

Attachment E

**TKD Heritage Assessment – 2-14 Phelps
Street, Surry Hills**



Former John Carroll Kindergarten 2-14 Phelps Street, Surry Hills

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

The John Carroll Kindergarten, 2 September 1953
City of Sydney Archives, Unique ID A-00042717

Authorship

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Image credits

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- 1 Aerial location image (top) and aerial detail image of the former John J Carroll Kindergarten, Surry Hills..
Source: NearMaps 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 John Carroll Kindergarten at 2-14 Phelps Street, Surry Hills. 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, October 2023). 2-14 Phelps Street is located in the Bourke Street South Heritage Conservation Area (C60) and is adjacent to the corner shop and residence group at 545-545A Bourke Street, Surry Hills (Item I1443 in Schedule 5 of Sydney LEP 2012).

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 located on the northern side of Phelps Street at its intersection with Alexander Street. The eastern side of the site is partially bounded by Arthur Lane. The site is identified as Lot 1 Deposited Plan 50102.



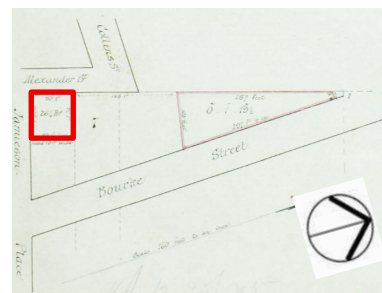
2 View of 2-14 Phelps Street.
Source: TKD Architects.

2 Historical overview

2.1 Early site history

The site of 2-14 Phelps Street is part of 28.33 hectares (70 acres) granted to commissary John Palmer on 1 April 1794. Businessman and speculator John Terry Hughes acquired at least a part of Palmer's grant by January 1837. He took out a mortgage over it with the Bank of Australia in March 1842. The Bank, as mortgagee, sold a substantial amount of land that included a triangle of land within the subdivision of Palmer's grant that included the future site of 2-14 Phelps Street, in January 1851.¹ It was acquired by Edward Bennett, described on title documents as an engineer or "gentleman".² At that time Phelps Street was identified as Jamieson Street. The name was changed to Phelps Street in 1873, honouring Thomas Phelps (circa 1836-1880), a property owner who contributed to the development of the street and other parts of Surry Hills³

In June 1873 Bennett sold part of this land, consisting of the subject site, to Surry Hills builder William Wagg.⁴ Wagg subsequently sold the land to Enos Napper, a market gardener living at Randwick, in October 1876. Development of the land is understood to have commenced during the second half of the 1870s. Napper sold it to freeholder Samuel Bridgement in July 1885. About three years later Bridgement sold the land to commercial traveller Carl Freidrich Riemenschneider.



- 3 Land acquired by Edward Bennett included the site of 2-14 Phelps Street (highlighted).
Source: HLRV NSW Certificate of Title Volume 4 Folio 48.

- 4 Development across the site of 2-14 Phelps Street in 1888. The name "Schnider" is inscribed on it rather than Riemenschneider. Development consisted of brick terrace houses and a pair of semi-detached houses.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Rygate & West Sheet 35, 1888.



¹ HLRV NSW Old Systems Title Book 20 Number 57
² HLRV NSW Old Systems Title Book 20 Number 57 and Certificate of Title Volume 4 Folio 48.
³ John Walter Ross, *The History of Collins Street, Surry Hills*, p.54 at https://shazbeige.com/pdf/Collins_Street_History.pdf, accessed 16 June 2025.
⁴ HLRV NSW Certificate of Title Volume 12 Folio 95.

In December 1892 Carl Riemenschneider transferred the property title to his wife Alice. Following her death in July 1894 at the age of 33⁵, the property passed back to him. He sold it to James Webber, described in title documents as a “gentleman”, in June 1901. Webber subsequently sold the property to Miss Ida Gilder in August 1911.⁶

The site of 2-14 Phelps Street was resumed by the Municipal Council of Sydney. The resumption of the western part of the site, consisting of 2-4 Phelps Street and 16-18 Alexander Street, was resumed on 6 May 1925 and gazetted two days later. The remainder of the site was resumed on 5 November 1926.⁷ Houses occupying the site were demolished and a children’s playground established in their place.



- 5 Photographs of the children’s playground taken during the 1930s showing children sitting near playground equipment (left) and the playground either before the equipment was installed or after the equipment was removed (right).
City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00055460 and Unique ID A-00015354

During World War II trenches providing shelter from air raids were excavated across the open space. Following the end of the war the trenches were filled in.

2.2 The John Carroll Kindergarten

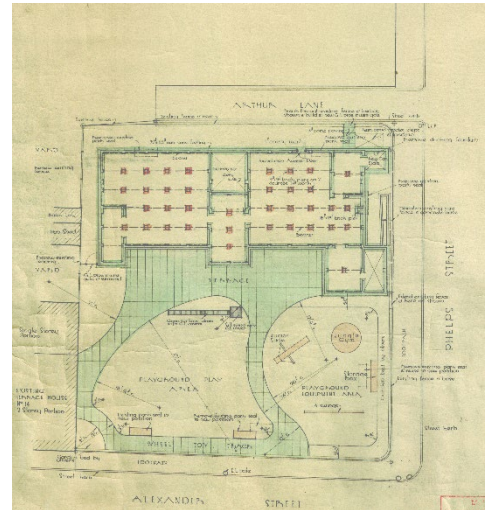
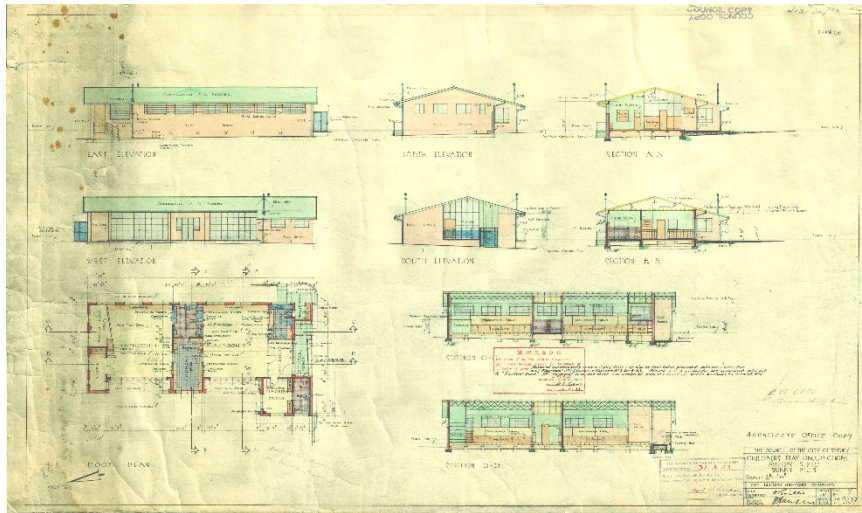
Architectural drawings describing what was termed a children’s play group centre signed by architect Albert Smillie were lodged with Council on 24 March 1953. The play group centre comprised a building located on the southern side of the site containing two playrooms separated by a locker room and lavatories and supported by a kitchen, storage spaces, teacher’s room and a raised play space. The building was extensively glazed on its southern and western sides to provide the interior with generous amounts of daylight. The glazing was set back and provided with deep roof overhangs. The rest of the site was given over to a carefully laid out playground that balanced areas for play equipment with paved areas.



