Ways of Whiteness: Negotiating settlement agendas in (post)colonial inner Sydney

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Abstract: (362 words)

The Aboriginal settlement known as ‘The Block’, Aboriginal Redfern or Eveleigh Street, forms an Aboriginal neighbourhood in inner Sydney. Since its deliberate and largely unexpected formalisation in 1973, this urban Aboriginal presence continues to unsettle the largely non-Aboriginal community that surrounds it and geographically binds it in place. The Block was founded as the ‘Black Capital of Australia’ and stakes a claim in the heart of Australia’s first and most prominent city, Sydney. The ‘return’ of Aboriginality, however, to a place from which it had been banished, remains a (post)colonial paradox.

This paradoxical presence elicits responses from within the non-Aboriginal community. The modalities of race relations, that are part of Australia’s history of repression of the indigenous ‘other’, are being reproduced through the transformation of the residential inner-city. The demise of The Block is forecast, but still it remains. This persistence elicits responses, including the increasing defensiveness of white space. Other responses include the specificities of the adaptability of whiteness to the Aboriginal community. One way to adapt, to what is increasingly constructed by the media in particular as an ever-present ‘pathology’, is to imagine being ‘elsewhere’. The desires for heritage housing, and the battles to protect non-Aboriginal heritage environments in the local area, are producing racialised exclusions that are based on an imagined past. This past has been conjured from an era before the return of Aboriginality to the city. Similarly, in the latest phase of Sydney’s Manhattanisation, a boom in New York style loft apartments is promoting lifestyles that can deny, and sometimes consume, urban pathologies within its own version of urbanity.

The populist commentaries about the area construct a future that is both inclusive and exclusive of an Aboriginal presence in the city. One version includes maintaining an Aboriginal presence, but one that is very different from its troubled contemporary status, and does not necessarily include the existing Aboriginal residents. The Block could be effectively contained and ‘tamed’ as a part of the city’s multicultural diversity. On the other hand there is post-Block fantasy that prevails as part of the new gentrification script for the area. If the area rids itself of this troubled Aboriginal presence, gentrification will proceed unencumbered. In a place with a continually reinscribed racial binary in operation, the ways of mobilising and activating urban settlement fantasies provide a unique window to observe the elusiveness of whiteness in its negotiation of a (post)colonial encounter.

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1 The colonial is still present in (post)colonial times (Jacobs 1996). I use parentheses when the term (post)colonial is used ‘in a temporal sense … [and] parentheses are omitted when using the term to indicate a theoretical perspective’ (Taylor 2000, 34).
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work, except where indicated in the preface

(ii) Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used

(iii) The thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices

Signature:

PREFACE

This thesis acknowledges all sources from which information has been derived and the work of others in the text.

This thesis was not carried out in collaboration with others and no work from any other qualifications has been included.

No work was carried out on this project prior to the PhD candidature enrolment.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Before colonisation, the Cadigal people and others of the Eora Darug clans (Kohen 2000), occupied the place where the city of Sydney, now stands. In the early 1970s, a small piece of Cadigal country, and its clutch of Victorian terrace houses in the inner-city suburb of Redfern¹, was handed back to the indigenous people of Australia who, through colonisation, had been dispossessed of their lands. This indigenous place, known as The Block, sits at the centre of the mostly non-Aboriginal city of Sydney (Figures 1.1 and 1.2, and Appendix 6 for demographic details).

This thesis concerns itself with responses to the presence of a materially impoverished Aboriginal community in the midst of rapid urban transformation. Since its formation in 1973, The Block has not coexisted comfortably with the predominantly non-Aboriginal community that surrounds it. Today, The Block sits in increasingly stark juxtaposition to the emerging characteristics of a rapidly changing area. As the surrounding suburbs of Darlington/Redfern² and Chippendale, the case study area (Figure 1.2), gentrify the modalities of race relations are played out in the day to day negotiations around space and place. This thesis considers these current modalities of race relations, although it is alert to the way they hark back to earlier encounters since the early 1970s.

The case study area of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale provides a window for the study of the ways that gentrifiers, many of whom busily renovate or restore heritage housing, and engage in a politics of heritage and enclave protection in these inner-city Sydney suburbs, variously encounter the Aboriginal presence which seems increasingly out of place in the city. This thesis analyses various discursive and material responses that work within the case study area to consolidate processes that racialise and confer or deny privilege. It closely monitors processes, such as the gentrification of the area surrounding The Block, and charts broader societal processes such as media stereotyping and governmental actions, that impact upon The Block and its surrounds.
A wider thematic in this thesis is that of whiteness and its workings in and through contemporary processes of urban settlement and transformation. By tracing the fields of whiteness at work in the case study area, this thesis seeks to contribute to current understandings of how whiteness is continually recast as the dominant ‘social ideal’ (Bonnett 2000, 1). Part of the project of this thesis is to engage with existing theorisations to help define the difficult concept of whiteness, and ground the concept with material examples. Following Wiegman (1999), this thesis explores the particularities of whiteness. It is the particularities that work at a local level, and through local expressions (Bonnett 2000), that are detailed. The broader context is the stiltedly postcolonising settler society that is contemporary Australia.

This chapter firstly contextualises the study with reference to geography and its literatures. Secondly, the chapter provides two vignettes of processes that I observed before embarking on this thesis. These are processes that helped lead me to thinking about studying ‘whiteness’. The first is a simple example of the institutionalisation of whiteness and its turf in a large public educational system, and the second is a more complex example of the capacity of whiteness to absorb other ethnicities, momentarily, as part of its own consolidation process. Following on from these examples, the recent rise of whiteness as a field of study is introduced. I then outline the field of whiteness, and my position within the case study area in inner-city Sydney.

1.1 The context of Ways of Whiteness: A geographical study

The thesis offers analyses of the ways that non-Aboriginal people encounter and negotiate an Aboriginal presence through contemporary strategies of urban transformation. The project of this thesis is not, however, simply bound to this inner-city place of the case study area, nor are its conclusions solely tied to this one locality. As a project that draws from the ‘cultural turn’ in human geography, a ‘turn’ that enabled studies of location to speak to themes and issues that reach beyond the case study, matters raised in this thesis reach beyond the possibly parochial concerns of this small part of inner-city Sydney.

This thesis details struggles over territory that have contributed to the ongoing re-inscription of an observable racialised binary. In this inner-city place, the boundaries
of segregation butt against each other through the designations of Aboriginal, and therefore non-Aboriginal, spaces. In particular, this thesis documents some of the contemporary modalities of racialisation that are expressed through new cultures of consumption that emerge with gentrification. In the case study area there are two kinds of urban transformation that are of specific interest to this thesis. One is the gentrification of existing housing that consists mainly of heritage-housing stock. The second is the conversion of old industrial areas, a process that is consistent with the Manhattan model of loft apartments and warehouse conversions. Through a close examination of these two types of residential urban transformations, this thesis is able to examine the ways in which these processes reproduce, and at times, challenge existing historical and geographical stories of racialisation – stories that began with the formation of The Block, but which reach back to the colonial past of the Australian nation.

This thesis draws from the wealth of critical race studies in geography, and elsewhere, that have emerged largely out of the experiences of race relations, and racial segregation in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). Unlike many of these studies, however, a postcolonial perspective is central to the political and analytical project of this thesis, which acknowledges the unique colonial history of Australia and its influence on race relations in the present. Although critical race studies and postcolonialism have tended to remain somewhat separated in geography (Jackson and Jacobs 1996), more recent studies have paid particular attention to the importance of colonial histories to racialisation processes in the present (for example, Jacobs 1996). Jackson and Jacobs (1996, 3) stated that: ‘postcolonial studies have helped us attend to the complex ways that the past inheres in the present’.

In the area that surrounds The Block in Sydney, a colonial past is inscribed in the present in very specific ways. Non-Aboriginal people continually encounter the Aboriginal presence that colonisation sought to dispossess and consequent urban settlement worked to displace. In subtle ways, such encounters invoke the colonial past, calling it into the present and requiring it and its consequences to be negotiated anew. At the inaugural place of Australian colonisation, a place now called the city of Sydney, indigenous people were quickly and thoroughly dispossessed and exiled
during the early days of settlement (Reynolds 1996). As a result, the recent return of the Aboriginal presence to the city, in the form of a specifically designated Aboriginal place now known as The Block, was an unlikely and unexpected one for the (sub)urbanised non-Aboriginal majority of Australians, in the 1970s. Aboriginal people seemed to belong ‘back then’ or ‘out there’ in the ‘outback’. As such, they were largely forgotten in the cities, or only thought of as a primitive race, languishing in decline in their remote desert existence, far away from the ‘civilisation’ of the city.

As a study of whiteness, this thesis does not document the suffering of the indigenous people who live their lives on The Block. However, it does remain respectfully aware of it. Rather, this thesis attempts to unearth the specific processes of whiteness that marginalise and, in direct and indirect ways, exclude the Aboriginal community from privileges that certain memberships (to benefits of whiteness) enable. For the city of Sydney, whiteness is normative regardless of the city’s multi-cultures and multicultural portrayals (Hage 1998, Gabriel 1998). It is within such an urban setting, in an ‘industrialised, western, first-world nation’ such as Australia, that academic studies often ‘identify, confirm, and thereby exclude, certain cultural formations as chronically marginal’ (Seth et al 1998, 9). Although several academic accounts have avoided casting The Block as chronically marginal (Anderson 1993a, b, 1998; Kohen 2000), this is the predominant script in popular imaginings. The widely held view is that the Aboriginal community on The Block is spiralling into self-inflicted decline3.

The mass media have long painted a picture of a drug-infested, destitute and dysfunctional ‘black’ community. For Anderson (1998, 211), who has maintained a commentary about The Block from 1993 onwards, it ‘defies texting in the dichotomous terms implied by an overdetermined structure of ‘domination’ and ‘resistance’…. It is a site of racialized poverty whose ‘difference’ is of interest … for what it says about the twin (cultural and economic) bases of struggle in class and race stratified societies’. This thesis has been a journey into the multiple positionings and re-positionings that living in close contact with neighbours who are ‘different’ in so many ways, can bring. The presence of The Block continues to disrupt many widely held values about home, community, street-life and neighbourhood. The chasm of difference between living ‘on The Block’ and the lifestyles of those who live just a
few streets away, continues to widen. The contests over place and space are too often pitted as the rights of ‘blacks’ to remain in the city, against the rights of ‘ordinary (non-Aboriginal) citizens’ to live and go about their business unhindered by their increasingly impoverished neighbours from The Block.

This thesis acknowledges that power relationships are complex and interwoven, or entangled (Sharp et al. 1999). It also acknowledges that there is a certain risk in centring the study on processes of racialisation and specifically on whiteness. Other voices and acts of resistance may not be heard or documented if the focus of research is solely on processes of normativity formation. Domination and resistance do constitute each other in the struggles detailed here. The activities that resist whiteness from within the Aboriginal community itself are not ignored as various stories of resistance, that happened along with activation of power, are documented. The main focus of this thesis, however, is the entanglements of power, domination and resistances that are grounded in specific value systems of whiteness that disempower the Aboriginal community. The task of this thesis is to trace the ways that such value systems are being continually re-configured through the processes of urban transformation enacted in the case study area. A postcolonial perspective brings colonial history into contact with current Aboriginal dispossession and poverty. The extent to which processes, that continue to privilege some and disadvantage already dispossessed others, are part of an ongoing neo-colonial project of whiteness in Australia, is considered in this thesis.

The specific methodological task of this thesis, then, is to unearth and document some specific entanglements of power that have operated in the negotiation of (white) space in inner-city Sydney. The purpose of this thesis is not to silence resistance in any way but to document, with some urgency, some of the damaging activations of power that reinforce the dominant social ideal of whiteness through the processes that are currently underway in this place in inner-city Sydney.

The contribution that this thesis makes to scholarship is most specifically about the politics of racialisation and racism unearthed through a geographical study of whiteness. In formal academic terms, a certain methodological and theoretical
unwieldiness has found structure by being grounded in the very geographical notion of ‘place’ specificity.

1.1.1 A pre-thesis observation (of whiteness?)

Having worked in the field of community welfare and welfare education for over a decade, I am aware of the disadvantage suffered by urban Aboriginal people. One incident that fuelled my doing this thesis occurred in 1995 when I participated in an initiative to help facilitate the process of Aboriginal self-determination. EORA College in the inner-city Sydney suburb of Darlington is the only Aboriginal Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW).

A training course was designed, and implemented, to ‘hand over’ provision of community welfare services to Aboriginal people, some of whom already worked as community welfare workers. As a teacher in the Community Welfare Division at the main Sydney campus, I was invited to participate in the education process. During the final stage of the process, funding was suddenly severed and the project was halted on the grounds that there was a ‘replication of provision’ within the TAFE system. To finish their qualifications, the students at EORA were required to attend the main(stream) campus. It seemed logical enough, but the point of the EORA initiative, to provide an Aboriginal place for Aboriginal students to study community welfare, had been lost.

As the only Aboriginal TAFE college, EORA stands alone in contrast to all others, which are not specified by ethnicity. This is not based on the range of ethnicities of those enrolled at TAFE but on institutional identification. Such institutions are dominated by the societal values of the (allegedly) non-ethnicised majority. TAFE has therefore institutionalised the non-ethnicity of whiteness in the Sydney metropolitan area where there are dozens of TAFE colleges, with EORA being the exception. Gradually, the small group of individuals, many of whom had been adversely affected by (white) welfare initiatives in the past and who were very dedicated to EORA project, dropped out of the mainstream course. The students had to continually justify their politics, their hardships and, at times, their existence in the
mainstream non-ethnicised (mostly non-Aboriginal) Community Welfare course. Although I had taught Aboriginal students in mainstream courses for some years, I was suddenly made aware of the difference, and protection, of being in and being out of one’s own (ethnic) turf. I came to the realisation that the mainstream TAFE system did have an ethnic turf. It was not formalised like the Aboriginal designation of EORA. This ability to ethnicise, or racialise others while maintaining an unethnicised quality captured my interest. This seeming neutrality, the assignment of no ethnicity to a dominant group (with values that are based on colonial British origins) appeared to be an example of the workings of whiteness that I wanted to explore further.

1.2 A case of racialisation and non-ethnicity in the case study area
Although the inner-city of Sydney consists of a variety of ethnicities there is a distinction between black and white space in the case study area. The overt distinction that exists between black and white space racialises groups of people in proximity to The Block, regardless of the variety of ethnicities traversing this space. This is exemplified by the example of the foot traffic in Lawson Street (Figure 1.2).

Redfern Railway Station, on Lawson Street, has a high volume of commuters leaving and entering the railway station each day. At peak times, in the mornings and evenings, the traffic on one side of Lawson Street is very heavy with pedestrians, many of whom are making their way to The University of Sydney. The other side of the street, The Block side, remains virtually empty. Although the ‘heavy use’ side is more directly routed to some parts of the University of Sydney, the other side of the street provides a much clearer route to other faculties (most notably Engineering and Architecture). Although there are people from a range of ethnic backgrounds who throng one side of Lawson Street, in this context all these pedestrians – despite how they identify or are identified – stay in what, in relational terms, is non-Aboriginal space. There is an invisible line running down the middle of the road and the ‘other’ side is basically a ‘no-go zone’ – both for the mostly non-Aboriginal residents of the case study area and for the diverse group of commuters who stay within the ‘safe’ zone. In this instance it appeared to me that the non-Block side of the road is a space of whiteness, almost regardless of who inhabits that space.
Away from the stark black/white racialised boundary near The Block, where the space of whiteness absorbs other ethnicities, whiteness appears to fade into ethnic neutrality. Away from the Aboriginal ‘other’, whiteness is not so visible (Gabriel 1998). My observation of the spaces near The Block lead me to think about how whiteness strengthens and consolidates against the presence of The Block.

1.3 Studying Whiteness

A recent plethora of ‘whiteness studies’ has emerged largely from a grounding in critical race studies in the US. These tend to be specifically concerned with the extremely relevant issues of post-slavery racism and white supremacy, and increasingly, issues of migration from Latin America. Studies of whiteness that have not emerged from the US dominated field, have also drawn generally on critical race studies, with occasional postcolonial references (Bonnett 2000). In the Australian context, Hage (1998) remarked that there is a greater need to attend to the ‘problematic representation[s] of Aboriginality in white fantasies’ (Hage 1998, 24). The specific context(s) of the indigenous condition and whiteness in the US and elsewhere, such as in Australia, remain marginal in ‘whiteness studies’ (however, see Hatt 1997 for US example).

I have remained mindful of the concerns raised by Bonnett (2000) and Dyer (1997) about carrying out research that contributes to an emerging body of increasingly narcissistic white studies that are basically white academics writing about themselves (Bonnett 2000 cites Wray and Newitz 1997, Fine et al. 1997, Thompson and Tyagi 1996 as examples). Wiegman (1999, 17) has stressed the inadvertent capacity for whiteness studies to construct a ‘mutuality-of-harm hypothesis’. For example, some studies have claimed that white minorities (in the USA) are being racialised just like other minority groups (Wray and Newitz 1997, use the example of poor whites portrayed as ‘white trash’). Dyer (1997) regards such propensities in the field of white studies to be a reaction to the rise of ethnic and racial studies that either point out the processes of racialisation of minorities, or explore minority cultures. Along with the enthusiasm for studying the racialisation processes of whiteness there appears to be a desire, by some, to explore white minority groups as examples of another kind of racialisation (regardless of context). The exploration of whiteness must avoid being a
plight-of-white story, or simply an exploration of a group that appears to be being ‘ethnicised’ simply because of the acknowledgment that ‘white’ is an ethnicity. This veils the power of the particularities of whiteness (Wiegman 1999).

Although this thesis is a study of whiteness based in a place with a racialised binary, where dominant cultural formations sit juxtaposed to an undesirable and racialised ‘other’, it is not a plight-of-white story, nor does it support the mutuality-of-harm hypothesis. It is a study of how processes of whiteness in the specific context of juxtaposition, mark boundaries, make claims to non-ethnicised identity formations, and represent and maintain purity. This thesis does not, however, deny the uniqueness and contingencies of the tangled power relationships in the case study area, nor does it deny that whiteness exists away from such a juxtaposition. Whiteness is racial when it is ‘marked’ by the presence of the non-white subject, but also when and where it is not marked (Dyer 1997, 14). The indigenous presence in the inner-city of Sydney is a catalyst for specific white identifications and overt mobilisations of privileging processes that are monitored and documented in this thesis.

1.3.1 Personal Positioning

As a home-buyer, a gentrifier, living in my own case study area, I am part of the concern of this thesis. The memberships to which I am entitled include, amongst others, the benefits of gentrification (for gentrifiers), claims to colonial heritage and its protection through legislation and involvement in resident activism in the area, membership to any group activity that protects turf and participation in any processes that determine the future of the area. Although I have definite associations with members of the Aboriginal community, and associated organisations, and have supported the Aboriginal Elders in their efforts to raise concerns about the future of the community. I am not, however, part of the Aboriginal community. I do move between it and the non-Aboriginal area that surrounds it, along with a range of other people.

1.4 The Block and the case study area

Although not the subject of this thesis, it is necessary to furnish the reader with an account of The Block. The Block is located in the centre of the case study area
(Figures 1.1 and 1.2) and is very much a part of it. The Block is straddled by the suburbs of Darlington and Redfern. Stigmatised by the presence of The Block, the gentrification of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale began later than other inner-city areas in Sydney. Once other options were depleted, gentrification commenced in the mid 1990s in the case study area. By the late 1990s, a wave of apartment development swept through the case study area (Figure 1.2).

The Block was formed in 1973 as a result of a complicated battle for Aboriginal rights. The ‘Aboriginal Housing Committee’ formed in the late 1960s to fight for Aboriginal housing in the context of widespread racial discrimination in the Sydney housing market and subsequent increases in Aboriginal homelessness (Anderson, 1993b, 324).

During a storm of non-Aboriginal protest the then federal Labor government, led by Gough Whitlam, granted money for the purchase of a site of 70 Victorian terrace houses to the inner-city Aboriginal community. This did not occur in recognition of an Aboriginal sacred site as such, nor as a result of a land claim made under the provisions of the Native Title Act (Commonwealth 1993). The Block emerged in response to a unique set of political machinations that occurred during the early 1970s (Anderson 1993a, b) when ‘Redfern’, a collective name for the area in which The Block sits (Darlington, Redfern and Chippendale), became the focal point of modern Aboriginal politics in Australia at that time.

The Block site consisted of mostly unoccupied or squatted terrace houses that were in a poor state of repair. The houses were bought up, one by one, by Ian Kiernan, a private developer who owned the construction company ‘Tierra del Fuego’ (Anderson 1992, 1993; Burgmann and Burgmann 1998). As Anderson (1993a, 81) noted ‘[Aboriginal] Redfern became a sphere of indigenous protest, an heroic site of resistance to European culture and colonialist control’. In a climate of political and trade union pressure (discussed in Chapter 4), the owner of the site eventually sold it to the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) in 1973, which had formed from the Aboriginal Housing Committee to receive the grant to purchase and administer The Block. The formation of The Block, the handing of land back to Aboriginal Australia,
was a grand gesture by the new radical Labor government and it happened at the
centre of Australia’s ‘big city’ during an era of massive social upheaval. Since then,
many Aboriginal services, such as the Aboriginal Medical and Legal Services, and
EORA TAFE College located in the Redfern area.

Born out of struggle, The Block remains embattled. It has not been the success story
of an urban village of Aboriginal self-determination that was originally envisaged. It
remains a beacon for the formidable health and housing issues that exist for much of
Aboriginal Australia. Census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics report that
Aboriginal mortality rates remain at 2½ times that of other Australians. Asthma,
Diabetes, heart problems, alcohol and other drug use are the main contributors to poor
health. Life expectancy remains at 15-20 years less, with infant/prenatal mortality
rates being 3 times the national rate, and death rates from circulatory diseases are 2½
times greater than that of non-Aboriginal population. The 1996 census indicated that
household income levels for Aboriginal people were $907 less per week than in all
other households, and there was one more person in indigenous households than the
Australian average (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Special Article:
statistics on indigenous people of Australia, 1994 Year Book; Australia Now – A
Statistical Profile, Population Special Article – A Profile of Australia’s Indigenous
People, Year Book 1996, Auhttp://www.abs.gov.au). With the recent rush of
renovation, restoration and redevelopment that has swept through the inner-city of
Sydney, the impoverished Aboriginal community is increasingly surrounded by
affluence.

1.4.1 Fields of whiteness in the case study area

Whiteness, in the context of inner-city Sydney, finds legitimacy through history. Non-
Aboriginal understandings about the Aboriginal presence in the city find nourishment
in the racist and racially-blind historiographies of Australia. These have been
spawned by imperial understandings of a world of ‘races’ that were thought of as
being either ‘advanced’ or ‘backward’. Such conceptions ‘legitimated the exercise of
power through these differences’ (Jacobs 1996, 17). In Australia, current
understandings of ‘race’, though not uncontested, are seeded through such constructs
of imperialism. Re-articulations of such notions of race are exemplified in the
preoccupations of the mass media (Dyer 1997 and Gabriel 1998). For example, continually portrayed as incapable in the modern world, Aboriginal people are often cast as uncivilised (Thomas 1994).

The Block is not a reality that is out there in ‘the outback’, or televised from some far away (foreign) place. It is not something from a time past when, reiterating the words of Australia’s current conservative Prime Minister, John Howard, ‘mistakes were made’. Its presence brings the poverty and marginality suffered by many Aboriginal people in Australia, into sharp focus. It is right there in the middle of Sydney for all to see and react to.

The discourses of the predominantly non-Aboriginal media and neighbours of The Block, as well as various events that occurred in the late 1990s, provide the empirical fields for this investigation of whiteness. Within these discourses the conditions of poverty that are suffered by many of the Aboriginal residents of The Block are sensationalised. On the other hand, they are sidelined in the flush of redevelopment and place (property) marketing. Within the context of a political economy of gentrification in inner Sydney, dominant white politics emerge. These cultural and material effects are detailed in this thesis.

1.5 Organisation of this thesis
The thesis consists of 9 chapters. This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, is followed by a review of the literature (Chapter 2) in which various strands of the theoretical debates underpinning this thesis are laid out. An account of my methodology is presented in Chapter 3, where I detail the way that this thesis evolved, how it was carried out and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Chapters 4 through to 8 present the substantive results of the thesis and follow a thematic structure. Chapter 4 details the background to why The Block is a ‘(Post)colonial Paradox’. It outlines the context in which The Block emerged and the history of its ongoing status of ‘not belonging’ in the inner-city. It traces the rise of (‘white’) defensiveness, and its link to a ‘working-class’ culture of besiegement in the case study area. Chapter 5 details how a paradoxical status is continually reinforced
by the shrill constructions of discourses from the media, police and other voices. In particular, Chapters 4 and 5 foreground the production of values that racialise the Aboriginal community.

Chapter 6 traces one of the two key types of urban transformation that reproduce the historical and geographical story of racialisation in the case study area. In this chapter, the rebirth of inner-city landscapes as desirable heritage real-estate, and the subsequent rise in heritage appreciation is traced. The eventual gentrification of one of Sydney’s ‘final (gentrification) frontiers’, the case study area, is detailed. The presence of The Block, as a hindrance to this process, is thereby considered.

Chapter 7 details the mobilisations of desires to protect ‘white’ space. It details the rise of heritage protectionism that protects selective histories that are represented through Victorian housing. It then considers the rise of ‘industrial heritage’ and its role in the preservation of white working-class cultural codes in the case study area. These are commodified and consumed by the ‘new middle classes’ who invest in their protection.

Chapter 8 details a more recent and more subtle racialisation process that is being promoted through urban transformation cultures in the case study area. The imaginary of escaping into the past that is evoked through preoccupations with heritage and its protection (Chapters 6 and 7) is part of the imaginary of escape that is promoted anew by way of loft-living aspirations in the case study area. Promoters of a new form of urbanism, that is promised through the marketing of Sydney’s new loft apartment landscape, promise escape through an imaginary of being ‘elsewhere’. Sydney’s ‘SoHo Syndrome’ denies or is indifferent to the presence of The Block. It uses building design and surveillance technologies to minimise engagement with the local, including The Block, and yet in some ways, Sydney’s version of SoHo Syndrome is reliant on the existence of The Block. It is proof of inner-city Sydney’s truly cosmopolitan worldliness.

Chapter 9 concludes the story of the ways of whiteness in inner Sydney.
The following chapter charts the scholarly lineages and theoretical underpinnings of this thesis. It details how a history of critical race research and studies of the city and urbanism combine into a study of the ways of whiteness in inner-city Sydney.

1 Redfern is the commonly used name for an area that includes the tiny suburb of Darlington. In this thesis I mostly refer to Darlington, as most of The Block is in Darlington (Figure 1.2).
2 Darlington/Redfern refers to Darlington, and The Block.
3 The enormous budget cuts to The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), administered by the federal Liberal government, has had immediate effect on the health and welfare of the residents of The Block. A range of services, such as an Aboriginal employment program and various health initiatives were lost.
4 Named after the Eora peoples, who were the main inhabitants of the coastal area where the inner-city of Sydney now stands, before colonisation (Kohen 2000).
5 For representational reasons, this is a ‘low profile’ engagement, but I offer my assistance where I can. I am keenly aware that the fraught landlord-tenant relationship, that exacerbates social problems for the community, is often ignored by ‘outsiders’ when they are called on to intervene because this relationship is considered to be intra-racial and therefore outside the jurisdiction of various authorities. For example, South Sydney City Council approved demolition of houses because of this misguided belief. This decision has come under scrutiny with the election of Green and independent councillors in early 2000. I am, by request, on the Board of Management of a local welfare agency that services The Block community.
6 The Aboriginal Housing Collective later became the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC).
7 All $s in this thesis are Australian dollars ($1 equalled approximately US52c or UK35p in early 2001).
2 UNRULY PATHWAYS TO WHITENESS

2.1 Unruly pathways

The key concerns of thesis are twofold. One is the urban transformation and associated logics of settlement in the post-colonising urban setting of inner-city Sydney. The second is the ways that such logics perform and manifest materially through the activities and desires of non-Aboriginal people who live near the urban Aboriginal community known as The Block.

This review of literature identifies that this thesis has two main scholarly influences. One is critical race scholarship in geography, which has recently been energised by postcolonial critiques. From this branch of scholarship, new studies of whiteness are emerging. A second geographical genealogy is the study of the urban. Notions of urban life and urbanism, from the early 20th Century, are re-emerging and contributing to new understandings of the cultural constructions of cities. With the proliferation of new fields of consumption in the residential city, such as processes of gentrification, new spaces of exclusion also emerge. These spaces of exclusion can be understood by utilising the theoretical and methodological shifts revealed by studies concerned with the new cultural politics of the city. This thesis is situated within the field of contemporary human geography projects that utilise whatever means available from an interdisciplinary field to make sense of social processes in a(n) (unfixed) place (Massey 1994). Of concern to this thesis are the social processes that privilege those who identify as white, or have the means to aspire to whiteness.

The work of two geographers was particularly influential in grounding the theoretical considerations of this thesis. In the early stages, Neil Smith’s consideration of the revanchist city (1996) provided a basis for thinking about urban transformations and consequent lifestyles, claims to territory by the ‘new middle classes’, and the material effects of resentment. The UK geographer, Alastair Bonnett (1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000), borrowing from other fields, carved out a space for the study whiteness in geography (Jackson 1998). Bonnett’s evolving discourse on whiteness,
which is most recently concerned with whiteness as a global identity formation (Bonnett 2000), provided a framework for making sense of the various racialisation and marginalisation processes analysed in this thesis. From these foundations, this thesis was also informed by authors and studies from geography and across a range of other disciplines. It was particularly influenced by work that has, at various stages in the evolution of human geograph(y/ies), shaken some of the discipline’s foundations.

With the cultural turn in human geography that emerged through the 1980s (Jackson 1989) and was consolidated in the 1990s (Thrift and Walling 2000), new spaces for considering culture, identity and subjectivity, were opened. By the late 1990s, convergences occurred across old divides. For example, where impasses existed between economic and cultural geographical understandings, such as the gentrification impasse (Redfern 1997 for discussion), bridges formed through the unlocking of ‘theoretical logjams’ (Lees 2000, 390). Similarly, from the early Marxist critiques of the economy by Harvey (1973) and Castells (1977), cultures of economy emerged (Corbridge et al. 1994, Gibson-Graham 1996, Lee and Wills 1997). The legacies of what Soja (1999, 4) termed ‘critical cultural studies’, built upon:

the more spatially-oriented French Marxist tradition … in particular … Henri Lefebvre, [for] the development of an explicitly spatialized political economy … and later … Althusserian structuralist Marxism, with its powerful critiques of empiricism, historicism, and economistic reductionism, provided an important transitional stimulus for the emergence and expansion of a distinctly cultural and spatial (or geographical) materialism.

The cultural turn in geography opened up ways of thinking differently about a range of geographical processes. Of direct relevance to this thesis is the way that the cultural turn brought into view new aspects of processes such as urban transformation. Questions were asked about consumption and taste in gentrifying landscapes (Jager 1986) and the cultural capital provided by early stage gentrifiers, who begin the processes of ‘renewal’ through, for example, small art galleries and second-hand clothes shops (Zukin 1982, 1995; Jackson 1995). Once the domain of economic analyses, geographies of gentrification became more inclusive of questions of
‘difference’ to the dominant groups who hold power. Through that power, a range of normative values, processes and spatialities are defined (Lees 1996, Fincher and Jacobs 1998). Questions about ‘race’ and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, for example, enhanced analyses of gentrification (for example, Bondi 1991, 1992, 1999, Lees 1999 on gender, Castells 1983, Lauria and Knopp 1985 on gay gentrification), particularly in the context of globalising ‘commodity cultures’ (Featherstone 1990, King 1991, Ritzer 1993 on ‘McDonaldization’, Jackson 1999b for review, Crewe 1999 for review of retailing and consumption). Recent discussions in geography about the rise of a global economy were accompanied by considerations of the spread of urbanism, or globalised consumption cultures that have been ‘linked to the emergence of a global society made possible by … communications and mass media’ (Clark 2000, 17).

In his consideration of commodity cultures, Jackson (1999b) proposed that future studies of commodification might look more carefully at the production of meanings. For example:

> When reading an advertisement … a variety of meanings are being consumed, only some of which are directly connected to the commodity, and which may or may not lead to the consumption of the product itself … Such meanings are, of course, frequently coded in terms of various forms of social difference. A geographical understanding of commodity cultures should therefore involve both an exploration of the … ‘traffic in things’ … and an appreciation of the commodification of cultural difference (Jackson 1999b, 105).

Such a strategy, Jackson claimed, may ultimately transcend the ‘unhelpful distinction’ between ‘the cultural’ and ‘the economic’ (Jackson 1999b, 105), that continues to plague human geography. This is particularly pertinent to debates about gentrification, which have been caught in a cultural-economic impasse (Lees 1994, Redfern 1997, Engels 1999). In the context of wholesale urban redevelopments occurring in many cities, new fields of cultural consumption are created. In inner-city Sydney, a city that is considered to be a fledgling world city in the global economy
(Daly 1992, Baum 1997, Connell 2000), new commodity cultures emerge in and through recent urban transformations.

In the case of inner-city suburbs like those that form the focus of this thesis, recent urban developments and the repackaging of inner-urban residential landscapes for certain residential markets reveal globally-familiar trends in the way city spaces are (re)made and consumed. An example of this in the case study area is the way the landscape of inner-urban housing was reinvented as ‘heritage’. The rise of the heritage industry is well documented (Hewison 1987, for Australian examples Rickard and Spearritt 1991). In another version of commodification of old landscapes, New York Style loft apartments appeared in the old industrial areas of inner-city Sydney. Such developments heralded new ways of living in the city. Heritage-linked gentrification, of the late 1980s and 1990s, and the loft residential development boom of the late 1990s are both considered in-depth in this thesis. In particular, they serve to illustrate the ways that historically and geographically specific processes of racialisation are enacted in and through urban consumption processes.

The contributions of a postcolonial perspective, that has given rise to the field of postcolonial studies in Australia (Jacobs 1996, Gelder and Jacobs 1998, Gandhi 1998), and elsewhere (Said 1978, Spivak 1985, 1987, 1990 and Bhabha 1990, 1994, 1998), have shaped the political positioning of this thesis. The complexities and issues of post- and neo-colonialism remain integral to understanding race relations in Australia. Processes of racial segregation and racialisation frame the endangered inner urban indigenous community of The Block, and the suburbs that surround it. Processes that segregate any group in Australia by ethnicity, cannot be separated from issues of colonialism. The principles of postcolonial critique have enabled this thesis to consider urban transformations in a new light. Colonial or neo-colonial tendencies manifest in the discourses and practices of urban transformation are charted in this thesis. Furthermore, the thesis attempts to elucidate the relationship between colonialism and recent theorisations about the hegemony of whiteness.

This thesis is a multi-disciplinary human geography project that has been enabled by geography’s renewed interest in locality (Massey 1984). It uses the specificity of
locality to speak to broader social processes (Jacobs 1993). Most specifically, the (post)colonial encounter occurring through the urban transformations in inner-city Sydney resonate with the neocolonial tendencies that shape modern-day Australia more generally. Additionally, the Sydney experience reflects processes that are not dissimilar to other settler state cities. Similar processes may occur where there is racialisation of a group a context of urban transformation.

Although this thesis is positioned within the field of geography, its theoretical reference points fan out to incorporate other fields. Generally, studies of Aboriginality in Australia have been concerned with social production in ‘traditional’ Aboriginal societies. It is recognised that the approaches of the past (for example, see Meggitt 1962) often relied on colonially-based assumptions about culture and society. More recently, research has focused on cultural differences and race relations with an emphasis on raising awareness of cultural understanding of ‘the other’. Such work has reflected on non-Aboriginal constructions of Aboriginality (Curthoys and Marcus 1978, Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1975, Cowlshaw 1986, Reece 1987, Beckett, 1988, Fesl 1989, Attwood 1989, Janson and Macintyre 1990, Muecke 1992).

Until recently in Australia analyses of race and ethnicity tended to be situated in somewhat separated scholarly camps concerned with ‘Aboriginal studies’ or ‘ethnic and multicultural studies’. This division of labour, according to Hage (1998, 24), was ‘the product of a White governmental tendency to treat “White-Aboriginal” relations and “Anglo-Ethnic” relations as two separate spheres of life’. The study of whiteness, as a critical hegemonic process rather than as a category of differentiation, has the potential to address this separation (Perera 1999). Recent interest in racialisation processes afforded by studies of whiteness have not simply been imported into Australia from recent turns to whiteness studies in the US or UK. Although explicit studies of whiteness are relatively new, particularly in Australia, the opportunities afforded by this evolving field are beginning to be realised (Hage 1998, Perera 1999, Shaw 2000).

This thesis does not engage directly with Anglo-Ethnic relations identified by Hage (1998), or Anglo-Aboriginal relations as such. The subject of the thesis is the
privileging (processes) of whiteness that are observable in the area that surrounds an indigenous presence in inner-city Sydney. Just as Hage’s (1998) work on whiteness does not fit into ‘ethnic’ or multicultural studies as such, this thesis cannot be classified as Aboriginal studies. The ways that whiteness operates in Australia, be it in relation to indigenous groups, or others cannot be separated from the colonial origins of settler society.

Increasingly, studies from the US, in particular, acknowledge the fundamentally empowered status of the hegemony of whiteness. Increasingly, studies of whiteness, dubbed Whiteness Studies in the US, are finding a place in multi-disciplinary studies in the social sciences and humanities. Thus far, however, colonial histories may receive mention (Dyer 1997, Bonnett 2000) but are yet to be studied in more detail in most Whiteness Studies, particularly in the US.

Whiteness Studies have tended to focus on the present moment of segregation rather than explore the complexly embedded histories of, for example, colonialism that drive into the present to create and hold these patterns of segregation. Studies of racial segregation in the US and UK, in particular, have provided a background for considering how segregation privileges the ‘un’-segregated. In other words, although segregation of one (or more) groups implies that city spaces are carved up ethnically, some groups have more power and access to the city (the ‘un’-segregated) than others (the segregated). In the same city there may be enclaves that are ‘ghettos’, which are bounded by enclaves of privilege. Such power relations are often historically embedded.

The next section introduces new ways of seeing in the city that are a dramatic departure from the single issue studies of, for example, segregation or gentrification. These new studies have opened up the study of cities to multiple methodologies and theoretical considerations.

2.2 New ways of seeing the city
In 1993, Jacobs outlined the ways in which ethnographic and other qualitative methodologies were being used to ‘unbind the city’ from positivist areal constraints.
In 1971, Barthes described the city as ‘a poem … which unfolds the signifier and it is this unfolding that ultimately the semiology of the city should try to grasp’ (cited in Short 1996, 390). Cities are ‘systems of communications telling us who has power and how it is wielded’ (Short 1996, 390). To make sense of these communications, cities can be ‘read’ like poetry. Jacobs (1993) noted that in human geography, there was ‘an increased recognition of symbolic and representational realms (figurative and discursive) … in the constitution and mediation of social and material processes’ (Jacobs 1993, 829). Texts that are ‘hidden’ in, for example, architecture, can be read (Duncan 1988). The power relations enacted through these have enabled ‘the boundary between social reality and representation of that reality… [to collapse]’ (Jacobs, 1993, 830). As Jager’s (1986) influential study of class definition and the aesthetics of gentrification exemplifies this point, so too does Crilley’s (1993) careful observation of the use of architecture as advertising in the marketing of new developments that contain heritage motifs.

