

Attachment N

**Draft Inventory Sheet – Ulster Street,
Paddington**

Heritage inventory sheet

Based on the NSW Heritage Office State Heritage Inventory sheet

ITEM DETAILS			
Name of Item	Ulster Street Landscaping		
Former name	Ulster Street road closure		
Item type	Landscape		
Address	Number	Street	Suburb
Property description	Lot		DP
Use	Current		Former
Statement of significance	Ulster Street, Paddington, is historically significant as one of a series of street closures from the 1970s that continued into the 1980s to pedestrianise urban precincts, formalised in the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan and its attendant Action Plans. It forms part of a series of contemporary landscaped road closures to the southern side of Oxford Street, Paddington. Ulster Street also has social/historical significance in relation to urban and conservation measures in Paddington during the 1970s. Ulster Street is associated with the significant City of Sydney landscape architect Ilmar Berzins and is a distinctive example of his work related to street closures. Ulster Street, Paddington is a formal landscape treatment informed by the so-called "Sydney School" and is representative of the application of the Sydney School aesthetic. It demonstrates attitudes to, and the design and implementation of, landscaped street closures in the 1970s and 1980s in the City of Sydney. It is representative of street closures from 1970s and 1980s and is distinctive for its formal character established by gridded brick paving and planter boxes.		
Level of significance	State:	Local:	
Heritage listings			
DESCRIPTION			
Designer	Ilmar Berzins.		
Builder			
Construction years	Circa 1974		

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Physical description	The Ulster Street road closure extends from Oxford Street to the north to Church Lane to the south. The place retains the original formal character of raised planters constructed out of clinker bricks and the formal grid of brick paving. Of note is the extension of the formal brick grid to the Oxford Street kerb, thus extending the form and character of the reserve into the main public domain of Oxford Street. The built form adjacent to the reserve remains and comprises the nineteenth-century context of the St Matthais' Church Hall to the southeastern side and the two-storey terrace house to the northwestern side. The raised planters are of clinker brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern terminated with a brick header course. The detailing of the planters is consistent with Fitzroy Gardens in Kings Cross, undertaken by Berzins in 1971 as part of the upgrading of that park. Planting consists of the Chinese Weeping Elm trees in the planters to the north of the closure and two Jacaranda trees in the southern portion. Underplanting consists of newly planted ground covers and reflects an ongoing refurbishment of the place that responds to changes in shade density as the trees mature and the need for underplanting to adjust to the environmental conditions. Seats are located adjacent to the raised garden beds that are of a design used by the City of Sydney from the early 2000s and were purpose-designed by Alex Tzannes for the City.
Physical condition	
Modification and Dates	
Archaeological potential	

HISTORY

The coastal regions of Sydney between Port Jackson and Botany Bay are the ancestral territories of the Eora people. The traditional owners of the land now within the City of Sydney local government area were the Cadigal (Gadigal) people. In common with other tribes living by Sydney Harbour, the Cadigal lived in harmony with the natural resources within their country, fishing from canoes or hunting the animals that lived in their surroundings. The tribe appears to have moved within its territory in response to the seasons and family connections. Shell middens and other archaeological remains in the area provide material evidence of many centuries of sustained connection to the land that also sustained them. The arrival of white settlers caused the wholesale disruption of traditional life and the cultural practices of the Eora people generally. Despite enormous challenges, today many Indigenous people identify as Eora and maintain cultural practices and a connection to Country.

Ulster Street is situated on land that was once a part of the Sydney Common, which was proclaimed on 5 October 1811. The Common was dedicated on 5 October 1866 under the Sydney Commons Improvement Act, which appointed the Municipal Council of Sydney trustees. The Act empowered the Council to sell a portion of the Common lands and the money raised was to go towards improving the remainder of the Common, renamed Moore Park in 1871. Ulster Street is included in the late 1860s surveys identifying the various allotments of the Sydney Common subdivision that were to be offered for sale. Land to the east of Ulster Street was granted to the Anglican church in 1872 and St Matthais' church hall, adjacent to the street, was constructed around 1882. Initial residential development along the street is understood to have been undertaken at this period.

The Ulster Street road closure is one of a series of road closures undertaken by the City of

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Sydney in the 1970s and 1980s. Locally, the road closure is part of a series of road closures along the southern side of Oxford Street, Paddington that were part of Action Plan 26 South Paddington Precinct C4, approved by Council on 2 July 1973. The streets selected for closure were Regent Street, Newcombe Street (subsequently partially reopened), Elizabeth Street (Strong Memorial Reserve), Ulster Street and Stewart Street. The locations of these road closures were deliberate as they are located adjacent or close to the busy Oxford Street, a main arterial road. The road closures recognised and enabled pedestrian priority as an ongoing outcome of the City Council's 1971 'Greening of Sydney' plan, and were closed as part of a traffic management initiative after lobbying by the Paddington Society to prevent constant "rat-running" from Oxford Street to Moore Park Road. The closures evidently improved amenity for residents. Prior to the road closure, Ulster Street formed a minor road that linked Oxford Street through to Church Lane.

Documentation describing the closure and attendant landscaping was prepared in 1974. Ilmar Berzins was involved with the project – his signature appears as Chief Technical Officer on the drawings prepared by the Council's Parks and Recreation Department.

The demand for increased pedestrian amenity through the city was the result of social changes and the impact of gentrification where former working-class neighbourhoods such as Paddington, Ultimo and Glebe had been rediscovered by a new (generally) middle-class educated generation as convenient places to live. Along with the street closures and increased pedestrian amenity was the extensive street tree planting that was undertaken through the city. This had the effect of increasing the aesthetic and ecological values of the place and thereby attracting further middle-class people to the areas.

Significant road closures were being instigated across the city, Martin Place being the most prominent example with the final stages being opened in 1979. Road closures and rationalisation of road alignments to allow for greater pedestrian amenity were just some of the measures that were undertaken. Taking advantage of Sydney's irregular grid for example, the corner of Hunter and Bligh Streets, where the memorial to the Reverend Richard Johnson occupied a traffic island, was incorporated as part of an extended pedestrian pathway while retaining traffic functions for the intersection.

Other methods of extending further pedestrian amenity included blisters on corners that in some cases incorporated street planting, raised pedestrian crossings and the like. Planting to streets was generally of Australian native species with Paperbarks, Eucalypts, Callistemons and Casuarinas widely used across the city in both the public domain and residential areas. Exotic species, notably London Plane trees and Chinese Weeping Elms, were extensively used for their deciduous habit and were allocated to more urban areas such as Central Sydney. These species were also used extensively across Sydney suburbs, with minor variations and reflected the social and political attitudes of the time with an emphasis on Australian natives. The focus on Australian native species was further encouraged by the election of the Labor Federal Government in 1972 as part of a broader national identity. Many of the natives were cultivars from across Australia (Grevillea "Robyn Gordon", a cultivar from Western Australia for example) that had shown resilience to a wide range of conditions found in public landscapes where maintenance was not a high priority. These species and others became the staple for the new generation of landscape architects that were graduating from universities.

It is noted on the original plans that instead of the existing Jacaranda trees that are located to the southern portion of the closure, London Plane trees were proposed. The Chinese Weeping Elm trees were retained as per the concept plan. Under planting consisted of Australian native shrubs such as Grevillea rosemarinifolia with some Azaleas to the side of the closure. This selection of shrubs reflects species that were widely used through both the public domain and private holdings. Photographs show the mature canopy of Chinese Weeping Elms and Jacarandas. The original seating shown is very similar to the timber seats that were installed in Fitzroy Gardens.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Australian Theme	State theme	Local theme

