

Attachment C

**TKD Heritage Assessment – 12A Dadley
Street, Alexandria**



Former Baby Health Centre 12A Dadley Street, Alexandria

Heritage assessment



Prepared for City of Sydney

January 2026

TKD Architects acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and create, recognising their continuing and unbroken connection to the land, water and sky.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and express our gratitude for their sharing of knowledge and cultures.

Cover
Alexandria Baby Health Centre, July 1964 (City of Sydney Archives)

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Document issue				
Issue	Date	Purpose	Written	Reviewed
P1	25 June 2025	Preliminary draft issue	RL	
P2	7 October 2025	Draft issue	RL	
A	16 December 2025	Final issue	RL	GP
B	20 January 2026	Revised final issue	RL	GP

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- 1 Aerial location image (top) and aerial detail image of 12A Dadley Street, Alexandria
Source: Nearmap with TKD Architects overlay.



1 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of report

This report has been prepared on behalf of the City of Sydney to assess the heritage significance of the former baby health centre at 12A Dadley Street, Alexandria. The property was identified as a potential heritage item in the Albert Smillie and Ilmar Berzins City Architect and City Landscape Architect Heritage Study (TKD Architects and Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects, October 2023). It is located in the Kingsclear Heritage Conservation Area (C3).

The assessment of heritage significance has been undertaken using the heritage assessment criteria contained in the New South Wales Heritage Office Guidelines, *Assessing Heritage Significance* (2023),

1.2 Site description

The subject site is bounded by Dadley Street to the west, Renwick Street to the south and Allen Lane to the east. A three-storey block of flats is located to the north of the site, which is a residential neighbourhood of terrace houses and apartment blocks. The Jack Shuttleworth Reserve is located opposite the site on the southern side of Renwick Street. Beyond it is the Cliff Noble Community Centre.

12A Dadley Street is presently used for community purposes. The site is identified as Lots 6 and 7 Section A Deposited Plan 2307.



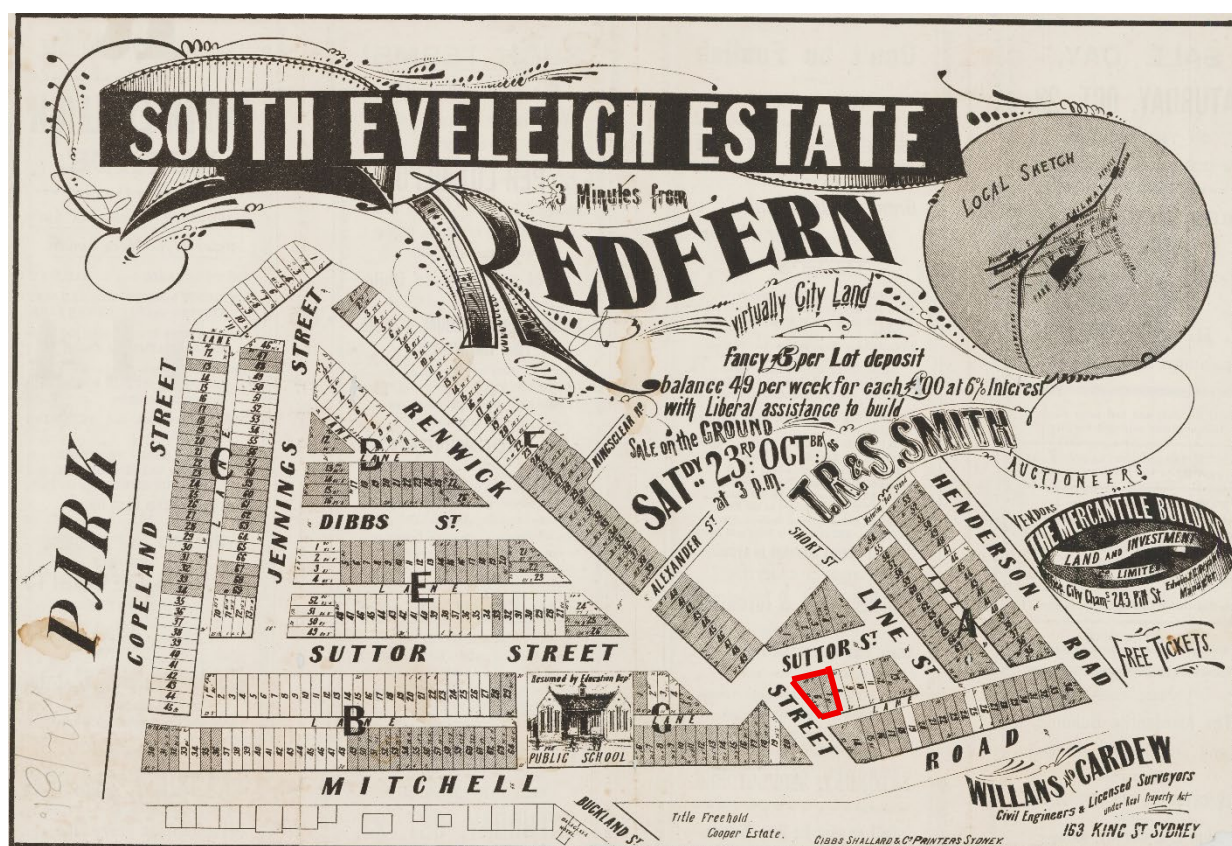
2 12A Dadley Street, Alexandria in 2023.

2 Historical overview

2.1 Site history

The site of 12A Dudley Street occupies part of 566.5 hectares (1400 acres) of land granted to emancipated convict, public servant and landowner William Hutchinson (1772-1846) in May 1823.

In July 1886 some 8.9 hectares (22 acres) were acquired by the Mercantile Building Land and Investment Company Limited.¹ The land was brought onto Torrens Title², subdivided and offered for sale in 1886. The subject site is a part of the Company's South Eveleigh Estate.



- 3 Auction notice for the sale of allotments in the South Eveleigh Estate dated 23 October 1886. The subject site is outlined in red.
Source: State Library of NSW Z/SP/A2?81.

On 7 February 1906 the title to Lots 6 and 7 in Section A of the subdivision (along with Lots 14 to 18 in Section A) was transferred to accountant George Thompson.³ Lots 6 and 7 were bounded by what was then called Suttor Street, Renwick Street and a lane. Suttor Street was renamed Dudley Street in 1917. Henry George Dudley (1868-1929) worked for the NSW Public Service in the Resumed Properties Department as a foreman and plasterer. He served as an alderman on Alexandria Council between 1908 and 1919, representing the Council's West Ward.

¹ HLRV NSW Old Systems Title Book 343 Number 814.

² HLRV NSW Primary Application 7576.

³ HLRV NSW Volume 1529 Folio 160.