A useful concept in such studies has been Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of cultural, or symbolic capital which considers the ‘social uses of art and culture and the way that “tastes” function as markers of “class”’ (Bourdieu in Jackson 1991, 220; Jager 1986 on gentrification in Melbourne, Australia; Zukin 1982, 1995 on loft living in New York City; Podmore 1998 on SoHo syndrome in Montreal). In addition, Jackson (1991a) identified Williams’ ‘structure of feeling’ in cultural studies of the city that consider heritage. This refers to ‘a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or period’ (Williams in Jackson 1991a, 222).

Crilley’s study of new developments in London and New York, linked representations of heritage to the marketing and consumption of idealised select ‘pasts’. He has identified that critical urban discourses paid attention to ‘images and representations of development rather than to the images projected by development’ (1993, 231). Such representations are designed to attract nostalgic interest ‘to imbue the neighbourhood with the instant aura of tradition and familiarity, and in the process tap into the gentrification market … chiefly by catering to the middle-class tastes there being expressed’ (Crilley 1993, 233). In this sense, the architectural post-modern turn
has been, in many ways, a clever marketing move. It has harvested the symbolic
capital of heritage and produced cultural codes. As Crilley (1993, 233) stated ‘under
the rubric of post-modernism, architecture … had primarily become a matter of the
systematic, purposive manufacture and marketing of commercialised meanings’.
Rather than a reading of the consumption of such property, Crilley showed how
meanings were found (‘read’) in the production of new built environments, and the
deliberate encoding of popular cultural meanings in those environments.

Buildings themselves are designed to ‘read’ as gigantic outdoor advertisements …
[and] nostalgic architectural compositions establish … the cultural theme and
ambience conducive to up-market consumption … The imagery of architecture
seek[s] to persuade the public of the virtues and propriety of the property capital
commissioning it. (Crilley 1993, 236, 237).

Crilley (1993) hinted at, but did not examine, the specificities of inclusion or
exclusion through such coding. He argued that the notion of ‘diversity’ is catered for
by the provision for a variety of consumption alternatives. The diversity that large
scale developments offer is often architectural only. This impression of
diversification appeals to a range of people, but hides the intentional market-targeting
of homogeneity. The groups targeted in the examples Crilley (1993) provided were
the (white?) middle classes of the UK and US.

The next section sketches an overview of the changes to thinking about racialisation
that have been enabled through the new cultural geographies.

2.3 Critical race study in geography
As stated earlier in this chapter, a central theme of this thesis is the enactment and
maintenance of whiteness in and through recent types of residential transformation.
Thus far this chapter has introduced various theoretical frameworks upon which this
thesis has been structured. This chapter turns now to detailing the trajectories that
have led to the current studies of whiteness.
2.3.1 From segregation studies to cultural geographies of racialised groups

There is a tradition of interest in issues of racial segregation and racism in geography (Peach 1975, Jackson and Smith 1981, Jackson 1985a,b, 1987; Jackson 1985a, Anderson 1998 for reviews). In the North American and British academies there are strong histories of critical race research in cities. In North America, in particular, early studies tended to concentrate on the formations of ‘ghettos’. According to Harold Rose (1993), the pioneers of North American racial segregation research were DuBois (1899) and Weaver (1948) whose studies of ghettos are renown. Much later, in 1993, Morrill’s (1965) *The negro [sic] ghetto: problems and alternatives*, was republished as a ‘classic’ in human geography. Peach (1993) has identified three principle exemplars of the main approaches to racial segregation research. These are: Richard Morrill’s ‘positivist’ project (detailed above); David Harvey’s ‘Marxist’ project (‘Revolutionary and counter-revolutionary theory in geography and the problem of ghetto formation’ in his *Social Justice and The City*, 1973); and David Ley’s ‘humanist’ project (*The Black inner-city as frontier outpost*, 1974) (Peach 1993, 350). Harvey and Ley were particularly critical of the ‘positivist approaches’ that preceded them. For Harvey, such studies lacked political will. For Ley, they were mechanistic (Peach 1993). All three studies have provided bases that others have drawn from. They are also somewhat responsible for the persistence of a segregationist tendency in subsequent research.

In Peter Jackson’s *Progress in Human Geography* report of 1985, the state of critical race scholarship in geography was summarised in four categories (Jackson 1985a). Firstly, ‘racial and ethnic segregation’ research (after DuBois and Weaver) remained concerned with the patterns of urban segregation and ethnic concentration. These studies have been criticised for their ‘narrow empiricism and socio-cultural apologism’ (Bridges in Jackson 1985a, 101). The second category of ‘race’ research concerned itself with ‘race and ideology’:

[m]ore material explanations which concentrate on the structured inequalities of power … on the relationship between blacks and the police … issues of schooling, feminism … and ideologies of racism (Jackson 1985a, 101).
The third category of research, on ‘riots and rebellion’, consisted of responses to moments of political upheaval associated with racialised groups in, for example, areas like South London (for example, the so-called Brixton riots). Fulfilling Jackson (1985a, 103) observation that fieldwork should be ‘patient, painstaking and sensitive’ academic commentaries that were spawned by the ‘riots’ in Los Angeles in the early 1990s (documented in collections by Gooding-Williams 1993, Baldassare 1994), included data from a variety of sources, including news media responses. Such trans-disciplinary inclusiveness has gradually become part of the methodological armoury of human geography.

The final strand of critical race studies identified by Jackson (1985a) emerged in the mid 1980s and had a distinctly ‘political dimension’. Race research was increasingly concerned with the ‘nature of ethnic politics’ by way of observations of how something called an ethnic ‘problem’ might have been produced (Jackson 1985a, 103). Of particular relevance to this thesis is Jackson’s observation that there was a gap in critical race research relating to the analysis of ‘white society and its … racism’ (Jackson 1985a, 104). He noted that ‘white institutions … generat[e] racial inequality’ (Karn in Jackson 1985a, 100) and called for increased attention to, for example, the (white dominated) mass media (Burgess 1985; Dyer 1997, Gabriel 1998 on whiteness and the media). Jackson flagged the need for geographical research to problematise whiteness.

Although Jackson (1985a) raised the need to consider white racism in the mid 1980s little published academic work existed on the theme of whiteness. Bell hooks, however, noted that whiteness has been under critical observation in the US since the times of slavery. According to hooks (1992, 338), ‘details, facts, observations, psychoanalytic readings of the white “Other”’ had been carried out by African Americans in order to ‘cope and survive in a white supremacist society’. The (largely white) North American academy, with its concentration on segregation and the so-called ‘race problem’, had been a little slower to problematise whiteness. Peach (1993), however, remarked that:
The Chicago School and Morrill give us a white view of a black dynamic; Rose gives us a black view of a white process. Rose’s dynamic comes from the outer edge of the city, not from the centre and from whites rather than from blacks … Wolf [in Morrill] argues that the key element [in ghetto formation] is not white flight [to the suburbs] but white unwillingness to enter the area near the ghetto, coupled with white loss [of urban space] … Wolf’s dynamic for ghetto expansion is white in action (Peach 1993, 350-351).

The fundamental distinction that Peach (1993) alluded to was the interdependency between the identification of problematic ‘racialised’ groups and the definition and maintenance of another (unspoken) category of the apparently non racial group, that is ‘whites’. The phenomena of ‘white in action’ was identified in earlier studies but it was not until the 1980s that an academic focus turned to the theme of ‘whiteness’: how it is made, how it is imagined, how it is represented and, most importantly, how its privilege is routinely naturalised.

By the time a Progress in Human Geography report on ‘issues of race, culture and defence of space’ (Leitner 1992, 105) was published, there was movement away from considerations of ‘race’ to geographies of racialisation and racism (essays in Jackson 1987, Blaut 1992). Leitner (1992, 106), somewhat belatedly remarked that she was ‘disheartened’ by studies that continued the tendency to ‘reduce the notoriously complex and elusive concept of cultural assimilation … to a single variable [race]’. She posited that there remained a proclivity in geography to oversimplify issues of racialisation, particularly in considering racial segregation. She accused numerous researchers (Hwang and Murdock 1988, Galster and Keeney 1988, and Ward 1989) of such simplification. Clark (1989) and Darden (1989) were, according to Leitner (1992), similarly negligent: they had not addressed long standing criticisms in the literature and, as a consequence, they had taken racial categories for granted as the ordering principles of social life and spatial patterns. As Leitner (1992, 107) observed, studies that:

make inferences from behaviour to preference, or from segregation to discrimination are seriously flawed … [O]ne cannot simply accept
preferences/desires as an unproblematic category, representing the given views of individuals who happen to prefer white over black neighbours, but must explore their social origin … [and] continually question … the categories used in different conceptualisations.

Leitner (1992) did cite a second body of research that, in her view, did contextual analyses. These studies used qualitative interviews and discourse analysis from case studies, and broader conceptions of culture than those found in traditional cultural geography. Such research enabled the recognition of the politics of race and racism, and associated power relations of class and gender (Smith 1989, 1990). Some of this research contended with inter-ethnic conflict between, for example, existing minority groups and new arrivals to the USA (Johnson and Oliver, Rose in Leitner 1992, 108). Leitner noted that some studies ‘have sought to unravel the social and political constructions of racial images and the practical consequences of these’ (Leitner 1992, 109) and drew our attention to research that contextualised racialisation. Such research includes studies of apartheid in South Africa (Christopher 1989), political interpretations of race and racial segregation in the UK (Smith 1989), and the ever-evolving racialisations of Chinatowns around the world (Anderson 1990, 1991).

More recently, Anderson (1998, 206) observed that much research still tends to presume ‘an ordered (racialized) reality whose subject positionings are … fixed and undifferentiated’. This tends to obfuscate the ‘multiplicity and mobility’ of subject positionings (Anderson 1998, 206). Drawing on a postcolonial perspective, Anderson (1998) identified that greater attention needed to be paid to the variations in the multiple and changing positionings of, for example, ‘race’, class, gender and sexuality. Acknowledging the ‘cultural turn’ in human geography, Anderson (1998, 204) did, however, warn that:

work which has sought to conceptualize racial segregation as a culturally and politically negotiated process (eg Anderson 1991, Smith 1989) … has been less successful in assimilating non-discursive actors of class formation and capital into its explanatory frame.
Auto-critiquing her previous research on Chinatowns, to ‘open … out the Chinatown storyfield to take in the district’s location within wider processes of class formation and capital’s restructuring’ Anderson (1998, 210) complicated the ‘neat stories of unilateral hegemony’ that remained previously unquestioned. Paying attention to context, multiple positionings and entanglements of power (Sharp et al. 2000), and utilising a broad range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies enabled fresh approaches to the study of racism and racialisation, and anti-racism (Bonnett 1992, 1996, 1999). Feminist and postcolonial criticisms also contributed to new ways of seeing and new methodological approaches in human geography.

It was the ‘cultural turn’ in geography that heralded new ways of studying processes of racialisation in cities (for example, Jacobs 1996). Such studies attended to the intricate webs of ideological practice and the ways in which they impact on minority groups. Paying attendance to a ‘politics of difference’ (Young 1990a) has encouraged detailed conceptualisations of identities that avoid the assimilationist tendencies of projects that tried to reconcile difference (for example, Dunn 1993, 1998 for ‘unassimilated cultural difference’ in the Indo-Chinese enclave of Cabramatta in Sydney; Fincher and Jacobs 1998 on ‘Cities of Difference’).

Recent analyses have turned their critical focus to majority groups or the dominant force(s) that prescribes the norms or benchmarks against which to identify difference. Fincher and Jacobs (1998, 6) have noted that the task of critical race studies of difference must go beyond simply describing (or mapping) difference, and instead ‘chart the varied processes by which difference is constituted’. Rather than identifying ‘whiteness’ as simply another part of a map or description of difference, it is a ‘temporally and spatially contingent and fluid category’ (Bonnett 1996, 97). The new critical studies of whiteness attend to identifying the processes of empowerment that enable whiteness to apply the markings of difference, as it requires, in a wide range of contexts.

### 2.3.2 From ‘Whiteness Studies’ to studies of Whiteness/Racialisation

Recently, geographers and others (particularly in the humanities) have acknowledged the need to consider the concept of ‘whiteness’ as an analytical category (Bonnett,
1997, 196). During the 1990s, a new urgency in theorising ‘race’ and ‘race relations’ was a response to conservative political turns and the rise of a ‘climate of backlash’ (Gabriel 1998; Gelder and Jacobs, 1998, Mickler 1998 in the Australian context).

The shift to thinking about processes of racialisation, rather than ‘race’, has countered the focus on those marginalised by their ethnicity. As Gabriel (1998, 12) noted:

[t]he concepts of race relations, racism, discrimination, prejudice … have invariably encouraged the production of a sociological knowledge of the ‘victim’. Whiteness, on the contrary, problematises the perpetrators and related processes.

Jackson (1998, 99) identified that ‘it is now generally recognised that race and gender are social constructions, rooted in politics and history rather than in genetics or biology’. Restating Bonnett’s 1992 observation, Jackson observed that much of the innovative scholarship on the construction of dominant categories, and majority groups still occurred outside geography (for example, Frankenberg 1993a,b, 1997, Dyer 1997, Gabriel 1998, Hage 1998). Alastair Bonnett had pioneered the study of whiteness in geography in the early 1990s through his analyses of anti-racist strategies in school education (Bonnett 1992, 1993) but by 1997, he had detected a deeply rooted disciplinary stasis that was not entirely accidental (Bonnett 1997). He may have gradually steered geographers into considering the oversight of studying whiteness, but he also commented that:

the racialized subjects of geographical enquiry have remained … the same, namely the activities and inclinations of marginalized ethnic groups, most especially non-Whites (Bonnett 1997, 193).

This effacement of the ‘white’ subject privileges whiteness (Bonnett 1997). It does so because ‘white’ has tended to remain, as Bonnett (1997) identified, as the naturalised, invisible and static category within geography. As such, whiteness remains largely the position of privilege, from which to observe racialised categories. This thesis attempts to place the privileging of whiteness under the critical lens, at centre stage.
2.3.2.1 ‘Whiteness studies’

Critical studies of whiteness began to appear in the late 1980s (Dyer 1988) and by 2000 a plethora of publications had become available. Largely based in the US context, ‘whiteness studies’ have garnered acclaim, and criticism.

The mechanisms that naturalise racial (white) constructions were explored in a study conducted in a college classroom in the US (Mazie et al. 1993). The participants had to ‘shed the mythic power of shared white identity that assumed the United States was a country created by European peoples whom we have learned to see in primarily “racial” terms’ (Mazie et al. 1993, 284). The researchers found that ‘whiteness’ held a central place in the minds of the group. In this study the breakthrough occurred with a shift in the use of ‘race’ as a term. It became a verb (paralleling the term ‘racialise’) rather than a noun and the term ‘racing’, something ‘actively done to categorise oneself and others within racial norms, social expectations, and laws’, was coined (Mazie et al. 1993, 286). The capacity and propensity (of whiteness) to racialise others (Said 1978, Jackson 1989) was exemplified.

In a place-based study from North America, Gregory (1993) documented (‘black’) resistance to the decisions made from ‘outside’ a raced, or racialised place. Such a study, with its focus on the area that surrounds a segregated place, considered the powerful forces that contribute to the ‘othering’ or racialisation of such places. The decisions about this place were made from within the surrounding (‘white’) place. In a scenario with similar spatial processes to the case study of this thesis (detail in Chapter 4), Gregory (1993) observed how one ‘city within a city’ was being systematically constructed by ‘white’ residents as a place with a racial problem. Using ethnographic techniques, Gregory explored how ‘whiteness’ constructed ‘blackness’ in Lefrak City, a predominantly black apartment complex in Queens County, New York.

Gregory argued that local ideology and power relations invested in the image of Lefrak City, as a “‘welfare haven’ infested with crime, poverty and drugs’ (Gregory 1993, 24). Although the focus of this study was on the mechanism of resistance to such image production from within the stigmatised place, Gregory also traced the
constructions of racialising discourses that promoted Lefrak city as a threat to the surrounding white neighbourhood (Anderson 1991 for Chinatown parallel). Gregory (1993, 32) remarked that:

Although race was seldom publicly affirmed in white activist discourse and ideology, it nevertheless served as a unifying category — a principle of articulation binding perceptions, sentiments, and concepts about danger, social pathology, and political agency, and, importantly, materializing these heterogeneous meanings in space.

Whiteness had therefore activated a racialised binary whereby ‘white’ became naturalised as settlers who belong and ‘black’ as those who did not belong. The ‘white activists’ enacted processes designed to alienate and demonise the ‘black’ other. Lefrak City, built in 1964 as a ‘middle-class’ project, changed status once African-Americans residents arrived. By 1976 Lefrak City was perceived as ‘a black ghetto enclave’. Poverty, crime and drugs ‘menaced’ the surrounding ‘white’ area (Gregory 1993). In this instance, white neighbourhood activists conflated poverty, welfare, crime (social pathology) with the black residents in powerfully discursive ways.

[w]hite residents felt that their neighborhood was being victimized … because of its political weakness as a ‘middle-class’ [rather than ‘upper-class’] community: low-income housing and other undesirable projects were ‘dumped’ [there]. (Gregory 1993, 26).

The perception of the white middle class was that it was being squeezed ‘betwixt and between the impoverished and the affluent’ (Reider, in Gregory, 1993, 26).

At the borders of racialised segregations, the juxtapositions of, for example black and white, emphasise racialised binaries. Such distinctions are often compounded by class, such as in Lefrak City and inner-city Sydney where black and white equate with poverty and affluence. It is at such ‘borders’, where black and white meet and
racialised binaries are made more visible, that moments of activity can be ‘captured’ and the encounters can be analysed.

2.3.2.2 Criticisms of ‘whiteness studies’

In her analysis of ‘the compulsion to form the disciplinary endeavor [known as] “whiteness studies”’, Wiegman (1999) criticised the tendency of whiteness studies in the US to essentialise whiteness as a universalised and invisible modality of dominance. Wiegman (1999) argued that it is the particularity of whiteness, its many shapes and forms, that enable structural dominance. She used the example of the alleged marginal status of white supremacist groups. Following Brown (1995), Wiegman (1999, 2, 19) noted the ‘repeated appeal to the minoritized, injured “nature” of whiteness’ (Gelder and Jacobs 1998 for reference to the Australian context). According to Wiegman (1999) this appeal to injury seems to form a symmetry with the rationale for the emergence of ethnic studies. This imagined symmetry with ethnic (minority) studies has been used to legitimise research on white minority groups. Both Wiegman (1999) and Bonnett (2000) expressed the need to be careful about the general claim in whiteness literature that whiteness itself is invisible. For Bonnett:

to use Saynor’s words [whiteness is] ‘the natural order of things’ [1995] that has structured its representation[s] … thus the meaning and formation of whiteness are taken for granted; the history and geography of the subject [are] made visible (Bonnett 2000, 120, his emphasis).

Therefore, it is not whiteness itself that needs to be made visible, but the historical and geographical contexts in which it operates, and the processes of normalisation in which it is embedded and which work to bestow upon it its ‘naturalised’ power. In his studies of anti-racism, Bonnett (1999, 2000) observed that there are (at least) four forms of ‘white studies’: firstly, studies of ‘anti-racism in white areas’; secondly, the literature of ‘white confession’; thirdly, engaging ‘excluded whites’; and, fourthly, studies of ‘historical geographies of whiteness’.

This final category ‘point[s] towards the possibility of more nuanced, and strategically and theoretically more useful, anti-racist readings of whiteness’ (Bonnett 2000, 121).
Bonnett (2000) regards studies of white racialisation to be a more useful way of framing studies of whiteness than many of the studies within the existing field of whiteness studies. Furthermore, he argues that analyses of the social contingency of whiteness and critiques of the category ‘white’ constitute an emergent research ‘school’. In this ‘school’ there are two broad approaches. The first ‘attempts to subsume the analysis of whiteness within a class analysis of the racialisation process’ and includes the work of Allen (1994), Roediger (1991, 1994) and the creator of the journal *Race Traitor*, Noel Ignatiev (1994) (Bonnett 2000, 134). This group presents whiteness as ‘a project of US capitalism … [and an] entirely oppressive identity’; and the second approach ‘stresses the plural constitution and multiple lived experiences of whiteness’ and includes studies by Jacobson (1998), and Frankenberg (1993b) (Bonnett 2000, 134). Bonnett (2000, 135) considers Frankenberg’s discussion of ‘the multiple and shifting boundaries of whiteness’ to be of immense value. This thesis aligns itself with the second approach to the study of whiteness. It identifies some of the many ways of whiteness in the context of rapid changes in an urban residential landscape.

Thus far this chapter has traced a lineage of the study of race and racialisation in human geography. As stated, this thesis explicitly seeks to explore how whiteness is performed and consolidated in and through contemporary processes of urban transformation, in the specific case of inner Sydney, Australia. This chapter will now turn to geographical thinking about ‘the urban’. Recently, research on racialisation processes began revisiting the urban, and ways of being in urban environments, in new ways. The next section traces connections between the residential movements back to the city, through gentrification, and the rise of 21st Century urbanism.

### 2.4 Cities as cultural constructions: on urbanism and gentrification

Geographers have long considered processes of urban transformation. Previously studied within the domain of ‘urban geography’, concerns about, for example, gentrification and global or world cities, have become part of the wider concerns of a more recent cultural politics of *the city* (cf Park 1925, Jacobs 1993). The (‘white’) flight of suburbanisation, from cities in North America, Britain and, to an extent, Australia, and the subsequent ‘return’ to many inner cities has been the basis of
ongoing dialogue and debate. Recently, considerations of globalising urban cultures (Eade 1997) have tied global economics to consumer tastes (Bourdieu 1984, Collins 1995). The production of place-specific identity traits have been increasingly linked to processes of capital. For example, cities and city life are being reshaped, to an extent, by corporate capital (Crilley 1993, Daniels 1993, Pryke 1994; D’Arcy and Keogh 1997 for a review of role and significance of property market and marketing processes in cities). Consideration of developer-driven urban transformations have been revived in recent studies of gentrification (Smith 1996; Thrift and Walling 2000 for review).

2.4.1 Towards a cultural politics of gentrification

Academic writing on gentrification, a term that was originally coined in 1964 by the sociologist Ruth Glass (Glass 1964), reached an impasse during the 1980s. The earlier positivist and marxist work was challenged (Rose 1984). Debates polarised over cultural considerations (Ley 1980, 1983) versus the political economy of gentrification (Smith 1979, 1982, 1984). Throughout the 1990s, however, there was some agreement about the cultural politics of gentrification, and ‘the need for synthetic understandings that productively exploit the tensions between different theoretical positions (Lees 1994, Smith 1996)’ (Lees 1999, 127). There were also agreements to disagree about these positions (Redfern 1997). Studies of gentrification began to tease out localised cultural politics of gentrification (Lees 1994, 1996, Jackson 1995, Jacobs 1996, Redfern 1999), and identify the links with broader political economies (Smith 1996).

In a progress report on the state of gentrification research, Van Weesep (1994) called for more research into the effects, rather than just the causes of gentrification. Many of the criticisms that economic assumptions in gentrification theory do not attend to the complexity of the impacts of gentrification, have not identified the heterogeneity of displacement, and non-displacement (Engels 1999). Moreover, studies that apply a predominantly ‘cultural’ analysis occasionally disregard power relations along class, economic or any other lines, altogether. For example, Ley and Mills’ studies of the consumption of gentrifying cityscapes in Canadian cities prioritised consumption/cultural explanations over all others, including economy. Mills’ (1988,
1993) particularly explicit study of ‘packaged’ cultural identity, as marketed by property developers, provided a detailed account of the development and marketing of an inner-city area in Vancouver, however, the analysis of the motivations of developers and, to an extent, the buyers, omitted consideration of displaced groups. This study challenged previously accepted ways of approaching gentrification. The social process was, for Mills, a relationship of (packaged ‘culture’ based purchase) negotiations between developer (producer) and purchaser (consumer).

Lees (1994) suggested that a way to go beyond a culture/class divide to more fully account for gentrification processes might be achieved by a system of complementarity where capital and culture are considered as part of the same process whereby one is not prioritised over the other. Jackson (1995, 165) demonstrated that culture (in a broader than conventional definition which tends to refer to theatre and art galleries) is inseparable from economy. Using two American urban examples as case studies he explored the variety of ways that economic processes (such as investment in the built environment) are ‘culturally encoded’ (Jackson, 1995, 186).

Engels (1999) emphasised that to appreciated the complexity of gentrification, more cross-cultural research is required. He also noted the need to consider the process of gentrification over an extended time. Following Beauregard (1990), he reiterated that most case studies tend to concern themselves with the specific conditions of before and after gentrification, but not with what happens in between. ‘Gentrification’, as a concept, can also be part of a larger analysis about urban change. In this thesis gentrification is considered in a broad sense, as an outcome and indicator of economic shifts that have occurred at the city level and internationally. Gentrification is a process that is both culturally encoded by, and culturally encodes, the residential city. The economic and the cultural are interdependent.

‘Gentrification’, in the context of this thesis includes the repopulation of the ‘older’ inner-city by former suburban dwellers, and by newcomers to the city, who ‘revitalise’ the housing stock. These people cause and effect change

[34]

In the world outside the academy, ‘gentrification’ has entered the marketing parlance of real-estate agents who sell the residential inner-city. For Goodwin ‘[t]he selling of an urban lifestyle has become part and parcel of an increasingly sophisticated commodification of everyday life’ (1993, 147). With the emergence of new urban ‘lifestyles’ as part of the cultural capital of gentrifying areas, thinking about the urban has turned to reconsider the lifestyle concept of ‘urbanism’, and its image counterpart: ‘urbanity’. The next section considers the recent turn to thinking about urbanism, or urban social life, in human geography.

2.4.2 Urbanism and urban lifestyles

Urbanism is about living in cities; it represents a way of life affecting the majority of people in countries of the modernised, industrialised and urbanised western world (Forrest and Burnley 1985, 1)

The term urbanism recently re-emerged in geographical considerations of the city. Largely relegated to the pre-positivist era and locked away in the writings and musings of Simmel (1903), Benjamin (1920s) and Wirth (1938), urbanism, as a way of life, was largely overlooked throughout the quantitative revolution in geography (however, see Harvey 1972). During that hiatus, ‘[t]he ways people lived in cities merely reflected the social organization of a particular economic order: capitalist urbanism was … fundamentally different to socialist urbanism’ (Davis in Kasinitz 1995, 2). With the rise of ‘new’ urban sociology (Abu-Lughod 1991), post-structuralist methodologies and the cultural turn of the 1980s and 1990s, geographers, and others, began again to consider urbanism and urbanity. Nowhere is the increased emphasis on urbanism as a way of life more evident than in the rise of the term new urbanism in the discourses of planning and architecture. New urbanism is ‘an outcome-based view of planning based on a vision of a compact, heterogeneous city’ (Fainstein 2000, 451). The somewhat myopic claim that urbanism is somehow
restricted to Western cities (Forrest and Burnley 1985, quoted above) is reflected in the preoccupation of new urbanism. This is a prescriptive form of urbanism and it is concerned largely with the US and, to an extent, UK contexts (Fainstein 2000). Such studies of new urbanism are distinct from the kinds of urbanism that are attended to in the recent surge of interest in urban lifestyles. This thesis explores some of the racialising effects of emergent urbanisms associated with new ways of living in inner Sydney. The experiences of urbanism (and urbanity) in inner Sydney do draw on specifically Western referents but, as Alastair Bonnett (2000) observed through his research on globalising whiteness, preoccupations with western identification is not necessarily bound to the West. This thesis contemplates the relationship between contemporary white urbanism(s) in the context of an indigenous settlement in inner Sydney.

The (re)turn to urbanism as valid terrain for recent academic consideration in geography is not untroubled. For example, the incorporation of cultural factors into analyses of cities raised suspicions about the political implications of de-prioritising economic (and class) factors (Sayer 1989, Badcock 1996 for review). Part of the ‘trouble’ spawned by the interest in urbanism has been the tendency to associate it with postmodernism. When Dear and Flusty’s ‘Postmodern Urbanism’ was published in the prestigious Annals of the Association of American Geographers in 1998, a controversy about claims in social theory was re-ignited. Lake (1999, 393) warned that ‘readers of Urban Geography must take notice [of urbanism being tied to postmodernism]’ and a heated commentary began between self-professed postmodernists (Dear and Flusty) and others (who defy being described as ‘modernists’ as such, for example Lake 1999, Beauregard 1999, Jackson 1999 and Sui 1999 for commentaries on ‘postmodern urbanism’). Dear and Flusty claimed that a Los Angeles model of urbanism was ‘distinguished by a centerless urban form termed “keno capitalism”’ (1998, 50). This reversal of the power of capital, where the ‘hinterland organizes the center’ was the basis for the claim that Los Angeles urbanism (suburbanism?) provided a ‘radical break’ in understandings of the ways that cities develop (Dear and Flusty 1998, 50). This conceptual fracturing of what Dear and Flusty (1998) describe as the Chicago School’s ‘classical modernist vision’ of the industrial metropolis, placed urbanism in an intellectual tug-of-war. It became
the object over which yet another postmodern-geographies-versus-other-human-geographies debate could rage. The challenges to existing approaches to urbanism on the one hand (Dear and Flusty 1998, Dear 2000) were met by the criticisms that their version of ‘postmodern urbanism’ contained theoretical ‘dead ends’ and ‘ethnographic voids’ (Lake et al. 1999). Amid the rivalries and subsequent jibes[^3], this quarrel highlighted the need for geographers to re-engage with the notion of urbanism, postmodern or otherwise. In a somewhat less passionate account, Clark (2000, 17) provided this definition:

Urbanism is the name which is most commonly used to describe the social and behavioural characteristics of urban living which are being extended across society as a whole as people adopt urban values, expectations and lifestyles.

Drawing on an intellectual lineage inaugurated by Wirth (1938), among others, Clark argued for adding ‘the spread of urbanism’ (2000, 19) to considerations of urban growth and urbanisation. He noted that ‘the spread of urbanism is linked to the emergence of a global society made possible by developments in telecommunications and mass media’ (Clark 2000, 15). Though Clark (2000) acknowledged that there are problems with generalising, he posits that urbanism is increasingly influenced by globalising cultural indicators, such as commodity brandings.

Social values and relationships have … become similar across the world. They have lost their connection with a specific place and are constructed and spread by the mass media … the spread of urbanism is linked … to the emergence of a global society (Clark 2000, 15, 21).

And, it seems that whether self-professed postmodernists, or not, there is an increasing interest in the mobilisations of power through contemporary urbanism(s). As Dear stated:

The creation of different kinds of urbanism, characterized by edge cities, gated communities, and a global hierarchy of new ‘world cities’ … is a key to understanding the burgeoning geopolitical order. (Dear 2000, 1).

[^3]: May refer to internal citation or footnote.
This thesis contemplates the emergence of specific urban lifestyle imaginaries that rely on ‘global society’ conceptions (Clark 2000) of, for example, identity formations around New York style ‘loft living’ in inner-city Sydney. This thesis speaks also to the specificities of the logics and consequences of these seemingly global expressions of urbanism in a (post)colonial context. In so doing, this thesis interrogates Bonnett’s (2000) conception of global(ising) white identity formations. For Bonnett (2000, 3):

White identities are, if nothing else, global phenomena, with global impacts. Indeed, the nature and implications of their local manifestations only come into view when they are understood as local … [I am advocating] an attempt to engage the international and comparative diversity of whiteness.

Rather than analysing global white urbanism, as expressed at the local level, the ways that localised expressions are reliant on international influences are considered. The convergences between the ‘spread’ of contemporary urbanities to locations such as Sydney, and consequent white identity formations that perform their own processes of consolidation, become visible in juxtaposition to the ongoing presence of an urban indigenous community. In the Australian context, colonial histories are critical to the production of new (white) urbanism(s).

2.4.3 Locating ‘the indigenous’ in critical race studies of the city
(Post)colonial theorists and researchers have raised the need for studies of urban segregation to consider the indigenous experience. King has acknowledged:

the growth in the studies of indigenous resistance … to different forms and sites of colonial domination … offers …[an] alternative direction for urban studies in societies which have experienced colonial rule (King 1992, 343).

Such a direction is of particular relevance to a settler culture society like Australia. Since colonisation, there have been fears about the prospect of racial ghettos forming. For example, the first settlers, and their descendants, were not concerned about the ghettoisation of indigenes – who were quickly dispossessed of land in urbanising areas
– but they did not take kindly to Chinese migrants during the gold rushes of the 1800s. Similarly, Southern Europeans, who migrated to Australian after World War II, were another cause for concern. More recently, the influx of migrants from South-East Asia after the Vietnam War raised suspicions by those who settled before them or their descendants (Bulbeck 1993). Such fears of the more newly arrived ‘other’ have occasionally been supported by the ‘authority’ of academics such as the historian Geoffrey Blainey. In 1984, Blainey proclaimed that there was potential for ‘working class’ job losses in competition with Asian migrants (Bulbeck 1993, 137). This proclamation simply served to fuel anti-Asian sentiments and fears of Asian enclaves. Indigeneous settlement has largely been relegated to non-urban contexts. In the Australian ‘outback’ Aboriginal ghettoisation is of little concern to the urbanised majority of Australians who do not live near an Aboriginal community. Studies of racial segregation in Australian cities have, therefore, been mostly about migrant settlement (for example, on Cabramatta see Dunn 1993, 1998, on migrant houses see Lozanovksa 1994). Stories of racial segregation continue to excite the Australian mass media. Warnings of (racialised) ‘ghettos’ include stories of migrant groups and indigenous groups. Newspaper reports, films, television and radio documentaries maintain an over-reactive focus on such issues and tend to support racial stereotypes. Generally, studies of racialisation in Australia cities have tended to focus on constructions of ethnicity within ‘multiculturalism’ (Gunew 1994, Hage 1994, 1997), rather than indigenous issues.

Some researchers considered the question of urban Aboriginal settlement in the Australian context at the time of accelerated migration to cities (Rowley 1970, Gale 1972). Generally banished from most urban Australian contexts after colonisation, the ‘returned’ Aboriginal presence is generally fragmented in small groups in Australian cities (with the exception of The Block). The issue of segregation is therefore quite different to, for example, the US experience. Consequently, the study of urban Aboriginal settlement has not followed existing scholarship on racial segregation. In 1972, Fay Gale’s *Urban Aborigines* broke new ground in the study of urban Aboriginal life. More recent studies include Anderson’s Sydney based case study of Aboriginal Redfern (1993a,b, 1998, 1999 and 2000), and the Perth based studies of

In his study of whiteness in Australia, Ghassan Hage (1993) argued that the presence of minority groups is legitimised and sanctioned by Australia’s official policy of multiculturalism, and its recent acknowledgment of native title rights. Hage argued that because of these official policies, Australia’s dominant ‘white’ culture has developed a sense that it is under siege by (racialised and ethnicised) minority interest groups. Hage (1993, 43) stated that:

while this discourse [of siege] … reflects a [perceived?] change in the status of Anglo-Australianness as a dominant national culture it is equally obvious that it tends to exaggerate it … even if we assume that … power is being undermined by multiculturalism, Anglo-Celtic Australians and the Australo-British cultural forms they have generated continue to be comfortably dominant within Australian society.

This developing sense of siege finds expression in popular political and popular discourses in Australia. In the context of this thesis, a sense of siege continues to evolve in the case study area in response to the indigenous presence. The decision by an Australian government to give land (back) to dispossessed indigenous Australians, at the heart of Sydney, formalised the return of an Aboriginal presence that was largely not wanted. Fear of the racialised ‘other’, and the continual association of The Block with all misgivings in the case study area, combined with the associated pressure from (non-Aboriginal) resident action groups, and others, means that politicians and bureaucrats respond quickly against providing, or being seen to support ‘minority privileges’. The formation of The Block, in the early 1970s, remains for many non-Aboriginal Australians an example of ‘minority privilege’ (Mickler 1998) that is a source of resentment in, and beyond, the case study area.

2.5 A geographical study of whiteness in the (post)colonial city
Colonialism is one of the elements that subtends the construction of white identity (Dyer 1997, 14).

Acknowledgment of the broader historical and geographical contexts of racialisation and segregation assists the opening out of methodological and theoretical possibilities in human geography research. In 1998, Sharon Zukin (1998b, 514) called for:

a more rigorous social science … not to make correlations between race and poverty … but to … deal with meta theoretical issues of space and time, and analyse contemporary cultures of materialisms and violence … [by] looking more closely at the racialization of space within cities and between cities and suburbs.

The racialising effects of gentrification and the associated symbolic economies (Zukin 1995), from ‘fashion streets’ to heritage dollars, are not politically neutral or just part of an evolving urban landscape. The cultural politics of the material and social impacts on racialised and segregated minority groups, need to be considered through the processes that implicate the privileged positionings of more anonymous, less visible players. For example, Evelyn Peters (1998, 667) used ‘the complex geographies of identity and resistance … in relation to First Nations women’ to interrogate and unsettle some of the deeply racialised cultural meanings of Canadian urbanism.

Following Bonnett, the specific ideological and practical aim of this thesis is to contribute to ‘a … more reflexive and incisive phase of geographical “race” scholarship’ (Bonnett 1997, 199). To do this, this thesis interrogates and unsettles the stasis of whiteness as an ethnic category, and observes some of the social processes that privilege whiteness and (re)produce it normatively, in a place.

This chapter has reviewed the main scholarly influences of this thesis. It has woven these influences together into a rationale for a geographical study of the racialising processes of whiteness, and consequent urbanism in inner-city Sydney, Australia.
The next chapter details the methodologies used in this thesis. These evolved over time in order to make sense of the ways of whiteness in the presence of a largely unwanted indigenous settlement at the hear of a (post)colonial city.

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1 Aboriginal Australians have long argued that because they are the 1st Australians, and not migrants their issues should not be subsumed within multicultural critiques.
2 According to Smith (1979), changes in property value through gentrification create the ‘rent gap’ which is ‘the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use’ (Smith 1996, 67). The ‘rent gap’ theory has been the source of ongoing debate in gentrification thinking.
3 For example, Dear (2000, 1) has commented that this enthusiasm for postmodern urbanism ‘risks being regarded as hopelessly faddish, already obsolete, or terminally indecisive. Such criticisms are usually the product of hostile or lazy minds …’.
4 The Federal Government’s response to the Wik decision was to call for ‘“blanket extinguishment” of Aboriginal rights to leasehold land [held by pastoralists] … [and thereby] reanimating the colonial fantasy of terra nullius that the earlier Mabo decision had overturned’ (Gelder and Jacobs 1998, 136); see also Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party maiden speech, and commentary, at www.theage.com.au/special/hanson/speech.htm.
3 METHODOLOGY

It is more useful to talk of data generation than data collection (Mason 1996, 35)

This chapter details the methodologies used to generate and analyse data for this thesis. It traces the ways that this thesis has sought to unpack some of the modalities of whiteness in inner Sydney. This thesis has benefited from using a range of research methods and data (Minichiello 1995). It has used quantitative data and a variety of qualitative techniques. The use of variety in data sources and analyses is a practice that has become commonplace in human geography particularly since the late 1980s.

