

Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Newcastle

Address:

Planning: Hunter & Central Coast

Suburb/nearest town: Hamilton South, Hamilton East, Merewether 2303

Local govt area: Newcastle

Parish:

State: NSW

County:

Other/former names: Garden Suburb

Area/group/complex:

Group ID:

Aboriginal area:

Curtilage/boundary: Shown by red hatching and labelled "C3—Hamilton South Garden Suburb"

Item type: Complex / Group

Group: Urban Area

Category: Subdivision - designed

Owner: Multiple Owners

Admin codes:

Code 2:

Code 3:

Current use:

Former uses:

Assessed significance: Local

Endorsed significance: Local

Statement of significance: The Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area is significant to the local community for the surviving evidence of an early twentieth century subdivision pattern made up of single dwellings on large "suburban" style allotments generally over 600 square metres. The precinct has associational significance with the eminent Australian architect and planner Sir John Sulman and as such, its original form is important evidence of his work and ideas. The suburb is one of Newcastle's earliest and largest examples of a planned garden suburb and as such is historically important. The evidence of Sulman's original design is reflected in the road layout, allotment shape and pattern, and form of housing – single storey detached bungalow and cottage style houses, with a consistent palette of face brick and painted weatherboard houses.

- Key Period of Significance - circa 1913 to 1940

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Historical notes of provenance: The Garden Suburb Hamilton was developed by the Australian Agricultural Company (AA Company), between 1913 and 1935, at the behest of the chief surveyor Worters Pulver. The land was part of the AA Company's 2000 acre coal bearing land acquired from the colonial government in 1829. As the mines wound down and the pits were closed at the turn of the 20th century, the AA Company found itself with a large area of redundant land, situated between the AA Company's townships of Hamilton and Cooks Hill.

The land was mostly flat and swampy and occupied by sand dunes. Two creek lines converged to form Cottage Creek in what was boggy ground and the drainage sink for a broader flood plain.

The challenge was to transform this land into a respectable suburb that would appeal to the growing professional and managerial classes, and move them away from the dense and industrial portside districts. The Sydney firm Sulman & Hennessey, who had been involved in the design of the Daceyville estate, were engaged to lay the suburb out in a way that would appeal to the middle class. Modelled on the Garden Suburb ideals, the plan by Sulman and Hennessey made provision for an urban green space on Stewart Avenue, and extensive parklands throughout. National Park, Learmonth Park, Wilson Place and small pocket parks were set aside in the original design. Newcastle Council was responsible for the development of these parks.

Sulman and Hennessey's scheme was to fill in the swamps inland of Bar Beach taking the sand from the dunes that swept across what is now Empire Park, and to relocate the Chinese market gardens in the swamp land (which is now National Park) to Hexham. Emeritus Professor of History University of Newcastle, John Ramsland, notes "Under Sulman's plan, work began to transform Hamilton South into a garden suburb that would be totally unlike Newcastle's modest mining towns with their small timber gun-barrel shaped miners' cottages almost opening onto the street. A middle-class suburb was thus created by filling and draining the many swamps between the Cook's Hill precinct of Newcastle and Hamilton and leveling the main sand dunes to create a large subdivision of AA land to be sold to the highest bidder." To provide the required fill, around 1800mm of earth was taken from the coastal hillside above Bar Beach (now Bar Beach carpark) and transported to the Garden Suburb by a temporary small-gauge railway to fill in the hollows and swamps. A massive concrete stormwater channel was also built by the Hunter Water Board, straightening natural creeks and gullies to drain the area for development.

The AA Company first advertised the Sulman and Hennessey plan in the window of Palings Music Warehouse, Hunter Street, in mid-1913 and the plan was submitted to Hamilton Council. Inspired by the Griffin's plan for the Civic area in Canberra, the final design featured three wide avenues, each envisaged as main roads with avenue trees planted on what would become the road reserves of Gordon, Stewart and Parkway Avenues. Parkway Avenue, the widest, was intended to provide direct vehicular access to Bar Beach from Hamilton and it bisected the suburb.

