PETERSHAM TAFE WEST

CONSERVATION PLAN

Heritage Group State Projects
Department of Public Works & Services
for
NSW Technical & Further Education Commission

August 1996

Report No HG96/19
PETERSHAM TAFE WEST - CONSERVATION PLAN

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Aims of the Study 1
1.2 Scope 1
1.3 Methodology 2
1.4 Acknowledgements 4
1.5 Areas for Further Research 4
1.6 Conservation Terminology 4
1.7 Technical Terminology 5
1.8 Abbreviations 5

2.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE AND BUILDINGS 7
2.1 Background and Establishment of the School 9
2.2 The Original School Building 10
2.3 Petersham Public School 1878-84 15
2.4 Petersham Superior Public School 1884-96 17
2.5 An Educational Centre 1896-1920 21
2.6 Higher Education at Petersham 1920-96 32
2.7 Recent Alterations and Current Condition of the Buildings 35
2.8 Summary of the School's Evolution 36
2.9 Table of Functions and Status of Petersham School 38

3.0 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE 43
3.1 Basis of Assessment 45
3.2 NSW State Heritage Inventory 45
3.3 Statement of Significance 46
3.4 Levels of Significance 48
3.5 Landscaping Elements 48
3.6 Levels of Significance Plan 49
3.7 Schedule of Significant Fabric 50

4.0 CONSERVATION POLICIES 53
4.1 General 54
4.2 Future Use of the Site 55
4.3 Recording 55
4.4. Context 55
4.5 The Original School Buildings 56
4.6 Services 59
4.7 Landscaping 59

5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY 61

APPENDIX A CHRONOLOGY 67
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Plan for Petersham TAFE West was commissioned in March 1996 by Operations Division of the Department of Public Works and Services on behalf of the Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFE). It was prompted partly by the recent conversion of Block E and is designed to guide the future development of the site.

1.1 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The Conservation Plan aims to document the site's history and development, to analyse and set out the cultural significance of the place and to develop policies for its future conservation. It is intended to be a working document and is designed to be accessible to all those responsible for the future care and management of the site.

1.2 SCOPE

Petersham TAFE West is located between Gordon Street and West Street, less than 500m from Petersham Railway Station (Fig. 1-1). The site under consideration covers approximately 0.8ha and comprises five main buildings. Block E is the original Public School dating from 1878, Blocks C and D are additions from around the turn of the century. Blocks A and B were added in the mid 1960s when the site became a Girls' High School.

Fig. 1-1 Street Map of Petersham (Site under consideration is shown black)

The scope of the study includes all the buildings and landscaping on the site including the boundary walls and landscaping.
The major elements of the site are identified on the site plan shown below.

Fig. 1-2 Petersham TAFE West site in 1996.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The team responsible for the study consisted of:

Sean Johnson Conservation Architect
Heritage Group, Department of Public Works & Services

Terry Kass Consultant Historian

Tony Popovich Landscape Technician

The historian carried out documentary research and submitted a report giving a detailed account of the history of the site. The conservation architect inspected the site and buildings. From these sources and from original research carried out by the Heritage Group, a summary of the history, building and landscaping design was assembled. This led to a general Statement of Significance and to Conservation Policies for the site.

Section 2 of this report was based on Terry Kass's historical outline report, revised and added to by Sean Johnson to include a description and analysis of the buildings and landscaping. Terry's original document in all its details remains intact and is available for reference from the Heritage Group.
This report follows the structure set out by J.S. Kerr in *The Conservation Plan* and is consistent with the guidelines to *The Burra Charter*. The sequence of work adopted is illustrated by the following diagram.

![Diagram of the Conservation Plan Process](image-url)
1.4 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the following people for their valuable assistance during the preparation of this report:

Mary McPherson Historical Resources Department, NSW Dept of School Education.
Libby Maher Marrickville Council Heritage Advisor
Mark Matheson Local historian
John Carr Architect, DPWS Hunter New England Region

1.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a need for more research into the school buildings of New South Wales, in particular those of George Allen Mansfield. During the preparation of this report considerable time was spent assessing the status of the original school building at Petersham, in relation to the rest of Mansfield’s school designs. But due to the large number of schools designed by Mansfield and the little research that has been done on this topic, the assessment must be viewed as provisional. Ideally, when carrying out a study of this type, one should be able to refer to a comprehensive comparative study of the State's school buildings, similar to that available in Victoria.¹

Intriguing questions remain about the sources of architectural design, attempts to standardise school plans, and Mansfield’s adaptation of the Gothic Revival Style to local conditions. One fact that has emerged clearly is the importance of this body of work to the State, in terms of its contribution to the quality of our built environment and for the physical evidence it provides of the educational system at a time of rapid change.

A thorough search was made for documentary evidence relating to the school. Such searches, however, are never exhaustive and it should be expected that further information will come to light over time. One gap in the story is left by the lack of documentary evidence about the extension of the school by William Kemp between 1882 and 1884. More photographs of the site no doubt exist and they could also add greatly to our understanding of its development.

1.6 CONSERVATION TERMINOLOGY

The following definitions taken from the Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter) have been used in this report.

Fabric means all the physical material of the place.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstance include preservation, restoration and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and should be treated accordingly.

Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
**Restoration** means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

**Reconstruction** means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric. This is not to be confused with either re-creation or conjectural reconstruction which are outside the scope of the charter.

**Adaptation** means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.

**Compatible use** means a use involving no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes requiring minimal impact.

### 1.7 Technical Terminology

- **Architrave**: Moulded frame surrounding a window or door.
- **Bed mould**: A small timber moulding fixed under a gutter.
- **Corbel**: A course of masonry projecting from the face of the wall.
- **Cornice**: Ornamental moulding between ceiling and wall.
- **Coursed rubble**: Rubble walling built in regular horizontal courses.
- **English bond**: Pattern of brickwork with alternate courses made up of stretchers and headers.
- **Fenestration**: Architectural arrangement of windows in a facade.
- **Flat arch**: An arch with a level underside formed of wedge shaped elements.
- **Flemish bond**: Pattern of brickwork made up of alternating stretchers and headers.
- **Gable parapet**: Wall at end of a roof projecting above the roof plane.
- **Header**: A brick built into a wall showing its short face.
- **Hipped roof**: A roof with four faces instead of the usual two, the shorter sides are the hipped ends.
- **Holland blind**: A linen fabric roller blind.
- **Leader**: Downpipe discharging into a rainwater head.
- **Ogee gutter**: A rainwater gutter with an S-shaped curved cross section.
- **Pediment**: A triangular gable feature in classical architecture.
- **Plinth**: The projecting base of a wall, generally with a chamfered top.
- **Quad gutter**: A plain gutter profile with a rounded lower edge.
- **Quoin**: Corner of a masonry wall.
- **Rainwater head**: A box-shaped metal receptacle for collecting a regulating rainwater flow into a downpipe.
- **Rendered**: Exterior plastering using a sand/cement mix.
- **Repointing**: Repair of mortar brick jointing.
- **Rusticated**: Given the appearance of masonry cut in massive blocks separated from each other by deep joints.
- **Sash window**: A window containing sashes: glazed frames running in vertical grooves.
- **Segmental**: Made up of part of a circle.
- **Senescent**: Showing signs of age.
- **Stretcher**: A brick built into a wall showing its long side face.
- **Tuck pointing**: A decorative form of brick pointing designed to give the impression of precision.
1.8 Abbreviations

AHC   Australian Heritage Commission  
AO    Archives Office of NSW  
AR    Annual Report  
DPWS  Dept. of Public Works & Services  
DSE  NSW Dept. of School Education  
DUAP  Dept. of Urban Affairs & Planning  
ICOMOS  International Council of Monuments and Sites  
LEP  Local Environmental Plan  
ML  Mitchell Library  
n.a.  not applicable  
n.d.  no date  
n.p.  no pagination  
NSWGG  New South Wales Government Gazette  
NT  National Trust of Australia (NSW)  
PWD  Public Works Department  
REP  Regional Environmental Plan  
SMH  Sydney Morning Herald  
SPF  Small Pictures File (Mitchell Library)  
TAFE  NSW Technical and Further Education Commission

1.9 References

2.0

HISTORY OF THE SITE & BUILDINGS
2.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE AND BUILDINGS

2.1 BACKGROUND AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Petersham Public School is built on or near the site of the former Petersham House. The house was occupied for a brief period by William Charles Wentworth. It is believed to have been the original farmhouse of George Blaxcell, Acting Secretary to the Governor.  

The area was settled very early in the 1790s and the population grew gradually as rural land use began and larger houses for Sydney based owners were built. It lay within the Parish of Petersham laid out as parish within the County of Cumberland but the suburb comprised only a small part of that parish. Petersham began to achieve its separate identity in the 1850s. The railway station was originally named Sydenham, but the name was changed to Petersham in 1857 after community support for the change of name. By then, the railway was already having an impact as it provided better access into the city and enabled residential development to grow.

Municipal incorporation as the Municipality of Petersham was instituted in 1871. By the 1870s, the area was developing rapidly. All Saints Church was built in 1871. A subdivisional boom in the locality from the 1850s to the 1870s opened up a good deal of land for suburban settlement. West's paddock on which the school is situated was one of the later estates to be subdivided. From a modest population of 750 in 1871, the number of people residing in Petersham leapt to 3,413 in 1881. The area had been served by a Roman Catholic School from at least 1854 and by a Church of England School from 1873. But as the number of people living there boomed, and there were few schools nearby, residents began to press for a public school.

A public meeting of 5 June 1876 passed a resolution that the area should be granted a public school and it established a committee to bring that event about. The Committee included a number of prominent citizens such as W. H. Piggott, a noted solicitor, W. H. Paling, merchant and musical entrepreneur; A. H. McCulloch, solicitor; J. F. Wooster, importer; F. Kirkpatrick, Inspector of Accounts and George Pile, land agent of the firm of Mills and Pile which was so active in auctioning land along the railway line from Sydney to Parramatta, including Petersham. In that period, residents were expected to contribute one third of the cost of land and buildings to establish a new school in their area as well as guaranteeing a minimum number of children to attend it.

A formal application for a school at Petersham was drawn up on 19 August 1876 and included the usual signatures of parents, of all religious denominations who stated that their children were ready and anxious to attend any new school. By the time the inspector was able to visit the area, fifteen more houses had been built and another forty were being erected, he noted. There were established schools at Marrickville, Newtown, Ashfield and Burwood, all of which were too far for very young children to reach. Construction of a school was favoured by the Inspector and the search for land commenced.

There were problems obtaining a suitable site. Those suggested by the local committee were not suitable, being either too far out from the railway line or on the northern side of the railway, away from most of the population it would serve. Estate agents, Hardie and Gorman offered parts of West's paddock, near the railway for £2,000 to the Council of Education. It eventually accepted lots 7-12, and 18-23, Section I of the estate at cost of £2000, on the proviso that a right of way be established from Frazers Road to the back of the school. The vendors readily agreed, even though they were put to extra expense by the requirement. After all, the erection
of a school on an estate being subdivided was a strong attraction for potential buyers. Coupled with the accessibility of the railway station, and the construction of the Presbyterian Church adjacent to the School in 1881, West's Paddock was a very attractive high class estate, which was eventually built over with houses of an elevated quality, such as the one named St Just purchased by the school in 1912. The new street was named Frank Street and is now part of The Boulevarde.

![Image of West's Paddock, 1877, lots 7-12 and 18-23 were purchased for the school. (Source: School File AONSW 5/17327)](image)

While manufacturing industries concentrated in the lower lying areas of Marrickville, more salubrious suburbs such as Petersham situated on the northern ridges were far less industrialised. According to Shirley Fitzgerald, Petersham ranked at the top of Sydney's suburbs in terms of social status. The area was reported to have 'some of the finest views round Sydney' it had been heavily wooded with species such as turpentine, figs, she-oaks and eucalypts. Pockets of the original vegetation were noted as surviving into the mid 1880s.

2.2 THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL BUILDING

Once the site was formally acquired, plans for the school could be drawn up. A Memo to the Council of Education's Architect, G. A. Mansfield, was drawn up on 16 December 1876 directing him to draw up plans to erect a brick school room and class room for 300 pupils plus a teacher's residence of four rooms and kitchen for Petersham. Although originally planned for construction, the teacher's residence was not built in an outburst of economy and the head
teacher had to occupy rented accommodation. On the 21 September 1877, Mansfield was instructed to draw up full plans for the school, making the Infants room 30 x 20 feet, and placing a gallery form across the rooms. The tender of Walker and Son, Ultimo for £4,126 was accepted for the erection of the school. The Council of Education decided to omit the weather shed originally called for in the tenders.

The first Petersham Public School, built in 1878, was positioned on the northern half of the site leaving a large area around it to the south and west. Future expansion of the school seems to have been anticipated from the start, although by the turn of the century it had already reached its limits of its original site. The early photograph of the school reproduced on the cover of this report shows how barren and shadeless the grounds were; they probably stayed that way until the Arbor Day movement of the 1890s.

Petersham was a medium-sized school, typical of the time and characteristic of the Gothic Revival work of the School Council's architect, G.Allen Mansfield. For the Municipality of Petersham, however, it would have been an important public building and a sign of the suburb's rising status. The photograph shows the fine stone and timber fence built along the New Cooks River Road (renamed Gordon Street in 1886) clearly indicating that this was considered the public frontage.
Background to the use of the Gothic Revival Style

The school was built at a time of rapid change and public interest in the education system. The role of the state in school education had been heatedly debated for many years and there had been outspoken criticism of the schools provided by the various churches. It was noted in 1855 that there was only enough accommodation for one third of school age children and that buildings were grossly overcrowded. The Public Schools Act of 1866 finally placed the five competing school systems: Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and government schools, under the authority of the Council of Education. Further extension of state control occurred only two years after Petersham P.S. was built with the Public Instruction Act of 1880 which made the state fully responsible for primary education, ended state aid to denominational schools and provided the framework for education in NSW ever since.

The Gothic Revival style had been employed occasionally throughout the 18th century in England, and in New South Wales, for its romantic associations and its picturesque appearance. It was not until the mid-19th century that it came into widespread use for secular as well as ecclesiastical buildings. After 1850 in England the style developed a new, eclectic character influenced greatly by John Ruskin’s writings. Ruskin promoted the use of hand crafted materials and brought Italian Gothic surface decoration to the notice of architects. The decorative effects possible with contrasting colours and textures of brick and stone began to be exploited by English architects like William Butterfield during the 1850s. In the next decade polychromatic brickwork was introduced to Australia by architects such as Joseph Reed in Melbourne, and by Edmund Blacket, John Horbury Hunt and Thomas Backhouse in Sydney. (Backhouse’s All Saints’ Church, Petersham, 1871, built in vivid red and yellow bricks would have been the most prominent public building in the area at the time.) Mansfield was one of these pioneers in the use of polychromatic brickwork in Australia.

It might seem strange that the new public school buildings of the 1860s and 70s were made to look like churches just at the time when the state was endeavouring to disengage education from the churches’ control. Partly this must have been simply a question of tradition, the link between religion and education was a strong one, partly it was due to the fact that Gothic became the accepted style for buildings associated with ethical values, such as educational establishments. In England the style had been used for many of the National Schools built in the 1850s and 1860s, but by the 1870s, the tide was turning against Gothic as the favoured school style. Robson in his influential book, School Architecture, showed the style of school suggested by the English Education Department at the time, although he went on to advocate avoidance of the pointed arch, proposing in its place a brick style of architecture based on the that of ‘the Jameses, Queen Anne, and the early Georges’ to express a ‘civil rather than ecclesiastical character’. In NSW, however, it was not until William Kemp took over as Schools Architect in 1880 that the style of school buildings moved away from Gothic.