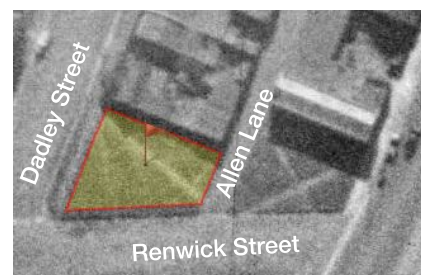
Evidence provided by *Sands Sydney and suburban directory* indicates that Lots 6 and 7 remained undeveloped when Thompson sold them to clerical worker Richard Henry Harris in 1922. The transfer of title took place on 29 November.⁴ Harris immediately transferred the property title to the Board of Water Supply and Sewerage, which retained possession of it until 1938. In March that year the title was transferred to contractor Herbert John Nichols, who sold it the following month to John Patrick Matthews and Kathleen O'Riordan, described on title documents as toilet manufacturers.⁵ Lots 6 and 7 were subsequently purchased by a company called Service Springs Pty Limited early in 1944.⁶

Alexandria Council was amalgamated with the Municipal Council of Sydney in 1948. A decision was made to acquire Lots 6 and 7 for the purposes of a children's playground in the second half of 1951 and the purchase of the land from Service Springs Pty Limited was finalised on 24 January 1952, when the transfer of title took place.⁷ In 1963 the Council's Parks and Recreations Department suggested replacing the existing early baby health centre, established in 1914, with a new building on the playground site.

2.2 Baby health centres in Alexandria

In 1914 Labor politician Frederick Flowers became the state's new health minister. That same year he held a conference, bringing together the Alice Rawson School for Mothers, the Sydney District Nursing Association, and numerous government departments. The Alice Rawson School for Mothers was named after the daughter of Sir Harry Rawson, governor of NSW between 1902 and 1909. It was founded in 1908 by the National Council of Women as a subsidised voluntary agency servicing the working-class suburbs of Newtown, Darlinghurst and Alexandria. In 1914 it and the Sydney District Nursing Association were combined under the Baby Clinic Board. The conference ended with a commitment to establish baby clinics throughout the city – the first would be in Alexandria, an industrial working-class suburb.⁸ Alexandria Baby Clinic was opened by Frederick Flowers and inaugurated on 24 August 1914 in rented premises at 22 Henderson Road. The movement expanded rapidly and by September 1919 there were twenty-eight baby clinics in various parts of New South Wales.

Following the recommendations of the Parks and Recreations Department in 1963, plans of a new building were prepared by the City Architect. Drawings are signed by Albert Smillie. The plans were approved by Council on 5 March 1964, and the tender of building contractors Drake & Vine was approved on 23 March 1964. Construction commenced on 7 April 1964. The works were completed and approved on 30 July 1964.



4 Site of the former Baby Health Centre, 1943. The site is outlined and shaded. Source: SIX Maps with TKD Architects overlay.



5 The newly opened baby health clinic at 22 Henderson Road, Alexandria, in 1914. The building is understood to still exist. Source: Museums of History NSW State Archives Collection NRS-4873-1-[2/8567.5]-2/8567.5

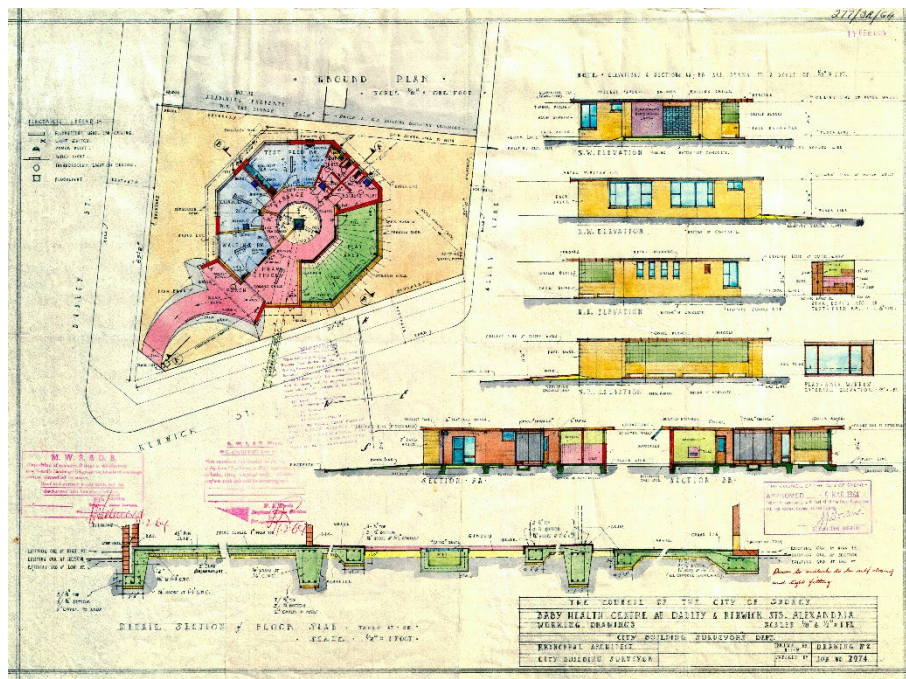
⁴ HLRV NSW Volume 1678 Folio 182.

⁵ HLRV NSW Volume 3403 Folio 18.

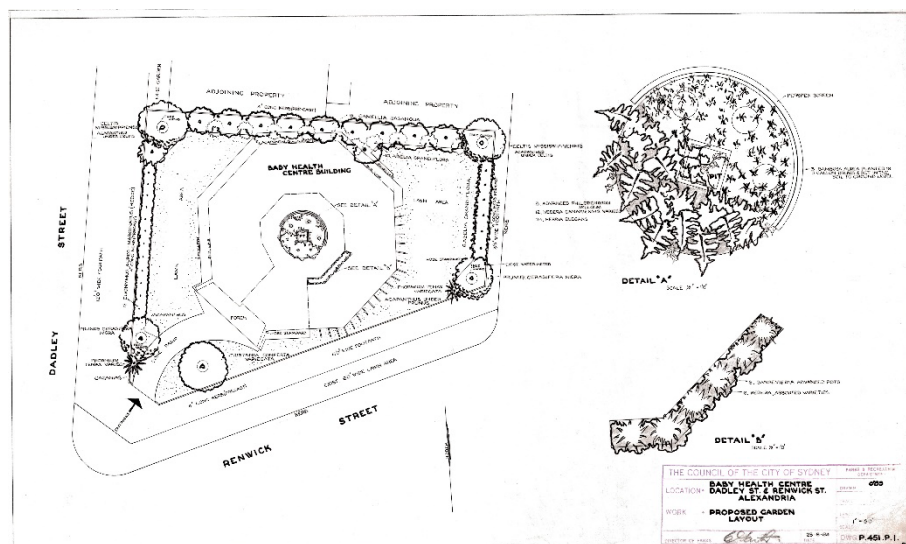
⁶ HLRV NSW Volume 4938 Folios 118 and 119.

⁷ HLRV NSW Volume 5424 Folio 112.

⁸ Brad Gillespie, "The history of the Alexandria Baby Health Centre" at <https://bradgillespie.com.au/the-history-of-the-alexandria-baby-health-clinic/> accessed 5 June 2025.



- 6 Council-approved drawings of the new Alexandria baby health centre. The drawing is dated 11 February 1964. Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545975.



- 7 1964 drawing describing proposed landscaping at 12A Dadley Street, which included the open court in the centre of the building. Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-01200709.

