

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

“I HAVE A DREAM” MURAL

305 KING STREET, NEWTOWN

“a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art”



For

Marrickville Council

March 2015

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IV
1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
1.1. THE BRIEF	1
1.2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	1
1.3. LIMITATIONS	1
1.4. AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION	1
1.5. DEFINITIONS	1
1.6. SITE LOCATION	2
1.7. STATUTORY LISTINGS AND CONTROLS	3
1.8. NON-STATUTORY LISTINGS	3
1.9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
2.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW	4
2.1. EARLY USE OF THE LAND	4
2.2. HISTORY OF THE "I HAVE A DREAM" MURAL	8
3.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	22
3.1. THE MURAL SITE CONTEXT	22
3.2. THE MURAL	24
3.3. CONDITION AND INTEGRITY OF THE MURAL	25
3.4. VIEW ANALYSIS	28
4.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	31
4.1. CONCLUSION OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	38
5.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE	38
5.1. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE	38
5.2. DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE	44
5.3. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	44
6.0 DISCUSSION	45
7.0 CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS	46

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: FEBRUARY 2015 INTERVIEW RE "WE HAVE THE DREAMING MURAL"

ATTACHMENT 2: DRAFT STATE HERITAGE INVENTORY FORM FOR THE "I HAVE A DREAM" MURAL

FIGURES

Cover: "I have a dream" mural, 305 King Street, Newtown Photo taken by Nathanael Hughes of Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

Figure 1: Location of site at 305 King Street, Newtown - outlined in red, shaded yellow Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps.....	3
Figure 2: Part of the plan of the subdivision of the Camperdown Estate offered for sale on 21 April 1841. The area of the future O'Connell Crescent Estate (information below) is shaded. Source: State Library of New South Wales Ref No. Z M2 811.1824/1841/1 (taken from Nicholas Jackson's history of 17 Mary Street, Newtown).....	5
Figure 3: (Left) Plan of the O'Connell Crescent Estate subdivision offered for sale in June 1841. The subject property is in the middle of the block fronting "The Newtown Road" between Mary and Eliza Streets. (Note that Lots 3 to 5 were acquired for Camperdown cemetery). Source: National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-f780	5
Figure 4: (Left) Detail of W.H.Well's survey of Camperdown dated January 1845. The survey depicted a building on Lot 3 and noted the owner as 'Webster'. Source: State Library of New South Wales Ref no. M3 811.1824/1845/1	6
Figure 5: The advertisement placed by John Webster selling his house and shop. Tuesday 27 January 1846, page 4. Source: Trove nla.gov.au	7
Figure 6: (left) This 1890 survey shows a small slightly mis-aligned building existed on the site (indicated via arrow), before being demolished by 1896. Source: Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, State Library of New South Wales Ref No. Z/ M Ser 4 811.17/1, Sheet 9	7
Figure 7: A 1943 aerial photograph of the area reveals that the buildings directly to the east of 305 King Street (indicated with arrow) had been demolished, and in their place existed a small and unassuming plaza, with a large building to its rear. Source: NSW Land & Property Information http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au	8
Figure 8: Andrew Aitken Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	9
Figure 9: Juilee Pryor Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection.....	9
Figure 10: Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken's first collaborative work, 'The Light Shineth', Rochford Street. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection.....	10
Figure 11: (Left) The eastern wall of No. 305 King Street right before the painting of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	10
Figure 12: (Left) Juilee Pryor's photo of Andrew Aitken working on the ladder, taken from the cherry picker. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection.....	12
Figure 13: The progress by midday Saturday Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	13
Figure 14: A detail of the frieze, taken by Tony Spanos of Pryor and Aitken after the completion of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection.....	14
Figure 15: The mural as first completed Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	14
Figure 16: A photograph taken by Juilee Pryor at dawn on Sunday morning. Andrew Aitken can be seen with his back turned and wearing his saxophone, and the borrowed cherry picker packed down. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	15
Figure 17: An example of the graffiti tagging of the mural frieze Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	16
Figure 18: An example of the graffiti tagging of the mural frieze Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	16
Figure 19: The Declaration of Independence painted by Aitken, and signed by members of the community. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection.....	17
Figure 20: The Aboriginal flag on the bottom half of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection	18
Figure 21: A screenshot of the music video filmed for Coldplay's 'A Sky Full of Stars' song. Source: Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPRjCeoBqrl	20

Figure 22: (Left) The mural was the site at which the first Walking the Streets was opened in c.1991/2 Source: Juilee Pryor's commentary on her personal collection of photos, ArchivePix Image Library	20
Figure 23: The "I have a dream" mural, recent photo	21
Figure 24 Figure 25 and Figure 26: The former Boot Emporium at 305-309 King Street, Newtown, with No. 305 at far right, with the mural painted on the shop's eastern side elevation.....	23
Figure 27: The property at 8 Mary Street Newtown (Lot 100, DP1087885) which includes the plaza fronting King Street adjacent to the east of No. 305 King Street. Note how the roughly L-shaped block extends through to Mary Street. Source: NSW Land & Property Information http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au	24
Figure 28: Detail of the lower left corner of the mural, showing damaged and chipped plaster and bill poster covering the injunction to respect the mural. Note the litter bins in the foreground. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	26
Figure 29 : View of the mural and Telstra Plaza from the opposite side of King Street. Note the centrally placed litter bins in the plaza. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	26
Figure 30: The "I have a dream" mural, Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014	27
Figure 31: Close view of the mural across Telstra Plaza from the north Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	28
Figure 32: View of the mural from the corner of Erskineville Road Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	29
Figure 33: View of the mural and the building at 305-309 King Street from further north, opposite side of King Street. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	30
Figure 34: View of the mural and the building at 305-309 King Street from further north, opposite side of King Street. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014.....	31

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “I have a dream” mural located at 305 King Street, Newtown is rare as an enduring large-scale political mural from the 1970s-1990s period - when political street art was at its height - and unique as a mural undertaken without any official permission.

The mural is outstanding for its prominence within the King Street Newtown streetscape, and for its social significance, demonstrated by its ongoing care by the community, its Facebook page, documentary and continuing use as a backdrop for popular culture, such as Coldplay’s recent music video (August 2014). The mural also has social and aesthetic significance for its message and its design and composition in conveying that message.

From its inception, the mural was designed to apply the universal human rights message - articulated by Martin Luther King Junior in his speech of August 28, 1963 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington (a defining moment of the American Civil Rights Movement) - to Australia. The original design included the Earth from space with Australia visible, and a group of people, including one wearing an Aboriginal flag, looking up at the message and the Earth. The Aboriginal flag painted across the lower portion of the mural was added about 18 months later by the original artists for a practical reason (to allow easy retouching to cover racist graffiti), however its addition has enhanced the mural in making its message clearer.

Today, the “I have a dream” mural is an iconic element in Newtown’s urban visual landscape and social fabric. Its message of tolerance, dreaming and being a better people has resonated in the community. The mural has survived graffiti wars, development plans and a blazing fire that erupted from an abandoned ticket booth in the plaza in 2011. When the Mural gets ‘tagged’ (graffitied), members of the community anonymously repair the damage (without seeking specific consent).

The mural has outstanding heritage significance for the local community and easily meets the criteria for local heritage listing. This report recommends the heritage listing of the “I have a dream” mural in the heritage schedule of the Marrickville Local Environmental Plan 2011, and allowing ongoing repair and retouching of the mural by the community without the need for development consent.

1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. THE BRIEF

This heritage assessment report has been prepared on behalf of Marrickville Council to assess the heritage significance of the “I have a dream” mural painted on the eastern wall of the shop at 305 King Street, Newtown. This report considers the historical, historical associations, aesthetic and social significance of the mural. The rarity of the mural is examined through a comparative analysis with other large-scale political murals in inner Sydney dating from the 1970s to the early 2000s.

For this report, oral history interviews were undertaken of one of the artists involved in the painting of “I have a dream” mural (Julie Pryor), and also Jeff Faraday and Adam Hill, the artists of the “We have the Dreaming” mural on a wall within the Telstra Plaza near the “I have a dream” mural.

1.2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this report is in accordance with the guidelines of the NSW Heritage Manual and in accordance with the latest version of The NSW Heritage Division, Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) Assessing Heritage Significance guidelines. This report is also in accordance with the principles and definitions set out in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 2013 and its Practice Notes.

1.3. LIMITATIONS

The site of the mural was visited by Chery Kemp, Heritage Specialist, of Paul Davies Pty Ltd on 2014. The mural has been professionally photographed by Nathanael Hughes of Aperture Photography.

The historical outline in this report has involved very thorough research, including an oral history interview with one of the original mural artists, Julie Pryor, and informs the significance analysis for the mural.

1.4. AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION

This report was prepared by Paul Davies Pty Ltd, Architects and Heritage Consultants, 180 Darling St Balmain NSW 2041.

This report was authored by Chery Kemp, Heritage Specialist, with historical research undertaken by and history written by Elizabeth Conroy, Historian sub consultant. All photographs were taken by Nathanael Hughes of Aperture Photography, unless otherwise credited.

1.5. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this report

Local refers to Marrickville Council area; and

State refers to New South Wales.

The following definitions used in this report and are from *Article 1: Definitions* of The Burra Charter 2013, the Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance.

Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, records, *related places* and *related objects*.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Fabric means all the physical material of the *place* including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its cultural significance.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of a *place* and its *setting*.

Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

Preservation means maintaining a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material.

Adaptation means changing a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use.

Use means the functions of a *place*, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

Compatible use means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Setting means the immediate and extended environment of a *place* that is part of or contributes to its *cultural significance* and distinctive character.

Related place means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.

Related object means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the place.

Associations mean the connections that exist between people and a *place*.

Meanings denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

1.6. SITE LOCATION

The shop on which the mural is painted is located at No. 305 King Street Newtown, one of a row of three shops (Nos. 305-309 King Street). No. 305 has a legal description of Lot C DP439135 (Nos. 309 and 307 King Street are respectively Lots A and B of the same DP), and is shown in Figure 1 below.

No. 8 Mary Street, adjacent to the east of No. 305 King Street, is a roughly L-shaped allotment (Lot 100, DP1087885) which contains a circa 1970s commercial building fronting Mary Street, and a building setback from King Street with a plaza fronting King Street. As the site at 8 Mary Street Newtown is owned and occupied by Telstra, this plaza has become known locally as "Telstra Plaza". This will be the name used for this plaza in this report.



Figure 1: Location of site at 305 King Street, Newtown - outlined in red, shaded yellow Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps

1.7. STATUTORY LISTINGS AND CONTROLS

NSW HERITAGE ACT 1977

The property on which the mural is located (No. 305 King Street Newtown) is not included on the State Heritage Register (SHR).

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (LEP)

The property on which the mural is located – No, 305 King Street, Newtown - is within the King Street/Enmore Road Heritage Conservation Area (HCA 2) listed under the Marrickville LEP 2011. The shop on which the mural is painted is not a local heritage item, however is considered to be a contributory building within HCA 2.

1.8. NON-STATUTORY LISTINGS

No National Trust listings have been noted for the subject property or the mural.

1.9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assistance of Juillee Pryor, one of the original mural artists, who agreed to an interview and allowed access to her private collection of photographs, is gratefully acknowledged.

The assistance of Marrickville Library's Local History section in researching the mural history is also gratefully acknowledged.

2.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

2.1. EARLY USE OF THE LAND

The inner west Sydney suburb of Newtown is located within a land grant of 240 acres given to William Bligh (1754 – 1817) in 1806 by Governor King (1758 – 1808). Captain Bligh had arrived in New South Wales to take up the governorship of the colony from King. Governor King granted Bligh not just the 240 acres, named 'Camperdown' but also 105 acres near Parramatta and 1000 acres near Rouse Hill.¹ Almost three decades before the grant, in 1779, the then Governor Phillip set aside what became the Camperdown grant for Crown and church use, as well as an interesting addition of a 200 acre grant for the support of a school teacher in the area. No definite action was taken to utilise this 200 acres though, so it reverted to the Crown once again.² In 1801 the land formed part of the grant to the trustees of a Female Orphan Institution, but in 1806 the trustees, upon being granted 1000 acres at Bathurst, agreed to it being granted to William Bligh in 1806 for the purpose of erecting a residence.³

Bligh was removed from office after the infamous rum rebellion in 1808 and he returned to England in 1810. Bligh's daughter, Mary Putland, married Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice O'Connell (1768-1848), the commander of the 73rd Regiment that had accompanied Lachlan Macquarie. The O'Connells also left Australia (in 1814) but returned to New South Wales in 1838. Upon their return O'Connell claimed his father-in-law's land at Parramatta, however in the intervening years of Bligh's and the O'Connell's absence, this land had either been sold or re-granted.⁴ To settle this matter, the O'Connells surrendered their claim to the Parramatta land in exchange for the confirmation of entitlement to the other grants, one of which was the 240 acre grant, 'Camperdown'.⁵

The O'Connells appear to have subdivided this land into 32 sections and released the lots for sale on 21 April 1841. Within this subdivision, O'Connell's son, Maurice Charles O'Connell, further subdivided Lots 1-3 into an estate he named O'Connell Crescent Estate. This re-subdivision was put up for sale shortly after the main release, in June 1841. It was advertised by the auctioneer, Thomas Stubbs, as being well suited for investors, tradesmen and mechanics.⁶

The O'Connell Crescent subdivision consisted of 73 smaller allotments in 5 sections; the property at 305 King Street being Lot 3 of Section 1. The plan of the O'Connell Crescent Estate has been lost by Land and Property information.

¹ Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), William Bligh, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bligh-william-1797>

² Marie Ryan, Newtown Municipality 1862-1892: Subdivision, Land Use and Services, p 6.

³ ADB, Bligh.

⁴ Nicholas Jackson, History of 17 Mary Street Newtown.

⁵ ADB, Sir Maurice Charles O'Connell, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/oconnell-sir-maurice-charles-2517>

⁶ Jackson, 17 Mary Street Newtown



Figure 2: Part of the plan of the subdivision of the Camperdown Estate offered for sale on 21 April 1841. The area of the future O'Connell Crescent Estate (information below) is shaded. Source: State Library of New South Wales Ref No. Z M2 811.1824/1841/1 (taken from Nicholas Jackson's history of 17 Mary Street, Newtown)



Figure 3: (Left) Plan of the O'Connell Crescent Estate subdivision offered for sale in June 1841. The subject property is in the middle of the block fronting "The Newtown Road" between Mary and Eliza Streets. (Note that Lots 3 to 5 were acquired for Camperdown cemetery). Source: National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-f780>



Figure 4: (Left) Detail of W.H.Well's survey of Camperdown dated January 1845. The survey depicted a building on Lot 3 and noted the owner as 'Webster'. Source: State Library of New South Wales Ref no. M3 811.1824/1845/1

An 1845 survey map (Figure 4 above) produced by W.H.Wells shows that a double-fronted cottage had been constructed on Lot 3, owned by 'Webster'. The Webster family was a well-known family in the early phase of Newtown's history. John Webster, a grocer and draper, and his wife Eliza arrived in the area in 1832 when it was... "away out in the country then, with a few houses scattered in the bush. Some of the little houses, I recollect, were nothing but old slab huts, with bark roofs. Primitive houses, primitive life".⁷

The Websters reportedly opened the first shop along The Newtown Road (now King Street). The store was called 'New Town Store' and was named as such to distinguish it from the established settlements at Camperdown, Cooks River and O'Connell Town.⁸ The New Town Store is not the building shown in the 1845 map, for the shop was situated on the corner of Eliza and King Streets (where ZaniBar is situated today) however Webster also owned a separate grocery store on King Street.⁹ The building depicted on the site on the 1845 map is most likely Webster's secondary shop, for in the following year, 1846, Webster placed an advertisement (see Figure 5 below) for the sale of "a house with best rate shop etc., in the best part of the road from Sydney to Cook's River. It is immediately opposite the road to Enmore, and has a double frontage... And the house is newly built, with first-rate workmanship."¹⁰

The physical description, location and date of construction of this house is consistent with the possibility that the building shown on the 1845 map is indeed Webster's house and secondary store.