4.—ELEVATION OF SCHOOL (INFANTS' AND "MIXED") FOR 250, AS SUGGESTED BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Fig. 2-3 Typical English School of the Period and of a similar size to Petersham (Source: E.R.Robson, 1874, p.15)
The Place of Petersham Public School in the Work of George Allen Mansfield

G.A. Mansfield (1834-1908) became one of New South Wales' most eminent architects. He was appointed Architect to the Council of Education in 1867 and continued in that capacity until 1880 when he resigned to go into practice with his brother Ralph. He became the first president of the Institute of Architects NSW in 1871 and was the first Australian born fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Mansfield Brothers, later Mansfield and Son, became one of the largest local practices and Mansfield was regarded (with Wardell) as one of the grand old men of Sydney architecture. Apart from his school work he designed prominent buildings such as: City Bank, Pitt St., 1874; Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, 1876-82, and Hotel Australia, 1884.

Mansfield designed over 90 public schools of varying size during his 13 years as Architect to the Council of Education. The majority of these were small country schools consisting of a single schoolroom, often with a porch, verandah and teacher's residence attached. At the other end of the scale were the impressive large city schools like Cleveland Street (1867), Sussex Street (1875) and Crown Street (1879) with separate provision for boys, girls and infants. Between these two extremes were the medium sized Public Schools such as the one built at Petersham in 1878. Mansfield's busiest years were the late 1870s. One year before Petersham P.S. was built, he urged the Council of Education to adhere to the use of 'model plans' to speed the work of his office. Model plans of five schools were proposed to be lithographed so that they could be simply traced by a draftsman.

...a tracing can be made to answer all the purposes of an "original" or "contract" plan, whereas an alteration of a few feet in length, a foot or so in width, or a fresh arrangement of school fittings, renders it necessary to make a fresh paper drawing of the whole plan, with its sections and elevations....With the great number of plans now in course of preparation the multiplication of such a difference in time, becomes a serious question.16

William Wilkins, Secretary to the Council of Education, asked Mansfield to show on his plans how each could be extended in the future to meet an increase in population. He described the order in which new departments would be created in a growing school: starting with a mixed school, then a mixed primary school with a separate infants department and leading to a school with separate boys', girls' and infants' departments.17 Petersham started out as the second type of school, containing a schoolroom for the primary department and a separate infants' room. It should therefore have been based on model plan number 4 but there were a number of significant differences.

The schoolroom was made much larger, there is one porch, an entrance hall and the infants room has parallel rows of desks and forms rather than at right angles as shown on the model plan. The most striking difference between the designs is the architectural treatment. Petersham, with its tower and spire, its dormer windows and Gothic tracery, is a much more impressive building than the no.4 model plan drawn two years previously. Mansfield did not achieve his stated goal of simply tracing standard drawings, at least not for the schools of medium size such as Petersham. A comparison between the original Petersham Public School and the five contemporary schools of a similar size shows how Mansfield continued to experiment in placement of elements and in external decoration.

Fig 2-4 Model School Plan No.4. 1877.
(Source: School Accommodation Folder. Historical Resources Dept., DSE)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/ Plan</th>
<th>Exterior view</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlington (1877)</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Darlington Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Uses moulded brickwork around windows. Octagonal tower, no dormers, main window composed of three equal lancets. Porch at outside end of verandah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta (1876)</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Parramatta Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Mixture of brick and stone dressings, main window composed of five lancets of varying heights, square tower, spire. Now part of Arthur Phillip High School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersham (1878)</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Petersham Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Brick with stone dressings, dormer windows to give extra daylighting, main window composed of three unequal lancets with stone ‘plate tracery’, squat square tower &amp; octagonal spire. Now part of Petersham TAFE West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverly (1878)</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Waverly Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Brick with stone dressings. No tower, no dormers, main window composed of four flat topped lancets contained within tripartite stone ‘plate tracery’. Mostly destroyed by later 2-storey additions. Some walls survive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickham (1878)</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Wickham Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Brick walls with diaper patterning. No tower, dormers shown sketched on lightly (not known whether they were built), flat-topped windows. Demolished prior to 1904.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yass (1877)</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Yass Exterior View" /></td>
<td>Brick with rendered trim. Square tower with flat-topped pyramidal roof. Classroom at end of schoolroom, inspection room next to infants. Still in use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: S = Schoolroom; C = Classroom; I = Infants room; P = Porch; V = Verandah.
A number of external factors such as the character of the site, its orientation and public visibility as well as the local availability of materials, influenced the designs; but the variety of stylistic devices in evidence shows that Mansfield took the opportunity to try different architectural treatments in each of these schools. Waverley and Wickham seem to have been the closest to model plan no. 4 but no two are alike, except in terms of the number and size of rooms provided, and, while they are all Gothic Revival designs, no attempt seems to have been made to standardise their architectural details. Using one style and palette of materials: brick, stone and timber, Mansfield created individual and craftsmanlike buildings which responded to their location. He adapted the Gothic style to suit the Australian climate using verandahs, roof vents and obscured glass but to seems to have turned his back on the Industrial Revolution, resorting to hand carved stone and timber (albeit fairly plain in decoration) and using rustic materials like timber roofing shingles. Mansfield's work for the Council of Education, while consisting mainly of modest buildings and breaking no new ground in terms of planning, invented a distinctive and consistent image for New South Wales primary schools. More than any other set of buildings in New South Wales, they show the influence of John Ruskin's writings.

Comparable buildings to the original Petersham Public School survive at Darlington, Parramatta and Yass. Each of the four remaining examples is a unique design but only Yass has continued to be used as a school. The 1878 building at Petersham therefore can be considered an intact and representative example of Mansfield's medium sized schools while being recognised as a one-off design.

2.3 Petersham Public School 1878-84

Once the building was complete, it was scheduled to open. It did so on 9 December 1878 with Arthur Branscombe Wood as the head teacher. Attendance for the first week of its opening was an average of 81.5 pupils. In January 1879, a separate Infants Department was established under Miss Belle Collins who remained at Petersham until her retirement in 1903. By September 1880, enrolment in the primary section was 310 and in the infants was 186, so six additional forms were supplied to cater for the number of pupils. Within a short time, Wood was expressing concern regarding dampness of the wall at the back of the Infants Department. When the architect Mansfield checked it on 21 November 1879, he noted that it did not need painting, but that all brick buildings showed some damp in very wet weather.

Weather sheds which had not been erected originally were provided in 1881. These were soon pressed into service as classrooms, as pupil numbers grew with the rapid expansion of suburban settlement nearby. By December 1881, Wood noted that four classes were having to take turns outside for their lesson, two on the verandahs and two in the new weather sheds. To try to meet the pressing needs for additional classroom space, the new Schools Architect, William Edmund Kemp, noted that he had a large tent 73 feet x 20 feet which could be used at either St Leonards or Petersham, both schools with urgent needs for more space. On 10 January 1882, the Inspector selected Petersham for the tent. A few days later, he also urged that a 40 feet x 20 feet tent should be added for the Infants Department. The accommodation shortage at Petersham was not unusual. Not only were country school suffering from overcrowding but so were a number of city schools. In 1882, Kemp was preparing plans for a standard model wooden school building which could be easily erected at certified denominational schools instead of tents.

On 24 June 1881, only two and a half years after its founding, Kemp was instructed to prepare plans for an extension which would virtually double the size of Petersham Public School. Since no plans had been completed by May 1882, he drew the disapproval of the Minister on
himself, though he defended his omission mentioning all of the other urgent school plans which he was being directed to prepare and stating that no special urgency had been communicated to him about the plan for Petersham.\textsuperscript{27} By putting an experienced draughtsman and a junior draftsman onto the project, Kemp managed to ensure that the plans for extensions were almost ready by 29 June 1882.\textsuperscript{28}

No plans or photographs of this development have been found but in 1884 the \textit{Australian Town and Country Journal} published a short piece on Petersham and included an illustration of the school. The accompanying description noted that the school was surrounded by a "substantial railing with stone pillars on either side of the gates".\textsuperscript{29} The small engraving published in the article gives an indication of the school’s appearance at the time. Kemp continued the roofline of Mansfield’s infants room, copying the triangular dormers and terminating the new wing in a gable similar to that at the northern end. Looking at the building today it is difficult to find any difference between Kemp’s and Mansfield’s masonry. The same type of brick and stone was used. Kemp rarely worked in the Gothic style, except when extending one of Mansfield’s schools, but he would have been conversant with the style since he had started his architectural career as a pupil of Cyril Blacket. Architecturally, however, the result is an awkward composition that looks as if it tried to be symmetrical and failed.

The first Petersham Public School building consisted of two principal spaces: a schoolroom and an infants’ room, each contained areas of raked seating with and without desks. (Fig. 2-2) The main entrance faced Gordon Street and was located in an open porch situated directly underneath the belltower. The original memo to the architect requested a school to accommodate 300 pupils; but in the event this must have been scaled down. Based on the standard allowance of 8 square feet per child or 18 inches each measured along the desks, the design capacity would have been only around 250 pupils.\textsuperscript{30} The smaller classroom was intended for separate lessons, in particular for denominational religious instruction. Clergymen of the different religions could be admitted to give religious instruction to their flock each day.

The design of the schoolroom as a single large space accommodating 3 or more groups of children was the standard arrangement at all English and Australian state schools until after the Knibbs and Turner Royal Commission in 1903 when smaller classrooms were advocated. The galleries were designed for collective teaching, mainly drilling in the 3 Rs.\textsuperscript{31} The teaching staff consisted of a head teacher and an infants teacher. They would have been assisted by one or more pupil teachers in accordance with the pupil teacher system introduced by William...
Wilkins in 1851. At some schools blocks of desks could be cordoned off from each other by curtains although it is not known whether this was done at Petersham.

During 1882, the school was elevated to a First Class School. By the time of the 1884 article it had become a school of the third type mentioned by Wilkins, having separate departments for girls, boys and infants. It would have contained two large school rooms, two smaller schoolrooms (possibly for infants) and two smaller classrooms for separate instruction.

Various minor works were completed. As a newly developing area, Petersham lacked paving and drainage, an essential requisite in an area where the natural drainage system was disordered by building works. Kerb and guttering were made in New Cooks River Road and West Street by the Borough of Petersham and the Department paid half of the cost. On 23 July 1883, James Reynolds of Darling Street, Balmain was engaged to construct a cesspit to draw away water which often lay in a large body at the back of school in wet weather. The school wash places were altered to allow them to be connected to the water mains in October 1883.

On the other hand, shelter from summer heat was also necessary. On 14 January 1884, Wood applied to have a weather shed built in the Boys' playground due to the summer heat being so intense. After the Inspector recommended the work be done, it was commenced.

2.4 PETERSHAM SUPERIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL 1884-96

By the 1880s, a second wave of settlement was under way in the locality. What had previously been a semi-rural area was being converted into dense suburban development. A building boom occurred in the 1880s which was, as elsewhere in Sydney, curtailed in the 1890s by Depression. Near the railway line, residences tended to be larger and occupied more by middle class residents. Near the school, Langdon and Langdon set up their timber yard on New Canterbury Road, whilst Searl's Nursery was on the other side of the railway line. Further to the south were brickworks and some nascent manufacturing enterprises. In these areas, housing tended to be occupied more by workers. It was here too that, later industrial development proceeded in the twentieth century, particularly in the flatter land towards Cooks River in what was then the Municipality of Marrickville.

After the school had been graded as a First Class School in 1882, the next stage was grading as a Superior School. Wood applied for this upgrading in January 1884 and it was officially made a Superior Public School on 15 March that year. A Superior Public School provided education in primary and post-primary departments. Since it had elements of junior High Schools, the School was providing a higher level of education than the usual run of schools.
Accommodation shortages continued to plague the school, which were felt most deeply in the Girls' Department. On 24 March 1885, Wood requested the construction of a room for the Girls' Department plus a staff room and a new detached wooden building for the girls large enough to house two classes, measuring say 40 or 50 by 20 feet. The Inspector also recommended that this work was needed. However, the education of girls had a much lower priority than the education of boys. When Kemp wrote on 29 July 1885 to the Department about the plans, he estimated the cost of the new rooms would be £600. This was seen by the Department as excessive so he was instructed to draw up plans for a wooden schoolroom costing £150. Kemp redrew the plans and by 25 September 1885, the tender of Thomas Taylor, Piggott Street, Petersham of £185 was accepted. The wooden room he built remained at the school for many years.

In 1886, the New Cooks River Road on which the school was situated was renamed Gordon Street, in response to the great outpouring of patriotic sentiment when news reached NSW of the death of the renowned Christian General, Charles Gordon at Khartoum. The street had been known briefly as the Park Way beforehand.

On 12 April 1888, an application was made by the technical education section to hold evening classes at Petersham School. However, the request was rejected since the school was close to roads and there were larrkins in the area, often lounging about on the railway bridge. Only constant vigilance by Wood, even on weekends, had saved the school from damage. Some vandalism was sure to occur if the school was open at night.

After the Girls had been catered for, it was the turn of smaller children in the Infants School. The awesome step of going to school was not assisted by the crowded conditions and the provision of facilities unsuitable for very young children. On 18 July 1888, W. Schultz, the Acting Head Teacher whilst Wood was on leave, noted that toilet seats in the school were too large for small boys. A boy had nearly fallen through the seat into the cesspit below but was saved by two older boys nearby who responded to his cries of alarm and grabbed him in time.

Additions to the Infants School were anticipated.

---

Fig. 2-14- School Grounds. 1890.
By 4 Sept 1889, Kemp had prepared a plan and specifications for additions to the Infants' School at an estimated cost of £1550. In November 1889, he altered the plans so that the additions were closer to the main school building, necessitating removal of sheds and some alterations to the fence. The tender of John Alexander Oag, King and Turner Streets, Balmain for £1,285 was successful. Oag subsequently undertook numerous other works at the school. On 4 June 1890, the new Infants' buildings were complete and ready for occupation. The Detail Survey plan prepared in 1890 shows the outline of the school and other buildings in the grounds including this newly built Infants Section.

The infants school is a two-storey building placed directly behind the main school. Since this building was not attached to the original design and was mainly hidden from the Gordon Street frontage, Kemp had no need to continue in the Gothic style. The infants school is a plain functional brick building with stone window sills and heads. The only ornament was the decorated barge boards at the gable ends of the roof, the eastern end of which would have been visible from Gordon Street over the top of the roof of the previous building. The building is typical of the economical schools designed by Kemp during the 1890s. The planning is simple: two schoolrooms sized 50 x 21 feet, one on each floor, with a staircase and small offices in the lean-to attached to the northern side. The plainness of design was something Kemp was criticised for generally in his schools work (after being criticised earlier for extravagance in what Tonkin called his 'Grand Classic' schools of the 1880s) but it arose from a need to economise in order to achieve the tight brief set out by the Department of Public Instruction.

![Infants School by William Kemp (now Block D), north elevation. 1996.](image-url)

While Mansfield's Gothic buildings had been impressive and picturesque from the outside, their interiors were somewhat gloomy and inconvenient. Kemp gave greater consideration to the comfort and convenience of the users, adapting to local conditions many of the improvements in daylighting and ventilation suggested by Robson. Later in the 1890s, after his much praised Sydney Technical College of 1891, Kemp used a simplified version of the Romanesque style.

