

Heritage Inventory Sheet

Item Name	Everley Park		
Recommended Name	Melita Stadium and Native Vegetation		
Site Image			
Address	1 Everley Road, Chester Hill NSW 2163		
Lot/Section/DP	1	-	222670
	B	-	415520
Draft Cumberland LEP ID	I28		
Former LEP ID	I34 (Parramatta LEP)		
Heritage Conservation Area	Not included		
Date Updated	March 2020		
Significance Level	LOCAL		
Site Type	Level 1	Landscape	
	Level 2	Parks/Garden/Tree	

Curtilage Map



Statement of Significance

Everley Park, which comprises of Melita Stadium and Native Vegetation, has local heritage significance for its historic, social, scientific, representative and rarity values. The Park is largely dominated by Melita Stadium, constructed between the late 1980s and early 1990s. The stadium is of historical significance as the home ground for Parramatta Football Club (FC), formerly known as the Parramatta Eagles and earlier, as the Parramatta Melita Eagles. The team 'Parramatta Melita Eagles' was established by Maltese migrants in 1956 after the amalgamation of the Malta Eagles and the Melita Soccer Club. The continued use of the club, in its various reiterations demonstrates a strong social connection to the local sporting community which have continued to support the club.

The Park is significant for its natural heritage values, with the park retaining valuable strands of native vegetation. The Cumberland Plain bushland has been extensively cleared since European settlement. The regeneration of vegetation along the Duck River reserve is historically associated with the Federal Government's revived interest in Australian native planting in the 1970s. The revegetation of the landscape has assisted the conservation of threatened species and ecological communities crucial to maintaining the unique biodiversity of the Cumberland Plain. The park contains an assemblage of 264 native plant species, representative of the type of vegetation once located across the Eastern Cumberland Plain. It also contains a stand of Wattle *Acacia Pubescens* which is in danger of extinction, a highly unusual occurrence of a stand of Grey Gum *E. Punctata* (in relation to the outcrop of Minchinbury sandstone), and an unusually large number of 51 native grass species. It is also relatively free from weeds and remarkably intact. The conservation of the Duck River reserve, which Everley Park forms a part of, is also associated with local Auburn resident Tony Price, who founded the 'Friends of Duck River Reserve' and was an active advocate for the biodiversity conservation of the area.

Criteria Assessment	
a) Historic	The stadium is of historical significance as the home ground for Parramatta FC, formerly known as the Parramatta Eagles and earlier, as the Parramatta Melita Eagles. The team 'Parramatta Melita Eagles' was established by Maltese migrants in 1956 after the amalgamation of the Malta Eagles and the Melita Soccer Club. The regeneration of vegetation along the Duck River reserve, including land known as Everley Park, is historically associated with the Federal Government's revived interest in Australian native planting in the 1970s.
b) Associative	The conservation of the Duck River reserve is associated with local Auburn resident Tony Price, who founded the 'Friends of Duck River Reserve' and was an active advocate for the conservation of the area.
c) Aesthetic/Technical	The item does not meet this criterion.
d) Social	The continued use of the club, its various reiterations demonstrates a strong social connection to the local sporting community which have continued to support the club.
e) Scientific	The Park is significant for its natural heritage values, with the Park retaining valuable strands of native vegetation. The Cumberland Plain bushland has been extensively cleared since European settlement. The regeneration of vegetation along the Duck River reserve is historically associated with the Federal Government's revived interest in Australian native planting in the 1970s. The revegetation of the landscape has assisted the conservation of threatened species and ecological communities crucial to maintaining the unique biodiversity of the Cumberland Plain.
f) Rarity	The Park contains a stand of Wattle Acacia Pubescens which is in danger of extinction, a highly unusual occurrence of a stand of Grey Gum E. Punctata (in relation to the outcrop of Minchinbury sandstone), and an unusually large number of 51 native grass species. It is also relatively free from weeds and remarkably intact.
g) Representativeness	The Park contains an assemblage of 264 native plant species, representative of the type of vegetation once located across the Eastern Cumberland Plain. It is also relatively free from weeds and remarkably intact.

Physical Description

The Park comprises an area of open park space and remnant bushland located along the west bank of Duck River, between Everley Road, Chester Hill and Melita Stadium. The site contains a large assemblage of native vegetation types, characterised by diverse plant communities of Open Forest, Grass Woodland, Open Heath and Scrubland.

A portion of the land has been cleared for the inclusion of a sporting field, called Melita Stadium. The stadium features a main grandstand and low-scale seating around the building. The grandstand appears to have been built between the late 1980s and early 1990s, and has been refreshed more recently, possibly c.2010. The Melita Stadium has an asphalted carpark, concrete wall with a steel gate and a small club house behind the stadium.

Overall, the condition of the stadium and parkland is considered good.

Condition	Good	Fair	Poor
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Alterations and Additions

- Revegetation of Duck River in the 1970s
- Construction of the Melita Stadium grandstand between late 1980s and early 1990s
- Stadium refresh c.2010

The plantings and grandstand are well maintained. The site has high integrity as a result.

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

Historical Notes

Construction years	1970s
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Duck River Reserve

The trees along Duck River were most likely planted in the 1970s, when a revived interest in Australian native planting was expressed in the greening much of Sydney's inner west areas by the Federal Labor Government. Today, the native vegetation on this site makes a notable contribution to the landscape and contributes towards a well vegetated corridor along the banks of Duck Creek where several walking tracks have been established.