⁷ Friday 13 December 1912, Sydney Morning Herald, page 5. Accessed via Trove

⁸ Linda Daniele, <https://lindadaniele.wordpress.com/tag/heritage/>

⁹ Friday 13 December 1912, Sydney Morning Herald, page 5. Accessed via Trove

¹⁰ Tuesday 27 January 1846, page 4. Accessed via Trove

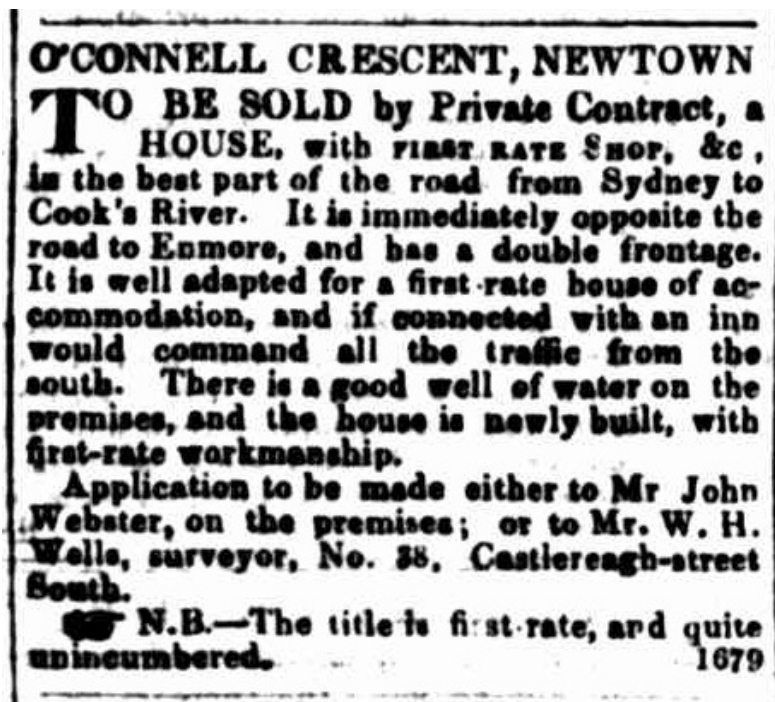


Figure 5: The advertisement placed by John Webster selling his house and shop. Tuesday 27 January 1846, page 4. Source: Trove nla.gov.au

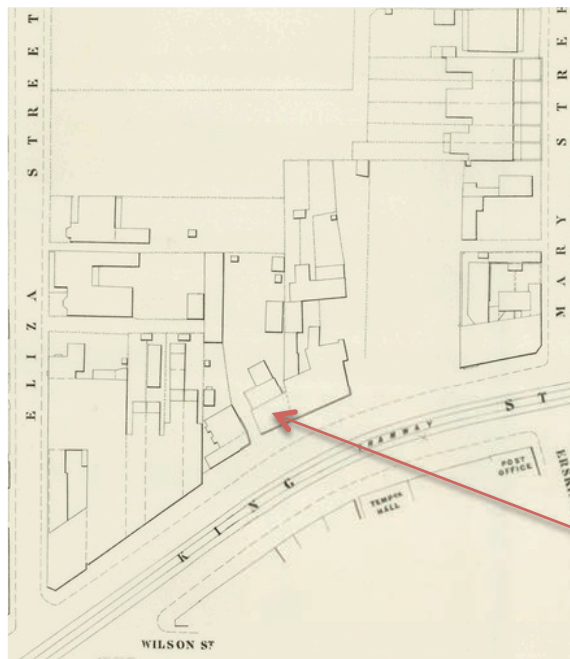


Figure 6: (left) This 1890 survey shows a small slightly mis-aligned building existed on the site (indicated via arrow), before being demolished by 1896. Source: Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, State Library of New South Wales Ref No. Z/ M Ser 4 811.17/1, Sheet 9

By 1890 the buildings along King Street between Mary and Eliza Streets (within the original O'Connell subdivision) had changed dramatically, in keeping with the industrial and commercial shift of the entire area. As shown in the image above, the house and store originally owned by Webster was replaced by an entirely different building.

In 1896¹¹ this small building was in turn replaced by an imposing new 3-storey building containing three shops: Nos. 305, 307 and 309 King Street. The 1899 and 1900 Sand's directory shows John Hunter as the occupant, and the use of all three shops as a 'boot palace'.

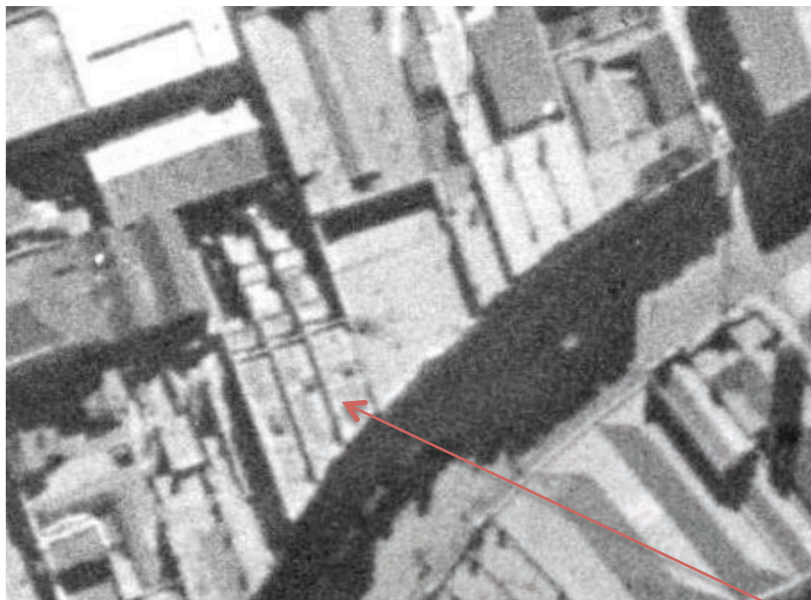


Figure 7: A 1943 aerial photograph of the area reveals that the buildings directly to the east of 305 King Street (indicated with arrow) had been demolished, and in their place existed a small and unassuming plaza, with a large building to its rear. Source: NSW Land & Property Information <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au>

By 1943 a plaza had been created to the east of No. 305 King Street. The building shown in 1943 (see Figure 7 above) east of 305 King Street was replaced circa 1970s with a 5-storey commercial office building known as 8 Mary Street on a roughly L-shaped allotment (Lot 100, DP1087885) which has a frontage to Mary Street and is setback from King Street with a plaza fronting King Street. Note that Telstra Plaza fronting King Street is part of Lot 100, DP 1087885, and not public land.

2.2. HISTORY OF THE “I HAVE A DREAM” MURAL

After many years of being associated with industry, the 1980s and 1990s saw Newtown find a new identity. “After many industries packed up and left, the neighborhood began to welcome students and other newcomers with its cheap and abundant housing. In the wake of the neighborhood’s growing diversity, artists also flocked to the area after the establishment of several artist warehouses, and Newtown’s reputation as a bohemian hub and mecca of social consciousness was firmly established.”¹² Newtown had become “a magnet for a colourful range of subcultures”¹³ and these elements of difference and individuality prompted the vibrant culture of Newtown to be partly morphed by its “element of rebellion”.¹⁴

¹¹ The date of construction of the building is marked on the parapet

¹² Sydney Street Art: A graffiti guide. magazine.hg2.com/sydney-street-art-a-graffiti-guide/

¹³ I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural – documentary, Dynamic Screen Content, 2012

¹⁴ Siobhan Lyons, ‘The Old Charm of Newtown: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Sydney’s Newtown’, page 210. Accessed via http://www.academia.edu/5661808/The_Old_Charm_of_Newtown_Exploring_Cultural_Diversity_in_Sydneys_Newtown

THE ARTISTS

The creators of the “I Have a Dream” mural, Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken, were both living in the Newtown area at the time they painted the mural. Pryor, 35, an artist and single mother of three, had been directly involved in Newtown’s art scene for many years (particularly via her establishment of Art Unit; a space where artists could showcase their work¹⁵). Aitken, 23, a sign writer and a New Zealand-born Canadian, had come to Newtown to be involved in its artistic culture. At the time of the mural’s creation Aitken and Pryor had only known each other for two weeks, however Juilee Pryor explains that they were both “quite desperate” in their personal situations for different reasons, and they had “a great deal of light in our hearts, and we wanted to bring that, bring it as a gift to the people of Newtown.”¹⁶

Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken met in late July 1991 when Aitken was in the process of painting “On the Wings of Eagles” on the corner of Wilson Street and Rochford Road. Pryor was painting a shop front close by and their artistic interest in each other eventuated into an artistic “duel” that carried out for several days. After some discussion about the possibility of working collaboratively on a project, Pryor suggested doing a small-scale mural to ensure they could work well together. This ‘test’ mural became the well-known “The Light Shineth in the Darkness” on Erskineville Road, a mural that sadly lasted only four years.¹⁷



Figure 8: Andrew Aitken Source: Juilee Pryor’s personal collection



Figure 9: Juilee Pryor Source: Juilee Pryor’s personal collection

¹⁵ I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural – documentary, Dynamic Screen Content, 2012

¹⁶ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

¹⁷ Juilee Pryor, <http://www.juileepryor.com>



Figure 10: Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken's first collaborative work, 'The Light Shineth', Rochford Street. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

PLANNING THE MURAL

Aitken and Pryor formed a group called Unmitigated Audacity Productions and set their sights on their first major collaboration together. The blank wall on 305 King Street was proposed as the site at which they would work and upon seeing it, Pryor knew it was "perfect": "When you work as a street artist, a muralist, what you're looking for is a length of view. So how many people will go past it? How can you see it from a distance?"¹⁸



Figure 11: (Left) The eastern wall of No. 305 King Street right before the painting of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

¹⁸ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

The duo sought permission twice to paint the wall, however in both instances were denied access. The intention of the owners was for the wall to be used as a site for commercial advertising billboards. Pryor and Aitken shared a common disapproval for the commercialisation of street art and the effects materialism had on society. Aitken stated in an interview¹⁹ that he saw an artist's job as being "to bring a light into the world." Pryor stated that it was "just not good enough to have beer and fag ads on King street, when something greater is at stake, so we both had a great deal of historical and future sense that it would be better to put something up there that wasn't selling anything...Having seen the wall and decided that it was the one, nothing could stop us."²⁰

Aitken and Pryor had "no hesitation"²¹ about the design for the mural. Martin Luther King Jr. was chosen for "his extraordinary speech talking about tolerance". They also loved the "symmetry in the language" of having King on King Street. Juilee Pryor explained that the image of the world captured by NASA were ideas that filled her childhood. The original plan was to finish the mural on 305 King Street and then paint the other wall of the plaza as a copy of a Roy Lichtenstein print, with the intention to showcase icons of the 20th century on both walls.²² Aitken and Pryor organised the painting of the first mural "like a military campaign"²³, and on Thursday 1st of August 1991 their work began.

In another interview, Pryor explained "Once the decision to go ahead was made, the project was unstoppable. Having set our course of action, we were going to do it and that was that..We thought if we did it really quickly and really, really well, it would become conspicuous almost immediately. Then people wouldn't get sued. It would become a landmark overnight."²⁴

THE CREATION OF THE MURAL

A large part of this section has been transcribed from an interview the writer had with Juilee Pryor on 13 August 2014.

"We worked out how to do it. We realised that the best way we could hide was to hide in a crowd...We had to clean the side up, we had to take all the posters off the wall, we sugar soaped it, we had to get paint up there, we had to prepare it. So we did that on the Thursday night. Then on the Friday night we got up there, started at 7 o'clock, hid in the crowd and pretended to be council workers, and this is the ruse we used successfully time and time again, pretend to be with Council - in fact later we would fake letters from council giving ourselves permission - it was indicative of our sense of humour... we got the bottom bit done, and we had double extension poles and triple ladders... and then we realised we'd underestimated the height of that building, so we rang a friend and Tony Spanos came down with a cherry picker... We honestly thought we were going to get arrested that first night."

"On the first night [of painting], the police actually came down...I actually spoke to them, because people have certain preconceptions and its easy to lead them by their preconceptions. So when the sergeant came up to me...I looked him directly in the eye and said 'Sergeant, do I *look* like a graffiti artist? I'm a middle aged woman, a mother of three', and he laughed at me...[I said] 'this is not graffiti, this is art'...and because his preconception was that graffiti artists are 18 year old boys, you know, crawling down drains and aerosol

¹⁹ This interview was shown in the I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural documentary created by Dynamic Screen Content.

²⁰ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

²¹ Ibid.

²² This second mural never went ahead.

²³ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

²⁴ "An overnight gift for Newtown:", Interview with Juilee Pryor published Wednesday September 11, 1991, reported in Green Left Weekly Issue 27, Story and photo by Kim Shipton

cans – oh there were aerosol cans, had them under the blanket at that point – [he said]’okay, clearly you’re not a graffiti artist because you’re a nice, articulate, middle aged woman...so tell you what, get on with it, stay safe, don’t annoy too many people and when you finish come down to the station and I’ll find some cells for you to paint.’...as soon as he laughed at me I knew I’d won...in that sense we’d got permission to do it.”