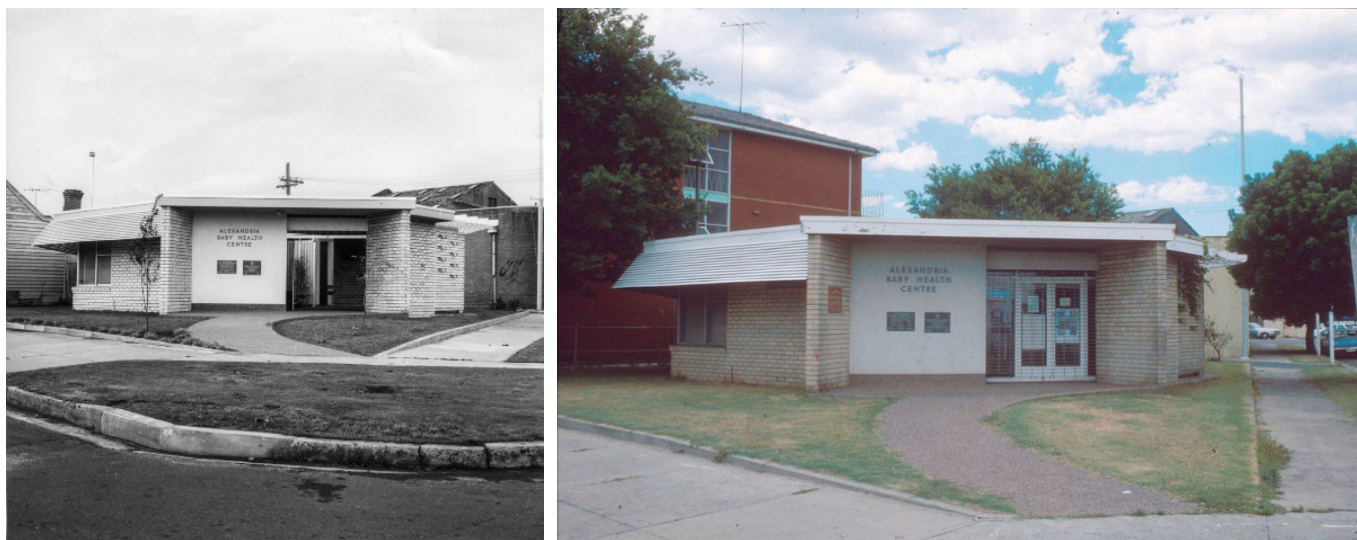


- 8 At the official opening of the Alexandria Baby Health Centre on 31 July 1964. Source: State Library of NSW Government Printing Office 2 – 30341 and Government Printing Office 2 – 30342.

The octagonal building incorporated features to be found in many baby health centres across the state - an area to park prams, a waiting room, consulting room, test fed room and lavatories, along with a screened play space on the eastern side of the building. A small central circular garden court was surrounded by an internal access corridor connecting all of the spaces.

As with baby health centres generally, the Alexandria baby health centre was staffed and controlled by the NSW Department of Health, while the building was maintained by the City

Council. However, by 1970 the baby health centre only operated on Friday. The Redfern Crisis Clinic applied to use the building from Monday to Thursday each week.⁹ However, by 1976 it was back to two days a week for infant health. A contract to undertake renovations to the building was signed on 17 July 1981 but the scope of works has not been ascertained. However, at some point of time the play area became a meeting room.



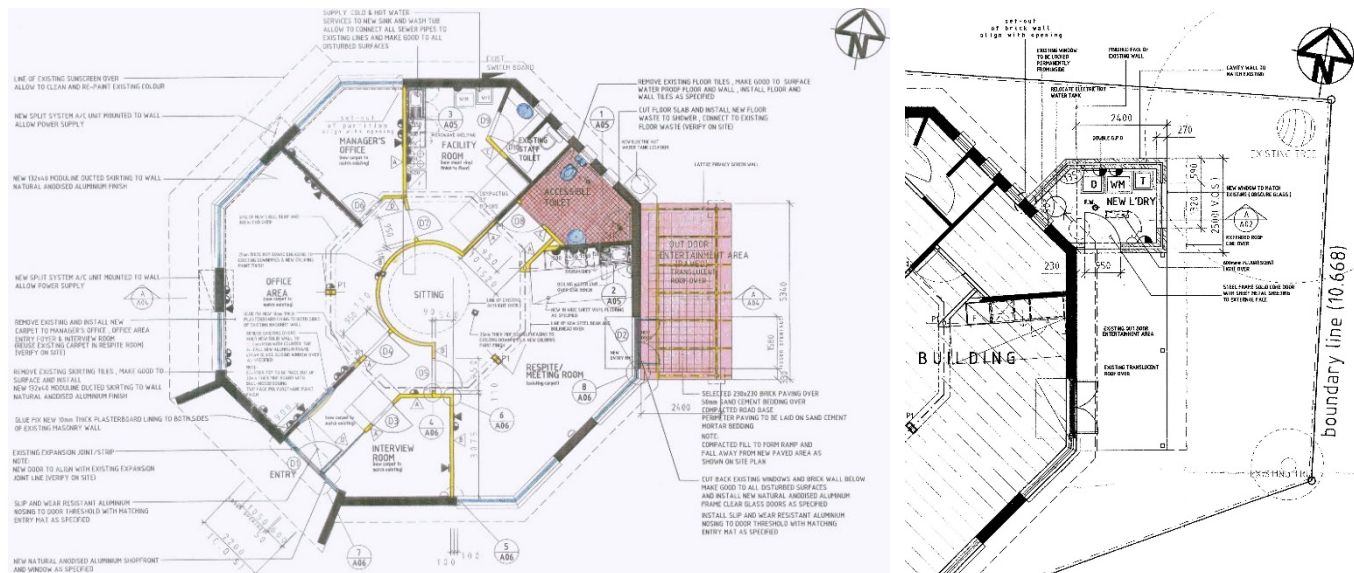
- 9 The Alexandria Baby Health centre photographed in July 1964 (left) and 1981 (right). Little had been done to the exterior of the building in this period. Landscaping is conspicuously absent, as is fencing around the site.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00010293 and Unique ID A-00021506.

The property title was transferred to South Sydney Council Around the beginning of 1991.¹⁰ This followed the establishment of South Sydney Council at the instigation of the State government in 1989. The City Council and South Sydney Council merged in 2004 following redistribution of municipal boundaries so that the building came once again under the jurisdiction of the City of Sydney.

During 2002 and 2003 plans were lodged with South Sydney Council to modify the building for home and community care (HACC) facilities. Documented by architects Woodhouse & Danks, the works involved extensive internal demolition and modifications to some windows, along with a laundry addition at the rear of the building, pergola on the eastern side of the building and landscaping works. The adaptation was intended to assist frail elderly people and people with disabilities to live independently in their own home. The following year the same architects documented a laundry addition at the rear of the building. The facility was known as Alleena, a First Nations aged care establishment understood to have been conducted under the auspices of Australian Unity Aboriginal Home Care from 2015.

9 City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00460772.

10 HLRV NSW Certificate of Title Volume 5424 Folio 112.



10 Portions of drawings prepared in the office of Woodhouse & Danks describing modifications to 12A Dudley Street in 2002 (left) and 2003 (right).
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-

It has not been ascertained when the building ceased use as an aged care establishment. However, a development application was lodged by the City of Sydney in May 2025 seeking consent for ongoing community use at 12A Dudley Street.¹¹

¹¹ Development Application D/2025/468.