The area was well positioned being in close proximity to the beach and the Newcastle central business district. The first subdivision occurred on the ground at 2:30pm on 30 May 1914. Gas, electricity and sewerage were to be available. In the Creer and Berkeley auction poster, the garden suburb Hamilton was promoted as "A triumph of town planning...ample public recreation grounds. Gardens...Bathing beaches...imposing tree planted avenues." Eighty-five lots were offered in the first auction, the boundaries of which were the Newcastle (Broadmeadow) racecourse to the west and the coastline in the east. Some of the posters carried a sketch of a picturesque California bungalow nestled between trees and shrubs, all intended for middle class families.

Notwithstanding the promotional material, the subdivision of the streets occurred at a slow pace, because of external forces including the onset of war in 1914, and later the Great Depression of 1929. Sales halted completely in 1918.

It is notable that the AA Company commissioned the local architect Frank G Castelden to design a comfortable four-bedroom dwelling as a model home for the estate so that "intending home-makers would have a concrete example of how and what cost to build." The intention of the AA Company was that the estate would be a model suburb with tree-lined streetscapes and attractive California bungalows with gardens front and back on spacious blocks along the parkway (later Parkway Avenue) and Gordon Avenue.

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In the original plan of the estate dated 1912, a focal point was designed around a central village green and provided for a business hub on Stewart Avenue. A rotunda for brass bands was intended to be a centre piece, but it was never built. Today, a few shops have been built and a petrol station, but the village green idea was never realised. Land for parkland was also set aside, although it was left to Newcastle Council to fill National Park and develop it as a sporting ground.

John Sulman, sought to devise the road network with Parkway Avenue as the centerpiece and certainly, Parkway Avenue endures as a dominant attribute of the Garden Suburb. Norfolk pines were planted along its length and on either side houses of a superior class of kiln-fired bricks (many of which remain today), together with neat and well tended lawns and gardens. Most homes were well set back on Parkway Avenue to emphasise and display the large front gardens.

Ramsland has analysed the legacy and enduring aspects of the Hamilton Garden Suburb estate. Ramsland has identified many surviving elements of the original concept - for example the majority of the dwellings - which are examples of the styles that were to define the Garden Suburb - California bungalows, Art Deco, and Spanish Mission houses of the 1920s-1930s. Ramsland says that the dwelling stock has "maintained the elaborate traditional and exotic front gardens of hedges, flowering bushes, small trees and rose gardens". Most tellingly and of most relevance to this review, Ramsland has remarked that "While the title Garden Suburb has been dropped long ago, the structure has survived better than at Daceyville, Matraville and Castlecrag combined."

The north and south sections of the Garden Suburb were intended to be purchased by two different demographic segments of the population. The Garden Suburb was designed to allow the section roughly north of Jenner Parade to be marketed to the more wealthy buyer (the managerial and professional class of an industrial city) who would build brick houses, while the south half (roughly south of Jenner Parade) was marketed to tradesmen and shop owners who were expected to build weatherboard houses. As a part of its marketing strategy the Company built two brick display houses in Gordon Avenue in the north end, and two weatherboard display houses at the south end, presumably to drive this socio-economic vision for the area. This attempt at social stratification was not overly successful as outside events would drive a more drawn-out development timeframe than first anticipated, and lead to a more mixed blend of brick and weatherboard houses throughout. However there are some streets where there are consistent rows of brick or weatherboard houses.