- 6 Aerial photograph showing air raid shelters in the children’s playground.
Source: SIX Maps



⁵ Death notice, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1894, p.1.
⁶ HLRV NSW Certificate of Title Volume 271 Folio 197.
⁷ Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales 8 May 1925 p.2154; City of Sydney Unique ID A-01203480, Parks, Reserves and Playgrounds Register, 1811-1985.



- 7 Drawing describing the plan, elevations and sections through the kindergarten at 2-14 Phelps Street, 1953. The detail plan at right shows the footprint of the building and the layout of the playground on the western side of the site.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00548717.



- 8 Photographs of the new kindergarten reaching completion, September 1953 (left) and shortly after completion, March 1954 (right). Note the fencing along street boundaries.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00042717 and Unique ID A-00042863.



- 9 Left: the kindergarten building viewed from the playground, May 1954. The projecting wing contained the teacher's room and attached bathroom. Right: details of doors with highlight glazing over on the western side of the building. The doors were set well back and shaded by a deep roof overhang, supported by the exposed steel truss.
- Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00042906 and Unique ID A-00042907.



- 10 Two views of the kindergarten's interior, June 1954. The mezzanine shown in the photograph at right no longer exists.
- Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00042908 and Unique ID A-00042909.

Approval was given to name the facility the John Carroll Kindergarten on 22 June 1953. John James Carroll (1890-1957) was an alderman for Flinders Ward between December 1934 and December 1953. He was Deputy Lord Mayor in 1949-1950 and Council representative on the City of Sydney Eisteddfod Council between 1949 and 1954. Carroll was a member of several

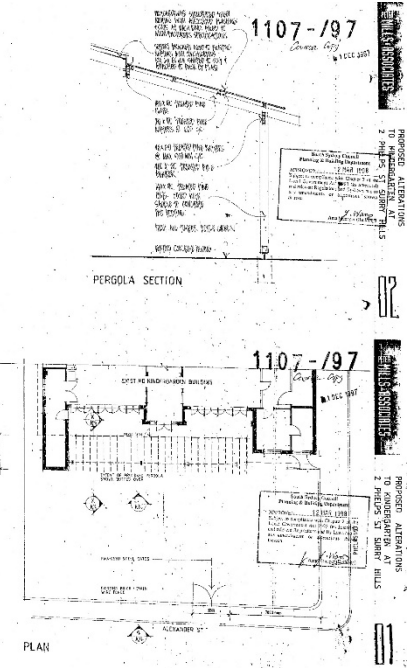
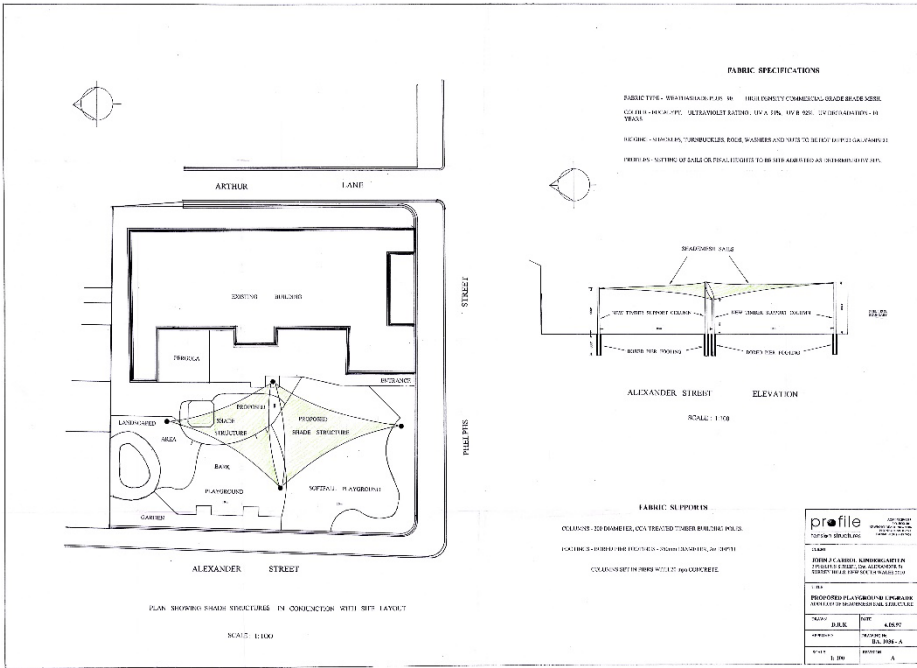
Council committees at various times and a Member of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board from 1939 to 1955. Prior to his election as alderman, he worked for the Council's Assets Department between 1909-1915 and 1931.⁸

It is understood that the kindergarten opened in August 1954. There are relatively few documented modifications that have taken place since the building was completed. They include the following, largely relating to the exterior of the building:

- Installation of a shade structure in the playground, 1997.
- Construction of a pergola across the western elevation of the building to shade the extensive areas of glazing and installation of new gates in fencing along the Alexander Street site boundary, 1997.
- Installation of baby changing facilities in the locker room between the two playrooms, 2000, which necessitated a limited amount of demolition.