3 Physical evidence

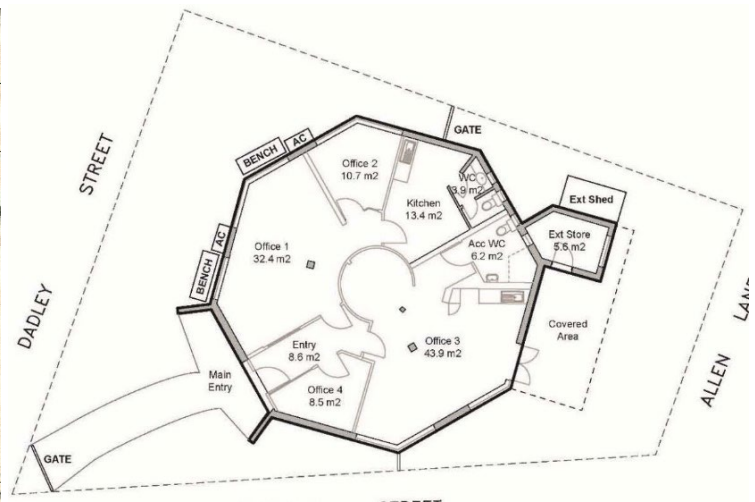
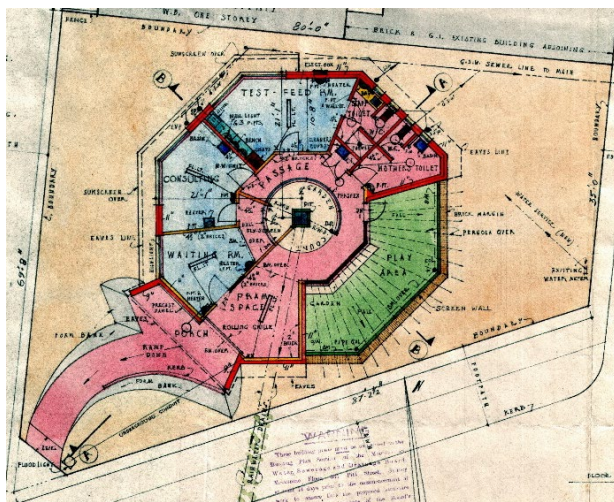
The former baby health centre at 12A Daldey Street is a single storey brick building with a shallow pitched roof covered by metal decking. The building is octagonal in plan. An oculus over what was intended as a garden court in the centre of the building has been covered by a translucent dome. Original plans indicate it may have been covered by a flat sheet of perspex, although this is not clear. In any case, the dome was in place prior to 2002. The building has aluminium framed windows, the majority of which replaced earlier metal framed windows in the early 2000s. Metal canopies shade windows in the western half of the building.

There is chainwire fencing along the Renwick and Dadley Street boundary and a portion of the Renwick Street boundary. The drawings prepared in 2002 indicate that this fencing had been installed prior to this. Brush fencing has been installed along part of the Renwick Street boundary and along the Allen Lane boundary, providing privacy to open space in this section of the site.

Although the interior of the building has not been inspected, comparison with the approved drawings prepared by the City Building Surveyor's Department in 1964 and an existing plan of the building reveals that the interior has been extensively modified to accommodate ongoing and changing uses.



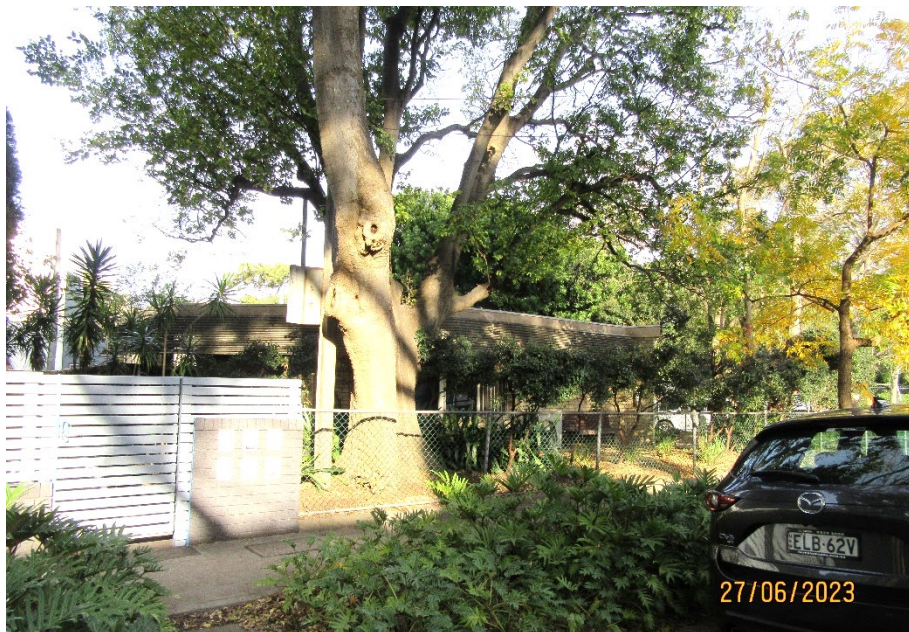
- 11 Detail of a photograph taken in 1964. The oculus in the centre of the building can be seen through the main entrance and appears to have been open to the sky.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A- 00010291.



- 12 The approved plan of the Alexandria Baby Health Centre, 1964 (left) and a recent drawing of the plan of the existing plan (right). Although some original walls appear to have been retained, spaces have been reconfigured, the circular central court has been incorporated into office space, space occupied by lavatories has been reduced and the laundry added to the building in 2003 has been converted to storage space. Most of these changes were made in the first half of the 2000s.

Sources: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545975; 12A Daldey Street Plan of Management, 21 May 2025, p.10.





- 13 Looking south along Dadley Street towards the former baby health centre.



- 14 Main entrance to the former baby health centre viewed from Dadley Street.



- 15 Looking north-east along Renwick Street to the former baby health centre.



16 Western side of the building, showing the lightweight metal awnings installed to shade windows and details of fenestration. on this side of the building.



17 General view of the western side of the building.



18 Looking along the side of the building facing Allen Street. Brush fencing encloses the yard at the rear of the site.



19 Pergola and laundry (at right) facing Allen Lane.



20 Rear of the building viewed from Allen Lane, adjacent to the northern site boundary.



21 Commemorative plaques at the main entrance to the building associated with the official opening of the building in 1964 and the golden jubilee of the first baby health centre in Alexandria, which opened in 1914.

4 Comparative analysis

4.1 Albert Smillie

Albert Smillie was born Albert Alexander Smellie, the son of Alexander and Lillie M Smellie of Balmain South, on 13 March 1904.¹² The family appears to have been of Scottish extraction.¹³ Smellie joined the Sydney Municipal Council's Architectural Branch as an architectural draftsman around 1924. On 29 April 1926 he registered as an architect with the Board of Architects of New South Wales.¹⁴ He subsequently became an Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, established in 1930. In July 1927 Albert Smellie changed his name via deed poll to Albert Alexander Smillie.¹⁵ About three years later he married Ivy Hazel Martin.¹⁶ A son was born to the couple in March 1932.¹⁷

In 1928 the commissioners who replaced the sacked Labor Council amalgamated the City Architect and Building Surveyor's Department with three others. They became the City Engineering and Building Surveyor's Department headed by engineer A H Garnsey. The City Architect lost the status of head of department. In 1936 the Department was split in two, and the City Architect and Building Surveyor's Department was re-created. In 1948 the title 'City Architect' was dropped from the department's name and it became the City Building Surveyor's Department. John Rankin was appointed City Building Surveyor in 1936, remaining in the role until 1963. In July 1936 Smillie applied unsuccessfully for the position of City Building Surveyor but by the following September 1936 he had been promoted to the position of architectural assistant and from around this time his name appears on numerous drawings prepared in the Council's architectural department as Architect. On 29 November 1949 Smillie was appointed the City of Sydney's Chief Architect and was responsible for the City's architectural branch.