Themes:	National theme	State theme	Local theme
	4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and villages	
	3. Economy	Creative endeavour	

Designer: Sulman and Hennessey Pty Ltd

Builder:

Year started: 1914 **Year completed:** 1940 **Circa:** Yes

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Physical description: There are a number of physical elements in Hamilton South that date from the early 20th century that give the suburb a distinctive residential character. These elements represent more than 100 years of residential development:

- Original single storey detached houses constructed between 1918 and 1940, represented by detached Inter-War bungalows in various styles and treatments.
- Generous allotment sizes, ranging from 420 – 820m² with the predominant allotment size being 520 – 620m² (Meredith Walker, 1986, p.9).
- Generous street frontage setbacks (approximately 5.9m), which is landscaped with grass, plantings and low brick or timber fences.
- A distinct difference between the north of the conservation area (predominantly brick construction with more Federation style dwellings) and the south of the conservation area (predominantly clad construction and later houses of the 1920s and 30s).
- Large and mature street trees along road verges including Gordon Avenue, Stewart Avenue, Jenner Parade and Parkway Avenue.
- The width of the carriageways of the principle streets including Parkway, Gordon and Stewart Avenues.
- National Park, Learmonth Park, Wilson Place and small pocket parks.
- Low density residential development throughout.

Physical condition level:

**Physical condition:
Archaeological potential level:**

Archaeological potential Detail:

Modification dates:

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Recommended management: The character of the Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area is made up of a variety of building styles that date from the late 19th and early decades of the 20th century. The special character of Hamilton South Garden Suburb will be preserved and maintained through the retention of contributory buildings, open space, the existing subdivision pattern and maintenance of the 'Garden Suburb' layout, street trees and elements of visual interest and heritage significance such as Parkway Avenue, Learmonth Park, small pocket parks, and the vegetated edges of Cottage Creek. Elements that are to be preserved include:

- the original dwellings of the Garden Suburb which were built up to 1935
- the single storey scale of housing stock that is an original defining feature of the Garden Suburb
- the consistent front and side setbacks including retaining the offsets to side boundaries and keeping front gardens as open space
- existing subdivision pattern and street layout as evidence of Sulman's 'Garden Suburb' layout and town plan
- a strong symmetrical and hierarchical pattern of streets including Parkway, Gordon and Stewart Avenues
- the existing appearance, form and function of Parkway Avenue, including the road verges, street trees, bridge abutments at Cottage Creek, and the central median that splits the carriageway into two single lane roads
- gardens, street trees and public open space including pocket parks at Wilson Place, Corona Street, and elsewhere and
- the relationship of houses to their gardens and houses to each other.

Management:	Management category	Management name
	Recommended Management	Prepare or include in a Development Control Plan (DCP)

Further comments:

Criteria a): The Garden Suburb is historically significant for its associations with the Australian Agricultural Company, at a time when the economy of Newcastle was shifting from coal to steel making. The opening of the BHP [Historical significance] Steelworks created a need for a higher standard of housing for professional staff, and the garden suburb is evidence of the need to house the growing middle class that emerged as a result of the establishment of BHP. The garden suburb is also representative of the type and style of building construction and development in the years between the two world wars, with numerous examples of the work of local building firms. The area is important in the course of Newcastle's history as its design and development represents the activities, decision making and strategies of the AA Company at the turn of the 20th century. It is also important in the course of Newcastle's history as one of the last areas to be opened up to residential development once the AA Company divested their land holding in inner Newcastle.

The garden suburb at Hamilton South is an important surviving example of the garden suburb movement and is representative of an approach to urban development that utilised town planning concepts from the United Kingdom and other features of the movement including well planned streets, tree lined avenues, parks and gardens. It is an important representative example of the model garden suburbs developed by the recognised architect Sir John Sulman, who was responsible for laying out the street plan for the Daceyville Garden Suburb of 1912, Matraville, and other garden suburbs in Sydney. The large parks contained within the area are representative of the AA Company's intention to market the area to a discerning buyer who would be attracted to parkland and open space.

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Criteria b): The HS Garden Suburb HCA has special associations with the A.A. Company, being part of their 2000 acre grant of land in inner Newcastle which remained undeveloped until after 1910. The land was converted from swamp and sand dunes, to level blocks of land suitable for residential occupation, and specifically designed to attract Newcastle's emerging middle class. This occurred as a result of the strategies and decisions of the Australian Agricultural Company, and the creative influence of its contracted town planners and architects, Sir John Sulman, John Hennessey, and Frank Castelden. HS GS HCA has strong associations with the work of John Sulman and important in the course of Newcastle's urban history as an expression of his ideas.