Vocational training for boys was introduced into state schools in 1890. Little provision was made for girls, however, although attempts were made to establish cookery classes. Some cookery classes started at Fort Street Public School which was the centre of the Central Cookery School. By 1894, there were classes in cookery at the Parramatta Industrial School for Girls as well. Miss Fanny Fawcett Story was the main cookery teacher for the state.

Wood found that his responsibilities as head teacher were difficult to carry out without a refuge from the myriad cares of classroom teaching. He applied to make an enclosure of part of the
August 1996

verandah as a Headmaster's Office, but the Senior Inspector, J. W. Allpass, was opposed to the idea, since he felt the Head should be permanently in the classroom. Kemp noted that the Minister himself had mentioned the need for the office when he recently toured the school. This is minuted 25/3/90 by JHC [J. H. Carruthers, the current Minister of Public Instruction, later NSW Premier], "I think this is so & it may be carried out." The work was completed by J. A. Oag. Wood had his Headmaster's office, a quiet refuge from the cares of the classroom. In 1926, his successors had very different thoughts about this quiet little cubicle built out of a verandah enclosure.

Improvements to the Grounds
By the late 1880s and early 1890s, an awareness of the effects of tree depletion was widespread in NSW. In June 1890, the Under-Secretary of the Department sent a circular to all schools that the Department wished to encourage tree planting in schools but could not yet formally declare an official Arbor Day. Instead any Friday between June and August could be set aside as Arbor Day for any particular school and the School Board could apply for trees and shrubs from the department as well as financial assistance for tree planting. The following year, 1891, the Department of Public Instruction proclaimed 21 August as the official Arbor Day in the state.

At Petersham, trees were planted in 1890, before the official start of Arbor Day. On 16 April 1890, William Johnston, of Aubrey Street, Petersham wrote to the Department that he was about to plant trees in the school grounds and that Wood wanted him to obtain Departmental permission. It was granted on 22 April. He wrote the following day, 23 April 1890, wanting a specification for tree guards to protect the young trees which he expected to plant on 24 May. Kemp simply noted that the best protection for trees in school grounds was good supervision and constant vigilance. Other tree planting took place that year. On 30 July 1890, J. Wheeler, Chairman of the School Committee applied for a grant to cover the costs of the "Arbor Day" ceremonies and tree planting.

The school took part in Arbor Day the following year. Arthur Wood applied on 14 July 1891 for aid to tidy the playground in preparation for the coming leading to the spreading of stone chippings over playgrounds at cost of £50/15/-.

The trees planted by Johnston and others appear to have thrived. On 13 November 1891, the school expressed concern about a broken front gate in the Girls' Department, since its broken condition would allow goats into the school grounds and they could ruin the new trees which are showing splendid growth. A new sense of pride in the school surroundings in the 1890s is shown by these events. The few trees remaining in front of the building today probably date from the plantings made around this time.

The range of educational experiences offered by the school was expanded. In September 1890, Departmental permission was granted for elocution lessons by Mrs Sheridan, widow of W. E. Sheridan, a noted actor, to pupil teachers and numerous girls at the school. On 17 July 1891, Jessie Ferguson of the Girls' Department applied to conduct cookery classes at the school. This was later approved.

Little building work was completed over the next few years at the school. Additional drain pipes were laid in May 1891, and a cesspit and cover was installed to collect water. On 16 August 1894, Belle Collins applied for some packing to be put into the floor of the upper class room to deaden the sound of the class in the upper room which was disturbing the work of the class below. Kemp thought the work was not necessary and it was not approved. At that time, a plan of the Infants classroom was drawn showing its layout.
Fig. 2-16  Infants' Department Layout, August 1894. (Source: School File AONSW 5/17326).

2.5  AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE 1896-1920

On 1 July 1896, Arthur Wood retired from the Department after many years of service. As late as 1912, he was still alive and in contact with his former school, who were informed that he was then living in Paris with his wife and daughter. 63 Wood was succeeded as Head Teacher by James Rickard, a man of great ability, who had started as a pupil teacher at Bathurst in March 1878 and whose impressive teaching had ensured a relatively rapid progress until he was appointed in charge of Newcastle Superior School in July 1890. 64 He concentrated on commercial education at Petersham and soon made the school a centre for commercial studies drawing pupils from a wide area of what was then the western suburbs of Sydney. 65

James Rickard was born at Wollongong in 1863. His younger brother Arthur became a real estate salesman, forming Arthur Rickard & Co Ltd in 1904. He was the most successful and renowned real estate entrepreneur in NSW in the early twentieth century, aiming his sales at the newly emerging market of workers seeking to buy allotments for homes. 66 In view of James Rickard's emphasis on commercial education at Petersham and his highly successful programme of making the school into an educational centre, it is interesting to speculate on possible links between the two brothers.

James Rickard's impact on Petersham Public School was almost immediate. He found the school garden overgrown with weeds and applied on 11 September 1896 for a load of manure to assist his work in reinstating the garden, a work already noted by the District Inspector. 67 An evening school was soon being proposed for Petersham. On 25 September 1896, George A. Rourke applied to conduct the proposed evening school at Petersham. 68 On 7 October 1896, Rickard applied formally to establish an evening school at Petersham for working boys wanting to improve their education. Inspector J. Dawson was very favourable. The enrolment was expected to be 19 males and 15 females. 69 Applicants for the school were aged from 14 to 36 though most were 14 to 16. They were employed by day as clerks, office boys, lift boys and in a timber yard. 70 The Evening School was successfully launched and continued for many years. 71
Meanwhile, the numbers in the Girls' Department had continued to grow with the expansion of the district. From a population of 10,369 of which 5,537 were females, and 2,225 houses in 1891, the district increased to 15,307 people of which 8,414 were females in 1901 inhabiting 3,085 houses. On 8 March 1897, Inspector Dawson noted that the Girls' Department was becoming so crowded that an extra four desks were added at the front of the main room.

**Extensions to the Girls' School 1898**

Such expedients were only temporary. By June 1897, Dawson was urging that the Girls' School needed enlargement. A gallery in the Girls School should be replaced by desks. This work was completed by removing the gallery in the Girls' Department and replacing it with a platform as in other parts of the school. More to the point, he recommended that the Department should build a two storey brick building like one recently built at Crown Street, with the ground floor a weather shed and the upper floor a classroom measuring 20 x 30 feet. The dimensions of the proposed building were later expanded to be 40 feet by 30 feet. By 5 August 1897, plans had been prepared for the extension estimated to cost £800. This time, there was no Departmental uncertainty about the need for adequate accommodation for the girls. The tender of J. A. Oag for the Girls' extensions was accepted at £854 on 20 September 1897. When the extension to the Girls' school was completed on 2 May 1898, the former Girls' wooden detached classroom was handed over to Boys department. They needed it.

The ‘extension’ was built well away from the existing girls school in the north west corner of the site. It is a brick, two storey building of similar scale and planning to the infants school and was designed by Kemp’s successor, James Sven Wigram, who had been a draftsman with both Mansfield and Kemp. Wigram took over from Kemp just at the time when the Department of Public Instruction’s Architects’ Branch was being forced to amalgamate with the Government Architect’s Branch of the Department of Public Works. This unpopular move was an attempt to make savings in response to the serious economic depression of the 1890s. In 1897 his position was downgraded to Chief Clerk of Works and many of his staff were transferred to Public Works, however, the education authorities continued to erect their own buildings.

The western facade of the girls school extension is positioned right on the edge of West Street directly opposite the intersection with The Boulevard. Architecturally, it shows the influence of the Queen Anne Style with touches of Kemp’s Romanesque manner. It makes effective use of red and liver coloured brickwork with contrasting bands of yellow bricks and is topped off with a slate roof. Some sandstone elements are included such as window sills, lintels and a corbelled stone under the chimney breast. The large arched openings at ground floor level on the eastern facade originally contained glazed doors and windows. Internally, the two large classrooms are well lit and of a generous ceiling height. Walls were rendered up to the window sills and ceiling ventilation ducts (ducted ventilation was a 'trademark' of Wigram’s work) are prominent in the boarded ceilings.
Other Improvements

In April 1898, Rickard had noted how crowded the Boys' School was becoming. Although it had 361 pupils, which was below its nominal enrolment limit of 369, the distribution of the boys in the different rooms ensured that some rooms were crowded. One class was held in a shed unsuitable for the coming winter. Inspector Dawson noted that with the completion of the "new commodious classroom" for the Girls, the Boys could occupy the small detached classroom at the back of the main building now used by the Girls. As we have seen, this was done. On Dawson's recommendation, the Under Secretary limited the Boy's Department's enrolment to 450. As soon as the detached timber classroom had been handed over, Rickard applied on 21 May 1898 to move this classroom into the Boys playground which was done at a cost of £25. Other changes were occurring in the Infants School. Due to the introduction of the kindergarten into the Infants school, the mistress Belle Collins applied for suitable furniture for the young pupils on 7 June 1898.

The school grounds expanded. On 14 July 1898, the Crown Solicitor informed the Department that it had completed the resumption of additional land namely lot 17, Section 1 West's Paddock for additional land for the school (C. T. 446 f. 217). This meant that the school's southern fence now abutted the Presbyterian Church erected in what is now Gordon Street in 1881.

In mid-1899, F. C. Janson fixed 11 wire screens to the school windows as protection against breakage. Other works were also completed on school windows. On 14 December 1899, there was a complaint that the windows in the Girls Department only opened at the tops and were inadequate for ventilation in summer. Consequently they were altered by replacing the large centre windows with double hung sashes in box frames. The same year, on 3 October 1899, W. Barnfield of Kepos Street, Redfern was awarded a contract to connect the school to the sewer mains at a cost of £522/17/6.

In November 1900, the Secretary of Petersham Superior Public School Old Boys Union applied to have the gas put on for lighting in the Main Boys Room to assist their meetings. Rickard noted that gaslights would also be useful for the Evening Classes, so it was installed.

Although there is no information about earlier lighting in the school it is likely that use was made of both candles and kerosene lamps.

Population expansion, coupled with an increasingly attractive range of courses offered by the school, put further pressure upon school accommodation. In the Upper Primary School, from a total of 23 boys in 1896, the enrolment had risen to 84 in 1899. Following developments in commercial education overseas, in December 1899 the Sydney Chamber of Commerce commenced a system of commercial examinations to accredit those who sat for them for commercial positions. These examinations became the goal of pupils at Petersham, many of whom proceeded to obtain very good passes on the basis of their outstanding training at the school. Further pressure on the school arose when permission was granted on 3 May 1901 to enlarge the enrolment of boys from 450 to 500 despite accommodation problems since the local area was growing so rapidly.

Extension to the Boys' School, 1903

At the same time, Rickard was attempting to persuade the Department to build a new boys' wing. He observed that 194 new buildings had been registered locally in the last two years plus many others which had not been registered. His pleas were supported by Inspector Dawson who reported on 20 January 1902 that he had recommended the erection of a Boys' Classroom about six to seven months ago to house 150 boys. He also observed how in the past few years, many cottages had been built in Petersham and Lewisham and many more were currently under
construction so that an enlarged enrolment at the school could be expected. When asked to report on the proposed additions, the architect, J. S. Wigram, noted that the accommodation problems could be solved by the erection of a wing at right angles in front of the Boys' school, which would allow connection to the building without detracting from the general appearance of the school. The estimated cost was £1,000. This proposal was subsequently approved. In October 1902, a contact was signed with J. A. Oag to build the new wing for £963 to house 150 pupils.

Opening of new wing of the school was undertaken by the Minister for Public Instruction, J. Perry on 13 February 1903. The total number of pupils at school at that time was 1496. At the accompanying prize-giving ceremony, the President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce commended the work of the school in commercial education. Classes were held in book keeping, typewriting, shorthand, commercial physics, chemistry, German and French. Especially gratifying to Rickard must have been the numerous testimonials to the quality of his teaching during the opening ceremony. The State Treasurer, Thomas Waddell, heard of the school's reputation when he came to live there, and sent his son there, much to his delight when he witnessed the progress the boy made. The ceremony finished with a selection of musical and elocutionary items from the pupils. A few days later, on 16 February 1903, Rickard formally notified the Department that the new boys wing was ready for occupation. It was vitally needed. By 1903, the Upper Boys School had an enrolment of 170 and it would continue to grow.

In his extension to the boys school, completed in 1903, Wigram followed Kemp's example and continued the use of the Gothic style for the buildings facing Gordon Street. The result is a rare example of his use of the style. The brickwork is immediately distinguishable from the earlier work. The earlier buildings by Kemp and Mansfield were constructed of sandstock bricks of a mottled yellow colour laid in Flemish bond. It is possible they came from the Playford Brothers' brickyard which operated in Windsor Road, Petersham from 1876-1882. Wigram used a darker coloured, pressed brick, laid in stretcher bond where the walls are cavity construction. The sandstone is of a darker colour than the earlier buildings. The design of the east facing gable, however, with its Gothic window and three louvred vents at the top, seems to be directly copied from Kemp's. Compare figs 2-11 and 2-18. Another small, purely decorative gable or parapet was built alongside. This has since been demolished, explaining
the currently truncated form of the window below. A photograph taken at the time of the opening of the new wing shows the line of trees along the Gordon Street frontage interrupted by the new building.

Meanwhile the earlier buildings were beginning to show their age. In the same year, Wigram noted that the verandah roof of the school was covered with shingles which leaked badly and recommended that it should be re-clad with iron.

In 1905 Rickard applied to become Head of Fort Street Demonstration School in Sydney. His application recounted Petersham School's successes in commercial education, noting that it was a leader in the field. With the exception of Fort Street, it had the best performance at the Sydney Chamber of Commerce exam, at the Railway Apprentice Clerk, Bank, Water Board, AMP, and the Pupil Teacher entry examinations. It was the first school to introduce the new Geometry, and one of the first to introduce Nature Study and Science teaching. It was the school where typewriting classes commenced and in 1905 was the only one to have a properly taught book keeping class. It was the only school with an Industrial Museum. It was widely known as a Commercial School. It was the only school where there were more Boys enrolled than in the Infants and Girls Departments combined, demonstrating that the school was providing a high standard of education, particularly Commercial education drawing boys from a very wide area.

Rickard was unsuccessful in his application. But he continued to strive for excellence. An ex-pupil later remembered that when boys indicated their desire to enter employment such as the Public Service, Rickard personally coached them for the examinations after school. A team from the school went to Melbourne in September 1905 after winning the Australian Rules football competition for Sydney Schools for two years, and whilst in Melbourne it won the game, the first time such a victory had occurred.

Vocational Training Rooms
The last school buildings to be added to the site for nearly 50 years were built in response to the new syllabus introduced by Peter Board from 1904 onwards. Board was the most important educational reformer in NSW. An experienced teacher, he had recently reported for the Department on advances in primary education overseas and his report had been as influential as the Knibbs and Turner Commission. He was soon to become the under-secretary of the Department and later the Director. Under Board's system the 'three Rs' were restricted to only 50% of school time while there was more accent on learning practical skills that would be of use in real life.

Planning therefore started on vocational training rooms for the school. On 30 August 1905, architect Wigram recommended building a new Girls' wing to the two storey building at the back of the Girls' playground, with the lower room for cooking and laundry and the upper room for needlework. The cost he estimated at £650. A Parents Association was formed in November 1905 which was later claimed to be the first such association in Australia. It was instrumental in the building of special rooms for Science, Manual Work, Sewing and Cookery and collected money to equip and furnish the rooms.