In 1950 Albert Smillie and City Building Surveyor John Rankin were sent to Great Britain, Europe and the United States to study trends in building control and modern building methods relating to civic infrastructure. They travelled to England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, America and Canada, and were away from June to November 1950.¹⁸ In June 1953 Smillie became the Council's Principal Architect. As the Chief Architect, and later Principal Architect, Smillie signed off on all the building plans but was not necessarily the designer of the buildings work. According to Edward John Merewether, a member of Smillie's architectural team in the post-war period, "The bosses were mainly one hundred per cent keeping the Department going, dealing with the Council and that sort of thing. They signed the drawings, but I don't ever remember any design criteria. I think most blokes were left to do what they wanted to do."¹⁹ Albert Smillie retired at the beginning of 1969. He died in March 1986, aged 82.



22 Albert Alexander Smillie. The photograph was taken during the 1950s.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00016548.

12 Birth registration number 10127/1904, accessed at <https://familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au/lifelink/familyhistory/search/result?4>.

13 "Obituary", *Williamstown Chronicle*, 28 June 1924, p.2.

14 AIA

15 Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales, 'Private Advertisements,' Fri 29 Jul 1927 [Issue No.101], Page 3815.

16 5904/1930

17 "Family Notices", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1932, p.10.

18 City of Sydney Archives File 2339/50 Building Projects Visit of City Building Surveyor and Chief Architect Overseas 1950; "Tour plan for Council men," *Daily Telegraph*, 9 May 1950, Page 11.

19 Biography supplied by City of Sydney - Interview transcript with Edward John Merewether, Trim 2019/007226

4.2 Overview of baby health centres in NSW

Following the pioneering establishment of baby health centres during the second decade of the twentieth century, purpose-designed baby health centres in Australia were built from the 1920s onwards. In regional NSW the assistance of the Country Women's Association (CWA) allowed baby health centres to open in country towns. They were financed by the State government up to 1930, at which time there were 79 across the state. Funding then passed from state to local level, although the state provided staff. The CWA was building baby health centres as well, sometimes in collaboration with a local council. By 1946, 138 of the 175 baby health centres operating in NSW had been established by the CWA.

By 1941 baby health centres were administered by the Division of Maternal and Baby Welfare for the Department of Public Health. According to NSW Health,

In 1942, a new interest developed from local government authorities in the establishment and improvement of baby health centres in their districts. This led to the preparation of lists and schedules setting forth the standard requirements for the premises of baby health centres including the appropriate equipment, maintenance and condition of the centres, the local responsibility, if any, and any other relevant data.²⁰

The baby health centre at Concord, opened in October 1943, was said to be "the first in the metropolitan area built to a special design for the Health Department by a municipal council."²¹ It was the first to demonstrate these new requirements. The building was designed by architect R Lindsay Little, who was responsible for seven baby health centres during the 1940s. Concord Council built and appointed the Centre, without any financial aid from the government²² and it became the model for subsequent baby health centres. The following year Strathfield Council acquired a site at 52 Redmyre Road and financed construction of a baby health centre designed by prominent architects D T Morrow & Gordon. Both buildings are extant but serving different purposes.

The Commonwealth government published detailed guidelines in 1944, noting that the welfare of mothers as well as infants needed to be considered. There were a number of standard requirements - a waiting room for mothers, babies and toddlers; a room for every nurse at the establishment for consulting with the mother and weighing the baby; a test-feeding room for instruction in breast-feeding; a kitchenette for sterilising equipment; a nurses' change room; and if possible, a doctor's room. The bungalow-like Centre at Concord was presented as a paradigm. Towards the end of World War II, the NSW government began to contribute half of the costs associated with building the centres.

Communities and community groups staged a variety of fund-raising events such as reviews, balls, card nights and mannequin parades while local councils could hold money in trust and invest it. Some baby health centres were built as war memorials. In at least one case several groups were involved. In 1951 the centre at Blackheath was opened, a collaborative effort between Rotary, the Country Women's Association, Department of Health and the local community.



23 The baby health centre at Concord.
Source: Roy Lumby photograph.

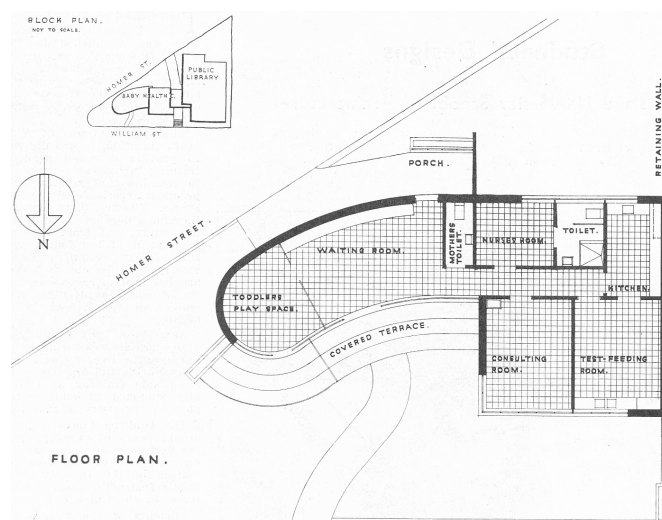
20 Various authors, *Our Babies: the States Best Asset. A history of 100 years of child and family health services in NSW*, p.66.

21 "New Baby Clinic", *Sun*, 17 October 1943, p.8.

22 "Concord Baby Health Centre" at <https://canadabayheritage.asn.au/concord-baby-health-centre/>, accessed 9 August 2023.

A series of Modernist pavilions was built during the 1950s through to the 1970s across the state. During the 1950s a respectable number were designed by the architectural firm of Davey & Brindley, which amongst others designed six baby health centres for Canterbury Council:

- Lakemba, officially opened on 22 November 1947.
- Punchbowl, opened 28 February 1948. The building is disused and derelict.
- Earlwood, completed circa 1952.
- Belmore, circa 1951, and Hurlstone Park, circa 1952, both of which have been demolished.
- Campsie, officially opened on 10 December 1954.



24 Left: Davey & Brindley's plan of the baby health centre at Earlwood.
Right: the Earlwood baby health centre abuts the local library.
Source of plan: *Architecture*, October-December 1952,

The buildings at Lakemba, Earlwood and Belmore are significant because they formed part of small groups of civic amenities, incorporating both baby health centre and local library. In some cases, baby health centres were incorporated into comprehensive civic centres containing Council offices, a library and the baby health centre, such as the group of buildings in Campsie. Another locality where the baby health centre was part of a larger group of community buildings is at St Marys, where council chambers were constructed in 1933. The council chambers were augmented by the construction of a community hall (the Memorial Hall) in 1961 and stylish Modernist baby health centre in 1962, which contained a test feed room, consulting room, staff room, waiting room, pram park at its entrance, a play area and lavatories. The group of buildings has since been repurposed as St Marys Corner Community and Cultural Precinct, which was opened in May 2010. The baby health centre has been repurposed as the St Marys Arts and Crafts Studios.