Criteria c): The Hamilton South Garden Suburb HCA is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics that define the garden suburb town planning movement. These features include:

[Historical association significance]

[Aesthetic/ Technical significance] 1. House styles – Federation and Inter War bungalows in the popular styles of the time, Edwardian, California, Art Deco and Spanish Mission.

2. Suburb layout and its reflection of the aspirations of the AA Company and their ambition for a high standard of residential development attractive to Newcastle's growing middle class.

3. Streetscapes and landscaping, especially on roads including Gordon Avenue, Stewart Avenue and Parkway Avenue, which strongly contribute to the character of the suburb with their wide carriageways and many mature street trees, particularly Parkway Avenue which is highly significant for its green open space.

4. The overall layout of the suburb which provides evidence of the technical achievement of the firm of Sulman and Hennessey in laying out the suburb to fit an existing town grid.

5. The areas of park and green space designed to be an integral element of the suburb's design and appeal, including Learmonth Park, National Park and smaller pocket parks.

6. The location of the garden suburb in close proximity to the Newcastle City Centre, is a defining visual marker of the urban geography of Newcastle.

The Garden Suburb provides a consistent development pattern with respect to style, scale, built form and materials and is important in demonstrating the key elements of the garden suburb town planning ideals of single storey detached dwellings in a garden setting flanked by tree lined streets.

Criteria d): A survey of residents in 2014 revealed that the community value the character and physical elements of the Hamilton South Garden Suburb and they agree with its protection as a heritage conservation area. On the whole there is a high degree of esteem held by the resident community and strong attachment to the character of the area, the streetscape, buildings and public open space. The area meets this criterion on cultural grounds at the local level.

Criteria e): Given the rate of survival of key elements of the garden suburb town planning movement, including its ability to demonstrate elements of the work of John Sulman as well as the behaviour and strategies of the AA Company in the early 20th century following the cessation of coal mining, the area has the potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding aspects of Newcastle's cultural history, and more broadly to the state of NSW for the capacity to yield information about the garden suburb movement, John Sulman, and the Australian Agricultural Company.

Criteria f): The area does not demonstrate this criterion to any notable degree.

[Rarity]

Criteria g): The Hamilton South Garden Suburb HCA contains many surviving elements of the early 20th century town planning ideals of the garden suburb movement, and demonstrates these characteristics in its key elements including garden suburb layout and town plan, single detached bungalows and houses on large lots, and street trees and open space.

Intactness/Integrity:

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References: Author Title Year

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Newcastle City Council	Review of Heritage Conservation Areas Report	Chapter 3	2016

Parcels: Parcel code Lot number Section number Plan code Plan number

Latitude: **Longitude:**

Location validity: **Spatial accuracy:**

Map name: **Map scale:**

AMG zone: **Easting:** **Northing:**

Listing:	Name	Title	Number	ListingDate
	Newcastle LEP 2012	Local Environmental Plan Within a conservation area on an LEP Heritage study	C3	15/06/2012

Data entry: Data first entered: 11/09/2003 Data updated: 02/07/2019 Status: Completed

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Location:

Newcastle

Image:



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Image by: Sarah Cameron

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/2173903b13.jpg>

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1). House in 1925.



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - 87 National Park Street

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Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - Dumaresq Street bungalow

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Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - 54 Stewart Avenue

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Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/t_2173903b1.jpg

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/t_2173903b2.jpg

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/t_2173903b3.jpg

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - typical weatherboard bungalows in Jenner Pde

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Image by: Sarah Cameron

Image date: 10/11/2006

Image number:

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/t_2173903b6.jpg

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Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - National Park Street

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - 167 Kemp St

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Image date: 19/03/2004

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - 167 Kemp St

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Image date: 19/03/2004

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location:

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Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area - tuck-pointing in progress

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Item name: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Newcastle



Caption: Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area

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