

Item Details

Name
Group of Workers' Cottages

SHR/LEP/S170

LEP #

Address
23,25,27,29,31,33,37,39,43,45,47&49 Richards Avenues RIVERSTONE
NSW 2765

Local Govt Area
Blacktown

Local Aboriginal Land Council
Unknown



Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Complex / Group	Residential buildings (private)	Cottage

All Addresses

Addresses								
Records Retrieved: 1								
Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
23,25,27,29,31,33,37,39,43,45,47&49	Richards Avenues	RIVERSTONE/NSW/2765	Blacktown	Unknown	St Matthew	Cumberland	Unknown	Primary Address

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The significance of the Former Riverstone meatworks housing precincts relates to the strong association with Benjamin Richards who was recognised for his development of a vertically integrated business raising livestock, shipping them to his works for slaughter, processing then railed off to Sydney for sale. This association continued through Benjamin's son, Robert, who formed the Riverstone Meatworks Company and subsequently with the Angliss Group of Companies including the Vestey family who, during the 20th Century, owned the largest meat holdings in Australia.

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts have historic significance at the local level because they provide a highly visible reminder of the close association between the workers and the industry they served. The provision of such a large number of workers' housing reflected how the industry operated: i.e. slaughtering at night hence the need to provide accommodation close to the workplace.

They provide evidence of the strong link with the early development of the meatworks and Riverstone Township from 1878 and as a means to attract employees to the meatworks. The location of the meatworks beside the railway line at Riverstone provided a transport link to ship freshly killed meat to Sydney then the international market.

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts retains its significance as a collection of worker housing. Although most cottages are not individually identified as aesthetically significant, this group of 21 cottages provide a record of the style of simple workers cottages constructed between the periods of 1900 to 1942. Some of the cottages are possibly of pattern book design origin. The timber detailing and decorative internal finishes of these buildings are still sufficiently evident to provide a considerable record of the detailing and style contemporary with the era of construction.

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precinct is a representative collection of worker housing still extant as a group in Riverstone providing a range of fine examples of varying 20th century style of cottages constructed between 1900 and 1942. Within these two precincts further stylistic groupings and individual items are evident.

The social significance of the workers and their cottages remains a strong feature of Riverstone and the local community today. The development of the Riverstone Township and community has strong links with the development of the meatworks. The establishment of the first school and other local community services at Riverstone originated from the needs of the meatworkers' families.

The "Butchers Row" of cottages, originally constructed to provide housing for the butchers who slaughtered at night, encouraged close social interaction between the Riverstone meatworkers and their families who worked and lived in these cottages.

The construction of the Manager's cottage beside the butchers housing reinforced the strong links between the workers and the management. The construction of the tennis court to the rear of the house encouraged worker socialisation. There also developed a pride in the cottages amongst the workers which was exemplified in the gardens the workers established. The meatworks is one of the few industries in Western Sydney to provide housing for their employees. The continuation of the provision of workers housing from the 1878 to 1942, including during WW2 when materials were scarce, is rare. The meatworks and their workers played a part within the Riverstone community for over a century.

There are still several descendants of the Strachan family, early settlers of the district still in occupation in the cottages. Many of the families and their descendants still reside in the Riverstone area. The current occupants in several instances are former employees of the meatworks or the family descendants of former employees. These and some more recent tenants retain that sense of pride in their homes.

(Edds & Associates)

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts have historic significance at the local level because they provide a highly visible reminder of the close association between the workers and the industry they served. The provision of such a large number of workers' housing reflected how the industry operated: i.e. slaughtering at night hence the need to provide accommodation close to the workplace.

They provide evidence of the strong link with the early development of the meatworks and Riverstone Township from 1878 and as a means to attract employees to the meatworks. The location of the meatworks beside the railway line at Riverstone provided a transport link to ship freshly killed meat to Sydney then the international market.

(Edds & Associates)

Criteria b)

Historical Association Significance

The significance of the Former Riverstone meatworks housing Precincts relates to the strong association with Benjamin Richards who was recognised for his development of a vertically integrated business raising livestock, shipping them to his works for slaughter, processing then railed off to Sydney for sale. This association continued through Benjamin's son, Robert, who formed the Riverstone Meatworks Company and subsequently with the Angliss Group of Companies including the Vestey family who, during the 20th Century, owned the largest meat holdings in Australia.

(Edds & Associates)

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts retains its significance as a collection of worker housing. Although most cottages are not individually identified as aesthetically significant, this group of 21 cottages provide a record of the style of simple workers cottages constructed between the periods of 1900 to 1942. Some of the cottages are possibly of pattern book design origin. The timber detailing and decorative internal finishes of these buildings are still sufficiently evident to provide a considerable record of the detailing and style contemporary with the era of construction.
(Edds & Associates)

Criteria d)

Social/Cultural Significance

The social significance of the workers and their cottages remains a strong feature of Riverstone and the local community today. The development of the Riverstone township and community has strong links with the development of the meatworks. The establishment of the first school and other local community services at Riverstone originated from the needs of the meatworkers' families.

The "Butchers Row" of cottages, originally constructed to provide housing for the butchers who slaughtered at night, encouraged close social interaction between the Riverstone meatworkers and their families who worked and lived in these cottages.