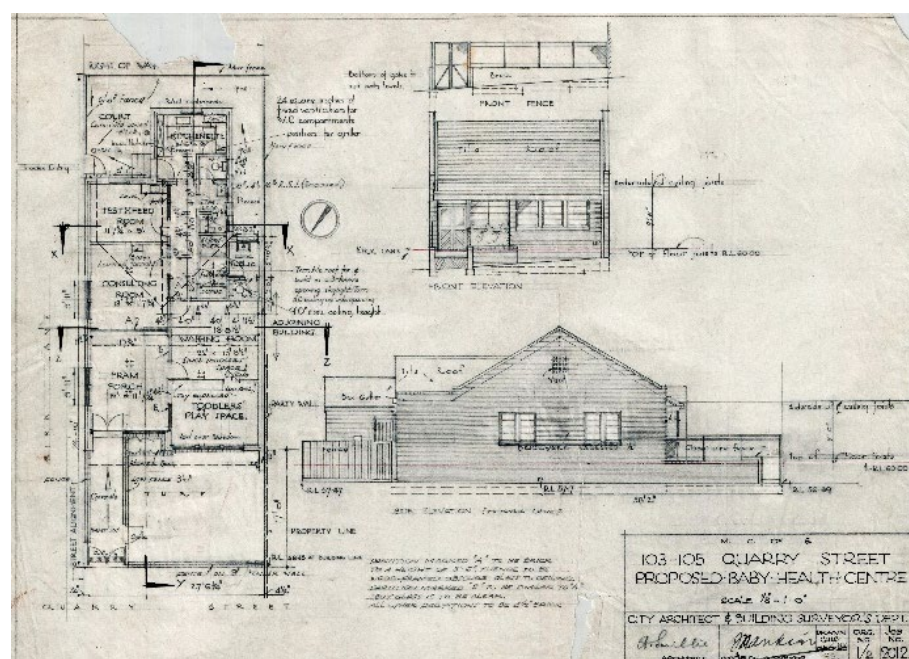
25 The repurposed St Marys baby health centre at the intersection of the Great Western Highway and Mamre Road..

4.3 Baby Health Centres in the City of Sydney

The Municipal Council of Sydney became involved in infant health care in the wake of the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900. The State government appointed Dr W G Armstrong the City Health Officer in 1901, and it was under his guidance that infant health became a concern of the Council. A "Lady Sanitary Inspector" was appointed in 1902 and in 1904 started visiting households where infant deaths had occurred.²³ The earliest baby health clinics in Sydney, which were established by the state government, opened in Alexandria and Newtown during 1914. They were followed by clinics in Bourke Street, Darlinghurst and other localities.

The City of Sydney inherited a number of baby health centres when its boundaries were enlarged in 1949, such as the building constructed in Redfern Park by Redfern Council and completed that same year. Not all of the baby health centres within the City of Sydney's enlarged boundaries were designed in-house. For instance, Glebe Baby Health Centre was designed by architect R Lindsay Little in 1946 for Glebe Municipal Council and completed around 1950.²⁴

Following the enlargement of the municipal boundaries, Central Sydney was surrounded by a ring of Labor-supporting suburbs. 15 kindergarten/day nurseries and seven baby health centres had been constructed by 1965, reflecting the social agenda of aldermen related to their electorate and the residential population there.²⁵ Amongst the earliest post war baby health centres designed by the City Architect predated the boundary changes, however, was the narrow domestically scaled building at 103-105 Quarry Street, Ultimo (1948, demolished). It contained the complement of spaces required by baby health centres at this time, including a pram porch, toddlers' play area, waiting, consulting and test feed rooms plus a small kitchen and staff rooms. Albert Smillie's signature appears on the drawings describing the scheme.



26 Architectural drawing describing the baby health centre at 103-105 Quarry Street, Ultimo.

Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545532.

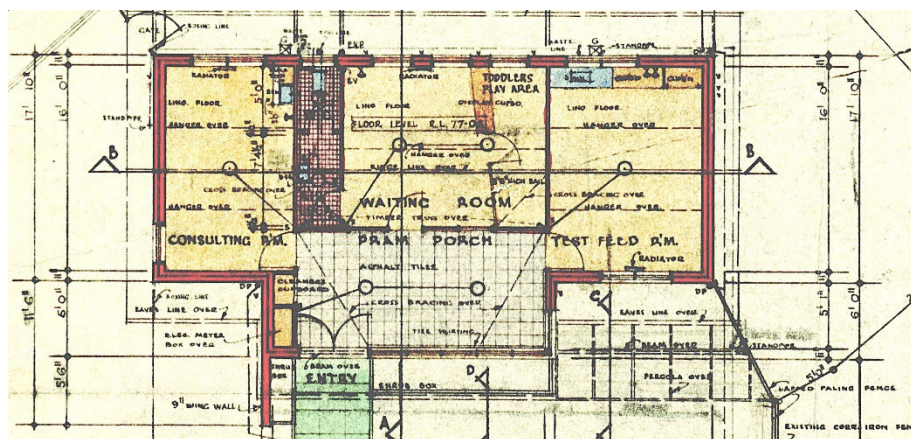
Another early baby health centres designed and constructed by the City of Sydney was at Millers Point. Here a baby health centre had been constructed at Lower Fort Street by the

23 Fitzgerald, p.219,

24 CSA Unique ID A-00035904. It has since been demolished.

25 Hilary Golder, *Sacked: removing and remaking the Sydney City Council 1842-1992* (City of Sydney, 2004), p.109.

Department of Health in conjunction with the City Council, and opened in 1916.²⁶ The facility was relocated to Argyle Street in the 1920s and its replacement at 87 Lower Fort Street was opened by Labor MLA Daniel Clyne on 22 November 1952. The compact domestically scaled building was a self-effacing and modest version of Modernist architecture containing all the essential spaces – “[b]y the mid-20th century ... an architectural language of economically lean, functionalist and often aesthetically unpretentious modernism was assumed appropriate to express widely accepted social ideals of community participation and accessible recreation.”²⁷ It was recently demolished.

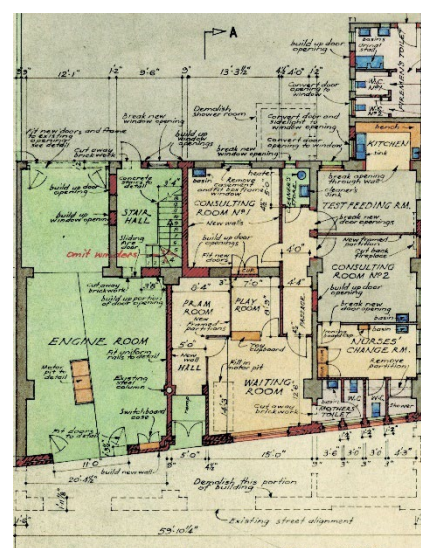


- 27 Left: plan of the proposed baby health centre at 87 Lower Fort Street, which was approved by Council in July 1952. The drawing bears Smillie's signature.
 Right: photograph of the completed baby health centre taken on 20 November 1952..
 Source: City of Sydney Archives, Unique ID A- 00042651 and Unique ID A-00562093.