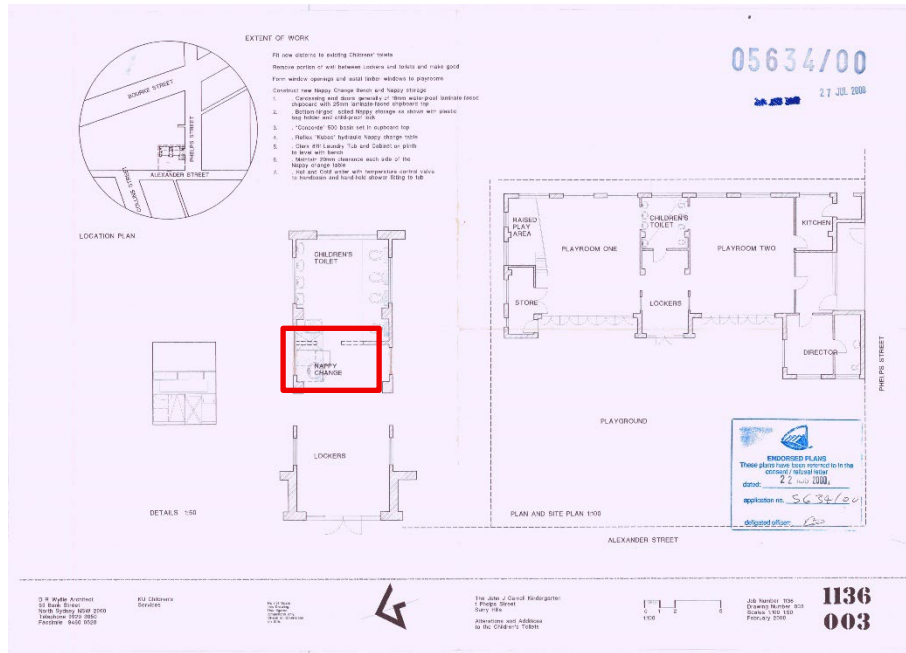


11 John James Carroll, 1942.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00006306.



- 12 Proposed works from 1997 included the installation of a shade sail over the playground (left) and construction of a pergola across the western elevation of the building (right).
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-01117539 and Unique ID A-00715642.

8 <https://www.sydneyaldermen.com.au/alderman/john-carroll/>, accessed 16 June 2025.



- 13 Drawing prepared for the installation of baby changing facilities, 2000.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00759258 with TKD Architects overlay.



- 14 The kindergarten photographed from the intersection of Alexander and Phelps Streets, 31 October 2010.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00072973 - Mark Stevens Collection.

3 Physical evidence

2-14 Phelps Street is a single storey brick building with a rectangular plan footprint and a shallow-pitched gabled roof located on the eastern side of the site. Its design shows the influence of what has been termed New Empiricism. This was a term coined by the English journal *The Architectural Review* in 1947 "to describe buildings produced in the 1940s and early 1950s that demonstrated a homely, unpretentious functionalist architecture, which relied on the honest use of local materials, colours and textures as well as familiar architectural elements such as gable roofs, small-scaled windows and accommodating porches without resorting to extremes of aesthetic abstraction." It was part of a "broader northern and Central European development dominant c 1930-1955 that combined modern movement structure and planning with materials and forms that asserted region and tradition." It was seen as a "regionally appropriate, crafted and humanist modernism" that was appreciated and interpreted by prominent Australian architects.⁹

The building is constructed with brick walls that are rendered internally. The roof is supported off steel trusses and comprises metal decking over timber rafters. The ceiling over the playrooms is raked to follow the pitch of the roof. Floors are constructed of timber. There is a deep recessed porch on the southern side of the building forming the principal entry to the building, while eaves on the eastern side of the building are relatively deep. The heads of the metal framed windows on the eastern and northern elevations are aligned with the eaves and have high sills. The pairs of doors and extensive glazing on the western side of the building is set back to provide sheltered conditions, which have been modified by the construction of the late 1990s pergola and the addition of corrugated metal decking over it. High windows in the eastern elevation would have assisted in cross ventilation of the playrooms. The playground area is heavily planted around its perimeter, effectively screening it from Alexander and Phelps Streets.



15 Eastern elevation of the kindergarten facing Phelps Street, showing the principal entry and porch.

9 Conrad Hamann, "New Empiricism" in Phillip Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.491-492.



- 16 Looking north along Phelps Street towards the kindergarten. Small windows along Arthur Lane provide light and air but also provide privacy within the building.



- 17 Looking south along Phelps Street towards the kindergarten. Planting in the kindergarten's playground is in the foreground. The palisade type fencing is not original.



- 18 The kindergarten viewed from Alexander Street. Planting on the site obscures views to the building.



- 19 Looking across the playground to the kindergarten. The shade structure and pergola (since covered by a roof) were probably installed during the second half of the 1990s.

Source:

<https://kindicare.com/childcare/centres/Australia/NSW/2010/surry-hills/ku-john-j-carroll-preschool>



- 20 Internal view looking to the northern end of the building. Compare to views in Figure 8 taken shortly after the building was completed.

Source:

<https://kindicare.com/childcare/centres/Australia/NSW/2010/surry-hills/ku-john-j-carroll-preschool>

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 1904.¹⁰ The family appears to have been of Scottish extraction.¹¹ 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.¹² 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.¹³ About three years later he married Ivy Hazel Martin.¹⁴ A son was born to the couple in March 1932.¹⁵

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 reinstated. 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 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 1950.¹⁶ 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. 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."¹⁷ Albert Smillie retired at the beginning of 1969. He died in March 1986, aged 82.



21 Albert Alexander Smillie. The photograph was taken during the 1950s.
Source: CSA Unique ID A-00016548.

¹⁰ Birth registration number 10127/1904, accessed at <https://familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au/lifelink/familyhistory/search/result?4>.

¹¹ "Obituary", *Williamstown Chronicle*, 28 June 1924, p.2.

¹² AIA

¹³ Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales, 'Private Advertisements,' Fri 29 Jul 1927 [Issue No.101], Page 3815.

¹⁴ 5904/1930

¹⁵ "Family Notices", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1932, p.10.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Biography supplied by City of Sydney - Interview transcript with Edward John Merewether, Trim 2019/007226

4.2 Development of kindergartens

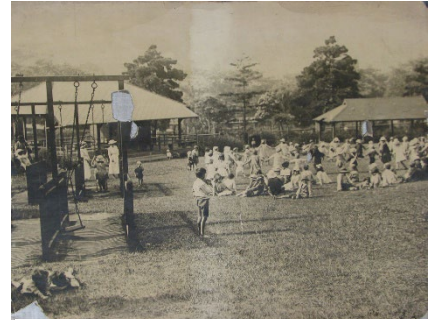
Social concerns for the disadvantaged during the 1890s were reflected in one way by the development of kindergartens, of which there were four in state schools by 1893. The Froebelian system of kindergarten education was introduced in whole or in part to over 40 other state schools in 1894. The formation of the Kindergarten Union the following year led to the introduction of free kindergartens in underprivileged areas and efforts to spread kindergarten principles into every school in NSW. With the easing of the depression during the second half of the 1890s kindergarten methods became increasingly popular in state schools.¹⁸

The first free kindergarten in Australia was an initiative of the Kindergarten Union of NSW, which was founded in 1895. It opened in Charles Street, Woolloomooloo in May 1896 and was followed not long after by kindergartens in Newtown and Surry Hills, which were regarded at the time as slum areas.¹⁹ What is understood to have been the first Municipal Council of Sydney initiative into child welfare occurred in the middle of 1912, when the Education Department approached it in regard to setting aside land in Victoria Park for a children's playground.²⁰ The playground was officially opened on 31 October 1913.²¹ It was referred to as a kindergarten playground and was superintended by a trained instructor.

