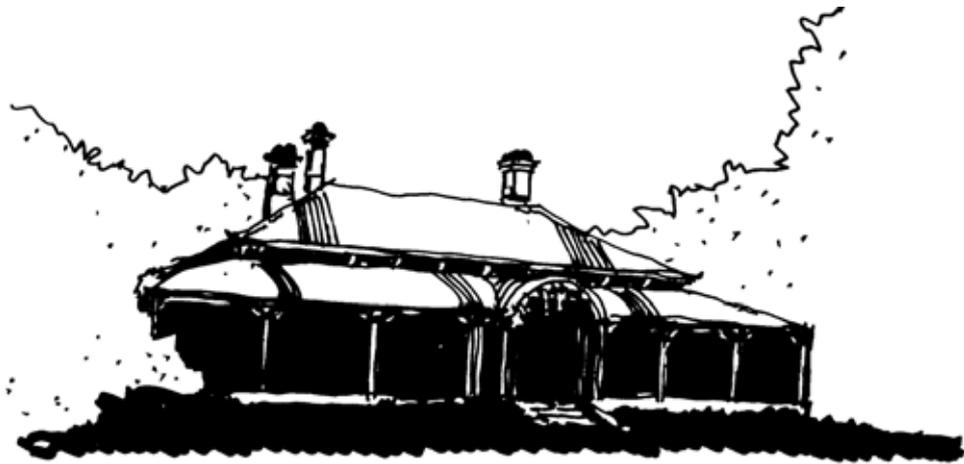


NEWTOWN
HERITAGE AND CHARACTER STUDY
2006



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2006

Prepared for the
Toowoomba City Council

by

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in association with
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

In the past nine years, Toowoomba City Council has commissioned a number of heritage studies. In 1994, a historical survey of Russell Street's buildings and the street itself were prepared. In 1995 and 1996, the Inner Residential Area Heritage Study and the Toowoomba 1996 Heritage Inventory assessed part of the Newtown Area in the context of the broader inner city residential area. Council and the community recognises that the Newtown area needs a detailed assessment of its local character and cultural heritage values.

This project will provide a survey and assessment of significant buildings and places in the Newtown area, along with advice about the appropriate regulatory framework needed to conserve identified places of cultural heritage significance.

The expected outcomes of the study are:

- A cultural heritage study of the Newtown Area (as shown on the attached map) that identifies significant places and valuable features in a format that can be updated and used by other organisations and interested parties; and
- Advice about the appropriate regulatory framework necessary to ensure the development of and around identified places is sympathetic.

The heritage and character study of Newtown will build on the Inner Residential Area Heritage Study 1995/1996 and the Toowoomba 1996 Heritage Inventory. The project consists of two parts.

In the first part of the project the major tasks are:

1. Prepare a contextual study of the Newtown area based on, but not limited to, the information contained in the Inner Residential Area Heritage Study 1995/1996 and the Toowoomba 1996 Heritage Inventory.
2. Undertake a field survey of the physical evidence of the Newtown area identifying its key characteristics and potential items of heritage significance; and
3. Prepare an inventory with each item of potential heritage significance separately recorded on a standard inventory form based on the forms used in the Toowoomba 1996 Heritage Inventory.

In the second part of the project the major task is:

1. Recommend strategies to conserve the character and heritage of the study area and ways to resolve conflicts. These strategies may form the basis of amendments to Council's Planning Scheme.

The scope of the study is limited by currently-available resources. This has meant that historical research of individual places does not generally form part of this study



nor does individual statements of significance. Where places have been previously assessed by other heritage agencies, this has been utilised, and, for some places, the Toowoomba Historical Society has provided background historical information. Thus, the use of the term "potential" heritage significance refers to the need for further detailed research and assessment of places to be carried out as part of the conservation management process.

Because of the urbanised nature of the Newtown area, the extent of natural environment heritage features is negligible. The study deals almost exclusively with issues of European cultural heritage focussing on the built environment.

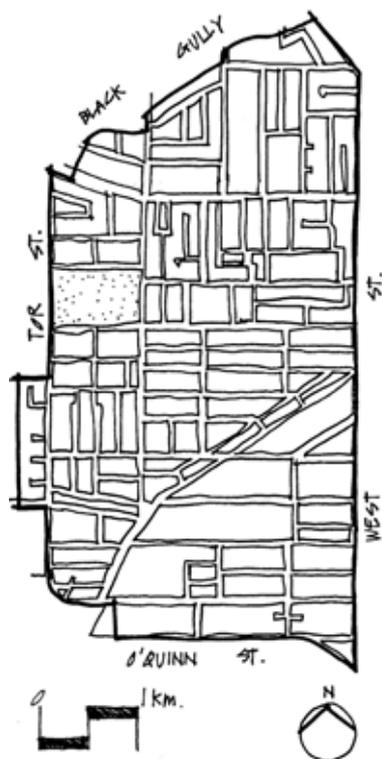
Due to their highly-specialised nature, Indigenous cultural heritage issues are not dealt with in this study but that is not to say that there are not issues of Indigenous cultural heritage to be addressed in Toowoomba.

Generally, no attempt was made to gain access to privately-owned sites for the inspection of building interiors.

1.2 STUDY AREA

The study area consists of part of the inner western residential area of Toowoomba known as the suburb of Newtown. The areas between West Street and Holberton Street were previously studied in the 1995 Inner Residential area Heritage Study and parts of this area have been under character protection controls for some time.

The current study boundaries better represents the suburb as an entity bounded by the Mort Estate to the east, Rockville and Wilsonton to the north and Harristown to the south. The present suburb of Newtown extends further west than the study area's Tor Street boundary but this area contains mainly post-1970s housing development which is not the focus of this study.



1.3 STUDY TEAM

The study team consisted of Ivan McDonald and Kathleen Miller of Ivan McDonald Architects and Stephanie Keays, Kathryn Waters and Katrina Walters of CKD Architects. Ivan McDonald and Stephanie Keays were in charge of the study in their capacity as heritage advisors to the Toowoomba City Council. Kathleen Miller researched and wrote the contextual study. Kathryn Waters, Katrina Walters and Wilson Tam (from Toowoomba City Council) carried out the detailed field survey under Stephanie Keay's supervision. Ivan McDonald assessed the field survey and wrote this report.

1.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assistance of the following people and organisations is gratefully acknowledged:

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Des McLucas

1.5 METHODOLOGY

A 4-stage methodology has been adopted. Firstly, the history of the study area was researched to establish the principal events and themes characterising its physical development.

Secondly, a comprehensive field survey, using standardised inventory forms, was carried out which identified surviving physical evidence of the area's major historical themes as well as identifying important visual characteristics such as significant views, open spaces, the extent of predominant and unifying elements (such as groups or precincts of similarly-styled housing) and consistent streetscape features.

Thirdly, historical and visual survey information together with information from a structured community participation program was analysed and an assessment made of which areas, features and places ought to be conserved. Statements set out what is important about the general character of the area and places of potential heritage significance are listed. The extent of these character attributes and the location of places of potential heritage significance are shown on the map.

Fourthly, issues concerning the urban conservation of the area were considered and recommendations made to conserve the heritage and character of the study area.



2 CONTEXTUAL STUDY

The 1995 Toowoomba Inner Residential Heritage Study contains a general overview of the Aboriginal presence to 1840 and early European settlement of Toowoomba and should be read in conjunction with the following contextual study.

2.1 EARLY SURVEYS

The popular use of the Toll Bar Road facilitated an easier, more northerly descent down the Range escarpment, redirecting teamster traffic northwards from Drayton along the present day James Street and providing impetus to the emergence of a new commercial strip along James Street.¹ In the first government survey of 1849 the "Drayton Swamp Agricultural Area" comprised twelve, twenty acre sections, was delineated between the present day West Street and the western edge of West Creek (bounded by present day West Street, Bridge Street and Stephen Street) to provide agricultural produce for the town of Drayton (see Figure 1).²

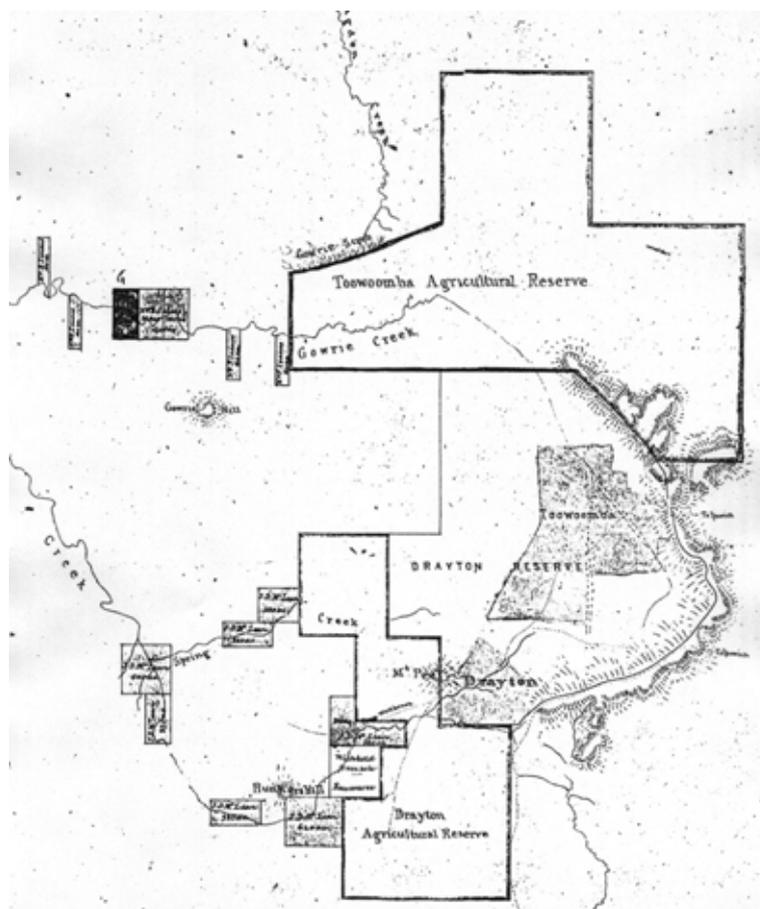


Figure 1: 1849 survey of preemptive purchases of Messrs Isaacs near Drayton
Source: QSA 1/4B1 map

¹ Maurice French, *A Century of Homemaking: A History of the Toowoomba Permanent Building Society, 1875-1975*, Darling Downs Institute Press: Toowoomba, 1979, p.9.