Figure 12: (Left) Juilee Pryor’s photo of Andrew Aitken working on the ladder, taken from the cherry picker. Source: Juilee Pryor’s personal collection

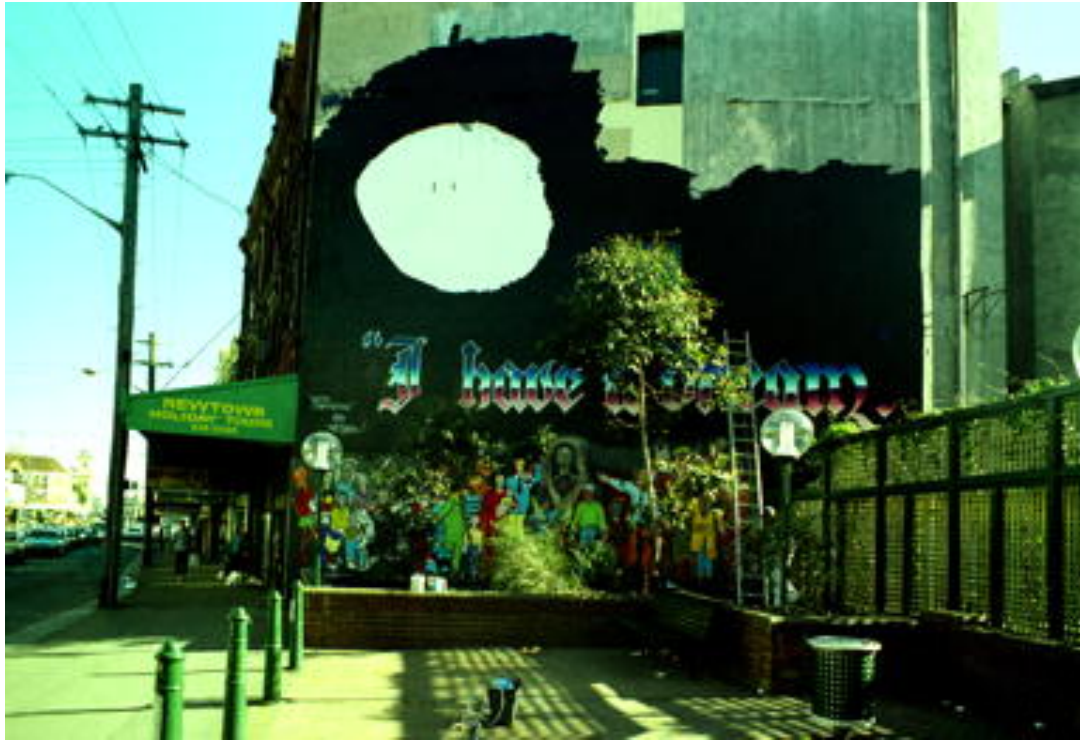


Figure 13: The progress by midday Saturday Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

By dawn on Sunday morning the mural was completed. It consisted of several images; Martin Luther King Junior's face, painted alongside an image taken by NASA of the earth. Beneath the two images was 'I have a dream', written in large gothic lettering (painted by Aitken, a sign writer). At the bottom of the mural was a frieze of various groups of people that live in Newtown; "Aboriginal people, Muslims, punks, young families, all sorts of people".²⁵ To the left of this frieze was a verse from the Bible, Genesis 37:19, written in much smaller gothic writing and bearing resemblance to a scrawl. It read "Behold the dreamer cometh; Come now therefore and let us slay him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams". Although Aitken was widely known to be a passionate Christian, Pryor (herself an atheist) explains that the reason for painting the verse was not for religious reasons but rather for its relevancy to who Martin Luther King was and the danger there is in being a dreamer... "the people who assassinated Martin Luther King Junior thought that was the end of that...but you can't stop an idea whose time is right...the power of that verse points to what happened to King."²⁶

²⁵ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

²⁶ Ibid.



Figure 14: A detail of the frieze, taken by Tony Spanos of Pryor and Aitken after the completion of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection



Figure 15: The mural as first completed Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

Throughout the painting of the mural Juilee Pryor received some criticism that the statement should read 'We have a dream' rather than the planned 'I have a dream'. While Pryor was briefly absent from the mural this corrected version of the statement was prepared to be changed. Upon her return, Pryor explicitly explained that this change was not appropriate for two reasons; firstly, the sentiment was "a direct quote", and secondly, she firmly believed that because this is language and it is written (therefore it is read and not heard)... "everyone is 'I'...[but] the word 'we' is exclusive, it means... 'we' have the dreaming and 'you' don't. Us and them. It's a funny, very very subtle way of seeing the world but 'I'...everyone's got a right to step into that 'I'. You think that's going to be the exclusive word, but the 'I' is inclusive and the 'we' is exclusive...besides, not everyone is a dreamer...I fought this battle."²⁷ Despite the battle, the mural was finished by dawn on Sunday 4th August, 1991, just as it had been planned. The military campaign had been successful.

²⁷ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview



Figure 16: A photograph taken by Juilee Pryor at dawn on Sunday morning. Andrew Aitken can be seen with his back turned and wearing his saxophone, and the borrowed cherry picker packed down. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

"Early Sunday morning, we'd finished the painting, it looked extraordinary, the sun was just starting to come up. King Street is deserted and golden light is just starting to come...it kissed the face of the mural...Andrew was living at the church just up the way from it, and he came back with his saxophone and brought back the champagne that we'd been given a week before and two glasses, and he blew a few notes and we sat there...and Tony Spanos was with us as well, it was quite magical.

Just the three of us were sitting there, and we'd finished this extraordinary, *unbelievably* cheeky thing to do that was right, and we knew it was right...we drank some champagne and we laughed, we just thought 'what have we done? We've just unleashed something into the world.' You could feel it. It was like the hair on my head stood on end for a week after I'd done that...and the sheer audacity of what we'd done, the scale of it, the danger, the whole thing...was extraordinary."²⁸

Aitken and Pryor did not expect the mural to remain for long. It was painted on a wall "at the less salubrious end of the area on a main traffic thoroughfare in one of the most congested streets in the city. Adorning a whole wall in bold colours, it is impossible to miss."²⁹

"By sheer scale, it was a pretty significant statement" stated Barry Cotter, Mayor of Marrickville from 1991 to 2004.³⁰

Pryor explained that she and Aitken were aware of the reality of their work; that their thinking was... "if it lasted a week, okay great, we had a go and we'd just find another wall and do something else."³¹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton, *On not belonging: Memorials and Memory in Sydney, The Newtown Project*, page 30.

³⁰ *I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural* – documentary, Dynamic Screen Content, 2012

The mural received mixed attention from the community at first, and although loved by many it became for one or two years during its early phase a battleground for a period of graffiti warfare that waged throughout Newtown. “There was abuse going backwards and forwards in paint” and although the racist graffiti was not limited to the Mural, the frieze at the bottom of it was particularly targeted.



Figure 17: An example of the graffiti tagging of the mural frieze Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection



Figure 18: An example of the graffiti tagging of the mural frieze Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

For the first 18 months of the mural's existence numerous efforts were made at removing the racist graffiti and repairing the mural's design. This however was a time consuming and unending battle that eventually led to there being hardly any of the original design left on the base of the mural. This is what led Andrew Aitken to eventually paint out the frieze completely and in its place put up a Declaration of Independence, with an invitation for

³¹ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

people to sign the document.³² This phase of the mural's history quickly led to its next phase: the painting of the Aboriginal flag.



Figure 19: The Declaration of Independence painted by Aitken, and signed by members of the community. Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

THE PAINTING OF THE ABORIGINAL FLAG

Contrary to popular belief, the painting of the Aboriginal flag was not done anonymously by a member of the community, but was actually a decision made by Pryor and Aitken and one on which they acted upon in an effort to “stop the skinheads putting their racist graffiti all over it”.³³ The presence of the Aboriginal flag was not an addition to the mural, for the Aboriginal flag had always been present in it (on a t-shirt worn by one of the people in the frieze). However the re-painting of the frieze and replacing it with a large scale Aboriginal flag was not a political statement as much as it was a practical one... “in a design sense it was very easy to repair, whereas a detailed painting with people you just can’t keep doing it...and these [graffiti writers] wouldn’t let up.”³⁴

³² Juilee Pryor's commentary on her personal collection of photos, ArchivePix Image Library,

³³ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

³⁴ Ibid.



Figure 20: The Aboriginal flag on the bottom half of the mural Source: Juilee Pryor's personal collection

Although the decision to paint the large Aboriginal flag was a practical one, additional meanings began to be made by all who saw it. The undertones of tolerance and the plight of the dream remained clear from the images that remained, however the juxtaposition of these meanings with the Aboriginal flag brought many additional meanings to be made by those who saw it.

Similarly, although it was not their explicit intention to do so, Pryor and Aitken's painting of the Aboriginal flag brought a great sense of satisfaction for the wider Aboriginal community. A senior Aboriginal woman from the Kimberley area told Pryor that the site was a powerful site for Aboriginal people, and to have the flag so strongly displayed and publicised was wonderful for their community... "we love it ...[the other artwork in the vicinity of the mural] doesn't speak for Aboriginal people, only the flag does that."³⁵

Many meanings can be made from the mural that stands today, and the painting of the Aboriginal flag makes Aboriginal identity a common interpretation, however Pryor intended the mural to be "always about inclusion and the space belonging to everybody, and everybody being equal, and everybody having the right to be who they are, and the right to be different." A significant reason for the success of the mural as a community icon is due to the fact that it is a mural that is easily-read and has multiple meanings that anyone can extract... "Nobody ever [asked] what's that about? Why is there an Aboriginal flag there? It didn't need to be explained, it was just quite ordinary...and if you couldn't find tolerance for ideas like that in Newtown then where the hell could you?...People in Newtown are very proud of that, they have been given a mirror to their better selves."

³⁵ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

THE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THE MURAL

Despite early attacks on the mural with racist graffiti, the "I have a dream" mural has been adopted by the Newtown community with great passion. Signatures to the Declaration of Independence painted by Aitken, and the anonymous message on the mural that states 'Please show respect, post no bills here' are just two examples of a constant and open dialogue the Newtown community engage in with the mural. It is the site at which people meet, disperse or engage in an art form, and where many community events have been held. When Telstra, the owner and namesake of the plaza that sits in front of the mural, planned to develop the site the community's negative response was so strong that Telstra disregarded their plan to develop it.³⁶

Today the "I have a dream" mural is an iconic element in Newtown's urban visual landscape and social fabric. Its message of tolerance, dreaming and being a better people has resonated in the community. The mural has survived graffiti wars, development plans and a blazing fire that erupted from an abandoned ticket booth in the plaza in 2011. When the Mural gets 'tagged' (graffitied) members of the community anonymously repair the damage (without seeking specific consent). Although this could lead to various legal and ownership issues in the future, Pryor laughs at the Mural now being "a self cleaning mural, because somebody would tag it and somebody else would paint it out." Pryor remarks that she, and Andrew Aitken, have had to relinquish any authority over it... "I gave it away the night I finished painting it."³⁷ As it was a gift for Newtown to enjoy, and they considered themselves "just the messengers", Pryor and Aitken decided against signing the artwork.

Over the years the mural has been featured in a documentary and numerous print media.

Around its 20th anniversary, an article in the Sydney Morning Herald published on August 25, 2011, included an interview with Pryor. This article noted that a fire in a temporary ticket booth in the plaza in April 2011 badly damaged the right side of the mural, however "a Facebook site was quickly set up to gauge support and volunteers (including one of Pryor's sons and Tony Spanos..) replastered and repainted the affected areas."³⁸

Artists and art students study the mural and scholarly dissertations have been written about it. The 2012 documentary "I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural" by Dynamic Screen Content was screened for free at the Newtown Dendy cinema and raised the profile of the mural and understanding of the mural's history in the community. This triggered the mural artists to question Marrickville Council about potential heritage listing for the mural, ultimately leading to the preparation of this heritage assessment for the Council.

A Facebook group still exists as a fan page for the site but by far the biggest audience the mural has had to date are the viewers of the music video for the song "A Sky Full of Stars" by British rock band, Coldplay (the video on Youtube had attained over 22 million views at the time of writing, August 2014). The band came to Newtown to shoot the music video on 17 June 2014 and were filmed playing and singing the song in front of the mural.

³⁶ Barry Divola, 'King(s) Street', Sydney Morning Herald, August 25 2011

³⁷ Julie Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

³⁸ Sydney Morning Herald article by Barry Divola, published August 25, 2011, accessed via <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/kings-street-20110825-1jbi4.html>



Figure 21: A screenshot of the music video filmed for Coldplay's 'A Sky Full of Stars' song. Source: Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPRjCeoBqrl>



Figure 22: (Left) The mural was the site at which the first Walking the Streets was opened in c.1991/2 Source: Juilee Pryor's commentary on her personal collection of photos, ArchivePix Image Library

When asked why the mural has been used by so many, Pryor answers that “the idea of something that could be so powerful that it would transcend the law, transcend the commercial imperative of a big business like Telstra... [that] it would unite a community...to promote the idea of a virtue is unheard of...It shocks people.”³⁹

The I Have a Dream is the last remaining mural that was painted in Newtown from the era of “real free style” street art and before its commercialisation, as Pryor explained, it is an example of street art made ...“when it was dangerous”.⁴⁰ The mural was painted by two members of the Newtown community who desired to bring a message of tolerance to the world, and they did so in the form of an unauthorised artwork on the most visible wall on King Street. “That uncommissioned rushed-up weekend’s madness” (as described by Pryor) is the last symbol of this classic ‘free’ period and as Pryor notes, “its successfully stood alone for all this time. Its increased its power not lessened its power, and that tells me that it’s in the right place, and it was put there at the right time, and even though all these other [murals] have come and gone, taken out by progress or whatever... Martin remains.”⁴¹

The Mural’s place has grown from being defined by the paint on the wall at 305 King Street, to King Street as a whole, to Newtown as a community, to Sydney as a community, to the wider Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous community and now to the international art and music community also. Every step of the Mural’s evolution has been carried out in the spirit of what now epitomises Newtown to those who visit it, that is; the individuality, the dream, and the slightly rebellious nature that infuses Newtown’s character.



Figure 23: The “I have a dream” mural, recent photo

Source: ‘Jmscws’. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jamescaws/8376278630/in/photostream/>

³⁹ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

REFERENCES

- ArchivePix Image Library- City of Sydney Archives
- Australian Dictionary of Biography
- Divola, B. 'King(s) Street', Sydney Morning Herald, August 25 2011
- Dynamic Screen Content - I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural. 2012
- Hamilton, P. & Ashton, P. On not belonging: Memorials and Memory in Sydney, The Newtown Project
- Jackson, N. History of 17 Mary Street Newtown.
- Pryor, Juilee - personal correspondence, personal photo collection, personal interview, 13 August 2014
- National Library of Australia Maps
- Ryan, M. Newtown Municipality 1862-1892: Subdivision, Land Use and Services.
- Sands Directory - 1900
- Sixviewer - Land and Property Information Services
- Sydney Street Art: A graffiti guide (website)
- Trove newspapers

3.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

3.1. THE MURAL SITE CONTEXT

Figure 1 earlier in this report shows the location of the site at No. 305 King Street, located on the northern side of King Street east of Newtown Railway Bridge, in approximately the middle of the block fronting King Street between Mary and Eliza Streets.

The mural is painted on the eastern wall of the shop at No. 305 King Street, facing into Telstra plaza fronting King Street, which forms part of the property No. 8 Mary Street, the site of a 5-storey circa 1970s commercial building on a roughly L-shaped allotment with a frontage to Mary Street (see Figure 27 below). This plaza is known as Telstra plaza after the owners of No. 8 Mary Street. The former "boot palace" at Nos. 305-309 King Street is shown in Figures 24 to 26 below (with No. 305 King St at far right).

Figure 27 below shows the site of No. 8 Mary Street which includes Telstra plaza. The building at No. 8 Mary Street has a mostly blank façade facing King Street, with a small mural at the ground floor level with an Aboriginal theme including the words "We have the dreaming" (see Attachment 1 for more details on this adjacent mural).

The eastern side of Telstra plaza, which faces the mural, is the blank western side wall of the shop at No. 293 King Street, Newtown.

The paved Telstra plaza on the No. 8 Mary Street property, is cluttered with:

- Public seats along the eastern wall of No. 305 King Street close to the mural
- Bike racks up against the ground floor mural of the No. 8 Mary Street building
- Bill-postering and tagging along the King Street façade of the No. 8 Mary Street building at 1st floor level
- Raised brick planter bed with metal pergola against the perforated concrete wall which forms most of the ground floor façade of the No. 8 Mary Street building facing into the plaza, extending around to abut the western wall of the shop at No. 293 King

Street (on Lot 1, DP58039). Note that this planter bed contains two trees near the western side wall of the adjacent shop to the east of the plaza, No. 293 King Street. The trees are a rare spot of greenery in the King Street streetscape.