On 6 February 1906, Wigram described the works currently in progress. They included the timber classrooms for Physical Science and Manual Training for the Boys; and a wing to be built onto the Girls Building at the north-west corner of their grounds to provide two rooms for Cookery and Domestic Science. The Domestic Economy rooms were completed in early 1907 for a final cost of £670/9/0. They were not fitted out at that stage since the equipment was
not immediately available due to a misunderstanding between the Mistress, District Inspector and Government Architect.¹⁰⁶

Fig. 2-19 Former Domestic Economy Rooms (now part of Block C), 1996.

Neither the Annual Reports of Department of Public Instruction nor several histories of education make any specific mention of the Domestic Economy rooms at Petersham. The possibility, hinted at in some school publications, that it was the earliest instance where such classrooms were built may be spurious. It does appear, however, from a reading of Noeline Kyle's history of women's education, that cookery was only a recent introduction in government schools at this time, and it is likely that these were some of the earliest purpose built domestic science rooms which provided for cookery as well as sewing.

Fig. 2-20 Plans for Proposed Domestic Economy Rooms, 1906. (Source: FWD Plan Room SB1216-6)
Modernization

Another result of the new educational philosophy brought in by Board was the introduction of smaller class sizes. In January 1906 Rickard complained about the need to teach 250 to 300 boys in one large classroom, in direct opposition the recommended reforms.107 It was some time, however, before Rickard was able to achieve smaller classrooms for his school. Glazed partitions were recommended for the large Boys' Room. This room was 70 x 25 feet, which the Inspector thought could be converted into three 23 x 25 rooms. The glass partitions were later approved. One partition was soon altered into a movable one.108 Rickard was still asking for the glass partitions on 6 August 1907. Although the work had been recommended it had not started.109 Eventually a tender was accepted for the partitions in December 1907 but nothing happened.110 The tenderer lost his deposit and in May 1908 a new tender was accepted at a cost of £279/17/6.111 The work was finally completed on 6 November 1908.112 Changes were also being undertaken in the Infants' School. On 12 November 1906, the Inspector recommended that the galleries in the Infants' rooms should be replaced by desks. So many pupils sat with slates balanced on their knees that their breathing was being hampered, he observed.

Construction of a new tram line was expected to alter the character of the suburb by allowing a range of new residents to settle in the district. Rickard urged the Department in March 1908 that extensive repairs were needed to smarten up the school since an ill-ventilated run down school would not be acceptable.113 The school grounds were being tar paved at that time, as part of the process of upgrading the school.114 Further sprucing up of the school was undertaken after a Department of Health Report of February 1910 noted that rooms in the Girls and the Infants Schools were ill-ventilated, poorly lit and had dark painted dadoes.115

An informative plan from March 1908 shows how the grounds were organised. The site was divided roughly into two halves with the girls occupying the northern half. Presumably this had been the arrangement from the first segregation of the sexes. Areas immediately around the main buildings were surfaced in asphalt (shown shaded). The tiny 'ovals' were situated in front of, and perilously close to, the main building with cricket pitches not far from the south western corner of the boys' school. No wonder wire screens were fitted to the windows in 1899. The small wooden room built for the girls in 1885 is shown behind the boys school and the 'enclosure for gardens' borders the northern boundary.

Fig. 2-21 School Layout in March 1908. (Source: School File AONSW 5/17328)
Plans were drawn up in October 1910 for additions and alterations which would make a radical change to the appearance of the old school buildings. The distinctive pointed brick gables with their with small pointed top lights built by Mansfield and Kemp were replaced by flat timber framed versions to let in more light. Most of the window joinery was replaced for the same reason and the window sills were lowered. Internally, further changes were made to convert large open classrooms into smaller ones in the Infants Department and the small classroom in the Boys Department. All the old galleries were removed.

The tender of Frank Vernon for the alterations was accepted at a cost of £2149 on 27 January 1911. The works included extensive remodelling of the Infants School. While the work was in progress the Infants' classes were housed temporarily in tents. The alterations created six separate classrooms. Other works due for completion on 11 August were two extensions 10 feet x 20 feet 6 inches to the Infants' classrooms and two teachers' rooms measuring 10 feet x 10 feet. On 7 August 1911, the new Infants' Rooms were occupied and their tents were handed over to Boys Department for the use of four Boys' classes.

Rickard was unhappy with some of the alterations in the long Boys room. The changes included the replacement of 10 old fashioned long narrow windows with 5 broad modern windows, but left 4 narrow windows. On 27 September 1911, he suggested that for architectural consistency they should all be altered. However, the architect did not agree since the narrow windows were at the back and did not provide much light. No additional windows were altered as a result.

Expansion of the School
In December 1909, Peter Board specified in a memo that the Department was seeking to acquire more land to expand the school. However, it was hemmed in on its site and the potential to expand was limited. The problem was resolved by moving across West Street. In August 1910, an allotment at the corner of West Street and the Boulevard was resumed for compensation of £725 (lot 8 and part lot 9, Sec 2 DP 275, C. T. 2062 f. 158). This commenced the expansion of the school off its original site.

At that time, in 1910, Rickard was making arrangements to teach classes in typing and shorthand to boys and girls. Typewriters were ordered and one of the teachers took a course at Stott and Hoare's Business College. Rickard met some opposition from the Department but was eventually able to prevail. These classes were held after school. The successes of the school and the ambitions of local parents and citizens coalesced into a demand for better educational facilities. In November 1910, a deputation of local citizens pressed the Department of Public Instruction for the establishment of a high school at Petersham, the resumption of land for a Technical School at Petersham and additions to the school site in Crystal Street nearby. In January 1911, new High Schools for girls and boys were established at Fort Street, Petersham (specially renamed in honour of the original model school in Sydney) less than a kilometre away from the Public School.

A further departure in teaching practice occurred that year. On 20 February 1911, Petersham Continuation School commenced operations with W.C. Ewing in charge. So successful was the Continuation School that it had 248 pupils by February 1911. Even though it also operated at night, the principle which lay behind a Continuation School differed from that of an Evening School. An Evening School was aimed at those who did not succeed at school. A Continuation School aimed to allow those who had completed their primary schooling and wished to continue with commercial education. It was vocational teaching for people who had left school. Petersham's main focus was as a Commercial Continuation School concentrating on Shorthand, Bookkeeping, Business Principles Commercial Geography, Commercial Arithmetic.
and English. Alterations to allow the Continuation School to operate at Petersham were
completed on 15 February 1911. In July 1911, a series of photographs were taken of the
Continuation School in progress, apparently for publicity purposes. By September 1912, it
was claimed to be the largest and most successful such school in Australia.

Further expansion both physical and educational occurred in 1912. In April 1912, St Just, the
house next to the land already owned on the opposite side of West Street was bought from
Grace Bennett for £1,900. The house was able to accommodate six classes on two storeys.
It was taken over by the girls in May and soon became Petersham Girls Intermediate High
School. In May 1912, however, the Architect informed the Department that since the building
had not been designed as a school and did not have the necessary structural support, that there
should never be a large number of pupils on the upper floors at once. He had already drawn up
plans for its conversion to a school in late April 1912.

The new land also provided room for expansion for the Boys' School. On 21 June 1912, it was
decided that the stable of St Just would be converted into manual training room for the Boys'
School. Conversion of St Just's stables into a Manual Training Room was completed on 23
November 1912.

This use of buildings never designed as school premises was a measure of the urgency of the
need to expand the school. On a number of previous occasions, nearby owners had offered
land occupied by dwellings to the school for sale, but they were invariably rejected since the
buildings were unsuitable for use as schools. The decision to acquire St Just in 1912 shows
how urgent was the need. Later in 1912, the Department signalled its intention to limit
Petersham to being a school catering for its local area only but this proposal was
understandably resisted by Rickard who wanted to maintain it as a major commercial school.
Eventually, some restrictions were made in the enrolments but Rickard was permitted to take
200 Boys and 150 Girls for the sixth class and above from outside the area. Late in 1912, the
new Departmental syllabus proposed to eliminate science teaching from the commercial school
curriculum. Rickard protested again noting how the school had pioneered practical science teaching in NSW. He was allowed to continue science teaching in the commercial school. 137

Fig. 2-23 Petersham School Science Room, 1909, such well equipped science rooms were rare in State schools. This image was used as an illustration in the 1909 Annual Report of the Department. (Source: Govt. Printer Disk 1, No 11908)

Accommodation continued as pressing problem. By September 1912, there were almost 300 boys and 150 girls in the secondary department. 138 After the Infants had vacated their tents for their new classrooms, the tents were immediately taken over by four Boy's classes. However, even maintaining the tents in a usable state was expensive, so new rooms were again necessary. On 31 July 1912, Rickard applied for accommodation for the four Boys classes. 139 A proposal to rebuild the tents with walls was later replaced by one to build four classrooms using the relatively new timber from the tent floors. The rooms could later be used as a gymnasium.

The quality of the teaching at Petersham and the vigour of the esprit de corps of its staff and students finally resulted in a professionally printed school magazine which was issued for about 7 years. The first Issue of The Royal Blue, The Magazine of the Petersham Commercial Schools, as it was called, was published in September 1912. Its title and its contents emphasised the focus and its major market. It also served as a useful promotional vehicle for a school whose reputation continued to rise. The practical orientation of the Continuation School was highlighted in 1913 when John Danks & Sons Pty Ltd, informed the Department that W.C.Ewing, a teacher at Petersham Continuation School, had successfully worked with their firm to gain experience in current commercial business practices, experience which he would then pass on to his pupils. 140

In January 1913, the Department of Education graded it as a school with primary and secondary departments. A Commercial Department was formally recognised by the Department at this time. A Girls' Intermediate High School commenced operation in St Just. 141 Also in the same year, a three year course was added to the two year course at the Continuation School. The
Continuation School had an average enrolment of 220 for its first two years. It was then the largest such school in NSW. 142

Work also proceeded rapidly on the new timber classrooms to be built from the tent floors. In January 1913, the tender of John Light & Sons of Garfield St, Five Dock, for £325/10/- was accepted to build two timber classrooms - the "Pavilion classrooms" as they were called - on land next to St Just. 143 Rickard informed the Department on 30 April 1913 that the "Pavilion classrooms" had been occupied on the 15 April, and in accordance with the standard reporting format where he had to list the premises vacated to occupy the new buildings, he wrote, with a hint of sarcasm, "The 'premises vacated' were the playground and weather sheds." 144 A photograph of these new pavilion class rooms was published in the school magazine in June 1913. They were described thus - "They are airy, well-lighted and pleasant in all weathers. They give the advantages of open-air teaching without its inconveniences." 145

The combination of the changes to the teaching offered at Petersham and the Department's limitations on numbers had begun to make Petersham into a school serving a very restricted educational clientele who were seeking higher education and one geared to providing them with a training suitable for a commercial career. By July 1914, the reduction in enrolments had lowered the numbers to 660 in the Boys' Department of whom 200 were doing higher level work and to 522 in the Girls' Department of whom 142 were doing higher level work. 146 In January 1915, remodelling of the Girls' Department was completed by J. M. Wilson of 139 Wells St, Newtown at a cost of £375. 147

In July 1915, headmaster James Rickard resigned after 19 years at Petersham. It was an early retirement since he was only 52, and it is possible that he was becoming increasingly frustrated by the Department. His last day of service was 15 December 1915. Rickard entered the business world, seeking, it seems, to mirror the dazzling career of his brother, Arthur. He became a director of Arthur Rickard and Co Ltd. He also became involved in other companies, such as Riverina Subdivisions Ltd, of which he became director. He was also on the council of the Millions Club, one of Arthur Rickard's ventures, and on the council of Barnardo Homes. He died on 6 July 1927, after being knocked down by a car in Macleay Street, Potts Point, some weeks earlier. 148

Fig. 2-24 Mr. James Rickard from The Royal Blue, September 1912.
Rickard was replaced by William Gray who was also an active and busy headmaster. Yet, with the loss of Rickard's dynamism and initiative, the expanding horizons of the school's curriculum and educational offerings slipped more into the acceptable Departmental mould and lost their vigorous even frenetic expansionism. As it was, the school seems to have reached saturation for its possible drawing area even before Rickard left.

Re-casting of the syllabus for Commercial High Schools was completed in 1918. Under the scheme of schooling which accompanied the changes, Petersham was made one of six centralised commercial schools, providing a three year course. Hence, there was further great pressure upon school accommodation. To meet the need, the school applied for further additions. In the meantime, they were allowed to rent the old Presbyterian Church Hall. This weatherboard structure had been built in 1881 as Petersham Presbyterian Church and had been superseded by the new brick church building in 1905.

2.6 HIGHER EDUCATION AT PETERSHAM 1920-96

Further change to the school's grading within the education system in 1920, coupled with the retirement of Rickard some five years before closed a phase in the school development and started a new one. In 1920, the Girls' Primary and Secondary Departments were formally separated although they had effectively been conducted as two departments for some years. St Just was reconditioned and then re-occupied by the girls in April 1920. In July 1920, a Boys' Intermediate High School commenced operation at the school and the Commercial School classification was formally discontinued. By 1920, the Boys school had 963 pupils with 17 classes in 11 classrooms, 4 portable rooms and 2 sheds.

About this time, a new development occurred within the school grounds. It is believed to be about 1920 when a school garden was established by E. Towle, one of the staff, at the West Street corner. It was laid out by him with the help of other staff members and some pupils. The Department permitted the garden to remain but the cost and effort for its upkeep was Towle's own responsibility. He spent a good deal of his leisure time looking after it with some financial assistance from parents. The municipal council gave stone for walls, plus soil and manure. It became a showplace of the district. The annual school garden competition for the County of Cumberland instituted in 1924 was won annually by the school garden every autumn and every spring except once. Towle also had small demonstration plots showing maize, barley, and other agricultural crops including rice. After his death, the garden gradually fell into disuse. In April 1925 Petersham Council proposed to assist Petersham school's garden with material for a dwarf stone wall which would be topped with a woven wire fence to replace an ugly paling fence if Department was willing to pay for cost of installation. The District Inspector was very supportive, arguing that since the school's garden had been so successful in the schools' garden competition it is "regarded as one of the beauty spots of the Western Suburbs".

By the mid 1920s, the original school building was approaching its half century as a school but all was not well with the building. On 26 September 1924, the principal W. Gray wrote a scathing memo about the dilapidated condition of the school especially the old building arguing that it was inadequate. Various representations were made about the school, one of the major issues being the decayed condition of its shingle roof. It seems remarkable that the original timber shingles used on the first school building had survived 46 years. On 6 February 1926, the Department's Architect estimated of the cost of replacing the old decayed shingle roof on the school with 117 fibro cement slates 20 x 10 inches, with 302 feet ridge capping and slates for the tower, as the preliminary to replacing the roof.
In the meantime, a campaign had swung into action to upgrade the school involving the local ALP, Petersham Council and local Members of Parliament, such as E. A. McTiernan as well as the P & C. A press report in the Sydney Sun on 24 May 1926 referred to the condition of the school. It claimed that rooms 5, 7, 8, and 9 leaked so badly from the decayed shingle roof, that pupils had to use umbrellas in the classrooms when it rained. Lavish detailed descriptions of moss grown walls running with damp peppered the report, as did the irony of the "dugout" of the Headmaster's office in an enclosed part of the verandah. Waxing lyrical, the journalist wrote, "They are taught incidentally to appreciate things beautiful in life and art, whilst, paradoxically their horizons are bounded by dirty dreary walls - walls of hideous browns and greens - jumbles of corridors half-filled with cupboards - in short an environment so depressing that only the optimism of youth can conquer it." The report was critical of the domestic science room, but was most scathing about the detached timber classroom occupied by more than fifty boys, which had started life as the Girls detached timber classroom in 1885 when the Department of Public Instruction refused to spend much money on a brick room for the girls. Its ventilation was bad. The journalist observed that, "One boy, wiser than he knew, improved the ventilation by throwing a ball through a window pane. That lad will probably become an architect, specialising in school construction."