² *ibid.*



Speculative purchase of these sections by squatters and merchants presaged the land value boom that was to occur over the next decade.³ Figure 2 shows the twelve, twenty acre speculative land purchases between West Street and West Swamp.

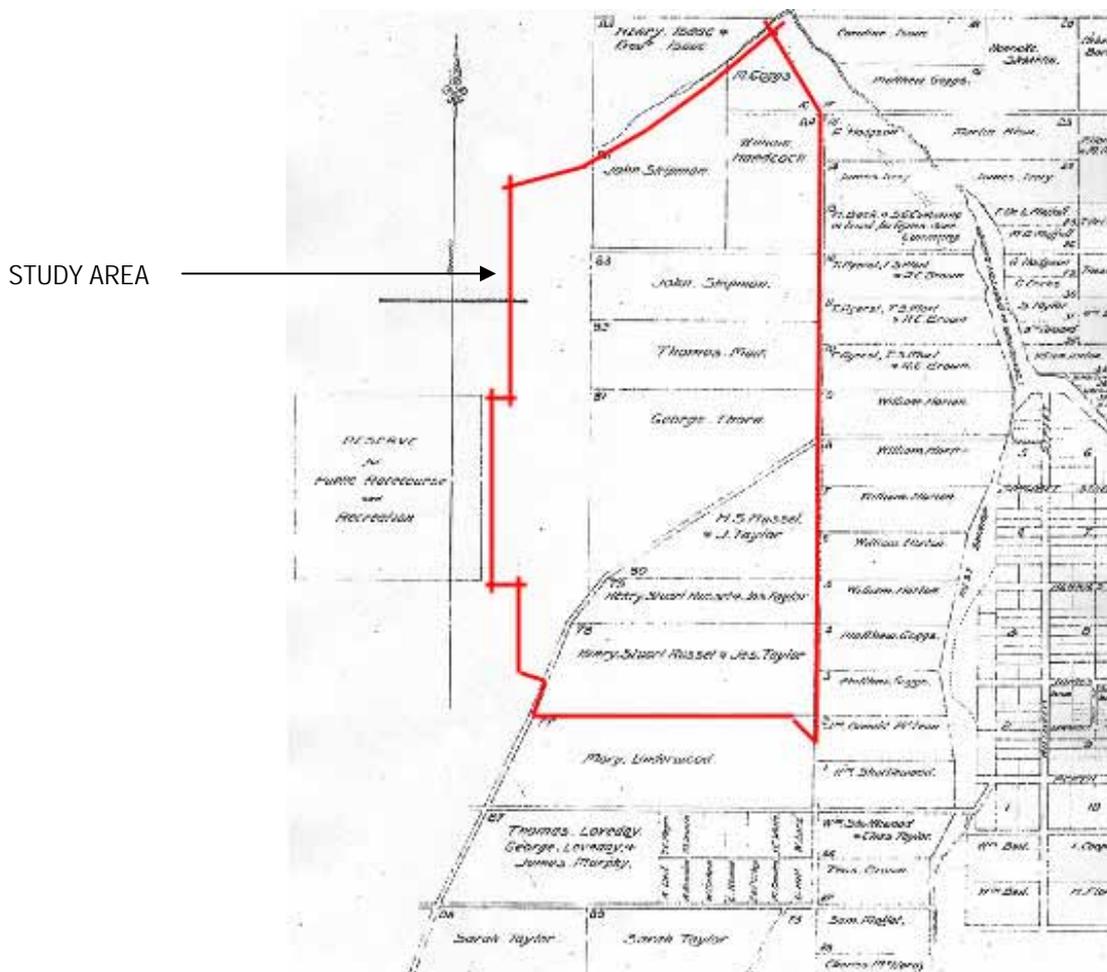


Figure 2: Plan of Toowoomba at Drayton Swamp, Parish of Drayton, County of Aubigny, NSW, circa 1857
 Source: QSA 18099 A2

A new township was surveyed at The Swamp in 1853, principally embraced by East and West Creeks. A westward wave of development came shortly after Toowoomba was proclaimed a municipality in December 1860. Buoyed by Toowoomba's new municipal status, further subdivision into residential and farming estates occurred in the 1860s, notably The Mort Estate (1862), Newtown Estate (first release 1866) and Paddington Estate (1866). Figure 3, an 1882 road map, shows the Mort Estate in relation to Newtown Estate and the Old Polo Ground once associated with 'Ascot House'.

The most enduring feature of a town is its layout and development pattern.⁴ The emerging morphology of Toowoomba conformed to the typical 19th century Queensland town development pattern. Boundary streets delineating the town

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Meredith Walker, *Historic Towns in Queensland: An Introductory Study*, The National Trust of Queensland: Brisbane, 1981. p.1/30.



reserve of one square mile or larger framed a square or rectangular grid with cardinal orientation.⁵ West, East, North and South Streets delineated the early Toowoomba town reserve (South Street was originally named Boundary Street). Remnant sections between the built-up core of the town and the town boundary was often subdivided for potential future suburban development,⁶ as was the case with the twelve speculative land purchases between West Street and West Swamp. Beyond the boundaries of these towns were large allotments for rural uses,⁷ where property such as Thorn's Paddock surrounded the urban enclave.

As early Queensland towns with this form grew, further rural land was subsumed for urban purposes and the grid extended. It was beyond the town boundaries that fragmentation of the grid pattern most likely occurred since later surveys had to absorb existing infrastructure as well as topographic features that would become interventions in the grid. Anzac Avenue (previously Drayton Road), Bridge Street (previously Gowrie Road), Black Gully and the railway alignment would all become grid interventions that characterise the present day Newtown. Figure 3 describes early infrastructure grid interventions.

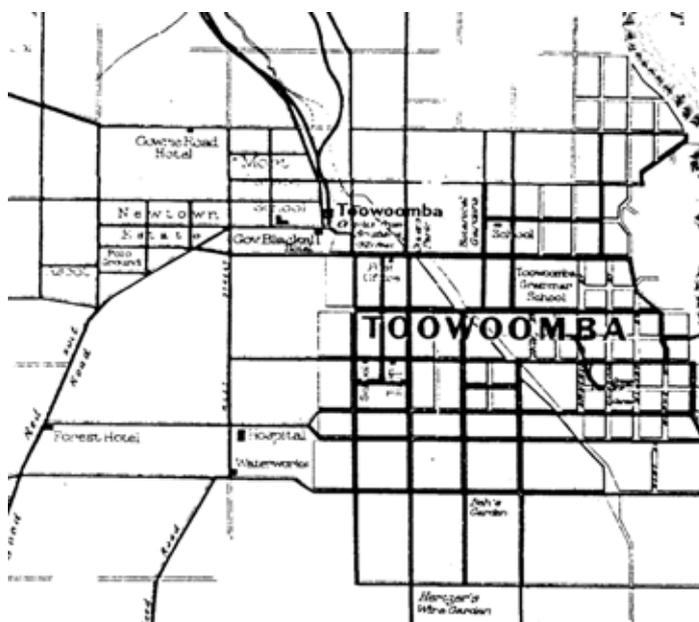


Figure 3: Toowoomba and environs road map, circa 1882

Source: QSA B1/9

The expansion of such town forms with edge-of-town suburban sections is often discernible on the ground by a marked variation in building age.⁸

The first major subdivision in Toowoomba, the Mort Estate, comprising one hundred allotments was offered for sale in 1862. Toowoomba was in the midst of a land speculation boom. Despite having the slowest growth rate of the ten major Queensland towns (including Drayton) between 1861 and 1864, Toowoomba's population was still almost three fold that of Drayton. In 1861 or 1862 the first building society, the Toowoomba Mutual Benefit Investment and Building Society No 1, was established to attract participants in the speculative land boom.⁹

⁵ *ibid.*, p.1/11.

⁶ *ibid.*, p.1/11-1/12.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*, p.1/12.

⁹ Maurice French, *op.cit.*, p.12.