- Bill-postering and tagging of the ground floor perforated concrete wall which forms most of the ground floor façade of the building at No. 8 Mary Street facing into the plaza
- A pair of Council garbage bins located centrally at the front of the plaza next to the street footpath. The central location of these garbage bins in the plaza is considered particularly unfortunate. They appear in most photos of the mural.

Note that the regular Saturday Newtown Community Market, organised by the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, is held at Newtown Square, outside the Neighbourhood Centre (No. 1 Bedford Street), not in Telstra plaza. However, small informal markets do occur in Telstra plaza.



Figure 24 Figure 25 and Figure 26: The former Boot Emporium at 305-309 King Street, Newtown, with No. 305 at far right, with the mural painted on the shop's eastern side elevation.



Figure 27: The property at 8 Mary Street Newtown (Lot 100, DP1087885) which includes the plaza fronting King Street adjacent to the east of No. 305 King Street. Note how the roughly L-shaped block extends through to Mary Street. Source: NSW Land & Property Information <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au>

3.2. THE MURAL

The mural is painted onto the eastern brick wall of the shop at No. 305 King Street. This 3-storey shop's eastern side wall is mostly blank, however there are two windows – one at 1st floor and one at 2nd floor level - and one door towards the rear, which are surrounded or subsumed by the mural.

The mural depicts the face of Martin Luther King Junior to the right of the windows, and the Earth from space (apparently a view taken from Apollo 8) with western Australia visible and cloud over eastern Australia, to the left of the windows, on a black background, with the words "I have a dream" below in Gothic script.

To the left and below the "I" is a quote from Genesis 37:19: "Behold the dreamer cometh; Come now therefore and let us slay him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams". In the lower portion of the mural, the black background seamlessly forms the top half of the Aboriginal flag, with the central yellow circle (sun) and red lower portion.

In the lower left-hand corner there was recently a painted injunction which read either "Please show respect, post no bills here" or "Don't poster here show respect". This injunction is now postered over (see Figure 29 below).

3.3. CONDITION AND INTEGRITY OF THE MURAL

As outlined in the Historical Overview in Section 2.0 of this report:

- The mural was originally completed on 4th August 1991
- Within 18 months of completion the mural had the Aboriginal flag and a biblical quote added by the original mural artists on the lower part of the mural (covering over the original painted group of people) to allow easy repainting whenever the mural was attacked with racist graffiti
- When the Mural gets 'tagged' (graffitied) members of the community anonymously repair the damage (without seeking specific consent)
- The mural underwent major repair in April 2011 by community members including a son of one of the original artists (to repair a burnt area).

The eastern side wall of the shop at No. 305 King Street Newtown appears structurally sound and in good condition. There is no sign of dampness.

There are the following concerns with the condition of the mural:

- A line of peeling paint across the mural near the top – see Figure 30 below
- Plaster which has lifted at the lower left-hand corner, taking the edge of the biblical quote with it – see Figure 28 below
- Bill postering in the lower left-hand corner of the mural which previously contained the words "Please show respect, post no bills here" or "Don't poster here show respect" - see Figure 28 below.
- General fading: the black background is not as black as previously, and the orange of the western half of Australia visible through the clouds is not as orange as previously – see Figure 30 below



Figure 28: Detail of the lower left corner of the mural, showing damaged and chipped plaster and bill posting covering the injunction to respect the mural. Note the litter bins in the foreground. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014



Figure 29: View of the mural and Telstra Plaza from the opposite side of King Street. Note the centrally placed litter bins in the plaza, which partly obscure the view to the adjacent "we have the dreaming" mural. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014



Figure 30: The "I have a dream" mural, Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

3.4. VIEW ANALYSIS

There are various views of the mural available from the north along King Street, as shown in Figures 30 to 33 below.

These views show the mural's prominence in the streetscape.



Figure 31: Close view of the mural across Telstra Plaza from the north Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014



Figure 32: View of the mural from the corner of Erskineville Road Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

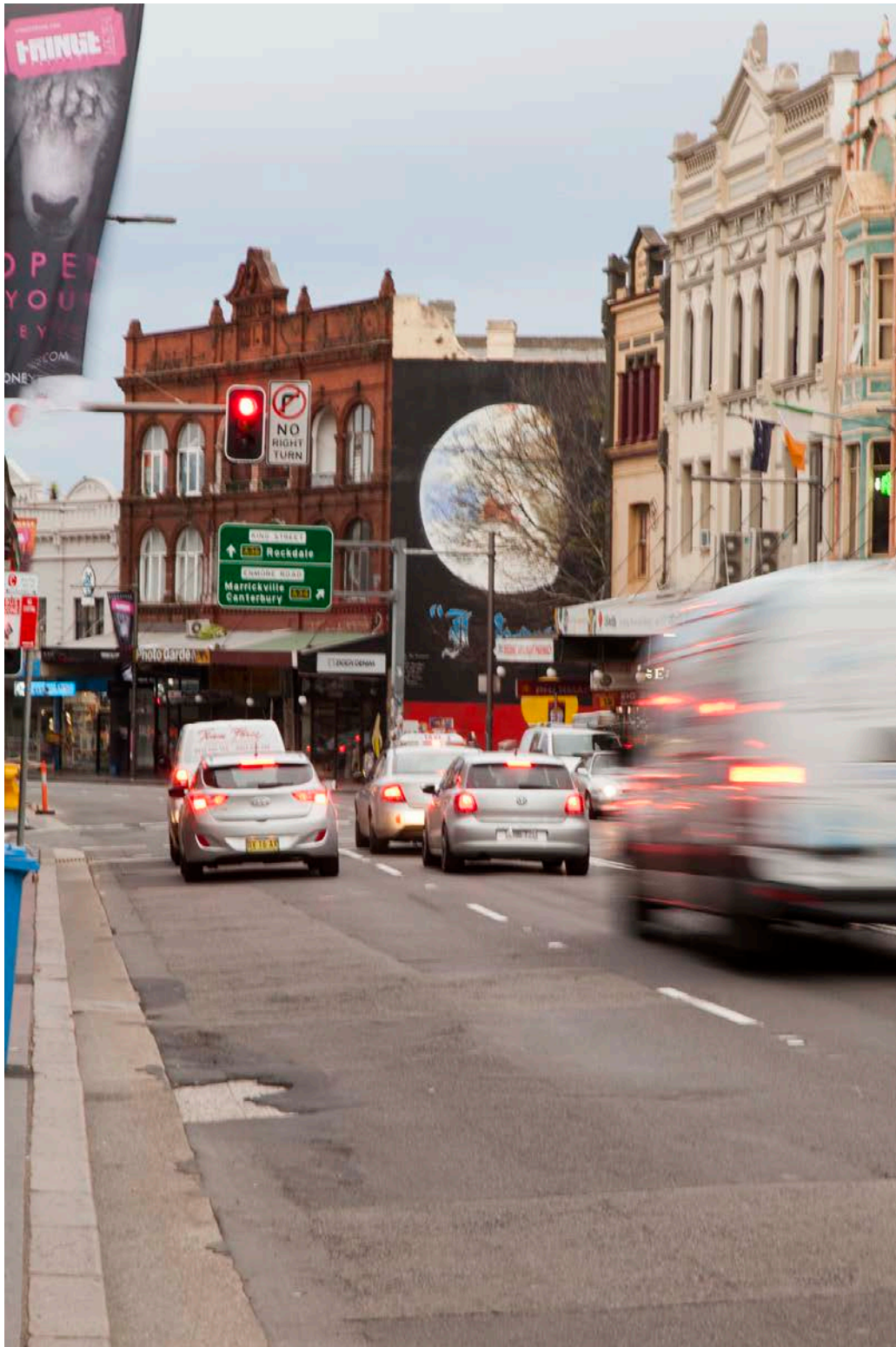


Figure 33: View of the mural and the building at 305-309 King Street from further north, opposite side of King Street. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

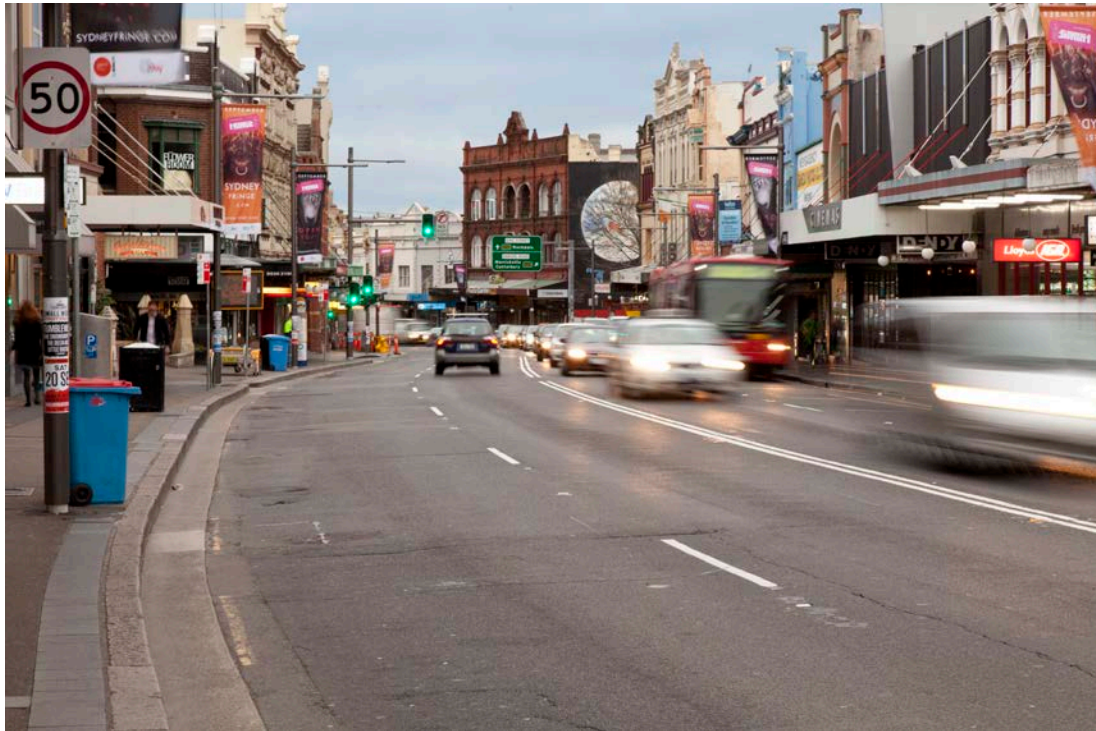


Figure 34: View of the mural and the building at 305-309 King Street from further north, opposite side of King Street. Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

4.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The mural is a landmark (as originally envisaged by the artists) and highly regarded by many in the local community of Newtown and Erskineville, as evidenced by its continued maintenance by the community and its continued high public profile.

The “I have a dream” mural is only one of a number of public murals undertaken by the same artists - Unmitigated Audacity Productions - in the 1990s in the Newtown and Erskineville area, most of which no longer exist (due to being painted over or due to the demolition of buildings). The “I have a dream” mural is also one of the earlier murals undertaken by Unmitigated Audacity Productions, who operated from 1991 till 1995, and is the most well-known. Though the lower part of the mural has been altered, this was done by the original artists around 18 months after the original completion of the mural.

Similar murals which involve political statements are now rare in the age of “tagging”, and given that many past such murals have been lost (either painted over or through demolition of the buildings they were painted on). Some examples remaining in Sydney are outlined in Table 1 below.

In July 2012 City of Sydney Council’s Environment and Heritage Committee considered a report on “Murals, street art and graffiti as heritage items” which involved review of the Council’s policies in this regard and recommended the setting up of a City Mural Register. This report was triggered by a threat from Railcorp to the “Three proud people” mural on the side wall of a terrace at 39 Pine Street, Newtown. This mural was considered in the attached Heritage Assessment Report to be one of the most related murals to the “I have a dream” Newtown mural.

While the “Three proud people” mural was subsequently heritage listed by the City of Sydney Council and the threat of demolition averted, the mural is now almost completely obscured from view from trains and from Macdonaldtown railway platform (which both previously had excellent views of the mural) by a high wall constructed in 2007 by Railcorp along the boundary of the railway land with Leamington Avenue. This illustrates the fact that views to a mural which enable public awareness of it are crucial, not just the retention of the mural itself.

Note that the height of the era of mural painting in Sydney was the 1970s to the 1990s.

After that period “tagging” took off and murals, in particular political murals, went out of fashion, however Council-sanctioned and often Council-funded pictorial murals remain – for example the pictorial mural on the park side of the Stanton Library at North Sydney - and such pictorial murals are still undertaken in Sydney today, mainly to cover up unsightly walls which attract tagging – for example in the Ashfield Council area. Within the Marrickville Council area, the Mays Lane St Peters art project has encouraged public street art – this project produced a book in 2010 (see Sources below) and also has a facebook page. The art in Mays Lane is rarely political.

The parameters of the following comparative analysis are:

- The murals must still be in existence. It should be noted that a great many murals painted in the Sydney area in the period 1970s to 1990s no longer exist (either painted over or the buildings they were painted on have been demolished).
- The murals must be located in the Sydney area
- The murals must be large scale, taking up most of or all of a wall of a building or a large built surface
- The murals must be political i.e. have a political message

Sources used for this comparative analysis were:

- Various websites (referenced in Table 1)
- Melinda Vassallo *Street Art of the Inner West* edited by Bob Percival, published 2009 with assistance from Marrickville Council
- *May's: The Mays Lane Street Art Project*, published by Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 2010, as a catalogue for a travelling photo exhibition

Table 1: Comparative remaining political murals in Sydney

Mural/meaning/content	Location	Date painted/artists	Heritage Status/Community awareness
"I have a dream" mural, depicting Martin Luther King Junior, the Earth from space, the Words "I have a dream" and a biblical quote from Genesis 37:19.	East side wall of retail building at No. 305 King Street Newtown, facing into Telstra plaza	August 1991, painted by Unmitigated Audacity Productions (Andrew Aitken Juliee Pryor and others). Painted without Council or building owner's permission.	Within a heritage conservation area, on a contributory building. A landmark with high community awareness. The subject of a documentary



Photo by Nat Hughes, Aperture Photography, 2 September 2014

Mural/meaning/content	Location	Date painted/artists	Heritage Status/Community awareness
Three Proud People mural, a depiction of the black power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games involving American sprinters Tommie Smith (gold medallist) John Carlos (bronze medallist) and Australian Peter Norman (silver medallist). Smith and Carlos made the black power salute with Peter Norman standing beside them wearing a civil rights button.	39 Pine Street, Newtown	2000, painted 6 months before the Sydney Olympic Games by activist artist Donald Urqhhart. Painted with the building owner's permission.	Heritage listed by the City of Sydney Council. High community awareness, particularly demonstrated in the "Save Leamington Campaign" of 2010/social significance evidence. The mural was the subject of a 2004 documentary "Salute" directed by Peter Norman's nephew Matt Norman.