Stung into direct action, the Inspector examined the school again and prepared a memo on 24 May 1926, which noted that many schools nearby accepted higher pupils. A proposal to build a separate High School building for super-primary pupils now at Petersham was also in the air. He believed that there was enough accommodation for those attending Petersham School, especially with the possibility that other school construction nearby would soon draw the pressure off the school. The Architect had been instructed to check the school mainly to check the leaky roof. However, he noted that the main problems were not simply the roof. The whole school was dirty and required cleaning and painting.

Disgusted with the Department's local school and apparently hoping for some action which would upgrade the school to a higher level, on 5 August 1926, the Petersham P & C proposed that the repair of the existing roof was unnecessary. Large parts of the school should be demolished to be replaced by new buildings, they insisted. They even provided an accompanying plan to show which parts should go including the 1878 school buildings. However the Department refused to demolish a working school. On 25 November 1926, they informed the Petersham Parents' & Citizens' Association that the Department's decision not to rebuild would not be changed. Re-roofing of the school was completed in November 1926.

Despite the condition of the school, the teaching appears to have continued to provide talented teachers. Hermann David Black was a teacher at the school. On 3 March 1927, he applied for special leave to complete his Economic Honours Exam at the University of Sydney. Black later became a noted economist and lecturer in economics and eventually became Chancellor of the University of Sydney. He served as Chancellor for many years, one of the most popular people to hold that position.

Approval to install electric light in the Girls Intermediate High School was given by the Department on 22 June 1927. For the next few years, however, the school had few additions or alterations. From 1928 to 1930, there were proposals to expand pupil accommodation at Petersham including the erection of kindergarten. However, these proposals were met by the Department with a statement that it planned to establish a Central Intermediate High School at Homebush. By 1930, enrolment at Petersham totalled 345 in the Infants, 292 boys and 280 girls in the primary school and 446 boys and 280 girls in the high school. The infants school
still occupied the two storey block behind the old school. The Boys occupied the southern part of the main building and the girls the main northern room.\textsuperscript{168}

The Great Depression of the 1930s affected a wide cross section of the population in all districts. Petersham was affected too. In May 1932, the school's Mothers Club made soup for children with unemployed fathers using the schools' domestic science facilities and paying for the gas they used.\textsuperscript{169}

Nevertheless, Petersham still attracted some notable members of staff. In 1932, Raymond Maxwell Crawford was teaching at Petersham until he resigned to take up a scholarship to Balliol College at Oxford. Crawford was later appointed to the Chair of History at Melbourne University starting his teaching in January 1937. He was a pivotal figure in the establishment of history teaching in Australia and in the "Melbourne school" of history which has had such a profound influence on the study of Australian history.\textsuperscript{170}

Continued attempts to expand school faculties failed and even upgrading was put away in the stringent financial conditions of the 1930s. On 17 February 1933, plans were prepared of proposed alterations at the school, but these were later rejected.\textsuperscript{171} Nevertheless, in 1934, approval was granted to erect a single portable classroom at a cost of £153/12/2 at the school.\textsuperscript{172}

When Homebush Boys High School commenced operations in May 1936, the school was directly affected.\textsuperscript{173} The Boys' Intermediate High School at Petersham was discontinued immediately, followed by the discontinuation of the Girls' Intermediate High School in December 1938.\textsuperscript{174} Petersham reverted to being Public School in January 1939.\textsuperscript{175}

On 2 May 1945, the engine of an R. A. F. Mosquito Mark VI fighter/bomber backfired and then caught fire, shortly before the aircraft exploded in the air above Petersham raining pieces of burning aircraft across an area of two square miles. The pilot was seen from the school trying to pull the ripcord on his parachute. The two crew members were both killed on impact. The co-pilot, LAC Charles Boydell, an Australian from Mosman landed in the railway sheds 100 metres from the school, whilst the pilot, Flt- Lt David Rochford, of Oxford, England, landed in the school grounds, still strapped in part of the aircraft cabin. Children rushed to the windows, before the headmaster, G. Allmon covered his body with his parachute. With some children visibly upset, the school closed for the rest of the day and were exempted from completing their homework. An aircraft cannon and other parts of the aircraft fell into the grounds embedding themselves deeply in the asphalt. Other wreckage from the explosion fell onto houses, narrowly missing a number of people and setting some houses alight. The fuel tank crashed into two houses in Gordon Street setting them alight. One man was badly burned. Over one hundred police were called to control sightseers whilst over fifty firemen fought the fires started by the wreckage.\textsuperscript{176}

A memorial was moulded from the wreckage of the aircraft and set in the school grounds near where the pilot's body landed. The silky oak trees planted nearby were donated by Miss Minard Crommelin, a nearby resident of the Boydell family. She also donated her retirement home at Pearl Beach to the University of Sydney for biological research.\textsuperscript{177}

The Public School continued at the school until December 1964. In January 1965, the primary pupils transferred to Lewisham Public School to allow Petersham to become a Girls' High School. Some of the camphor laurels which had adorned the playground were removed to make way for the new two storey High School block.\textsuperscript{178} A series of alterations were made to the original school buildings: some doors, windows and all the fireplaces were bricked up,
internal glazed partitions were replaced with fixed timber framed walls, the 1903 Boys' wing was subdivided into offices and had a porch added to the southern end.

A Public School was re-established at West Street, when overcrowding at Lewisham became too great. Teaching and accommodation conditions at all the schools operating at Gordon and West Street sites were heavily criticised in the late 1970s. There were claims from the staff that the Girls' High School had been neglected whilst other schools were rebuilt. Windows in the school's art block had not been opened in ten years according to the staff, and the roof leaked in places. The Girls High School discontinued operations in December 1989 when it amalgamated with Newtown Boys' High School to become the Newtown School of the Performing Arts, and the Gordon Street site came under the control of TAFE.

2.7 RECENT ALTERATIONS AND CURRENT CONDITION OF THE BUILDINGS

In 1995 TAFE commissioned State Projects DPWS to carry out a major refurbishment of Block E, the former original Public School building. Externally, the stonework and brickwork was repointed and repaired, many individual stones had to be replaced due to their advanced state of decay but epoxy repair techniques were used wherever possible to prolong the life of the original masonry. The front fence, which had lost its timber posts and pickets, was reconstructed from evidence provided by an early photograph, and the surrounds were landscaped. Several of the trees along the Gordon Street frontage were found to be in a precarious condition and growing too close to the original stone front fence and these were removed.

The major visible changes on the outside were:
- a new glazed entrance porch replacing the 1960s flat roofed one at the southern end of the Wigram extension to the Boys' School;
- a new flight of steps enclosed with sandstone walls leading up to a door at the northern end of the same building;
- the reconstructed front fence;
- the new landscaping to the Gordon Street frontage.

The landscaping could have the most dramatic impact on the appearance of the Gordon Street frontage in time. Apart from the old trees remaining in this area, no other landscaping survived. The area was surfaced with bitumen and was used as a carpark. The new landscaping is designed to create a 'green buffer zone' between the classrooms and the extremely heavy traffic on Gordon Street. A hedge of Viburnum tinus is placed directly behind the front fence, most of the bitumen has been removed and apart from the paths the area is turfed, noxious weeds such as privet have been eradicated, a new border has been established in front of Block E leaving a gravelled drainage strip between the planting and the walls.

Extensive internal alterations were undertaken to accommodate offices, a library and learning spaces. Seismic stabilisation was also carried out on those elements identified as being particularly dangerous during an earthquake (e.g. chimneys and unsupported gable walls).

A Development Application was submitted to Marrickville Council accompanied by a Statement of Heritage Impact describing the alterations in more detail. It was proposed to replace the asbestos cement shingle roofing and restore the spire but this work was not proceeded with, there being only enough funds available to carry out necessary roofing repairs. The Statement of Heritage Impact concluded that the works "would not reduce or obscure the
cultural significance of the place, as long as they are carried out in a responsible manner in accordance with the documents.”

Currently, thanks to these and other recent works, the buildings are in a good state of repair. It is important that appropriate maintenance is carried out on a continuing basis and that when the time comes to replace the shingle roofing, which has a limited life span, the correct material is selected. Refer to the Conservation Policy Section for more details of the recommended treatment.

2.8 SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL’S EVOLUTION

When the school was established in 1878, it was simply framed to provide the basic education which every family had come to expect for their children as part of the provision of state education. Within a few years, it had been upgraded to a Superior Public School, providing a wider, more extended range of education for its pupils. Many other schools nearby were also graded as Superior Public Schools at the same time.

| 1878 | The original building by Mansfield looks small in comparison with the site purchased for the school. Evidently the founders foresaw its future growth. |
| 1890 | The school building has been more than doubled in size by the additions designed by W.E.Kemp. The two storey Infants’ School has been added to the rear of the main school building and a number of wooden out buildings have appeared, (weather sheds, temporary classrooms and the like). The yard is divided into boys at the south and girls at the north. |

By January 1912, it was still a Superior Public School, as were many others nearby. Of nearby schools, Stanmore, Marrickville, Ashfield, Leichhardt, Annandale, Camperdown and Kegworth were all classified as Superior Public Schools. Other schools nearby which provided education only of primary level included Summer Hill, Enmore and Dulwich Hill. In the wholesale re-classifications which occurred in early 1913, Petersham was graded at a similar level as all the former Superior Public Schools in the surrounding area.
The continued expansion of the school can be seen by comparing this plan with the previous one. The school filled up and outgrew its site being forced to acquire extra land: The developments were: extension to the Girls' school, 1897; additional land next to the Presbyterian Church, 1898; extension to the Boys' school, 1903; vocational training rooms, 1906 - 1907; additional land on the other side of West Street, 1910; purchase of St. Just and construction of pavilion classrooms, 1913. Even after this date, lack of accommodation continued to be a problem, resulting in the school renting the Presbyterian Hall next door for extra classrooms in 1918 and erecting a double portable classroom in 1920. But Petersham's period of expansion was over and, despite reorganisations in its use, there were no major new developments until the building of the Girls High School block in the south western corner of the site in 1964.

In many ways, Petersham was a typical school of its period providing the range of education which could be anticipated. What set it apart, however, were the other courses and special education available in few other schools. Its education was focussed heavily on commercial subjects, the product of the work of its principal, James Rickard. It provided evening classes. It also provided an Evening Continuation School, which allowed those who had left school to further their education to better fit them for a commercial career. These courses were available above the range of schooling available at the other Superior Public Schools nearby. It held a high position in the hierarchy of schools in what is today the inner western suburbs, but was then the western suburbs of Sydney. It would have been one of the most prestigious schools, if not the most prestigious in its area, but for the fact that the Fort Street High School was situated only a short distance away.

In subsequent decades, from the 1920s onwards, as the school became overcrowded and as more schools offered education to the Intermediate High School level, Petersham lost its pre-eminent position. Once High Schools were being built in greater numbers from the 1920s onwards, it rapidly lost caste to become one of a series of schools with primary and some secondary education. In the post-war period, it was reclassified a number of times, still being able to cater for secondary education but its position had been lost to other more prestigious schools, notably High Schools nearby.
# 2.9 Table of Functions and Status of Petersham School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Grade of School</th>
<th>Definition of Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1878</td>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>Elementary school providing basic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1884</td>
<td>Superior Public School</td>
<td>School with primary and post-primary departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Evening school</td>
<td>School department providing education for those over 14 years old who had little or no education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Evening Continuation School</td>
<td>School department providing vocational education for those who had left primary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1913</td>
<td>Public school with primary and secondary departments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1913</td>
<td>Commercial school</td>
<td>School permanent aimed at providing commercial vocational training for boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1913</td>
<td>Girls’ Intermediate High School</td>
<td>School with primary and high school departments to cater for those who could not be accommodated in the few High Schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1920</td>
<td>Boys’ Intermediate High School</td>
<td>As above for boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1939</td>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>Elementary school providing basic education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1965</td>
<td>Girls' High School</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1990</td>
<td>TAFE college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES

1. R. Cashman & C. Meader, Marrickville: Rural outpost to inner city, Hale & Iremonger, Marrickville, 1992, p. 106
2. Ibid., pp. 42-3, 53-4.
3. 1871, 1881 Censuses.
5. 76/16360, AONSW 5/17326A
6. Ibid.
7. 76/16359, AONSW 5/17326A
8. 77/3464, AONSW 5/17326A
11. AONSW 5/17326A
12. 77/3464, AONSW 5/17326A
13. 77/2149 from G. A. Mansfield to Secretary of Council of Education, 25 January 1877, School Accommodation folder, Historical Resources Department, NSW Dept. of School Education.
15. Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 11.
16. AONSW 5/17326A
17. 75/1689, Memorandum to Architect from W. Wilkins, Secretary of Council of Education, 24 June 1875.
18. Schoolroom (4 rows of 7) = 28
19. Infants desks = 28
20. Infants gallery (7 rows 8 per row) = 56
21. Total primary = 166
22. Grand total = 250
23. Based on floor area alone: Schoolroom (1507 sq ft) is large enough for 188 pupils. Infants room was (605 sq ft) large enough for 75 children gives a total of 263 maximum.
24. Classrooms (4 rows of 7) = 28
27. 83/8219, AONSW 5/17326A
28. 83/21024, AONSW 5/17326A
29. 83/3910, AONSW 5/17326A
30. 84/1177, AONSW 5/17326A
33. 88/19442, AONSW 5/17326B
34. 85/9247, AONSW 5/17326A
35. 85/21935, AONSW 5/17326A
36. 85/27285, AONSW 5/17326A
38. 90/9683, AONSW 5/17326B
39. Daily Telegraph, 5 June 1890, p. 7
57 90/35727, AONSW 5/17326B
58 91/36922, AONSW 5/17326B
59 91/58804, AONSW 5/17326B
60 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 4.
61 91/37496, AONSW 5/17326B
62 91/23070, AONSW 5/17326B
63 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 11.
64 96/28983, 94/40968, AONSW 5/17327A
65 05/6226, AONSW 5/17327B
66 P. Spearritt, 'Sir Arthur Rickard', ADB, v. 11, pp. 386-7; BDM indexes 1788-1945
67 96/47616, AONSW 5/17327A
68 96/58317, AONSW 5/17327A
69 96/60358, AONSW 5/17327A
70 96/58318, AONSW 5/17327A
71 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 5.
72 Censuses 1891, 1901
73 97/14223, AONSW 5/17327A
74 97/55848, AONSW 5/17327A
75 97/35448, AONSW 5/17327A
76 97/46354, AONSW 5/17327A
77 Ibid.
78 98/28223, AONSW 5/17327A
79 Ibid.
80 98/32355, AONSW 5/17327A
81 98/42908, AONSW 5/17327A
82 98/42615, AONSW 5/17327A
83 99/35670, AONSW 5/17327A
84 99/77309, AONSW 5/17327A
85 99/60484, AONSW 5/17327A
86 96/58318, AONSW 5/17327A
87 ADB, v. 11, pp. 386-7; BDM indexes 1788-1945
88 05/6226, AONSW 5/17327B; Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 11
89 AONSW 5/17327B
91 02/04229, AONSW 5/17327B
92 02/17099, AONSW 5/17327B
94 Sydney Mail, 18 Feb 1903, p. 419
95 Leichhardt & Petersham Standard, 21 Feb 1903, p. 3
96 03/11910, AONSW 5/17327B
97 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 11.
98 Warwick Gemmell, And so we graft from six to six, Angus and Robertson, 1986, p.63.
99 03/38807, AONSW 5/17327B
100 05/6226, AONSW 5/17327B
102 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 10.
103 05/48578, AONSW 5/17328A
104 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 12.
105 NSW - Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1907, p. 92
107 06/7039, AONSW 5/17328A
108 06/11334, AONSW 5/17328A
109 07/49459, AONSW 5/17328A
110 AONSW 5/17328A
111 Ibid.
112 08/67600, AONSW 5/17328A
113 08/14995, AONSW 5/17328A
114 08/20078, AONSW 5/17328A
115 AONSW 5/17328A
116 PWD Plan SB 1216 - 1
117 11/5515, AONSW 5/17328B
118 11/35917, AONSW 5/17328B
119 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 17.
120 11/52121, AONSW 5/17328B
121 11/78133, AONSW 5/17328B
122 11/36094, AONSW 5/17328B
123 AONSW 5/17328A
124 AONSW 5/17328B
125 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 15-6
126 10/77518, AONSW 5/17328B
127 11/14902, AONSW 5/17328B