The City of Sydney consolidated its child welfare efforts in the post-World War II era and by 1965 it had constructed seven new baby health centres and modified buildings to accommodate the facilities.

The Baby Health Centre at 62-64 Pine Street, Chippendale, was located in a two-storey 1920s industrial building that was acquired by the Municipal Council of Sydney in 1946, next to the Golden Fleece Kindergarten. The building was modified to accommodate a baby health centre a couple of years later. It included the standard complement of spaces – pram park, test feed room, waiting room, consulting room and playroom, along with separate spaces for nurses and a doctor. Council acquired the Golden Fleece Kindergarten in 1955. 62-64 Pine Street was subsequently incorporated into this facility.

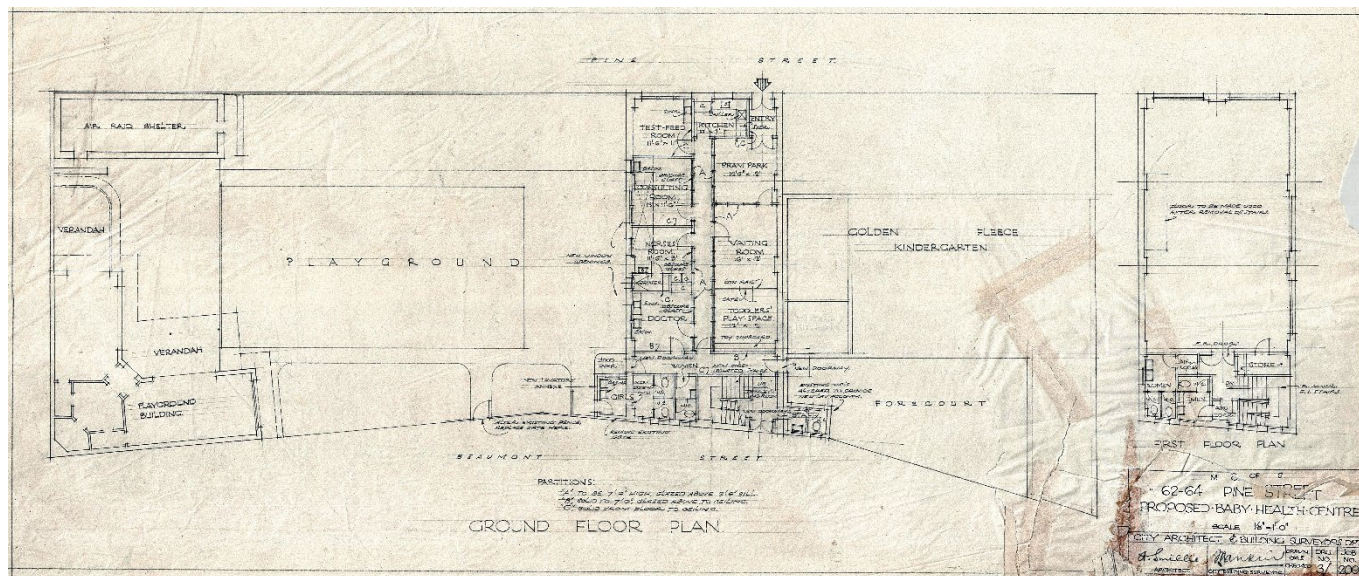
The Littlebridge Community Hall at 38 William Henry Street, Ultimo, was another building intended to house a baby health centre. The property, which included Little Bridge House, was resumed by Council in 1952 for a children's playground. Instead, plans were prepared for minor alterations to the house for the purposes of a baby health centre.²⁸ The site was developed by the construction of the Esme Hackett Welfare Centre in the mid-1950s, and Little Bridge House was eventually demolished. The site is now occupied by the Ultimo Community Centre and Library. A baby health centre was incorporated into plans for extensive alterations to the Paddington Fire Station at 257 Oxford Street, which was documented during 1953 but not



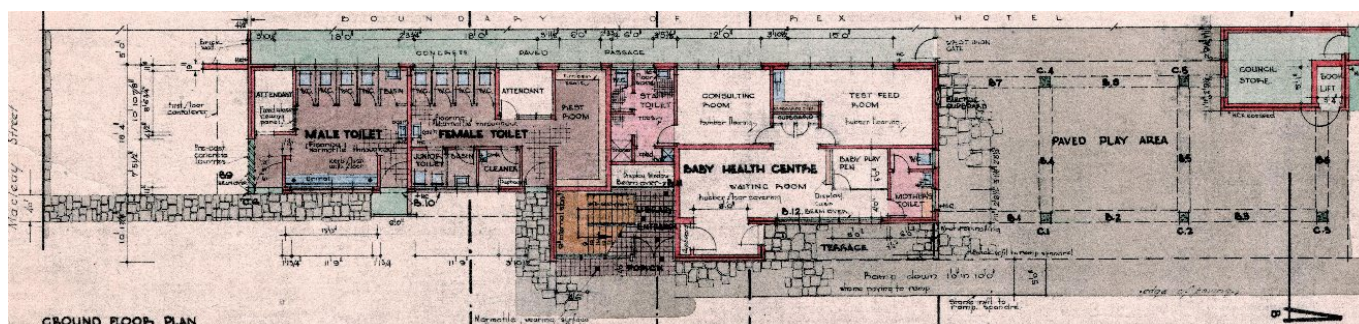
- 28 Section of a drawing documenting the alterations to Paddington Fire Station, which shows the layout of the baby health centre.
 Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00568554.

26 The first baby health clinic was opened on 28 July 1916. See *The Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People*, 29 July 1916, p.8.
 27 Hannah Lewi and David Nicholls (editors), *Community: building modern Australia* (UNSW Press, 2010), p.3.
 28 City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545853.

approved for about two years. This building has since been demolished.²⁹ Similarly, provision was made for a baby health centre on the ground floor of the award-winning Florence Bartley Library at 60 Macleay Street, Kings Cross, which opened in 1959. The building was demolished in 1997.

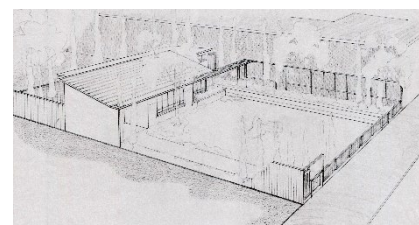


29 Plan describing the alterations to the industrial building at 62-64 Pine Street, adapting it for use as a baby health centre.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545527.



30 Section of a drawing documenting the Florence Bartley Library at Kings Cross, showing the layout of the baby health centre on the ground floor.
Source: Unique ID A-00546051.