Photo of the Three proud people mural Source: photo taken by Peter Rae in 2010, illustration for Sydney Morning Herald article "Last stand for Newtown's "three proud people"" July 27, 2010

Mural/meaning/content	Location	Date painted/artists	Heritage Status/Community awareness
-----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------------



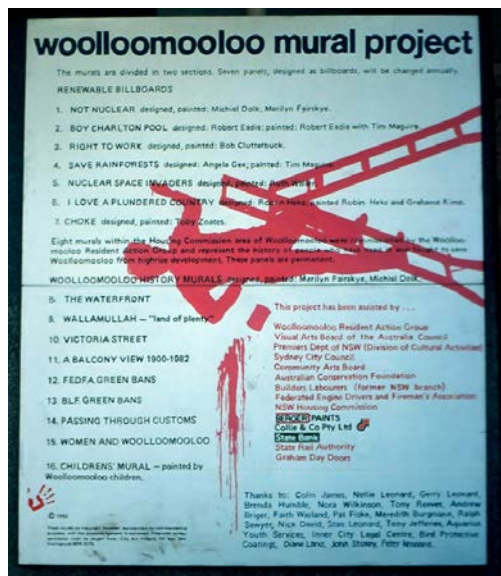
A photo of the Three proud people mural taken in 2006 showing its size and context (most likely taken from Macdonaldtown Station platform), before the mural was blocked off from view from the railway. Note the source website includes the story of the event the mural depicts. Source: http://sydneyearlydailyphot.blogspot.com.au/2006_10_01_archive.html

Mural/meaning/content	Location	Date painted/artists	Heritage Status/Community awareness
Peace, Justice and Unity Mural depicting black and white hands touching and bound and	Painted on the side of Pilgrim House, 262 Pitt Street (owned by the Uniting Church of Australia)	Painted in 1984 and 2003 by Public Art Squad (David Humphries, Rodney Monk, Ashley Taylor). Painted with the permission and with the mural theme developed by the building's owners and lessees	The building is locally heritage listed, however the mural is not mentioned in the heritage listing form.



Peace, Justice and Unity mural at 262 Pitt Street, Sydney Source: <http://www.publicartsquad.com.au/Murals/murals.html>

Mural/meaning/content	Location	Date painted/artists	Heritage Status/Community awareness
Green Ban murals — 8 of an original 16 painted to commemorate the Green Bans protests to save the Woolloomooloo area from demolition	On the pylons of the Eastern suburbs railway in Woolloomooloo	These murals were painted soon after the completion of the Eastern suburbs railway in 1973, by the Woolloomooloo Resident's Action Group with support from unions, the Council, the State Government and the Australia Council. Painted with the Council's permission	Within the Woolloomooloo Heritage Conservation Area. Eight of the original 16 murals were destroyed (most by Railcorp), though photographed in 1982. The remaining 8 are now being preserved by City of Sydney Council.



1982 photos of the Woolloomooloo Mural Project by Matthias Tomczak Source: <http://woolloomooloomurals.blogspot.com.au> and flickr



A 2012 photo of one of the Woolloomooloo Mural Project murals showing the scale and context
Source: <http://showusyourwoolloomooloo.com.au/photography/michele-mural/>

4.1. CONCLUSION OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The “I have a dream” mural at No. 305 King Street Newtown is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent. The mural is very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale street art political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region, and locally rare as one of the few remaining works of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

5.1. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The NSW Heritage Manual (1996, amended 2001) sets out the basis for assessment of the heritage significance of an item, place or site by evaluating its significance in reference to specific criteria. These criteria can be applied at national, state or local levels of significance.

The criteria used are:

Criterion (a) Historical significance

The item is important in the course of, or pattern of New South Wales’ cultural or natural history (State significance) OR An item is important in the course, or pattern, of the local area’s cultural or natural history.

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Shows evidence of a significant human activity
Applicable – the expression of political views through art
- Is associated with a significant activity or cultural phase
Applicable – representative of the height of political graffiti in Sydney 1970s-1990s
- Maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity
Not relevant

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Has incidental or unsubstantiated connections with historically important activities or processes
Not relevant
- Provides evidence of activities or processes that are of dubious historical importance
Not applicable
- Has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of a particular association
Not relevant – while the mural has been repaired and repainted and the lower part was changed by the original artists about 18 months after the original painting of the mural, all of these changes have been in keeping with the original concept of the mural, and the upper part essentially remains as originally painted (though with retouching and repair over time)

Types of items which meet criterion (a) include:

- Items which demonstrate strong associations to past customs, cultural practices, philosophies or systems of government, regardless of the intactness of the item or any structure on the place;

Applicable. The mural demonstrates the subversive act of the illegal painting of a large-scale political mural in the 1970s-1990s, the period at which politics as expressed in the public arena was at its height in Australia

- Items associated with significant historical events, regardless of the intactness of the item or any structure on the place;

Not applicable

- Significant cultural landscapes and other items demonstrating overlays of the continual pattern of human use and occupation; and/or

Not applicable.

- Items where the physical fabric (above or below ground) demonstrates any of the points described above.

Not applicable.

Criterion (b) Historical Association

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in New South Wales' cultural or natural history (State significance) OR

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of the local area (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Shows evidence of a significant human occupation

Not applicable.

- Is associated with a significant event, person or group of persons

The mural has historical association with Unmitigated Audacity Productions, a group of artists who undertook the painting of murals on blank walls around Newtown and Erskineville in the early 1990s (variously with or without the approval of building owners).

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Has incidental or unsubstantiated connections with historically important people or events

Not Relevant.

- Provides evidence of people or events that are of dubious historical importance

Not relevant.

- Has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of a particular association.

Not relevant – The mural has been repaired and retouched over time and the lower part altered by the original artists 18 months after its completion, however the changes to the lower part of the mural are in keeping with the mural's original concept, and the repair and retouching which has been undertaken over time to correct tagging or graffitiing, essentially constitute conservation of the mural.

Types of items which meet this criterion include:

- Items which demonstrate strong associations to a particular event, historical theme, people or philosophies, regardless of the intactness of the item or any of its structures;

Applicable – the site is associated with Unmitigated Audacity Productions

- Items associated with significant historical events, regardless of the intactness of the item or any structure on the place; and/or
Not applicable
- Items where the physical fabric (above or below ground) demonstrates any of the points described above.
Not applicable

Criterion (c) Aesthetic/Technical significance

An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in New South Wales (State significance); OR

An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Shows or is associated with, creative or technical innovation or achievement
Applicable – the mural's artists declared it was "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art"⁴²
- Is the inspiration for a creative or technical innovation or achievement
Not applicable
- Is aesthetically distinctive
Applicable. For the use of the colours of the Aboriginal flag in its lower portion.
- Has landmark qualities
Applicable. The mural is highly visible from the east looking west along King Street.
- Exemplifies a particular taste, style or technology.
Applicable. Exemplifies political murals in Sydney in the period 1970s-1990s, which are now rare.

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Is not a major work by an important designer or artist
Not applicable. The mural is a major work by Unmitigated Audacity Productions, a locally important artists collective.
- Has lost its design or technical integrity
Not applicable, though the lower portion has changed over time (see historical overview for details).
- Its positive visual or sensory appeal or landmark and scenic qualities have been more than temporarily degraded
Not applicable. While the mural has been altered, repaired and retouched, the alteration to the lower part was undertaken by the original artists 18 months after its completion, and the later repair and retouching has essentially been conservation work
- Has only a loose association with a creative or technical achievement.
Not applicable.

Types of items which meet this criterion include:

- Items which demonstrate creative or technical excellence, innovation or achievement;
Applicable. The mural is an important achievement by artist's collective Unmitigated Audacity Productions, undertaken illegally in 1991 and therefore audacious.

⁴² page 8, Street Art of the Inner West, quote from the original artists.

- Items which have been the inspiration for creative or technical achievement;
Not applicable
- Items which demonstrate a highly original and influential style, such as an important early (seminal) work of a major architect; and/or
Not applicable
- Items which demonstrate the culmination of a particular architectural style (known as climactic).
Not applicable

Criterion (d) Social significance

An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in New South Wales for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (State significance) OR

An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the area for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Is important for its associations with an identifiable group
Not applicable
- Is important to a community's sense of place.
Applicable. The mural has been demonstrably embraced by the local community, evidenced by its Facebook page, the documentary on the making of the mural which has been screened for free at the Dendy Cinema, Newtown in 2012 and 2013, and DVDs of which are being marketed on the mural's Facebook page.

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Is only important to the community for amenity reasons
Not applicable.
- Is retained only in preference to a proposed alternative.
Not applicable.

Types of items which meet this criterion include:

- Items which are esteemed by the community for their cultural values;
The mural is esteemed by the local community, evidenced by its constant repair and maintenance by community members.
- Items which if damaged or destroyed would cause a community a sense of loss;
It appears clear that the community would experience a sense of loss if the mural were removed or covered over. The fire damage to the mural in 2009 gave rise to crowd-funding for its repair.
and/or
- Items which contribute to a community's sense of identity.
The mural does contribute to the sense of identity of the Newtown/Erskineville community.

Items are excluded if:

- They are valued only for their amenity (service convenience); and/or
Not applicable.
- The community seeks their retention only in preference to a proposed alternative.
Not applicable.

Criterion (e) Research potential

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to the understanding of New South Wales' cultural or natural history (State significance) OR

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the area's cultural or natural history (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Has the potential to yield new or further substantial scientific and/or archaeological information
Not applicable
- Is an important benchmark or reference site or type
Not applicable.
- Provides evidence of past human cultures that is unavailable elsewhere.
Not applicable.

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- The knowledge gained would be irrelevant to research on science, human history or culture
Applicable
- Has little archaeological or research potential
Applicable
- Only contains information that is readily available from other resources or archaeological sites.
Applicable.

Criterion (f) Rarity

An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of New South Wales' cultural or natural history (State significance); OR

An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the area's cultural or natural history (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Provides evidence of a defunct custom, way of life or process
Not applicable
- Demonstrates a process, custom or other human activity that is in danger of being lost
Applicable. The mural is very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region, and locally rare as one of the few remaining works of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.
- Shows unusually accurate evidence of a significant human activity
Not applicable
- Is the only example of its type
Applicable. The mural is unique as the only remaining example of a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent.
- Demonstrates designs or techniques of exceptional interest
Not applicable

- Shows rare evidence of a significant human activity important to a community.
Applicable. The "I have a dream" mural at Newtown is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent.

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Is not rare
Not applicable – there are few remaining examples of political murals in the Sydney region dating from the 1970s-1990s period (see Comparative Analysis section of this report for detail).
- Is numerous but under threat
Not applicable

Criterion (g) Representativeness

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of New South Wales' cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (State significance) OR

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (Local significance).

Guidelines for Inclusion:

- Is a fine example of its type
Applicable – the mural is a fine example of 1990s political mural painting in a public space.
- Has the principal characteristics of a particular way of life, philosophy, custom, significant process, design, technique or activity
Not applicable
- Is a significant variation to a class of items
Not applicable
- Is part of a group which collectively illustrates a representative type
Not applicable
- Is outstanding because of its setting, condition or size
Applicable – due to the landmark nature of the mural and its size
- Is outstanding because of its integrity or the esteem in which it is held.
Applicable – the mural has a high level of community esteem, evidenced by its ongoing maintenance by the community.

Guidelines for Exclusion:

- Is a poor example of its type
Not applicable – the mural is a good example of 1970s-1990s large scale political mural painting
- Does not include or has lost the range of characteristics of a type
Not applicable
- Does not represent well the characteristics that make up a significant variation of a type.
Not applicable.

5.2. DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Criterion (a) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The mural is of historical significance as an expression of political views through art in the public arena. The mural demonstrates the subversive act of the illegal painting of a large-scale political mural in the 1970s-1990s, the period at which politics as expressed in the public arena was at its height in Australia.

Criterion (b) HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The mural has local historical association with the artist's collective *Unmitigated Audacity Productions* who were responsible for a number of murals in Newtown and Erskineville in the 1990s (which are no longer in existence, though recorded in photos).

Criterion (c) AESTHETIC/TECHNICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The mural is a creative achievement, declared by its artists as "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art". The mural is of aesthetic significance for its message and its careful composition, which linked the message to Australia. The mural is a prominent element in the King Street Newtown streetscape, highly visible from the public domain.

Criterion (d) SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The mural has been demonstrably embraced by the local community, evidenced by its Facebook page, the 2010 documentary on the making of the mural which has been screened for free at the Dendy Cinema, Newtown in 2010, 2012 and 2013, and DVDs of which are being marketed on the mural's Facebook page. The mural is esteemed by the local community, evidenced by its constant repair and maintenance by community members. Fire damage to the mural in 2009 gave rise to crowd-funding for its repair. The mural contributes to the sense of identity of the Newtown/Erskineville community.

Criterion (e) RESEARCH POTENTIAL

Not applicable

Criterion (f) RARITY

The "I have a dream" mural at Newtown is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent.

The mural is very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region, and locally rare as one of the few remaining works of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.

Criterion (g) REPRESENTATIVENESS

The mural is a fine example of 1990s political mural painting in a public space, outstanding for its prominence in the streetscape and for its high level of community esteem.

5.3. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "I have a dream" mural is of historical significance as an expression of political views through art in the public arena. The mural demonstrates the subversive act of the illegal painting of a large-scale political mural in the 1970s-1990s, the period at which politics as expressed in the public arena was at its height in Australia.

The mural has local historical association with the artist's collective *Unmitigated Audacity Productions* who were responsible for a number of murals in Newtown and Erskineville in the 1990s (which are no longer in existence, though recorded in photos).

The mural is of aesthetic significance as a creative achievement, declared by its artists as "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art". The mural is of aesthetic significance for its message and its careful composition, which linked the message to Australia. The mural is a prominent element in the King Street Newtown streetscape, highly visible from the public domain.

The mural is of demonstrable social significance to the local community, evidenced by its Facebook page, the documentary on the making of the mural, and its constant repair and maintenance by community members. Fire damage to the mural in 2009 gave rise to crowd-funding for its repair. The mural contributes to the sense of identity of the Newtown/Erskineville community.

The mural is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent, and very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region. The mural is locally rare as the only remaining work of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.

The mural is a fine example of 1990s political mural painting in a public space, outstanding for its prominence in the streetscape and for its high level of community esteem.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The mural is of local heritage significance as outlined above, for its historical, historical association, aesthetic and social significance and for its rarity. The mural is seen as a community asset, evidenced by its informal community conservation. This means that any actions by Council concerning the mural and Telstra Plaza should involve community consultation prior to decisions being made.

The building at No. 305 King Street Newtown is a contributory building within the King Street/Enmore Road Heritage Conservation Area (HCA 2) listed in the Marrickville LEP 2011, and is also part of a large 3-storey contributory retail building built in 1896 encompassing Nos. 305-309 King Street, Newtown. Due to this situation, it is highly unlikely that the building at No. 305 King Street will ever be demolished (as opposed to being conserved with minor alterations over time). The mural is therefore not endangered by the situation of the building on which it is painted.

Telstra plaza is part of the allotment of No. 8 Mary Street, and (despite appearances) is private not public land, therefore co-operation of the owners and lessees of the No. 8 Mary Street building and plaza (currently Telstra) is crucial. The mural would be threatened by any owner of the No. 8 Mary Street site wanting to build over Telstra Plaza. However, if Council allowed and encouraged activation of the existing King St frontage of the No. 8 Mary Street building, this would enable the owners of No. 8 Mary Street to profit from the building's King Street frontage and the plaza on their land.

There is also the issue of the adjacent "We have the dreaming" mural (completed October 2012) which was painted with permission on the King Street frontage of the No. 8 Mary Street building, by Aboriginal artists Jeff Faraday and Adam Hill as a comment on the Australian context of the message of the "I have a dream" mural (see Attachment 1 for details). The "We have the dreaming" mural is an important element of the context of the "I have a dream" mural within Telstra Plaza.