40 PETERSHAM TAFE WEST - CONSERVATION PLAN
8/8/96
128 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 29.
129 11/11592, AONSW 5/17328B
130 Government Printer Photos
131 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 12.
132 12/42373, AONSW 5/17329.1
133 12/34262, AONSW 5/17329.1
134 Ibid.
135 12/89322, AONSW 5/17329.1
136 12/52379, AONSW 5/17329.1
138 Royal Blue, Sept 1912, p. 11.
139 12/42736, AONSW 5/17329.1
140 12/89322, AONSW 5/17329.1
141 12/42736, AONSW 5/17329.1
142 Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1993, p. 119
143 'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', p. 20.
144 AONSW 5/17329.1
145 13/38182, AONSW 5/17329.1
147 Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1993, p. 119
148 Stamp Duties Office, Deceased Estates Files, No. 31516, James B. Rickard, company director, AONSW 20/1234; SMH, 9 July 1929, p. 19
149 15/69359, AONSW 5/17329.2
150 Royal Blue, March 1918, p. 13.
151 AONSW 5/17332B
152 C. Meader, R. Cashman & A. Carolan, Marrickville: People and Places, Hale & Iremonger, Marrickville, 1994, p. 82.
154 Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1993, p. 119
157 24/78658, AONSW 5/17332B
158 AONSW 5/17332B
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 26/70166, AONSW 5/17332B
163 26/98128, AONSW 5/17332B
164 26/97996, AONSW 5/17332B
165 27/26151, AONSW 5/17332C
166 AONSW 5/17332C
167 30/99509, AONSW 5/17333
168 AONSW 5/17333
169 32/93831, AONSW 5/17334
170 33/54744, AONSW 5/17334; R. M. Crawford, Manning Clark, Geoffrey Blainey, Making History, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1985, pp. 38-44
171 34/9094, AONSW 5/17334
172 Ibid.
173 Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1993, p. 81
174 Ibid., p. 119
175 Ibid., p. 119
176 SMH, 3 May 1945, p. 3; Daily Telegraph, 3 May 1945, p. 11
177 Notes at Memorial Service, 2 May 1996.
3.0

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
3.1 **Basis of Assessment**

Cultural significance has been assessed in this study using the methodology and terminology of the *Burra Charter*\(^1\) and *The Conservation Plan*\(^2\). The assessment has been developed from an understanding of the history of the place and an inspection of the existing fabric. This section gives an statement of significance for the whole site and its major components.

3.2 **The NSW State Heritage Inventory**

Evaluation criteria for the assessment of cultural significance were developed by the Department of Planning as part of the State Heritage Inventory Project with the aim of producing a standard heritage assessment procedure which can be applied consistently. The criteria fall within two linked groups: Group 1 the nature of the significance and Group 2, the degree of significance. The following table, prepared to assist in the State Heritage Inventory, lists the different types of significance that need to be assessed prior to the establishment of the cultural significance of a building or group of buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 1</th>
<th>NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 1</td>
<td>HISTORIC</td>
<td>is concerned with the range of historical context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 2</td>
<td>AESTHETIC &amp; TECHNICAL</td>
<td>is concerned with creative or technical accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 3</td>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>is concerned with community regard or esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 4</td>
<td>SCIENTIFIC &amp; ARCHAEOLOGICAL</td>
<td>is concerned with research potential or the archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 5</td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>is concerned with other special values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 2</th>
<th>COMPARATIVE DEGREES OF SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 6</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>is concerned with the uncommon or exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 7</td>
<td>REPRESENTATIVE</td>
<td>is concerned with the typical or characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 8</td>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>of significance to the State of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 9</td>
<td>REGIONAL</td>
<td>of significance to the Sydney Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 10</td>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td>of significance to the local government area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Statement of Significance

The configuration of the site, all remaining parts of Blocks C, D & E and all traces of associated structures and landscaping, which were in place by 1913, are of Considerable Significance to the State, Region and locality for the following reasons:

Historical:
- The remaining building fabric of Blocks C, D & E has State significance as it provides physical evidence of the changes which occurred in the NSW education system between 1878 and 1903. For example, there is evidence of changes in planning, room sizes, architectural expression, lighting and ventilation.
- The school achieved a high reputation under the influence of James Rickard, Head Teacher between 1896 and 1915. It became a prominent evening school and a pioneering centre for commercial education and practical science teaching. In 1912 it was claimed to be the largest and most successful Continuation School in Australia.

Evidence of the high standards and enterprising spirit of the school is provided by contemporary claims, e.g. that it had the earliest purpose-built Domestic Economy rooms, that it had the first Parents Association. Even after Rickard resigned, the school was able to attract teachers of the highest calibre, for example Hermann David Black, later a noted economist and Chancellor of the University of Sydney, taught there in 1927; another teacher in 1930s was Raymond Maxwell Crawford, later Chair of History at Melbourne University and pivotal figure in the development of history teaching in Australia.
- Evidence of the continual expansion and improvement of the buildings between 1878 and 1913 reflects the constant struggle of the educational authorities to keep up with an expanding population and a society changing from a pastoral to an industrial existence. This is reflected in the configuration of the site, including the current Public School site on the other side of West Street, as well as in the buildings.
- The establishment of the Public School has local significance as an important event in the history of the Municipality of Petersham. The expansion of the school buildings and the site reflected the growth of Petersham from a rural settlement to an inner city suburb.
- The original school has local significance as one of the first public buildings in the area.
- The remaining trees on the Gordon Street frontage have significance as they are likely to be the result of early Arbor Day plantings.

Aesthetic Value

Block E
- The portion of Block E dating from 1878 is an intact example of a Gothic Revival Style school by the prominent school architect George Allen Mansfield. It is representative of the medium sized schools he designed of which only 3 others are known to exist. The building is unique in planning and detailed design and includes the only known extant example of stone ‘plate tracery’.

The original Petersham Public School retains all its major components: the schoolroom, infants room, classroom, tower, belfry and spire although the roofing, bargeboards, dormers and gablets have been changed: The early school interiors can be interpreted from the evidence of the remaining fabric.
EXTENSIONS TO BLOCK E
- These extensions are rare examples of the use of the Gothic style by W.E.Kemp in 1884 and by J.S.Wigram in 1903. The growth of Block E demonstrates the use of the Gothic Revival Style and the same palette of materials by three major school architects. The resulting complex facing Gordon Street is a prominent and distinctive building forming a consistent group with the Presbyterian church next door.

BLOCK D
- Block D is an intact, representative example of a simple, functional, two-storey building by W.E.Kemp, using similar brick walling and stone dressings as the original school.

BLOCK C
- Block C is an intact, representative example of a small two storey school building carried out by J.S.Wigram in a simplified version of the Romanesque Style established by Kemp.

Block C is one of the earliest school buildings for which Wigram was wholly responsible. Tonkin states that the Girls' Department at Marrickville (1899-1900) was the first example of the simplified Romanesque. Peterham's Block C, also a girls' school, is two years earlier.
- It makes an attractive and distinctive contribution to the streetscape of West Street and The Boulevarde.

THE SITE AS A WHOLE
- The pleasant scale and materials of the buildings, their distinctive and consistent style, and the landscaped setting make the site an important landmark in the local streetscape.
- The way the buildings on the site grew between 1878-1907, taking their cues from the original small public school, is an object lesson in harmonious architectural treatment.

SOCIAL VALUE
- The site has been in continuous use for educational purposes over 118 years. Its current use as a TAFE college is apt considering the strong tradition of commercial and vocational education associated with the site.
• The site has strong memories and associations for many local people who may have gone to school there or might be aware of the memorial in the grounds to the airmen who died in the World War II aeroplane crash nearby.

3.4 LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE
(The following terminology is used to define levels of significance for individual elements in relation to that of the place as a whole. Shading and letters B to D plus 'Int' are used to indicate the level of significance on plans and lists of elements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Considerable Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Some Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>Intrusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS

Generally: The south western area of the grounds belonging to the former school have been altered greatly in recent years, by the construction of Block A when it became a Girls' High School in 1965 and by subsequent paving and ramps etc. carried out by TAFE. The grounds facing Gordon Street, however, have remained in their near-original configuration and use for over a century. Several of the large established trees which remain are significant items of planting and make an important contribution to the significance of the site as a whole.

There are also some built landscape elements of significance: the front stone fence facing Gordon Street with its fine Gothic pillars and vestiges of the early lighting, the memorial to the airmen who crashed nearby in 1945, the cast iron lamp standard at the south east corner of Block E (refer to the schedule of significant items). The southern boundary wall, constructed in brick, seems to date from the time when the Presbyterian church was built, 1905, and is therefore of some significance. It is acting as a retaining wall but is leaning over towards the TAFE property and urgently requires stabilization or rebuilding.
3.6 **Levels of Significance Plan**

The following plan of the buildings and landscaping denotes levels of significance based on the above terminology.

![Diagram of Petersham TAFE - Levels of Significance Plan.](image-url)

**Fig. 3-1** Petersham TAFE - Levels of Significance Plan.
3.7 **Schedule of Significant Fabric**

**Fabric of Considerable Significance**

**Exterior**
- Roof structures and roof forms of Blocks C, D & E. Slate roofing to Block C. Other roof coverings have been substantially replaced.

- Spire form and structure, cast iron finial. Any vestiges of original louvred belfry and bulls eye vents remaining under painted metal covering. Lightning conductor appears on early photograph and is of considerable significance.

- All original brickwork: chimneys, parapets, string courses, sills and general walling.

- Areas of original pointing are important evidence of the building’s original construction and appearance. They have survived more than 100 years in protected areas (e.g. under verandahs) and can be expected to continue intact for the foreseeable future, if left alone.

- All original sandstone elements: lintels, sills, plinths, window surrounds, plate tracery, downpipe sockets, string courses, chimneys, ‘1878’ date panel in Gordon Street facade.

- All original exterior joinery including windows, doors, roof eaves and barge boards, entrance porches, verandah posts, brackets and beams. Vestiges such as coat hook rails under verandahs

- All original glazing (further research is needed to determine how much original glass remains)

- All original metalwork: cast iron wall vents, verandah railings to Gordon St frontage.

- Gordon St. stone fence including base walls, stone pillars, remains of early lighting and ironmongery.

- Remaining trees on Gordon Street frontage.

- Memorial to airmen killed in crash over school.

**Interior**

All original fabric including:

- Roof, floor and internal wall structures and linings, boarded ceilings, painted brick walls. Evidence (including sub-floor) of the original raked and platform seating.

- Configuration of interior spaces.

- Joinery, panelling, doors, stairs, balustrades, skirtings, architraves, dados, fireplaces and picture rails.

- Vestiges of original services. Cess pit reported to exist under Block D

- Ironmongery, door and window hardware (not all is original but most should be kept in situ. New items, where necessary, may be fixed alongside).

**Fabric of Some Significance**

**Exterior**
- Flat dormers to Gordon St. elevation of Block E.

- Replacement windows dating from 1911.
• Cast iron lamp standard. (This was reported to have been moved to this site from the Railway Station relatively recently).

• Replacement barge boards.

• Shingled gables.

INTERIOR
• Any evidence of alterations later than 1913.

INESIGNIFICANT FABRIC
EXTERIOR
• Roofing of asbestos cement shingles.

• Fire hose reels.

• Metal cladding to spire and belfry drum.

• Rendered blocking-up of arches in Block C.

INTERIOR
• Any fabric dating from the 1995 conversion for TAFE.

• 1960s additions (Blocks A & B).

• External security screens fitted to windows.

INTRUSIVE FABRIC
• Large illuminated TAFE sign on Gordon Street boundary.

• Exterior lighting fixed to brickwork

• Paint applied externally to brickwork.
REFERENCES

4.0

CONSERVATION POLICY
4.1 GENERAL

4.1.1 Formally adopt this Conservation Plan as a guide to future management and development of the site.

Endorsement for the plan will be sought from TAFE and Marrickville Council.

4.1.2 Seek endorsement from the Heritage Council of NSW for this Conservation Plan.

Petersham former Public School is listed in the Registers of the National Estate, National Trust of Australia (NSW) and in the Heritage and Conservation Register established by the Department of Public Works & Services under Section 170 of the Heritage Act. The site is listed as an item of environmental heritage in Marrickville Council's Local Environmental Plan.

4.1.3 Undertake all conservation or development works to the site and buildings of Petersham TAFE West in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter) Revised 1988.

Any developments involving demolition (part or whole), damage or alteration to the buildings or their setting will require consent from the council who may refuse consent if the heritage significance of the item, including stylistic or horticultural features of its setting, are affected.

The guidelines for the Section 170 Register state that proposals involving alteration, disposal or demolition of items of State or regional significance should be referred to the Heritage Council through the Department of Planning’s Heritage Branch.¹

4.1.4 Treatment of fabric of different levels of significance:

- **Considerable Significance**: Aim to retain all fabric. If adaptation is necessary for the continued use of the place, minimise changes, removal and obscuring of significant fabric and give preference to changes which are reversible.

- **Some Significance**: Aim to retain most of the fabric. If adaptation is necessary, more changes can be made than would be possible for fabric of considerable significance but the same principles apply.

- **Insignificant**: Fabric of slight significance which may be retained or removed as required for the future use of the place, provided that its removal would cause no damage to more significant fabric.

- **Intrusive**: Intrusive fabric should be removed or altered to reduce its impact when the opportunity arises, whilst minimising damage to adjacent fabric of significance.
4.1.5 Engage persons with relevant expertise and experience in conservation work to assist in the planning, design and supervision of any future maintenance or alterations to the buildings or other items on the site.

Consultants and contractors for maintenance or new work should be required to demonstrate that they have relevant experience in the type of work required and in successfully dealing with heritage items.

4.2 FUTURE USE OF THE SITE

4.2.1 Continue to use the whole site for educational purposes in accordance with a long-term coordinated plan. Ensure that changes of use or new developments are compatible with the primary use of the site and provide for the ongoing protection of significant elements of the site.

4.2.2 Submit a Development Application to Marrickville Council accompanied by a Statement of Heritage Impact, using this Conservation Plan as a basis for assessing significance, for any proposed development on the site.