In the recent past, the conservation of the Duck River catchment also included the interest of local residents who have a keen interest in the ecology of the Cumberland Plain bushland. In 2013, a journal article in *Cunninghamia* Vol.1, No.1, by Alison Hewitt titled 'Revisiting Tony Price's (1979) account of the native vegetation of Duck River and Rookwood Cemetery, western Sydney', was written which discusses the work of Tony Price, a local Auburn resident who studied the remnant species along the Duck River:

*In the late 1970s, local Auburn resident G A (Tony) Price, recognised the value of these remnants both for the species they held and the clues they could give to past vegetation patterns, spent three years surveying and collecting plants in the area. He compiled an extensive list of the existing plant species, recorded ecological observations, and interpolated them into a picture of the landscape and vegetation of the district at the time of European settlement, in his unpublished account *The Vegetation of Duck River and Rookwood Cemetery, Auburn*.*

He was the founding member of the 'Friends of Duck River Reserve' whose activities included: petitioning for interpretative signage; instigating fencing of the area to protect it from minibike riders and overflow parking at the Melita Soccer Stadium; gaining funding for the removal of old car bodies from the reserve; ensuring the retention of trees along the riverbanks; propagating local species and undertaking bush regeneration work.

Tony Price conducted his fieldwork in 1976, 1977 and 1978 and completed his written account in 1979. He states that he studied the Duck River site most intensively. He collected voucher specimens, utilised the limited number of published field guides that were available at that time and took specimens to the identification counter at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney for assistance. He recorded abundance estimates on all species, coding them as common (X), occasional (O) or rare (R) but did not record a decision rule as to how species were assigned into these abundance classes. He carefully recorded the habitat/s in which each species was found, dividing these into his eight 'microenvironments': 1. low woodland, Duck River; 2. ti-tree and eucalypt scrub; 3. grasslands; 4. exposed soils and subsoils; 5. drainage lines, edges of permanent sheets of water, creeks etc.; 6. permanent and transient sheets of water; 7. graves, Rookwood cemetery; and 8. dumped soil, edges of roads and tracks. Price was also interested in the ecological processes that were occurring in the vegetation and made notes on the apparent regeneration and establishment requirements of species: their light and shade tolerances and responses to waterlogging, drought, fire and soil disturbance.

Based largely on his surveys of the remnant native vegetation at Duck River and Rookwood Cemetery, Price reconstructed a picture of pre-European vegetation for the Auburn district. He also drew from his observations of the 'scattered, veteran eucalypts' of the State hospital grounds at Lidcombe, the Carnarvon Golf Course at Berala, and various parks and yards immediately east and west of these

sites. He incorporated his knowledge of local land use and fire history and compared his conclusions on the pre-European vegetation with those postulated earlier by Pidgeon (1941) and Kartzoff (1969).

Melita Stadium

The football team known as the Parramatta Eagles, better known as Parramatta Melita, was established by Maltese migrants in 1956 after the amalgamation of the Malta Eagles and the Melita Soccer Club. Their first season was played in 1957. Melita Eagles joined the NSW Soccer Federation along with higher profile clubs such as Hakoah, APIA Leichhardt & St George who were part of the original breakaway movement from the old NSW Soccer Football Association.

In 1962, they underwent a name change to Melita Eagles-Newtown and played their home games at Fraser Park, Marrickville. By 1967 they had reached the top tier of football in New South Wales (NSW). Whilst playing in the National Soccer League (NSL) the team name was changed to Parramatta Eagles in accordance with demands by the ASF to remove ethnic origins from club names. The Parramatta Eagles competed in the A-league, known as the NSL for a number of years. They first competed in the 1984 season after finishing as Premiers in NSW in 1983, and again in 1989. The Parramatta Eagles remained in the NLS until 1995.

Melita Stadium was constructed sometime between the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 2000, a five-year partnership was established with the Manchester United Football Club to run an Academy from Melita Stadium. Melita Stadium is the home of the former NSL club Parramatta Eagles, now known as Parramatta FC Eagles and Parramatta Lady Hawks.

A new partnership was formed between (PMESC) Melita Eagles Sports Club & (GDSFA) Granville & Districts Soccer Football Association, creating Parramatta FC. Parramatta FC gained promotion back into the NSW Premier League in 2011.

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

5. The heritage curtilage for this item should be revised/reduced.	10. Maintain the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	
	11. The condition of this item is poor. Condition and maintenance should be monitored.	

Other recommendations and/or comments:

- None.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number
Heritage Act – State Heritage Register	N/A	-
Local Environmental Plan	Everley Park	I28
Heritage Study	Everley Park	I28
National Trust Australia Register	N/A	-

Previous Studies

Type	Author	Year	Title
Heritage Study	Extent Heritage Pty Ltd	2019	Cumberland LGA Heritage Study
Heritage Review	National Trust (Parramatta Branch)	2004	Parramatta Heritage Review
Heritage Study	Meredith Walker	1993	City of Parramatta Heritage Study

Other References

- <http://www.parramattaafc.com.au/our-club/history/club-history-since-1952.aspx>
- Hewitt, A 2013, 'Revisiting Tony Price's (1979) account of the native vegetation of Duck River and Rookwood Cemetery, western Sydney' in *Cunninghamia* Volume 13, No.1, pp 25-124.

Limitations

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

Additional Images



View north to entrance to Melita Stadium.



View east to main grandstand at Melita Stadium.



View towards main grandstand.



Melita playing fields viewed north-west.



View to signage at Duck River Reserve.



View west along the Duck River Reserve.



View south from Duck River Reserve showing Melita stadium in the background.



View west along Duck River Reserve.