It is considered that Council should assist in protecting and conserving the “I have a dream” mural and its context by undertaking the following actions:

- Formal heritage listing of the mural in Schedule 5 of Marrickville LEP 2011, including a public exhibition of the heritage listing proposal,
- During public exhibition of the heritage listing proposal, seek the views of the artists associated the adjacent “We have the dreaming” mural in Telstra Plaza
- Engage in community consultation concerning any changes to Telstra Plaza.
- Support appropriate proposals by Telstra or any future owner or lessee of the building at No. 8 Mary Street to open up the King Street façade of the building to Telstra plaza, activating the street frontage of the building, while retaining the “We have the dreaming” mural.
- Working with Telstra or any future owner or lessee of the No. 8 Mary Street building and the plaza to redesign the plaza and remove clutter within the plaza to enhance the setting of the mural.

7.0 CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Amend the Marrickville LEP 2011 to list the ““I have a dream” mural” as a local heritage item in Schedule 5 of the LEP. Allow ongoing repair and retouching of the mural by the community without the need for development consent.
- 2) Encourage the owners or lessees of the property No. 8 Mary Street Newtown (currently Telstra) to undertake renovations to activate the street frontage of the building which faces into the plaza, and to cooperate with Council in removing clutter from within the plaza (centrally placed bins, planter bed and metal pergola at the back of the plaza) to enhance the setting of the mural. Retain the “We have the dreaming” mural as part of this process.
- 3) Acknowledge the importance of the adjacent “We have the dreaming” mural within Telstra Plaza, as a comment on the “I have a dream” mural which links the message to the Aboriginal Australian experience. During the public exhibition of the heritage listing proposal for the “I have a dream” mural, seek the views of the artists associated with the adjacent “We have the dreaming” mural.
- 4) Engage in community consultation prior to undertaking actions outlined in point 2) above.

ATTACHMENT 1:

FEBRUARY 2015 ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW REGARDING
THE
“WE HAVE THE DREAMING MURAL”

'We Have the Dreaming' Mural: A collaboration by Jeff Faraday and Adam Hill

Oral History Interview by Elizabeth Conroy, February 2015

Introduction

The mural is sited in direct juxtaposition to the large and iconic 'I Have a Dream, Martin Luther King' mural on King Street, Newtown. It sits on the wall facing into the square and out onto King Street (the wall forms part of the Telstra Communications building). The wall was originally covered in layers of advertising posters which, when the mural was planned for the site, was removed by Marrickville Council in preparation for the artwork. The wall itself had a large section of render missing and this imperfection has made its way into the 'look' of the final artwork.



(Left) An image depicting the position of the 'we have the dreaming' mural in relation to the large 'I have a dream' mural, painted by Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken in 1991. https://www.flickr.com/photos/newtown_graffiti/5993263323

The mural was originally begun by writer Jeff Faraday who commissioned a sign-writer friend to paint the phrase 'we have the dreaming' onto the wall. The mural, as shown in the picture, remained in this unfinished state for 18 months until Faraday could find the appropriate Indigenous artist to finish off the work. He and Adam Hill had mutual artist friends and it was through this connection that Hill became involved with the project. They discussed possible ideas for the artwork over coffee and then stood at the site, where Adam observed the wall and suggested ways the imperfect render could be incorporated into the artwork.



(Left) An image taken by John Gaspar and uploaded onto photo sharing site, Flickr, depicting the 1st stage of the mural undertaken by Jeff Faraday in 2011. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/johngaspar/8734332989/>

A strong theme for both artists was the idea of incorporating the face of Pemulwuy, the Aboriginal leader and Aboriginal warrior who led resistance to colonisation. This idea gradually gave way to the idea of painting whales which was, as Adam states, the dreaming for the area and therefore highly relevant. Adam Hill's completion of the mural took four days and the mural was finally complete in October 2012.



(Above) An image showing Adam Hill's additions to the mural completed over four days in October 2012. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/71072750@N00/13283551293>

Adam Hill is a prominent Indigenous artist who has been creating artworks for twenty years, and showing commercially for seventeen years. He states that this mural is indicative of his personal style and is "right up there" as a "major feat" of his career.

The wall was primed and undercoated before the main mural was painted with exterior house paint. After the mural's completion Telstra paid for a high-gloss seal to be painted over the top in an act to protect it against graffiti damage. This, both men agree, is partly why it remains in such good condition despite it being in the heart of graffiti-dense Newtown.

Transcript of the oral history interview with Adam Hill and Jeff Faraday, artists, co-collaborators of the 'We Have the Dreaming' mural on King Street, Newtown.

Interview by Elizabeth Conroy, Historian, February 2015

EC: I hear that you started the mural, could you explain the process you went through to create it?

JF: It began I suppose when I went to university in 1995, I didn't last [laughs] but I did well and one of the subjects I took was a general studies unit which happened to be Indigenous Studies. And there I became aware of Pemulwuy – who you're familiar with [interviewer nods] – and that unfortunately is not a very common response. People normally go 'who, what?' and this was twenty years ago and I just went 'what the fuck?' – I'd never heard of him, no one has ever heard of this guy and I was aghast that that was the case. So I did my assignment for that unit on Pemulwuy, read the book...and then I kinda forgot...well not forgot but I spoke about it a couple times...and then fast forward to about 2009 or 2010 and I was living out the back of a friend's house, this really nice place in Marrickville which is no longer there, its been developed into apartments or something. And the guy inside comes out, he's at uni – a mature age as well, and he comes out and he says 'man have you ever heard of someone called Pemulwuy?' and I just went 'THAT'S IT! That is IT! I'm gonna do this mural thing that I've been thinking about for years'.

I was very militant when I started out, I grabbed my chalkboard and I went up to the street and I started taking names for a petition to have the Martin Luther King thing replaced with an image of Pemulwuy. And I got lots of support, Tim Freedman amongst the people who stopped, but I also, over that couple days that I stood there taking email addresses, realised that there is a lot of support also for the Martin Luther King thing, and then that and as well as the huge task involved...in that case there was nothing I could do about it, that's there and we're gonna have to deal with that...what am I gonna do? I have to do something. And so I got together with a mate of mine, Mr Adam Loxley, and we invented this group which is just the two of us really, called The Companion Mural Organisation...and we came up with this idea to paint something that would supplement it such that it would describe the history and culture of the area, something more relevant to *us*, the area, and you know the totality of the Indigenous peoples and...its my comment for reconciliation basically. The word 'we' is meant to imply *all* of us and all Australians have some claim to that unique, beautiful and ancient belief system.

EC: So your fascination came out of Pemulwuy, why didn't you put him on the mural?

JF: Good question – well there are no images of Pemulwuy for obvious reasons.

EC: There's been a sketch done but it's obviously someone else's interpretation

AH: Actually my initial drafted sketch was going to include Pemulwuy

JF: Yeah that was our initial idea

EC: So with the original mural, take me through what it used to look like before there was the addition [of Adam's work]. What did it used to be like? For example, what did it look like before the whale was added?

JF: I can show you some photos...actually, neither Adam or I have ever taken a photo or posted a photo of this mural, and yet it's all over the internet. If you search for the words 'we have the dreaming' in inverted commas all that comes up is images of this specific mural,

and if I may say, those four words have never been put together in that order in the uploaded history of the English language.

EC: Now that is very interesting and I did want to ask you about that. It seems to be such a simple phrase that just rolls off the tongue, it seems like such a cohesive statement to say – and ‘post-The Sorry’, it does seem to sum up how a lot of us see the Indigenous history and culture and how we’re trying to reconcile all of the problems. I’ve gone to uni and studied Indigenous Studies and we talked about ‘we have the dreaming’ and what that stands for...I did performance studies too and even that statement was said in one of the verbatim theatres. So it’s being used.

JF: That’s pretty cool

EC: Yes, it is, and see I thought that you would have got that statement from somewhere else and I wanted to find the origin of it. How did you actually come up with the words? Was it the dreaming and then added the collective ‘we’? Are you talking about other cultures as well?

JF: Australians, us, all current residents have some claim.

EC: Sure. And was the word ‘dreaming’ intended to be a dialogue with the Martin Luther King mural?

JF: Absolutely

EC: Okay, so would you say then that this artwork has to be in that site to have meaning, with regards to the ‘dreaming’ word up against Martin Luther King?

JF: No, well as you just said, we’re using it. That’s where it comes from and that’s why it is, because it’s a direct response to that other thing, but it’s a statement of fact, you know, and the...um...yeah it transcends that spot. Like say that other people have used it and it’s just a statement and its true and correct, no matter where you are.

EC: Would you say it has particular significance in that space at that site with the juxtaposition of ‘I have a dream’, which is so large -

JF: yeah, I’ll say that for it! [laughs]

EC: So your mural is a comment on the Martin Luther King mural, an open dialogue?

JF: Yeah absolutely, yeah, yeah..

EC: What would you say if someone else did an artwork on the third wall, as a comment on your work? Could you see that happening?

AH: We’d have to take it to Q&A!

JF: I don’t see it happening because, um.. it was twenty-something years before that I claimed that wall that was right next to that thing, and I mean, that’s in the very heart of Newtown...which is the heart of street art culture, and with two exceptions nobody’s touched it. It’s in the middle of Newtown, *begging* to be tagged and they tag all around in the gardens on the walls and stuff and they left [the mural]. That’s how powerful those words are; that little shithead 15 year olds with spray cans wouldn’t touch it.

EC: Perhaps because one could say it’s an inclusive artwork and therefore everyone can have a bit of ownership over it, which is the purpose of graffiti in the first place.

JF: Absolutely, that’s particularly what they do. They tag something possessively, and that’s an individual of the inherent arrogance and delusion of that culture – just because you spray something you dickhead you don’t have the right to it. Whereas this is for the community, it’s not about Adam or I...it was for everybody.

EC: You say that you claimed that wall, did you seek permission to do that artwork?

JF: Yes, it was totally legal. It was owned by Telstra, and a guy called Ryan Senior gave me permission to do it. It's hard enough changing a plan with Telstra let alone finding someone who will give you permission to use their property to do art. It took a long time to find the right guy. The first thing I did, if we go way back to when I was at the chicken shed out back and pulled out my mobile and notebook and called the council straight up and said 'hey I wanna do this' and the council said that we don't need a DA for a mural, and I went, 'I don't need a DA for a mural? Thanks for your time' [laughs]

EC: And do you see either of you going back to the mural to touch it up when it starts to age?

JF: No it hasn't been touched since we walked away from it.

EC: And what happens when it does start to need care – who do you see doing that?

AH: I'm not into re-touching murals, I'm more into paying out for a new one. So hopefully we'll have accrued enough prominence by then...and you know.. with crowdfunding things and whatever...

EC: How did you both know each other? Obviously you knew each other before the mural was painted as it was a collaboration?

JF: Nah, not really. I knew that I needed an Indigenous artist to complete it and I got a couple of friends...we have a couple of mutual friends... and uh, [one of the friends] suggested I need Adam Hill. I kept hearing this name and I was like 'yeah I do, I *do* need Adam Hill. Who IS this guy? How do I find this guy?' [laughs] And ah eventually [one of the friends] turned up at Adam's studio one day –

AH: Yeah and then the connection was formed.

JF: We had a coffee at Caruthers, then we chatted for an hour or so. Adam said 'lets go up and look at it.' And we stood in front of it and talked about it.

EC: Right, so how did you envisage the collaboration and what was your goal in getting involved Adam?

AH: When I first saw it, the first image we came up with...that bit there (the imperfect crease in the wall) was going to be Pemulwuy's head, because I saw a bun straight away, and the face and the shoulders. So that was going to be Pemulwuy in the landscape. But then, um, I saw a Sydney Harbour cave, because the blue is there and I thought we could just make some escarpments come off that in a really graphic kind of fashion. And then ah...I kinda like that imperfection, but then it became obvious that it should be like looking into a cave, which I'd done before in a number of murals all over the place. So I made it the cave and worked around that.

EC: So you looked at the wall itself and got your ideas from there? You weren't told what should go there?

AH: No, no not at all. Collaboration.

EC: So Adam can you tell me about the techniques you used in creating your addition to the mural?

AH: Ah, well, its pretty indicative of my style of work. Then I realised the importance of acknowledging the Sydney dreaming which is whale dreaming, the Gadigal dreaming, and that was kinda emphasised from a humorous encounter with Mick Mundine down at the block where I was painting the mural on the side of the community centre down there. I'd always had this special affiliation with the red belly black snake whenever I go bush, so I'd painted this big red belly black snake at the bottom of the mural and he of all people pulled

up and said 'you can't paint that, a snake brings bad energy here'...so incidentally that was in the back of my head when I was painting this one, and I knew exactly what to paint. So that's how the whales came about.

EC: Have you had any feedback from the Indigenous community about how they see this mural?

AH: Nah. Everybody's got their head up their arses really [laughs]

EC: What about anyone else in the community, not necessarily Indigenous?

AH: No...Sydney's a harsh place for receiving compliments.

JF: Along those lines, when you finally finished it and stuff, I posted it on my Facebook page. 'Hey check it out, the thing you've been hearing me talk about for five years is finally finished' and nothing! [chuckles]. I've spoken to people who have said that the statement makes the hair on the back of their head stand up, and it still does that for me.

EC: Yes, it's very powerful. How do you see the art? Stagnant...fluid?

JF: Of course its fluid, but its an umbrella term which has the potential to bring cohesion to heaps of disparate movements, you know what I mean.

EC: What aspect of the mural do you think is the most significant? Is it the site, the message, the medium?

AH: Well definitely the 'bringing together' of people, and what we're not seeing and something we do want is to attach a go-pro that can capture the amount of people that come to visit. I am imagining that school groups and art groups are visiting not only the big mural, but also our one. I certainly plug it when I do workshops with high school kids. And you know the value I talk about with that mural is about giving back to the community, and also to counter-graffiti or tagging, to create your own comment in the public space and how valuable that is.

EC: So the public site is important, what else?

AH: Particularly the cultural reference. Its been included on the only Aboriginal language website. There's always an educational element to my murals. I want people to reference that. You know and it says down the bottom 'smile, you're on Gadigal country'. My biggest gripe in encountering devout patriotism here is that people don't know what Aboriginal country they live on, and they can't name more than five Aboriginal language groups – so I see that as a thing to change in appreciation if you're going to accept the remnants of Aboriginal culture in Australia, you know.

EC: And what would you say if someone from the community, perhaps another artist or performer, wrote a dialogue on your painting? Something similar has occurred at times on the Martin Luther King mural, not graffiti but just an additional statement.

JF: I've never seen that

EC: If it did happen to your mural, would it change its meaning or significance?

AH: Yeah of course it would

JF: I'd get it removed!

AH: From where I've come from it's a rule of thumb – I've never...gone over somebody else's work. If you want me to do that you give me the blank wall. But um, I'd be offended if somebody touched it.

JF: it is graffiti proof because the stuff is gloss, and Telstra paid for that.

AH: it's not an invitation to make comment

JF: If it was we would've painted it in blackboard paint [laughs]... I'd like to create a situation where it's impossible to think about [the Martin Luther King mural] without thinking about our one. That's the whole point. We want to take the focus away from *that* to ours. Coldplay for instance were in Sydney last year, and it was reported on the news that Coldplay were in 'Hipsterville' in Newtown shooting a film clip beneath Newtown's iconic 'Martin Luther King mural', and I suppose, well, I aspire, and I've gone out of my way to create a situation where if that happened in the future, that news report would say "in front of Sydney's iconic 'we have the dreaming' mural", because that's how I believe it should be. We have the dreaming is a statement whereas 'I have a dream' is an aspiration; and recent events that I've seen reported in the US suggests it remains an aspiration, and its relevance to us is minimal.