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(Edds & Associates)

Criteria g)

Representative

The former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts is a representative collection of worker housing still extant as a group in Riverstone providing a range of fine examples of varying 20th century style of cottages constructed between 1900 and 1942. Within these two precincts further stylistic groupings and individual items are evident.
(Edds & Associates)

Integrity/Intactness

High

Owners

Records Retrieved: 0

Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Date Ownership Updated
No Results Found		

Description

Designer

Builder/Maker

Physical Description

Updated

23-49 Richards Avenue are a group of Inter-War cottages built to house workers at the former Riverstone meatworks.

23 and 25 Avenue is fibro cottages with single and paired double hung windows and a roof of corrugated metal.

27 Richards Avenue is a weatherboard cottage with a hipped roof of corrugated metal. Windows are groups of casement sashes and the front door is glazed.

31, 33, 37, 43 and 49 Richards Avenue are asymmetrical weatherboard cottages with a hipped and gabled roof of corrugated metal. The windows facing the street are casements with top lights. 2 over 2 pane double hung windows are on the sides of the house.

29, 39, 45 and 47 are Inter-War gabled cottages clad with weatherboards and with fibro sheeting to the gables. The roof is clad with corrugated metal. Windows are groups of casement sashes with top lights.

Physical Condition

Updated 12/16/2015

Fair

Modifications And Dates

Further Comments

Current Use

Residential

Former Use

Residential

Listings

Listings

			Records Retrieved: 2		
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Local Environmental Plan	Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015	I90	7/7/2015 12:00:00 AM	430	
Local Environmental Plan	Amend No 143		4/12/2002 12:00:00 AM	72	2262

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 0

Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
No Results Found					

History

The history of these cottages is linked to the development of Riverstone Meatworks.

Benjamin Richards purchased over 679 acres of land at Riverstone from A H McCulloch in 1878. Richards was a major buyer of cattle and had a network of pastoral stations including land on the Hunter River, Liverpool Plains, and Barwon River and at Milbrodale. The Riverstone land provided access to the newly built railway so that he could transport freshly killed meat to Sydney and other districts. It was also on the livestock route from his Hunter River and Liverpool Plains land. Eastern Creek and South Creek also provided water for processing the meat and washing down.

Construction of the meatworks began with a beef house closely followed by a mutton house. A railway siding was constructed in 1879. Nearby land was subdivided in 1881 and formed the core of the village of Riverstone. Despite this and other subdivisions, workers at Richards’ meatworks complained of a lack of nearby accommodation. By the mid-1880s it appears that Richards had constructed five cottages to begin to address this problem. A manager’s cottage 17 Richards Avenue was built in 1900. In 1901, nine cottages were recorded in "Butcher’s Row", now Richards Avenue.

Richards’s meatworks had become a key player in the local and export meat industry by the time Richards died in 1898. The meatworks then had three slaughter houses, engine room, boiler shed, tallow shed, bone shed, stables, implement shed, cooper’s shed, Blacksmith’s shop and twelve cottages of about four rooms each.

Benjamin’s son, Robert, assumed control of the meatworks after his father’s death. The business was known as Riverstone Meatworks and was managed by B. Richards & Co. Following the death of Robert in 1902, B. Richards & Sons Limited was formed to carry on his business.

Riverstone Meatworks was sold to the Angliss Group in 1919. In 1920, the property was transferred to the Riverstone Meat Co. Ltd. It was then purchased by the Vestey family of Britain through their company W Weddel and Co Ltd. A new meatworks was constructed in 1971-73 and the old works demolished. Smorgon Meat Group purchased the works around 1992 and closed it.

A number of the surviving weatherboard cottages are similar to pre-fabricated cottages available from George Hudson & Sons around 1910, although have different floor layouts. Cottages at the north end of Richards Avenue appear to date from the late 1920s.

In 1934, fourteen dwellings are recorded in Richards Avenue including the manager’s residence and the chief engineer’s house. 1936 saw the construction of five new weatherboard cottages including one for the assistant manager.

Two cottages (19 and 23 Richards Avenue) were demolished in 1941. Another two were built the following year and permission was given to build five more. At least three of these were built in 1942-3. A new railway siding built in 1947 led to three cottages being shifted to the rear.

The Smorgon group painted the houses in the 1990s before selling the property to Road masters. A number of the older houses were demolished around that time.

The likely dates of construction for the cottages are as follows:

- 1, 3 and 5: c.1942
- 7: 1920s
- 17: c.1900
- 23-25: c.1941
- 27: 1936
- 29, 39, 45 and 47: 1936
- 31, 33, 37, 43 and 49: c.1922

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 5

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Unknown
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Unknown
3. Economy	Transport	Transport and its impact on urbanism
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Rural Industry
3. Economy	Industry	Rural Industry

Management Summary

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 5

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
Blacktown Heritage Study			1995		(not stated)
Blacktown Heritage Study			1988		Jonathan Falk Planning Consultants in association with Rodney Jensen and Assoc.s
Heritage Study of the North Western sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner and Associates
Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner & Associates in association with Max Kelly and Elizabeth Vines
Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner & Associates Pty Ltd

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 1

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	Graham Edds & Associates	2002	Former Riverstone Meatworks Housing Precincts - Conservation Management Plan	

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Local Government	Blacktown City Council	1140102

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