

# Royal Hospital for Women Park, Paddington

detailed design, documentation and construction  
management

**Client**

Woollahra Municipal Council

**Design Team**

*Master Plan:* Terragram

*Landscape Architect:* Turf Design Studio

*Structural Engineer:* Shreeji Consultants

*Civil Engineer:* Alan Dean Associates

*Stonemasonry Advice:* Dept. of Commerce; Joy Singh, Alf Pires, Angus Donald

*Landscape Contractor:* Glascott Group

*Stonemason:* Rick Timperi

# An old hospital gives birth to a new park.

The old Royal Hospital for Women, demolished for residential development, finds a resting place within a new park for Paddington.

Royal Hospital for Women was closed in 1998 for redevelopment as residential housing, with a half a hectare of the site fronting Glenmore Road reserved as open space by Woollahra Municipal Council.

This park takes its name from The Benevolent Society's Royal Hospital for Women. 'The Royal' operated between 1901 and 1997 when it moved to Randwick.

The idea of the park, initiated by local residents and community groups during the planning for the redevelopment of the site, was adopted by The Benevolent Society as a tangible memory of their time in Paddington.

The park has been designed and constructed by Woollahra Council. Turf Design Studio was commissioned to undertake design development, documentation and construction management of the Masterplan prepared by Woollahra Council Urban Design Team in association with Terragram.



## Opening Day Speech, by Mayor Geoff Rundle

*The park takes its name from the Royal Hospital for Women which stood on this and surrounding land between 1901 and 1997, under the control of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales.*

*'The Royal', as the hospital was fondly called, was dedicated to improving conditions and treatment for all women and children and was known for its high standard of care and for many innovations in medical practice.*



IMAGE SUPPLIED BY WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL

*It is because of this significant history that it was important in designing the Park that contribution of the Royal was appropriately acknowledged. Besides the name, looking around you will find many symbolic reminders of the Royal Hospital for Women and in the future the Park will feature a memorial to the babies who lost the fight for life at the Hospital.*

*Innovations that occurred at the Royal included, the opening of the first baby health centre in Australia in 1906, providing the first Antenatal Clinic in NSW in 1912 and the development of Australia's first diagnostic ultrasound unit in 1962. By the time of its closure in 1997, 280,000 babies had been delivered at the Royal.*

*Within the Park, the pillars to the original entry gates from Glenmore Road have been retained as the main pedestrian entry to the park. Historic sandstone remnants including the architraves, friezes, cornices and lintels have also been incorporated into the design of the Park. The location of the former tennis court is defined by sandstone markers set in lawn near Flinton Street. Interpretative signage has also been installed to explain the significant history of the area and the site to visitors of the Park.*

*While incorporating these historic elements, the Park has also been designed as a neighbourhood park that reflects the village atmosphere of the surrounding area. The Park is the largest open space within the heart of Paddington and has been described by members of the community as a welcoming place.*

*The Royal Hospital for Women Park is a great spot for locals to come read a book, bring their children to play or meet up with friends.*

*The site is saturated with local history and much emotion. We have been very fortunate to have the input and assistance of so many local residents and community groups who have helped us get to this point.*



IMAGE SUPPLIED BY WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL

*I would particularly like to thank the Paddington Society for their involvement and enthusiasm in getting this Park to this stage and the Woollahra History and Heritage Society for their input into local history records.*

*Our thanks go to Woollahra Council's Warwick Hatton, David Sheils and Rod Ward for overseeing the project management of the Park. We would also like to thank Tom Sitta from Terragram and Woollahra Council's Margaret Zulaikha who were responsible for developing the original concept plan of the park. Thanks also to the landscape architects Mike Horne and Scott Ibbotson of Turf Design Studio for their hard work and creativity in design development and documentation of the park. Finally our thanks go to Matt Glascott and Matt Burke of the Glascott Group and stonemason Rick Timperi for construction of the park.*

*Just as the Royal Hospital for Women saw the birth of so many babies today marks the birth of this new Park. I hope the Park will provide a wonderful meeting place and recreational space for residents and will serve as a fitting tribute to its significant heritage for future generations.*

*It is now with great pleasure that I declare the Royal Hospital for Women Park officially open.*

*Saturday 9th April 2005*



MAIN FEATURE WALL INCORPORATING SALVAGED STONE PIECES



# Masterplan

In November 1997, Woollahra Council undertook two public workshops to initiate the project with the local community to establish values and strategy for development for the park, a preliminary concept plan was prepared by council and was presented to a community reference group that included members of the Paddington society, ward councillors, State MP Clover Moore member for Bligh, representatives of Stocklands (site developer) and members of the local community

The Masterplan was then developed from these preliminary Council concepts by Tom Sitta from Terragram and Woollahra Council's Margaret Zulaikha.