In this chapter, I firstly outline a short rationale for doing this thesis, and my personal and political positioning within the study. Then, I give a brief summary of the emergence of ethnography-based locality studies in human geography and some of the criticisms of its (re)emergence. I then detail fieldwork and other methodologies used to generate data for this thesis. Finally, I discuss the analyses of the data generated.

3.1 Context

The racialisation of indigenous Australians, and its reproduction in and through housing consumption and lifestyle practices in inner Sydney, is the central concern of this thesis. It is not the residents of The Block who were subjects of this research, although the discursive and other processes that portray The Block as a dysfunctional Aboriginal space most certainly are significant. Not least, the discourses that consolidate whiteness in the case study area, form part of the data for this thesis. The racialising and privileging processes of whiteness began in the case study area in the 1970s with local responses to the formalisation of The Block. It was, however, several events that dominated change in the case study area during the latter part of the 1990s (1997 to 1999) that generated much of the data. Firstly, housing prices escalated dramatically in comparison with the rest of Sydney. In addition, the wholesale conversion of old warehouses into apartment buildings, and the building of
new apartments, cemented a gentrification cycle that had started, haltingly, earlier that decade.

During the period of tracking such changes, an array of local events and transformations occurred that are typical of an inner-city neighbourhood experiencing rapid change. For example, several development proposals ignited resident activism. Such activities provided additional data for this thesis. This sensitivity of my thesis to such current, local events – many of which were unanticipated – complicated the data gathering tasks. There were, at times, ethical dilemmas about the use and collection of such information as it became available but I maintained an active diligence to ethical concerns, at all times.

As a consequence of needing to respond to unexpected events, the methodology of this thesis has had to remain open to change. Armed with a methodological plan, this thesis remained flexible as the unexpected events provided windows to new fields of data. Such changes to research methodology occurred with the cultural turn in human geography. The capacity to move beyond more rigid research styles and remain open to the unplanned, is invaluable for data generation. Such responsiveness is typical of, for example, action research strategies (Hood et al. 1999, Stringer 1999, Reason and Bradburg 2001).

3.2 New cultural geographies of locality
This thesis used the reinvented case study approach that has accompanied the cultural turn in human geography. Its use of a case study was not, however, restricted to the location as it is processes in the case study area that are significant, rather than the case study area itself. The case study (area) provided a context for the study of whiteness.

Sayer (1989, 256) noted several characteristics of the swing back to using case studies in human geography. These included the rise of a concern, in the early 1980s, with growing social polarisations, particularly the ‘north-south’ divide, and an increasing heterogeneity of political geography (in the UK). He also identified a more general ‘empirical turn’ and, most importantly, a growing concern for what ‘real people’, as
opposed to ‘the ciphers of social theory’, were doing and thinking (Sayer 1989, 256). Building upon anthropological case study approaches, which tended to search for generalities (Mitchell 1983), more recent geographical studies became more context specific (Massey and Allen 1984, Keith and Pile 1993). Such approaches have been ‘distinguished by … self-conscious engagement with social theory … [and] drawn upon different, mainly realist, rationales’ (Sayer 1989, 253). Realist perspectives ‘advocate combined intensive/extensive methodology to highlight the link between broader structures and processes in local settings … and suggest a commitment to a range of qualitative approaches’ (Jacobs 1993, 830).

The reinvented locality-specific case study has numerous origins in recent geographic thought. The positivist era had relegated studies of location to, for example, structuralist studies of capitalist production (Jackson 1991a). The new locality study approach promised a better understanding of global capitalism through observations of the variety of globalisation’s localised consequences (Duncan 1980, Massey and Allen 1984). Because localities differ in the way they respond to, resist and constitute economic restructuring, new locality studies in geography have enabled new understandings of social relationships and structures.

To find ways that local cultures and, for example, global economics might interact or constitute each other, geographers also looked beyond the discipline. As a social science that had spent a long time considering the materialities of economics, new cultural geographies needed to grapple with the cultural particularities of place and to ‘identify the qualities that structure that experience [of place]’ (Jackson 1991a, 222). Furthermore, ‘the cultural studies approach refuses to treat “culture” as separate from “society” or “economy”’ (Jackson 1991a, 219).

The embrace of the cultural turn in geography has invigorated qualitative methodologies in its search for cultural data. The contribution of Clifford Geertz’s (1973, 1983) ‘thick descriptions’, the use of local knowledge to deepen and ground narratives of interpretation, and experimental methods of ethnographic description used to address issues of ‘representation’, are well recognised in the social sciences.
According to Jackson (1991a, 215, 219), the new phase in locality studies in geography combined:

alternative theorisations of ‘local culture’ [which] draw … on concepts of cultural politics (from Stuart Hall), structures of feeling (Ramond Williams), cultural capital (Pierre Bourdieu) and local knowledge (Clifford Geertz) … where ‘cultural politics’ [is] defined as the domain in which meanings are constructed and negotiated … the cultural is always … political.

The new locality studies have not only remained alert to a range of political issues that were brought to the geographical research agenda through structuralism, they have drawn on the contributions of poststructuralism and postmodernism in human geography and other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, postcolonial and cultural studies.

The move in human geography to locality-based studies has not necessarily been smooth, methodologically. Sayer (1989, 255) raised the fundamental question: ‘how far, or at what depth, are social structures and processes context-dependent?’ His concern was to collapse the divide between the idiographic (particular cases) and nomothetic (general laws) debates. His suggestion was that new regional geography/locality studies might attend to these difficulties by being theoretically informed and empirically based. Sayer (1989, 257) noted that ethnography has ‘pulled towards contextualising explanations or interpretations’, whereas political economy tended to use analytical explanations that are ‘independent of context … [and therefore] law-like’. For Sayer (1989), the new locality studies in human geography offered ‘methodological challenge[s]’ because they would attempt to ‘hold the two [political economy and contextual explanations] in tension’ (Sayer 1989, 257).

Locality based studies are not immune from more general criticisms of the cultural turn in geography. Blair Badcock (1996, 91), for example, expressed concerns about the ‘“[l]ooking-glass’ views of the city’. His key concern was for what he saw to be a reduction in economic considerations with the accelerated search for the cultural. He
listed various concerns of others, and followed Sayer (1993) who was ‘more struck by the chasm between “the esoteria of postmodernism” and “what is happening outside” academia to ordinary people in our communities’ (Badcock 1996, 92). Furthermore, Badcock amplified a concern raised by Chouinard that: ‘working class and other disadvantaged groups … are often curiously absent from the landscapes … of “consumption”, “spectacle” or “power” … represented in postmodern cultural geographies of the city’ (Badcock 1996, 92). Badcock continued with a point about gentrification, which is of particular concern for this thesis because of its focus on whiteness, rather than the marginalised Aboriginal community (The Block). He argued that the study of gentrification had become a ‘fixation … at the expense of countless unexamined neighbourhoods where the impact of structural decline, disinvestment and the withdrawal of social services is equally profound’ (Badcock 1996, 92). Furthermore, he warned that:

concern about the level at which the imagery and façadism registers in the consciousness of the imbibers … [means that] far too much can be … read into the meaning of postmodern landscapes given their potential for duplicity (Badcock 1996, 94).

This thesis attempts to demonstrate that although not solely about gentrification per se this kind of research, on the consumption of housing and lifestyle choices in the postmodern landscape of the inner-city of Sydney, does address issues of marginalisation. It has broadened the focus to show the very real links between processes of gentrification and marginalisation rather than prioritise one over the other. Moreover, the marginality of the Aboriginal community in inner-city Sydney is not external to processes of gentrification. The Aboriginal ‘others’ are variously present and absent in the imaginaries of lifestyle choices as they are in the material effects of urban change. Understanding transformations of places, including gentrification processes in cities in which the majority of Australians live, is vital to understanding complex processes of racialisation and consequent marginalisation. For example, this thesis details the ways that imagery construction and façadism reveal both direct and duplicitous efforts that build upon existing racialised power relations. I argue that through image-making of, for example, new urban lifestyles
(Chapter 8), new sites of consumption emerge that reinforce existing neo-colonial processes that privilege whiteness.

In a somewhat different critical vein (to Badcock 1996), a new debate about the need to ‘rematerialise’ cultural geography emerged in 2000 (see ‘Commentaries’, by Jackson, McDowell and Smith, 2000, in the 1st edition of Social & Cultural Geography). In response to cultural geography’s purported preoccupation with questions of meaning and representation, Peter Jackson (2000, 13) noted that ‘geographers are already contributing … to the revival of interest in material culture … taking the materiality of objects seriously in analysing processes of commodification, social differentiation and the attribution of symbolic value’. The extent to which ‘the social’ has been sidelined by the ‘cultural turn’ may be simply a matter of emphasis and orientation. Linda McDowell (2000, 22), for example, has insisted on ‘placing right at the centre of a cultural economic geography the construction and analysis of material practices as well as their discursive meanings’.

Using slightly different terminology (to McDowell’s ‘cultural economic geography’) Ed Soja (1999) had noted that ‘New Cultural Politics’ moved away from the emphasis of ‘Old Economic Politics’, on grand political narratives (Soja 1999). Soja’s (1999) summary of the ongoing debate concerning the politics of cultural geography was that:

the most insightful current attempts to make practical and political sense of the New Cultural Politics [of cultural geography] are arising from a significantly different conceptualization and understanding of the spatiality of social life, from geographical imaginations that work in different spaces from those focused on by most radical urban and regional political economists … the cultural turn should not be seen as an abandonment of ‘radical’ formulations … but as an invitation and challenge … to rethink and restructure the epistemological and spatial foundations of their theories and practices. (Soja 1999, 65-66).

For Soja, the ‘cultural turn’ has been a gradual process of ‘culturalizing’ political economy (1999, 65). As such, there was not a sudden shift in ideology, or wholesale leap from modernism and structuralism to de-structured or ‘flip’ postmodernism as
Sayer (1993) predicted. Indeed, the use of the term *postmodernism* has tended to be overzealously embraced (Barnes and Duncan 1992, Driver 1995). Rather than continue a somewhat circular debate, Driver (1995, 129) has suggested that there is ‘much more to be gained from serious engagements with the specific philosophies, politics and methods too often hastily subsumed under that heading [of postmodernism]’. In short, geographers need to be careful not to hastily abandon useful methodologies, such as reading the meanings in the salvaging of old factory façades, simply because of associations with postmodernism. This thesis has attempted to be methodologically careful. It has embraced a trans-disciplinary approach and a range of methodologies. Critical race studies and other geographical studies have benefited by being open to include the specifics of local encounters in the context of broader politics (for example Anderson 1991, Jacobs 1993, 1996). The contribution of ethnographic methodologies that are now part of the fieldwork armoury in human geography, and have been used in this thesis, is outlined in the following sections.

3.3 Towards ethnographic methodologies in geography

It is curious that ethnographic interviewing has not played a more prominent role in cultural geography. One reason for this might be geographers’ focus upon their interpretation of place, space or cultural landscape rather than the inhabitants’ interpretations (Duncan 1993, 375).

Since Duncan’s observations in 1993, there has been an explosion of ethnographic research in human geography, particularly in new location studies. This phase in human geography has embraced new methodologies, particularly qualitative and interpretative methodologies (Bird 1993, Robinson 1999, Kitchen and Tate 1999, Hay 2000). Concurrently, a new reflexivity in the politics of doing fieldwork encouraged debate about the issue of the researched and the researcher (Marcus and Fischer 1986).

Along with concerns raised about the politics of research that represents ‘others’ (cf Marcus and Fischer 1986), Jackson (1991b) noted the need for geographers to attend
to the ‘politics of position’. Drawing on feminist scholarship, Jackson acknowledged that ‘where we are located in the social structure as a whole and which institutions we are in … have effects on how we understand the world’ (Hartsock in Jackson 1991b, 133).

To make some sense of the disadvantaged position of The Block, this thesis tracks the politics of, for example, heritage appreciation and protection through non-Block resident activism. It has turned the ethnographic lens on processes that overtly or covertly privilege some over others. In so doing, this thesis has avoided concerns about representation of marginalised or minority groups (Jackson 1991b, Keith 1992) by turning attention to the concerns of the powerful majority in the case study area.

Feminist geographies have made some of the most profound contributions to situating the politics of geographical research and researchers. Drawing from a lineage of feminist methodologies and critiques (for example McDowell 1992, Miles and Crush 1993, Momsen 1993, Rose 1993), Katz (1994) and Kobayashi (1994) referred to the slippage of the positionalities of researcher and subject. They stressed the need to maintain non-essentialised or unfixed views of the research position. For these geographers, speaking from multiple-positionalities included speaking both as geographers positioned as the feminised ‘other’ of the academy, but also as researchers who were aware of the politics of their positionalities in the fieldwork process. Kobayashi (1994) acknowledged that fieldwork must also be recognised for its pro-active potential. The sheer doing of fieldwork, especially ethnographic fieldwork, performs functions other than those ascribed by the researcher.

As a researcher, I studied my own cohort: other gentrifiers. Some of the subjects of the research for this thesis were people who bought houses, like me, in the early stages of gentrification in the case study area. Whether we (purchasers/gentrifiers) acknowledge it or not, we were (and are) part of the processes of change in the area. One of the effects of gentrification in Sydney has been ethnic homogenisation. As Kendig (1979, 113) observed:
[non-English speaking] ethnic groups who from the 1950s had been the chief
buyers of inner-city housing, were especially affected [by gentrification]. By 1961
… [only] a quarter of the houses in Paddington was owned by … migrants …
while a similar proportion … owned houses in Redfern.

As I am a gentrifier who is not from an Aboriginal or non-English speaking ethnic
group, the questions asked of the subjects could be asked of me. During the research
for this thesis, I remained mindful, however, not to engage in a ‘whiteness study’ that
was obsessed with the experiences of self as ‘white’ (Dyer 1997, 10). The placement
of self in this study was as a recipient of the privileging that processes of whiteness
offer, but also as an observer of the activities that my cohorts engaged (and engage) in
that further or, on occasion, challenge such projects of whiteness.

Engaging non-Aboriginal residents in discussions (during interviews) about changes
in their local area, performed the task of enabling difficult issues and concerns to be
raised and discussed. Discussions about media representations of the case study area,
residential development and the presence of The Block, were framed in ways that
allowed participants to talk through and, in some cases, beyond some of their
concerns. The interviewees were often highly informed; discussions were a two-way
information exchange. Kobayashi (1994, 78) remarked that ‘understanding how
discourses are produced and sustained, by uncovering and engaging social
constructions on the very sites they are produced and nourished … is [a] profoundly
geographical [project]’ . The politics of doing fieldwork in one’s neighbourhood, with
one’s neighbours as subjects, included the dissemination and retrieval of information.
Through research, narratives were generated and discourses were produced. I
acknowledge that those who volunteered to participate did so for their own reasons
and not all politics of doing fieldwork can be predicted or controlled regardless of
how it is guided.

Although I was not one of my research subjects as such, my gentrification story serves
to illustrate some of the issues, and ironies, that lead to my involvement in
Darlington’s gentrification. My story also illustrates some of difficulties of
generalising about ‘the gentrifier’. I have included my story to contextualise my place
in this thesis, and the politics of my desire to explore processes that privilege whiteness. The personal narratives of the research subjects, the unique stories that enrich any study of location are, on the other hand, part of the actual research process rather than its context.

3.3.1 Positioning the personal in the field of whiteness
In 1995, I moved into 20 Ivy Street, Darlington, in the case study area. By buying this house (with my partner), I encountered the ‘marketplace’ of property consumption at that time. We had sold our terrace house in another inner-city area, Surry Hills, at an enormous profit. We had bought that house very cheaply, in an area that was largely undesirable. Then, in just a few years, the status of the area suddenly changed to being highly desirable. Regardless of its poor state, our property had realised Smith’s ‘rent gap’ (Smith 1982). As owner-occupiers, this was of little consequence until we decided to sell the Surry Hills house, ironically, because of the encroaching effects of gentrification. A warehouse converted into luxury apartments, located directly behind our house, finally drove us out of Surry Hills. Moving to Darlington felt like a move away from the pulse of the city, but the house we bought is larger with more garden. It is still only two subway-stops away from the CBD, rather than just the one as it was for Surry Hills, but ‘the city’ (CBD) is still within walking distance.

Darlington was largely a pre-gentrified area in the mid 1990s. Having spent most of my adult life in areas that eventually gentrified, I do carry some pre-gentrification snobbery. Some of the trappings of gentrification are acceptable to me (like cafés and shops), but I am wary of the overall effects of encroaching middle-classness. Such effects did, after all, ‘push’ me out of Surry Hills. Another example of encroaching middle-classness was the increasing level of intolerance to diversity that began to manifest with the gentrification of Surry Hills. Resident activism sought to protect (newly gained) turf from the ‘ill effects’ of, for example, pre-existing welfare services. Another example of gentrifier resident activism in Surry Hills was a campaign against the burning of joss sticks in a Chinese temple. There were also complaints against ‘offensive migrant house’ colours (such as ‘Portuguese Pink’ or ‘Mediterranean Blue’).
Darlington, I hoped, might be different. I was quite sure that the stigmatising presence of The Block would keep middle-classness at bay\(^4\). The Block, as I understood it, was a permanent Aboriginal settlement. The drug and crime problems associated with the area existed throughout Sydney’s inner-city. I was convinced that in the case of Darlington the problems were the same as Surry Hills but they were racialised, as they often were in other cities in the world. For me, Darlington would have similar drug and crime issues as existed in pre-gentrification Surry Hills. Moreover, Darlington had not yet, from my point of view, ‘lost its charm’. It still had diversity in the range of age groups, classes and ethnicities that Surry Hills was swiftly losing.

By the late 1990s, the same kinds of middle-classness that existed in Surry Hills, started to manifest in Darlington. The presence of the Aboriginal community had stalled gentrification as gentrifiers largely avoided buying into the area if other options were possible. As gentrification cycles matured in other parts of inner Sydney (Engels 1999), and gentrification capital started to seek new territory, even the racialised drug and crime problem associated with the case study area, was not enough to deter buyers in the late 1990s. After all, ‘first stage’ gentrifiers, like me, had already moved in. This vanguard included those who were amenable to the presence of The Block but it also included those who would participate in (racialised) turf protection activities. Residents in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale had become increasingly agitated by the impoverished Aboriginal presence and the slow pace of gentrification. The anticipated capital gains, that the media were particularly excited about (for example, ‘At $508,000 Redfern may do a Paddington’, The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 December 1996, 3), were slow. We ‘gentrifiers’ were (and are) all part of the process that legitimated Darlington as a gentrification frontier whether we accepted the Aboriginal presence or not.

3.3.2 Personal knowledge(s) of place

In Darlington there is a distinct siege mentality in the streets surrounding The Block. The striking first impression is the level of visible home security. Whether renovated or unrenovated, houses have windows and doors clad in security grilles. Some houses have visible alarm systems and fences capped with barbed or razor wire. When I was shopping for a house in Darlington, this visual barricading struck me. Private space
was (and still is) aggressively segregated from public space (Caldeira 1996a, b). Such segregation gave the area a distinct ‘war zone’ character. When signing the contracts to buy our house in Darlington, The Block seemed to be in a worse state than ever. I was hoping that we had not made a mistake. After all, whiteness (and gentrification) had privileged me with the choice to go elsewhere.

Since moving into Darlington in 1995, it seems that there was no war as such but rather a series of well-planned offensives against the Aboriginal community. Non-Aboriginal residents did mobilise to fight the hard-fought-for formation of The Block in the 1970s and, in the late 1990s, anti-Block resident action reignited in various forms with accelerating gentrification. The development of apartments was the basis for much resident resistance but, as the character of the area encircling The Block changed (and continues to do so), resident activism increasingly responded to the stark contrast of its poverty and drug use. Several moments of intense resident action that occurred in the late 1990s, provided ethnographic evidence for the ways that whiteness rallies and consolidates itself in the case study area.

The next section details how the data used in this thesis was generated. It tracks the process of moving between gathering data from planned to unplanned sources. The final sections of this chapter detail how such variety has enmeshed into a detailed account, or thick descriptions, of processes of whiteness in the case study area.

3.4 Generating data in the case study area

The data for this thesis was generated within a case study area and about this case study area. A range of data about housing prices, warehouse conversions/apartment development and ways of living in close proximity to The Block were collected. Along with data generated through in-depth interviews with local residents and business people, data sources also included media representations and narratives by others who do not live/work in the case study area, but are stakeholders (police, politicians, real estate agents). This ‘mixed methods’ format (detailed below) engaged a ‘critical-realist’ view. Critical realism looks beyond the empirical by:
recognising that underlying structures are complex and may be different from the observable events and discourses to which they give rise. … [A] study set in a critical—realist framework may have, or at least searches for, deeper explanatory power (Winchester 1996, 119, 120).

In order to search for deeper explanations about the ways of whiteness, the original methodology plan for this thesis was to activate the distinct data sets set out in Figure 3.1 (below).

**Figure 3.1 Set data sets**

- Quantitative data from secondary sources: changes in house prices; changes in population numbers; general numerical trends for the city of Sydney
- Newspaper articles that provided popular discourses about The Block
- Newspaper articles about Darlington, Chippendale and Redfern (other than The Block) provided other information about the area (for example its gentrification; its troubles because of The Block)
- Newspaper and other promotional materials (advertisements) for warehouse conversions/apartment developments provided detail of the promotional discourse of ‘Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome’
- Interview transcripts from interviews with 35 people who live and/or work in the case study area provided narratives about living/working in the (stigmatised) area
- Interview transcripts from interviews with other stakeholders provided narratives about the case study area. The stakeholders included: 2 politicians (local and state parliament), 3 police officers and 3 real estate agents

Robinson (1999, 411) has identified four broad categories of data generating techniques that are commonly used in contemporary human geography. These are:

1. Questionnaire survey methods
2. Non-directional interviews or informal surveys
3. Participant observation
4. Interpretation of ‘supporting’ documentation and ‘texts’

Rather than use a large-scale survey of a statistically representative area, this thesis has used a combination of non-directional interviews/informal surveys (which included several statistical questions at the beginning of the interview), and
collections of media-generated texts. Additionally, as unexpected events occurred during the research process, subsequent data sets emerged. Interview data, and any written materials generated by these events (for example council documentation, newspaper articles) were also gathered. As discussed previously in this chapter, when unexpected events occurred, participant observation was also required. This was followed by interpretation of supporting documents and texts.

Although qualitative methods dominated the process of data gathering, this thesis relied on quantitative information to establish statistical trends about population increases and demographic characteristics, and property price changes for the case study area. These quantitative sources provided a context in which to study a place with rapid increases in population and property values over a short time (Daly 1998, Vipond et al. 1998).

Quantitative and qualitative data have distinct roles in this thesis. Qualitative data has not simply followed an existing quantitative framework, nor is it privileged over the quantitative. Both forms of data have been interspersed to frame and support arguments throughout the logic and narrative of the hermeneutic themes in the following chapters of this thesis.

### 3.4.1 Quantitative data: property values

As property sales escalated at the end of the 1990s in the case study area, this was also a period of intense development approval and subsequent marketing (Figure 1.2 shows new apartment buildings/warehouse conversions in the case study area). Many apartments were sold ‘off the plan’ (that is, before the apartments were built). Figures (such as housing prices) were kept and checked with institutions, such as the Real Estate Institute, which helped to roughly triangulate this data (detailed in chapter 4). The following sections detail the qualitative techniques used in this thesis.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative techniques: Non-directional interviews or informal surveys

Generally, there are two types of interviews commonly conducted in ethnographic fieldwork. These are the structured and so-called unstructured interviews (Collins 1998). This thesis has used the ‘unstructured’ method of interviewing but
acknowledges that some structuring is always necessary to conduct a research interview. Although the unstructured interview method allows for a greater freedom of expression than the ‘interrogator and interrogated’ model (Collins 1998), the interview approach used in this thesis was interactive (a discussion). Interviewees were given the space to develop narratives about the topics that were presented. As Collins (1998, 1.6) noted ‘engagement implies a willingness on the part of the interviewer to understand the interviewee’s response to a question or prompt in the wider context of the interview(s) as a whole’. A potential shortcoming is that interviewees can develop a narrative that disregards the questions, themes or prompts (Collins 1998) but such narratives can lead the researcher in useful, though unplanned, directions that may only be realised after completion of the interview.

In the original research plan (prior to unexpected events), interviewing was divided into 3 locations. The locations were chosen because proximity to The Block affected house prices at the very localised scale of a few streets. I wondered if proximity also affected opinions about The Block, heritage and change in the area. Similarly, I wanted to gauge the perceptions of apartment dwellers (Appendix 3 for interview questions). The 3 locations selected were:

a) **Near Block neighbours** (terrace houses and local business people who live/work in streets bounded by Lawson, Abercrombie and Vine Streets, that is adjacent to The Block [Figure 3.1]).

An ‘Invitation to participate’ (Appendix 2) was dropped into the letter boxes of every 4th houses on the North side of Lawson Street (Darlington end only - west of railway line) and Abercrombie Street (east side only) between Lawson Street and Vine Street, Darlington (Figure 3.1, street map). Approximately 25 households, mostly terrace houses, received a letter. I then door-knocked to arrange interview times with those who were interested in being interviewed. I gained 9 in-depth interviews.

b) **Darlington terrace house occupants:** Just away from the ‘Near Block Neighbours’ area and therefore The Block, this is the more obviously gentrifying part
of Darlington. Every 5th household in Edward and Thomas Streets were letter-boxed with an invitation to be interviewed. I gained 16 in-depth interviews in Darlington.

c) **New development residents in Darlington and Chippendale:** I wanted to find out why people were moving into these new developments within such a stigmatised area.

Only residents of the newly converted warehouse/loft apartment blocks were fielded for interviews to provide information about why people choose to move to this area in recent times. ‘Abercrombie Rooftops’ on the corner of Abercrombie and Caroline Streets, ‘Citipoint’ in Abercrombie Street, ‘Moorgate’ in Moorgate Road, ‘TriBeCa’ in Abercrombie Street, ‘The Benedict’ in O’Connor Street, and ‘The Buckland’ in Buckland Street were canvassed. All letterboxes in these buildings received invitations for interview followed by a door-knock to arrange interview times for those interested. This stage of data generation was abandoned due to low levels of residential occupation and a distinct disinterest by those who had just moved into the new developments at the time.

The 35 people who were interviewed for this thesis included both planned and unplanned interviews. Local residents, including those who organise resident action groups, local business owners, police, real-estate agents and several politicians were interviewed. All interview questions followed a general plan with only slight variations for real estate agents and police (Appendix 3).

### 3.4.3 What interview subjects were required to do

Held at a time that was suitable for the interviewee the interviews were conducted as follows:

Each interview that had two distinct parts. The first was a process of asking a few basic questions (Figure 3.2) and ticking off details about the interviewee to ‘break the ice’ and to ensure that individuals met some basic criteria to establish the demographic background of each interviewee (such as their age group and length of occupancy). From then on the interview was tape-recorded (with interviewee’s
permission) and the tapes were archived without identification, other than a number, to protect the interviewee’s identity. Interviews were conducted as interview ‘conversations’ (Burgess 1985).

**Figure 3.2 Ice-Breaker questions for gathering basic statistics**

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<tr>
<th>The Address of the interviewee</th>
<th>- to establish that the interviewee lives in the case study location, also may influence opinions about the existence of The Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The interviewee’s length of occupancy</td>
<td>- to give a basis for familiarity with the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the interviewee rent or own their home or premises?</td>
<td>- may influence opinions about change/gentrification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sort of house/dwelling: size, state, renovation type</td>
<td>- may also influence opinions about change/gentrification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same ‘statistics’ were gathered for all residents interviewed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I had a set of guide questions which were used as prompts when necessary (for questions and rationales for each question refer to Appendix 3). The prompts did not, however, dominate the interviews. The opening discussion question for residents in all cases was ‘would you like to tell me a bit about living here such as why you live here, and what are your opinions about the area?’. This open-ended question brought up general themes about gentrification, heritage, The Block, policing and so on. Interviewees were able to talk to these themes, or about other things, for as long as they wished. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to taking up several 60 minute cassette tapes.

The interview tapes and field diaries (which recorded the unexpected events), were transcribed into texts. Interview texts were coded using themes (Appendix 4: area attraction/changes; feelings about The Block; anomalies). Media reports on events and promotional materials produced by developer advertising (newspaper advertisements and site brochures) also provided text. The media texts provided details about popular discourses that are produced within specific discursive
environments. The individual narrative accounts generated during interviews spoke to these discourses.

### 3.4.4 Narratives and discourses

Narrative is the quintessential form of customary knowledge (Lyotard 1984, 22).

The use of narrative and discourse analysis is now commonplace in human geography. Robinson (1999, 409) noted that ‘qualitative techniques are essentially descriptions of people’s representations and constructions of what is occurring in their world’. The use of (ethnographic, or other) narratives in geographic methodology became more common during the late 1980s. A dictionary defines a narrative as a spoken or written account of connected events in order of happening whereas a discourse is a conversation, talk, a dissertation or treatise on an academic subject, a text (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 9th edition). In geographical usage, Sayer (1989, 262) has defined narratives as ‘writing in general … constructing texts’ in a broad sense, or as ‘a story of successive events’ in the narrow sense.

In 1991, Yi-Fu Tuan, a humanist geographer and philosopher, claimed that the emphases placed on economic and material forces had meant that speech and language had been neglected in geography. Tuan (1991, 693-4) stated that:

> although speech alone cannot materially transform nature, it can direct attention, organise insignificant entities into significant composite wholes, and in so doing, make things formerly overlooked – and hence invisible and nonexistent – visible and real.

The emancipatory and empowering possibilities of narrative analysis re-invigorated aspects of humanism largely neglected during the ‘positivist’ years of human geography. Humanist geography, which emerged in the 1940s and focused on the relationship between behaviour and landscape, raised concerns about individual as well as group behaviour (Norton 2000). This link with psychology, and most
specifically, phenomenology, re-emerged in the 1970s with the idea that geography was ‘an interpretive art’ (Crang 1998, 11). Phenomenology has contributed to the current concerns of human geography that implicate the symbolic meanings attached to landscape in identity politics (Norton 2000).

The production of meaning can be ‘read’, be it through observation of semiotic messages presented in, for example, architecture and built environments, or through analyses of texts (such as those produced during research interviews). The use of textual analysis in cultural geography includes the reading of cultural formations as texts (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988).

The methodological reliance on the use of narratives in human geography is criticised. Sayer identified a tendency to ‘underspecify causality in the processes they [narratives] describe’ (Sayer 1989, 263). He acknowledged, however, that a political-economic context of narrative analysis is useful. In an appeal to find a balance between what Merrifield (1997) regarded as rigid analytical techniques, such as the linguistic procedure of pragmatic content analysis on the one hand, and Clifford’s fluid relativism that denies context, on the other, he suggested inclusion of careful considerations of ‘the everyday’ in the production of cultural meanings (Lefebvre 1971, Eyles 1989). Merrifield (1997, 419) appealed:

for an attempt to translate between processual and daily life universes suggests that theory can be enriched if it speaks the language of daily life and that daily life can be more deeply understood if the way it is constructed processually is also known.

Merrifield (1997, 461) was concerned with the tendency for the production of academic narratives that privilege processual metaphors over ‘metaphors of immediate urban daily life experience’. The caveat, however, was that some metaphors of the everyday have been less than successful because the have tended to ignore process. For example, Merrifield (1997, 424) observed that in Jacobs (1961) ‘ballet of the city sidewalk’:
Her vision is clearly non-processual: no mention is given to the … “choreographic processes” of capital circulation, of the various interlocking dynamics of property and land markets … big institutions … to the manner in which class, race and gender get constructed.

Careful geographic analyses need to find a balance between the bigger picture and contextual contingencies to determine the ways that both are constituted by each other.

The narratives of individuals generated during the research stage of writing this thesis, contributed to the story of the production of whiteness in the case study area. Such narratives provided empirical evidence for assessing the extent to which dominant discourses about the case study area were constituted, supported or contributed to, or challenged and unsettled locally. In addition, local narratives provided evidence for assessment of the level to which they were subordinated to the influential institutions such as the predominantly ‘white’ media, government agencies and, increasingly, resident action groups. The narratives that were used in this thesis do not float freely, that is, they were produced by and in relation to specific events. They are part of a self conscious political process.

To make sense of the processual capacities of localised narratives, I used Bonnett’s (1992) conceptualisation of discursive environments. A discursive environment ‘refers to a specific group’s shared perceptions in and concerning a particular place’ (Bonnett 1992, 4). Incidents of ‘shared perceptions’ were traced in research interview narratives through the coding process (tabulated in Appendix 4).

Discourses were generated in the various discursive environments in several ways. This thesis focused specifically on the narratives and storylines of people who live and work in the case study area, and the rhetoric of the popular (print and other) media, and real estate agents who sell property in the case study area. Façadism and urban imaginaries, promoted by selling agents and property developers, produced identifiable meanings (through metaphors and metonyms). There were also the
official, and at times unofficial, institutional responses (narratives and rhetoric) produced through policing and governmental reactions to events in the area.

As the unplanned incidents occurred, any consequent contributions to discourse that were produced were included in the analytical process. At times, interviews provided leads to events and interviewees discussed these events. For example, several interviewees disclosed their involvement in resident action groups that led me to the groups themselves (and, on occasion, their methods of producing propaganda). Section 3.4.5 details the discursive environments that were pertinent to data generation for this thesis.

3.4.5 Discursive environments

a) media representations of place

Two types of media data generated discourses about The Block and surrounding area. These were:

1. Real estate advertisements.
Initially, house advertisements were sought but these were scarce. Houses in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale was usually advertised with houses in other areas in, for example, block advertisements by a real estate agency promoting a more desirable area. Sometimes Darlington, Redfern or Chippendale were advertised as ‘Newtown Area’ or ‘Surry Hills Area’. In early 1997, however, a new commodity and associated selling discourse emerged. New York Style loft apartments appeared in the case study area. It then suddenly became a viable inner-city residential (investment) location. I abandoned collecting the portrayals of terrace houses to the task of building an archive of promotional materials for the new style of apartments (newspaper advertising, brochures, letters of invitation to inspect, floorplans, bookmarks, other promotional paraphernalia). This archival material tells its own unique story about the portrayal of the case study area in Chapter 8.

2. News stories about the case study area, including The Block.
A collection of news stories, particularly from the most popular Sydney newspapers and several television documentaries, provided detail on the production of popular
discourse about the case study area and The Block. Articles from the 1970s onward provided the archival material, in the form of text, for analysis of discourse production.

b) **Place-based interviews** (Appendices 2 and 3)

c) **Other:** Discourses produced by other (print) media such as fliers, letters and newsletters by resident action groups, and politicians, and council meetings and documentation. Several reports by South Sydney City Council and various state government departments were also used as data as were propaganda and narratives generated by resident action groups.

### 3.4.6 Participant observation in the case study area

The unplanned events that are integral to this thesis, and relied on a strategy of participant observation, are listed in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 The unplanned events**

- Formation of the Darlington Resident Action Group (DRAG) to fight ‘inappropriate’ (apartment) development
- The ‘Caroline Lane (drug use) Incident’ and subsequent media furore that caused the removal, and then sudden reinstatement of a needle-exchange facility in a laneway near The Block
- A state government proposal for a drug health facility for a site in Little Eveleigh Street and subsequent mobilisation of Redfern Residents Action Group (RRAG) to fight the proposal
- The engagement of community consultants by South Sydney City Council to negotiate with the community over the future of the Wilson Brothers Factory Site and consequent mobilisation of groups to protect white space during the negotiations

Over the course of these events, I attended public council meetings, community consultation workshops and meetings, and street meetings held by resident action groups. My initial attendance at these events was as a resident but when I realised their significance to my research, I became a ‘researcher-participant’ (Gans in Robinson 1998). As such events occurred with little warning, and after my thesis
project had gained ethics clearance, certain ethical problems did exist. I remained vigilant to the principles of ethical research (refer to Endnote 1). Rough fieldwork diaries were produced from participant observation.

3.5 Data analysis

Qualitative sources are used to ‘understand the subjective meaning of social action rather than to merely recount its superficial characteristics’ (Winchester 1996, 118, see Eyles 1988, Eyles and Smith 1988, Brannen 1992 for review of qualitative methodologies). The variety of qualitative methodologies used in this thesis is reflective of the diversity of data sites available in the research context. The context of data generation is vital (Jackson 1991b) because of its positioned origins (Marcus and Fischer 1986) and the need to consider ‘partial perspectives’ and to value ‘insider knowledges’ and investments (Lee and Poynton 2000, 11) in the formation of understandings about people and place. Differently contextualised data may reflect the same issues in different ways. For example, a newspaper article is rarely (if ever) politically neutral. It is produced from a positioned politics. The message that is transmitted depends on the agenda behind its production (Mani 1990). The objective of the newspaper article may be to sensationalise an issue. So, often times, it is the sensationalism that is data, or what is not being said, depending on the research.

To consider the particularities in the range of positions about an issue enabled inclusion of ‘individual’ stances, or pieces of information during analysis for this thesis. Providing space for voices of otherwise unheard individuals is a strength of qualitative approaches (McDowell 1992). Giving voice to an individual who is in a position of power, such as a politician, on the other hand, may have more impact on the explanation of an event or process than other narratives. Without the other voices, the details of that power may be lost or the power of that position may be overemphasised and resistant voices may go unheard (Sharp et al. 2000). As the narrator of multi-vocal research, it was essential for me to remain vigilant to the distributions and workings of power within and between data sources.

The writing/analyses of this thesis have drawn on a ‘phenomenological perspective’ to uncover ‘essence and meaning … without utilising the presuppositions and methods
of science but by examining human interpretation and experience of space and place’ (Robinson 1999, 420). It combined the information gathered through the various research methodologies into a research narrative. Collins (1995) has described these woven texts as ‘aggregate narratives’. These:

try to envision a Big Picture … but in so doing reveal … no one master-narrative or aesthetic … [but] generate a productive cacophony, a dissonant mix of master-and micronarratives which resist any attempts to harmonize them but are, nevertheless, better understood through juxtaposition, in all their noisy simultaneity (Collins 1995, 8 and 33).

Qualitative research is often concerned with the ‘extraction of meanings in a process of interpretation’ (Robinson 1999, 410). This thesis has used ‘writing’ as analysis, a method that has emerged in qualitative and interpretative geographies (Pile 1991, Barnes and Duncan 1992, Winchester 1996, Jacobs 1999, Le Heron et al. 1999, Robinson 1999). The variety of sources have been combined to provide a ‘thickened description’ (Geertz 1973) about the processes of whiteness in place. Thickened description:

attempts to make sense of the complex layers or dimensions of meaning in cultural rituals by describing them in detail from many points of view … the term also has affinities with the interpretation of iconography and symbolic imagery in art works and artefacts (Robinson 1999, 474).