The initiative of the railway connection between Ipswich and Toowoomba brought about a 184% population increase between 1864 and 1868.¹⁰ Shortly after, however, with the discovery of gold in coastal centres, Toowoomba's population plummeted. There were 112 empty houses by the census of March 1868 but the population recovered within two years.¹¹ The 1871 census showed that West Street was among the most popular residential areas.¹²

Newtown is one of Toowoomba's oldest suburbs. It is believed the area was first surveyed in 1851.¹³ The area of land of 130 acres and 1 rood that was to become early Newtown was gazetted on 23 December, 1857 and offered for sale on 22 February, 1858. George Thorn subsequently purchased it (see Figure 2).¹⁴

Newtown was surveyed as town lots in 1865 but was not developed as a working class suburb until the 1880s.¹⁵ The area previously known as "Thorn's Paddock" was parcelled and promoted for sub-development. On the 23rd of September 1865, allotments were first offered for sale in the Newtown Estate.

Entries in the Darling Downs Gazette record the progressive subdivision, promotion and sale of land in the Newtown Estate. The first entry advertised an auction to be held on Saturday 13th of January, 1866 at McLoughlan's Hotel of the first instalment "near the Racecourse and in the vicinity of the Union Club House, opposite the valuable property of James Taylor, Esq., MLA, and just outside the boundary of the Municipality".¹⁶ The Estate had at first been subdivided into about 150 allotments, the best of which were to be released in this first sale event, only "62 attractive residence sites on the Main Drayton Road, each having a large frontage".¹⁷ Further sales pitches described the Newtown Estate as follows:

*This favourite suburb of Toowoomba has a last been placed in the market for sale and the auctioneers have great pleasure in directing the attention of the public to this unparalleled opportunity of securing Attractive Villa Residence Sites near to the heart of the town, yet away from the bustle, dust and heat of our busy township.*¹⁸

Only days before the auction this first sale was postponed for a month "in consequence of the whole survey not being fully completed, and the Proprietors having determined to place a much larger quantity on the Market".¹⁹ The initial marketing campaign targeted potential working class buyers and encouraged speculative investment:

The auctioneers would especially point out to the Working Man, The Mechanic, and the Navvies the advantage of purchasing in this Estate, as land in this locality is always increasing in value, so that if they do not intend to build upon the lots for a speculation, nothing in the market presents such a favourable opportunity of doubling their outlay in a few months; and should they intend to build upon the property they have large frontages, splendid access to the rear, and in fact every advantage that could be possibly wished for. Another important item is that every purchaser will have the right of

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.13.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *Newtown State School, Toowoomba: 75 Julilee 1924-1999*, Saturday 9 October 1999, p. 31. This claim needs to be further evidenced and clarified. No 1851 survey plan has been found but other surveys from later in the 1850s exist.

¹⁴ NSW Government Gazette 23 December 1857 and 22 February 1858. Date purchased by George Thorn unknown.

¹⁵ Maurice French, *op.cit.*, p.14.

¹⁶ The Darling Downs Gazette, 4 January 1866.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ The Darling Downs Gazette, 11 January 1866.



access to a SPLENDID WELL of never failing pure water on the Estate, a boon which is hard to obtain in a suburban township. The terms of sale will be extremely liberal. Plan to be seen at the Argyle Rooms. Sale at 12 o'clock sharp. LUNCHEON PROVIDED.²⁰

Upon readvertising the first sale a month later, the Darling Downs Gazette records a three fold increase in the number of allotments making up the resurveyed portion and the almost double first release:

100 Most Desirable Residence Sites in the Newtown Estate, being the First Instalment of 469 Allotments. To Private Gentlemen, Solicitors, Railway Engineers, Business Men, Hotel-keepers, and others The splendid Newtown Estate, having nearly three-quarters of a mile frontage to the Main Drayton Road ...²¹

The next release was advertised on 24 September 1877, possibly amounting to a re-subdivision. "The last block on the Far-Famed and rapidly improving Newtown Estate ... 52 grand allotments ... Frontage to Russell Street, Wallace Street, Clairmont Street, Holberton Street. Comprising the whole of Section 9 ... The most improving locality in the district".²² The role of the building societies in facilitating the land boom is evidenced: "No sounder or more secure investment of your money can be made than sinking it in land ... It is only three years ago that Allotments on the Newtown Estate were sold a £6 and £10 each. The same lots are now bringing as high as £45 each ... The building societies are only too glad to assist you to build on the Newtown Estate".²³

Major sales of land in the Newtown Estate were not advertised again until 18th November, 1893 being for "three splendid allotments at the corner of Drayton and Racecourse Roads – areas from 20 to 30 perches".²⁴

Some impressive residences were built in the Newtown Estate by influential residents and designed by local architects. Originally set in seven acres with a lawn tennis court and adjoining the Clifford Park Racecourse, "Weetwood" was built in 1888 by R. W. Scholfield and designed by James Marks. The Weetwood Handicap was instituted in honour of the original owner's work for the Toowoomba Turf Club. James Marks also designed "Oak Lodge" and "Spreydon" (originally one home) for his timber merchant partner, Robert Filshie around 1896. It was used in the 1910s as Spreydon Girls' College that was a precursor to Fairholme College. "Tor" was designed by William Hodgen for his aunt and uncle, Sophia and Frederick Holberton and built in 1904. Extant stable buildings are part of the original layout of the property. Hodgen also designed "Ascot House" (see Figure 4) and "Elphin", the latter built in 1907 as a town retreat for pastoralist Andrew Crombie. Newtown resident, Harry Marks is credited with designing the "Ascot House" extensions. The Hogarth residence, "Kerrislaw" became the first Ursuline Convent. Harry Marks designed and built his own home, "Gladstone House", in Gladstone Street in 1908.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ The Darling Downs Gazette, 17 January 1866.

²² The Darling Downs Gazette, 24 September, 1887.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ The Darling Downs Gazette, 18 November, 1893.





Figure 4: 'Ascot House' and extensions, Newtown (date unknown)
Source: Toowoomba Local History Library photo collection.

2.2 THE TOWN OF NEWTOWN

When Gowrie Shire was abolished in 1913, the territory was divided between the Shire of Jondaryan and the town of Newtown. The town only survived until February 1917, partly amalgamated into the city of Toowoomba and partly into the Shire of Jondaryan. Although the life of the town was short lived, its birth evidences a distinct local identity that has survived through generations of Newtown residents.

Survival of the town was a battle from the outset. Resisting the Greater City Movement of the time, Newtown residents supported by prominent local identities agitated for the separation of Newtown from Toowoomba as early as 1893. Indeed, the constitution of Newtown as a town in its own right could have been the only departure from contemporary local government policy in Queensland.²⁵ In addition, fettered by debt inherited from Gowrie Shire (largely due to the purchase of land for Newtown Park), the restrictions of the Great War and Newtown's proximity to Toowoomba all worked to ensure the demise of the town.²⁶

The town was originally divided into three wards with mainly agricultural land use in the North Ward and suburban allotments in the South and Central Wards. Newtown's business sector serviced primary industry, with the exception of a few corner stores and three hotels, The Newtown (formerly the Newmarket), the Alexandria Hotel and the Gowrie Road Hotel which had stables to accommodate stockowners on their way to the sale yards. Small businesses included Corrie's and Olding's stores, William's Bakery and Dunster's nursery. Newtown also had its own private hospital called "Kymoria" in Russell Street, owned by Dr Alex Horne.

McPhie's Sale Yards near the centre of the town generated conflict between residents and animals in the streets on a weekly basis. Complaints regarding "Sunnyside", a "house of ill-fame" located next to the Alexandria Hotel also feature regularly in Council minutes. A few small industries were located in Black Gully. Whichello established a fellmongery and tanning business there in the 1870s as did Coonan and Cloak.

The Krimmer and Reid bacon factory established in Gladstone Street in 1911, later amalgamating with a farmers co-operative on Sunny Road (now Mort Street).

²⁵ Ann Alcock and Anne-Maree Roche, *History of Newtown: 1913 to 1917*, DDIAE, 1979, pp.7.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp.1-4 and 7.



The town's government gazettal in 1913 described the boundaries of the town as follows:

Glenvale Road in the south and south of, but parallel to James Street to West Street and along that street and Sunny Road (Mort Street) to Hogg Street. The boundary then followed Hogg Street to Tor Street and down Tor to North and along that street to Greenwattle Street.²⁷

Comprising two square miles, it was larger than the current suburb and was home to a largely working class population, with few business people or wealthy residents.²⁸

2.3 NEWTOWN AS A 20TH CENTURY SUBURB

In 1921, upon conducting an enquiry into the necessity of establishing a State School for the rapidly growing population of Newtown, the District Inspector for the Darling Downs for the Department of Public Instruction, Hon Fewtrell reported:

There is ample evidence that the city (of Toowoomba) is extending in this direction very rapidly, and that at no very distant date the locality will be extensively settled.²⁹

Newtown underwent major re-subdivision again in 1928 by the Toowoomba City Council in a compilation of a new subdivisional plan of that portion of the city formerly comprising the Newtown Town Council Area.³⁰

Conflict between the competing interests of agricultural and residential land uses in and around Newtown endured well into the 20th century. In 1934 the Newtown Progress Association expressed concern to Newtown's police inspector "for the safety of pedestrians, especially school children, at the manner and time of driving stock through the streets of Newtown on sale days".³¹ In addition the association requested the cessation of "the practice of training race horses on the footpaths of Newtown".³²

2.4 SCHOOLS

In 1864 construction of the first primary school in the district commenced. Five years later the National School Building on the Mort Street Estate was built, now the site of a State School. Demand was such that by 1911 Toowoomba was gaining one new school every three years. The town's population had swelled from 3,000 in 1868 to 20,702 in 1921.³³

Toowoomba has also been served by a large number of private schools, both secular and denominational. Many of them no longer exist, but Newtown hosts several private schools, some of which were originally established in some of the suburb's early substantial private residences.

²⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *Newtown State School, Toowoomba: 75 Julilee 1924-1999*, Saturday 9 October, 1999, p. 27.

³⁰ Correspondence from Survey Office, Department of Public Lands to Town Clerk, Toowoomba, acknowledging receipt of letter advising as such.

³¹ Newtown Progress Association Record Book Number 71, Correspondence from the Secretary to the Inspector of Police dated 14 October, 1934 and again on 16 May, 1936 regarding "the saleyard menace in our beautiful suburb".

³² Newtown Progress Association Record Book Number 71, Correspondence from the Secretary to the Police Officer in Charge of Newtown, dated 10 May, 1936.

³³ Quoted in *Newtown State School*, *op.cit.*, p. 31.



NEWTOWN STATE SCHOOL

Newtown State School, opened in 1924, was a Newtown Progress association project. Situated in what has been described as "the heart of Newtown",³⁴ in Albert Street at a place known locally as the "Old Polo Ground" and Sports Ground. Numerous additions to the first school building over time have accommodated swelling enrolments. Plantings that surround the school grounds are the legacy of an early dedication to Arbor Day. Four native trees were once sent from Canberra by Sir Littleton Groom to commemorate his brother, the Hon. W. H. Groom, who was a member of the first committee.³⁵ The acquisition of land on the western side of Polo Street in 1928 permitted the expansion of the playgrounds and a setting for the construction of a school master's residence. The Assembly Hall (1958), pool and grandstand and various recreational and educational facilities have been added over the last half of the century. War memorials located at the school commemorate former students who saw action in the Second World War and include an Honour Board unveiled in the main classroom listing the names of 175 pupils who enlisted, the flag pole (its plaque listing the names of the 13 who died) and gates dedicated to their memory.

KENSINGTON

Miss Bailey of Taylor Street opened Kensington, a primary school, in 1913. Originally located in Russell Street adjacent to the Methodist Church, the school was relocated to new premises in Bothwell Street.

THE GLENNIE SCHOOL

The Glennie School was opened in "St Alban's House" in Russell Street at the end of 1908. A fund inaugurated by Cannon Glennie enabled the purchase of land in Herries Street around 1890 for a future Girls' School. Building on this site had commenced in the interim. The Glennie School Chapel was named "St Alban's Chapel".³⁶ St Andrew's Presbyterian Church was located in West Street opposite the Holy Name Catholic School. St Alban's Church of England was on Drayton Road opposite the Newtown Hotel.

ST MARY'S CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' COLLEGE

The Christian Brothers arrived on the Downs in 1899 and soon found a suitable site for a school in West Street and set about the its construction to a design by William Hodgen. This is possibly one of the earliest schools in Newtown.

ST URSULA'S COLLEGE

St Ursula's College was opened in 1931, converting the residence "Kerrielaw", once the home of the Hogarth family, into a school. A building program for the extension of the house was immediately undertaken since lack of space was problematic from the outset.

HOLY NAME CHURCH AND SCHOOL

A Catholic church was built in Bridge Street on Newtown's boundary in 1903. After it was destroyed by fire, the Holy Name Church and School replaced it, opening in 1921.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁵ W.H. Groom was also instrumental in the foundation of the Toowoomba Permanent Building Society and the Racecourse.

³⁶ *St Alban's Church, Newtown, Toowoomba*", Anglican Church of Australia, p.11.



2.5 THE IMPACT OF WAR

During the Great War, all German street names in Toowoomba were renamed. North of the study area, Klein Street (named for Martin Klein, a German farmer whose property was bounded by the street) was changed to Jellicoe Street.³⁷

During the Second World War, Toowoomba became a military town and many Newtown properties were seconded for military purposes. The Glennie School was turned into a military hospital. "Ascot House" served as headquarters for the United States army operations on the Downs. Not only taking over the better housing, the military caused an acute housing shortage.³⁸

The United States Navy used Newtown Park and Laurel Bank Park as "R and R" centres. The Newtown Park Camp, commissioned from 1943 to 1945, was designed to accommodate 150 men plus the operating crew. Land east of the park, on the opposite side of Holberton Street was also seconded for latrines and ablutions and a sick bay. Military huts left behind after the war were used by the homeless and converted to emergency housing for returned soldiers. Other parks were also turned into military camps.

Military presence in Newtown continued in peacetime. The 11th Light Horse Camp occupied Newtown Park circa 1931 (see Figure 5). The Newtown Progress Association minutes in 1925 records local discontent with the recent removal of fencing during military occupation that allowed straying stock to make use of the park.³⁹ A military drill hall had been constructed there around the turn of the century, while the land was still in private ownership.⁴⁰



Figure 5: 11th Light Horse Camp, Newtown Park circa 1931

Source: Toowoomba Historical Society photo collection, loaned by Mrs G. Douglas

³⁷ Robert Dansie, *Morass to Municipality*, Darling Downs Institute Press: Toowoomba, 1985, p.85.

³⁸ Maurice French and Duncan Waterson, *The Darling Downs: A Pictorial History 18560-1950*, Darling Downs Institute Press: Toowoomba, 1982, p.221.

³⁹ Newtown Progress Association Minute Book, 19 September 1925, notation dated 1927.

⁴⁰ This claim needs verification.



2.6 RECREATION AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Newtown has a reputation as a training ground for future sports stars and racing champions, bred in an environment with strong sport and recreation facilities.⁴¹

RACING

Horse racing was a popular recreation for the residents of Toowoomba and the Downs. Initiatives to start races in Toowoomba occurred in the late 1850s, around a decade after they had commenced in Drayton. Race meetings were major social events and festivities were known to last a week to a fortnight, attracting spectators and participants from as far afield as Ipswich and the Clarence River for the duration and stimulating service industries in the towns. A racing club was formed in Toowoomba in 1858. Christmas sports in 1859 and 1860 were held on Frog's Hollow, then part of the Government Camping Ground. Competition between Drayton and Toowoomba over municipal status caused the communities to hold separate race meetings in 1860. In that year the Queensland government granted the two communities a 160 acre joint sports reserve⁴², deliberately locating it outside the boundaries of both the rival towns, on a ridge to the west of Toowoomba (see Figure 2). When both towns became municipalities, the reserve became Toowoomba's racecourse and renamed Clifford Park Racecourse in 1914, although it had been known as such for many years, being associated with the Clifford Plate (established 1873) that was named after Clifford House, the home of James Taylor, an official of the race and turf clubs since their earliest days.

Several street names surrounding the Racecourse are attributable to racing association and influential local figures in the racing scene. F. H. Holberton was a steward in the Toowoomba Turf Club, formed in 1882. International places, horses, race events and trainers are recalled in street names such as Ascot, Newmarket, Doncaster, Goodwood, Gainsborough, Bernborough, Weetwood and Tancred. Development surrounding the Clifford Park Racecourse is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: 1931 aerial photo, Newtown, over Clifford Park Racecourse with Tor Street in the foreground.

Source: Toowoomba Local History Library photo collection

James Marks designed the grandstand at Clifford Park Racecourse.

⁴¹ *Newtown State School*, op.cit., p. 31.

⁴² Plan of Toowoomba at Drayton Swamp, Parish of Drayton, County of Aubigny, NSW, showing lands recently measured for sale. Surveyed by Burnett in December 1856.



SPORTS GROUNDS

The Newtown Rugby League Football Club was formed in 1922 at the Newtown Hall. Unlike many other clubs, it has not changed its name nor did it take up Rugby Union in 1930. Late in 1959, the Newtown Club sold land in Pottinger Street and bought ten acres on the corner of Hursley Road and McDougall Street to establish new public sporting grounds.

The Newtown Progress Association launched the Newtown Cricket Club in 1929.⁴³

The West End Bowling Club clubhouse for men only, once situated on the site of the present West Toowoomba Bowls Club, was built in 1910 in Rome Street. In 1914 the women of Newtown opened the West End Croquet Club.

OTHER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Two other contemporary Newtown societies were the Red Cross Society and the Newtown Rechabites who held meetings in Cousen's Hall.

Newtown Park was formerly opened in 1913, although it had been used for limited public purposes, whilst under private ownership, for decades.⁴⁴ Figure 7 shows Newtown Park and surrounding development in 1931.



Figure 7: 1931 aerial photo of Newtown with Bridge Street in the foreground and Newtown Park to the top right.

Source: Toowoomba Local History Library photo collection.

A military Drill Hall, later moved to Margaret Street, was located there around the turn of the 20th century as a base for the 11th Australian Infantry Battalion and 14th Light Horse. During the Great War it became a recruiting depot for the AIF.