Victoria Park was followed some years later by a kindergarten playground at Moore Park equipped with play equipment and a shelter, which was officially opened by the Lord Mayor on 25 July 1917. Its use was granted to the Kindergarten Union, which was able to benefit financially as the Council granted it the right to supply teas to golfers using the nearby golf course "as the profit made from this undertaking will be expended on children's welfare in the city."²² Additions to the small building at Moore Park were designed in 1924 by the City Architect's Department and officially opened the following year.²³

During 1922 the Council sought powers from the State government to resume land for conversion to children's playgrounds.²⁴ Consent was granted, and the site of 2-14 Phelps Street was amongst the parcels of land resumed during the 1920s. The Council continued to establish playgrounds during the 1930s.

The passage of the Local Government (Areas) Act in 1948 enabled the extension of the city's municipal boundaries in 1949 to incorporate the surrounding municipalities of Alexandria, Darlinghurst, Erskineville, Glebe, Newtown, Paddington, Redfern and Waterloo, all characterised by Labor-voting, low income-earning residents. A Labor Party majority in Council held sway for the next 19 years. The construction of buildings, structures and parks to improve the condition of residents reflected the social agendas of aldermen relating to their electorates and the loss of residential population there as the demography of Sydney changed. Many socially responsible endeavours were initiated by the City of Sydney in the 1950s. They were one part of wider



22 Victoria Park playground.

Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00022828.

¹⁸ Alan Barcan, *A Short History of Education in New South Wales* (Martindale Press, 1965), pp.159-160.

¹⁹ Hannah Lewi and David Nichols (editors), *Community: building modern Australia* (UNSW Press, 2010), p.55.

²⁰ "Playgrounds. Victoria Park Site", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June 1912, p.9; "Victoria Park. Site for Children's Playground", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1912, p.7.

²¹ "The Real Issue", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1913, p.12.

²² "Playgrounds. City Council Scheme", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 October 1924, p.17.

²³ The Kindergarten Union enjoyed a very positive relationship with the City Council during the 1930s. Several mayors and their wives took what was termed a "keen interest" in its Free Kindergarten work, while the Town Clerk, City Engineer and Council Officers gave the Union "courteous treatment at all times." (Kindergarten Union 40th Annual Report, 1935, p.4). Council provided playground maintenance and salaries associated with the work, exempted Kindergarten Union buildings from rates and taxes, and by the end of the 1930s (if not before) was providing an annual grant. (Kindergarten Union 44th Annual Report, 1939, p.7).

²⁴ Municipal Council of Sydney, *Proceedings*, 25 July 1922, Item 2990/22.

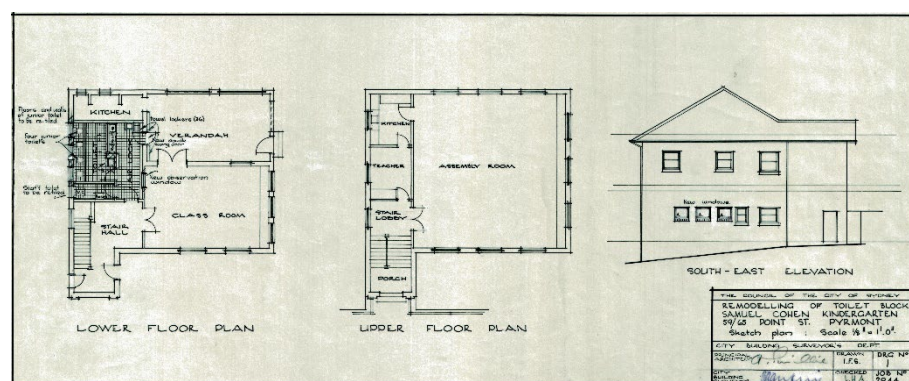
efforts to provide needed community amenities and services, which included welfare centres for the elderly, libraries, baby health centres, community halls and swimming pools.

By 1971 Council was subsidising nine kindergartens and two-day nurseries, which were operated by the Kindergarten Union and Day Nursery Association. It was responsible for seven supervised and 16 unsupervised playgrounds within the City of Sydney's boundaries.

Outside the boundaries of the City of Sydney, by the 1960s pre-school kindergartens were becoming a ubiquitous feature of early childhood, an accompaniment to rapid population growth in the post-war era. However, it is not clear how many were financed by the community or, apart from the City of Sydney, how many were funded by local councils. Ryde Council began planning to construct pre-school kindergartens in the mid-1940s. The first was at Eastwood, completed in 1948. Some funding came from the NSW Government. The Kindergarten Union was one recipient.