This thesis explored examples of the inscription of cultural meaning on location, particularly in laying claims to located spaces, such as territories ascribed as ‘white’. The dislocated time-space(s) of imagined pasts and other places that increasingly preoccupy the ways of whiteness in the case study area, also carve out cultural space. As individuals, and groups envision (or ‘map’) cultural spaces, the many experiences contribute to understanding the variety of meanings of places (Collins 1995). The forms of analysis used in this thesis have built a picture of place but do not claim to be the story of this place. They do, however, contribute to the explanation of attributes of people and processes in this place.
3.6 Building the ‘themes’ of the following chapters

Several heuristic themes emerged from the data generated for this thesis and are detailed in the following themed chapters. Chapter 4 traces the history of the way that The Block has been subjected as ‘not belonging’ in inner-Sydney. A history of the case study area is traced and includes the establishment of The Block, and a chronology of ideas about The Block. The rise of resident action, groups that have mobilised in response to The Block’s presence is also been documented as part of this history of place. Chapters 4 and 5 detail a process of cultural encoding. The Block was encoded as not belonging and its ongoing presence remains a paradox. This status is continually re-encoded. Chapters 6 and 7 collate various data sources that provide evidence for the way an ‘architecture of denial’ of The Block is constructed in the case study area. The way that the heritage of The Block is carefully denied is analysed in these chapters by tracing the commodification and protection of select (white) histories in the inner-city. Chapter 8 details carefully constructed notions of elsewhereness. The ‘elsewhere’ is an image of New York City and this chapter details the rise of ‘Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome’ in which The Block is either sidelined through lifestyle imaginaries and/or is commodified and consumed as part of the cosmopolitan fantasy.

1 For example, as a resident I attended public council meetings about development in my area. What I had not anticipated was that overt displays of hostility and racism would be directed at the Aboriginal people from The Block, who were present at these meetings. I had to decide whether to include such detail as data for this thesis, or not, because of the ethical problem of inclusion: those present at the meeting did not know that I was a ‘participant observer’ as well as a resident. I decided to include the details (and be a participant observer, without the permission of those being observed) but I followed the usual ethics procedures that ensured the anonymity of those involved in such data production. I looked for trends through discourse production. All materials that were placed on public record were included (such as publications by South Sydney City Council).

2 Residents of Chinese origin had occupied this part of the city since the turn of the 20th Century.

3 Our Surry Hills house, in Reservoir Street, was described as ‘Portuguese Pink’ by neighbours. As the area gentrified, new neighbours began to pressure us to remove the paint and render to match the row.

4 With hindsight I now realise that I had commodified The Block in my own middle-class way, as a repellent for other middle-classness. Other commodifications of The Block are discussed in Chapter 8.

5 This is not a statistically representative sample.
URBAN INDIGENEITY: A (POST)COLONIAL PARADOX

This chapter details how a blighted inner-city area in Sydney became a site of struggle between non-indigenous and indigenous Australians. Prior to gentrification, the inner-city suburbs of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale provided spaces for disadvantaged people to inhabit. The most disadvantaged were indigenous Australians who moved into inner-city areas that were otherwise largely undesired. Aboriginal people began to migrate to Sydney in the 1930s from mission homes in rural areas where work was scarce; to seek employment and find out about missing kinfolk after decades of the forced separation of families (Anderson 1993a, b). ‘Redfern’ (in this case, as the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area) was the focal point of such migrations. Redfern Railway Station became the place to alight after a train journey from country areas to the city. The entrance to Eveleigh Street, now the main street of The Block, is just across the road from Redfern Railway Station.

Apart from housing poor Aboriginal people, Redfern started to become a symbolic place, the meeting place for otherwise displaced peoples (Anderson 1998). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, an overt politics of place emerged (Anon 1974, Anderson 1993a, b, 1999). Redfern became a place of struggle, and then victory, for Aboriginal land and housing rights, resulting in the formation of The Block. In Sydney, the place where the colonisation of land that became Australia began, land was handed back to the indigenous people of that land. The symbolism of this political victory remains. But it is a meaning that coincides with a stigma associated with this neighbourhood, and specifically The Block, precisely because it is Aboriginal. As a focal point of indigenous struggles for rights, and as a magnet for indigenous disadvantage, The Block has captured the attention of the non-Aboriginal majority of Australians.

4.1 The paradox of urban indigeneity

For much of non-Aboriginal Australia, the events that culminated in land and housing being granted to an urban Aboriginal community in inner Sydney were initially of
little consequence in the 1970s. The suburbanised majority had little to do with the inner-city at that time. For the incumbent working class communities, life in the inner-city was very different to living in the suburbs. It was an undesirable city world that was, at most, traversed by those commuting by road or train to the districts of central business and commerce in the city of Sydney (Fitzgerald 1987, Spearrit 1978, Lowenstein 1978; Massey et al. 1999 on ‘City Worlds’). There were those who had been left behind, in the inner-city, during suburbanisation. There were also those who sought the low cost inner-city housing after migrating from rural areas and there were those who had migrated to Australia’s inner-cities from other parts of the world after World War 2. In short, prior to the era of gentrification, only those with few other options – the poor ‘working classes’, migrants and Aboriginal people – lived in the inner-city.

As large numbers of people left, the inner-city areas of Sydney deteriorated further. More heavy industry, factories and warehousing activities moved in to benefit from cheap land and urban locations. For those still living in such mixed-use areas, battles were occasionally waged against threats to housing and amenity (McInness 1967, Troy 1981). Although resident activism emerged largely in more affluent areas (Roddewigg 1978, Costello and Dunn 1994), and mobilised against threats to amenity and environment, a culture of defending the inner-city of Sydney by the ‘working classes’ was also evident. The now famous ‘green bans’ movement began in the 1970s (detailed in Chapter 6). Prior to such movements, and the subsequent gentrification of the inner-city, this landscape was characterised by the dirt and grime of heavy industry from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s. Industrialisation of the inner-city of Sydney paved the way for housing facilities that were unsuitable for location in (other) residential areas. One example was the Waverley Council’s garbage disposal incinerator, which was housed well away from the Waverley area, in inner-city Waterloo. As renters, mostly, inner-city residents did not have the same rights to residential amenity (such as clean air) as their suburban, home owning and rate paying counterparts (McInness 1967).

Although largely powerless against intrusions that exacerbated their already impoverished living environment, inner Sydney residents were not passively resigned
to such incursions. For example, non-Aboriginal residents of Darlington and Redfern voiced strong opposition to the proposal to provide a place for Aboriginal settlement in the inner-city. Another fight to retain residential territory loomed but this time it was a ‘human zoo’, as referred to by its opponents (quoted in Anderson 1993a, 94), that threatened to occupy their part of the beleaguered inner-city. A movement of opposition to the formalisation of the Aboriginal community galvanised and resistance to the presence of The Block remains strident in the area that surrounds it, to this day.

The founding of an Aboriginal presence in the middle of what is commonly accepted to be Australia’s premier city was a consequence of the new politics of Aboriginal rights that had emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Anderson 1993a, b). But The Block represented a return of indigenous people to a place from which they had been successfully banished during the early days of colonisation (Mickler 1991, Jacobs 1996, Jones 1997 for Perth example). For the non-Aboriginal majority of Australians this return of Aboriginality to urban space was inappropriate. The history of settlement in Australia was such that urban areas were quickly rid of their indigenous populations. In the non-Aboriginal settler mind, ‘Aborigines’ belonged outside the city despite the fact that cities played host to small numbers of Aboriginal people often inhabiting fringe spaces (Gale 1972, Bropho 1980). This history means that for many non-Aboriginal settler Australians, the Aboriginal settlement in Darlington (The Block) remains an enigma. For many who live(d) near to The Block, its founding and ongoing presence is a paradox; it will always be out-of-place.

This chapter provides a historical context for the paradoxical status of The Block. The Block continues to be discursively framed as a dangerous place that does not belong in the centre of Sydney. Rather than detailing the political economy of this place, this chapter refers to the useful model established by Kay Anderson that demonstrated the imaginative and discursive ‘making’ of Chinatowns in Vancouver (Anderson 1989, 1991), Sydney and Melbourne (Anderson 1990). Discourse and material conditions are shown to be mutually dependent.
4.2 A history of urban blight 1 - The Dangerous City

The case study area has evolved through various stages of settlement from its origins as Blackwattle Swamp. The ‘respectable’ Victorian era of the mid to late 1800s (McInness 1967, 351) left a legacy of Victorian terrace houses that are now highly desirable. The second notable stage of white settlement in the case study area was its descent into the stasis of a long term ‘slum’ era, along with the rest of inner-city Sydney. From the turn of the 20th Century, negative environmental effects of industrialisation, overcrowding and inadequate infrastructures exacerbated the impoverished living conditions (Fitzgerald 1987, 148). A third stage in the development of the case study area involved the large-scale movement of residents away from inner-cities to the suburbs. Suburbanisation resulted in further deterioration of the inner-city built environment, through neglect and disinvestment. This decline continued throughout the 1900s until the fourth stage when the development history of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale diverged from much of the rest of inner Sydney. Gentrification had begun in the 1960s and 1970s but this migration ‘back’ to the inner-city of Sydney from the suburbs, was highly location-specific.

4.2.1 Industrialisation and ‘slum’ landscapes

In 1900, Victorian terrace housing dominated the Darlington/Redfern built landscape (McInness 1967, 351). Throughout the 19th Century, most Sydney dwellers lived in terrace houses in what is now the inner-city, or ‘not too far from Sydney Cove’ (Frost 1992, 193), and not far from places of work. From the turn of the 20th Century, Sydney’s ubiquitous terrace houses became increasingly regarded as ‘an inherently bad form of housing that fostered slum attitudes, crime and immorality’ (Fitzgerald and Keating 1991, 80). The catastrophic epidemic of rat-borne bubonic plague of 1900, and the subsequent smaller outbreaks in 1902, 1907 and 1921 to 1922, affirmed such connotations (Curson 1985, 52) and the increasing un-desirability of the inner-city. The poorer parts of Sydney, Erskineville, Alexandria, Ultimo, Waterloo, Pyrmont, Woolloomooloo, Surry Hills and Redfern, with small rented terrace houses, became ‘working class’ suburbs. The term ‘slum’, which was associated with dirt and disease, was commonly used in reference to these poorer industrial workers suburbs in Sydney (Howe 1994, 142). As such areas deteriorated, the larger terrace houses,
located on main thoroughfares, that formerly housed the ruling classes, were easily transformed into boarding houses (Fitzgerald 1987, 148). Darlington and Chippendale began to be transformed into industrial areas in the 1920s and most of the small wooden terraces were demolished over that time to make way for factories, warehouses and breweries. Although the landscape of Chippendale changed dramatically due to industrialisation, Darlington retained much of its predominantly brick housing stock until the 1960s (North and Christie 1997; McInness 1967).

4.2.2 Urban Blight and Suburbanisation
The transformation of older inner-city residential areas, from areas of general settlement to zones of ill-repute and disregard, occurred hand-in-hand with processes of suburbanisation. The mass migration to the suburbs occurred particularly during the housing shortages following World War 2. Murphy and Watson (1997) cited inner-city slum clearance, government and developer suburb-building initiatives, improved transport links and the (re)domestication of women after war duties had taken them out of their homes, as part of the suburban pull. Decentralised employment in manufacturing, that moved to the cheap hinterlands, also contributed to the realisation of the great Australian dream of suburban living. Fitzgerald noted that ‘literature advertising the garden suburbs appealed directly to class snobbery, deprecia[ed] the older suburbs’ (1987, 42). With the massive building program that saw Sydney expand into the Western Plains in the 1950s and 1960s, ownership of a house on a plot of land away from the tenements of the inner-city, dramatically changed the ‘face of domesticity’ in Australia (Murphy and Watson 1997, 7). The mass exodus from areas such as Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale left behind only those with few resources.

For newly arrived post-World War 2 migrants, the impoverished inner-city became home (Burnley and Murphy 1994). In 1947, Australia had recorded its lowest proportion of overseas born since colonisation (Castels et al. in Bulbeck 1993). The nation was firmly divided by class and religion with a predominantly working class Irish Catholic population and the more affluent White Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASPs).
The sudden flood of new migrants from war-torn Europe registered as ‘culture shock … [for the then] … highly homogenous anglicised white population’ (Bulbeck 1993, 131). Moving into the inner-cities, the concentrations of first generation migrants were generally regarded as ‘ethnic ghettos’ of ‘new Australians’ who refused to assimilate into mainstream (white) Australian society. An Australian migrant policy attended to what was diagnosed as the ‘problem migrant’: the non-assimilating migrant who retained European behaviours. The resultant ‘problem migrant policy’ defined all ethnic groups as marginalised (Bulbeck 1993, 134). Policy makers believed that the concentrations of ethnic groups in the inner-cities would become underclasses but the process of policy revision, and the subsequent focus on migrant integration, did little to alleviate the problems of migrant poverty (Martin 1978, de Lepervanche 1984, Bulbeck 1993). The existing ill repute and undesirability of inner-cities, for the ‘white’ majority of Australians, was exacerbated by migrant poverty. In a nation with a home-ownership ideal, tenancy rates in the inner-cities reached 90%, prior to gentrification (Fitzgerald 1987, 41). The suburbs represented affordable respectability and a haven from the problems in the inner Sydney.

In the US the term ‘white flight’ described the mass exodus from the ‘dangerous’ inner-cities during post-war suburbanisation in the 1950s (Smith 1996, 217). Such a term was not applied to the case of Sydney because of the extant homogeneity of Sydney’s ethnicity overall. For many who fled to the suburbs, their escape was to a better life, away from the constraints of their prescribed (working) class. Consecutive post-war governments provided home ownership initiatives that assisted suburbanisation for the majority (Bulbeck 1993). For those leaving the inner-cities behind, participation in the ‘Great (white) Australian Dream’ of home ownership in the suburbs, promised upward mobility. Many would become the new ‘middle classes’ that would, in the 1960s and 1970s, look again to living in the inner-cities.

The next section of this chapter details a stage of further deterioration in the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area in the 1960s and 1970s that occurred in contrast to the rest of inner-city Sydney, which began to gentrify. Along with the deterioration of the case study area, battles for territory ensued. I argue that such battles helped to establish a sense of siege among those who remained in the case
study area and for some of those who arrived (and are arriving) during gentrification. The resident battles, the wins and losses that occurred during the years of suburbanisation, and then subsequent gentrification of nearby areas, are now part of the cultural fabric of the case study area. For some, the sense of siege, and the readiness for battle, remain ever present.

4.3 A history of urban blight 2 - The Endangered City
In the 1960s Darlington faced the prospect of complete subsumption by The University of Sydney (USYD). Darlington residents battled to save their suburb. The second stage of besiegement occurred in the early 1970s with the establishment of The Block. At both times the predominantly poor and ‘working class’ residents of the Darlington area were disempowered by their class status (Fitzgerald 1987, 148). The non-suburban location, and the mix of industry, housing, ethnic diversity and poverty, contributed to the existing un-desirability of areas such as Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale.

4.3.1 University expansion into Darlington
By the late 1950s an increase in demand for tertiary education meant that USYD needed to expand. By 1985 enrolments had increased to over 18,000 as compared to the 1961 figure of 12,527, indicating a correct forecast of growth (Report on the development of The University Site. 1961-1985, 1985). In 1957, USYD appointed a Select Committee to develop a plan for its future. This committee outlined the proposal for future development of the university grounds. USYD turned to its deteriorated, largely undesirable, neighbouring suburb of Darlington. The result was the large-scale expansion of USYD into Darlington which caused major social upheaval with the displacement of whole sections of residential streets, such as Rose and Darlington Streets, Butlin Avenue and Maze Crescent (Figure 4.1). The displaced residents consisted of owners and renters. Owner-occupiers were ‘helped’ to buy elsewhere after receiving close to, or just more than, the property value set by the Valuer General’s Department (NSW government department)\textsuperscript{7}. Renters, who were mostly ‘protected tenants in the terms of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1939’ (McInness 1967, 353), were also ‘helped’ by USYD to move to other rental properties (McInness 1967)\textsuperscript{8}. Residents in the area lobbied the local Sydney City Council
Councillors (‘Aldermen’) in an attempt to save the suburb of Darlington from complete subsumption by USYD. Residents were successful in playing a part in the reduction of the larger plan of expansion known as the ‘University Extension Area’ (UEA).

The following details USYD’s expansion process, resident responses and what was lost during the expansion into Darlington. According to The University of Sydney’s Strategy Plan (Conybeare, Morrison and Partners 1990), the UEA for Darlington consisted, in part, of land originally granted in 1835 by Governor Bourke. After WWII, 50 acres of the land to the South of City Road in Darlington, was earmarked for the new University of Technology (now The University of New South Wales, UNSW). When UNSW was located in Kensington, the Darlington land was set aside under the Cumberland County Plan to meet the expansion needs of USYD and the attached Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Without consultation with the residents of Darlington, the 1958 UEA proposal was that USYD would subsume Darlington. The area bounded by City Road, Cleveland Street, Wilson Street and Golden Grove Street (Figure 4.1) was targeted. The first stage of USYD’s expansion process was to inform residents who lived in houses in Rose Street, between Calder and Raglan Streets, of the plan. Residential reaction was understandably ‘adverse’ and lobbying ‘caused certain aldermen of the Sydney City Council to initiate objections to the university’s planning proposals’ (Conybeare et al. 1990, 15). The result of lobbying was a reduction of the UEA to an area of approximately 36 acres (McInnes 1967, 357). The new UEA site was bounded by City Road, Cleveland Street, Shepherd Street, Lander Street and Raglan Street (Figure 4.1).

In the 1960s, 438 Darlington residences (some were shops with residences) which were included in the new UEA, were ‘lost’ to USYD. Various other shops, 47 factories, 5 pubs, a dance hall, a bottle yard, a branch of the Commonwealth Bank, a junk yard, the Royal New South Wales Institution for Deaf and Blind Children, Darlington Public School, St Michael’s Hostel for Catholic girls, Darlington Town Hall, Darlington Post Office, an electricity sub-station and two children’s playgrounds
were also subsumed (McInnes 1967, 348, 349). A ‘Special Uses’ zoning for schools and USYD was applied to the Darlington area on the 11 May, 1958 but the exact boundaries remained uncertain. The boundaries of this zone were finally set in 1969 when USYD was allocated an extra 9 acres (Proceedings of Council, 1959, Sydney City Council). These boundaries exist today. USYD’s Darlington Campus is bounded by Darlington Road, Codrington Street, Abercrombie Street and Golden Grove Street. The South Sydney Council Local Environment Plan, 1996, confirms these current boundaries.

According to USYD’s development report, planning for university expansion has been hampered by the ‘attendant problems of finance, procurement, over-spreading and antagonism from citizens in affected neighbourhoods’ (Conybeare et al. 1990, 22 emphasis added). The residents of Darlington and Chippendale have consistently met any further developments proposed by USYD, with scrutiny and protest. Very recently, USYD and local residents came to an arrangement with a plan for ‘community consultation’ via a ‘Community Committee’ (according to a local former ‘committee’ member and local resident and business owner, Interview 3, 17 October 1997) as part of the development process. USYD continues, however, to be regarded with suspicion by many Darlington residents, even by those who have not lived in the area for long. There is a history, and a memory of those earlier expansionist days that feeds the community’s distrust.

4.3.2 Loss of Darlington Identity

The struggle for territory in Darlington is reflected in the near loss of the suburb and the name of ‘Darlington’ itself. A main arterial road, Cleveland Street separates Darlington and Chippendale but since USYD’s subsumption of half of Darlington, both suburbs are routinely conflated and referred to as ‘Chippendale’. It is only in recent years that Darlington has been re-identified as a separate entity. This has been due, in part, to the effort of real estate agents who wanted to distinguish Darlington from ‘Redfern’ with all of its racialised connotations – that also apply to neighbouring Chippendale. For example, a newspaper headline: ‘No-Go for taxis in Chippendale’ (SMH, 27 September, 1997, 3), referred to the stigmatised ‘no-go’ zone of Darlington/Redfern, including The Block area. Having lost territory firstly to USYD
and then to The Block, and sharing a postcode with Chippendale, Darlington only just exists.

4.4.3 Other losses
The most recent ‘losses’ of residential amenity and territory in Darlington has again been to USYD. A stand of trees or ‘bushland’, owned by USYD in Shepherd Street, was fought for by local residents who wanted to ‘save the bush’ and halt the development of sporting and student union facilities on the site. As USYD owned the land, the development proceeded. In another battle, The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) succeeded in building a residential development for student housing on the site of the somewhat lamented ‘Miss Muffett’s Jam Making Factory’. Local residential distrust of USYD and its expansionism was applied to the other university presence, of UTS, in the area. With the UTS development, the losses incurred include more than territory. This student-housing development was widely regarded to have been built at the expense of heritage. At a South Sydney City Council (SSCC) public meeting (14 June 1997, at Harry Burland Activity Club, Darlington) members of ‘Darlington Resident Action Group’ (DRAG) mobilised to protect another site from a similar fate. DRAG members called on a developer who had proposed to build an apartment block on the corner of Ivy and Boundary Streets opposite the UTS apartments, not to replicate the ‘mistakes’ of the UTS development. There was overwhelmingly agreement by those present at the SSCC meeting that the UTS development represented a benchmark for ‘tastelessness’ in the area. As one angry resident stated in defence of heritage:

we want more sympathetic [development] … with 2 storey terraces. When’s the 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} UTS buildings [going ahead]? Is council serious about … heritage? (South Sydney City Council Public Meeting, 14 June 1997)

UTS was presented as the aesthetic invader, a vandal to the heritage of the area. Although two very separate institutions, the two universities (UTS and USYD) continue to be viewed with suspicion, as potentially threatening to the remaining heritage of Darlington. The residents of Darlington mobilise quickly to protect houses and (façades of) old industrial buildings as these are important reminders of the past, a
heritage of survival. Affordable housing for students, however, is simply part of the force that threatened Darlington, and destroyed part of its heritage in those earlier times.

4.4 The return of indigeneity

The other significant and highly controversial event that contributed to the sense of siege and threat, and consequent resident mobilisations in the Darlington area, occurred after the expansion of USYD in the 1960s. In the early 1970s another patch of territory in the case study area was under threat by a proposal to house an Aboriginal community. This event set in train another set of battles that are ongoing to this day.

The residents of the already diminished suburb of Darlington were well used to mobilising for a fight by the time the then Federal Labor Government granted the funds to establish a site for urban Aboriginal housing. Although Aboriginal people had lived in the area since the 1930s (Anderson 1993a, b), the proposal to centralise an Aboriginal presence in inner-city Sydney rankled with local non-Aboriginal residents. The local South Sydney City Council supported the local residents of Darlington who did not want this development in their area.

The claiming of land and Victorian terrace houses for Aboriginal people unsettled an already destabilised local community in Darlington (Anderson 1993b). This event occurred at a time of widespread ignorance of Aboriginal people, particularly in the urban context. For most non-Aboriginal Australians, indigenous people were primitive outback dwellers. In general, non-Aboriginal people were unsure how to respond to the emergence of what became known as ‘Black Politics’ in Australia. Urban Aboriginal occupation was regarded with suspicion at a time when this mostly misunderstood politics was strengthening – it was unpredictable and seemed potentially dangerous, particularly if referenced to the US model of Black Politics and associated civil unrest.

The Redfern area had become a focal point for activism as well as Aboriginal migration to the city. Aboriginal people became more ‘visible’ to non-Aboriginal
society, as a ‘radical’ part of the wave of social reform movements of the time (Mickler 1998, 115). In the 1967 referendum Australians voted to reform indigenous policy. This would consolidate Aboriginal citizenship nationally. The establishment of the Aboriginal ‘Tent Embassy’ on Australia Day, 26 January 1972 (Attwood 1989) was an event that indicated a new stage of Aboriginal politics in Australia. In Darlington, local (non-Aboriginal) residents came face-to-face with this new ‘Black Politics’. Instead of supporting its traditional ‘working classes’ constituents the new federal Labor government supported an unknown, frightening and highly politicising ‘other’ by providing a place for Aboriginal settlement in Darlington. The residents of Darlington, betrayed by Labor, closed ranks. They rallied to embark on yet another battle to protect their embattled enclave from this unexpected new threat.

4.5 Racialised Resentments

Although Aboriginal people were present in the city, the sudden formalisation of an indigenous neighbourhood meant that it could no longer be denied or ignored. The Block may have been legitimised as an Aboriginal place in the 1970s, but for many non-Aboriginal Australians it remains unacceptable. During interviewing for this thesis, a local real estate agent was explicit about a particular aspect of The Block that makes it unacceptable:

I don’t believe there should be any street in this country that any Australian should fear going down. That’s been the problem in Eveleigh Street [The Block]. You and I, and I’ve been down it, most people would not go down it for fear, sheer fear, you shouldn’t have to [fear it]. That to me is an insult to us, to have that fear, we should be able to walk down any street (Interview 12, 4 March 1998, my emphasis).

The sentiment that all streets should be available for ‘all Australians’ to access is a version of a more widely felt view that Australia is an egalitarian society. Such egalitarianism means that racial segregation is unacceptable (and unlawful). Although anti-discrimination legislation was introduced in the 1970s (1966 in South Australia) (Bulbeck 1993, 74), unspoken and unwritten segregation still exists. For example, a
local Aboriginal welfare worker told me recently about ‘pub apartheid’. He informed me that Aboriginal people may feel welcome or ‘allowed’ to drink and gamble on the ‘card machines’ in the front bars of local hotels (pubs), but are sometimes not welcome to eat in hotel bistros or restaurants. It seems that Aboriginal people are not always part of the ‘any Australian’ group.

For the non-Aboriginal majority, who generally have no experience of segregation, an Aboriginal-only place incites resentment. Resentment is ‘an emotion … a power with its own material and discursive logic’ (Solomon in McCarthy et al. 1997, 234). Such logic can be traced in the above statement by the real-estate agent (Interview 12, 4 March, 1998). The category of ‘any Australian’ is, at first glance, an obvious one that refers to all Australians. There is, however, a caveat. Clarification of the category of ‘any Australian’ is found in reference to the word ‘us’ meaning ‘you and I’. This interviewee was referring to me (as ‘you’) and himself (as ‘I’). The subtext was that ‘we’/‘us’ are non-Aboriginal (‘ordinary Australians’): ‘that … is an insult to us to have that fear, we should be able to walk down any street (Interview 12, 4 March 1998, my emphasis)’. Aboriginal Australians were, therefore, relegated to the status of ‘them’ (the other) in the ‘any Australian’ category: the reference is to ‘any (any = us = non-Aboriginal) Australian(s)’. In a neo-colonial sweep, the inference is that it is all (of ‘us’) non-Aboriginal Australians only that have a right to access the whole of Australia.

When those groups that have been identified ethnically or racially as ‘other’ seem to have something that ‘ordinary Australians’ do not, the resentment expressed is based on a perception of privilege (Hage 1998, Mickler 1998). In the above quote (Interview 12), Eveleigh Street (The Block) is considered to be a privilege that ‘they’ (Aboriginal people) have, that ‘we’ (‘ordinary Australians’) do not have. It is a privilege that ‘authentic’ (non-ethnicised Australians) cannot share even though it is in ‘our’ egalitarian country. In other words, The Block is an un-Australian place. It is a place of privilege for ‘them’, the un-Australian others.

Tim Cresswell (1996) noted that different groups of people have different ideas about what is and what is not appropriate in a place. These differences become translated into different normative geographies but, it is when ‘different cultural values clash
that normative geographies are defined by those with the power to do so’ (Cresswell 1996, 10). In the case study area there are distinct differences about what is considered to be appropriate settlement for the inner-city of Sydney. An area that is inaccessible for most Australians, a ‘no-go zone’ or ‘ghetto’, is definitely not considered to be an appropriate form of settlement in the Darlington area, or anywhere else in Australia. Cresswell (1996, 10) also noted that the ‘process of reaction and definition in the media … constitutes a rich source of evidence for the normally unstated relations between place and ideology’. In the following chapter, media responses to events on The Block and around it, convey popular sentiments and beliefs about this place. Media discourses are not, however, neutral. Their role in promoting a particular imagery is detailed. Such portrayals enhance the status of The Block as both a foreign and unwanted presence in the city of Sydney, and a privilege that only the racialised other can share.

Recent media discourses about The Block have taken a new direction. This latest discourse is the discourse of The Block’s decline. It is, allegedly, on the verge of implosion.

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the context of how urban indigeneity is paradoxical in the inner-city of Sydney. It has detailed how the inner Sydney changed during the 20th Century and the distinction between the case study area and other parts of inner Sydney. The history of Darlington’s besiegement, the establishment of a community spirit of suspicion and the threat to territory that has come with the arrival of urban indigeneity, were outlined.

The next chapter traces the consolidation of the paradoxical status of urban indigeneity. It details the ways in which The Block is resented because of the fear it produces within the predominantly non-indigenous community that surrounds it. Recent discourses of The Block’s imminent demise enhance and reinforce the paradoxical status of urban indigeneity. Such discourses provide hope for the possibility of a fulfilled gentrification scenario, one that is free of the hindrance of a troubled urban Aboriginal settlement at its centre.
There were many reasons for migration to cities at this time. Aboriginal people had been dispossessed of land and forcibly moved onto reserves from the late 1890s and by the 1930s disease and malnutrition were rife. Massacres of isolated Aboriginal groups still occurred in the 1920s and 1930s (Bulbeck 1993).

Somewhat confusingly, ‘Redfern’ refers to the suburb of Redfern, the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area and also The Block, particularly in media accounts.

The ‘green bans’ were a form of development ‘black ban’. The Builder’s Labourers Federation (BLF) were a strong trade union that used ‘green bans’ to halt developments that were considered to be detrimental to environment, or threatened ‘working class’ or heritage housing (Roddewigg 1978, Mundey 1981, Jakubowicz 1984, Burgmann and Burgmann 1998 and, for Aboriginal housing, Anderson 1992, 1993; Burgmann 1993).

After much protest by the incumbent middle-class gentrifiers of inner-city Sydney, operation of this facility finally stopped in 1997.

The term ‘Aborigines’ is a contentious one and generally disliked by Aboriginal people. Although Aboriginal people acknowledge that they are Aboriginal (to Australia) the term ‘Aborigine’ is a label that was imposed by non-Aboriginal authorities.


Such figures are usually well below market value.

Some displaced tenants were offered leases for other houses that the university had bought during this expansion process. This meant that some displaced protected tenants moved into neighbour’s houses. There are incidents where tenants, ‘approximately a dozen families’ (McInnes 1967, 361) who had moved to such houses and spent scarce monies decorating them, found they had to move again after eighteen months because of changes to university planning. These families had been assured by the university that they would be settled for five or six years (McInnes 1967, 361).

This became The University of Sydney’s Department of Geography.

On 28 May 1967 a federal referendum gave the Commonwealth constitutional powers to legislate on Aboriginal matters by amending Section 51 (xxvi) of the Constitution which gave only the States such powers. The 1967 referendum authorised the deletion of Section 127 of the Australian Constitution so that indigenous people could be counted in the census (Mickler 1998, 121). Voting in Australia is compulsory.

The ‘Aboriginal Embassy’ was widely demonised and eventually ‘violently removed by police under a new law … introduced by the Liberal government’ (Mickler 1998, 139).
5 SECURING THE PARADOX: SURVEILLANCE, FEAR AND POPULAR DISCOURSES

Following on from the context of the formation of The Block, provided in the last chapter (Chapter 4), this chapter details some of the methods used to maintain and reinforce its paradoxical status. I argue that because the presence of The Block – the settlement of ‘outback’ indigenes in the city – is a paradox for many non-Aboriginal people, there is a belief that The Block will pass, that its demise is assumed and assured. Of specific concern is the ongoing practice of monitoring the Aboriginal community by police and residents, and the mass media that perpetuates a discourse of The Block’s decline (Beauregard 1993). Through surveillance, the Darlington area gained the reputation of being a dangerous place. It is a ‘fearscape’ (Davis 1998), or feared place. As such the non-Aboriginal community of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale is usually cast by the media as being victimised by the criminally-inclined Aboriginal perpetrator. Discourses of decline about The Block not only support the probability of a hopeful closure to this chapter of besiegement in inner Sydney, they actively pursue this end through a process of whitewash (Gabriel 1998), or cultural bleaching. The promise is for urban lifestyles without fear, for person or property. The underlying promise is for unfettered gentrification and the associated capital gains for home owners once the stigma of The Block has gone.

5.1 Maintaining the paradoxical status of urban indigeneity
Throughout its existence The Block has remained out of place. Its paradoxical status continues to be reinforced and reiterated, particularly in the context of recent gentrification in the surrounding area. This section documents how The Block is continually portrayed as not belonging. Through careful monitoring and media reportage, the status of The Block as an unacceptable settlement, evolves. With the manifest resentment of the provision of land in the city for Aboriginal people, a more general era of backlash against minority groups, is observable in Australian society. The ‘myth of [Aboriginal] privilege’ (Mickler 1998) is conflated with widely held stereotypes about Aboriginal life, particularly about alcohol and drug-use. This
exacerbates The Block’s status of not belonging in the inner-city of Sydney. The most recent salve for the inappropriate presence of The Block is the discourse of its decline that promises the final solution to the paradox of the Aboriginal community.

5.2 Systems of Surveillance
Since the establishment of The Block, the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area has been a magnet for surveillance. From Foucault’s observations of Bentham’s ‘Panopticon’ (1977), through to Davis’s (1990b) ‘fortress city’ and Soja’s corporate ‘citadel’ and ‘paranoid architecture’ (1990, 1996), the politics of surveillance, the capacity to regulate, restrain and contain, has been variously considered. More than mere observation, surveillance is a sophisticated multifaceted process of domination through, for example, the defence of space or the denigration of public space (Newman 1972 on ‘defensible space’, Davis 1990a, b, Urry 1990 on ‘gaze’ and public space, Sorkin 1992, Merrifield 1996 on public space, Keith 1993, Jackson 1994 on surveillance/policing, Hillier and McManus 1994, Morgan 1994, Hillier 1996 on surveillance in Australian cities). In ‘modern’ cities such as Sydney, hidden cameras, referred to as ‘close circuit television’ (CCTV) networks constantly monitor city space (City of Sydney 1999). They are most prevalent in places that have been identified as crime ‘hotspots’ (City of Sydney 1999). Surveillance technologies have become part of everyday life and are generally expected in shopping malls and other privatised ‘public’ places. Surveillance in spaces of consumption, such as shopping precincts, may provide comfort for those who just go about their business, but it is determinations of what are unacceptable uses of such spaces that are often inflexible and discriminatory. In the extreme, Los Angeles has its ‘shopping citadel’ of ‘City Walk’. This is an exclusive, gated ‘leisure enclave’ for shopping (Beckett 1994). The unauthorised businesses and activities of poverty, which include collecting empty bottles, asking for spare change or simply sitting in one place for too long, are unacceptable. The uses of City Walk are defined, in part, by what is not allowed. The rigid norms of acceptable use are maintained through careful planning and security measures, including CCTV and patrols by security guards.

Such realms of surveillance beg new questions about who fits in, and who does not, and why (Cresswell 1996). In the case of groups of young men being ‘moved on’ by
police on the street, or by security guards in shopping malls, age and gender are relevant determinants as well as behaviour or class (as is particularly the case with obvious poverty). ‘Race’ too, is often a determinant of non-acceptance (Keith 1996).

In recent considerations of racialised exclusion, John Gabriel (1998, 12) turned the focus onto the perpetration of racialised exclusion and linked surveillance with a politics of ‘whiteness’:

Surveillance … is an integral aspect of whiteness … [and it] cannot be understood outside of discursive, regulatory and technological means at its disposal to position itself through others.

Surveillance is more than watching. In inner Sydney, it is tied to the ‘fortressing’ of non-Aboriginal imaginaries of home and safety. Surveillance is perpetuated in loops of ‘security’ measures which circulate between residents, who watch and report to the police and, at times, gain media attention (detailed in Chapter 7). There are links between residents, businesses and private security guards, and the police. Some homes and business premises have back-to-base alarm systems, which are linked to private security firms, and the police. The police use video surveillance as well as regular foot, car and helicopter patrols. The local railway station has CCTV surveillance technologies and railway police. The police and the local council (South Sydney City Council) report details of their activities, and concerns, back to the residents through leaflets, newsletters and public meetings. Private security firms promote their products, and the need for their products, heavily in the case study area. Local resident action groups respond quickly to incidents of crime, particularly if they are linked to The Block (detailed in Chapter 7). Institutions such as the federal government body, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and the NSW Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Housing, that provide or retract funds for social services, are also stakeholders in ‘keeping an eye’ on The Block. The positioning of the Aboriginal subject under the gaze of (mostly) non-Aboriginal scrutiny, uses a composite of mechanical as well as human surveillance technologies. In sum, as a local Aboriginal spokesperson remarked in response to surveillance of The Block:
we’re talking about the most surveilled area in the country … Redfern police have had continuous electronic surveillance in operation at The Block [since mid 1997] (Lyall Munro, 31 January, 1999, Australian Associated Press, Reuters).

Whether or not it is the most surveilled area in the country, The Block is heavily scrutinised. Such heavy surveillance creates a skewed version of The Block that confirms its status as an always problematic place, which constitutes the ongoing ‘on record’ version of its existence. Furthermore, the perpetuation of fear justifies the high levels of surveillance.

In a place with an overt racial binary in operation, as in the case study area in inner-city Sydney, ‘black’ is associated with night, dark lanes and Aboriginal people, and ‘white’ is associated with daytime, well-lit streets and gentrifiers (cf Sibley 1995). Whiteness is imagined to be the highly organised and vigilant protector that, above all else, retains control of a situation (the Aboriginal community) that might spiral out-of-control. Not unlike the colonial encounters of the past the fantasy of whiteness, in this instance, is founded on and justified by the fear of the ‘black’ other.

5.3 The emergence of a racialised fearscape

Whereas in the rest of inner-city Sydney the tag of ‘danger’ was gradually nullified from the 1960s, the case study area retained its reputation as being a dangerous place. The arrival of The Block in the early 1970s shifted existing fears of the inner-city in a unique way. The discourse of inner-urban decline became specifically racialised and focused on the case study area. As other gentrification options dwindled by the early 1990s, however, this otherwise avoided area became one of Sydney’s final gentrification frontiers (cf Smith 1996).