4.3 RECORDING

4.3.1 Ensure that any fabric of ‘considerable’ or ‘some’ heritage significance, which is justifiably removed, is recorded prior to removal in accordance with the Recording Guidelines prepared by the Heritage Branch of Department of Urban Affairs & Planning.

4.4 CONTEXT

4.4.1 Protect views of the original school buildings and associated plantings from Gordon Street.

The buildings contribute a distinctive visual character to the local streetscape. Any new developments or plantings should not obscure views from Gordon Street or visually overpower this character.

Fig. 4-1 The Gordon Street Frontage of Petersham School, 1912. (Source: Royal Blue, Sept.1912)
4.4.2 Protect views of Block C and the rear of Blocks D & E from West Street.

4.4.3 Any new developments on the site should respect the character of the original school buildings in terms of architectural design, scale and materials.

New buildings should be identifiable as new and separated physically from the old ones. Do not build too close to the original school, keep an area around it free of new buildings. New designs should not mimic the old. Engage architects with relevant expertise and experience of designing sensitively in the context of older buildings. Choice of materials, roof pitch, proportions of fenestration and overall scale of new buildings will be critical factors.

4.5 THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS

4.5.1 Conserve the fabric and character of all elements belonging to the original school buildings.

This includes all remaining parts of Blocks C, D & E and all traces of associated buildings and landscaping listed as of considerable or some significance.

4.5.2 Find compatible uses for all significant parts of the original school buildings.

The Burra Charter defines a 'compatible use' as 'a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact.'

The most compatible uses will usually be those related as closely as possible to the original use.

4.5.3 Develop a maintenance strategy for the buildings.

Produce a maintenance manual for the place. The manual should set out preferred maintenance guidelines in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter. It should also be used to keep a record of all the work carried out over the years. Relevant staff should be made aware of the manual. keep it up to date and readily
accessible. Examples of typical guidelines are:

- **Treatment of brickwork:** Repoint the brickwork where badly eroded using a soft, lime-based mortar similar to the original type. Do not use power tools to rake out or repoint with hard cement mortar. Do not paint brickwork. Do not fix items, such as light fittings and services, to the external walls. Locate fixings in joints rather than in masonry units.

- **Stonework:** Repair or replacement of stones shall be specified by an experienced conservation architect. Keep the existing joint pattern. All work shall be carried out under the supervision of a banker mason.

- **Woodwork:** Maintain the paint system in good order. Investigate and consider employing the original colour schemes.

- **Roofing:** Use slate or slate-like materials on roofs to Blocks C, D & E. Corrugated roofing is inappropriate for these buildings.

- **Gardening:** Take care not to spray water onto the brick walls during irrigation of the gardens. Maintain a gap between the planting and the walls of the buildings.

- **Interiors:** Conserve any remaining evidence of the early use of the interior spaces. There is a tendency to ‘tidy up’ traces of the original use of the spaces, (e.g. marks of the raked galleries, blocked in entrances, fireplaces, etc.); but they are important clues to the interpretation of the place and consideration should be given to their presentation to the modern user.

- **Colour schemes:** Carry out a paint analysis to determine the original colour schemes. Consider using authentic colours where possible, even if only in one room or a part of each room.

- **Glazing:** If excessive solar gain or glare needs to be reduced consider the reintroduction of coloured or frosted glass into the upper panes of the windows.

### 4.5.5 Re-use old materials for repairs.

It is often impossible to find new materials to match the original bricks, stone, ironwork etc. when carrying out repairs. Therefore, where demolition or re-location of significant fabric is unavoidable, retain materials for re-use. Approval must be obtained for any demolition work in accordance with policy 5.2.2. and fabric has to be recorded in line with policy 5.2.4. Items should be catalogued, labelled and securely stored at a suitable location on the site.

### 4.5.6 Graffiti removal

Remove graffiti as soon as possible after the attack under close supervision of a conservation architect. Removal of pigments from the rough, porous surface of the brickwork or from the delicate sandstone is a demanding and specialized job. It should be preceded by careful trials starting with the least intrusive methods. Inexpert attempts can cause worse damage and disfigurement than the graffiti itself.

Consider applying an anti-graffiti coating to vulnerable areas but only use fully reversible, non-sealing products such as the polysaccharide PSS20. Seek advice from the Heritage Group beforehand.
4.5.7 Do not paint brickwork

Brickwork has been painted in the past, possibly as a form of weather protection. This paint is intrusive and should be carefully removed (again under strict supervision of a conservation architect). If additional weather protection is considered necessary use reversible techniques or internal lining.

4.5.8 Original colour schemes.

Black and white photographs give an indication of the location and number of tones used originally. Paint analysis should be commissioned to confirm what the colours were and when re-painting is required consideration should be given to reinstating them. This applies to Blocks D, C and E.

4.5.9 Re-roofing of Block E

When the existing asbestos cement shingles reach the end of their servicable life, replace them with a similar modern material (Eternit) to give a similar appearance to the architect’s original intention as shown by the sketch plans (fig. 2-2). Refer to the recent report on re-roofing.3

4.5.10 Bargeboards

The earliest part of Block E had ornamental bargeboards. The existing ones probably date from the Wigram extension in 1903 and are considered of little heritage significance on this part of the building. If the existing bargeboards should need to be replaced consider replicating the original design from photographic evidence.

4.5.11 Spire & Belfry

When the existing metal cladding reaches the end of its servicable life, re-roof the spire with f.c. shingles as recommended for the main roof. Take care to accurately reproduce the details which can be seen on the early photographs.
The octagonal drum of the belfry could also be reconstructed from the available evidence. This work would add to the interpretation of the Mansfield building but the same details should not be applied to the later extensions to Block E. They should be kept distinct.

Consider the feasibility of reconstructing the cast iron weathervane or finial from the top of the spire. Assess the condition of the remains, either stabilize in-situ or salvage and install a replica.

4.5.12 Lightning Protection

The existing lightning conductor appears, from the photograph, to be original. Obtain an independent assessment, by a specialist consultant not a contractor or supplier, of the risk of a strike and the effectiveness of the existing conductor. If it is inadequate and it is not possible to upgrade it, keep it in place and install new protection internally.

4.6 SERVICES

4.6.1 Ensure that any future upgrading of services involves the least possible impact on significant fabric.

Plan new service routes carefully beforehand to avoid damaging or disfiguring significant fabric. Do not chase services into the external face of brickwork or stonework. Re-use existing fixings or locate new, non-corroding fixings in joints rather than in masonry units. Where possible preserve evidence of early services (e.g. wiring, gas, water supply, old cess pits and drainage lines).

4.7 LANDSCAPING

4.7.1 Conserve the existing stone fence along the Gordon Street boundary and rebuild the leaning southern boundary wall in brick, reusing salvaged materials.

4.7.2 Protect and maintain all plants with heritage value, using skilled arborists where necessary.

4.7.3 No trees having heritage significance should be cut down or damaged.

Any proposal to do so must be carefully evaluated and fully justified, and every attempt made to find alternative solutions. An exception may be made in cases where a tree has become senescent and beyond the ability of an arborist to restore it to good health. In most cases, such trees are to be replaced with the same species, unless the space is to be used for new construction, the original tree was incorrectly sited in the first place, or an inappropriately-scaled species was used.

4.7.4 Replace the large illuminated TAFE sign on the Gordon Street frontage with a sign more in keeping with the character of the site.
4.7.5  *Do not allow planting to obscure views of Block E.*

Plants used in the present scheme have been selected to avoid this but other larger species might be introduced or invade the site themselves later.

REFERENCES


5.0

BIBLIOGRAPHY
MAPS AND PLANS - MITCHELL LIBRARY
Higinbotham & Robinson, *Municipality of Petersham*, M4/811.1824/1887/1

NSW- Department of Lands, Metropolitan Detail Survey, M Ser 4 811.17/1 - Petersham Sheet 26, 1890.

NSW Dept. of Public Works & Services Plan Room, Card Ref.s for Petersham Public School SB 1216 & SB1817.

PICTORIAL SOURCES - ARCHIVES OFFICE
Photo collection - no images

PICTORIAL SOURCES - MITCHELL LIBRARY
Laser Disk collections
   At Work and Play
   Government Printer
   Hood Collection

Pictorial catalogues
Small Picture File "Sydney -Suburbs - Petersham"

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES - ARCHIVES OFFICE OF NSW
Council of Education, Register of applications for school sites, 1874-8, (no entry for Petersham), 5/3818

Dept of Education School Files
Petersham 1876-95 5/17326
Petersham 1895-1905 5/17327
Petersham 1905-11 5/17328
Petersham 1912-5 5/17329
Petersham 1921-7 5/17332
Petersham 1928-31 5/17333
Petersham 1932-4 5/17334

Dept of Education Subject Files
Architect 1876-83, 1891 20/12484

Dept of Education - Properties Branch, Card catalogue of building work, repairs, etc, 1916-35, Petersham at 11/15372

Dept of Education - Properties Branch, Registers of Assets, L-Z 11/15328

Stamp Duties Office, Deceased Estates Files, No. 31516, James B. Rickard, company director, Potts Point, died 6/7/1927, 20/1234

NSW DEPT. OF SCHOOL EDUCATION - HISTORICAL RESOURCES DEPT.

School Accommodation Folder

Views of Public School Buildings &c. Vol.s 1-3

MARRICKVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL LIBRARY - LOCAL STUDIES COLLECTION

Vertical File "Petersham Public School"

NEWSPAPERS

Australian Town and Country Journal

Daily Telegraph

Leichhardt & Petersham Standard, 1903

Sydney Mail

Sydney Morning Herald

PRIMARY SOURCES - PRINTED BOOKS AND ARTICLES

NSW - Council of Education, Reports, 1877

NSW - Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1905-09

New South Wales Government Gazette

Petersham Presbyterian Church, Yearbook and Information, 1881-1912, M. L. 285/P

Royal Blue - The Magazine of Petersham Commercial Schools, 1912-19

SECONDARY SOURCES


UNPUBLISHED REPORTS

'Notes on the History of Petersham School 1878-1920', Department of School Education

Tonkin, Peter F., School Buildings 1848-1930; An Analysis of the Form and Function of Public Schools in New South Wales, B. Arch (Hons) thesis, 3 volumes, University of Sydney 1975.
APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF PETERSHAM TAFE WEST

BACKGROUND AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL

5 June 1876
Public meeting passed resolution to seek a public school for the area and established committee to press for school.

19 August 1876
Application for a school at Petersham.

Department eventually accepted lots 7-12, and 18-23, Section I, on the proviso that a right of way be established from Frazer's Road to the back of the school at cost of £2000.

16 December 1876
Memo to Architect. To draw up plans to erect brick school room and class room for 300 pupils plus teacher's residence of 4 rooms and kitchen.

21 September 1877
Memo to Architect. To draw up full plans, making infants rooms 30 x 20 feet, and placing gallery form across the rooms.

31 December 1877
Memo to Architect. Tenders accepted for school from Walker and Son, Ultimo for £4,126. The Council had decided to omit the weather shed originally called for in the tender.

PETERSHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL 1878-84

9 December 1878
Petersham Public School opened with Arthur Wood as head teacher

January 1879
A separate Infants Department established under Miss Belle Collins who remained at Petersham until her retirement in 1903.

21 November 1879
Concern regarding dampness of wall at back of Infants Dept. Architect noted that it did not need painting, but that all brick buildings showed some damp in very wet weather.

2 September 1880
Enrolment in primary was 310 and infants was 186 and 6 additional forms were supplied.

February 1881
Petersham Presbyterian Church completed close to the school.

3 March 1881
Memo that Troughton and Bolton of Dick Street were entitled to total payment of £166 for erection of weather sheds.

24 June 1881
G. A. Kemp instructed to draw up plans for additions to Petersham School but none completed by May 1882 occasioning Ministerial disapproval.
12 December 1881
Wood noted problems at school, with four classes having to take turns outside, two on verandahs and two in sheds.

13 December 1881
Accommodation problems at Petersham. Architect noted that he had a large tent 73 x 20 which could be used at either St Leonards or Petersham. On 10 January, Inspector selected Petersham for the tent.

14 January 1882
Inspector noted that a 40 x 20 tent should be added for the Infants.

28 February 1882
G. A. Wright was paid £46/3/6 for erecting tent.

1882
School elevated to First Class.

29 June 1882
By putting an experienced draughtsman and junior draftsman onto the project for additions for Petersham, the plans for extensions were almost ready.

29 March 1883
Borough of Petersham request payment of half of the cost of making kerb and guttering in New Cooks River Road and West Street.

23 July 1883
Due to large body of water lying at back of school in wet weather, James Reynolds of Darling Street, Balmain engaged to construct cesspit to draw away water.

October 1883
Wash places altered to allow them to be connected to water mains.

January 1884
Wood applied to have Petersham graded as a Superior Public School.

14 January 1884
Wood applied to have weather shed built in Boys' playground due to summer heat. Inspector recommended. Tender of J. W. Eaton, Lane Cove Road, St Leonards for £95/17/6 accepted.

PETERSHAM SUPERIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL 1884-96

15 March 1884
Petersham made a Superior School.

24 May 1884
Illustration of the school published. School surrounded by a "substantial railing with stone pillars on either side of the gates".

16 December 1884
Architect's memo. That when new weather shed completed, old ones handed over to Infants which meant that fences had to be altered, thus making at extra £14/15/6 payment to Eaton.

6 January 1885
Payment made to Borough of Petersham for making kerb and gutter in adjacent streets.

24 March 1885
Wood requested a room for Girls Department plus a staff room and new detached wooden building for Girls enough to house two classes, measuring say 40 or 50 by 20 feet. Inspector also recommended, and noted as "Approved".
29 July 1885
Memo from Architect re plans. Cost of new rooms will be £600, which was seen by Dept as excessive so he was instructed to draw up plans for a wooden schoolroom costing £150.

25 September 1885
Architect redrew plans. Thomas Taylor, Piggott Street, Petersham tender of £185 accepted.

1886
New Cooks River Road on which the school was situated renamed Gordon Street, after being known for a short time as the Park Way.

12 April 1888
Applications made to hold evening classes at school but rejected.

18 July 1888
W. Schultz, Acting Head Teacher noted that the toilet seats were too large for small boys.

4 Sept 1889
Architect prepared Plan and Specifications for additions to Infants' School to cost £1550.

November 1889
Architect altered plans for additions so that they were closer to main school, thus causing removal of sheds and some alteration to the fence. Tender of John Alexander Oag, King and Turner Streets, Balmain for £1,285 was the successful tenderer.

1890
Detail Survey plan shows outline of school and other buildings in the grounds.

1890
Introduction of vocational training for boys in schools. Little provision for girls although attempts were made to establish cookery classes. Some start at Fort Street Public School which was centre for Central Cookery School.

26 February 1890
Architect writes of proposal to make an enclosure of part of the verandah. Work was completed by J. A. Oag.

16 April 1890
William Johnston, Aubrey Street, Petersham writes, that he is about to plant trees in school and that Wood wants him to obtain Departmental permission, which was granted 22 April.

23 April 1890
William Johnston wants specification for tree guards to protect the young trees he is planting in school grounds. He expected them to be planted 24 May.

4 June 1890
Infants buildings complete and ready for occupation.

June 1890
Under-Secretary of the Department sent a circular to all schools that Department would like to encourage tree planting in schools but could not yet formally declare an official Arbor Day.