Newtown Park was acquired under the old Gowrie Shire Council, chosen for its central location. Two hundred Camphor Laurels donated by the Department of Lands were planted around the perimeter. The park has been variously used over time, including a military rest camp and caravan park, closed in 1987.

⁴³ *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 30 September, 1929.

⁴⁴ *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 20 September, 1913.



In 1929 the Newtown Progress Association moved to procure land on which to build a Newtown Hall.⁴⁵

Despite its brief time as a separate town, life in Newtown has always been akin to that of a residential suburb. It has always been dependent on Toowoomba for many residential amenities, its business sector remained small, its industries associated with agriculture and the remainder of its community initiatives connected with leisure activities.⁴⁶

2.7 POST-WAR HOUSING GROWTH

Although Newtown was well-developed by World War 2, there was still considerable residential land available for consolidation. Figure 8 shows a rapid rate of growth in detached dwellings in Newtown from the immediate post-War years. Sharp growth occurred in the decade following World War 2, amid nationwide social and economic change. Shortly after the declaration of peace in 1945, the Commonwealth lifted its wartime control of building activity under the *National Security (Building Operations) Regulations*. Nevertheless, the necessity for some form of resource management of materials (particularly timber) and labour remained in order to relieve acute housing shortages.

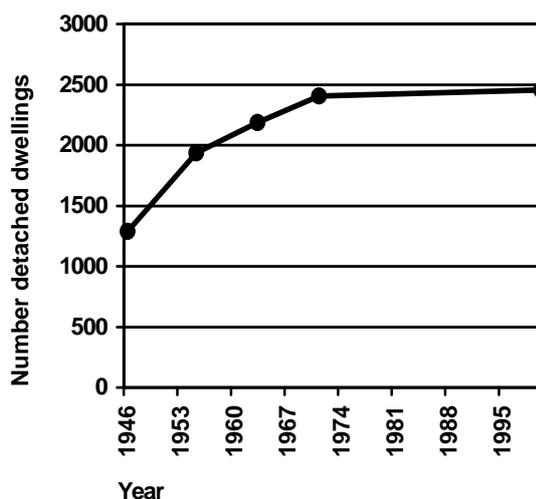


Figure 8: Newtown housing growth analysis 1946 to 2000 based on aerial photographs from 1946, 1955, 1963, 1971 and 2000.

Commonwealth building restrictions arising out of the war effort had only exacerbated an existing pre-War housing shortage in Toowoomba, as was the case statewide.⁴⁷ Mr Duggan, Member for Toowoomba, described the situation in 1946 as “a very grave social problem ... revolving round materials and labour”.⁴⁸ The cost of basic building materials had risen sharply and rapidly, labour (both skilled and unskilled) was scarce and industrial production levels consistently fell short of supplying the market. A general demand for housing peaked in the immediate post-War years characterised by high marriage and birth rates consequential to the return of servicemen and women. Throughout the State, thousands of families were living in

⁴⁵ *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 17 September, 1929. This date needs verification since the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 6 May 1997, p.5, dates the Hall at 1904.

⁴⁶ Ann Alcock and Anne-Maree Roche, op.cit., p.1.



tents and makeshift shelters for extended periods, some even years. So great was the housing shortage, that the Queensland Government set up a temporary camp in Toowoomba to accommodate families waiting for new housing.

Queensland Parliament rushed through legislation in 1945 to ensure equity of access to housing across the whole community by controlling the availability of building materials for designated building operations. The Commonwealth had exercised control by removing the necessity of obtaining a permit for all houses below a certain value. The Queensland Government legislated control in the same vein through floor area, but eliminated the need to apply for permits wherever possible by exempting the construction of small homes and giving special consideration to country areas.⁴⁹ Under the *Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act 1945* (Qld), dwellings in Newtown over 1250 square feet (that is, 116m²) required a permit to build, obtainable from a Bureau of Industry officer located in Toowoomba.⁵⁰ The State was divided into three prioritised zones (the major cities including Toowoomba, a five mile coastal zone and the rest of the State) to discourage unessential building works such as beachside holiday homes and to advantage of existing urban residential development, primary and secondary industry and public works.⁵¹ This tended to encourage the construction of small houses close to well-established areas.



Figure 9 Typical post-War housing being constructed by the Queensland Housing Commission in 1949.

Source: "Fifty Years of Public Housing in Queensland", p.14.

There was a nationwide upsurge in building activity from 1945 to 1960, despite the general economic recession of the 1950s.⁵² Immediate post-War forecasts anticipating a period of between five to ten years until the resumption of normal building supply levels were realised when legislative controls in Queensland ceased operation in August, 1952.

Comparatively moderate housing growth overall in Newtown from around the mid-1950s to mid-1970s was tempered by the replacement of some housing stock with industry and institutional development. During the housing crisis, industrial development had been limited to a replacement only basis. After restrictions were lifted, building operations in Queensland were directed toward rapid industrial expansion⁵³ but, in Toowoomba, this occurred mostly beyond the study area.

New detached housing development in the study area has plateaued over the last thirty years as Toowoomba's urban fringe moved steadily outward beyond Newtown.

⁴⁷ Queensland Parliamentary Debates, vol. 176, 1945-46, p.1319-20.

⁴⁸ Queensland Parliamentary Debates, vol. 176, 1945-46, p.1316.

⁴⁹ "The Bureau of Industry Thirteenth Annual Report, 1946", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1946, Volume 1, p.844.

⁵⁰ *Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act 1945* (Qld) 9 Geo. 6 No 22, p.113

⁵¹ Queensland Parliamentary Debates, vol. 176, 1945-46, p.1305.

⁵² Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the Forties and Fifties*, The Five Mile Press Pty Ltd: Victoria, 1993, p. 89.

⁵³ Alice Hampson (1987) *The Fifties in Queensland: Why not? Why?*, Bachelor of Architecture thesis, University of Queensland, p.120.



3 IDENTIFYING HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

Just like every person, every place has a character. A place's character is the sum of those particular qualities that distinguish it from other places. It is derived from the way people experience it in sights, sounds, smells and feelings. It is an important idea because it helps us to understand why Newtown is different (or similar) to other places and, hence, what is important about the area to keep.

The character of the Newtown area is derived largely from visual characteristics embodied in the physical fabric of the area. To understand the area's character requires an assessment of the area's built environment, townscape and landscape qualities, and archaeological and anthropological resources.

Within the overall urban fabric of an area, there are often also individual places which are important in themselves and have special qualities that are of value to past, present and future generations. These places are often referred to as cultural heritage places and are the places that a community wants to keep.

The identification of both the valued characteristics of the overall Newtown area and the individual places of potential cultural heritage significance within the area are the essential first step in ensuring their conservation.

This section is an assessment of the results of a comprehensive street by street and building by building survey of the study area which (i) confirmed if physical evidence survives of important historical themes and events identified in Part 2 and (ii) identified important visual characteristics such as significant views and streetscapes, intact groups and precincts of houses that are unified by style or age and significant landscape and townscape features.

3.1 PRELIMINARY FIELD SURVEY

A preliminary field survey involved a visual assessment of all streets in the study area and the recording of basic urban conservation data including:

- predominant building stock
- predominant land use
- predominant house styles
- streetscape and townscape features.

A preliminary assessment was made of the street block's urban conservation value on a scale of no value/ some value / considerable value. These results were mapped and analysed to determine which parts of the study area required further detailed survey.

Street blocks assessed as having no urban conservation value were generally those areas to the northern, western and southern edges of the study area which were developed late in the 20th century. While houses in these areas are consistent in age and style and might ordinarily satisfy some of the assessment criteria for future generations, they are not valued by the present generation, are common in style to much of late-20th century eastern Australian housing and do not possess qualities that give Newtown a distinctive character. These street blocks were excluded from detailed field survey. The remaining majority of the study area is shown on Figure 10 and was subject to detailed field survey. Of particular note was the prevalence of houses from the immediate post-World War 2 period. These houses were recognisable in age and style and formed a conspicuous part of the study area's



character. Although the significance of this period of Toowoomba's housing development has not previously been given much weight, it was clear that it formed an important part of Newtown's character and ought to be given closer study.

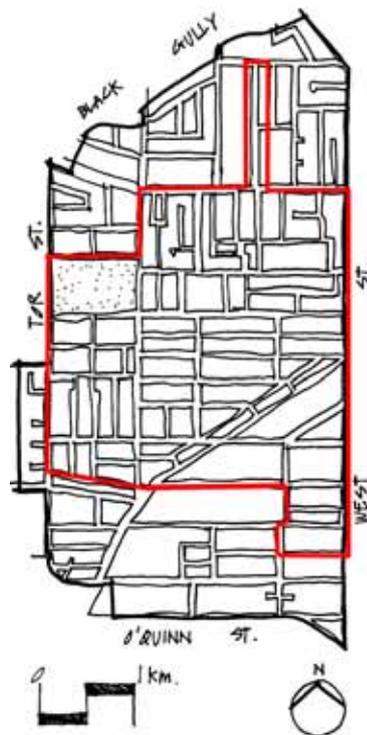


Figure 10 Detailed Field Survey Area

3.2 DETAILED FIELD SURVEY

The field survey involved a visual assessment of all buildings in the study area. This was carried out from the street without gaining access to building interiors or backyard spaces (except where these could be viewed from rear streets). Transient conditions such as the current state of repair, external colours or readily reversible unsympathetic alterations (such as verandah enclosures) were ignored in favour of identifying potential.