4.3 Architecture of kindergartens

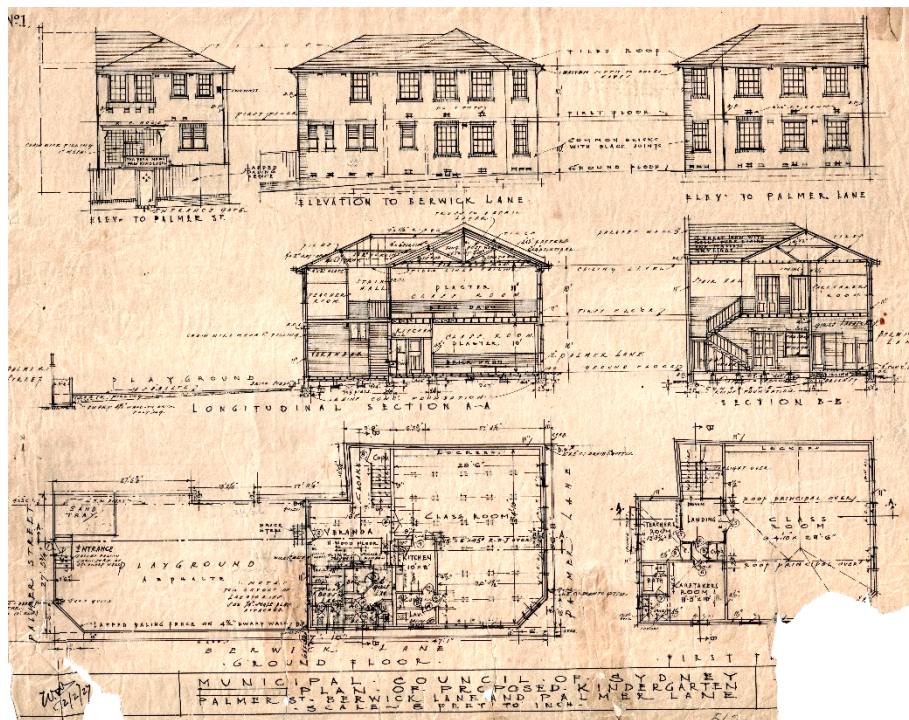
A purpose-designed kindergarten and hall at 222 Palmer Street, Darlinghurst, was designed and documented in the City Architect's Branch in 1927. It has not been ascertained if Albert Smillie was involved with the project. The completed building, known as the Frances Newton Memorial Free Kindergarten in the John Birt Memorial Hall, was formally handed over to the Kindergarten Union at the beginning of July 1928. It was contemporary with the Outpost Kindergarten at 59-65 Point Street, Pyrmont, designed by architects Peddle Thorp & Walker for the Kindergarten Union and approved in August 1926. Both buildings were simple, domestically scaled two storey brick buildings with hipped roofs containing classrooms and assembly rooms supported by ancillary spaces such as small kitchens and lavatories.²⁵ Outpost later became the Samuel Cohen Kindergarten. Both buildings have been demolished, the Frances Newton Kindergarten in the middle of 2018.



23 Alterations to the Samuel Cohen Kindergarten documented by the City Architect, 1961.

Source: City of Sydney Archives.

²⁵ City of Sydney Archives Building Application 777/26 and Unique ID A-00545126.

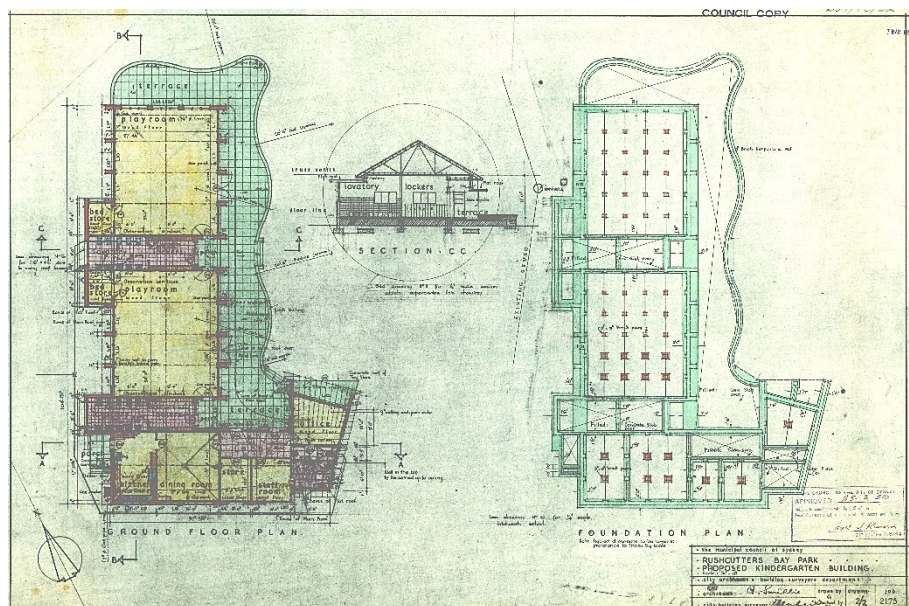


- 24 Architectural plans prepared by the City Architect for the John Birt Hall and Frances Newton Kindergarten, February 1927. Sketch proposal describing a preschool playground building at Camperdown Park, 1938. Source: City of Sydney Archives, Unique ID A-00545126.

The City of Sydney embarked on a program of kindergarten construction and had designed and built 15 kindergartens and day nurseries by 1965. They were restrained buildings designed in the prevailing Modernist aesthetic, tailored to meet strict budgets. Extensive areas of glass and deep eaves or verandahs provided cheerful bright interiors protected from the sun's worst effects. The following examples place the John Carroll Kindergarten into its context of kindergartens designed by the City of Sydney.

- Kindergarten, Rushcutters Bay Park, 7A Waratah Street, Rushcutters Bay, c.1952.**

The kindergarten is still operating under the auspices of the Kindergarten Union. The planning concept is close to the John Carroll Kindergarten, with two playrooms separated by amenities and enjoying cross ventilation. The building shares a similar New Empiricist aesthetic to John Carroll. It continues to function as a preschool and early childcare centre.

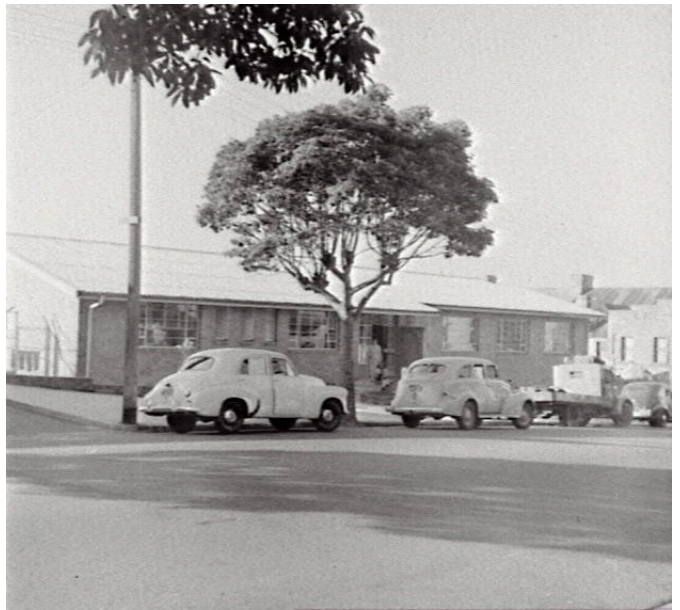


- 25 Left: plans of the Rushcutters Bay Kindergarten. Above: photograph of the building, 1956. Additional sun protection has been added. Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00575530 and A-00015364.