This final gentrification frontier is still a fearscape. Certain activities in the area work to exacerbate this reputation. For example, fear is invoked with any issues of drug use and supply, crime, dirt and disorder (Wolch and Dear 1987, Sibley 1995). The media seizes upon anything that ties such issues to The Block (Figure 5.1 gives examples of ‘drug headlines’, whereby drugs, crime and the Aboriginal community are synonymous).
Figure 5.1 Examples of ‘drug headlines’

‘Tackling the Block: Police move in on Redfern’s drugs and crime,’ ‘Heroin feeds wave of crime’, SMH, 18 January 1997, 33, 44
‘Zero tolerance as police blitz streets’, ‘Drugs, despair and derelict houses chip away at the block’, SMH, 16 January 1997, 6
‘Say no to drugs for the next generation,’ Chippo Politics, 1, 9, December 1997, 4
‘Local Drug Fear’ South Sydney Bulletin, 9 September 1998, 3
‘Residents united in drug paper,’ South Sydney Bulletin, no date
‘Minister: It’s wrong,’ The Sun Herald, 31 January 1999 (re white boy using Heroin in Aboriginal place)
‘Heroin shot - Aboriginal spokesman says he smells a rat’, The Australian, 31 January 1999
‘Redfern - a bogus war on drugs’ The Australian, 1 February 1999
‘Experts condemn needle shutdown’ SMH, 1 February 1999, 3
‘Heroin site no surprise to minister’ The Australian, 2 February 1999, 5
‘Needle give-away - Box of 100 syringes left in lane for addicts’ The Daily Telegraph, 2 February 1999, 5
‘Redfern closure wrong’, The Canberra Times, 2 February 1999, 8
‘Carr calls summit,’ The Sun Herald, 7 February 1999
‘Residents fear Redfern clinic will be needle exchange,’ SMH, 17 February, 1999
‘Carr defend needle exchange program’, The Australian, 20 May, 1999 (‘concerns over the needle exchange program in Redfern precipitated the drug summit’)

Note: ‘Carr’ refers to the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Robert Carr

The image of The Block, and the drug-related incidents depicted by the media, entrench its dangerousness and its ghetto-like character (discussed in Chapter 8). The ongoing reportage of such incidents also serve as a reminder to the public – those who read the newspaper stories – that The Block is always problematic. During research interviews, one Darlington resident used a ‘time bomb’ metaphor (interview 16, 29 April, 1998). Echoing a familiar sentiment, this resident felt that The Block is a place where incidents escalate explosively at any time.

The media readily seize upon incidents that occur between police and residents of The Block. The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), Sydney’s most popular broadsheet newspaper, has been particularly diligent. Incidents on The Block are often dubbed as ‘riots’ and have made newspaper headlines routinely since the 1970s. Recent examples of such reports include ‘[Redfern] riot case for trial’ (SMH 2 December 1989, p4). ‘It was Redfern, but it was just like Tobruk’ (SMH, 7 August 1989, 3)
which compared Redfern (The Block) ‘riots’ to war. ‘Sorry we couldn’t stop them, say police … car stolen by rioters in Redfern’ (SMH 3 January 1990, 1). ‘Call for tougher penalties after police attacked [during a riot] in Redfern’ (SMH 27 January 1997). Occasionally, police responses to incidents in ‘Redfern’ have also been reported. In 1989 to 1990 there was a spate of reports on policing The Block. Emotive terms such as ‘riots’ and the policing response, known as ‘raids’ pepper media reportage on police and Aboriginal relations (Figure 5.2 for ‘raids’).

**Figure 5.2 Examples of reports on policing The Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMH, 20 October 1989</td>
<td>‘Police accused of brutality in Redfern arrest of Aborigine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH, 22 January 1990</td>
<td>‘Arrests follow police action in Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH, 23 February, 1990</td>
<td>‘Row looms on inquiry into raid at Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH, 2 March 1990</td>
<td>‘Police raid racist, says churchman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH, 21 May 1990</td>
<td>‘Redfern police raid ‘racist’: report condemns excessive force’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This short spate of reports about one particular police ‘raid’ was considered by some non-Aboriginal residents in the case study area to be an example of ‘police bashing’ (Interview 14, 27 April 1998). The police have been accused of a variety of misdemeanours, such as ‘underpolicing’, ‘overpolicing’ and racism (Cunneen 1990). The police are also defended by local residents, and others, as being misunderstood and misrepresented by the media. During an interview with a resident living very close to The Block, the respondent displayed increasing agitation (and anger?) about media representations of police:

Very often … sections of the media do … the old sacred cow treatment of the Kooris. [They report that] all these dirty [whites/police] … coming in and flogging these poor blacks. Its just ridiculous, because blacks are flogging whites and vice versa … each individual situation is an individual situation and its the poor police who’ve got to deal with these filthy, ugly human scenarios. I mean the police are human beings … they chose to be police, bad luck, I’m not a police lover, but they are humans and they have to go in there and deal with really dangerous people all the time, junkies with syringes and crazed human beings, and evil human beings, and angry human beings and ugly, filthy human beings, and
other people, we all have to put up with this … and a lot of the things that have
gone down here have been misreported, so they’ve given the community … the
wrong picture. Its not just darkie having a bad time, its just like ‘Cop It Sweet’.
Remember ‘Cop It Sweet’? … it wasn’t only cop it sweet, everybody’s copping it
sweet. Two nights later [after ‘Cop It Sweet’ was broadcast] my wife came home
and got bloody mugged  (Interviews 5, 15 November 1997)

According to this interviewee, police and local non-Aboriginal people have to ‘cop it
sweet’², along with Aboriginal people who have suffered at the hands of local police.
In using the phrase ‘cop it sweet’ the interviewee was making explicit reference to a
television documentary on police racism of the same name (‘Cop It Sweet’, ABC
‘Four Corners’ program, Brockie 1991). This commentary (above quote) was a tirade
about contradictions and misunderstandings. This interviewee expressed anger at the
media for what s/he saw as bias. S/he felt that the media privileged the Aboriginal
‘side’ of the story to the detriment of non-Aboriginal people who, as far as s/he was
concerned are victimised by living with the Aboriginal presence. The largely non-
Aboriginal police force, who have to deal with the pathologies of the area, are also
victimised in the mind of this interviewee. For this interviewee, non-Aboriginal
people and the police also ‘cop it sweet’ along with Aboriginal people but, for some
reason, that story is not told by the (biased) media. For this interviewee, the media
fail to recognise the situation for non-Aboriginal residents and police in the case study
area.

Another resident referred to the ‘Cop It Sweet’ documentary during a research
interview. This interviewee stated:

Sometimes I think they [the media] blow it out of proportion, living around here,
but, sometimes, like … Cop it Sweet? Yes, we seen that [person] in the car, and I
won’t name his name, driving around in the car and I reckon it was a pinched
[stolen] car myself, but they [media/Aboriginal people?] don’t care … but what I
mean is they’ve [media/Aboriginal people?] just got a set against the coppers
[police] and that’s it … They [Aboriginal people] reckon they own all the land and
all this sort of thing and they never paid a penny for it, as I say our fathers went
and fought for the land, I don’t know whether their [Aboriginal] fathers did but I know mine did to make it what it is now, but they don’t respect that, they don’t respect it at all. The media I’ll say sometimes they do blow it out of proportion, but then again they sometimes do tell the truth, and sometimes, they don’t know the truth. We who are living around here, we do  (Interview 14, 27 April 1998).

This interview respondent, a long term older resident, became so agitated that the commentary lost its clarity. The interviewee began to conflate the media and Aboriginal people during this outburst. Again, the interviewee finds a contradiction. In her/his view it is non-Aboriginal people who are being victimised (by the media/Aboriginal people) when it is the Aboriginal community that is the source of trouble (no respect for the hard fought for land, a ‘set’ against police, hinting at car theft). For this resident the memory of ‘fathers’ defending the nation during the world wars sets a benchmark for a value system of respect. Although s/he acknowledges that Aboriginal ‘fathers’ might have fought for ‘the land’ (Australia) during the World Wars, s/he feels that the respect for that has been lost by the local Aboriginal people (and, perhaps, the media). In this case, the soldiers were being shamed because the land they defended and, by inference, the laws and value systems of Australia, are no longer respected. The paradox is that it is ‘we’, who for this interviewee are the non-Aboriginal residents particularly the older working-class people, who feel besieged along with the police but the media, particularly the ‘Cop It Sweet’ documentary, fail to recognise the ‘truth’. For this interviewee, local (non-Aboriginal) people know the ‘truth’ about (Aboriginal crime and disrespect) in the area. Several police officers who were interviewed also felt that the media misrepresent policing in the area (interviews 24, 28 and 30), and that this was particularly so in the ‘Cop It Sweet’ television documentary.

On the other hand, a local newsletter, Chippo Politics (November 1999, 4, 9, page 8), which is considered to be ‘left wing’ because of its origins and associations with the Australian Labor Party, expressed this sentiment:

There are a couple of issues that remain on the agenda for 2000. One locally is the issue of police/black relations. There seems to be enough evidence that the police
are still resorting to their old tactic of [using] a sledge hammer to crack a walnut.

Local policing is really only of media interest when it is associated with the much more pressing preoccupation of The Block itself. After the aforementioned police ‘raid’ (Figure 5.2) the media was silent about policing for just over 6 months until the headline ‘Cops and fairy floss at Eveleigh Street’ (SMH 14 December 1990, 7). The sentiment of hope expressed in this ‘feel-good’ story, about happy Aboriginal children and police sharing a moment eating fairy floss (cotton candy) together at a charity function on The Block was quickly sidelined as the emphasis of media reportage turned, once again, to Aboriginal crime and its policing. Figure 5.3 (below) lists the usual kind of reportage on The Block and policing in the case study area.

Figure 5.3 The ‘usual’ confrontations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Newspaper/Source</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1991</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Warrants for night-time Redfern raid ruled invalid’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Feb 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Bashing third in a month’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Police act on bashings’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Bash bus stays all week’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mar 1992</td>
<td>Eastern Herald</td>
<td>‘Mobile police station in Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Realism in Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Redfern safety meeting’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Redfern law’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1991</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Mobile police station in Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Police accused of storming flat [in Redfern]’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Redfern police supports boss’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Mar 1992</td>
<td>Sun Herald</td>
<td>‘Redfern, a residents tale’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Mar 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Guard plan for no-go area’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Apr 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Call for review of swearing law’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 May 1992</td>
<td>Eastern Herald</td>
<td>‘Redfern Kooris refuse to meet local police (for a ‘cultural exchange’)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Sep 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Youths snatch drivers’ handbags’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Sep 1992</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘New police commander aims to arrest Redfern rift’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dec 1993</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘State Govt closes Redfern bail hostel’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Nov 1994</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Talks on Eveleigh attacks’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Jul 1995</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘24-hour guard for our ‘little Bronx’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb 1996</td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>‘Four hurt as youths go on rampage in Redfern’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Mar 1996</td>
<td>Sun Herald</td>
<td>‘Police attack [in Redfern]’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1 Production of fear: police ‘blitz’ Block-related crime, then withdraw

In July 1997, media reportage on policing The Block gained a new focus. The NSW
Police Commissioner, Peter Ryan had allegedly declared a ‘New York-style ‘zero tolerance’ blitz’ concerning The Block (‘Redfern’). Headlines included ‘Zero tolerance as police blitz streets’ (SMH, 16 January 1997, 6) and ‘Zero tolerance for petty crime’ (Sun Herald, 26 January 1997, 7) in Redfern. In ‘Redfern crime slashed New York Style’, journalists reported that the ‘police presence has increased and [there is] a general ‘crackdown’ on crime in the area [of Redfern]’ (SMH, 17 April 1997, 3). A twenty-four hour mobile police unit (located in a mini-bus) was positioned next to Redfern Railway Station, opposite the entrance to Eveleigh Street, over the 1997-8 summer. Then, later in 1998, a permanent shop-front police station was installed at Redfern Railway Station to replace it (but appears to be attended sporadically). Such police presences may provide a sense of safety but they also perpetuate notions of risk and ever-present danger in this inner-city area. For the media, ‘Redfern’ (The Block) is a constant source of newsworthy stories.

The removal of the mobile police unit (bus) has done little to allay fear in the case study area. The police shop-front is generally unattended and relies on an emergency intercom, beside the door, for contact with the local police station which is a few blocks away. The expectations of safety, established by the presence of the mobile police unit have been downgraded. The Block, the perceived source of local fears, is still there. According to the local police (interview 24, 3 July 1998, interview 28, 4 August 1998), many local non-Aboriginal residents complain that the area is underpoliced. The perceived lack of policing and police levels more generally were issues that were raised, unprompted, during research interviews with local non-Aboriginal residents (Interviews 18, 19, 29, 32, made direct reference to the need for more police in the area, and interviews 5, 16, 31, 33 made indirect references to inadequate policing levels). The insistence on raising such issues, by home-owners and renters, professionals and blue-collar workers alike, indicated that policing and fears about a lack of safety remain priorities in the case study area.

At the time of interviewing (1998), the Redfern police were well aware that some residents felt that the area was underpoliced, and some, particularly concerning The Block, felt that the area was overpoliced (one Darlington resident made direct reference to overpolicing in Interview 13, and in Interviews 10, 11, 26 there were
indirect references to overpolicing). The (now former) Local Area Commander of Redfern Police station knew that the Aboriginal community felt (and still feels) over-targeted by police (interview 28, 4 August 1998). Over-reactive responses by the NSW police force to incidents on The Block have been documented (Cunneen 1990). The screening of the television documentary on racism and Redfern Police (the previously mentioned ‘Cop It Sweet’ documentary) brought swift response by the NSW Police Force. For example, a new Local Area Commander was brought into Redfern (in August 1997) to improve police and Aboriginal relations. This Local Area Commander, Peter Parsons, believed that policing The Block had to change because ‘the normal policing response in years gone by … was, in my mind, totally reactive’ (Interview 28, 4 August, 1998). This Commander implemented a more progressive ‘community oriented’ style of pro-active policing. A continuous policing and media focus that associates The Block with crime has maintained the ‘fearscape’ (Davis 1998) in the case study area. This fearscape does not escape the attention of visitors and new residents.

5.3.2 Infectious fear
The feelings of fear, the fear of loss of safety, and the feelings of besiegement that circle about in this fearscape, can quite simply be categorised as ‘race fear’. For non-Aboriginal residents, and others, fear and distrust are focused on the racialised ‘other’, and this is continually reinforced through media depictions and policing. For those who feel besieged by the presence of The Block, the media’s (and other) scripting of The Block as dangerous, provides a crutch. The Block becomes the scapegoat, an outlet for all the tensions of living in the inner-city.

To compound an already fraught situation, the racialised binary enacts another pressure on the non-racialised (that is, non-Aboriginal) group. It forces ‘white’ visibility (Dyer 1988, 1997, Frankenberg 1993a, 1993b, Gabriel 1998). In a context of racialised difference the group that is usually ethnically neutral is suddenly rendered visibly ‘white’ because of the presence of, and contrast with, the racialised ‘black’ group (Thiel 1991). Yet, even with the discomfort of being exposed, ethnically, whiteness remains pristine by contrast to blackness. Whiteness appears to be innocent. The Aboriginal community of The Block carries the kind of stigma that
is carried by other racialised groups, in other contexts where ‘race’ is associated with drugs, dirt and disorder (Douglas 1966, Kristeva 1982, 1991, Sibley 1995), and crime (For example, Cabramatta is Sydney’s ‘Asian’ drug-crime hotspot with a reputation for dirt and chaos). Whiteness is, however, always at risk of being sullied (discussed in Chapter 7) therefore, because of this ever-present danger, vigilance in surveillance and defence of space is a priority for non-Aboriginal residents and business people, and for those who pass through the case study area.

5.4 Securing the status of paradox: Discourses of Decline

During the late 1990s, the status of The Block declined drastically. This new discourse of The Block’s decline (detailed in the next sections), helped to formalise its paradoxical status in inner-city Sydney. Once sanctioned as something that cannot belong, The Block’s decline seemed inescapable. The discourse of decline pointed to a closure in this chapter of Aboriginal Australian settlement in the city of Sydney.

[f]or once, Aborigines can’t blame White Australia …[e]xhausted and in disgrace, Redfern is an Aboriginal failure, and they know it (Journalist’s commentary, SMH 18 January 1997).

The mass media are responsible for reinforcing a familiar scenario, which can be described as ‘blaming the victim’. The Block is presented as being responsible for its own implosion. The demise of The Block is constantly reiterated in headlines such as ‘Drugs, despair and derelict houses chip away at the block’ (SMH 16 January 1997, 6). In late 1990s, the discourse of The Block’s decline reached a crescendo. In 1997 the media reported that the Aboriginal Housing Company (sometimes called the Aboriginal Housing Corporation, and formerly The Aboriginal Housing Cooperative), who administer The Block and act as landlord, had announced that the site was to be transformed. The plan was to be rid of the problem element of The Block by demolishing and redeveloping the site, possibly into a ‘Black Chinatown’, ‘complete with Aboriginal cultural centre’ (SMH 22 March 1997, in Anderson 1999, 76). The media, real estate agents and others, seized on this announcement.

It is not just non-Aboriginal Australia that criticises The Block or contributes to the
discourse of its decline. The unquestioned belief that The Block has failed, that it has succumbed to drugs and crime because of its Aboriginality, was seemingly legitimised by the contribution of Aboriginal voices. From time to time, the media report comments by high profile Aboriginal spokespeople such as (the late) Dr Kumantjayi Perkins. Concerning conditions on The Block, Dr Perkins allegedly stated that ‘we’ve got to kick black arse over this’ (SMH, 18th January 1997, 33, 44). Mr Mick Mundine, the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Housing Company, has not been afraid to state his desires to ‘finish it’ (The Block). Aboriginal interventions usually highlight issues such as disadvantage or, as in the Dr Perkins’ commentary (SMH 18 January 1997), community dysfunction, but the commentaries are then subsumed into a general assumption of racial failure. The media vigilantly reports Aboriginal criticism, but rarely the prevalent Aboriginal support and concern for The Block. The discourse of the decline has, on occasion, appeared to be supported by (some) Aboriginal voices, but the overall focus remains on race failure, which is privileged over issues of disadvantage and dispossession by the largely non-Aboriginal mass media.

5.4.1 Whitewash
For Gabriel (1998) such discourses (of decline) serve as ‘whitewash’. Whitewash is a process of ‘cultural bleaching’ whereby the racialisation of others naturalised the dominance of whiteness. Whiteness remains racially neutral, it is unracialised. Processes of whiteness, such as the impact of (mostly non-Aboriginal) gentrification, including the recent push by apartment developers into the case study area (Figure 1.2, Chapter 1), the invasive surveillance of The Block and defence of (white) space, are invisible to the primary concern of vilifying the Aboriginal presence. Non-Aboriginal crime receives scant acknowledgment by the media and local information networks, such as police newsletters.

The media’s capacity to contribute to processes of ‘whitewashing’ is exemplified in the sentiment of blame, quoted above (SMH 18 January 1997). Such a comment vindicates processes of whiteness, altogether. In another example, an announcement by the Aboriginal Housing Corporation to change the status of The Block from residences to a ‘Black Chinatown’ aroused the interest of the ABC TV ‘Four Corners’
unit. With a reputation for its in-depth, genuinely investigative journalism, particularly after the exposé of police racism in ‘Cop It Sweet’, this recent investigation promised to introduce the bigger picture of the pressures on this tiny urban Aboriginal community, to the media spotlight. The highly respected and award-winning ABC journalist, Liz Jackson, reported the story about The Block (Jackson 1997).

Far from a sensitive, in-depth investigation, this documentary simply corroborated the usual sensationalist representations of drugs and drug use, poor rat-infested housing and devastated lives. The investigation was subsumed by the familiar discourse of decline about The Block. The style of the report echoed what McCarthy et al. (1997) have identified in relation to the ‘new wave of black cinema in the USA’ (with directors such as Spike Lee), as ‘a kind of documentary accuracy … [whereby] vendors of chic realism recycle a reality code … [which] operates as a system of repeatability … [and] the elaboration of a hierarchy of discourses – the fabrication and consolidation of secular common sense’. Such films use a ‘constructed reality code of “being there”’ according to McCarthy et al. (1997, 237). The ‘Four Corners’ report is clearly not a form of ‘black cinema’, the production was a predominantly non-Aboriginal project, but it was a representation of a place, filmed in a ‘being there’ style. Jackson and the production team spent enough time with the people interviewed on The Block to gain a level of trust. There were many moments of intimate, sympathetic communication but, regardless of the sensitive portrayals of individual stories, the documentary spiralled into a ‘gritty realism’ that sensationalised the already ‘known’ situation of despair. Unlike ‘black cinema’, the specular common sense presented was the outsider-view superimposed over the situation on The Block. Regardless of the initial intention of the documentary makers, the mass media cannot seem to see past the immediate images of dysfunctional, irreconcilable divisions and the usual stories of dirt, rats, drugs and crime which, by all accounts, are leading to the inevitable implosion of The Block. The lens of reportage remains fixed on the self-perpetuating despair. The context, the external realities and the bigger picture, as well as the other stories of everyday lives and struggles against dispossession, unemployment, lost families and racism, continue to be sidelined by this fixation.
The (alleged) decline of The Block has even received international attention. The prominent US broadsheet newspaper, The New York Times, carried an article headline ‘Enclave Reflects Aborigines’ Plight: Developers covet a zone the Koori find crucial to unity’ on the 9th February 1997. Although a stark headline in comparison to those found locally, it was simply a ‘grab’ and completely misleading. The opening sentence read: ‘In the shadow of gleaming skyscrapers three subway stops from the CBD, young men … sell heroin openly’. There was an immediate shift in focus from the ‘plight’ of Aboriginal residents at the hands of property developers to the usual portrayals of The Block as a drug haven, riddled with criminality. It appears that the interesting story of the ‘coveting developers’, and the pressures they place on The Block, ended up on the editorial cutting room floor.

The media accounts I have analysed to date chart a drawn-out process of reporting the demise of The Block yet the actual demise has not quite happened. The quite extensive use of heroin, the drug overdoses that bring a steady flow of ambulances into the area, and the frequent house fires that bring fire engines into the narrow streets continue, as do the less eventful everyday lives lived on The Block.

The next section details how the media shifted their focus from a discourse of The Block’s decline, to a discourse of the Block’s finality. The Block has been almost gone for several years (Figure 5.4 below for media headlines).

**Figure 5.4 Headlines: The imminent demise of The Block**  
[A short summary of the ‘agenda’ for each article is included *(italicised in brackets)*]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>‘Eveleigh St land rights claim: emotion runs high as residents battle for their block’, Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) 3 March 1996</td>
<td><em>(a losing battle to keep The Block)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>‘Black Santa sleighs The Block a final time’, SMH 23 December 1996</td>
<td><em>(because the demise is imminent ... this is the final Christmas for The Block)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
‘Its days are numbered’, and ‘The Block’s days are numbered’, SMH 18 January 1997, 33 & 44 (The Block will soon be gone)

‘Blacks vow to fight demolition of Block’, SMH, 1 February 1997 (the plans are laid to demolish The Block)

‘$6m to raze The Block’, The Daily Telegraph, 4 February 1997, 1, 2 (plans are laid to demolish The Block at large public expense)

‘Perkins linked to new plan for Block’, SMH, 22 February 1997 (Aboriginal corruption is behind the demise of The Block)

‘Block Out’, The Australian Magazine, 14-15 June, 1997, 13 (The Block is nearly gone)

‘Block saved from builders’, The Daily Telegraph, 14 August 1997, 20 (The Block has a momentary reprieve from demolition)

‘Block to get the chop? Not whilst houses are occupied, says Mayor Vic Smith,’ Sydney Bulletin, 19 August 1997 (South Sydney City Council’s mayor promises no demolition until rehousing occurs)

‘Block bulldozed: Eveleigh St reduced to rubble’, The Daily Telegraph, 18 December 1997, 21 (The Block has been ‘levelled’ … at least the demolition has started)

‘Enclave Reflects Aborigines’ Plight: Developers covet a zone the Koori find crucial to unity’, The New York Times, 9 February 1997, 18 (The Block will be demolished)

‘Report puts blacks back on The Block’, The Daily Telegraph, 1997 (Another momentary reprieve)

1998

“‘I’m staying put’” says Elder’, Sydney Bulletin, 27 January 1998, 3 (the sad plight of one last ‘battler’, an ‘old lady’ remains … deserted in her fight by the rest who have gone from The Block)

1999

‘Spotlight will be on Aborigines,’ SMH 18 June 1999 (during the 2000 Olympic Games, The Block will be an embarrassment)

‘Bulldozed!’, Sydney City Hub, 4, 38, Cover story, 6 May 1999, 12 (The Block has gone … well at least demolition has begun)

‘The Block’s last line of defence, save her 40 great-grandchildren,’ SMH, 50,483, 21 June 1999, 3 (Another ‘one old lady left’ story, which disregards the extensive ‘squatter’ presence and occupation of houses)

Almost gone since 1995, The Block still exists in 2001. There were some false-starts to its demise, and the inevitable may be slower than expected, but the media picture remains clear: The Block is heading towards extinction. Local non-Aboriginal
residents remain sceptical of the reality of The Block’s demise, regardless of any desires for a neighbourhood without it. Throughout the research interviews for this thesis, residents and business holders in the area were generally unsure about what was going to happen to The Block. For some interviewees (Interviews 2, 20, 22 and 32, all residents), the imminent demise of The Block was mentioned but the majority of interviewees entertained a discourse of decline, rather than daring to presume an inevitable end.

Non-Aboriginal residents living near The Block contribute to promoting its demise by repeating and circulating the narrative of racialised failure. Two interviewees were particularly explicit about the failure of The Block. One stated:

I think over the past 5 or 6 years it’s been really the drug problem. It’s exacerbated … it’s that Eveleigh Street [The Block] should never have been up there originally, putting them up there all together … it’s a terrible mistake and the one’s who got away and moved out into the suburbs are probably leading much better lives, away from there, it’s just too concentrated … but also it’s all the country people, the blow ins … They come in from the country, they think oh you know we can go a bit wild here while we’re visiting the relays … and that’s the whole problem I think (Interview 17, 29 April, 1998).

For this interviewee (quoted above), the failure of The Block is based on a (racial) contradiction. This interviewee believed that urban Aboriginal people simply do not belong in the city because ‘they go … wild’ (Interview 17, 29 April, 1998). The paradox lies in the reversal of the usual order: the uncivilised outback and civilisation (the city) are reversed. Aboriginal people do not fit into this interviewee’s idea of civilised urban behaviour. S/he regarded the settling a group of non-urban nomadic people (Aboriginal people) into one concentrated place as somewhat unnatural. Add to this existing problem of concentration (on The Block) is the problem of having relatives visit. This concentration in the city is, for this interviewee, a basis for the Aboriginal drug problem. Drug use was assigned the image of ‘going wild’, somewhat like a ‘grog-binge’ (alcohol binge), or ‘partying hard’ and as such it was perceived to be recreational, part of the ritual of getting together with relatives in the
city. In the mind of this interviewee, if The Block didn’t exist, there would not be this urban place to visit, congregate inappropriately and ‘go wild’. The realities of drug addiction\textsuperscript{11}, the use of drugs (mostly Heroin) and their association with the need to escape the chronic hardship of poverty were ignored. The association of drug use with recreation renders it as a somehow confused cultural/racial practice. The rest of Australian society and its colonial history is thereby exonerated of all responsibility for issues of addiction amongst some of its most disadvantaged members.

Another interviewee was clear about her/his view of where Aboriginal people do and do not belong:

So in the end as much as I love the Aboriginal culture, once you bring these people away from their culture … you put them in the city, they are really up against it … and so at the end of the day I … believe The Block must be razed, its a failed human experiment. And they can do something else there with the Kooris, or they can do something else there with a mixed community … something positive (Interview 5, 15 November 1997).

This commentary is also laden with white views about Aboriginality and the belief that there is a contradiction with the existence of The Block. Because of the belief in a singular Aboriginal culture (traditional, outback, pre-colonial), all other versions (contemporary, urban, postcolonial, as well as the multiplicity of kin-based groupings) were unacknowledged. For this interviewee, the urban ‘experiment’ (of The Block) failed because it placed a traditional, outback culture in the middle of a modern, urban (non-Aboriginal) setting. In a similar vein to the previous interviewee (Interview 17), this interviewee (Interview 5) equated Aboriginal people with a tradition that does not fit into a dynamic urban context in which (Aboriginal) culture can be corrupted. The final statement revealed a desire: ‘they can do something else there with the Kooris’ or ‘with a mixed community’. For this interviewee, the Aboriginal-only status of The Block is part of the problem yet, s/he is concerned with corrupting the purity of Aboriginal culture by bringing it to the city.

For both respondents, a main concern is that Aboriginal people and culture, and the
city do not mix. For these non-Aboriginal residents, Aboriginality fails in the city if it is not assimilated into mainstream (non-Aboriginal) society. These interviewees want non-urban Aboriginal culture, existing in some sense of authenticity, *out there*, in the outback but, in the city, Aboriginal people should assimilate and conform to the dominant norms. Using this logic, The Block failed because it does not fit either model.

The media’s vigilance on reporting the alleged demise of The Block has had two effects. Firstly, the imperative of its demise has tended to allay some of the threat that The Block will spill out of its boundaries and invade white space. If the numbers on The Block are dwindling substantially, then the likelihood of incidents is somewhat reduced. The second impact is that the media’s wavering, its continual heralding of a demise that does not happen, caused a sense of urgency.

On the 21 June 1999, a *Sydney Morning Herald* article headlined ‘The Block’s last line of defence, save her 40 great-grandchildren’, crystallised a theme of finality. The article claimed that there was only one inhabitant left on The Block, an Elder, Mrs Joyce Ingram. This was somewhat confusing information for anyone living in the area who could not help but notice that there were quite a number of people occupying The Block at any time (police estimate that at any one time there are usually about two hundred people living on The Block, Interview 28, 4 August 1998).

Mrs Ingram may be one of the last official Aboriginal Housing Company tenants but she is far from the last resident on The Block. The content of the article followed the usual media line of imminent demise. It reported that ATSIC ‘has committed $6.3 million to the demolition and relocation of The Block’s residents after a survey indicated 40 of the 52 families wanted to leave’. The expense of getting rid of The Block is recycled occasionally which simply exacerbates existing resentments about taxpayers meeting the costs of Aboriginal issues. Examples of this recycling include: ‘$6m to raze ‘The Block’ (*The Daily Telegraph*, 4 February 1997, 1,2), ‘ATSIC seeks $6m to demolish ghetto’ (*The Australian* 4 February 1997, 3) and ‘ATSIC puts up
$6m for Redfern facelift’ (SMH 4 February 1997, 4). Regarding the oft quoted survey about the number of families that want to leave The Block: in 1995 the NSW Government’s Department of Aboriginal Affairs obtained ‘Building Better Cities’ funding for this survey. What the newspaper articles fail to mention is that the results have been hotly disputed by the Redfern Aboriginal Coalition (RAC) who represent tenants and residents on The Block and administer employment programs. The RAC have raised the question of gross inadequacies in the interview process. Most notably, it was only the official leaseholders who were interviewed but the majority of the population living on The Block do not hold leases. Regardless of the obvious occupation of houses on The Block, the media message is that any remaining leaseholders want to leave. The glaring contradiction in the reportage is that the article (SMH, 21 June 1999) infers that all residents (apart from Mrs Ingram) have already gone elsewhere, yet the newspaper report stated:

> [s]he [Joyce Ingram] will only leave her home of 20 years when she is convinced the area will remain in Aboriginal hands, and that the remaining local Aboriginal community … has a home. ‘When they’re safe … and I find a place to my liking, after winter, then I might move,’ she [allegedly] said (SMH, 21 June 1999, my emphasis).

Obviously, the media is somewhat confused about the population on The Block and about whether the demise of The Block is imminent or not, but every few months we (the newspaper-reading public) are reminded again that The Block is going, or nearly gone, because drugs, crime, spiralling standards of living and so on, have taken their final toll.

The focus of the article about Mrs Ingram (SMH, 21 June 1999) shifted the emphasis from sensationalism about crime and conditions, from how The Block is imploding, to the inevitability of its passing. This reality, as presented through the eyes of the last survivor, echoes other stories of the so-called passing of Aboriginal people. The death of Truganini in 1876, for example, was significant because of the belief that she was the last Tasmanian12 Aboriginal person. Historian, Henry Reynolds (1999, 13) stated that ‘in both popular and specialist literature [it was agreed that] the Tasmanians had
been a uniquely primitive people … living fossils, representatives of the “old Stone Age” … the implication for mainland Aborigines was clear. They too would tread the downward path [towards extinction].

Focusing on Mrs Ingram, as the last surviving resident of The Block, momentarily quietened the production of crime/fear narratives by the media. It seemed inevitable that The Block would pass (into extinction) once Mrs Ingram left. In this newspaper article, however, there was a startling disruption to the tone of reverence. At the very end of the article there was a quote from Grant Christian, the Aboriginal Housing Company’s chairperson, which stated:

> We’re trying to improve the place [The Block] and it will be for Aboriginal people and it will be housing (SMH 21 June 1999, my emphasis).

There may be displacement of Aboriginal tenancy on The Block, heralding its passing but the Aboriginal residential presence will, according to this quote, remain. There are those who continue to fight for housing on The Block according to the Redfern Aboriginal Corporation (RAC) and the Redfern Residents for Reconciliation (RRR). A high-profile Aboriginal spokesperson, Sol Bellear, stated during research interviews for this thesis that those who think otherwise (that The Block will not be a place for Aboriginal housing), are ‘in for a surprise’ (interview 34, 15 September 1998). As local non-Block residents know all too well, the remaining few official tenants on The Block may move, and be housed elsewhere, but many return. The Block’s status as a meeting place (Anderson 1999), and the dire need for shelter, even as houses are boarded-up or demolished, ensures an ongoing Aboriginal presence. The reality is that The Block remains the ‘Black Capital’ of Aboriginal Australia. It continues to attract Aboriginal people, many of whom have nowhere else to go. Many stay and rent or purchase houses nearby. Others live on The Block as squatters. For many who have lost connection with their cultural origins, The Block is home, and for others it is the place to find out about home (Anderson 1999).

5.4.2 Whitewish - the promise of gentrification
The discourses of decline about The Block reinforce a general belief in its inevitable
The discourses are a part of the wishful thinking of a post-Block fantasy. Another aspect of the post-Block fantasy occurs through the very material processes of inner-city transformation. Gentrification is gradually changing the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area. As gentrification surrounds The Block, many speculate and purchase property close to The Block. Such speculative investments rely on the prospect of escalation in property values. Such speculations are based on a belief, backed by plenty of (media) ‘evidence’, in the pending post-Block era. Such beliefs have been based on the rhetoric of ‘change’ for the area. The area is changing. For example, investment in apartment developments has soared (detailed in Chapter 8) but the most expected event, the demise of The Block, remains a speculative gamble rather than a fact.

According to Real Estate Institute figures (Suburb Snapshot, www.smh.com.au), between March 1998 and March 1999 median house prices in the Darlington and Chippendale postcode area (2008) rose by 3.5% in a market of general decline in house prices (for example Paddington house prices dropped by 5.3%). The rise in prices in the case study area can be attributed to its ‘affordability’ for home-buyers or ‘low entry’ investors, as compared to other inner Sydney areas. The sudden surge in apartment prices in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale and nearby, to the South, was dominated by warehouse or ‘loft’ conversions. Apartment prices escalated by 18.3% from March 1998 to March 1999, whereas in Paddington, the area known as the ‘hallmark of gentrification’, apartment prices dropped slightly. The media seizes upon statistics such as these to promote a scenario of gentrification but they belie an assumption about gentrification that needs critical interrogation.

There is a common misconception perpetuated by real estate agents, and associated media discourses, that the gentrification process is standardised. The reality is that not all inner-city areas in Sydney will ‘do a Paddington’ as was claimed for Redfern, by the media (‘At $508,000 Redfern May do a Paddington’, SMH, 31 August 1996, 3). Gentrification does not always fit in with the predictions of real estate agent promotions, such as depicted in this headline (SMH, 31 August 1996). The assumption that gentrification will follow a Paddington lead has stimulated investment in areas such as Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale, which in turn
stimulates gentrification. The gentrification process is not, however, necessarily uniform, predictable or conclusive. Gentrification cycles are prone to be influenced by local contingencies (Engels 1999).

In the context of Sydney’s gentrification, areas such as Paddington and Woollahra are generally though of as being at a mature stage of gentrification. By contrast Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale are classified, particularly by real estate selling agents, as being in the early stages of gentrification, with the promise of higher capital gains on property investments. Regardless of the expectations and sales hype, areas such as Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale are unlikely to attain Paddington’s level of mature gentrification. Like Glebe or Newtown, gentrification may peak at a level that is different to the established benchmark of Paddington or Woollahra. The attainable house prices, and associated cultural and taste capitals, such as ‘retro’ versus ‘Victorian’ aesthetics, may never be the same. To promote such uniformity in gentrification is illusory. Setting other areas against the benchmark of Paddington and Woollahra is often misleading, particularly for gentrification speculators. But, it is good for the business of selling property. The imaginary of a mature gentrification scenario in the case study area, like that in Paddington and Woollahra, does not include the presence of The Block. Real estate agents, and the media, have promoted the assumption that a new post-Block era is just around the corner. For investors the new era for this last frontier of gentrification will blossom once it is cleansed of the impediment of The Block.

5.5 Conclusion
This chapter has been concerned with how the emergence of a value system about the paradoxical status of The Block, as detailed in Chapter 4 has been reinforced through surveillance and fear production, and by media discourses. This chapter traced the way that discourses about the paradoxical status of The Block have evolved. It has considered how such discourses perpetuate the decline scenario, and the ways that local narratives variously support, and sometimes question, these discourses. The next chapter details how conceptions of heritage are evolving in the case study area, and the ways in which such conceptions valorise select pasts. Such selective imaginings carefully forget or deny indigenous struggles, and indigenous heritage of
the past, present and future in the inner-city of Sydney.

1 This was a difficult interview because the interviewee was highly agitated and repeatedly told me to ‘not be afraid’. S/he locked the door after letting me in (thereby locking me in), offered me marijuana (s/he started smoking the minute we sat down), stormed around the room and asked me very personal questions. This person is ‘known’ in the area as having some connections with racist organisations and Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party.

2 A play on the colloquialisms of ‘cops’ (police), and ‘copping it sweet’ (similar to ‘taking it on the chin’ or ‘grin and bear it’). It means putting up with unfairness, or blame, and not complaining.

3 Between 300 and 400 Aboriginal people fought in the 1st World War and were included in the Australian ‘digger legend’. In the 2nd World War special units were created for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders (Bulbeck 1993, 224).

4 ‘Chippo’ is the locally used shortening of Chippendale. Chippo Politics is a newsletter that grew out of ‘Chippo Politics Forums’ which are regular gatherings at a local pub with guest speakers, of varying political persuasions, who discuss current political issues.

5 This commander was replaced in November 2000 by a new commander.

6 This draws on the use of the term ‘race’ in reference to Aboriginal people and issues, for example, the recent ‘race debates’ of the Hanson-Howard era in Australian federal politics in the late 1990s.

7 I acknowledge John Fielder’s (1995) note, in reference to his earlier paper (1991, Gooninup/The Old swan Brewery), that the problem with the ‘dirt and danger’ analysis is a tendency to universalise and gloss over specific social historical complexities and contradictions. He corrects this by using Stratton’s (1990) ‘shifts in epistemes of representation … and identifies tendencies rather than direct elements’ (p. 103, 104). The ‘dirt and danger’ analysis presented here is an example of ‘Aboriginalism’ (Attwood 1992, 3): ‘a specific universalism that racialises the Aboriginal social body, making “Aborigines” out of the indigenous Australian population’.