30 July 1890
J. Wheeler, Chairman of the School Committee applied for a grant to cover costs of the Arbor Day ceremonies and tree planting.

September 1890
Permission given for elocution lessons to be given by Mrs Sheridan, widow of W. E. Sheridan, a noted actor.

11 May 1891
Additional drain pipes laid, and cesspit and cover installed to collect water. Completed for £14/15/- by J. A. Oag, King and Turner Streets, Balmain.

14 July 1891
Application by Arthur Wood to tidy playground in preparation for the coming "Arbor Day" leads to the spreading of stone chippings over playgrounds at cost of £50/15/-. 
17 July 1891
Application by Jessie Ferguson to conduct cookery classes at school. Later approved.

13 November 1891
Concern about broken front gate in Girls' Department, since it would allow goats in which could ruin the new trees which are showing splendid growth.

16 May 1892
Belle Collins, Head of Infants Dept, applied for stone chips for Infants playground.

16 August 1894
Belle Collins applied for some packing to be put into the floor of the upper class room to deaden sound, which was not approved. Plan of the Infants classroom on file.

AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE 1896-1920

1 July 1896
After Arthur Wood retired, he was succeeded as Head Teacher by James Rickard from Newcastle.

11 September 1896
Rickard found the school garden overgrown with weeds and applied for a load of manure to assist his work in reinstating the garden.

25 September 1896
George A. Rourke applied to conduct the proposed evening school at Petersham.

7 October 1896
Rickard applied to establish an evening school at Petersham for working boys wanting to improve their education.

8 March 1897
Inspector Dawson noted that Girls Department crowded that four extra desks were added at the front of the main room.

14 June 1897
Memo from Inspector Dawson that Girls’ School needs enlargement. Gallery in Girls School should be replaced by desks. Should build a two storey brick building like one recently built at Crown Street, with the ground floor a weather shed and the upper floor a classroom measuring 20 x 30. It was later expanded to be 40 feet by 30 feet.

5 August 1897
Chief Clerk of Works prepared plans estimated to cost £800.

20 September 1897
Tender of J. A. Oag for Girls' extensions accepted at £854.

7 August 1897
Chief Clerk of Works noted that cost of removing the gallery in the Girls' Dept and replacing with platform as in other parts of the school cost £6.

1 April 1898
James Rickard noted that Boys School crowded. On Inspector's recommendation the Under Secretary limited the Boy's enrolment to 450.

2 May 1898
Extension to Girls school completed. Former Girls' wooden detached classroom handed over to Boys department.

21 May 1898
Rickard applied to move this classroom into the Boys playground. Completed at cost of £25.

7 June 1898
Due to the introduction of the kindergarten into the infants school, mistress Belle Collins applied to have suitable furniture.
14 July 1898
Crown Solicitor informed school that it had completed resumption of additional land, lot 17, Section 1 West's paddock for school (C. T. 446 f. 217).

1899
From enrolment of 23 boys in 1896, the enrolment had risen to 84 in the Upper School.

20 June 1899
Account from F. C. Janson for fixing 11 wire screens to windows as protection against breakage.

3 October 1899
W. Barnfield, Kepos Street, Redfern awarded contract to connect school to mains sewerage at cost of £522/17/6.

December 1899
Sydney Chamber of Commerce commenced a system of examination.

14 December 1899
Complaint that the windows in the Girls Department which only opened at the tops were inadequate for ventilation in summer. Altered by J. A. Oag at a cost of £127/7/- to replace the large centre windows with double hung sashes in box frames.

January 1900
Mains drainage extended to school.

5 November 1900
Secretary of Petersham Superior Public School Old Boys Union applied to have gas put on in Main Boys Room.

3 May 1901
Permission granted to enlarge enrolment of boys from 450 to 500 despite accommodation problems since the local area was growing so rapidly.

20 January 1902
Report by Inspector Dawson that he had recommended the erection of a Boys' Classroom about 6 months ago to house 150 boys.

10 March 1902
The Architect noted that the accommodation problems could be solved by the erection of a wing at right angles in front of the Boys' school, which would allow connection without detracting from the general appearance, at cost of £1,000. This was subsequently approved.

October 1902
Contact signed with J. A. Oag to build new wing for £963 for 150 pupils.

1903
Upper Boys School had enrolment of 170.

13 February 1903
Opening of new wing of the school by Minister for Public Instruction, J. Perry. Number of pupils at school 1496.

16 February 1903
New boys wing ready for occupation.

5 June 1903
Architect noted that verandah roof covered with shingles leaked and should be re clad with iron at cost of £15/10/-.
Tender of George Walker, Stanmore Road Petersham accepted.

1905
New brick Presbyterian Church replaced the old timber building adjacent to the school.

30 August 1905
Architect's Memo that best manner to build new wing to the two storey building was at the back of the girls playground, with the lower room for cooking and laundry and the upper for needlework at an estimated cost of £650.
September 1905
A team from the school went to Melbourne after winning the Australian Rules football competition for Sydney Schools for two years, and whilst in Melbourne it won the game, the first time such a victory had occurred.

November 1905
Parents Association formed which was later claimed to be the first in Australia. It was instrumental in the building of special rooms for Science, manual work, Sewing and Cookery and collected money to equip the rooms.

24 January 1906
Rickard complained about the need to teach 250 to 300 boys in one large classroom.

6 February 1906
Memo from Architect. Work currently under way was construction of classrooms for Physical Science and Manual Training. A wing was also to be built with Girls Building at NW corner of their grounds to provide 2 rooms for Cookery and Domestic Science. Glass partitions were also to be added to Boys Room. The large Boys Room was 70 x 25, which the Inspector thought could be converted into three 23 x 25 rooms. The glass partitions were later approved. One was soon altered into a movable partition.

21 May 1906
Successful tenderer for Physical Science Room was S. Corfield 4 Edward Street, Summer Hill. Cost of whole work £462/10/-.

23 July 1906
A. D. Scouller, 39 Perry Street. Marrickville successful tenderer for Domestic Economy Room, for £690.

12 November 1906
Inspector recommended that the galleries in the Infants' rooms should be replaced by desks. This work was completed by A. S. Scouller, 39 Percy Street, Marrickville.

1906
Science and Manual Training room completed for cost of £478/14/8.

Early 1907
New classrooms completed but equipment not immediately available due to a misunderstanding between the Mistress, District Inspector and Government Architect.

1907
Domestic Economy rooms completed for cost of £670/9/0.

6 August 1907
Rickard anxious for glass partitions to make smaller classrooms of about 23 x 25 feet of Boys Room. Work had been recommended but not started.

30 December 1907
Tender of J. T. Burrows to complete partitions for Boys Room accepted at £265.

March 1908
Rickard urged that extensive repairs be undertaken to smarten up the school.

c. March 1908
Plan of school for tar paving, which shows buildings.

11 May 1908
Original tenderer, Burrows, for partitions lost deposit since he did not start in specified time and a new tender from Charles Shuker, 84 Sutherland Street, St Peters accepted at a cost of £279/17/6.

6 November 1908
Partition in Boys Room completed.

December 1909
Peter Board notes in memo that department seeking to acquire land to expand school.
February 1910
Health Report notes that the Girls and the Infants Schools were ill-ventilated and dark with dark dadoes.

August 1910
Allotment at corner of West Street and the Boulevard resumed, and compensation of £725 paid (lot 8 and part lot 9, Sec 2 DP 275, C. T. 2062 f. 158).

1910
Rickard made arrangements to teach classes in typing and shorthand to boys and girls.

October 1910
Plans drawn up for Additions and Alterations to the school, mainly to convert large open classrooms into smaller ones in Infants and Boys Departments.

November 1910
Deputation of Local citizens pressed for establishment of a high school at Petersham, the resumption of land for Technical School and additions to the school site in Crystal Street.

3 December 1910
Removal of galleries in small Boys classroom completed.

27 January 1911
Tender of Frank Vernon for additions accepted at cost of £2149.

20 February 1911
Petersham Continuation School commenced with W. C. Ewing in charge.

15 February 1911
Completion of alterations for Continuation School at Petersham.

Early 1911
Extensive remodelling of Infants School, and its classes were housed temporarily in tents.

July 1911
Series of photographs taken of the Continuation School in progress.

18 July 1911
Architect's memo re new shed for cleaner at back of Boys weather shed. Lately completed by F. Vernon at cost of £48/10/-.

1 August 1911
Additions expected to be completed 11 August. They consist of two extensions 10' x 20' 6" to Infants' classrooms and two teachers' rooms 10 x 10.

7 August 1911
New Infants' Rooms occupied and their tents were handed over to Boys Department for the use of 4 Boys classes.

27 September 1911
Rickard suggests that four narrow windows also be altered. No additional windows altered.

7 November 1911
Additions and Improvements by Vernon completed.

April 1912
House, "St Just" next to the land on opposite side of West Street was bought from Grace Bennett (C. T. 2256 f. 92) for £1,900.

21 June 1912
Stable of "St Just" to be converted into manual training room for boys.

1912
Department intended to limit Petersham to being school catering for local area only. Some restrictions were made in the enrolments but school permitted to take 200 Boys and 150 Girls for the sixth class and above from out of the area.
31 July 1912
Rickard applied for accommodation for 4 boys classes now taught in sheds. A proposal to rebuild tents with walls was later replaced by one to build four classrooms using the timber from the tent floors which could later be used as a gymnasium.

23 November 1912
Manual Training Room in "St Just's" stables completed.

Late 1912
New Department syllabus proposed to eliminate science teaching from commercial school curriculum. Rickard protested noting how the school had pioneered practical science teaching in NSW. He was allowed to continue science teaching.

September 1912
First Issue of The Royal Blue, The Magazine of the Petersham Commercial Schools.

September 1912
Almost 300 boys and 150 girls in secondary department.

January 1913
Became a school with primary and secondary departments. A Commercial Department was formally recognised by the Department at this time. A Girls' Intermediate High School commenced operation in "St Just".

1913
A three year course was added to the two year course at the Continuation School. Continuation School had an average enrolment of 220 for its first two years.

9 January 1913
Tender of John Light & Sons, Garfield St, Five Dock, for £325/10/- accepted to build two timber classrooms - the "Pavilion classrooms" on block next to "St Just" using timber from the tent floors.

23 April 1913
New timber classrooms complete and final payment certificate issued.

30 April 1913
Rickard informed the Department that the "Pavilion classrooms" were occupied on the 15 April.

12 May 1913
Letter from John Danks & Sons Pty Ltd, that W. C. Ewing, a teacher at Continuation School had most successfully worked with their firm to gain experience of current commercial business practices.

June 1913
Photograph of new pavilion class rooms for boys.

By July 1914
Reduction in enrolments had lowered numbers to 660 in Boys' with 200 doing higher level work and 522 in Girls' of which 142 were doing higher level work.

January 1915
Completion of remodelling of Girls Department by J. M. Wilson of 139 Wells St, Newtown at cost of £375.

July 1915
Headmaster James Rickard resigned after 19 years at Petersham with his last day being 15 December 1915. Replaced by William Gray.

28 September 1916
Contractor Ramsay Sharp & Co, started work to substitute electric light for gas lighting in Evening Continuation School.

3 January 1917
Electric light installation completed for £52/12/9.
1917
Erection of a portable manual training classroom next to boys portable classrooms at cost of £220.

16 January 1918
Contractor W. Barnfield & Sons, of Sydney completed additions and the remodelling of closets at a cost of £525/14/8.

31 January 1918
Contractor J. Light & Sons of Five Dock started work on new lavatories.

17 May 1918
New lavatories completed at cost of £191/19/0.

1918
Re-casting of syllabus for Commercial High School. Under this scheme Petersham made one of six centralised commercial schools, providing a three year course.

1918
Applications to add further accommodation to school. Need to rent Presbyterian Hall.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT PETERSHAM 1920-96

1920
Girls Primary and Secondary department formally separated although they had effectively been conducted as two departments for some years. "St Just" reconditioned and then re-occupied by girls in April 1920.

July 1920
Boys' Intermediate High School commenced operation at the school and the Commercial School classification discontinued.

1920
Boys school has 963 pupils with 17 classes in 11 classrooms, 4 portable rooms and 2 sheds.

1920
School garden at West Street corner established by E. Towle.

9 February 1920
Under Secretary recommended erection of double portable classroom.

4 September 1922
Plans showing enrolment etc in each room.

11 October 1922
Completion of erection of double Portable Classroom, at cost of £531/18/4.

26 September 1924
Principal W. Gray writes scathing memo about the dilapidated condition of the school especially the old building.

9 April 1925
Inspector writes approving of Petersham Council's proposal to assist the Petersham School garden with material.

16 April 1925
After Gertrude North of the Girls High School complained of the decayed condition of the school fernhouse it was demolished.

6 February 1926
Architect's estimate of the cost of replacing the old decayed shingle roof on the school with 117 fibro cement slates 20 x 10 inches, with 302 feet ridge capping and 5.5 slates for the tower.

24 May 1926
Press report referring to condition of school.
April 1926
Teacher A. Towle took pupils to the zoo to see the landscaping.

5 August 1926
Petersham P & C proposed that repair of existing roof is unnecessary and that large parts of the school should be demolished to be replaced by new buildings.

7 September 1926
Tender of James Muir, 52 Redfern Street Redfern to replace roof with fibro cement slates at cost of £875 accepted.

19 November 1926
Re-roofing complete at costs of £875.

25 November 1926
Petersham P & C to be told that department's decision not to rebuild will not be changed.

3 March 1927
Hermann David Black, teacher at school applied for special leave to complete Economic Honours Exam at University of Sydney.

22 June 1927
Approval to install electric light in Girls Intermediate High School.

6 July 1927
James Rickard, former principal of Petersham died

18 February 1928
Death of Arthur Towle, of 14 Third Street, Ashbury at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital from sub-acute appendicitis.

1928 to 30
Proposals to expand accommodation at Petersham including the erection of kindergarten, met by department with its plans to establish a Central Intermediate High School at Homebush.

7 November 1929
Completion of additions to closets to the Intermediate High School by F. Condon of 34 Cowper Street, Randwick at cost of £220/9/6.

By 1930
Enrolment totalled 345 in the Infants, 292 boys and 280 girls in the primary school and 446 boys and 280 girls in the high school. Infants school still occupied the two storey block behind the old school. The Boys occupied the southern part of the main building and the girls the main northern room.

July 1931
Some minor repair work undertaken on fencing.

May 1932
Mothers Club made soup for children with unemployed fathers

October 1932
Electrical rewiring of the school needed.

17 February 1933
Plans of proposed alterations at school, which were later rejected.

1934
Approval given to erect a single portable classroom at cost of £153/12/2 at the school.

May 1936
Homebush Boys High School commenced operations

May 1936
Boys' Intermediate High School discontinued at Petersham.
December 1938
Girls' Intermediate High School discontinued at Petersham.

January 1939
Public School commenced operations.

2 May 1945
R. A. F. Mosquito fighter/bomber exploded in the air above Petersham, with body of one of the crew members landing in school grounds

December 1964
Public School discontinued at Petersham.

January 1965
Infants' School commenced operations.

May 1975
Infants' School discontinued at Petersham.

May 1975
Public School commenced operation on West Street

January 1965
Girls' High School commenced operation.

December 1989
Girls' High School discontinued operation.

1 Dept of Education - Properties Branch, Card catalogue of building work, repairs, etc, 1916-35, 11/15372
2 Dept of Education - Properties Branch, Card catalogue of building work, repairs, etc, 1916-35, 11/15372