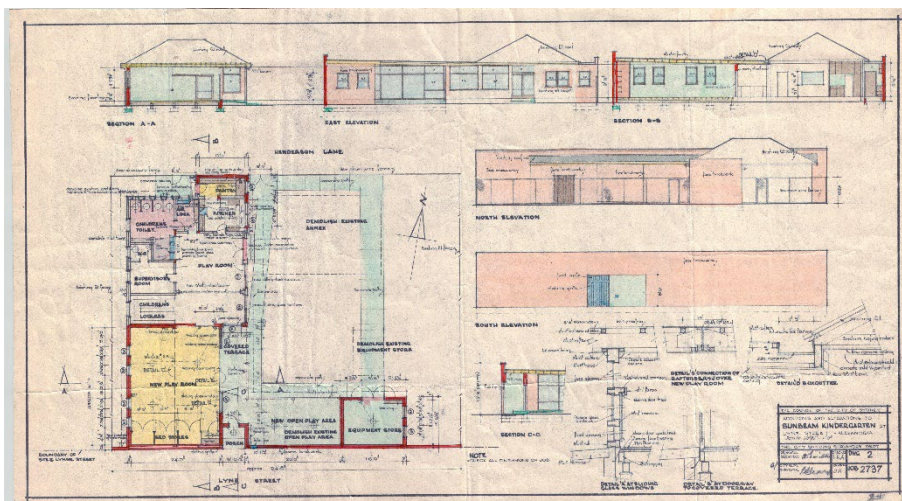
- **Kindergarten, Lander Street, Darlington, c.1954.** A photograph of the building shows a similar building form to the John Carroll Kindergarten – a rectangular single storey brick building with metal framed windows and a shallow pitched gabled roof covered by metal decking. It is understood the building no longer exists.
- **James Cahill Kindergarten, 7 Raglan Street, Waterloo.** Completed c.1955, still functioning as a Kindergarten Union preschool centre. The building shares several similarities with the John Carroll Kindergarten: face brick external walls, metal framed windows, extensive areas of glazing to playroom spaces, and shallow-pitched gabled roof.
- **Alterations and flat-roofed additions to the Sunbeam Kindergarten, Lyne Street, Alexandria, 1957.** An additional playroom and other spaces were added, giving two playrooms. The kindergarten is still operating.



26 Kindergarten in Lander Street, Darlington, May 1954.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00042900.

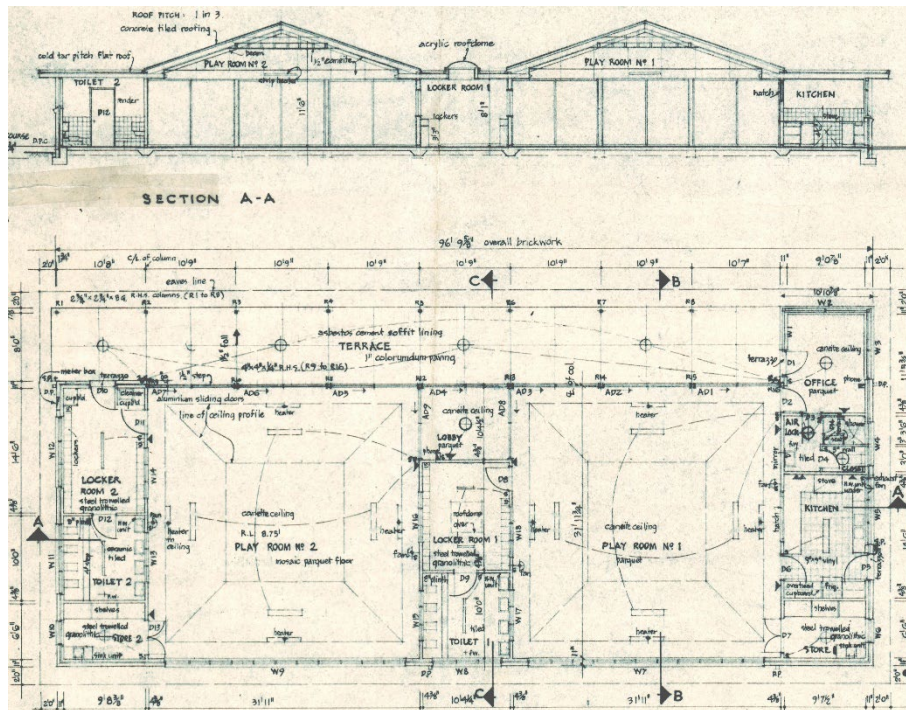


27 External views of the James Cahill Kindergarten, October 1955. The building is generally similar to the John Carroll Kindergarten in terms of architectural form, materials and glazing.
Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00043026 and Unique ID A-00043025.



28 Left: plans and elevations of the additions to the Sunbeam Kindergarten.
Above: photograph of the additions. The building demonstrated a restrained Modernist aesthetic.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.

- Hilda Booter Kindergarten, Jubilee Park, Glebe, 1965.** Although the aesthetic of this building had evolved from earlier kindergartens, its planning still conformed to their program of two playrooms separated by a block of amenities. The playrooms are expressed externally by separate pyramidal roofs and ceilings are lined to follow the rake of the roof planes. Extensive areas of glazing on the north-eastern side of the building are protected by a verandah extending the length of the building. The building still functions as a kindergarten.



February 1965

Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID
A- 00015363.

- Towards the end of 1906, the Kindergarten Union planned the establishment of the **Golden Fleece Kindergarten in Pine Street, Chippendale**. Officially opening in June 1907, it was largely financed by woolgrowers and initially housed in a former boot factory. In 1915 architects Peddle & Thorp designed a single storey building containing a large playroom with two small classrooms opening off it plus a teacher's room and lavatory accommodation. A small wing contained an equally small caretaker's flat.