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HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT		
Historic significance SHR criteria (a)	Ulster Street, Paddington, is part of a series of street closures from the 1970s that continued into the 1980s to pedestrianise urban precincts as part of the City Council's "Greening of Sydney" policy, formalised in the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan and its attendant Action Plans. It forms part of a series of contemporary landscaped road closures to the southern side of Oxford Street, Paddington. Ulster Street, Paddington, has social and historical significance in relation to urban and conservation measures in Paddington. The gentrification and resultant demand for community open space is embodied through the displacement of vehicular access for communal use, and resulted from agitation from the Paddington Society during the 1970s. This resulted in the closure and landscaping of Ulster, Newcombe, Stewart, Regent and Elizabeth Street, of which Ulster Street is the finest. Ulster Street fulfils this criterion at a Local level.	
Historical association SHR criteria (b)	Ulster Street, Paddington, is associated with Ilmar Berzins, the City of Sydney landscape architect who was responsible for extensive improvement works throughout the City of Sydney from the beginning of the 1950s to the second half of the 1980s. It is a distinctive example of his work related to street closures. Ulster Street meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.	
Aesthetic significance SHR criteria (c)	Ulster Street, Paddington, is a formal landscape treatment informed by the so-called "Sydney School". It is representative of the application of the Sydney School aesthetic, most evidently the use of a type of clinker brick for the planter boxes and brick paving. The selection of materials brought design elements of the Sydney School into an established nineteenth-century urban context. Ulster Street continues the design themes exemplified in Ilmar Berzins' significant redesign of Fitzroy Gardens in Kings Cross (c.1971), notably the use of raised planters as a solution in urban areas to raise trees above the urban floor. Ulster Street fulfils this criterion at a Local level.	
Social significance SHR criteria (d)	Ulster Street, Paddington, along with the other contemporary street closures in Paddington, is evidence of the gentrification of the suburb during the 1960s and 1970s. Although it may be of significance to the community, more research is required to establish this.	
Technical/Research significance SHR criteria (e)	Ulster Street, Paddington, has limited research potential as a demonstration of the attitudes to, and the design and implementation of, landscaped street closures in the 1970s and 1980s in the City of Sydney. Ulster Street provides evidence of the successful implementation of Action Plan 26 South Paddington Precinct C4. Ulster Street meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.	
Rarity SHR criteria (f)	Ulster Street, Paddington, is not a rare example of a 1970s landscaped street closure in the City of Sydney and does not meet the threshold for listing at a State or Local level.	

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Representativeness SHR criteria (g)	Ulster Street, Paddington, is representative of street closures from the 1970s and 1980s resulting from implementation of Action Plans associated with the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan and is distinctive for its formal character established by the gridded brick paving and planter boxes. Ulster Street meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.			
Integrity				
RECOMMENDATIONS				
Recommendations	• Manage Ulster Street landscaping in accordance with Sydney LEP 2012 and Sydney DCP 2012. • Ulster Street Landscaping has retained a high level of intactness, which should be retained and conserved. • The external form of Ulster Street Landscaping, any original spaces, fabric and finishes should be retained and conserved in any future development. • All conservation and new works should be undertaken in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter). • It is recommended that a Conservation Management Strategy be prepared to guide future works and conservation at the place. A heritage impact statement should be prepared prior to any major works being undertaken.			
INFORMATION SOURCES				
Type	Author/Client	Title	Year	Repository
Written	TKD Architects			City of Sydney
AUTHOR OF THIS REPORT				
TKD Architects			2026	Date