8 An interestingly twist for academic studies of whiteness is that high-profile Aboriginal spokespeople are sometimes referred to, by other Aboriginal people, as coconuts – black or brown on the outside and pure white on the inside. As Hage (1998) has noted, whiteness is an aspiration.

9 For example, a film made by The Settlement, titled: Fight for Blood (2000), was based on the lives of various individuals from The Block (past and present), including the ghost of a deceased drug user. It won three film awards including the prestigious Griffith Film Festival Prize of 2000 ($10,000). A documentary produced by the Indigenous Cultural Affairs Magazine (ICAM) at SBS TV titled: Substance Misuse Part 2 (22 March 2001) featured a sensitive portrayal of the difficult lives of drug misusers on The Block. It dealt with issues of unemployment and despair but did not subscribe to a discourse of The Block’s decline.

10 An anonymous informant was a witness to the deliberate vandalism including setting houses, that are all squatted, on fire.

11 The common sight around The Block is not people ‘going wild’ as heroin tends to put people to sleep. The ‘wildness’ may be the association an lawlessness. This interviewee had heard stories of ‘bag snatches’ and mentioned such fears during the research interview.

12 Tasmania is the island state to the South of the Australian mainland. There are Tasmanian Aboriginal people who are descendants of the early ‘Tasmanians’ (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal).

13 In early 2000 a mattress-camp was set up under the eaves of the Aboriginal Housing Company’s office building on the corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets. It was ‘moved on’ and the area was enclosed with storm-wire fencing to stop any further camps. In October 2000 a row of terrace houses were demolished and tents became a more common sight.
This past doesn’t just endure: it displays itself against the tawdry present which it also actively indicts (Wright 1997, 106).

The desirability of the area surrounding The Block has been enhanced by recent developments in the gentrification of the inner-city of Sydney. Spiralling housing costs and maturing gentrification cycles have pushed the gentrifiers search particularly for heritage housing, to the ‘new urban frontier’ areas (Smith 1996). With their rows of Victorian terrace houses, old factories and warehouses, the case study area of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale has finally become a desirable heritage area.

This chapter explores how heritage housing and artefacts have become increasingly important to in the case study area. As noted in Chapter 4, the old built landscape was fought for in the 1960s and 1970s. Half of the built landscape of Darlington was lost to USYD in the 1960s, and another patch of Darlington became The Block. The remaining Victorian and old industrial landscape of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale has taken on special heritage significance and a culture of preserving built heritage has emerged.

In a place where Victorian and old industrial architecture are increasingly desired and passionately defended, the presence of the indigenous community is difficult to reconcile. Many of the Victorian terrace houses on The Block are derelict and rows of terraces have been razed. With an evolving heritage imaginary, that relies on select histories, The Block is both increasingly problematic to existing definitions of heritage and, it is also by-passed by an expanding heritage imaginary. In this chapter I argue that the preoccupation with heritage that is evolving in the case study area, is a useful way to deny the realities of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Remembering only specific versions of history, and celebrating these through heritage architecture and artefacts, is a way to escape the realities of everyday life and the pathologies that poverty and dispossession stimulate. Furthermore, I argue that such selectivity
specifically denies the heritage significance of a sanctioned return of Aboriginal people to the city, as evidenced in the creation of The Block in the 1970s. The celebration of select heritages renders other histories, invalid.

This chapter identifies how the built heritage landscape of the case study area offers a site for articulating and elaborating whiteness. The history that is celebrated is anchored in (white) Britishness. The architecture in the case study area is largely 19th Century Victorian (after the British Queen Victoria, Queen of Australia) but its authenticity as Australian heritage is grounded in the lives of those who occupied the area. Darlington is dominated, architecturally, by terraces that are described as ‘Early Victorian’. Early Victorian (architecture) was ‘An Elegant Era’, according to Howells and Morris, (1999, 38). Some who lived in the case study area during this time did lead the elegant lives of the Victorian ruling classes. They lived in large terrace houses that were maintained by servants. Others lived the lives of servants and the working-classes (‘battlers’). The battlers lived in small houses and worked in the nearby factories and warehouses within the case study area. The built heritage environment speaks of a history of white settlement and its architecture has become a desirable remnant of the colonial past.

6.1 Building (white) Heritage
Heritage is continually re-invented. A time-line of what constitutes heritage in the case study area started with Victorian terrace houses. It then included more recent industrial landscapes and now includes the even more recent retro-chic of the 1940s to 1970s. The emergent ‘black politics’ of the 1970s, however, and the formation of The Block remains outside of the heritage imaginary in inner-city Sydney.

6.1.1 Heritage dreaming in inner-city Sydney

Certain places may be incorporated into sanctioned views of the national heritage while others may be seen as a threat to the national imaginary and are suppressed or obliterated (Jacobs 1996, 35).
In the current notion of heritage in Australia, the British colonial past looms large. The effects of globalisation, and movement of industries and ports out of the inner urban areas, have meant that inner-city Sydney is transforming dramatically. The 2000 Olympic games added an impetus to finish (re)development projects. The former industrial areas of Pyrmont and Ultimo, for example, were dramatically reshaped. The sense of urgency in retaining heritage housing did begin as a movement in the 1970s but gained momentum with this recent development boom. Many of Sydney’s heritage buildings and some heritage areas have not stood in the way of progress. Remaining sites are precious. For some, they are sacred (Taylor 1994). The expansion of the conservation movement is largely embraced as a counter to the mass destruction of modernist urban rebuilding (Taylor 1994). Heritage scarcity, and the cultural capital that, for example, Victorian attracts (Jager 1986) means that built heritage is becoming increasingly expensive as well as ‘classy’.

The profitability of ‘heritage’ has not been lost on big business. Transnational corporations, including renowned fast-food outlets, are acutely aware of the value of refurbishing scarce, expensive heritage buildings for the unlikely function of selling American-style fast-food (Figure 6.1). Regardless of the uncomfortable seating and table facilities, precious dining moments are spent in evocative Victorian or Art Deco surroundings. Like the notion of ‘old money’, heritage buildings give a sense of stability and solidity. If a building has been standing for a hundred years or so, it is not likely to fall over tomorrow.

In Australia, historian, Ken Taylor (1994) has noted that the depth of popular feeling and enthusiasm for heritage has enabled the development of a cultural heritage management movement. Professionals advise on what should be kept and how to preserve what is left of a history of just over two hundred years of built environments. Taylor is, however, ambivalent about whether or not Australian heritage movements are nostalgia driven. He views ‘ordinary sacred places’ as ‘those which reflect our relationships with places that have meaning because either we, or our ancestors, have connections with them’ (Taylor 1994, 27). The current nostalgia for the past is, according to Taylor, a search for identity and a reversal of the ‘cultural cringe’ suffered by antipodean postcolonial Australia. As a former British colony, Australia
is commonly regarded to lack a recognisable, independent lengthy history (Taylor 1994), regardless of its indigenous history.

Taylor (1994, 27) has identified a number of factors that have influenced the emergence of the ‘cultural heritage movement’ in Australia. These include responses to the former disinterest in history during massive urban redevelopment in the 1960s and 1970s. A second influence was the resurgence of nationalism, espoused by the Whitlam government. Thirdly, the development of heritage management as a profession and public recognition of its potential have influenced the heritage movement. Taylor also notes that the Bicentennial in 1988 ‘provided tremendous impetus and funding’ (Taylor 1994, 27). He argued that these factors gave rise to the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC), the Register of the National Estate and legislation to protect ‘heritage’, such as the AHC Act of 1975 (Taylor 1994, 27-28). With increasing community awareness of heritage issues, particularly with gentrification and an increased awareness of the value of heritage tourism (Waitt and McGuirk 1996), the Australian heritage industry is thriving.

Reflecting on Lowenthal’s contention in 1979 that ‘things worth saving need … [to be] familiar or well loved’, Shaw and Jones (1997) have questioned the political neutrality of heritage protection. They have reiterated that there can be a range of respondents with a variety of agendas to questions of heritage preservation.

Today the same place or building can be variously viewed as a homely landmark, a relic of imperial oppression and a tempting commercial opportunity (Shaw and Jones 1997, 3).

Others are suspicious of the heritage impulse. Lowenthal (1985), Rosaldo (1989) and Jager (1986) examined motivations for yearnings for the past. Rosaldo has stated that:

‘We’ valorize innovation and then yearn for more stable worlds, whether these reside in our own past, in other cultures, or in conflation of the two … in any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture
people’s imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination (Rosaldo 1989, 108).

Lowenthal (1985) and Jager (1986) acknowledged the profitability of nostalgia for heritage. Jager (1986) also detailed the operation of class in heritage appreciation, which is particularly notable in the case study. Urban conservation reuses history for profit (Thrift and Glennie 1993) and social distinction. Less attention has been paid to the complexities of race relations issues and nostalgic reference to the colonialism of the past (Jacobs 1992).

With reference to indigenous heritage in Australia, Taylor (1994, 32) asserted that ‘we need to learn more from Aboriginal understanding of place and the ordinarily sacred’. Where Aboriginal heritage is concerned, connections with the ancient past are a common (non-Aboriginal) consideration. Taylor (1994), for example, has referred to Aboriginal heritage as ‘the Aboriginal wonders of Kakadu … the ordinary places such as Aboriginal tracks commemorating thousands of years of human relationship with the landscape’ (Taylor 1994, 32). Aboriginal heritage is often celebrated for its connection with an ancient world, and for what it can offer non-Aboriginal Australians. There are two notions of heritage in operation in Taylor’s account. One is of colonial Europeaness as the heritage of contemporary Australia and the other is Aboriginal heritage, which is largely anchored in the pre-colonial past. As such, Aboriginal heritage has something to offer contemporary Australia but primarily in terms of a primitivist, culturalist model of Aboriginality. Relegated to a ‘traditional’ status, the offerings, be they material artefacts or knowledge about sacredness, become ‘Aboriginal heritage’. Places and people become museum-like objects when exoticised in this way (Wasserman 1984, 1994, Thomas 1994).

6.1.2 Heritage and white settlement in Australia

In a study of the preservation of the ‘birthplace’ of colonial Australia, Tony Bennett (1993) traced the selective preservation and restoration of The Rocks area at the centre of the city of Sydney. The Rocks is, according to Bennett, part of an idealised and sanitised history of colonisation. The past has been fabricated and the marks that bear testimony to the real and contradictory history of colonisation are no longer present.
‘The glittering façade’ he says ‘functions as an institutional mode of forgetting’ (Bennett 1993, 225). The new allegory is the ascent of ‘a free, democratic, multicultural citizenry’ (Bennett 1993, 227), bereft of Aboriginal reference, except for a craft shop where traditionally referenced ‘artefacts’ can be purchased. For Bennett, the notable absence of an Aboriginal presence reinforces the belief in a ‘European civilisation’ that had tamed ‘the natural’ in this location (Bennett 1993, 228). Indigenous occupation is thus rendered as part of ‘the natural’ (Jacobs 1996, Anderson 2000) that, through its taming, has been overwritten by the human (non-Aboriginal) presence (Bennett, 1993, 228). Indigenous occupation is now largely invisible to this history of place. In order to maintain this invisibility, The Rocks area had to be cleared of those whose lives testified to the real complexity (and violence) of its history (Bennett 1993, 232).

Nostalgias for idealised pasts tend to disregard the complexities of, for example, the brutality of race/class relations (Jager 1986, Rosaldo 1989, Jacobs 1996). A yearning for ‘more of the same’ (Bennett 1993, 235), is intrinsically muffled in the imaginings of the good old days. Consequently, partial memories of the idealised and sanitised past are sanctioned, enshrined and reified. Even the most violent of events can fade with the sweetened memory of the ‘happier times’ that have been somewhat lost to the harsh present, and even harsher future. Nostalgias are thus partitioned constructions with the capacity to allow or participate in the repetition of forgotten violences (Roslado 1989, 108).

The critiques that Lowenthal (1985), Rosaldo (1989) and Jager (1986) bring to analyses of heritage are central to this thesis. Following Bennett (1994), this thesis argues that nostalgic references to a colonial past in Australia need to attend to the ongoing complexities of race relations.

6.1.3 Victorian(a) revisited: gentrification (cycles) in inner Sydney

The rise of ‘The Heritage Industry’ has provided a window through which to observe historical, social and economic distinctions of, for example, gentrification and the renewal of formerly run-down inner urban areas, with a critical eye. ‘Heritage
Studies’ have emerged (Hewison 1987, and edited collections by Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990, Shaw and Jones 1997).

Gentrification is intrinsically linked to the emergence of heritage and associated industries, in inner-city Sydney. By the late 1960s, the suburban dream was not necessarily fulfilling its idyllic promises. Increasing isolation for many (the cheapest land was on the fringes of an expanding city), the lack of services and time spent commuting, were tarnishing the gloss of suburbia. Changing family structures, the post war re-return of women to the (paid) workforce (Bondi 1991) and other emancipatory movements of the 1960s and 1970s added an imperative for inner-city living for some. Increasing globalisation of Australia’s economy attracted ‘white collar’ workers to new CBD jobs in Sydney. With the increased working hours often associated with such work, living in or near the city was becoming more attractive (Powell 1967, Jager 1986, Murphy and Watson 1997). The consequent gentrification, the re-colonisation of the inner cities by the ‘middle classes’, has been of interest to urban geographers and is well documented (from early work by Glass 1964, Harvey 1973, Hamnett 1973, Ley 1978, Smith 1979 and more recently Mills 1988, Lees 1989, Bondi 1991). The inner-city of Sydney is no exception (Kendig 1979, Cameron and Craig 1985, Fitzgerald 1987, Fitzgerald and Keating 1991, Frost 1992, Stilwell 1993, Howe 1994; Bonyhady 1995, Engels 1994, 1999, Murphy and Watson 1997). For many, the move to the city also meant moving into a historical or heritage area. Increasingly, the historical feel of the inner-city and the opportunity to live in a heritage area, attracted home makers and investors.

Classic gentrification trends are identifiable in Sydney. During the 1960s the reconstitution of inner Sydney began as young, upwardly mobile generations began to seek out the inner urban terrace house areas once prices in the eastern suburbs became prohibitive (Lauria and Knopp in Murphy and Watson 1997, 138). By the late 1960s, the demographic of Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale had also started to change. More migrants, university students, academics and ‘bohemians’ were beginning to move into the area. Some bought properties, rather than rented (Powell 1967). According to Powell, in 1967:
white-collar groups [are] attracted to … inner areas offering a seemingly better alternative than a new house in an outer suburb. There is now a well-developed and spontaneous redevelopment process under way involving not only the refurbishment and reconstruction of old houses but causing a reconstitution of the social structure as well. Cultural activity is thereby increased together with a heightened awareness of local history and an impulse towards urban conservation (Powell 1967, 77).

Powell (1967) had pointed out a heritage-effect of gentrification. Jager (1986), has argued that gentrification is driven partly by nostalgic interest in older housing, and by the cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) associated with this built fabric. The currency of heritage housing has become increasingly significant with maturing gentrification.

The transformation of former ‘working-class’ inner-city areas such as Surry Hills (Keating 1991), Glebe (Horvath and Engels 1985, Engels 1994, 1999) and Balmain (Bonyhady 1995) into ‘middle class’ housing, has been well documented. The revitalisation of formerly grander suburbs, such as Paddington and Potts Point, has also received academic attention (Kendig 1979). Mentioned occasionally, though lagging well behind in documentation as well as actual gentrification, are Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale.

Paddington, Glebe and Balmain began to attract individuals or groups who needed cheap rent (Kendig 1979, 125). Purchasing in such areas followed, as did increases in property values and a shift in ‘class’. Between 1966 and 1971, the percentage of professionals and other higher-status, white-collar workers living in the inner-city overall rose by 5%. The increase in Chippendale, during that time, was only 3% as compared to 7% in Paddington, 6% in Balmain and 5% in Glebe (Kendig 1979, 125). Kendig (1979, 142) also noted that house prices in Redfern rose by 67% between 1960 and 1965, yet in Paddington they rose by 206% during that time. The popularity of Paddington may be attributed to a range of factors including location (away from industry but near the city and salubrious ‘eastern suburbs’), size of the terrace houses (generally larger than in other areas) and predominance of residential land use (Cameron and Craig 1985). The attraction of Balmain and Glebe, which were the
next suburbs to gentrify, was their proximity to Sydney Harbour. Waterside industries were dependent on shipping so their decline, with de-industrialisation, meant that ‘salubrious sites with waterside views’ became available for residential development (Murphy and Watson 1997, 10). Additionally, the establishment and concentration of alternative cultural enclaves occurred throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Balmain and Glebe, with the rise of social movements. This enhanced the attractiveness of these suburbs (Murphy and Watson 1997), while other areas remained undesirable.

Although university students had occupied the case study area since the 1970s, it remained a poorer area until the early 1990s. It was stigmatised by locational disadvantages that, according to Cameron and Craig (1985), included the mix of industry and housing, the presence of public housing, and the lack of retail services. The proximity of the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area to a range of educational institutions, the University of Sydney, Sydney Technical College (now Sydney Institute of Technology) and later, the Institute of Technology (now the University of Technology, Sydney), was overshadowed by the stigma of ‘slum’. Cameron and Craig (1985) noted that their 1985 survey indicated that ‘the presence of ethnic and racial groups and … associated physical violence and social tension’ were the most significant problems in the area (Cameron and Craig 1985, 29). In compared to a 1973 survey, such issues had gained prominence. This rise indicates an increase in the belief that ethnicity/race had become a problem in the area. The distinct associations with ethnicity/race, which added to the ‘alien and vaguely disquieting presence [of slums] in Sydney’ (Mayne in Fitzgerald 1986), outweighed any heritage attraction of the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area. This part of the residential inner-city remained largely undesirable and in a ‘low development’ state until the 1990s.

Cameron and Craig’s 1985 study also compared the gentrification of Redfern and Paddington. Relying on the ‘continuum of gentrification’ model, Cameron and Craig (1985) posited that Redfern was ‘certainly more than 10 [years] behind Paddington’ in the process of gentrification (Cameron and Craig 1985, 29). The study identified that whilst the two locations occupied opposing ends of the gentrification continuum, a trend was evident. They noted convergence between Redfern and Paddington, with
Redfern gradually becoming more like Paddington in terms of land use, socio-economic status (including household composition and employment categories), and measures of residential desirability (Cameron and Craig 1985).

Gentrification of the case study area began as overflows from nearby Surry Hills into Redfern East, and then to West Redfern; from North Newtown into Darlington/Redfern and from Glebe into Chippendale. One real estate agent stated that the Darlington area remained about $30,000 cheaper than North Newtown because of the presence of The Block, but the gap is narrowing (Interview 12, 4 March 1998). Gradually, however, some buyers who preferred Surry Hills, Newtown or Glebe, found Redfern (particularly to the East, away from The Block), Darlington and Chippendale more affordable.

6.1.4 Heritage dollars

As in other inner cities, the rise of heritage appreciation of inner Sydney’s residential landscapes has been an important factor in gentrification (Hewison 1987, Urry 1995, Jacobs 1996). The trend to restore rather than renovate has emerged. The two camps, heritage restoration versus remodelling old houses, represent two distinct (though not necessarily mutually exclusive) gentrification aesthetics. David Ley (1980, 1986, and 1994) has long advocated the need to consider consumption issues (including those to do with aesthetic and taste) in understanding gentrification. His ‘consumption’ analysis stood in opposition to Neil Smith’s ‘production’ argument(s), which resulted in an impasse in gentrification theory (Lees 1994, 1996). Recently, however, gentrification studies have combined analyses of consumption practices and the political economies of gentrification (Jager 1986, Redfern 1997, Lees 1999 and Bondi’s response 1999, Engels 1999).

Gentrification of inner Sydney has not been uniform. If there is such a thing as essential gentrification then it is buried within a set of multiple and ever evolving processes. There is clearly a variety of gentrification cycles that have occurred in different locations (cf Redfern 1997). The ‘cycles’ are not necessarily discreet as borders of the areas gentrifying do merge and processes of change are repeated within areas. To register this complexity does not deny that gentrification displaces groups
of people. Nor does it deny that such urban transformations place pressures on non-gentrifying areas that, for whatever reasons, do not participate or are slow to participate (such as the case study area). Globally driven economic forces attract residential colonisation of the city but a myriad other factors, including the politics of taste, are at work.

Inner-Sydney heritage suburbs are now highly coveted. Those seeking cheap houses to renovate are increasingly sidelined in inner-city Sydney\(^2\). Those who (can and will) pay a premium for heritage were identified as ‘2\(^{nd}\) stage’ or ‘yuppie’ gentrifiers (Smith 1987). These gentrifiers are distinct from ‘1\(^{st}\) stage’ gentrifiers who bought into inner-city areas at low cost when unrenovated houses, and those that had been poorly renovated or renovated in ways that appeal to a minority only, were plentiful. Heritage and preservation issues may have been of interest but the cultural capital of heritage had not been established for 1\(^{st}\) stage buyers. On the contrary, 1\(^{st}\) stage buyers participated in the production of the cultural capital of heritage through their efforts to save and restore terrace houses. 1\(^{st}\) stage gentrifiers legitimated terrace house living for those who would follow. 2\(^{nd}\) stage gentrifiers move into areas with established heritage pedigrees.

The gentrification ‘awakening’ of the case study area coincided with the depletion of available ‘unimproved’ (unrenovated) Victorian terrace housing stocks in other inner Sydney locations. According to Cameron and Craig (1985, 25), in 1985 16% of Redfern terrace housing stock remained unimproved whereas in Paddington only 7% remained so. With the rapid rate of restoration/renovation in the Redfern area by the late 1990s, the ‘unimproved’ figure was much reduced. Once the prices of unimproved houses transcends the cost of a renovated/restored, or partially renovated property, the scarcity of ‘unimproved’ housing stock indicates the advanced stage of the gentrification cycle in that area. By this stage, heritage appeal can be costly and is available only for those with the economic power to put economic necessity at a distance (Bourdieu 1984). Real estate selling agents often describe the remaining unimproved properties as being ‘in original condition’ and use retained heritage, such as ‘Victorian features’ as a selling point. As one real estate agent said during a research interview:
You go into some of these houses and we say, where’s the fireplace? And they say, we threw those out on the street years ago, and I say well you threw $5,000 for each one and you had 4 of them … and they say, we wanted more room, still you didn’t get $20,000 more room! … its a shame … but it’s a delight to walk into an older house and find the original features still there, no matter what condition, it’s wonderful to find it (Interview 12, 4 March, 1998).

This commentary is a broadcast of the cultural capital of heritage – of how heritage becomes currency when there are houses in ‘original condition’ left to restore. By this stage of gentrification, specifically targeted heritage (Victorian architectural) has become a priority for those who can afford to choose their own restoration/renovation style. By this stage of gentrification, heritage is expensive.

By 1999, the socio-economic status of purchasers buying in the case study area began to change as the availability of larger terrace houses, that had not been renovated, diminished. Premiums were being paid for terrace houses regardless of their condition. My own experience of house selling and buying, that spanned several years in the mid 1990s provides a snapshot view of the relative price differences between the case study area and other parts of inner Sydney. A very large unrenovated terrace in George Street, Redfern sold for less than $300,000 in 1995. This terrace is 6 to 7 metres wide with three storeys and five upstairs bedrooms. This house was only marginally more expensive than much smaller, two storey terraces with two bedrooms in Surry Hills (at a more mature stage of its gentrification cycle), which were selling for $250,000 and above at the time. In late 1995, a 6 metre wide, two-storey terrace with four bedrooms sold in Chippendale for $285,000 (Richardson and Wrench, Newtown). The house I now part-own at 20 Ivy Street, Darlington, is five metres wide and partly renovated. It has three to four bedrooms and land size which is larger than usual. It sold for $290,000 in early 1996 in a largely un-renovated but very livable state. Similar houses in Paddington were selling for two to three times the price, at the time.

By the middle of 1999, house prices in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale had risen substantially. Residex figures for March 1998 were: median house price for postcode
2008, Darlington and Chippendale, was $290,000 and for postcode 2021, Paddington, $580,000. These median readings span the range of house sizes. The house at 18 Ivy Street, Darlington, an unrenovated (almost derelict) version of 20 Ivy Street, sold for just over $400,000 in 1998. The selling agent of 18 Ivy Street (Richardson and Wrench of Newtown) offered an estimated selling value of $450,000 for our rough but livable house at that time. By October 1999, a similar fully renovated house a few doors away sold for $420,000. The complete renovation of that house was considered to be a detractor and ‘blamed’ for the poor return at auction. The selling agent believed that the ‘country cottage’ style was not to everyone’s taste. The owners had over-capitalised by renovating, rather than ‘restoring’ the Victoriana of this large house.

In late 1999, the stock of unrenovated smaller terraces in the case study area were being purchased by astute buyers who were beginning to pay premium prices. These houses are one or two storeys and approximately 3 to 4 metres wide. They usually have 2 (upstairs) bedrooms and a kitchen and bathroom at the rear of the ground floor level. For example, in October 1999, a property in Calder Road, Darlington (adjacent to Ivy Street), sold for $315,000. A derelict version sold in Young Street, Redfern (in a stigmatised location because it is opposite three Department of Housing residential towers) for $265,000. Such prices are comparable to the 1996 cost of a larger terrace in Darlington. Some of the very small houses in Darlington have been remodelled into postmodern architectural extravaganzas to better use the small spaces and enhance light and ventilation that is often lacking in these former ‘workers’ houses. The façades of these highly capitalised properties are usually kept as a precious touch of heritage and to appease council regulations. The trend to converting smaller terraces into extravagant ‘urban living spaces’, or even the more modest versions, indicates that investors are now confident enough to outlay large sums of capital in the case study area.

In a different heritage vein, the formerly mixed-use area of Chippendale in the case study area, with its industrial landscape of warehouses and small factories as well as terrace houses, was described, as recently as 1997, as being a development ‘dead space’ (North and Christie 1997). By the end of the 1990s, however, a development
boom occurred. The former ‘Grace Bros’ department store on Broadway, vacant for nearly a decade, was redeveloped into an enormous shopping and cinema complex. It is promoted as ‘The Greatest Show on Earth: The Broadway Shopping Centre’. Along with this development, and the sudden awakening of Darlington and Redfern (just to the south on the southern side of Cleveland Street), Chippendale’s largely vacant industrial landscape offered fresh territory for astute property developers to profit from gentrification. The face of Chippendale was suddenly transformed into a boutique inner-city area of expensive warehouse apartments (detailed in Chapter 8). The advent of such development means that gentrification now encircles The Block. The heritage of formerly disregarded areas has expanded the consumption choices for gentrifiers in inner-city Sydney.

6.2 Selective Heritage

In 1996, South Sydney City Council’s Local Environment Plan for Heritage and Conservation designated the whole Darlington/Redfern area as a ‘Heritage and Conservation Area’. This means that:

Council needs to consider the impact of the proposed development on the attributes and character of the area. This includes assessing the impact of both the demolition of … existing buildings and the relationship of … new development with the surrounding conservation area (SSCC Minute Paper Item 9, 11 June 1997, 5,6).

Regardless of the mix of buildings in the case study area, its heritage value was finally recognised in legislation. This official recognition coincides with the swift onset of gentrification of an area that had been largely by-passed because of the presence of The Block.

6.2.1 Select pasts and peoples

Modern day appreciation of built heritage can be attributed to a variety of motivations (Crang 1994). The extent to which motivations for heritage consumption and protection are driven by the commodification of heritage may depend on the operations of the heritage industry (Hewison 1987) in an area. For example, this may
include the influences of historical societies and interest groups, who may promote specific heritage attributes in an area, or it may be through the ‘hard sell’ of heritage marketing in the promotions of real estate. Heritage can be used for a range of economic and/or political ends (Jones and Shaw 1997). Tayor (1994, 27), however, contends that appreciation of heritage is simply ‘a genuine interest by people wanting to know more about what they increasingly see as their history’, and its social significance.

At the local level, appreciation of specific heritage(s) can become highly contested as occurred when non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal desires collided at the site of a proposed redevelopment of an old brewery site in Perth, Western Australia, into a large commercial concern (Mickler 1991, Muecke 1992, Jacobs 1996, Shaw and Jones 1997). This proposal met with protests based on the heritage significance of the site. In this example, the non-Aboriginal version of heritage was that the old brewery building had heritage significance and should be preserved. The Aboriginal version was not as materially evident. The site, according to the ‘Aboriginal Fringe Dwellers of the Swan Valley’, was the home of a spiritual ancestor: the Waugal serpent (Jacobs 1996). Regardless of the struggle over whose heritage would dominate, or the possibility of achieving a compromise, the fate of the brewery site remained ultimately ‘in white hands’ (Jones 1997, 154). In the context of this example, the power to decide always rested with the (mostly, or all) non-Aboriginal decision makers.

In the case study area, dominant understandings of heritage are clearly non-Aboriginal. The landscape is dominated by built heritage and the incumbent Aboriginal community, consisting of many kinship groups from around the country as well as the Sydney region⁸, does not have a Waugal-like ancestral claim to the place it now occupies. In the case study area, heritage is found in housing and factories, which evoke specific (and imagined) pasts. The workers cottages, for example, evoke an image that gentrifiers, governing bodies who make heritage decisions, and the public more generally, associate with the (white) working-classes (battlers), regardless of the shifting ethnic mix of the area. The battlers of the inner-city of Sydney more generally, have been romanticised and mythologised in populist imagining and representations about inner-city life in the first half of the 20th Century. A well
respected Australian novelist, Ruth Park, assisted in the process of romanticising the battlers in several books including the most famous two, *The Harp in the South* (1948) and *Poor Man’s Orange* (1949). Subsequent films, based on these two novels, helped to widen the reception of such imageries. The stories exemplify the heroism of white working-classes in the harsh world of inner-city Sydney in the early to mid 1900s. The late onset of gentrification in the case study area means that the image of the battler was retained longer than in other inner-city Sydney areas.

With its share of small workers-cottage terrace houses, the battler-image became a part of the promotion rhetoric of the rusticity of case study area. In Darlington the (former) battlers are glorified because of the heroic struggles against USYD, and against the proposal for The Block (Chapter 4). There are also those who are living proof, who fought in these earlier battles and now participate in current resident activism, such as the local news agent who also lives in the area. A renowned former battler, the (former9) high-profile (Labor) Mayor of South Sydney City Council was a proud and powerful promoter of his working-class roots, and the working-class heritage of South Sydney in general. The mayor was (and is) a folkloric character in the area. A local newsletter and forum for resident commentary on a range of issues, *Chippo Politics*, helps to keep residents informed of local issues and its working-class heritage. *South Sydney Inner City News*, a newsletter from the local council, promotes and celebrates a specific working-class history and the ‘battler’ heritage of the case study area.

Many of the older non-Aboriginal residents in the case study area are reminders that there was an era prior to the existence of The Block. Research interviews with local residents reveal that the older ‘working-class’ remnant population, who fought USYD and the proposal for The Block, is highly revered and cared for by others in the local community. The local doctors and pharmacist keep a close eye on the older people. They visit them, administer medical treatment at home10, and home-deliver pharmaceuticals. Neighbours are involved in their care. For example, the death and funeral of the local ‘cat lady’, who fed and cared for stray cats, was lovingly reported in *Chippo Politics*11. Neighbours, who attended the funeral in droves, have taken on the ‘tradition’ and share stray cat-care duties. Along with care, there is an often-
expressed concern for the welfare of the local elderly. For many younger non-Aboriginal residents, these elderly residents ‘original’ are fragile and defenceless. They need protection against criminal attack. For example:

I don’t think that elderly people should … be targeted, it’s really really sad. It’s usually young, its usually people, the people I’ve been finding who’ve been telling me about it, it’s usually … [someone] stronger than an elderly person in the first place and usually … coloured (Interview 4, 17 October 1997).

This quote identifies the paternalism that is felt towards the now elderly (original white) battlers. It also identifies those who pose a threat to these older residents: the ‘coloured’ young people (Aboriginal youth). The (former) Local Area Police Commander, Peter Parsons, also expressed concerns that elderly people are easier targets, especially for ‘bag-snatches’. His overriding concern was that the real risk for elderly people is that they can be knocked over and injured during such a crime (Interview 28, 4 August 1998). These are valid concerns in areas where poverty and drugs lead to petty crime but issues such as these tend to evoke more than concern for the elderly. The now elderly (predominantly) white working-classes, as well as their places of home and former toil, converge into a broader set of concerns about what (and who) needs protection in the case study area.

As the number of (original, working-class) ‘battlers’ diminishes with the arrival of the new middle-classes, their memory is glorified as part of the folkloric heritage (and cultural capital), of the case study area. Consequently, when a building is demolished, be it terrace house or industrial site, the losses go beyond bricks and mortar. It is as though the protective will and strength of the forbears that has become part of the unique heritage-image of the case study area, which can be (virtually) summoned from the (built) fabric of the area, are also at risk.

The importance of built heritage in the case study area is strengthened by nostalgias that ‘write-in’ those histories that have hitherto been less important in definitions of heritage (Crang 1994). The inclusion of the former working-classes, their homes and workplaces, exemplifies the capacity of ‘heritage’ to be flexible and inclusive.
Previously of little heritage interest, the smaller houses with few decorative features (or their façades) and the (façades of) old factories are now valued as heritage. This recognition of more than ruling-class pasts is still limited. The inclusion of aspects of distinct classes does not mean that heritage definitions have expanded to be inclusive of all other stories in the case study area. The working-class heritage revival has proved to be a useful heritage-base from which gentrification of a formerly less than desirable area has been legitimised. The production and consumption of heritage in the case study area does, however, remain on a very specific trajectory.

### 6.2.2 Working-classes and Industrial façades

Definitions of what constitutes heritage vary from context to context, and over time. In the case study area, terrace houses with ‘original features’, such as original decorative fire places, plasterwork and staircase joinery, now have heritage value that they once did not. They were ‘slum dwellings’. As one resident noted, the smaller terrace houses are an ‘ugly reminder of dirt floor basic housing … that was probably not very pleasant’ (interview 15, 25 April, 1998). These ‘ugly reminders’ now constitute valued heritage. Many of the sites of working-class toil, the factories and warehouses, have been converted into apartments but the developments often retain heritage features, such as façades. These have industrial-heritage value. Additionally, there are modern forms of ‘neo-arcaism’ expressed in the new developments that retain no original features but reference heritage (Jager 1986, 88) through ‘heritage’ brickwork, cobbled laneways and stone gutters.

The case study area has many examples of façadism whereby only the shells or fronts of heritage buildings were retained and new residential structures built behind them. The façadism compromise (between retaining a whole heritage building and complete replacement) does not, however, retain a true ‘battler’ heritage, as such. The actual workplaces of the original battlers were removed and only a hint of heritage architecture is retained. The purpose of the factory or business is often celebrated through signage or retention of the original name. Examples include ‘The Printery’, ‘The Piano Factory’ and ‘The Cyclops’ (once a popular brand of bicycle). With the acceptance of façadism, the compromise has done away with the toil of the working-
classes. The memory is a softer one, of the objects produced, rather than repression by class (Jenks 1981, Harvey 1990: ‘carnival mask’).

For 2\textsuperscript{nd} stage gentrifiers, heritage is retained in façades. The loss of the workplaces (or drinking places in the example that follows) that existed behind the façades is of little concern as long as a heritage motif is retained. As one interviewee stated:

I think it’s important to keep those certain buildings and façades if you can. Looking at Sydney overall with all the old theatres … that were pulled down and whatever I think that’s disgusting. But I think … like the old Newtown Hotel what they did there is really good [saved the façade and largely rebuilt the interior] (Interview 18, 8 May 1998).

Although destroying old theatres is ‘disgusting’, according to this interviewee, cleansing sites of the original working-classes (such as the drinkers of the old Newtown Hotel) is acceptable. This acceptance of a remnant of heritage fabric that a salvaged façade provides, does not indicate that heritage has become somehow less important. On the contrary, façadism indicates the strength of specific heritages and heritage style.

Selected memories about the past circulate through the consumption practices of residents in the case study area. Along with proponents of façadism, which indicates that a little bit of heritage is better than no heritage at all, there are those who do regret the loss of industrial sites. During research interviews, an interviewee reminisced about ‘Miss Muffett’s jam-making factory’ (Interview 14, 27 April, 1998). For some of these older residents, who remember such places when they operated, the days of operating factories were the good old days. There are also those who sympathise with the older residents and their histories. The good old days (of working-class whiteness in the case study area) remains a fantasy which is reinforced by acknowledgment of threats to retaining such histories in the present. Of the threats to the fantasy of the good old days: the arrival of migrants in the 1950s (Bulbeck 1993, 131); the subsumption of half of Darlington by USYD in the 1960s; and the formalisation of The Block in the 1970s, one remains to this day. The Aboriginal presence helps to
retain the fantasy of the good old days of the white working classes by posing an ongoing threat to it.

The history of embattlement, the protection of turf, and the retention of some of the façades of old workplaces, has helped to retain idealised images of the past. For the case study area, a multiply-faceted heritage imaginary circulates. There is passion about protecting heritage, and acknowledgment of the history of battle to protect territory, but there is also the ambivalence about protecting more than the façades of actual workplaces. ‘Industrial’ heritage is retained in the façades yet the importance of the battlers is not forgotten. More important than where they toiled for a living is the role the battlers played in the preservation of housing and territory. They fought to save the heritage housing and the place that gentrifiers increasingly occupy. The legacy of the battlers is that they had the capacity to fight. This capacity is called upon in more current battles to protect heritage (detailed in Chapter 7).

6.2.3 New-build ‘heritage’ and retro chic

Appreciation of heritage is not necessarily restricted to retention of (some) original built fabric. If a development is completely new, with no heritage fragments to preserve, or the cost of preservation outweighs demolition and rebuilding, then heritage style can be reproduced. As with façadism, heritage-referencing is an acceptable compromise to non-heritage building designs for some in the case study area. As one interviewee stated:

In Ivy street they actually kept in character [by building reproductions of Victorian terraces - Figure 6.3]. Its a bit of a shame that they pulled most of the buildings down but … at least they kept them [the new ones] in the same character (Interview 4, 17 October 1997).

For this interviewee, buildings that replicate heritage are better than those of a contrasting style because they stay ‘in character’ with the area. They blend in with the cultural capital of heritage. The growth of retailing in antique reproductions and retail chains that sell (colonial style) country-cottage furniture and household goods are also ‘in character’ with a heritage or heritage-style home\textsuperscript{12}. The mainstreaming of rusticity
and heritage appreciation has been assisted through such commodity fetishism (Marx 1867) and the consumption of heritage-referenced objects.

Recently, the ‘consumption circuit’ (Jager 1986, 87) of heritage has expanded to include ‘retro chic’, in the case study area. Retro chic includes the appreciation of old things, objects that are, in Patrick Wright’s (1997, 104) words, ‘not-quite-antiques’, but are nonetheless collectable. Definitions of heritage value had already expanded to include, for example, *Art deco* architecture and furnishings. The more recent addition of ‘retro-modern’ style from the 1950s and 1960s (Collins 1995), throws up new options for consumption of oldness. As Michael Jager (1986, 87) has remarked:

> where there is an increasing concentration of alternative/new wave/avant garde … the new consumption circuit depends not just on the consumption of objects but on the consumption of history as it is embodied in the objects. Urban conservation … reuses and recycles (history). This leads to a new and distinctive kitsch … contemporary kitsch distinguishes itself from an industrialized low culture.