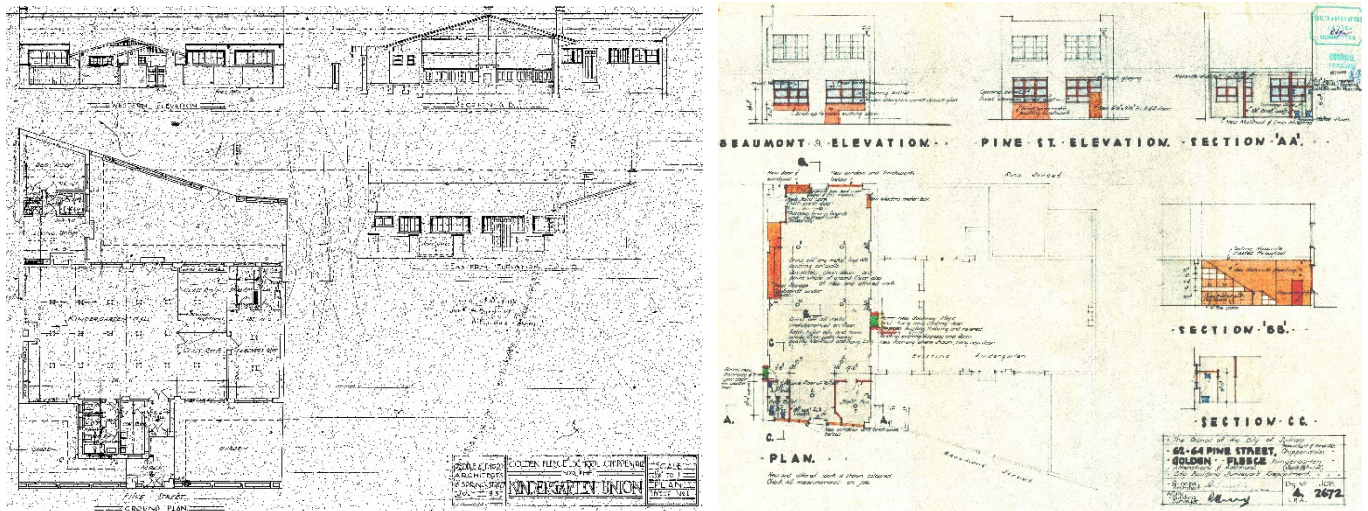
The building was completed the following year. The Municipal Council of Sydney resumed the two storey 1923 industrial building at 62-64 Pine Street in 1951 and completed the purchase of the Golden Fleece Kindergarten in 1955 following the suggestion of the Kindergarten Union.

Modifications to the kindergarten and the former industrial building, adapting part of it to kindergarten use, were carried out in 1957-1958. To the south of 62-64 Pine Street was a playground consisting of properties resumed by the Council in 1925/1926 and 1937. The 1916 Peddle & Thorp building has survived but was extensively modified. In 2010. It is part of the Chippendale Child Care Centre, since 2020 run by Sydney Day Nursery (SDN).



30 Looking north along Beaumont Street - the playground on land resumed by Council in 1925-1926 and 1937, beyond which is 62-64 Pine Street and part of the former Golden Fleece Kindergarten at 60 Pine Street, November 1981.

Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID
A- 00060687.



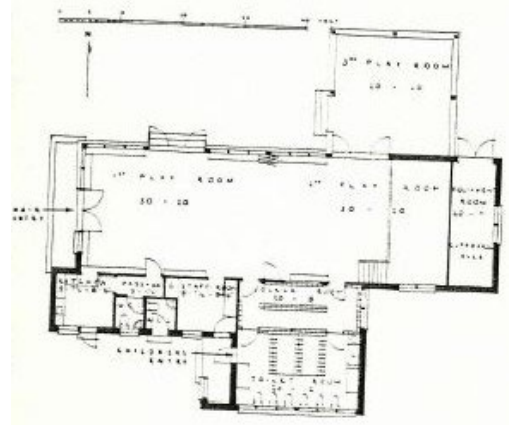
- 31 Left: Peddle & Thorp's drawing of the Golden Fleece Kindergarten at 60 Pine Street, 1915.
 Right: City Architect's drawing of modifications to the kindergarten building and 62-64 Pine Street, 1955.
 Source: City of Sydney Archives Unique ID A-00551826 and Unique ID A-00116842.

4.4 Some kindergartens outside the City of Sydney

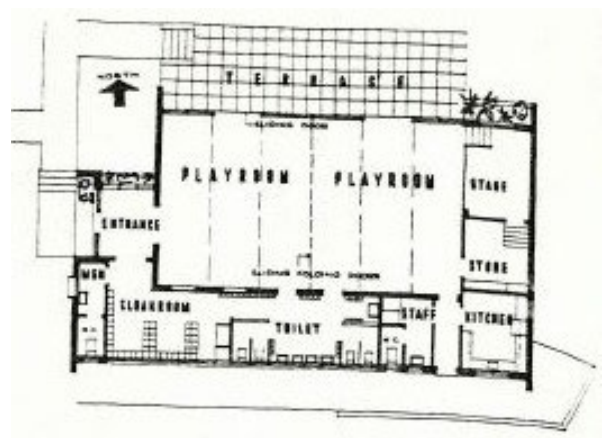
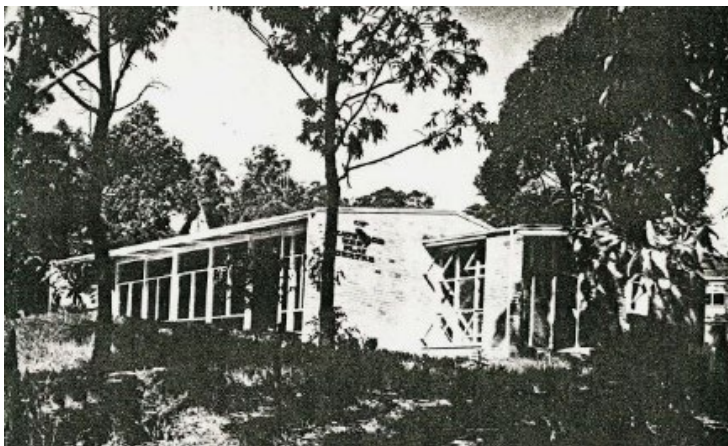
Regardless of where funding came from, some highly regarded kindergarten buildings were designed by prominent architects during the 1950s and 1960s. Eleanor Cullis-Hill designed two kindergartens for local community groups in Ku-ring-gai, at Turramurra (1961) and at Wahroonga (1954).²⁶ The latter, in Millewa Avenue, Wahroonga was a dual-purpose nursery school and hall and was entered for the prestigious Institute of Architects' Sulman Award in 1956. Its domestic scale, overall form and deep porch recall the John Carroll Kindergarten. The planning program was also similar, although the configuration of spaces differed from those of John Carroll. It is understood to have been modified but is still in use.

An informal Modernist kindergarten at 61 Dalrymple Avenue, Chatswood West designed by McConnel Smith & Johnson was constructed circa 1955. Its plan was not dissimilar to the kindergarten at Wahroonga, with service and ancillary spaces organised along two sides of the pair of playrooms. Externally it demonstrated a New Empiricist influence. It is understood to be still in use for the purposes it was designed. Architect Peter Muller designed a widely published kindergarten at Palm Beach. Originally established by community efforts in 1948 and housed in the local surf lifesaving club, it was relocated on Crown Land (Iluka Park). Construction was funded by the community, and the building was completed in 1961.²⁷ Its exterior reflected Muller's distinctive and individual approach to Modernist architectural design. It too is understood to be still in use.