AH:...yeah its even more proof that size doesn't matter...And because you've got this little poignant comment that was always meant to be to show that our message is way deeper than, in all due respect, the somewhat material gigantic message neighbouring. And the sense of the dreaming and spirituality will always be layers beyond most peoples' understanding because we're all used to seeing [the Martin Luther King mural]. So that's why it will arguably become the most important piece I've created.

...I was punching the air in wanting to make comment that opposed Martin Luther King's sentiment, because um, my issue was that [it was a] nice message and world famous quote, but its got nothing to do with Aboriginal spirituality, and if you want to take it deeper, lets take a look at how Martin Luther King is one of the most respected orators in American history who happened to be black – but was he speaking on behalf of First Nations people? You know? And how many First Nations people endorse what he was saying? The very religion that overthrew First Nation culture, as was done here, is now celebrated that big and people flock to it – "oh, I know that quote", and you know that's why its Jeff's catchphrase there that is so important. I really want people to get their teeth into that and understand that.

ATTACHMENT 2:

DRAFT STATE HERITAGE INVENTORY FORM FOR THE “I HAVE A DREAM” MURAL

MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL SHI INVENTORY FORM – WORD VERSION

ITEM

ITEM NO:

ITEM NAME: "I HAVE A DREAM" MURAL

LOCATION: 305 King Street, Newtown

ALTERNATE ADDRESS: Telstra Plaza, King Street, Newtown

OTHER/FORMER NAMES:

ITEM TYPE:

GROUP: Urban Area

CATEGORY: Other-Urban Area

GROUP/COLLECTION: -----

LGA: MARRICKVILLE

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The "I have a dream" mural is of historical significance as an expression of political views through art in the public arena. The mural demonstrates the subversive act of the illegal painting of a large-scale political mural in the 1970s-1990s, the period at which politics as expressed in the public arena was at its height in Australia.

The mural has local historical association with the artist's collective *Unmitigated Audacity Productions* who were responsible for a number of murals in Newtown and Erskineville in the 1990s (which are no longer in existence, though recorded in photos).

The mural is of aesthetic significance as a creative achievement, declared by its artists as "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art". The mural is of aesthetic significance for its message and its careful composition, which linked the message to Australia. The mural is a prominent element in the King Street Newtown streetscape, highly visible from the public domain.

The mural is of demonstrable social significance to the local community, evidenced by its Facebook page, the documentary on the making of the mural, and its constant repair and maintenance by community members. Fire damage to the mural in 2009 gave rise to crowd-funding for its repair. The mural contributes to the sense of identity of the Newtown/Erskineville community.

The mural is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent, and very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region. The mural is locally rare as the only remaining work of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.

The mural is a fine example of 1990s political mural painting in a public space, outstanding for its prominence in the streetscape and for its high level of community esteem. The mural continues to express the original artist's intentions and remains today, as expressed by the artists "*a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art*".

Assessed Significance: Local

LISTINGS: None

LOCATION:

Owner: Private – corporation (305 King Street, building and Telstra Plaza)

LOTS/DPS: Lot C, DP439135

BOUNDARIES: The Mural is painted onto the eastern side wall of the 3-storey retail building at 305 King Street, and faces into Telstra Plaza (a plaza on the King Street frontage of No. 8 Mary Street, Newtown).

DESCRIPTION

DESIGNER: Unmitigated Audacity Productions (Julie Pryor & Andrew Aitken, artists)

MAKER/BUILDER: Unmitigated Audacity Productions (Julie Pryor & Andrew Aitken, artists)

YEAR STARTED: 1st August 1991 YEAR COMPLETED: 4th August 1991 CIRCA: NO

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The mural is painted on the eastern brick wall of the imposing 3-storey building encompassing the three shops Nos. 305, 307 and 309 King Street, Newtown (constructed 1896), on the eastern wall of No. 305 King Street, Newtown. The mural faces into Telstra plaza (part of the property No. 8 Mary Street, Newtown), taking up the majority of the elevation. There are views of the mural from the east for a considerable distance along King Street. The mural incorporates two windows, one at 1st floor level and one at 2nd floor level, and one door towards the rear of the building, which are surrounded or subsumed by the mural.

The mural depicts the face of Martin Luther King Junior to the right of the windows, and the Earth from space (apparently a view taken from Apollo 8) with western Australia visible and cloud over eastern Australia, to the left of the windows, on a black background, with the words "I have a dream" below in Gothic script.

To the left and below the "I" is a quote from Genesis 37:19: "Behold the dreamer cometh; Come now therefore and let us slay him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams". In the lower portion of the mural, the black background seamlessly forms the top half of the Aboriginal flag, with the central yellow circle (sun) and red lower portion.

In the lower left-hand corner there was recently a painted injunction which read either "Please show respect, post no bills here" or "Don't poster here show respect". This injunction is now postered over.

PHYSICAL CONDITION:

The eastern side wall of the shop at No. 305 King Street Newtown appears structurally sound and in good condition. There is no sign of dampness.

There are the following concerns with the condition of the mural:

- A line of peeling paint across the mural near the top – see Figure 30 below

- Plaster which has lifted at the lower left-hand corner, taking the edge of the biblical quote with it – see Figure 28 below
- Bill postering in the lower left-hand corner of the mural which previously contained the words “Please show respect, post no bills here” or “Don’t poster here show respect” - see Figure 28 below.
- General fading: the black background is not as black as previously, and the orange of the western half of Australia visible through the clouds is not as orange as previously – see Figure 30 below

MODIFICATION DATE/S: The lower portion of the mural was changed to form an Aboriginal flag in 1993, within 18 months of completion. This was undertaken by the original artists, Juliee Pryor & Andrew Aitken. When the Mural gets ‘tagged’ (graffitied) members of the community anonymously repair the damage (without seeking specific consent). The mural underwent major repair in April 2011 by community members including a son of one of the original artists (to repair a burnt area).

FURTHER COMMENTS: The adjacent “we have the dreaming” mural (completed 2012) on the south wall of the building at No. 8 Mary Street, facing into Telstra Plaza, forms a comment on the “I have a dream mural” and is an important element of the context of the “I have a dream” mural.

HISTORY

Area/Locality:

The inner west Sydney suburb of Newtown is located within a land grant of 240 acres given to William Bligh (1754 – 1817) in 1806 by Governor King (1758 – 1808). Captain Bligh had arrived in New South Wales to take up the governorship of the colony from King. Governor King granted Bligh not just the 240 acres, named ‘Camperdown’ but also 105 acres near Parramatta and 1000 acres near Rouse Hill.¹ Almost three decades before the grant, in 1779, the then Governor Phillip set aside what became the Camperdown grant for Crown and church use, as well as an interesting addition of a 200 acre grant for the support of a school teacher in the area. No definite action was taken to utilise this 200 acres though, so it reverted to the Crown once again.² In 1801 the land formed part of the grant to the trustees of a Female Orphan Institution, but in 1806 the trustees, upon being granted 1000 acres at Bathurst, agreed to it being granted to William Bligh in 1806 for the purpose of erecting a residence.³

Bligh was removed from office after the infamous rum rebellion in 1808 and he returned to England in 1810. Bligh’s daughter, Mary Putland, married Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice O’Connell (1768-1848), the commander of the 73rd Regiment that had accompanied Lachlan Macquarie. The O’Connells also left Australia (in 1814) but returned to New South Wales in 1838. Upon their return O’Connell claimed his father-in-law’s land at Parramatta, however in the intervening years of Bligh’s and the O’Connell’s absence, this land had either been sold or re-granted.⁴ To settle this matter, the O’Connells surrendered their claim to the Parramatta

¹ Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), William Bligh, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bligh-william-1797>

² Marie Ryan, Newtown Municipality 1862-1892: Subdivision, Land Use and Services, p 6.

³ ADB, Bligh.

⁴ Nicholas Jackson, History of 17 Mary Street Newtown.

land in exchange for the confirmation of entitlement to the other grants, one of which was the 240 acre grant, 'Camperdown'.⁵

The O'Connells appear to have subdivided this land into 32 sections and released the lots for sale on 21 April 1841. Within this subdivision, O'Connell's son, Maurice Charles O'Connell, further subdivided Lots 1-3 into an estate he named O'Connell Crescent Estate. This re-subdivision was put up for sale shortly after the main release, in June 1841. It was advertised by the auctioneer, Thomas Stubbs, as being well suited for investors, tradesmen and mechanics.⁶

The O'Connell Crescent subdivision consisted of 73 smaller allotments in 5 sections; the property at 305 King Street being Lot 3 of Section 1. The plan of the O'Connell Crescent Estate has been lost by Land and Property information.

Property (building at 305 King Street, Newtown):

An 1845 survey map (Figure 4 above) produced by W.H.Wells shows that a double-fronted cottage had been constructed on Lot 3, owned by 'Webster'. The Webster family was a well-known family in the early phase of Newtown's history. John Webster, a grocer and draper, and his wife Eliza arrived in the area in 1832 when it was... "away out in the country then, with a few houses scattered in the bush. Some of the little houses, I recollect, were nothing but old slab huts, with bark roofs. Primitive houses, primitive life".⁷

The Websters reportedly opened the first shop along The Newtown Road (now King Street). The store was called 'New Town Store' and was named as such to distinguish it from the established settlements at Camperdown, Cooks River and O'Connell Town.⁸ The New Town Store is not the building shown in the 1845 map, for the shop was situated on the corner of Eliza and King Streets (where ZaniBar is situated today) however Webster also owned a separate grocery store on King Street.⁹ The building depicted on the site on the 1845 map is most likely Webster's secondary shop, for in the following year, 1846, Webster placed an advertisement (see Figure 5 below) for the sale of "a house with best rate shop etc., in the best part of the road from Sydney to Cook's River. It is immediately opposite the road to Enmore, and has a double frontage... And the house is newly built, with first-rate workmanship."¹⁰

The physical description, location and date of construction of this house is consistent with the possibility that the building shown on the 1845 map is indeed Webster's house and secondary store.

By 1890 the buildings along King Street between Mary and Eliza Streets (within the original O'Connell subdivision) had changed dramatically, in keeping with the industrial and commercial shift of the entire area. As shown in the image above, the house and store originally owned by Webster was replaced by an entirely different building.

In 1896¹¹ this small building was in turn replaced by an imposing new 3-storey building containing three shops: Nos. 305, 307 and 309 King Street. The 1899 and 1900 Sand's directory shows John Hunter as the occupant, and the use of all three shops as a 'boot palace'.

By 1943 a plaza had been created to the east of No. 305 King Street. The building shown in 1943 (see Figure 7 above) east of 305 King Street was replaced circa 1970s with a 5-storey commercial office building known as 8 Mary Street on a roughly L-shaped allotment (Lot 100,

⁵ ADB, Sir Maurice Charles O'Connell, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/oconnell-sir-maurice-charles-2517>

⁶ Jackson, 17 Mary Street Newtown

⁷ Friday 13 December 1912, Sydney Morning Herald, page 5. Accessed via Trove

⁸ Linda Daniele, <https://lindadaniele.wordpress.com/tag/heritage/>

⁹ Friday 13 December 1912, Sydney Morning Herald, page 5. Accessed via Trove

¹⁰ Tuesday 27 January 1846, page 4. Accessed via Trove

¹¹ The date of construction of the building is marked on the parapet

DP1087885) which has a frontage to Mary Street and is setback from King Street with a plaza fronting King Street. Note that Telstra Plaza fronting King Street is part of Lot 100, DP 1087885, and not public land.

The Mural:

The creators of the “I Have a Dream” mural, Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken, were both living in the Newtown area at the time they painted the mural. Pryor, 35, an artist and single mother of three, had been directly involved in Newtown’s art scene for many years (particularly via her establishment of Art Unit; a space where artists could showcase their work¹²). Aitken, 23, a sign writer and a New Zealand-born Canadian, had come to Newtown to be involved in its artistic culture. At the time of the mural’s creation Aitken and Pryor had only known each other for two weeks, however Juilee Pryor explains that they were both “quite desperate” in their personal situations for different reasons, and they had “a great deal of light in our hearts, and we wanted to bring that, bring it as a gift to the people of Newtown.”¹³

Juilee Pryor and Andrew Aitken met in late July 1991 when Aitken was in the process of painting “On the Wings of Eagles” on the corner of Wilson Street and Rochford Road. Pryor was painting a shop front close by and their artistic interest in each other eventuated into an artistic “duel” that carried out for several days. After some discussion about the possibility of working collaboratively on a project, Pryor suggested doing a small-scale mural to ensure they could work well together. This ‘test’ mural became the well-known “The Light Shineth in the Darkness” on Erskineville Road, a mural that sadly lasted only four years.¹⁴

Aitken and Pryor formed a group called Unmitigated Audacity Productions and set their sights on their first major collaboration together. The blank wall on 305 King Street was proposed as the site at which they would work and upon seeing it, Pryor knew it was “perfect”.

The duo sought permission twice to paint the wall, however in both instances were denied access. The intention of the owners was for the wall to be used as a site for commercial advertising billboards. Pryor and Aitken shared a common disapproval for the commercialisation of street art and the effects materialism had on society. Aitken stated in an interview¹⁵ that he saw an artist’s job as being “to bring a light into the world.” Pryor stated that it was “just not good enough to have beer and fag ads on King street, when something greater is at stake, so we both had a great deal of historical and future sense that it would be better to put something up there that wasn’t selling anything...Having seen the wall and decided that it was the one, nothing could stop us.”¹⁶

Aitken and Pryor had “no hesitation”¹⁷ about the design for the mural. Martin Luther King Jr. was chosen for “his extraordinary speech talking about tolerance”. They also loved the “symmetry in the language” of having King on King Street. Juilee Pryor explained that the image of the world captured by NASA were ideas that filled her childhood. The original plan was to finish the mural on 305 King Street and then paint the other wall of the plaza as a copy of a Roy Lichtenstein print, with the intention to showcase icons of the 20th century on both walls.¹⁸ Aitken and Pryor organised the painting of the first mural “like a military campaign”¹⁹, and on Thursday 1st of August 1991 their work began. By dawn on Sunday morning 4th

¹² I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural – documentary, Dynamic Screen Content, 2012

¹³ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

¹⁴ Juilee Pryor, <http://www.juileepryor.com>

¹⁵ This interview was shown in the I Have a Dream: the Making of a Mural documentary created by Dynamic Screen Content.

¹⁶ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ This second mural never went ahead.

¹⁹ Juilee Pryor, 13 August 2014, personal interview

August 1991 the mural was completed. At this time, the lower portion of the mural included a crowd of people.

18 months later, in 1993, Pryor and Aitken painted over the lower portion of the mural with an Aboriginal flag, due to the difficulty of repairing graffiti in the lower portion, including racist graffiti. Initially Aitken painted a Declaration of Independence in the lower portion, later replacing this with the Aboriginal flag. The Aboriginal flag had always been present in the mural, in the form of a T-shirt worn by one of the people in the lower portion of the mural, however the repainting introduced a large-scale Aboriginal flag.