A part of the attractiveness of ‘not-quite-antique’ kitsch is not dissimilar to ‘top end’ antiques; the uniqueness and rarity of the objects is part of their appeal. This distinguishes the consumer as having distinctive taste. The consumption circuit of heritage objects, and its extension into retro chic, includes a proliferation of ‘antiquities’ and ‘collectables’ shops that have sprung up throughout inner-city Sydney. Of particular note is the high proportion of such shops along the Princess Highway in the South Newtown shopping precinct, not far from the case study area. Indeed, South Newtown has come to be the retro-modern and *object d’art* centre of Sydney and can be compared to the concentration of more standard antique shops in Paddington and Woollahra (that specialise in ‘top end’ antiques). The emerging preference for retro-modern furnishings and items from the 1950s, 1960s and even the 1970s, which are cheaper than more ‘authentic’ Victoriana (19th Century antiques), signifies a diversity and distinctiveness of tastes that exist within gentrification cycles.

Amongst the pieces sold in ‘collectables’ shops, are some increasingly rare objects
that cater to very specific tastes. These include boomerang-shaped ashtrays, wall-plates and coffee tables from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, that are adorned with hand-painted images of Aboriginal people as ‘noble savages’ (Thomas 1994). The contemporary motivation for owning such recycled objects can be debated. Historian, Ken Taylor (1994) has disregarded nostalgia as somehow benign, but the purchase and display of these distinctive objects, that might be considered not just ‘tasteless’ but offensive, today, is not without political effect. Objects emblazoned with caricatured tribal Aboriginal people were mass produced before civil rights movements and ‘Black Politics’. Unlike other increasingly rare objects d’art, such as Lava Lamps, these racialised objects are unlikely to be reproduced, en masse, because of the controversial subject matter. The innocence of such imagery, or the naïve nationalism of the context in which they were produced, whereby the ‘noble savage’ was a proud part of Australia’s emerging identity, is long gone. Nicholas Thomas (1994, 22) argued that the contemporary collection of such objects reveals more about the interests and motivations of those consuming them than they ever did about those being represented. The contemporary collector may be fascinated by the quirky uniqueness of such objects, that perhaps now seem quite bizarre. The collector may even hide behind the naïvete and innocence of the production era, rather than be implicated in the racialised messages that the display of such objects portray.

Whatever the motivation for ownership of these objects, the politics is not neutral. The reception of the messages portrayed may vary, but the debasing message of the ‘noble savage’ (on ashtrays, egg-cups and so forth) is retained, regardless of the era in which it is transmitted. The somewhat unpredictable circuits of (heritage) consumption in inner-city Sydney are sometimes more overtly racialised than others.

The specificity of the selectiveness of the ever-evolving thirst for heritage in the case study area is further exemplified in the ways that migrant groups have been associated with anti-heritage through specific renovation styles (Armstrong 1994, Lozanovska 1994). Renate Howe (1994) remarked that post-war migrants ‘rescued the reputation of the terrace house as a place to live as well as restored its fabric, albeit with a “Mediterranean finish”’ (Howe 1994, 155). It is this ‘Mediterranean finish’ that is now classed as anti-heritage renovation. During a research interview with a real estate agent (Interview 12, 4 March 1998), post-war renovations of houses by Greek
migrants were blamed for the absence of ‘authentic’ heritage features. Greekness was associated with ‘tasteless’ renovation, the replacement of decorative timber windows with aluminium and timber floors with concrete. Heritage, on the other hand, was associated with restoration of timber windows and floors.

6.3 Heritage discourses in the case study area

Somewhat ironically, gentrifiers do speak of the virtues of the ‘diversity’ in the case study area. During research interviews ‘diversity’ was referred to as a desirable trait for living in the case study area (Interviews 1, 3, 16, 21, 26). The notion of diversity is, however, largely about ‘class’, such as having a mix of gentrifying home owners and community oriented renters (Interview 32). Ethnic diversity was rarely included as part of the diversity of the case study area. Instead, diversity has generally become a label for the range of architectures for the conspicuous consumption of those who can afford it (Crilley 1993). It is diversity in architecture that is at the top of the ‘diversity hierarchy’. Using Dear’s (1992) ‘good neighbour hierarchy’ of tolerance as a template for a diversity-desirability hierarchy, artistic and photographic studios are at the top of the list. In the case study area, ‘Mediterranean style’ renovations are very low on the list and renovators often re-model such renovations. With its razed and derelict terrace housing, The Block is at the very bottom of this list.

The notion of heritage, as it is popularly conceived and as it has been legislated for by governments,14 exhibits a certain consistency in inner-city Sydney. The term ‘heritage’ commonly identifies old built environments (Victorian houses and buildings, and other old buildings). Each person interviewed during research, the local residents and business people and others, were asked about heritage. Overall, the popular notion of ‘heritage’ was largely unchallenged in these narratives. Heritage was largely thought of as the built environment.

Figure 6.4 summarises some of the ways that research interviewees conceptualised heritage. The concerns for heritage in the case study area are also listed. As the table shows, as most respondents considered heritage to be the built environment the concerns were for the fabric of the built environment. Some did, however, imagine heritage to be more than just buildings. Cultural considerations were generally
centred around issues of non-Aboriginal heritage, such as retaining working-class housing, or remembering class distinctions.

**Figure 6.4 Examples of thinking about ‘heritage’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>‘heritage’</th>
<th>Comment/concern [issue raised]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 22 Sept. 1997</td>
<td>built/heritage aesthetics</td>
<td>Heritage is important but not protected [concern for conservation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Oct. 1997</td>
<td>built/culture of working-class past</td>
<td>Heritage is important and being replaced by higher cost accommodation [concern about class displacement]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 17 Oct. 1997</td>
<td>built/culture of the diversity of (colonial) past</td>
<td>Important, loss of heritage is loss of cultural mix [built heritage = cultural identity]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 15 Nov. 1997</td>
<td>built/culture of colonial past</td>
<td>Important, loss of heritage is loss of identity [built heritage = cultural identity]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9, 4 Feb. 1998</td>
<td>built/heritage aesthetics</td>
<td>Important, nostalgia of aesthetics of the past [desirability in the present = consumption]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10, 12 Feb. 1998</td>
<td>built/working-class industrial culture</td>
<td>Important, loss of heritage is loss of diversity, Loss of industries and ‘workers’ [nostalgia for the identity-solidarity of the past]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13, Mar. 1998</td>
<td>built/working-class industrial culture</td>
<td>Warehouses important [industrial heritage as nostalgia for the ‘working-class’ solidarity of the past]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14, 27 Apr. 1998</td>
<td>built/culture of colonial past</td>
<td>Important, nostalgia for past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18, 8 May 1998</td>
<td>built/heritage aesthetics</td>
<td>Important, façades as aesthetic reminders [masks of the past; ‘authenticity’ important, even in token amounts]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20, May 1998</td>
<td>built/aesthetic, including industrial</td>
<td>Important, nostalgia for human history, industrial aesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21, 1 June 1998</td>
<td>other cultural</td>
<td>Built ‘heritage’ prioritised over culture, definition of ‘heritage’ needs consideration [inclusive of other heritages including recent Aboriginal heritage]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A handful of interviewees linked the significance of (post)colonial Aboriginal struggle with heritage in the case study area. As one interviewee stated:
generally heritage is really important … In this area I think it’s extremely important, more important than other areas in terms of indigenous people. It just seems … there’s a strong cultural thing here for Aboriginal people that needs to be preserved. (Interview 21, 1 June 1998).

Similarly, another interviewee, albeit in passing, said that:

Other than Aboriginal, I don’t know much about heritage in Redfern at all. (Interview 11, 14 February 1998)

And finally, an interviewee stated that:

Because I’m not particularly Australian anyway … I can see that its nice to have some areas preserved as historical precincts, but … if people were going to try and preserve Eveleigh Street as a historically Aboriginal thing, well, that’s fairly obviously going to impinge on my quality of life … I am aware that that is an issue, but that is a heritage thing too, its been their stomping ground for a long time now, way before it was officially given to them … it goes back a long way … In the ‘20s, they used to hide alcohol smugglers and stuff, it was always the place people could seek refuge in. (Interview 6, 18 November 1997).

This interviewee articulated a certain ambivalence about heritage and the Aboriginal presence. S/he is aware of a history of the Aboriginal presence and the heritage of The Block, but is also sure that any formal recognition of such heritage would negatively affect her/his lifestyle. In this quote, the resident may not be pleased about the presence of urban Aboriginal heritage, but s/he is certainly aware that there is an important history and cites examples of the informal background that is part of the heritage of this place (Anderson 1993a, b, 1998). Urban Aboriginal heritage is dispassionately acknowledged in all three quotes (above).

On the other hand, spokespeople for heritage protection in the case study area, groups such as DRAG and Chippendale Resident Interest Group (CRIG), do not make any
connection between ‘heritage’ and indigenous people, other than in a pre-colonisation context (cf Taylor 1994). For the convenor of CRIG, Aboriginal heritage is *pre*colonial, and ‘long gone’:

The sad thing about Chippendale is no-one knows what the Aboriginal background to it was. It was a swamp, a tea-tree swamp back in the old days … and it would have run into Blackwattle Bay, and so I would imagine the Aboriginals used it for fishing, collecting mussels, whatever they did, but no-one knows. That’s long gone. But these days, you’ve got an interesting street pattern with the lanes, the mixture of terraces and the old warehouses’. (Interview 29, 17 August 1998)

The heritage of colonialism, of encounters between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, remains largely unacknowledged. The existence of The Block as a benchmark in the struggle for Aboriginal civil rights, is by and large excluded from the heritage equation. As convenor of CRIG, Interviewee 29 (quoted above) has expressed the views of a staunch supporter and protector of the *specific* non-Aboriginal ‘heritage’ of street patterns, lanes and buildings. Although s/he acknowledges an Aboriginal presence from the pre-colonial past, there is no acknowledgment of The Block. This view epitomises the selective understandings about what constitutes heritage, as expressed by the majority of non-Aboriginal interviewees. It reflects the popular view of (white) Australia about heritage. Heritage is part of the unspoken definition of ‘community’, of belonging, and the exceptions (Interviews 6, 11, 21) represent a marginal perspective. For the case study area, heritage remains as the architecture of a past era that is remembered for the presence of romanticised whiteness. The elegant lives of those who could afford High Victoriana and, in a more recent working of heritage, the legacy of the working-classes, of those who lived in small terraces and fought to save their Victorian homes and (white) territory, are collectively remembered (Boyer 1998). The migrant presence in the area has been relegated to anti-heritage. The modifications that migrants made to aging housing stock, to make it more livable and culturally appropriate (Lozanovksa 1994), now detract from its heritage-value. Similarly, while the Aboriginal community may be acknowledged to have heritage, it is locationally (non-urban), culturally and ethnically homogenised
and pre-colonial. The emergence of a ‘Black Capital’ (The Block) in a politics of unification of disparately dispossessed Aboriginal peoples, is continually written out of the evolving heritage imaginary of the gentrifying inner-city neighbourhood in which it sits. The racial binary of ‘black’ and ‘white’ communities and places is temporally maintained as Aboriginal history is truncated by a nostalgia that prefers the architectural and other tokens of a partially remembered colonial past. The gentrifiers imagining(s) of heritage is one that has excused itself from engagement with others – migrants and Aboriginal people. Whiteness is embodied through such heritage fantasies.

6.4 Escaping into imaginaries of the past
In the case study area, gentrifier imaginaries of the past are constructed in ways that envision escaping from the everyday of urban living. They avoid the ‘everyday’ by looking to a romanticised and select past, and by protecting its memory. This is one strategy of escape. A second strategy of avoiding the everyday in the case study area is imagining being elsewhere, and is considered in Chapter 8. Both strategies of escape encourage an indifference to the everyday realities of here and now by denying the other pasts that have contributed to the conditions that are experienced on The Block today. By denying colonial encounters with indigenous peoples, by privileging the whitewashed versions of history, the colonial and neo-colonial bases for current dispossession and poverty are denied. Such denials make it easy to believe that the conditions of The Block are self-inflicted. This is part of an exclusionary process of socialisation that is part of the embodiment of whiteness in the case study area.

The politics of denial can be used to deploy a ‘protective organ’ (Simmel 1903) that insulates against unpleasantness in urban life. The production of imaginaries, that provide a means of denying the arduousness of the everyday, provide relief for those non-Aboriginal residents who live close to The Block, and who are disturbed by its presence. For Latham (1999, following Sennett 1990a, 1994), indifference is ‘the embodiment of a subtle economy of denial’. Indifference is perpetuated through embedding oneself, at least in part, in the fantasy of other times or places. The activation of (and, at times, obsession with) accompanying routines, provides distraction from the everyday. Such distractions include activities that protect, for
example, architectural heritage features. The lifestyles built up around such past-times provide a comfort zone that detracts from (the pathologies) of the everyday. Distraction (from the everyday) is a mechanism of denial. In inner-Sydney, there is an imaginary of another time, the good old days, that is indifferent to recalling those aspects of the past, such as race relations, that make the memory less palatable. This imagined past, therefore, denies any repercussions of past racisms, in the present. Only the partially remembered pasts, glorified through built heritage and objects, are brought forward into the present, and preserved. This renders all other local concerns, such as Aboriginal or other heritages of the inner-city, as inconsequential. Heritage making, in the case study area, legitimises certain presences but not others, and it is only some who benefit.

In the case study area, pre-modern, non-Aboriginal ‘Anglo’ colonial heritage is romanticised, prioritised and protected. As Lowenthal (1985) has suggested, the past is like a foreign country. Escapist imaginaries are found in the fantasies that ‘old stuff’ can invoke. These fantasies go beyond the simple desires to recycle resources. The days before the social upheavals of civil rights movements and, in particular, the rise of indigenous politics in Australia in the 1960s, are remembered and glorified through artefacts of (white) heritage, be they considered to be tasteful or kitsch. Such remembrances truncate history through partial forgetting (Bennett 1993) that buries the injustices and violences of the past, in the past. Under the guise of a continuation of symbolic form, sanctioned heritage discourses:

… erect … a set of rigid, iconic, homogeneous, national categories which stereotypically define who belongs and who does not … (Herzfeld in Rapport 1995, 645).

These categories are complexly erected but are not difficult to identify. In the new residential, postmodern context of inner Sydney the renewed interest in pre-modern, colonially-encoded built formations has helped to embed a white identity politics that is manifested in representations of, and by (white ‘heritage’) architecture (Crilley 1993). Not only are other ethnicities not represented, they do not belong in the common conceptions of heritage. Victorian terrace houses and increasingly, older
industrial sites, are colonially encoded. Heritage architecture invokes nostalgia for the selectively remembered and collectively prioritised pasts of whiteness. The affirmation of membership to these select pasts celebrates the racially exclusive imaginary of place. As Collins (1995, 34) remarked ‘the imageability of cultural life is crucially important in determining a sense of self-location’ (Collins 1995, 34).

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has identified how select pasts of whiteness have been immortalised in heritage identifications, appreciation and protection that have emerged with the gentrification of the inner-city of Sydney. Lifestyle formulae that have enabled escape from the day-to-day, the (post)colonial uncertainties and insecurities, were explored by tracing the emergence of specific white heritages. As these are celebrated and expanded upon, the impoverished and dispossessed ‘other’ is deliberately ‘forgotten’ by many of the non-Aboriginal population in the inner-city of Sydney, as they engage with the postmodern city. This increasingly pluralistic city is duly being drained of politics (Kearns and Philo1993, 23) through the construction of heritage ‘theme park’ environments. For example, The Rocks in Sydney is a formalised heritage theme park. For those visiting The Rocks, the theme is a neutralised, culturally severed history of place, a palatable representation of a (partial) history. This chapter has documented how in a less formalised theme park way, (white) ‘heritage’ is packaged and legitimised, and incorporated in lifestyles in the case study area. Non-Aboriginal heritage is consumed and reproduced through the gentrification of the built environment in the case study area. Heritages of whiteness are brought into the present to maintain territories that were gained, and then fought for, in the past.

The next chapter is concerned, in part, with how mechanisms of denial and indifference are being activated, learned and socially institutionalised through the protection of built heritage, through resident activism, in the case study area.

1 The elegant inner-city suburb of Paddington (and Woollahra), with large terrace houses, is the benchmark for Sydney gentrification (see Cameron and Craig, 1985).
2 Beyond the scope of the current discussion are the following considerations: cheap inner urban property was/is often sought by groups who needed/wanted to be grouped ‘together’, such as migrant
groups; gay men and lesbian women. The economic/cultural ‘mix’ of such imperatives are contingent upon a number of factors, not least of which include issues of marginality and exclusion in the largely ‘white’ heteronormative suburban landscape. Ethnic concentrations, so specifically inner-urban in the past, now occur in suburbs, but tend to clump (eg Cabramatta, Auburn) rather than ‘assimilate’. In recent years communications technologies have enabled some unsettling of, for example, heteronormative dominance.

3 According to ‘Di Jones Real Estate Agents’.

4 My own house in Reservoir Street sold for $245,000. It was in very poor condition. Other nearby small terraces in (slightly) better condition sold for between $250,000 and $300,000.

5 Residex is an organisation that provides statistical information on residential property trends (The Residential Property Index). The index is used by governments, the Real Estate Institute and newspapers (www.ozemail.com.au/~residex/).

6 Di Jones Real Estate Agency.

7 According to South Sydney Council Local Environment Plan 1996, Heritage and Conservation, Darlington is a ‘Conservation Area’, with several ‘Heritage Listed’ buildings. Currently, this simply means that Council permission must be gained for alteration or demolition of a building (LEP p21). Victorian terrace houses have been demolished (eg on the corner of Ivy Street and Abercrombie Street, Darlington). Although The ‘Darlington Conservation Area’ is ‘legally registered’ with the federal government body, the ‘Australian Heritage Commission’ this has not protect it from local government jurisdiction. The Commission notes indicate that ‘the data was mainly provided by the nominator and has not yet been revised by the Commission’.

8 The main language group, according to Anderson (1998, 217), is Banjalang but there are also Eora (Sydney), Wiradjuri (Nowra), Kamilaroi and others from throughout NSW and Queensland.

9 In the last elections the (now former) Mayor, Vic Smith, bid farewell after 12 years as Mayor. He was ousted by a right-wing independent. In his closing speech, Mr Smith described himself as a surviving ‘foundation resident’ (Mayor’s last Message, South Sydney InnerCity News 37, 2). The swing from a Labor government headed by a strong Labor leader for 12 years, to a weakened Labor government headed by an independent, is indicative of the changing demographic in South Sydney.

10 Including the residents of The Block.

11 This information was given by neighbours during informal chats. The ‘cat lady’ lived in Edward Street, just behind my house in Ivy Street. She died just before my research began and the particular edition of ‘Chippo Politics’ has been impossible to locate. The editor stated that ‘Chippo Politics’ had just started up as a local newsletter, and some earlier editions were not saved.

12 There is also a trend to build heritage-style new homes such as ‘The Victorian’, or ‘The Federation’ in new Western Sydney subdivisions.

13 Carter’s Price Guide for Antiques (1999 edn) has a range of such objects from a metal 1960s tray valued at $30, Martin Boyd vases ($160 - $240) and biscuit barrel ($575-625) from the 1950s with images of Aboriginal warriors; Royal Doulton and other make plates with warrior images ($40 - $50); various ‘Piccaninny’ (Aboriginal baby) objects (salt and pepper shakers/bookends), and a Norah Wellings English cloth Piccaninny doll (1940s) for $550- $650.

14 At the local council level a ‘Heritage and Conservation’ Local Environment Plan for South Sydney was introduced in 1996; At the NSW government level, the Heritage Council of NSW announced that a ‘New State Heritage Register’ for ‘state icons’ had been established (1998) by amendment to the ‘Heritage Act’ of 1977. At a national level the term ‘National Estate’ was adopted in 1972. There is the Heritage Commission, and the independent National Trust of Australia, established in 1950, which holds a classification of heritage register.
DEFENDING WHITE HERITAGE

In Chapter 6, I concluded that the evolving definitions of what constitutes ‘heritage’ remain racially blind in the case study area. Such heritage(s) is non-inclusive of histories other than those of a neocolonial project of whiteness. Colonial heritage(s) is privileged over all other heritages in the case study area. The preservation of heritage buildings or their façades, at the very least, has become increasingly important, and fought for through resident activism.

Interest in heritage, and subsequent interest in its protection, has gained popularity in post-industrial inner cities around the world (Zukin 1982, 1986; Hewison 1987; Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Residents (and others) in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale, mount regular campaigns to preserve the original built fabric of the area when it is threatened by development. In this chapter, I elaborate on the theme of privileging white heritage that was introduced in Chapter 6. I do this by tracing how localised resident activism contributes both to the empowerment of whiteness and white spaces and, consequently, ongoing racialisation processes in the case study area. The chapter details examples of resident activism which revalorise non-Aboriginal areas whilst devalorising the Aboriginal place known as The Block. This activism produces material outcomes that directly or indirectly impact on the Aboriginal community. This chapter also shows that defence of white space is sometimes mobilised consciously, but at times it is mobilised less consciously by way of a racial blindness.

As noted previously in this thesis, many non-Aboriginal residents in the case study area, share a sense that their neighbourhood is endangered because of the Aboriginal presence. The activism outlined in this chapter is either borne directly out of this sense, as expressed through overt anti-Block activism, or is not immune to this sense, as demonstrated through the protection of (white) heritage architecture and architectural motifs. The inability of resident activism to be inclusive of other than colonial/white heritage(s) is, I argue, indicative of the capacity of whiteness to deny the
heritage of others, or to be indifferent to those heritages. According to Herzfeld (in Rapport 1995, 645-646):

Indifference is socially created through the selective rhetorical deployment of a kin-based discrimination between insiders and outsiders (those ‘out of place’ then being treated ‘like dirt’).

Denial of, and indifference to heritages ‘other’ than those that have been prioritised through recorded history, persist in the case study area. For the non-Aboriginal residents who mobilise to defend white space and white built heritage, particular attention is paid to the socialities and manufactured memories of ‘kinship’. For example, members of a resident action group that protects built heritage in the case study area, and the non-participating recipients of that activism (such as other gentrifiers), enjoy the rewards of kinship. Such kinships enable collective valorisation of white histories, which are deliberately or actively indifferent to all others.

The emergence of such privileging activisms follows the ideas of Sidney Plotkin (1990, 219) who has argued that, in struggles over community land use, ‘it is necessary to see one meaning of community as defensiveness and exclusion, as a sense of beleaguered membership in an endangered enclave’. Although focused on specifically local incidents, this chapter shows how localised resident activism contributes directly, and less obviously, to broader structures of inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Such activism relies on a sense of endangerment to person, to property (and property values) and to the cherished heritage(s) of whiteness.

7.1 Urban Social Movements and Resident Activism
Localised resident activism emerged in cities around the world along with broader political reforms in the 1960s. Along with other ‘movements’, urban social movements started to challenge the policies or actions of the state (Castells 1977). According to Fincher (1987), early theorisations tended to consider urban social movements as progressive agents of change. By the early 1980s, commentators were noting that some localised resident activisms were based on the motivations of ‘turf protection’ (Dear and Taylor 1982). Local resident activisms of this kind have urged a
shift in the previous assumption that resident action was largely a politics of class emancipation (Castells 1976, 1983).

In their study of resident action in Sydney, Costello and Dunn (1994) identified that resident activism is either ‘diversionary’, or, ‘critically empowering’, at a local level. Diversionary actisms are those that can enable structural change or win territory battles (such as land use disputes). Activisms that critically empower, on the other hand, include political movements such as the green movement, women’s movement, peace movement and gay and lesbian liberation struggles. These movements mobilise at the grass-roots level. The political ideologies of such movements, however, are usually broader-based and distinct from the ‘protection of turf’ motivations (Costello and Dunn 1994).

Dear and Takahashi recently offered categorisations of ‘NIMBYism’ (Not In My Back Yard-ism) as either ‘reactive’, ‘to protect existing amenities and distributions of resources’, or ‘empowering’, ‘to correct past inequalities’ (1997, 87). Although somewhat different categorisations of resident activism to those of Costello and Dunn (1994), there is agreement about the politics of urban social movements. Those activities organised around ideologies of localised turf protection, that actively privilege local issues over challenges to larger political structures or dominant ideologies, are likely to be in the grip of the NIMBY syndrome. NIMBY tends to be dominated by self-interested protectionism (Dear 1992).

It is now clear that some local activisms mobilise for conservative and exclusionary purposes (Plotkin 1990). The marginalising impact that some urban activism has on minority groups, where race and class intersect (Takahashi 1996, Dear and Takahashi 1997), and where a rhetoric of resistance to endangerment by ‘something Other’ are gaining recognition (Dalby and Mackenzie 1997, 101). This chapter details various urban social movements and resident activisms in the case study area. From the emancipatory mobilisations to protect Darlington from the expansion of The University of Sydney (USYD) and to provide housing in inner Sydney for disadvantaged Aboriginal people in the 1960s and 1970s, this chapter traces the rise of turf protection and consequent resident activism. Examples are also drawn from
several events as they happened in the case study area. The various resident activisms encountered in this chapter are implicated racially. This can be overt racialisation, through activism mobilised directly against the presence of The Block, or covert via activism that simply consolidates whiteness.

7.1.1 Urban Social Movements and NIMBY activism in Darlington

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, two monumental events occurred in the case study area in inner Sydney. One was an announcement that USYD was expanding into Darlington, and the other was the rise of an emergent Aboriginal ‘Black Politics’ in inner-city Redfern. Both events precipitated emancipatory political movements. In response to the announcement by USYD residents of Darlington mobilised to save their suburb (detailed in Chapter 4). The second movement was the mobilisation of land rights for an indigenous place in the city of Sydney which resulted in the formation of the Aboriginal settlement known as The Block. This section introduces how the emancipatory struggle for Aboriginal land rights in Sydney elicited a resistance response from the non-Aboriginal residents in the case study area that became a racialised resistance movement.

In response to the announcement that the Aboriginal presence in the city of Sydney was to be formalised through the purchase of The Block site in the early 1970s, the ‘South Sydney Resident’s Protection Movement’ (SSRPM) formed, to fight what one SSRPM document referred to as the ‘festering sore’ of Aboriginal settlement (Anderson, 1993b, 328). The argument of the SSRPM was that Aboriginal ‘ghettoisation’ would lead to violence and hatred. The SSRPM was pro-assimilation, as were many others at the time. Prominent Labor politicians, from the local council to federal government level, supported this position (Anderson 1993a). The long-standing assimilationist argument was that Aboriginal people should merge with mainstream (that is, non-Aboriginal) society. This ‘either/or’ option in which cohabitation between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people was either ‘solved’ by non-urban segregation or assimilation, circumscribed popular opinion at the time. As an example of Aboriginal self-determined segregated living in the city, The Block was an unfamiliar outcome in this familiar debate. At the time of the proposal for The Block, a group of non-Aboriginal residents made an almost hysterical plea against the
segregated development: ‘a human zoo should not be allowed in this area’ (quoted in Anderson 1993b, 328). Looking back, it does appear that the battle to maintain territory had drawn on historical hierarchies of domination in which the most racialised ‘other’ is positioned as part of nature, an uncivilised beast (Anderson 2000). In terms of subsequent local activisms, those original anti-Block responses were overtly NIMBY in character.

Sidney Plotkin (1990) has identified the exclusionary politics of ‘enclave consciousness’ (Plotkin 1990, 223). In the context of this thesis, the two important emancipatory social movements, of preserving ‘working class’ housing (from subsumption by USYD) in one case, and the recognition of Aboriginal land rights in the other, were grass-roots movements that were grounded in broader emancipatory politics. On the other hand, the actions of the SSRPM, and more recent local activism in the case study area has mobilised around ‘enclave consciousness’ that specifically aims to protect (white) turf and heritage. According to Plotkin (1990, 223), enclave consciousness:

sees its primary political conflicts with the outside society, not within … this way of thinking can end up justifying the repression of minorities … while supporting the social power of leading economic interests.

Although the battle that mobilised against the expansion of USYD was emancipatory, and the battle against the formation of The Block was exclusionary, both battles exhibited unequivocal traits of ‘enclave consciousness’. In the first battle, USYD had become the tyrannical landlord. In the second, the Federal Government, as the authority ushering in the Aboriginal community of The Block, became the imposer of an unwanted presence in the same working class area. Both opposition movements used class unity to fight the large and external ‘enemy’. A distinction between the two battles is identifiable, however, because it was the fight against the Federal Government (and others involved in the development of The Block) that resulted in a seemingly justifiable repression of a minority, as Plotkin (1990) suggests. In the early 1970s, Aboriginal people were simply too alien to be considered as part of the ‘working classes’, regardless of their employment conditions. Because of their lack of
status, the repression of Aboriginal people was irrelevant in Darlington, in the early 1970s, to the pressing issue of what seemed to be a class battle.

Furthermore, in accordance with Plotkin’s (1990, 223) definition (quoted above) of ‘enclave consciousness’, a representative of ‘leading economic interests’ (Plotkin 1990, 223) was also involved during the anti-Block battle. The Block site had been bought by a developer in the same way that USYD had bought up swathes of Darlington in the previous territory battle. Unlike the USYD context, however, the imposition of a development ban on the site that would become The Block meant that the developer had no choice but to sell (Anderson 1993b, 324). In the meantime, the localised politics of class emancipation that had been exhibited in the earlier battle with the University of Sydney, had slipped into exclusionary enclave consciousness. For the Darlington residents the less than desirable interests of the property developer, which could eventually threaten the poorest of the working classes through spiralling rents, were not as undesirable as the prospect of housing an Aboriginal community. South Sydney City Council supported development applications that assisted the interests of the developer by stipulating that only single family units were acceptable in the development proposal for the site that became The Block. Such a stipulation meant that the requirements of the Aboriginal community would not be met (Anderson 1993a, 93). All class unities and emancipatory politics at the local level had succumbed to racialised enclave consciousness.

The aforementioned events were politically complex. The anti-Block response was a result of a range of reactions to complex political machinations. Issues of class emancipation were combining with an emergent localised political conservatism that was borne out of fear and outrage. There was the threat to white working class space that an impoverished Aboriginal presence would pose, and there was a belief that only an already impoverished and disempowered area would have to bear such a burden. After all, no other urban area would have wanted or accepted an obligatory Aboriginal community.

The politics of the positions held were context specific, yet historically informed. The legacy is that these events have helped to establish a specifically racialised local
politics that continues to emerge in the case study area. Although representations of animality and zoos are no longer overtly associated with the Aboriginal community, stereotypes of Heroin-addicted ‘junkies’ and ‘criminals’ have simply replaced the old, now unacceptable typecasting of Aboriginal people. These new stereotypes are the basis for ongoing anti-Block hyperbole and resident actions detailed later in this chapter.

According to Pendall (1999), broader anti-development politics that resemble NIMBY at the local level, are often lumped together into a NIMBY classification. Acknowledging Pendall’s qualification for a nuanced assessment of resident action, it is clear that anti-Block activisms in the 1970s were based on assumptions about who would be moving in, rather than the development of the site as such. There was, however, a broader anti-development politics also at work at that time. A movement that became known as the ‘Green Bans’ was working to protect working class housing from rapid urban development. This movement was distinct from the anti-Block NIMBY response but not removed from the complex politics involved at the time. The Green Bans movement is also implicated in current heritage protection activism.

7.1.2 From Green Bans to the heritage protection movement

The anti-development movement of the 1970s, known as the ‘Green Bans’ (Mundey 1981, Roddewigg 1978, Jakubowicz 1984, Short 1988a, 1988b, Burgmann and Burgmann 1998) protected homes and green space from a largely unfettered development boom that was transforming much of Sydney’s urban fabric at the time. The politics of the Green Bans, which were trade-union imposed work bans placed on specific urban developments, was particularly protective of working class housing in the old inner-city suburbs of Sydney (Jakubowicz 1984).

The issue of housing workers in the city has largely given way to larger economic forces. Workers have tended to move to the ‘affordable’ (outer) suburbs of Sydney. During the early 1970s, the emancipatory politics of the Green Bans movement ignited a conservation ideology for Sydney’s built heritage. The Green Bans movement was a ‘collective urban social movement’ because of the diversity of groups involved in the protection of housing and open space from large scale government and private
developments, and freeway construction. Although having a primary concern with emancipatory politics, the protection of the homes of the working classes, the Green Bans did pave the way for the expression of a conservative political movement focused on heritage protection. With a different *raison d’être* to the Green Bans movement, the heritage conservation movement has flourished with gentrification. Gentrifiers have turned the strategies of ‘people power’ and the techniques of protest to protect the heritage architecture of buildings that were once protected as the homes and workplaces of the ‘working classes’. The built fabric of terrace houses that was once retained for emancipatory purposes, is now protected for very different reasons.

### 7.2 Protecting white territory in the case study area

The outcome of one particular development ban, a quasi or pre ‘Green Ban’ was unique to the case study area. A development ban was applied to the area that became The Block, as a gesture of emancipation and recognition of Aboriginal land rights (Anderson 1993a, b). The ban aimed to assist some of the most disempowered people in Australia but, for the incumbent non-Aboriginal working classes in the case study area, this ban was another act of class betrayal. These betrayals, by the then Labor federal government and the trade union movement (who were behind the Green Bans) have contributed to the sense of siege and enclave consciousness that remains today and manifests through the processes of resident activism that protect heritage architecture and white space in the case study area.

Much of the activism I wish to discuss in this and subsequent sections is related to the ways that resident activism has responded to crime in the case study area. The next section of this chapter is concerned with the rise of a particularly racialised form of enclave consciousness, or localised community feeling. Examples are drawn in the first instance from the formal protective movement known as Neighbourhood Watch, which helped to establish a system of informal surveillance in the case study area, through to various examples of racist extremism that emerges from time to time to agitate anti-Aboriginal sentiments in the case study area.

#### 7.2.1 Neighbourhood Watch

In the mid 1980s, the popular anti-crime initiative, Neighbourhood Watch (NW), was attempted in the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale area. The NW concept, based
on ‘community control’ with local police support, used surveillance techniques such as ‘keeping an eye out’ to help protect property from theft and damage. There are no records of the Darlington branch of NW, which would normally be kept at the local supporting police station (in this case, Redfern Police Station) but, according to several long serving police officers, it lasted from 1985 until 1990. From research interviews, there are at least two versions of why NW folded in Darlington. In one version of events NW gradually ceased due to waning interest, as one Darlington resident stated:

I used to be a coordinator for here … well we kept the Neighbourhood Watch going. The only time you’d get a crowd there was when they were robbed … then it just phased out, nobody wanted to go, what was the good of keeping it up if few people was here? (Interview 14, 27 April, 1998)

According to another resident:

Neighbourhood Watch … we tried very hard with that but that fell down, went down the gurgler, there’s only the … few who wanted to put any effort into it. We did have a few meetings with the police from Redfern … but it all fizzled out. (Interview 15, 25 April, 1998).

Other residents were less ‘neutral’ in their reportage of the demise of NW in Darlington. For some, the Darlington branch had ‘racist’ motivations as one resident noted:

Starting the neighbourhood watch in this area, it is a police initiative, yes … what happened was the police tried to start it and it was taken up [by local residents] to make it look as though every bit of crime that happens in the area is because of the Aboriginal community. It wasn’t because the police were trying to do that, it was just there were some people in the area who appropriated it. (Interview 10, 12 February, 1998).

Another resident, who described himself as ‘an agent of [Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal] reconciliation’ revealed that NW was probably deliberately defused:
I [was] the last secretary for Neighbourhood Watch, I wound it down … [winding it down] was the best thing I’ve ever done [for reconciliation]. (Interview 26, 7 July, 1998).

The loss of NW in the case study area was, therefore, lamented by some and applauded by others. In more general accounts of the NW programs in Australia, the demise of local initiatives was diagnosed as resulting from changing gender roles and a reduction in the networks of home-based women, among other things (Hillier 1996, 101). By the late 1980s, racism in policing in the Redfern area had become the focus of an inquiry commissioned by the National Inquiry into Racist Violence, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity (Cunneen 1990). The ‘Four Corners’ (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) documentary on racism at Redfern Police Station (‘Cop It Sweet’) was made in 1991 (discussed in Chapter 4). Concerning the demise of NW and policing issues, one long term resident stated that:

There were some really really big, very very nasty police raids down on The Block and that involved a lot of meetings to develop what now are considered really normal things in terms of Aboriginal police liaison activity [such as regular meetings between police and Aboriginal Elders], which people just didn’t have at that stage (Interview 10, 12 February 1998)

It would appear that the ‘winding down’ of the Darlington branch of NW was due to a range of factors. These may include improvements in policing, through new police liaison initiatives with the Aboriginal community, and an associated shift in resources from NW to new initiatives, a lack of resident commitment to NW as well as an anti-racist stance taken by a few (such as the last secretary of NW). Ultimately, regardless of how it was wound down, the finger of blame for the ills in the area was still focussed on the Aboriginal community. The legacy is that the surveillance of The Block, remains. The processes of defending white space in Darlington existed before NW, and have continued to evolve since. NW was simply a formalised version of existing surveillance; there has been a tradition of ‘knowing what is going on’ in the area since the formation of The Block. Local residents have long engaged in ‘self’ surveillance, that is, they watch out for themselves and each other in the local area.
They also engage in ‘community’ surveillance, which basically means protecting the non-Aboriginal community by maintaining surveillance over the Aboriginal community. The demise of NW was not the end of ‘self’ or ‘community’ surveillance, which was expanded in the late 1990s when private security guards were engaged by a groups of residents in Chippendale to patrol their streets. This professional surveillance was meant to show the local police that residents were serious about increasing the policing of streets (Interview 29, 17 August 1998) as many residents felt that the area was seriously under-policed (Local Area Commander, Interview 28, 4 August 1998).

The police, non-Aboriginal residents and business people continually watch The Block. The non-Aboriginal community continues to ‘keep watch’, formally and informally, in the case study area.

7.3 The emergence of grass-roots ‘tactics’ in response to The Block
In addition to NW and tactics of surveillance, specific tactics have been mobilised through resident activism in response to drugs and crime in the case study area. In recent times, crimes associated with Aboriginal drug use have become the cause célèbre in the defence of (white) space. In the next two sections, the deployment of two tactics that have been used to defend white space are detailed. The first tactic served to denote The Block as the completely unacceptable perpetrator of drug-related crime (7.3.1 and 7.3.2). The second tactic involved resident activism against a proposed development by NSW Health Department/Central Sydney Area Service for a facility for the treatment of drug and alcohol related heath issues in the Darlington area (7.3.3). Both examples are linked by the association of drugs and drug related crime with The Block, and the spread of drug use from The Block into non-Aboriginal space. Chapter 5 of this thesis detailed the association of drugs and drug related crime with The Block, and the spread of drug use from The Block into non-Aboriginal space. Public concerns about drug use on The Block, combined with concerns about the controversial proposal by The Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross to house an ‘illegal’ safe-injecting room there, provided impetus for the NSW ‘Drug Summit’ that was launched in 1999 (‘Carr calls summit,’ The Sun Herald, 7 February 1999; ‘Carr
defends needle exchange program,’ Australian Associated Press [Reuters], 20 May, 1999). Residents in the case study area have been concerned about the ‘drug problem’ for some time. Various resident action groups have formed in response to drug issues but a particularly pernicious group is the Caroline Lane Action Committee (CLAC).