26 Bronwyn Hanna, *Absence and Presence: a historiography of early women architects in New South Wales* (Doctor of Philosophy theses, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of NSW, 1999), p.281.
 27 "Palm Beach War Memorial Kindergarten" at <https://pbwba.org.au/newsletter-october-2022/>, accessed 28 August 2023.



32 The kindergarten at Wahroonga designed by Eleanor Cullis-Hill, 1954 (left), building plan (right).
Source: reproduced in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* – Douglas Baglin photograph; *Architecture in Australia* Volume 45 No. 4, 1956.



33 McConnel Smith & Johnson's kindergarten at West Chatswood., 1956



34 The kindergarten at Palm Beach designed by Peter Muller,
Source: State Library Victoria Identifier H91.244/3802, Peter Wille photograph.

In 1960 a public meeting was called to discuss the establishment of a Community Kindergarten in St Ives. The formation of the St Ives Preschool Kindergarten followed, and the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council leased some land in Garrick Road to the newly established association. Intensive fundraising activities were initiated and architects Collard, Clarke and Jackson were commissioned to design a building, completed in 1961. What emerged was described as “A charming innocence that is wholly suitable to the function pervades this rather perfect little pavilion with its exactly square plan, wide veranda [sic], and pyramid roof.”²⁸ It still functions as a pre-school kindergarten.



35 The kindergarten at St Ives designed by Collard Clarke & Jackson.

Source:

https://www.csec.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/image_viewer.htm?CSEC00602,4, David Moore photograph published in *Cross-section*, September 1962.

4.5 Conclusions

The John Carroll Kindergarten is one of several designed and constructed by the City of Sydney's Architectural Department during the 1950s and 1960s. Like the kindergartens designed by architects in private practice for local community groups in other parts of metropolitan Sydney, they are mostly still in use as pre-school facilities. Kindergartens designed by private practitioners for community groups demonstrated a high level of architectural resolution. Those designed for the City Council may not have had quite the same architectural freedom but were still convincing examples of the New Empiricist strand of Modernist architecture and were designed to provide light and open spaces protected from the sun by eaves overhangs, setbacks and the like. Their planning reflects a well-defined program of spaces and is similar to the private community buildings. They continue to serve as preschool and early childcare centres, generally under Kindergarten Union auspices.

The John Carroll Kindergarten is very representative of the buildings designed by Council's architects in terms of its planning, architectural expression and response to climatic conditions.

28 "St Ives Preschool Kindergarten" at http://www.stivespreschool.org.au/uploads/8/3/3/9/83397228/information_booklet_2016.pdf, accessed 28 August 2023; Robin Boyd, *The New Architecture* (Croydon, Vic., 1963), p.25.

5 Assessment of heritage significance

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 John Carroll Kindergarten at 2-14 Phelps Street is one of several that were designed and constructed by the City of Sydney during the 1950s and 1960s. Its site history, of a block of land that was resumed for the purposes of a children's playground and then developed as a kindergarten site, is not unusual.

2-14 Phelps Street does not meet the threshold for listing.

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).

2-14 Phelps Street is associated with Albert Alexander Smillie, who joined the Sydney Municipal Council's Architectural Branch as an architectural draftsman around 1924, registered as an architect in April 1926 and in September 1936 was promoted to the position of architectural assistant to the City Building Surveyor. In November 1949 Smillie was appointed the City of Sydney's Chief Architect and was responsible for the City's architectural branch. Smillie was involved with numerous Council projects, which included a number of kindergartens.

2-14 Phelps Street 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).

2-14 Phelps Street has aesthetic significance as a modest vernacular example of New Empiricist style architecture, which was a regional form of Modernist architecture that exploited regional design and construction techniques. The style was used extensively by the City of Sydney's architectural branch during the post-World War II period for buildings fulfilling a responsible social agenda.

The building is notable for the modulation of the building mass, disposition of fenestration and roof overhangs to emphasise entry and to control sun ingress, as well as provide thermal comfort through shading and cross ventilation.

2-14 Phelps Street meets this criterion 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.

There is some evidence that the John Carroll Kindergarten has social significance. A community celebration was held at the 60th anniversary of the kindergarten's opening in August 2014.²⁹ It continues to fulfil an important role within the local community. Further research may confirm this level of heritage significance.

2-14 Phelps Street 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).

Several kindergartens within the City of Sydney that are contemporary with 2-14 Phelps Street still fulfil the role for which they were designed. They have similar potential to yield information contributing to an understanding of the cultural history of the City of Sydney.

2-14 Phelps Street does not meet the threshold for listing at a State or 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).

2-14 Phelps Street is not rare. There are several contemporary kindergartens fulfilling their original purpose in the City of Sydney.

2-14 Phelps Street does not meet the threshold for listing at a State or 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.

2-14 Phelps Street is representative of the kindergartens designed by the City of Sydney during the post-World War II period. This is because of its architectural design, planning and selection of materials. It is also representative more generally of kindergartens designed by architects in private practice for community groups in other parts of metropolitan Sydney.

2-14 Phelps Street meets the threshold for listing at a Local level.

5.1 Statement of significance

The KU John J Carroll Preschool at 2-14 Phelps Street, Surry Hills is one of several kindergarten buildings that were designed and constructed by the City of Sydney during the 1950s and 1960s.

²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/KUChildrensServices/posts/ku-john-j-carroll-preschool-celebrated-60-years-of-high-quality-service-on-sunda/716425881746448/>

The building is associated with Albert Alexander Smillie, the City of Sydney's Chief Architect responsible for the City's architectural branch. Smillie was involved with numerous Council projects from the 1930s to the 1960s, which included several kindergartens.

2-14 Phelps Street has aesthetic significance as a modest vernacular example of New Empiricist style architecture, which was a regional form of Modernist architecture and was used extensively by the City of Sydney's architectural branch during the post-World War II period for buildings fulfilling a responsible social agenda. It is notable for the modulation of the building mass, disposition of fenestration and roof overhangs to emphasise entry and to control thermal comfort through shading and cross ventilation. The building is considered to be representative of the kindergartens designed by the City of Sydney during the post-World War II period and has retained a relatively high level of integrity.

There is evidence that the KU John Carroll Preschool has social significance, which would be confirmed by further research.

6 Conclusions

2-14 Phelps Street, Surry Hills fulfils the NSW Heritage Council's criteria for historical association, aesthetics and representativeness at a local level. It is also likely to fulfil the criterion for social significance. Because of this it warrants listing as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.