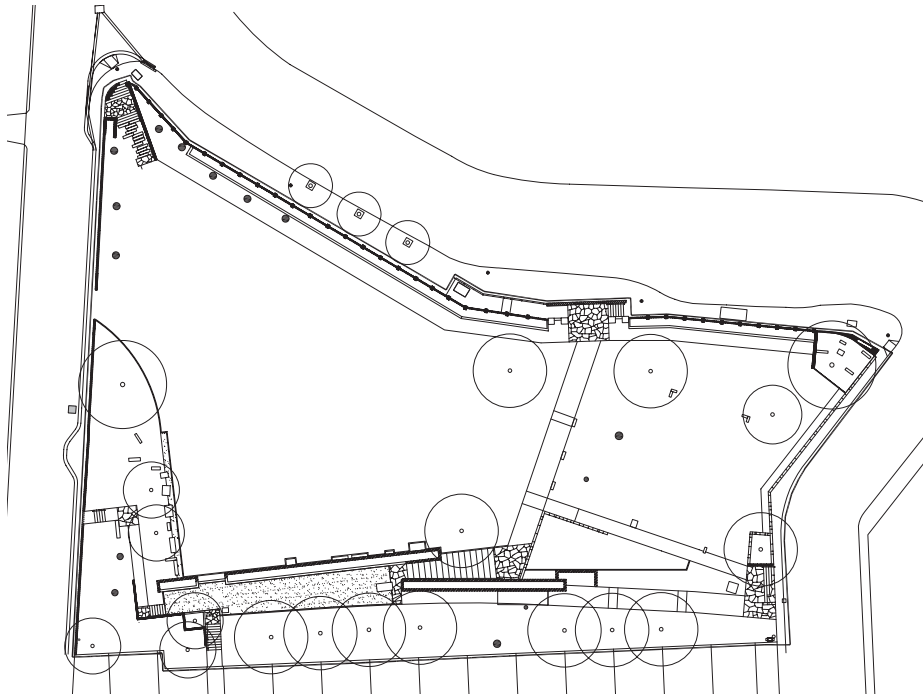
RHW PARK PADDINGTON - PLAN  
FOR WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, PREPARED BY TERRAGRAM PTY / LTD

## Detailed Design and Documentation

Turf Design Studio were responsible for design development and documentation of Royal Hospital for Women's park, this included re-cataloguing and reuse of existing site stone, and further refinement of the Masterplan within site constraints and budgetary controls. Detailed documentation included general arrangements, site demolition, site setout and levels plans, electrical, drainage and services plans, irrigation plan, site sections, site construction detailing plans and planting plan.

Rather than trying to replicate or reconstruct previous structures within the park, significant pieces of stone placed around the site will explore their dislocation and act as artifacts that evoke memories of past times, places and people.

The park is structured as two distinct levels; as a broad lawn sloping north toward Glenmore Road, overlooked by an upper seating terrace access via new pathways and entry thresholds.



Level changes are handled using a series of sandstone walls intersected by generous stairs and ramps where needed. Sandstone remnant from the demolished hospital buildings were stockpiled on site.

Turf worked with Joy Singh and Alf Peris of the State Government Stone program to ensure heritage and construction considerations were properly addressed.



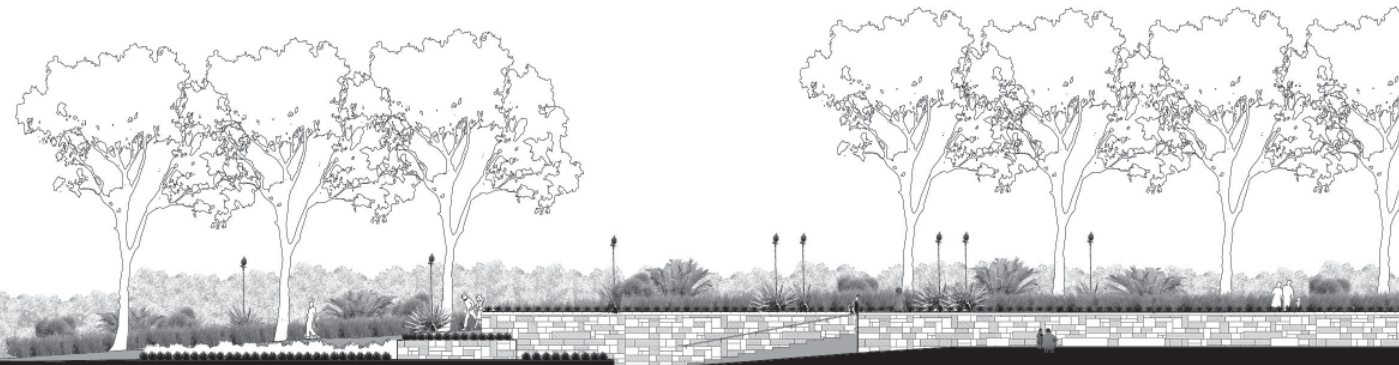
SALVAGED FEATURE SANDSTONE



SALVAGED SANDSTONE IN LAWN

Stone elements are incorporated into the new sandstone walls forming a montage of old and new. The higher quality pieces are displayed on the lawn with interpretive information describing their source. Other large broken pieces lay as ruins in the planted embankment.

Broken sandstone paving provide thresholds at key entry points and junctions in the pedestrian pathway system.







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Above The main hospital building as seen from the tennis court, circa 1918.

The Royal Hospital for Women falls within the Paddington Conservation Area which is recognised regionally and nationally for its consistent townscape qualities representing the historical, social, cultural and aesthetic growth of the area, the royal hospital for women has contributed towards this significance. Much of the physical evidence of the hospital has now been demolished but through meaningful interpretation of items of heritage significance and through interpretive signage the story of the site will live on.

The original Main Wing, later the Gynaecological Wing, has been retained and converted to apartments; the distinctive chimney, built in 1942, has been retained as a symbolic landmark.

Within the Park, the pillars to the original entry gate from Glenmore Road are retained as the main pedestrian entry to the park. Sandstone elements from many of the earlier buildings, including architraves, friezes, cornices and lintels, have been incorporated in the design of the park. The location of the former tennis court is defined by sandstone markers set in the lawn near Flinton Street.



IMAGE SUPPLIED BY WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL