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IMAGES

Image Caption



Image
Year

1961

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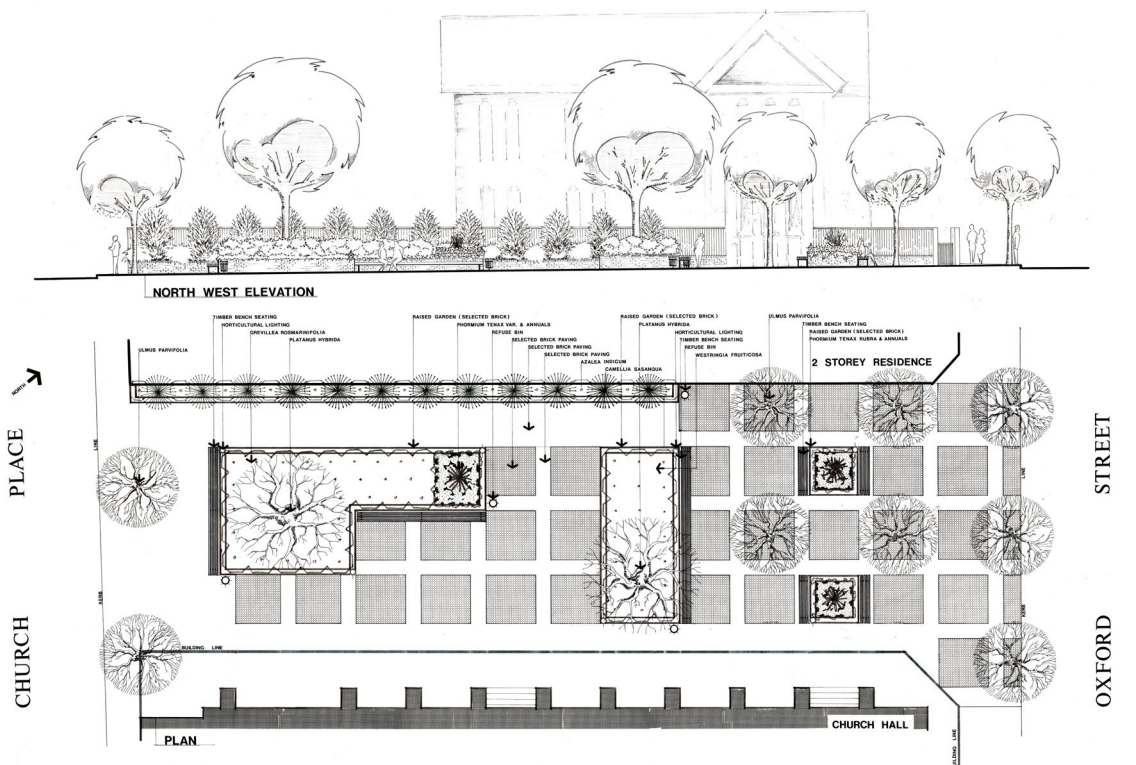


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1972

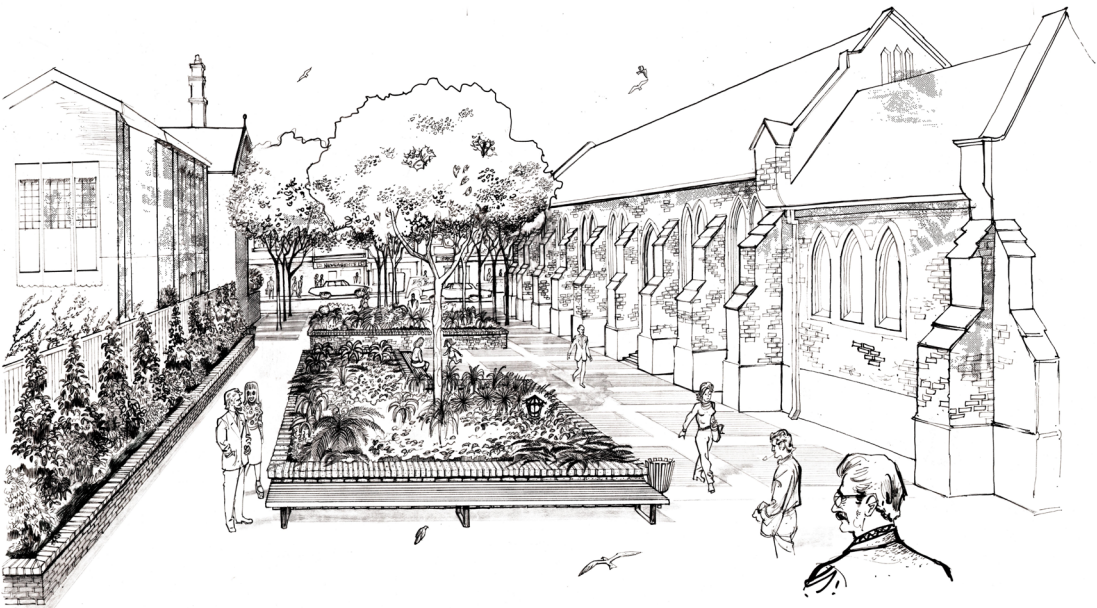
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Image Caption			
			
Image Year	C. 1974	Image author and Copyright Holder	City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-0120074.

IMAGES			
Image Caption			
 A photograph of a paved courtyard or plaza. On the left is a long, low building with a stone and brick facade. On the right is a multi-story red brick building with white window frames and a white picket fence in front. The ground is paved with dark, rectangular stones. Several trees, some with green leaves and some bare, are planted in raised planters. There are wooden benches with metal frames. A street lamp is visible in the background.			
Image Year	2023	Image author and Copyright Holder	Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects

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