A standardised inventory form recorded a range of data for each building as well as a photograph. The type of information recorded included:

- locational details
- number of stories
- overall form (low-set / high-set / on ground)
- roof form
- roof pitch
- roof material
- wall material
- features
- setting details
- physical condition
- approximate age (pre-World War 1 / inter-War / post-World War 2)
- integrity.

1,455 inventory forms were completed.



3.3 TOOWOOMBA'S HOUSING TYPOLOGY

Toowoomba has recognisable house styles which share many features with other parts of Queensland but which also have distinct local variations. A range of styles of Toowoomba's houses has been well set out in the 1999 publication, "The Toowoomba House: Styles and History" and covers eight basic styles from the late 19th century to World War 2. These are set out below.

The Early Toowoomba House, 1890 to 1918

1. **The Colonial House**
The quintessential early Queensland house, usually symmetrical and with generous, Georgian-derived proportions, spacious verandahs, pyramidal roof and central hall.
2. **The Cottage**
Similar to the Colonial House – pyramidal roof and front verandah, symmetrical and with a central hall – but smaller. It was they typical, modest early house of our towns.
3. **The Early Gabled House**
Often quite similar to the Cottage but more elaborate and larger, sometimes much more so, and with one projecting front room with a decorate gable.
4. **The Larger Early House**
Greater area, more features, decoration and verandah, and sometimes architect-designed. No two houses are likely to be the same. This division is not really a style as such houses tended to follow one of several.
5. **The Federation House**
In the years before the Great War, a new, more decorative style appeared with splendid carpenter's flourishes and stained glass. Window proportions become more elongated and casements (windows hinged on the side) were favoured.

The Bungalow, 1920s and 1930s

6. **The Queensland Bungalow**
The State's own new 20th century house, quite unlike the earlier styles, now without a central passage and with an asymmetrical gabled front. Most followed similar patterns, often taken from State design booklets.
7. **The Custom Bungalow**
Bungalows individually designed in the Queensland style. They were usually a little larger, more ambitious in detail, with more decoration than the pattern book houses and sometimes architect-designed.
8. **Bungalows along Southern Lines**
The bungalow was handled a little differently in the southern States and some people preferred to follow one of those styles. Melbourne's widely-read monthly *The Home Beautiful* was probably quite influential.

The house styles do not cover periods beyond World War 2 because this was rightly seen as a time of tremendous social and architectural change beyond which different styles of housing emerged. It is time, however, to consider some of the last half a century of housing development and what emerges are indeed recognisable house



styles that are different to what went before and after them. This immediate post-World War 2 period of development has already been identified in Part 2 as one of Newtown's key historical phases and the field survey work confirms the abundance of this era of housing.

Two new Toowoomba house styles are therefore proposed to be considered. These relate to a period of development from World War 2 to the end of the 1950s after which time the post-War housing crisis had eased; more homogenous southern designs were influential, particularly through project home builders such as A.V.Jennings; and new buildings of aluminium windows, concrete roof tiles and plasterboard sheeting became common. These additional house styles have the following attributes.

The Post-War House, 1940s and 1950s



- 9. **Post-War Brick and Tile**
Single-, double- or triple-fronted with moderately-pitched roofs and generous roof overhangs. Timber casement or awning windows, sometimes at corners. Features included entry porches (sometimes curved) and low brick pier and panel fences. Sometimes referred to as 'Austerity' style because of its simple form and lack of decoration.



- 10. **Post-War Timber and Tin**
A more-modest version of the brick-and-tile style but still featuring a low-moderate roof pitch in a stepped hip form. Low-set on stumps and typically clad with narrow chamferboards.

3.4 COMMUNITY INPUT

The definition of "cultural significance" refers to historic, scientific, aesthetic and social value to past, present and future generations. Historic significance is largely identified through documentary and archival research; aesthetic significance is largely identified through field survey; and scientific significance is not likely to play a large part in this study. Social significance – what present generations value – is largely identified by the community. Such value could attach to a particular place or to a characteristic of the area.

Community input has been sought and will continue to be sought as the study reaches completion. To date, the community's input has been sought via:

- Newtown Progress Association
- Council's Heritage Advisory Group.

The community has provided a valuable range of responses varying from the identification of specific to broad concerns about character retention in Newtown. It is this latter type of information that strongly and consistently identified not only what the community thinks is important to keep in the Newtown area but also how this character is perceived to be threatened. Some of these responses are set out below:



- *the cottage-type houses with their colour, lead-light windows, verandahs, etc*
- *post-War style of housing*
- *pride taken in the neighbourhood including the landscape garden*
- *intermingling of some Art-Deco-style housing*
- *pre-World War 2 cottage community*
- *feeling of community*
- *large blocks, wide streets, corner shops, suburban identity, sporting clubs, older-style gardens, diverse range of housing styles, grand homes*
- *corner shops*
- *Newtown has a neighbourly feeling and not much fog*
- *we don't want more ugly flats*
- *lack of two-storey houses*
- *lack of modern development*
- *REAL suburb – not made to house people within a city (ie like Glenvale)*

3.5 ASSESSMENT

ASSESSING HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Concept and Definition of Cultural Significance

The cultural significance of a place can arise from a combination or any one of a number of factors. In general, these factors fall into the four broad categories of significance defined in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) as aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for the past, present or future generations. In simple terms, the purpose of cultural significance is to help in identifying and assessing the attributes which make a place of value to the community.

Every place has a history, as aesthetic value or a social meaning to some member of a community. Most places therefore meet some of the criteria prescribed above. It is, however, neither possible nor desirable to conserve every place. Some measures must be applied to these broad criteria in order to determine the degree of significance. The degree to which a place is significant will determine the appropriate forms of conservation management for the place.

In the context of this study, *local* heritage significance (as opposed to state, national or international significance) is the appropriate threshold. Places of local significance are those that are of particular importance to the local community or part of a community which, in this study, is defined as the city of Toowoomba.

While most places are likely to be assessed as being of local significance, it is to be expected that some places will satisfy the criteria for higher thresholds of significance. Therefore, for each place, an assessment has also been made of whether it is of local, state or national significance. Where places have already been assessed and are currently on state and/or national registers, these existing assessments have generally been adopted.

Because the cultural significance of a place is generally embodied in its physical fabric, places where little or not physical fabric survives are generally not considered significant. This can be the case where a school or church site no longer retains any school or church buildings and the site is either vacant or has been redeveloped for other uses.



Assessment Criteria

While the assessment of cultural significance was done objectively and by drawing on available factual data, judgement and a holistic view of the city was also exercised. The values upon which judgements of cultural significance are made are set out below. These values have primarily been derived from the Burra Charter and have been expanded to reflect the wider range of cultural heritage values inherent in this study.

Aesthetic Significance

Aesthetic significance takes into account the community's perception of the form, scale, colour, texture and material, smells and sounds of a place and its use. Places of aesthetic significance would:

- demonstrate a high degree of creative accomplishment;
- demonstrate important design or visual qualities; or
- demonstrate visual merit or interest.

Historical Significance

Historical significance encompasses the history of aesthetics, science and society and to a large extent underlies all of the other cultural significance values. A place may be of historical significance because:

- it is important for its association with themes, events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the occupation, evolution or pattern of development of the community;
- it is an example of rare, endangered or uncommon aspects of the cultural heritage of the community;
- it has a strong association with the life or work of a person or group of people of significance to the community;
- it is an important representative of the range of places which make up the cultural heritage of a community;
- it has been influenced by a theme, event, phase or activity that was important in local history; or
- it was the site of an event that was important in local history.

Technological Significance

Technological significance relates to the importance of a place to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of a community's history. A place may be of technological significance because:

- it illustrates an important technological, creative, or scientific process or advance; or
- it has the ability to yield information which can contribute to an understanding of past technologies which can contribute to an understanding of past technologies and the history of human occupation of the area.

Social Significance

Social significance embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to a majority or minority group. A place may be of social significance because:

- it is highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;
- it is recognised by the community as having public value or is held in high esteem for its associations with the whole or part of the community whose history or culture is interwoven with the history of the place; or



- it demonstrates a distinctive way of life or custom that is no longer in use or is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest.

Architectural Significance

Architectural significance relates to unifying visual characteristics, particular stylistic characteristics or innovations, or innovations of construction details or materials present in buildings. A place may be of architectural significance because:

- it is one of a predominance of buildings which are linked visually by means of age, scale, materials or architectural style;
- it represents a particular stylistic or design innovation;
- it is extremely old or rare, or represents a style of building that was characteristic of a specific area or era; or
- it utilises materials in a rare or unusual manner.

Comparative Values

In addition to the range of assessment criteria discussed above, other interpretive and comparative values were also applied which could modify the degree of significance of a place. These values were generally of four types:

- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Urban context; or
- Integrity and condition.

Rarity relates to the surviving numbers of a particular type relative to their original numbers.

Representativeness relates to how well a particular place represents the qualities which characterise its type. A place's representative value may also be enhanced by its integrity, condition or association with other aspects of significance. Given numerous examples of a particular type of place, representative value can determine which place or places are selected to best demonstrate their type.