Although the decision to paint the large Aboriginal flag was a practical one, additional meanings began to be made by all who saw it. The undertones of tolerance and the plight of the dream remained clear from the images that remained, however the juxtaposition of these meanings with the Aboriginal flag brought many additional meanings to be made by those who saw it.

Similarly, although it was not their explicit intention to do so, Pryor and Aitken's painting of the Aboriginal flag brought a great sense of satisfaction for the wider Aboriginal community.

Despite early attacks on the mural with racist graffiti, the "I have a dream" mural has been adopted by the Newtown community with great passion. Signatures to the Declaration of Independence painted by Aitken, and the anonymous message on the mural that states 'Please show respect, post no bills here' are just two examples of a constant and open dialogue the Newtown community engage in with the mural. It is the site at which people meet, disperse or engage in an art form, and where many community events have been held. When Telstra, the owner and namesake of the plaza that sits in front of the mural, planned to develop the site the community's negative response was so strong that Telstra disregarded their plan to develop it.²⁰

Over the years the mural has been featured in a documentary (I have a dream: the making of a mural, 2012), in numerous print media, on the internet (it has its own Facebook page) and in popular culture (as a backdrop for a 2014 Coldplay music video).

HISTORIC THEMES:

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
Culture	Creative endeavour	Public art
Culture	Social institutions	Developing community

Owner: Private- Individual (the building)

Current Use/s: commerce

Former Use/s: commerce

ASSESSMENT

SHR Criterion (a) Historical:

The mural (completed 4 August 1991) is of historical significance as an expression of political views through art in the public arena. The mural demonstrates the subversive act of the illegal painting of a large-scale political mural in the 1970s-1990s, the period at which politics as expressed in the public arena was at its height in Australia.

SHR Criterion (b) Historical Association:

²⁰ Barry Divola, 'King(s) Street', Sydney Morning Herald, August 25 2011

The mural has local historical association with the artist's collective *Unmitigated Audacity Productions* who were responsible for a number of murals in Newtown and Erskineville in the 1990s (which are no longer in existence, though recorded in photos).

SHR Criterion (c) Aesthetic/Technical:

The mural is a creative achievement, declared by its artists as "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art". The mural is of aesthetic significance for its message and its careful composition, which linked the message to Australia. The mural is a prominent element in the King Street Newtown streetscape, highly visible from the public domain.

SHR Criterion (d) Social:

The mural has been demonstrably embraced by the local community, evidenced by its Facebook page, the 2010 documentary on the making of the mural which has been screened for free at the Dendy Cinema, Newtown in 2010, 2012 and 2013, and DVDs of which are being marketed on the mural's Facebook page. The mural is esteemed by the local community, evidenced by its constant repair and maintenance by community members. Fire damage to the mural in 2009 gave rise to crowd-funding for its repair. The mural contributes to the sense of identity of the Newtown/Erskineville community.

SHR Criterion (e) Research:

Not applicable.

SHR Criterion (f) Rarity:

The "I have a dream" mural at No. 305 King Street Newtown is unique in the Sydney area as a large-scale street art political mural originally painted without any official form of consent. The mural is very rare as one of the few remaining large-scale street art political murals from the period 1970s-1990s in the Sydney region, and locally rare as one of the few remaining works of its artists, Unmitigated Audacity Productions, whose murals once adorned numerous walls in the Newtown/Erskineville area.

SHR Criterion (g) Representative:

The mural is a fine example of 1990s political mural painting in a public space, outstanding for its prominence in the streetscape and for its high level of community esteem.

Integrity/Intactness:

The mural has a high degree of integrity in terms of representing the intentions of the original artists, despite alteration to the lower portion in 1993 by the original artists. The mural remains today, as expressed by the artists "*a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art*".

Assessed Significance: Local

REFERENCES

REFERENCES USED FOR THIS ITEM

HERITAGE STUDIES WHICH INCLUDE THIS ITEM:

Study Author: Paul Davies Pty Ltd, Architects, Heritage Consultants

Study Title: *Heritage Assessment "I have a dream" mural, 305 King Street, Newtown: "a humanist protest against the sterility of post-modern art"*

Year: March 2015

Number in Study:

ADMIN

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY AND TYPE:

Statutory Instrument: list on a Local Environmental Plan

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT:

Council should:

- allow the community to undertake ongoing repair and retouching of the mural without the need for development consent.
- encourage the owners or lessees of the property No. 8 Mary Street Newtown (currently Telstra) to undertake renovations to activate the street frontage of the building which faces into the plaza, and to cooperate with Council in removing clutter from within the plaza (centrally placed bins, planter bed and metal pergola at the back of the plaza) to enhance the setting of the mural. Retain the “We have the dreaming” mural as part of this process.
- Acknowledge the importance of the adjacent “We have the dreaming” mural within Telstra Plaza, as a comment on the “I have a dream” mural which links the message to the Aboriginal Australian experience
- Engage in community consultation concerning changes to Telstra Plaza or King Street Newtown in the vicinity of the mural.

IMAGES

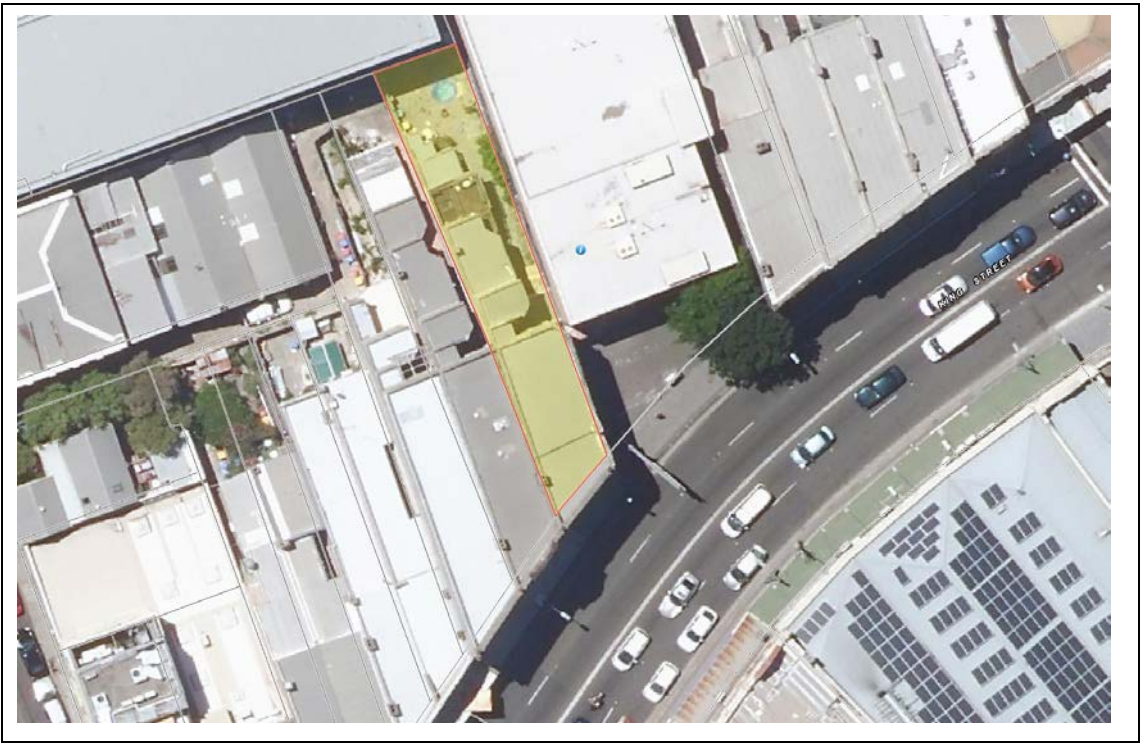


Image type	Satellite photograph
Image Caption	Location of site at No. 305 King Street Newtown (shaded yellow). Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps
Thumbnail Caption	Location of site at No. 305 King Street Newtown (shaded yellow). Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps
Image Number	
Image by	NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps
Image date	October 2014
Image copyright	NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps
Image filename	
Thumbnail filename	



Image type	Photograph
Image Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown, from within Telstra Plaza. Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Thumbnail Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown. Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Image Number	
Image by	Nathanael Hughes, Aperture Photography/Paul Davies Pty Ltd
Image date	September 2014
Image copyright	Marrickville Council
Image filename	
Thumbnail filename	

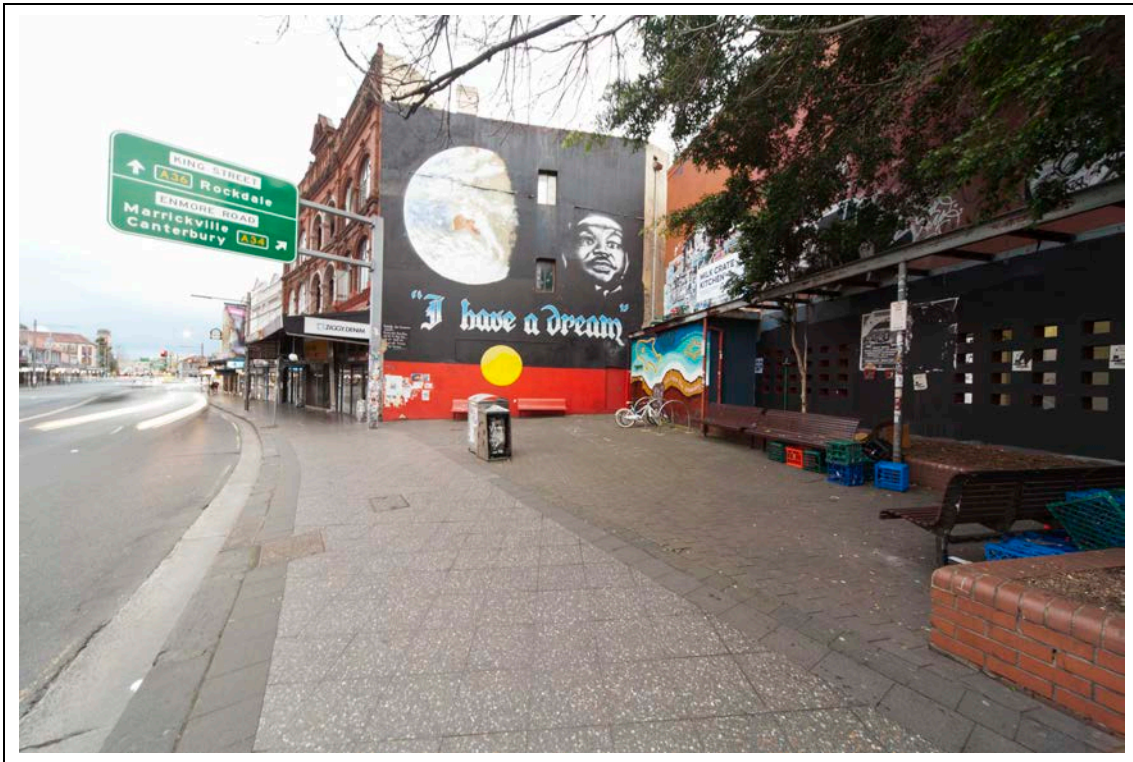


Image type	Photograph
Image Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the east down King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Thumbnail Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the east down King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Image Number	
Image by	Nathanael Hughes, Aperture Photography/Paul Davies Pty Ltd
Image date	September 2014
Image copyright	Marrickville Council
Image filename	
Thumbnail filename	



Image type	Photograph
Image Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the opposite side of King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Thumbnail Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the opposite side of King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Image Number	
Image by	Nathanael Hughes, Aperture Photography/Paul Davies Pty Ltd
Image date	September 2014
Image copyright	Marrickville Council
Image filename	
Thumbnail filename	

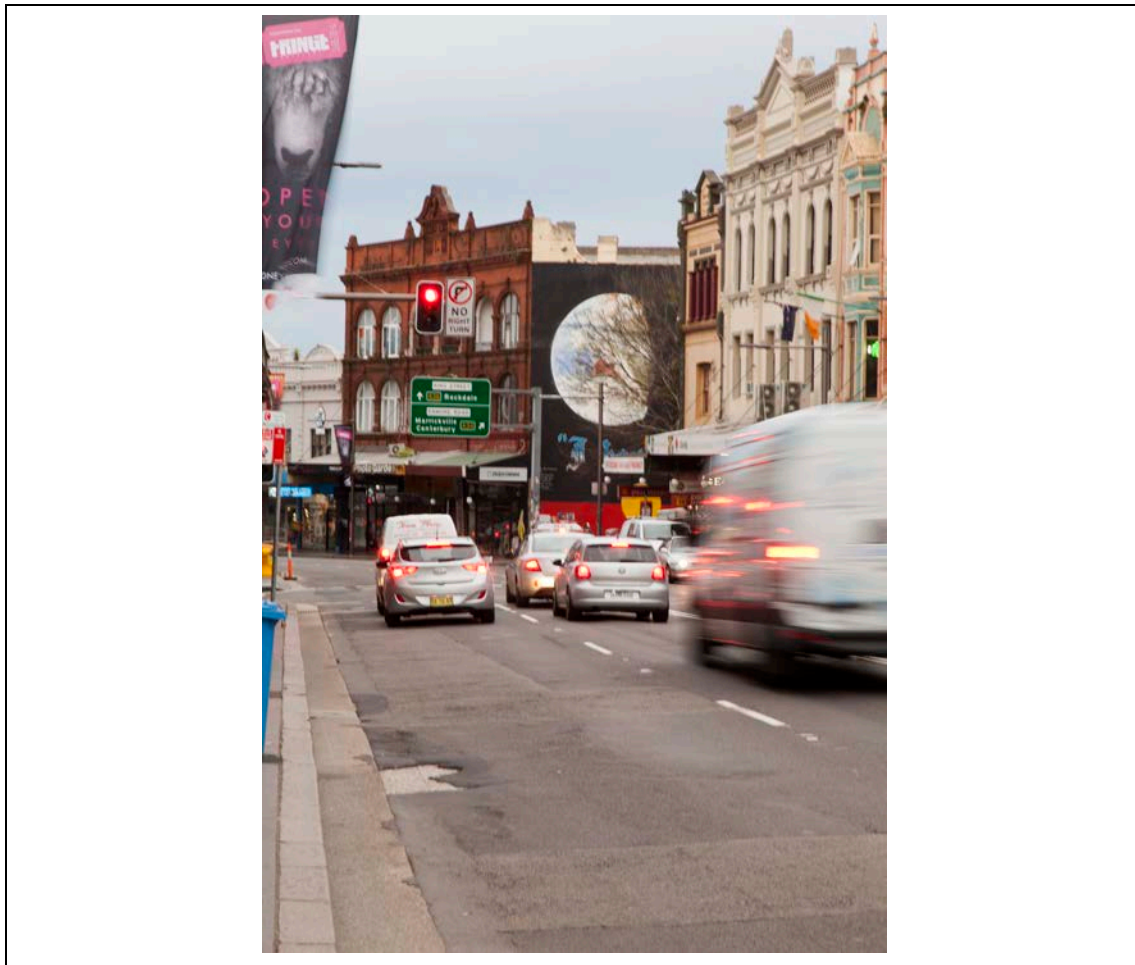


Image type	Photograph
Image Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the east down King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Thumbnail Caption	"I have a dream mural" on the east side wall of the building at No. 305 King Street Newtown from the east down King Street Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd.
Image Number	
Image by	Nathanael Hughes, Aperture Photography/Paul Davies Pty Ltd
Image date	September 2014
Image copyright	Marrickville Council
Image filename	
Thumbnail filename	