
Foley Park Glebe, NSW

By Robert Hannan.

Foley Park on the corner of Glebe Point Road and Prymont Bridge Road has many connections to the early history of Glebe.



Hereford House 1910 Sydney Teachers College (Sydney University Archives)

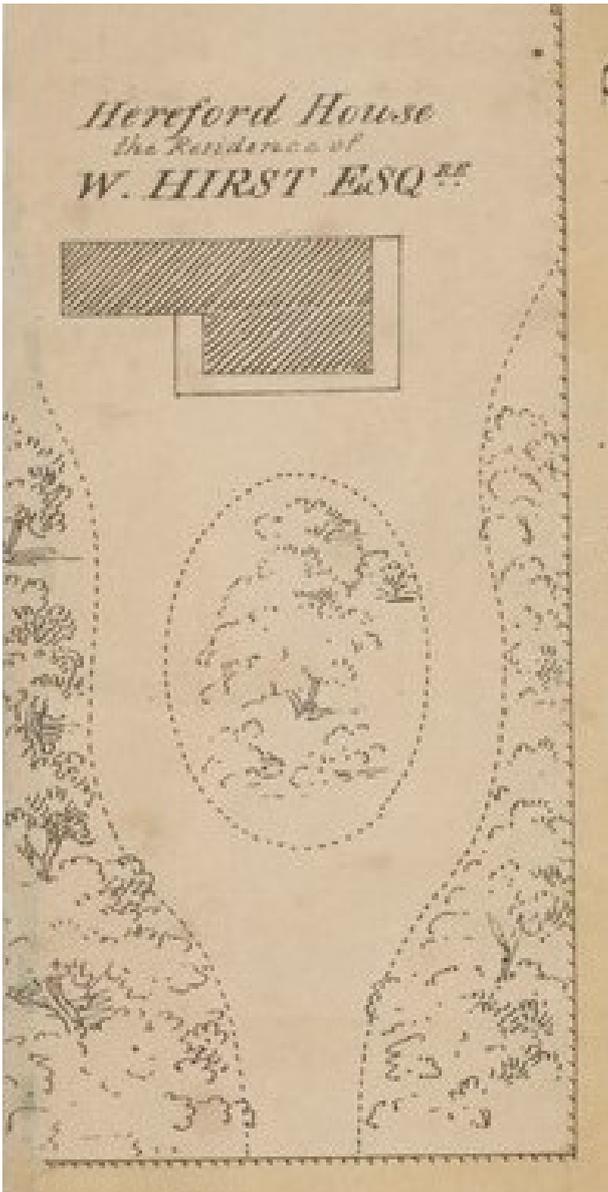
As a reminder of aboriginal ownership an important Iron Bark tree of pre-European colonisation still stands adjacent to the park, bearing the scar marks of bark removed for a shield or coolamon by the Wangal people.

After colonisation Glebe became the property of the Anglican church and when sub-divided in 1828 the park's land was sold to publican George Williams who commissioned Edward Hallen to construct Hereford House. Later additions and alterations were made by John Verge in 1832 and 34. This substantial house was subsequently the home of many prominent Sydney identities.

In 1911 the house, on reduced acreage, was sold to the Crown and became a teachers training college until the early 1930s. When it was demolished the grounds became a municipal park.

The paths and pergola in Foley Park today mark an outline of the original house and verandah. The park retains many original elements and trees from the old garden.

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During the Great Depression, Glebe Council in partnership with Grace Bros Broadway, constructed a small brick building in the middle of the park and housed within was the donated wireless. This small brick building became known as The Wireless House.

This unique joint venture was for the benefit of locals who were unable to afford a wireless of their own or who were unemployed and needed a place to congregate. The little house provided an important meeting and entertainment place for local people who could sit around or stand close by to listen to a range of broadcasts the more affluent enjoyed in their own homes.

It remained in use until the 1960s and was restored in 2009 as historical item of social importance in early 20th century Glebe. Radio recordings provided by the National Film and Sound Archives of Australia now play to demonstrate the important place the wireless played in the early 20th century lives.

The HHA is advising the heritage committee of the Glebe Society, who with the assistance of heritage consultant Robert Griffin, to make a submission for the inclusion of Foley Park and its unique features on the NSW State Heritage Register.