Urban context relates to the collective contribution that a group of related places makes to our understanding of an area or theme. While each place individually may not be significant, their combination may be significant.

Lastly, the integrity of a place can modify its significance. *Integrity* means the degree of intactness of a place but, while a closeness to the original design is usually considered important, alterations and additions can also be significant. In many cases, places may have been altered unsympathetically over time but these alterations may be readily reversible. This is particularly the case with verandah enclosures and commercial building awnings. Therefore, the current physical form of the place is often looked beyond to its potential for retrieving its earlier or original form. The physical *condition* of a place can also modify its significance. Given a large number of similar places, such as Newtown houses, those which are more intact and in better condition are likely to be regarded as better representative examples.

ASSESSMENT OF CHARACTER HOUSING

Based on the detailed field survey of almost 1800 buildings, an assessment was made of the relative character value of each house. Four basic criteria were considered and scored on a weighted scale. These were:

- Style;
- Integrity;
- Condition; and



- Group Value
- Style values were:
- Excellent example of a style 4
 - Rare or highly-individual 4
 - Good representative example of a style 2
 - Ordinary example of a style 1
 - Not representative of a style -2
 - Outside of style range (post-1965) -2
- Integrity values were:
- Highly intact 1
 - Altered sympathetically 0
 - Altered unsympathetically but readily reversible 0
 - Altered unsympathetically and not readily reversible -2
- Condition values were:
- Good 0
 - Fair 0
 - Poor -2
- Group values were:
- Forms part of a visually-cohesive group related in age and style (min. of 3) 1
 - Not part of a group 0

Scores of 4 or more were given a Category 1
 Scores of 3 or 2 were given a Category 2+
 Scores of 1 or 0 were given a Category 2-
 Scores of -1 or less were given a Category 3

Category 1 houses are relatively rare and are usually the best examples of their kind such that their retention should be in no doubt.

Category 2+ houses represent the majority of houses and are regarded as meeting the threshold for retention.

Category 2- houses are not regarded as meeting the threshold for retention and could be removed without detriment to character.

Category 3 houses are typically out of character houses for which there is no case for retention.

Based on this assessment method, the character houses were distributed thus:

Category 1	4%
Category 2+	55%
Category 2-	15%
Category 3	26%



This leads to the conclusion that the majority of houses in the curtailed, detailed survey area (approximately 60%) make a definite contribution to the character of the area and may justify retention.

NEWTOWN CHARACTER PRECINCT

General Location: refer to attached map

History: refer to Part 2 Contextual Study

Description: The Newtown area is characterised by historical and architectural components of the built and cultural landscape environment that generate a unique local identity. The flat topography and grid pattern of wide open streets which are relatively devoid of street trees has given Newtown a sparser and more open character than the typical camphor laurel-lined streets of East Toowoomba. While this may not have aesthetic significance, it is none-the-less an important distinguishing visual characteristic of the area. The area is characterised by large suburban blocks (typically in the 800m² range) with wide street frontages (typically in the 20m range). Combined with a predominant building stock of detached, single-storey, low-set houses, it creates a character of modest low-density, open suburban living typical of the mid-20th Century. The built environment features a diversity of low-set, single-storey detached houses predominantly from the periods prior to and immediately after World War 2 (circa 1930 – 1955) which was the major period of development of the area. The predominant building materials are timber and corrugated iron but there is also a significant amount of brick and tile used. While this mid-20th Century built form predominates, there is also some significant earlier housing stock including a number of large 19th Century villas related to the area's early history. Consistent with a long-standing, self-contained community, is the existence of a wide range of historical, social and physical infrastructure such as corner shops, hotels, halls, churches, schools and parks. The nearby Clifford Park Racecourse has seen a long-standing association with horse racing in those parts of Newtown surrounding the racecourse and parts of Newtown have a strong association with medical care and recreation of World War 2 service personnel.

Significance: The Newtown area has historical value because of its association with events, developments and cultural phases which have played a significant role in the occupation, evolution and pattern of development of Toowoomba especially in relation to mid-20th Century suburban development and as evidence of the post-World War 2 housing boom.

The Newtown area has social value because it is recognised by the community as having public value and is held in high esteem for its association with past generations whose history is interwoven with the history of the place.

The Newtown area has architectural value because of the prevalence and representative range of typical Queensland early- to mid-20th Century domestic architecture which, unlike



most other areas of Queensland, is almost entirely low-set in format.

Contributing Elements:

- Pre- and post-World War 2 low-set, detached houses (up to circa 1965)
- Large suburban lots with wide frontages
- Grid pattern of streets
- The relative openness and spaciousness of wide streets without large street trees
- The surviving social and physical infrastructure of the early- to mid-20th Century such as corner shops, hotels, churches, schools and halls
- The major public open space of Newtown Park
- Mature street trees (although rare)
- Bluestone kerbs (although rare)
- Activities associated with horse racing, particularly stables

Neutral Elements:

- Late 20th Century low-set, detached houses (post circa 1965)

Detracting Elements:

- Generally post-1965 multiple dwellings

PLACES OF POTENTIAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

A preliminary list of 143 places of potential heritage significance has been identified. These places require further detailed assessment to verify their significance. A significant number of these places are houses which are also identified in the character housing assessment as worthy of retention. Depending on the eventual urban conservation controls, these houses may not need to remain on this list. There are also a number of places on the preliminary list which have insufficient locational or other necessary data to be perused beyond a preliminary list stage.

Included in this list are a small number of houses already entered on other heritage lists such as the Register of the National Trust, the Queensland Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate. These places are:

- "Tor"
- "Weetwood"
- "Ascot House"
- "Spreydon"
- "Oak Lodge" and
- "Elphin"

The preliminary list of places of potential heritage significance is set out in Appendix 1.



4 CONSERVING HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

The nature of our society is such that most of our urban areas undergo continuing, and often drastic, change. Indeed, much of this change may be for the better – there are few parts of our cities, suburbs, towns and villages which cannot be improved. However if we decide, for one reason or another, that an area has some special character or a place has heritage significance, there is an implication that change will be carefully managed; that it will be directed towards respecting what exists; and ensuring that changes build on existing characteristics rather than basically altering them.

The Toowoomba City Council is primarily responsible for the control of development, building and land use. As such, the decisions Council makes will be those which primarily determine whether or not urban conservation areas are conserved, and the success of such conservation.

In terms of character protection and heritage conservation, Council has five major responsibilities.

- To ensure that its area is surveyed and that urban conservation areas and heritage places are identified.
- To prepare statutory planning controls which will prevent damage (wilful or unwitting) to the areas.
- To ensure that all departments of the Council's staff are aware of the need to conserve the identified areas, and of the methods to achieve successful conservation.
- To ensure that its Works programs and expenditure are geared towards assisting the conservation of the areas identified.
- To undertake a program of public education and awareness-building, to ensure that residents, property owners, investors, workers etc are aware of the heritage and character attributes of the area, the need for the conservation of these attributes, and the means by which conservation can be achieved.

There has always been, and will continue to be, community debate about conservation and about the degree of conservation which is appropriate for any particular area.

A balance must be struck between development and conservation, but it must always be borne in mind that the two are not diametric opposites. They can work complementarily, with appropriate scales and types of development in the right locations being used to complement heritage places and assist in the economic viability of items and areas which are to be conserved.

All the departments of Council, as well as its elected Councillors, should share the responsibility for conserving the Newtown area. The planning department has control over major new development, and should frame and exercise that control so that new development is harmonious with the identified character and heritage significance. The building department, responsible for alteration to existing buildings, must ensure that changes are sympathetic with the area's character. The engineering department is responsible for ensuring that public works enhance, rather than damage and destroy important qualities of the area. The parks and gardens department should be responsible for caring for and reinstating the significant landscape qualities of the area.



Urban conservation is an all-encompassing caring for the whole quality of the urban area. To leave it as the sole responsibility of one section of Council will inevitably result in frustration, and in a less-than-satisfactory result.

4.1 CONSERVATION OPTIONS

The implementation options for all areas of policy are extremely broad and wide ranging. In general terms they can be classified into the following four groups:

- voluntary measures
- induced measures
- regulatory controls
- imposed outcomes

Within each of these classifications there are many options which are available. However, in practice the number of options is curtailed by considerations including the scope of power available to the implementation agency and the funds that it has at its disposal. Nevertheless the scope remains quite wide and a full examination of all possibilities is warranted.

Voluntary Measures

Voluntary ones are those directed at achieving attitudinal changes. They generally rely on educational programs which seek to bring about modifications in behaviour through the development of social attitudes. Such measures are likely to be effective only if those following the policy can be readily identified and are perceived as trend setters and, additionally, if there is no economic penalty involved.

It is therefore apparent that such measures could be appropriate to securing the objective of heritage conservation providing the economic aspects can be met. These aspects will require the careful management of land use entitlements which are part of the regulatory regime. Promoting sympathetic colour schemes for old buildings and local heritage awards are examples of this groups of measures.

Induced Measures

Induced measures include those programs which are generally based on economics through the imposition of penalties or subsidies. While penalties can be used in a limited manner for heritage conservation they are a matter of last resort.