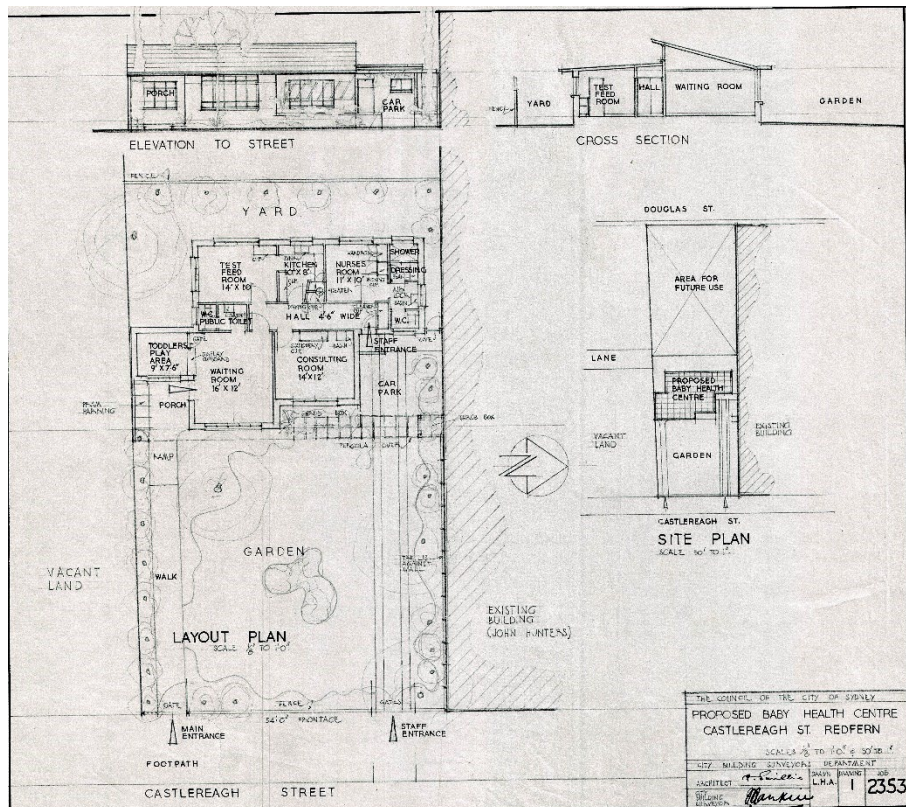
Before becoming part of the City of Sydney, Redfern Council established a baby health centre in a building under construction to provide a field house in Redfern Park. In 1949 the building was altered to include what was intended as a temporary baby health centre, but apparently became a permanent facility. However, a baby health centre was also designed for a site opposite Redfern Park on Castlereagh Street (now Chalmers Street), which had been acquired by Redfern Council. It is clearly shown on the City of Sydney's Building Surveyor's Detail Sheet for Redfern, produced between 1949 and 1972.³⁰ The building no longer exists.



31 Undated perspective study of the baby health centre on Chalmers Street opposite Redfern Park.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545664

29 City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00568554

30 City of Sydney Archives: City of Sydney - Building Surveyor's Detail Sheets, 1949-1972: Sheet 15 - Surry Hills - Unique ID A-00880190



- 32 Undated plan of the baby health centre on Chalmers Street opposite Redfern Park.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00545664

In June 1922 a refurbished terrace of houses at 443-453 Riley Street was handed over to the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies. The terrace was remodelled to the design of the Government Architect to accommodate a child care centre consisting of a baby health clinic, kindergarten and day nursery.³¹ These buildings remained in use until the second half of the 1970s, when they were replaced by a new complex designed by architects Stafford Moor & Farrington. For a time, the site continued in use as a childcare and baby health centre and is now used as a children's education and care centre.

Part of the context of the former Alexandria baby health centre is a Council financed welfare centre at 24 Suttor Street, just to the south of the former Alexandria baby health centre. The building was designed in the office of prominent architect Harry Seidler and completed in April 1964. Initially known as the Alexandria Welfare Centre, it was subsequently renamed the Cliff Noble Welfare Centre and now serves as a community centre.

4.4 Conclusions

Notwithstanding alterations and additions to the former Alexandria baby health centre that reflect changing uses after its closure circa 1980, the concept of the original design conformed to the standard requirements that had been established for baby health centres in NSW. Its planning and overall form were unusual, unlike any other baby health centre known to have been constructed during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s in NSW.



- 33 The Cliff Noble Welfare Centre in Suttor Street, Alexandria.

³¹ "Welfare Centre. Opened at Surry Hills", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 1922, p.10.

5 Assessment of heritage significance

5.1 Assessment

Historical significance

Criterion A An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The former Alexandria baby health centre at 12A Dadley Street is one of several baby health centres designed and constructed by the City of Sydney in various locations across the local government area after World War II and the redistribution of municipal boundaries in 1949. It provides evidence of efforts by the City of Sydney to improve social welfare conditions within the local government area during this period.

The building is the second to house a baby health centre in Alexandria, the suburb in which the first baby health centre in NSW was opened in 1914. After this use was discontinued the building continued to serve the community, including members of Sydney's First Nations community.

The building meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Historical associations

Criterion B An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance to NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The former Alexandria baby health centre has associations with City Architect Albert Smillie, who was involved in the design and construction of several baby health centres, welfare centres, libraries and other public facilities for the City of Sydney from the 1930s through to the 1960s.

The building meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Aesthetic significance

Criterion C An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

The former Alexandria baby health centre is notable for its distinctive octagonal plan that was organised around a circular central court. internal court. Modifications to the building to suit changing uses have removed much of the original layout, but the exterior of the building is relatively intact.

The building meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Social significance

Criterion D An item has strong or special associations with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The building has been a community facility continuously since its opening in 1964. Uses have included a baby health centre, the Redfern Crisis Clinic and a home and community care facility. It is likely to have significance for people who worked there and members of the public who used its facilities, but further research is needed to confirm this.

The building may meet the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Research potential

Criterion E An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

Because of alterations to the building, the former Alexandria baby health centre is not considered to have the potential to yield information that might contribute to an understanding of the City of Sydney's cultural history.

The building does not meet the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Rarity

Criterion F An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The former Alexandria Baby Health Centre is considered to be a rare surviving example of a baby health centre designed by the City Architect, notwithstanding changes that have taken place to the building's interior. Its original external form is generally intact. Other baby health centres constructed in the City of Sydney after World War II have been demolished.

The building meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

Representativeness

Criterion G An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's (or local area's) cultural or natural places, or cultural or natural environment.

Because of modifications to the building, the former Alexandria baby health centre is not representative of this typology. However, many communal buildings designed by the City Architect continue to be used, although not for the purposes for which they were originally designed. In this sense the former baby health centre is representative.

The building meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

5.2 Statement of significance

The former Alexandria Baby Health Centre at 12A Dadley Street, Alexandria, is one of several baby health centres designed and constructed by the City of Sydney in various locations across the local government area after World War I, providing evidence of City of Sydney endeavours to improve social welfare conditions for residents is the second baby health centre in Alexandria, where the first baby health centre in NSW was opened in 1914. The building has continued to serve the community, including members of Sydney's First Nations community, and it is likely to have significance for people who worked there and members of the public who used its facilities, However, this needs further confirmation.

The former Alexandria Baby Health centre has associations with City Architect Albert Smillie, who was involved in the design and construction of several baby health centres, welfare centres, libraries and other public facilities for the City of Sydney from the 1930s through to the 1960s. It is notable for its distinctive octagonal plan organised around a circular central court and, notwithstanding internal alterations, is considered to be a rare surviving example of a baby health centre designed by the City Architect and representative of communal buildings designed by the City Architect.

6 Conclusions

The former Alexandria baby health centre at 12A Dadley Street fulfils the NSW Heritage Council's criteria for historical significance, historical associations, aesthetic significance, rarity and representativeness at a Local level. The site may also have potential social significance. Because of this it warrants listing as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.