The reverse approach of subsidisation offers better outcomes but has to be tailored to meet the financial constraints of the Council.

Nevertheless opportunities on a limited scale may exist for such measures. Reducing or waiving Council fees or giving rates concessions in Urban Conservation Areas are examples of this group of measures.

Regulatory Controls

The third category of implementation measures is that afforded by a regulatory regime. This most commonly used approach has many advantages notably in the diversity of measures which can be applied. Its principal disadvantage is in its invoking. That is, it normally only becomes operative when some action, usually development, is proposed. Even so, it is a powerful mechanism which, for reasons explained later, makes it ideal as the pivotal system for urban conservation.



Imposed Outcomes

Finally, there is the group of measures classified as imposed. These range from absolute resumptions to various forms of shared controls which are nevertheless imposed on private individuals. While being highly effective such measures are costly and often unpopular. Their application in the field of heritage conservation is generally restricted to a small number of highly significant places.

From this general overview it is apparent that there is considerable scope for the adoption of implementation measures suitable for heritage conservation.

Underlying Considerations

While there are valid social and scientific reasons which of themselves warrant the conservation of heritage places, these, in the main, can only be justified for a limited number of places exhibiting a demonstrable and proven level of significance. This study is seeking to identify both those specific heritage places and broader urban conservation areas which contain a fabric which, when viewed as a whole, exhibits recognisable and valued characteristics in a cohesive sense.

In this respect, the objectives relevant to this study are not only those which can be derived from social and scientific goals but also emanate from the rather more general goal of providing a high level of amenity for residents to improve the liveability of the city.

The approach adopted by most planning schemes to achieve amenity objectives is fundamentally that of controlling land use. Such controls are premised on the notion of separating incompatible land uses. However the basis for this approach is not relevant for the outcome of urban conservation because urban conservation is not, in itself, a question of land use, although this control may be warranted for other reasons.

The second common approach to amenity adopted in planning schemes is that of imposing development requirements on new developments. These requirements have focussed on neighbourliness from the point of view of noise, privacy, sunlight and shade and so on. They have, in the main, been devoid of controls which determine form and character.

Thus it is not surprising that the traditional approaches found in town plans have been relatively ineffectual in conserving heritage values. Consequently it will be necessary to adopt alternative approaches which address the fundamental characteristics associated with urban conservation. Key considerations which must be recognised are as follows:

- What knowledge exists of these places? Is it detailed and site specific or is it of a more general nature?
- What level of ability exists to influence the conservation of these places? What is the political commitment and is there a legal basis for control?
- What is the threat to the places identified? Is it atrophy or is it land economics?
- What are the spatial characteristics of the identified places?

It is against this background that the key functions of urban conservation can be approached.

These are:

- conserve the **fabric** of the place
- conserve the **setting** of the place
- conserve the **context** of the place.



Briefly these functions can be explained in the following way. The conservation of the fabric is concerned with the maintenance of the physical properties of the place. It may be important to retain the internal layout of a building as a number of small rooms which reflect and reinforce its heritage significance as a residence. Equally its external fabric may have importance for its contribution to the streetscape.

The integrity of the site may equally be of importance. Typically front gardens with ornamental plantings reinforce the role of a place as a residence and it may not be appropriate to replace such features with, for example, carparking.

Lastly, the contextual setting of a heritage place may be important. For example, the understanding and appreciation of a farmhouse's setting on a hilltop may be lost if the development of adjoining properties obscures this relationship.

It is against this background that the options for conservation measures should be considered. As has been noted earlier, the regulatory regime is likely to be the basis for securing outcomes with other measures being adopted to complement and support the overall program. Thus, the recommendations in the following section focus on the regulatory tools available in the town planning framework.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Part 3 of the study report identified a number of places of potential heritage significance. It also identified local characteristics that distinguish Newtown from other parts of Toowoomba and appear to be valued by the local community. The following recommendations seek to ensure the conservation of Newtown's character and places of heritage significance.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that a register of places of potential heritage significance be created and maintained.

Rationale: In order to protect places of heritage significance, they must first be identified, then assessed so as to articulate why they are important and, then recorded. The current study has identified a list of places in Newtown for which there is a prima-facie case of heritage significance. They are referred to as being of "potential" significance because sufficiently-detailed and -reliable historical research has not been able to be carried out within the scope of this study.

While most places would be of local significance, places meeting higher thresholds of significance (such as those places on the Queensland Heritage Register) should also be included for completeness. These latter places will not require further research or assessment and will probably be managed by other levels of government such as via the Queensland Heritage Act.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that further research and assessment be carried out on places of potential heritage significance to verify their significance.

Rationale: For some types of heritage places (such as those with architectural or aesthetic value) their qualities of significance are mostly self-evident and they may be reliably assessed by what can be seen. Some other types of places (such as those



with historical, archaeological or social value) can only be reliably-assessed by thorough historical research or by surveys of stakeholder attitudes. Until such further study is done, these latter places should still be protected but remain regarded as "potentially" significant.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that attributes which characterise Newtown and/or distinguish it from other parts of Toowoomba be acknowledged and protected.

Rationale: Newtown has a distinctly different character to many other parts of Toowoomba which helps to make up the overall character of the city. This character is largely derived by the built environment in the form of large stocks of pre- and post-World War 2 housing set in a grid pattern of open suburban streets and wide lots. Also, since the early (but brief) days of the Newtown Town Council, Newtown has prided itself as being slightly distinct from the rest of "Toowoomba". These diversities of history and built form deserve acknowledgment and protection.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that places of potential heritage significance in Council ownership or control be protected by appropriate conservation management.

Rationale: As an authority regulating the conservation management of places in private ownership, it is important for the Council's credibility that it demonstrates good standards of conservation management with its own heritage assets. If dealt with properly, such an approach need be no more onerous than normal responsible asset management.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that places of potential heritage significance in private ownership be protected through regulated controls.

Rationale: The Council has, at its disposal, considerable powers with respect to regulating and controlling heritage places. Given that most heritage places in the study area are buildings, then control of demolition and development become fundamental planks in the heritage control regime and can be readily implemented through the statutory planning process and local laws. While voluntary measures may have some desirability, they give no certainty and are likely to be ineffective.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that private owners of places of potential heritage significance be offered concessions and incentives.

Rationale: Owners of heritage places often feel disadvantaged with respect to development "rights" and processes. It is often the case that a greater degree of scrutiny and assessment given to heritage places at a development application stage can involve additional time and costs in relation to the preparation of professional reports. While long-standing owners of heritage places will accept this as a normal part of the development process, owner of newly-listed places may see the listing as an imposition such that financial or time concessions may be welcome.



With respect to development “rights”, demolition control of heritage places is likely to restrict development potential on some sites and may potentially expose the Council to compensation claims of injurious affection. The ability to make such claims has recently been limited, but not extinguished, by the Integrated Planning Act.

Concessions and incentives could include:

- rates rebate on heritage places
- waiver of development application fees
- relaxation of development standards
- more-flexible land uses
- fast-tracking of development applications
- free heritage advice by the Council’s Heritage Advisory Service.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the character of the area be protected through regulatory controls.

Rationale: Council currently regulates the character of much of the inner residential area through the Residential Conservation Code of the Planning Scheme. One option is to simply extend the current package of controls over those parts of the study area which contain substantial amounts of pre- and post-World War 2 character housing. This would represent about 80% of the study area. Community input to date would seem to support such an approach.

Alternatively, a different package of controls could be developed that uniquely deals with Newtown’s particular characteristics. The retention of the older housing stock in its low-density setting would be a fundamental aim, but whether or not this necessarily requires demolition control of character houses is dependent on a number of factors such as desirability to retain the existing housing stock, the degree of threat to the existing housing stock and other planning priorities such as the provision of higher residential densities close to the city.

In any package of controls, regulation of lot configuration and compatibility of new built form with the established character of the area should be fundamental.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the local community continue to be involved in the decision-making process with respect to the conservation of Newtown’s character and heritage places.

Rationale: Community input to date has helped inform the study by identifying valued characteristics, providing local history and warning of perceived threats to the area’s character. In many ways, the local community is the best-equipped to help Council develop policy that is workable and responsive to local needs. Since many of the community participants to date are also property owners in the area, they are also key stakeholders in the process.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that support be given for local community conservation action.

Rationale: Urban conservation initiatives can be great community-building exercises. Most people have a natural interest in the quality of their surroundings and many are



willing to be actively involved in their suburb's betterment. Supporting local conservation initiatives fosters community understanding of heritage issues, instills pride in a local community and can relieve Council of some of the resource burden.

Some initiatives include:

- help establish or support an existing Friends Group to manage or maintain a heritage place
- hold a seminar on researching the history of your house
- sponsor an art or photographic competition with the theme of local character
- recognise personal or community effort and achievement in the area of heritage conservation by a local heritage awards program.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that public awareness be raised about heritage and character issues in Newtown.

Rationale: Although parts of Newtown are currently included in Council's urban conservation program, there are some specific measures that can focus on Newtown's distinctive characteristics such as:

- revise "The Toowoomba House" book to include recognised post-World War 2 housing styles typical of Newtown
- prepare another brochure in the Council's current heritage brochure series focussing on Newtown's heritage places and character.



***Appendix 1 Places of Potential
Significance – for further
investigation***