7.3.1 Caroline Lane Action Committee (Figure 4.1 for map of streets).
CLAC is a determined resident action group with a fundamentally anti-Block stance. In the mid 1990s, CLAC lobbied against an Aboriginal Housing Company proposal to house Aboriginal elders in a development planned for the corner of Caroline and Eveleigh Streets, within The Block area. CLAC’s main objection to the proposal was that the development would encourage Aboriginal ‘blow ins’ who would seek shelter with the elders (Interview 31, 13 September 1998). South Sydney City Council records indicate that this development was approved in 1988\(^3\) (letter to author from Freedom of Information Coordinator, South Sydney City Council, 17 May 1999). In another campaign, CLAC tried to remove Caroline Lane altogether by lobbying South Sydney City Council to partition the lane for purchase by adjoining households in Caroline Street. Caroline Lane, which is adjacent to Eveleigh Street (the main street of The Block), is notorious for being an Aboriginal ‘shooting gallery’ (Heroin-injecting area). By purchasing a section of laneway behind each house, the residents of Caroline Street would have taken ownership of this laneway thereby removing the ‘shooting gallery’. South Sydney City Council had, according to one interviewee, agreed to sell portions of the lane to residents for ‘about 4 or 5 grand [thousand dollars]’ (Interview 31, 13 September 1998). Objections by the Lawson Street residents who share Caroline Lane, and their success in a subsequent Land and Environment Court of NSW case over rights to Caroline Lane, meant that the sell-off did not eventuate. The Lawson Street residents would have lost access to their properties from the rear lane if the plan had proceeded.

For those wanting to purchase sections of Caroline Lane, there were several gains to be made. Firstly, the notorious ‘shooting gallery’ would be ‘dealt with’ (or moved away from the lane, at least). Secondly, property values would benefit, and thirdly, non-Aboriginal space would have been consolidated. On gentrification in the area, one resident stated:
We bought here mainly because of price, and also because of expectations of the area being gentrified, and we feel that it will eventually be gentrified ... and also we’re prepared, we are young enough to sit out the disputes in Beirut here and in due course we hope to see the problems dealt with and we’ll benefit from that economically and also socially (Interview 32, 13 September 1998).

This interviewee expressed a preparedness to wait for the windfall of gentrification. The use of ‘disputes in Beirut’ as a metaphor for the war-zone conditions in the area between The Block and surrounding area, is pertinent. It exemplified the perceived temporariness of the situation. This war will end and when it does, there will be winners and losers. For this interviewee, the winners will be the astute young home buyers who have been prepared to ‘sit [it] out’.

The absorption of Caroline Lane into private space would have been an astute economic move in a gentrifying area. Although CLAC failed to secure Caroline Lane, it remains undeterred. The consistency of CLAC to campaign and to emerge in other guises during other campaigns (detailed below), has enabled a strong anti-Block position to be heard again and again. Another event would set in train a different process that was also designed to rid Caroline Lane of the (Aboriginal) drug problem. The following details the involvement of CLAC, both directly and indirectly, in several incidents that occurred in the late 1990s.

### 7.3.2 Caroline Lane - a government response

The following is an example of a government response to publicised drug use in Caroline Lane. A photograph of a ‘young (non-Aboriginal) boy’, who was being injected with Heroin by an adult in Caroline Lane (Figure 7.1), was front page news for a popular Sunday tabloid newspaper, *The Sun Herald* (‘It’s Wrong’, 31 January, 1999). Though not stated, and the ethnicity of the adult in the photo is ambiguous, Caroline Lane is notorious (as an Aboriginal ‘shooting gallery’). The resulting furore over this incident elicited an immediate response from the then state Minister for Health and Aboriginal Affairs, Andrew Refshauge. According to a newspaper article, headlined
‘It’s Wrong’ (The Sun Herald, 31 January 1999), Refshauge ‘quickly ordered a halt to the official needle exchange program conducted in Caroline Lane’ and is quoted as having said ‘I am suspending the program at Caroline Lane as of today and we will hold a top-level investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident [of the assisted Heroin injection]’. Journalists fuelled the outrage by describing the needle exchange program as ‘a scheme that hands out Heroin injection kits to children’ (The Sun Herald, 31 January 1999). The damage wrought by the photograph of a (white) child being given Heroin in an area of Aboriginal drug use, was that the government sponsored needle-exchange service was suddenly removed.

According to Dr Alex Wodak, the director of the drug and alcohol service at St Vincent’s Hospital, the needle-exchange facility had been ‘an enormous success in cutting the number of drug addicts getting HIV, since it began’ (‘It’s Wrong’, The Sun Herald, 31 January, 1999). A week after the furore, it was revealed that the ‘child’, who had been estimated to be about 12 years of age in the newspaper article, was actually 16 years old. Regardless of the age or ethnicity of the Heroin user, closure of this essential health facility had serious consequences for all drug users who used it, so the media continued the story by then reporting the criticisms of the needle exchange closure by health authorities (‘Experts condemn needle shutdown’, SMH, 1 February, 1999, 3’; ‘Redfern closure wrong’, Canberra Times, 2 February, 1999, 8). The much needed needle-exchange service that had been provided by the NSW government Health Department, had been removed from Caroline Lane, by its highest official because it was deemed to be promoting the dangerous practice of drug-use in an Aboriginal drug-use area. A local Aboriginal spokesperson for The Block, Lyall Munro, raised another concern about the whole event. His comment, which was also reported by the media, was ‘why wasn’t the media there when Aboriginal kids were shooting up … they have the same problems as that white kid who was photographed’ (‘Heroin shot - Aboriginal spokesperson says he smells a rat’, Australian Associated Press, 31 January 1999). This story did not raise a furore of any kind. It did not have the impact of the photo of the vulnerable white ‘child’.

Unofficially, questions were raised about why the media was actually in Caroline Lane that day. There are those who live on The Block (and outside it) who suspect that the
whole event was a media ‘set-up’. Two CLAC members happened to be present on the day the photograph was taken. They were ‘anonymously’ quoted in one of the newspaper reports:

> It’s not a needle exchange, it’s a needle give-away’ said a Caroline St resident, Robert, who discovered the needles [after an open box of syringes was found in the place of the removed needle exchange unit in Caroline Lane] … ‘I know Caroline Lane is a disgrace. We’re trying our hardest but it’s an uphill battle’, another Caroline Street resident, Dave, said. (‘Needle give-away’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 February 1999, 5).

This quote is informative for reasons other than what the residents said about the health service provisions for drug users. It reveals the identities of the two individuals quoted. Although the identities are limited by the use of first names only in this report (quoted above), the Darlington community is familiar with both ‘Robert’ and ‘Dave’ and their anti-Block doorknock appeals. They are both recognisable anti-Block agitators and founding members of CLAC and its offshoot groups and committees. For example, these same two individuals were responsible for a campaign that collected racialised ‘crime victim’ stories from the local area. According to two interviewees (Interviews 31 and 32), approximately 500 ‘crime victim’ stories were collected. These stories were collated as a vague petition (Figure 7.3). The target of the petition was not specified but the document did mention several politicians. The ‘petition(s)’ were then sent, without the knowledge or consent of the residents who had provided the stories, to a high profile television reporter and anchor, Kerry O’Brien, at the ABC TV 7:30 Report.

Several weeks after the door-knock, and the ‘petition’ being sent to the 7:30 Report, the ‘Manager Editorial Development & Support’ for the program responded with a ‘Dear Resident’ letter (Figure 7.2) that was sent to all residents who participated (or, as was the case with my household, did not participate). This letter was a polite refusal to pursue the story (ABC TV 7:30 Report, 11 June 1998). Anti-Block activisms can be, at times, slippery and manipulative. In this case it was illegally non-representative.
Caroline Lane remains a contested zone between what appears to be the agendas of ‘black’ laneway (drug) users versus ‘white’ home-owners. When the mobile ‘needle-exchange’ facility started visiting the laneway, there were two consequences. Firstly, this state funded health facility began providing a much needed essential health service. The second consequence is that it helped to formalise the status of Caroline Lane as an Aboriginal ‘shooting gallery’. Drug use has, by association and proximity to The Block, become an Aboriginal issue regardless of the supply and the demand. This continues to attract the attention of the media and, more recently, the NSW government. The mobile needle-exchange facility benefited both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal intravenous drug users (the white ‘child’ may have otherwise used a second-hand syringe). Non-Aboriginal Heroin use, so commonly ‘an issue’ in other inner-city areas, was elided by the racialisation of the drug problem in the case study area. The need, as it is now perceived generally, is to contain the drug-related activity of The Block to protect white children. Resident activism in the case study area has proved itself to be a highly active and flexible. Groups such as CLAC have the capacity to mount a range of strategies, which include misrepresenting residents and gaining the attention of the media, in an ongoing campaign against the presence of The Block.

7.3.3 Little Eveleigh Street medical facility
This next section details another example of the way that The Block, drugs and the seepage of Aboriginal drug use into neighbouring areas, have been countered by resident activism. Since the aforementioned furore about Caroline Lane in early 1999, the NSW Minister for Health and Aboriginal Affairs announced the establishment of a number of new NSW Health Department initiatives in the case study area. One proposal was to house a health facility that would target drug dependency in a building in Little Eveleigh Street, near the corner of Lawson and Eveleigh Streets (map 4.1) (RRAG ‘letter to sign and send’ 17 February 1999, Chippo Politics, 2, 2, March 1999). The non-Aboriginal residents responded to the announcement of this proposed facility by rallying to the battle cry of ‘not another shooting gallery’. The Redfern Resident Action Group (RRAG)6 formed immediately (in February 1999) ‘to voice the concerns of local residents about drug dependency services in the Redfern area and to offer solutions through proper community consultation’ (Redfern Residents Action
The first RRAG missive was letterbox-dropped around Darlington and stated:

A recent internal review by the [NSW] Health Department on the operation of the injecting equipment vehicle in Caroline Lane was released to the media on 7 February 1999 … recommend[ing] the placement of a large scale permanent drug dependency service near the Block …[leasing] 122 Little Eveleigh Street, to set up a needle exchange program in that building. (from RRAG ‘letter to sign and send’ 17 February 1999, also distributed at first public meeting).

The aim of the RRAG campaign was to halt the development of this ‘large scale permanent drug dependency service near the Block’ (from quote above). The rationale was that such a facility should not exist in a ‘residential area’ (and specifically not on the predominantly non-Aboriginal ‘side’ of Lawson Street in Darlington). The campaign started with urgent public meetings (starting February 1999). The ‘sign and send’ letters (see quote above) were addressed to various politicians, including the NSW Minister for Health who was also the NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Deputy Premier of NSW. The politicians who were targeted by the ‘sign and send’ letters were invited to attend and speak at public meetings. Most did attend, and most addressed the meetings (from local, state and federal governments). The local area police commander also addressed a meeting and professed his support for those residents who opposed the facility. Newsletters kept local residents informed of the progress of the campaign, and the success of lobbying against the facility.

Although couched in different terms, the response to the proposed health facility was not dissimilar to a proposal for the imposition of a noxious facility; it was very low on a hierarchy of tolerance. This familiar ‘Not In My Back Yard’ response paralleled the response to the proposal to house an Aboriginal community in the area, decades earlier. Michael Dear’s (1992) ‘good neighbour hierarchy’ (rather than the implied ‘bad’ neighbour hierarchy) includes groups with physical disabilities or life stage issues such as ‘old age’ or ‘terminal illness’ at the top of the tolerance list. Lower down the scale are facilities for ‘mental disabilities’, and at the bottom of the hierarchy of acceptance are services for those with ‘social diseases’ such as criminality,
alcoholism and drug use\textsuperscript{9}. Although such a list is generally applicable, in the case study area this hierarchy is exacerbated by race (cf Pendall 1999). The proposal to house an Aboriginal community in the 1970s was met with similar responses to those at the bottom of the hierarchy. Moreover, with gentrification in inner Sydney, the demographic shift towards a more affluent populace has meant that a decrease in tolerance to existing welfare facilities, is emerging\textsuperscript{10}. The campaign against the Little Eveleigh Street health facility proposed for Darlington was highly organised, well-resourced and drew support from a wide and influential field.

In the early stages of the campaign for the Little Eveleigh Street health facility, the NSW Minister for Health and Aboriginal Affairs largely ignored the pleas by RRAG to reconsider the Little Eveleigh Street proposal. Independent MP, Clover Moore, however, did listen. She responded to the residents who were being represented by RRAG. Electoral boundaries had moved and the Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale neighbourhood had suddenly come into her independently-held electorate. She promised ‘to make inner Sydney a better and safer place to live’ (‘letter to residents’ leaflet from Clover Moore, Electorate Office, 58 Oxford Street, Paddington, NSW, 2021, 25 February 1999). A letter was also sent from Moore to the Minister. It was titled ‘Re: Proposed consultation on drug and alcohol services at Redfern’ and was also letter-boxed to residents of Darlington (dated 25 February 1999). In this letter, Moore claimed to represent ‘the residents’ who were ‘highly sceptical that an authentic, meaningful and effective consultation process will take place’. The Mayor for South Sydney City Council, who was competing for Moore’s seat in State parliament at that time, quickly added his support for RRAG and their campaign. The desires to not have this facility ‘without the support of the Redfern [non-Aboriginal] community’ (letter to ‘Residents’ from Vic Smith, Mayor of South Sydney, 23 February 1999) became a party-political competition. RRAG successfully timed their campaign by pitching it at rival political parties just before an election. The battle to establish which political party would best represent the (non-Aboriginal) residents of Darlington overshadowed the real issue of addressing the drug problem in the area. Resident action groups have become highly organised and adept at mobilising a variety of strategies to achieve their goals. In this case the goal was to halt the development of a facility that might help to address the drug problem in the Darlington area.
The RRAG campaign was also assisted by some unsolicited, but useful, support. The term ‘shooting gallery’ has been a part of the local lexicon, particularly since the Caroline Lane ‘incident’ discussed earlier. The term is an emotive one as it conjures images of Heroin injecting orgies, guns and ‘crack-houses’ that are depicted in films about US ghettos and drug-taking. The media contributed to the RRAG campaign by highlighting the controversy over drug use. For example, ‘Residents fear Redfern clinic will be needle exchange’ was published in Sydney’s daily broadsheet, The Sydney Morning Herald (17 February, 1999). And, during the RRAG campaign, an un-named group quietly exploited the hysteria. A leaflet titled ‘Are You Nervous As You Approach Or Leave Redfern Station’ was dropped into Darlington letter-boxes and posters bearing the same information were pasted on telegraph poles all over the neighbourhood (Figure 7.4). The message was that the RRAG campaign must be supported to fight the proposal because ‘This shooting gallery will directly effect you – your safety, your property, your children, your lifestyle’ (Figure 7.4). This poster/leaflet tied the Little Eveleigh Street facility directly to the Caroline Lane (Aboriginal) drug problem.

The RRAG quickly dissociated itself from this publicity by distributing a newsletter that noted that any printed material (such as that above) that did not carry the RRAG logo, was not RRAG material. The RRAG clearly did not want to be affiliated with this un-named group that made explicit connections between The Block and drug use. The RRAG had become careful about referring to the Aboriginal community as their campaign progressed. For example the original ‘letter to send’ noted that: ‘Nearly half a million needles were distributed from Caroline Lane in 1998’. This letter also noted the ‘social and health problems of our area, including those suffered by Aboriginal residents on the Block’ (RRAG ‘letter to send’ 17 February 1999). This kind of commentary then disappeared and no further reference to The Block, or Aboriginal people, was made. The rhetoric of RRAG remained simply that the proposed medical service should not be in a residential area. Local residents and business owners are, of course, already well versed about the (allegedly Aboriginal) origins of the drug problem. Several Darlington residents, who were interviewed for this thesis, used the term ‘shooting gallery’ in reference to Caroline Lane and/or the proposed Little
In the opposition to the Eveleigh Street facility, the issue of non-Aboriginal drug use was avoided. The focus remained firmly on the mostly unspoken but known association with The Block. When non-Aboriginal people engage in Heroin use in the area, such as the white child depicted in the Caroline Lane story, the drug use is still associated with The Block as the magnet for such activity. In 1999, the NSW Health Department released a report on community consultation about ‘Drug services in Redfern’ that had been carried out by a private consultancy company (Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd). The report concluded that there was ‘widespread agreement that drugs and alcohol issues … represent a major health and social problem in Redfern … On the other hand [there are concerns that] any significant development of services in the Redfern area …[are] likely to enforce Redfern’s role as a centre of illegal drug dealing and using in Sydney’ (Health Department of NSW 1999, 3.1). Throughout the report, the ‘drug problem’ was tied to The Block. By early 2001, it was still unclear whether or not there would be a facility at Little Eveleigh Street. No work had commenced on the building that had been leased to house the facility. The damage wrought by the Caroline Lane ‘incident’ has meant that the State government now exercises extreme caution before proceeding with any proposal for a drug health facility in the case study area.

The provision of a drug health facility in the area may be a pro-active government response, but when Aboriginal drug use (and disease) seeped along Caroline Lane and into white bodies, and then threatened to cross Lawson Street and move into non-Aboriginal residential space, residents mobilised to halt the spread. The Caroline Lane incident and the Little Eveleigh Street campaign have served to further stigmatise The Block and strengthen Anti-Block sentiment.

In the aforementioned example, a gentrifying area was under the threat of housing a facility that seemed to be inappropriate for that area (Sennett 1976, Takahashi 1996). The issues of control at racialised housing borders are complex particularly where
behaviour is deemed to be inappropriate or aberrant (Sennett 1976, Gregory 1993, Smith 1996), such as illegal drug use. Drug use and related crime is a serious problem in the case study area but any attempts to alleviate this problem, such as by the provision of a specialist state-run health facility, collide with racialised agendas of resident activism. A legacy of the original objection to the formation of The Block (by the SSRPM in the late 1960s) remains in the case study area. In an era of swift gentrification, the embeddedness of white dominance and resentment expresses itself in a variety of ways. The entrenched prejudices and fears about The Block will not be alleviated by the provision of a health facility that, in the end would appear to be yet another facility provided for Aboriginal people. This is resented as well as feared. In the next example, the future use of a site that had been earmarked for Aboriginal services was successfully contested to ensure the protection of gentrifying space and the consolidation of whiteness. This has had serious implications for an existing Aboriginal facility in the case study area.

7.4 Wilson Brothers Factory site

At the time of preparation of the plan the buildings are *generally vacant* and derelict. The Redfern Aboriginal Corporation* [sic] runs employment training programs on part of the site and is the only current user of the land. (Section 2.3 Current Uses Of The Site, SSCC 1999, 1, my emphasis. *This is actually ‘The Redfern Aboriginal Coalition’11*)

Another example of the interplay between local resident activism and government that has had grave consequences for The Block, involved the process of decision making over the future of the Wilson Brothers factory site. The Wilson Brothers factory site adjoins The Block (Figure 7.7 locates site). In 1990, The South Sydney City Council (SSCC) had endorsed a plan to develop the Wilson Brothers factory site as an Aboriginal recreational centre and proceeded in negotiating the purchase of the site. This was part of a wider redevelopment plan for The Block (SSCC 1999, iii). The site was consequently rezoned from Industrial uses to 9(c) Recreation.
In 1993, the SSCC purchased the Wilson Brothers factory site (bounded by Caroline, Hugo, Vine and Eveleigh Streets) from Wilson Brothers Pty Ltd. (SSCC 1999, iii). At that time, several improvement plans for The Block were in place, including a proposal by the Aboriginal Housing Company to ‘erect 3 x 2 storey dwellings at 2-10 Caroline Street’ (letter to author from Freedom of Information Coordinator, South Sydney City Council, 17 May 1999). The Wilson Brothers factory site would consolidate the provision of Aboriginal services within the immediate vicinity of The Block.

By 1997, the site remained undeveloped, but trouble erupted when SSCC announced its plan to demolish the buildings. According to Section 2.6 of South Sydney City Council’s ‘Draft Plan of Management of The Wilson Brothers factory site and Yellowmundee Reserve, Caroline Street, Redfern’ a decision had been made to turn the site into open space, temporarily, in response to ‘concerns regarding the structural safety of the buildings’ (SSCC 1999, iii). At this time, the future of The Block seemed increasingly uncertain (Chapter 4). The SSCC seemed to have decided that the original plan, to redevelop the Wilson Brothers factory site as an Aboriginal recreational centre, was somehow no longer a valid option. The SSCC proposed, therefore to turn the site into much needed inner-city green space.

With the release of the (new) SSCC plan, concerns were suddenly raised about the possible heritage value of some of the factory buildings. Although it is not clear ‘who’ raised the concerns about the safety of the buildings, there was enough opposition to the proposal to demolish the site that SSCC decided to consult with the community to help decide the future of the site (SSCC 1999, iii). Another concern was that useable buildings, including the building that was being used by the Redfern Aboriginal Coalition (RAC), to provide valuable employment schemes for the Aboriginal community, were to be demolished. The RAC leases one of the four buildings on the Wilson Brothers factory site, at ‘peppercorn’ (low) rent. When the alarm was raised over the safety of the buildings, the RAC engaged engineers to check the building that they were using. It was deemed to be safe (personal communication, December 1998).

The SSCC became increasingly aware that there were very different investments in the fate of the Wilson Brothers factory site. A private community consultancy company
(Sarkissian Associates) was engaged to ‘identify the individual people and groups with an interest in the development of the site to allow them to participate in the preparation of the plan’ (SSCC 1999, iii). After 35 weeks of ‘community consultation’, carried out between November 1998 and July 1999, a final compromise was proposed for the future use of the Wilson Brothers factory site. A draft ‘Masterplan’ and ‘Draft Management Plan’ was presented to the SCC.

The final proposal was that, apart from one ‘heritage’ building, the factories be demolished. The retained building would be used for ‘General Community Use’ and one small corner terrace house would also remain\(^{13}\). The remainder of the site would become parkland (SSCC 1999, 42). The ‘recommended management scenario’ in the Draft Management Plan (SSCC 1999) is that the SCC should act as a sole manager for the site, in order to establish the centre and its community programs. The SCC would grant leases as it saw fit, and the centre manager would carry out day to day administration of these leases (SSCC 1999, 48, Section 8.4.4). There is no mention of continuing RAC\(^{14}\) usage in the final plan.

In regard to the future of housing of Aboriginal services, such as the RAC or a recreation facility, the SCC had been ‘not very helpful’ according to the spokesperson of the RAC. The immediate concern of the RAC is that the new site plan does not provide for RAC usage (personal communication, December 1998).

The following is a detailed account of the process of public participation that led to the final SCC decision about the future of the Wilson Brothers factory site. The process of ‘community consultation’ can be summarised as follows:

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Fig 7.5 Wilson Brothers factory site community consultation process

| Aim: to decide what to do with the site. |
| Process: Lengthy public participation |
| 1) prospective steering committee members nominated. |
| 2) Council selects committee. |

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3) Private consultancy (Sarkissian et al) start public meeting process.

Public Meetings:
1) Stage 1 Public Meetings: 4 separate meetings, all ‘the same’
2) ‘Speak Out’ 28 November, 1998 (Wilson Brothers factory site). Comments from the 4 initial meetings were displayed and commented on.
3) ‘Checklist Workshop’, 6 February, 1999 (Darlington Activity Centre) where ‘a set of principles to guide the planning of the site … workshoped and refined … a draft set will be presented based on results of the previous consultations’.
   (SSCC Community Participation Newsletter, January 1999)
4) ‘Nitty Gritty Workshop’, 8 May, 1999. ‘a public participatory design workshop where plans showing alternative options are worked within a ‘hands-on’ way by the community. The ‘checklist’ … will be used to assess plans for the site that satisfy the needs and aspirations already expressed by members of the local community’
   (drawn from SSCC Community Participation Newsletter, January 1999)

7.4.1 Community Consultation
The first public meetings in the consultation process were held in November, 1998. These meeting were charged with emotion15 as the forum was used by some to air their grievances about drug use and crime in the area. At one meeting, in Ivy Street, The Block community was repeatedly blamed for crime in the area. Two Aboriginal Elders who were present, were deeply distressed. On more than one occasion one of the Elders wept. The consequence of such overt hostility was that the Aboriginal presence at the consultation sessions diminished. Only a few stalwarts remained to the last stages of the consultation process.

At the final stage of the community consultation process, a public meeting called the ‘Nitty Gritty workshop’ was organised (May 1999). Three options for the site were finally presented (Figure 7.6) and ‘the community’ was invited to contribute by choosing a preferred option. Option 1, ‘Building and Courtyard’ proposed to retain the main buildings around a central courtyard; Option 2, ‘Building and Park’ proposed to retain a (heritage) building at the Northern end of the site, demolish all other buildings and convert most of the site into a park; Option 3, ‘Park and Place’ proposed to demolish all buildings and convert the site into parkland.

7.4.1.1 Options and stakeholders
From the early concerns about the structural safety of the Wilson Brothers factory site buildings and the announcement that the SSCC would demolish the buildings, to
selection of the ‘Steering Committee’, through to the final three site proposals, resident action groups mobilised to push for their preferred options. The ‘Steering Committee’ were selected by the SSCC to ‘provide … direction for the study and operate … as the principle conduit for contact with the community in the interim periods between formal community events’ (SSCC 1999, 11). The Steering Committee consisted of representatives of four main ‘factions’ as well as three council representatives. The factions included the Caroline Lane Resident Action Group; the Redfern Aboriginal Coalition (RAC, as distinct from the Aboriginal Housing Company, who are the landlord organisation for The Block and did not get involved in any overt lobbying); Redfern Residents for Reconciliation (RRR), a small group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents who were supporting the RAC, and the Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group (consisting largely of Caroline Lane Action Committee, CLAC, members). A representative of each ‘faction’ was selected for the steering committee. The process of public participation resulted in 3 options that basically aligned with the separate desires of the stakeholders.

Option 1 was proposed in line with what the consultants believed to be the desires of one lobby group: the RAC, who were supported by the RRR. The RAC wanted to retain buildings for Aboriginal services, including their own. This option was not, however, endorsed by the RAC because it did not represent their case for provision of accommodation for (existing, and new) Aboriginal services. Most importantly, all 3 options, including Option 1, meant the demolition of the building used by the RAC.

Option 2 proposed to keep the building that some residents felt had heritage attributes, for a sports/community hall and convert the rest of the site into parkland and recreational areas. The building is adjacent to terrace housing to the North, and the rest of the site would be demolished (apart from the tiny corner terrace). This plan bears the hallmarks of a very sensible compromise between two disparate desires. On the one hand, a useable building would be saved, and on the other hand, open space would be created in a congested inner-city area. This option did not appear to ‘side’ with those who wanted open parkland (and no housing of Aboriginal services), associated with Option 3 and its supporters, nor did it ‘side’ with those who preferred
Option 1 (imagined to be the preference of the Aboriginal community, including the RAC), to keep buildings (for lease) and have a central courtyard.

Option 3 was the preferred option of the Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group. It required the demolition of all buildings and the construction of a park. The resident ‘feedback’ about this option was that it was the ‘safest’ option (Wilson Brothers factory site Community Participation Program Stage 2, 28 November 1998). Narratives of dirt, danger, drugs and crime, associated with The Block, peppered the feedback documentation (‘Speak Out’ feedback, 28 November 1998, SSCC). ‘Open space’ was preferred because it would allow better surveillance of the Aboriginal community. As one resident stated during research interviews:

We just want a park. It [the site] goes half way down to Vine St, [so] it’s easy to police as well. Most people here, if someone says boo you call the police.

(Interview 31, 13 Sept 1998).

Within the campaign for a park, a sub-campaign for a police station was mounted but was swiftly quashed by the Local Area Commander of Police who made it clear that there would be no police station housed on the site. The proposal for a park that would provide open space for surveillance purposes became the emergent agenda of the campaign. The first theme for this campaign was an evocative plea for ‘green space’ (a combination of park and open space) in the congested city. At the first public meetings, a representative of Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group presented their case in this way:

The best solution for the [Wilson Brothers] site is a Native Australian Flora park … because … It is an open valley of natural Australian trees and bushes. A return to the pre-colonial and possibly even the pre-aboriginal [sic\textsuperscript{16}] landscape of Redfern. Can you remember the feel of the Australian bush? The smell, the light, and the sounds which have long disappeared from Redfern? … It’s fresh … It will attract native birds. Can you imagine hearing the raucous laughing of kookaburras in the inner-city? It \textbf{will} happen. And it will bring Cockatoos, Rosellas, Galahs, possums, and magpies … It prevents the site from becoming another failed social
experiment in Redfern. (‘You can help decide the future of Redfern’, Leaflet, 17 November 1998).

This seductive narrative of bushland in the city has been used in at least two ways. It imagines a breath of fresh air in an otherwise congested inner-city area. Secondly, a bush imaginary that is pre-Aboriginal (as well as pre-colonial) invokes a fantasy landscape to visit that is either free of Aboriginal people, pre-colonial or otherwise. It also places Aboriginal people as part of nature and as such they are without culture, without agency and without politics (Lattas 1990, Jacobs 1996). This reference to a pre-Aboriginal time can invoke two eras. One is pre-colonial, when the area was bushland and the other is a more recent time before the contemporary Aboriginal presence.

This version of a pre-Aboriginal park was invoked only the once, at the beginning of the Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group campaign. Thereafter, the focus shifted to the provision of ‘open space’. A bushland imaginary, with or without Aboriginal people as part of nature was superseded by the perceived need to open the space to provide ‘visual links’ (SSCC 1999, 40), in other words, to watch the Aboriginal community and thereby gain more control of the ‘Aboriginal (drug) problem’. The need for open space became the catchcry of the Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group.

The draft ‘Master’ plan of management presents a more neutral interpretation of the visibility that open space would deliver once buildings were demolished on the Wilson Brothers factory site:

a community precinct linked visually and physically to the local area …
accentuates existing visual links across the locality so as to facilitate social interaction both at the site and through the neighbourhood (SSCC 1999, 40).

The use of the term ‘visual links’ is a euphemism for surveillance. This softer, more palatable term was repeated throughout the final Draft of Management Plan document (SSCC 1999). One resident, who was also worried about the proximity of The Block
to the Wilson Brothers factory site, had a different prediction about opening up the ‘visual links’ by removing the buildings:

I don’t want a park because it will be noisy. There will be no sleep at night. I would like townhouses because it puts more value on our property. NO PARK … People will be drinking and drugging all night like Caroline Lane (‘SpeakOut’ feedback, 28 November 1998, SSCC).

This resident is clear about a fear of the future usage of the Wilson Brothers factory site: privatise or pay the price. The usual problems raised with a proposal for development, the increased traffic and parking difficulties and, in this case, the issue of the loss of publicly owned council land, are not the problem for this resident. The inappropriate use of the newly open space that a park would provide in ways that parallel the use of Caroline Lane is a much greater cause for concern. This concern is directly implicates the Aboriginal presence with the Caroline Lane ‘drug scene’. Option 3 produced a range of considerations about how effective opening space to provide ‘visual links’ would be in circumstances where real issues of drug use remain mostly unspoken and unaddressed.

Eventually the process of community consultation culminated with the SSCC rejecting Options 1 and 3 because:

[I]t was considered that neither adequately addressed the expressed needs of the community for development of the site … the ‘building and park’ option [2] … is considered to best address the express needs of the local community and best respond to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings (SSCC 1999, xiii).

7.4.1.2 A protest and presentation of ‘Option 4’

At the final ‘Nitty Gritty’ community consultation workshop, which was the forum at which the final three options were presented, an alternative option, the ‘Redfern Reconciliation Community and Cultural Centre’ option (called ‘Option 4’, Figure 7.7) was presented by a group of participants who felt that Aboriginal voices had been
silenced. This ‘shared vision’ was the result of meetings between the Redfern Aboriginal Corporation (RAC), The Settlement (a local Aboriginal welfare agency), Redfern Residents for Reconciliation (RRR) and Redfern and Environs Neighbourhood Education Workshop (RENEW). ‘Option 4’ included architectural plans for improving the existing site by retaining much needed accommodation for Aboriginal services, including the RAC (Figure 7.7). It had been offered to the community consultants prior to the ‘Nitty Gritty’ workshop but they had, without comment or explanation, ignored this suggested option. The rejected ‘Option 4’ then became a protest presentation. Supporters silently held hand-painted signs that simply stated ‘Option 4’. This group, consisting of Aboriginal Elders, other older local residents and a few younger people, was completely ignored by the organisers of the ‘Nitty Gritty’ workshop. ‘Option 4’ had not been prepared by the professional team of consultants and landscape architects, it was external to the official process.

The point of the protest was that the ‘community consultation’ process was flawed as it had marginalised the Aboriginal community of The Block. This point was either missed or deliberately ignored. The preferred interpretation of stakeholding was retained by the consultants: no specific stakeholder was going to be seen to have a majority say in the future use of the Wilson Brothers factory site regardless of the SSCC’s original intention to house an Aboriginal recreation facility on the site. The RAC, and the other groups sharing the vision of Option 4, had been disregarded by the consultants in the same way that those who were overtly hostile to Aboriginal people, were disregarded. Both ‘groups’ were treated as two opposing factions, as protesting fringe groups.

7.4.1.3 Politics of Representation
At the final community consultation meeting (the ‘Nitty Gritty’ workshop), a leaflet had been circulated by the ‘Redfern Residents Wilson Crothers [sic] Site Action Group’ (Figure 7.8). This leaflet had also been letter-boxed around the Darlington area prior to the workshop. An Elder from The Block gave an impromptu (and very moving) speech on racism and brought the leaflet to the attention of those present at the ‘Nitty Gritty’ workshop. It was made clear by the consultants that there was no
possibility of changing the process, regardless of the overt racism in the leaflet which represented the views of one of the stakeholders who supported Option 3.

Far from representing all sectors of ‘the community’, the consultation process had eliminated the possibility that the site would become a recreational centre for The Block. This original purpose, the reason that the SSCC had purchased the site in the first place, was never clarified at any of the community consultation meetings. This information about the purpose of the purchase only surfaced in Sections 2.6 and 2.7, both titled ‘Recent Planning History’, of the Draft Plan of Management (SSCC 1999, iii, 7), that was produced after the community consultation process. The reason for omitting this information from the consultation process is not clear. What is clear is that this vital piece of information (it was vital enough to be included in the Draft Management Plan), that might not have been known to the consultants at the start of the process, certainly was brought to their attention during the process of community consultation17. The consultants knew that the Wilson Brothers factory site had been purchased, originally, as part of the redevelopment of The Block. The result may have been very different had ‘the community’ who were being consulted known of this original purpose.

7.4.1.4 The next stage
The draft Plan of Management recommended that ‘the park component’ be implemented at the outset of the redevelopment project. Although this is a ‘logical’ possibility (a park can exist whilst a building is being refurbished), it also means that the one lobby group, the ‘Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group’ and others who supported Option 3, will be appeased, at least temporarily. This proposal gives priority to the overtly anti-Block desires for open space for surveillance purposes. The desires to contain The Block within its boundaries, to not let it expand into the Wilson Brothers factory site on the border between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal territory, have been formalised through land-use provisions by the local SSCC.

7.4.2 From CLAC to the ‘Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group’…
Yeah we tried to close Caroline Lane, and that didn’t work, people objected. Caroline Lane Action Committee … so that and now … The Wilson Brothers Factory site … They [the Aboriginal community] want to keep it [The Wilson Brothers factory site]. Council owns it, so we’re just against any extension of the Block. We want it to be a park. We want part of it to be a police station as well, and we got over 400, no 390 signatures … And some [of the 390] people objected to the police station. That was the biggest piss off because they didn’t have any other ideas, they didn’t say why. (Interview 31, 11 September 1998).

… the 500 letters we got together prior to the steering committee, were just completely ignored by the 7:30 report, by the Prime Minister’s office, by Bob Carr’s office [NSW premier], by the police commissioner, and so on and so on … And then they turn around and say, we’re going to put a shooting gallery in [at The Wilson Brothers factory site], yeah, its pretty frustrating. (Interview 32, 19 September 1998).

The small group of residents who live in close vicinity to The Block, in Caroline, Lawson and Hugo Streets, who agitate about the Aboriginal presence, are very angry about The Block. They experience many of the problems that emerge from such a highly disadvantaged community. Alcoholism, drug use and violence do occur in the area. This small zone that borders The Block produces extreme examples of a politics of whiteness. On the one hand, there are the anti-Block agitators, and on the other, there is local branch of the Redfern Residents for Reconciliation that formed in Caroline Street to support the RAC, but remain largely inactive. Those who are anti-Block are highly mobilised. They actively recruit newcomers to the area. And, their identity evolves as required. The ‘Wilson Brothers Action Committee’ (otherwise known as the ‘Chippendale Residents Wilson Brothers Factory Site Action Group’, and the ‘Redfern Resident’s Wilson Brothers Factory Site Action Group’) is an offshoot of the Caroline Lane Action Committee (CLAC) which formed in 1997-8 in response to the issue of crime in the local area. Those 390 - 500 ‘victims of [race] crime’ stories mentioned previously (Interviews 31 and 32, above), have appeared again and again, in various campaigns. This group of residents, who simply called
themselves ‘local residents’ when they collected the ‘petition’ and record of crime experiences in the area, mobilise in whatever guise is required.

This form of activism is reliant on the production of fear. It campaigns by producing fear of The Block and focusing on Aboriginal drug use and criminal, and associated dangers. CLAC (or other incarnations of CLAC) agitators and their attempts to produce fear may have failed in their quest to have a police station on the Wilson Brothers factory site, but they did succeed in their mission to have a park (albeit partially and temporarily). The campaign for ‘open space’, to enhance the ‘visual links’ and enable surveillance of the Aboriginal community was successful. The outcome of the Wilson Brothers community consultation and decision-making process for the Aboriginal community, however, is far worse than the exacerbation of non-Aboriginal fears about their presence. A geography of fear may unsettle non-Aboriginal residents but the loss of material resources for the Aboriginal community that is the result of this fear production, remains largely unacknowledged.

In this example of the locally contested Wilson Brothers factory site, any merging of community interests was subsumed by what became a racial(ised) contest. Far from bridging the racial binary, the final ‘compromise’, Option 2, simply reinforced community division. In its attempts to be inclusive, the SSCC made provision for a process that was, in the end, exclusionary. The consequent process enforced an existing racial power relation in the case study area. Any possible ‘Aboriginal privilege’ (Mickler 1998), such as the provision of an Aboriginal recreational facility and the ongoing accommodation for the RAC, was successfully averted.

7.5 Protecting select white heritage
Apart from CLAC and its various alter egos, and the groups that formed around the Wilson Brothers factory site consultation process, there is another kind of resident activism gaining strength in the case study area. These groups form to protect built heritage. As noted in Chapter 6, the question of which pasts are remembered and which pasts are forgotten or denied rarely arise during considerations of what constitutes heritage and its protection. In this final example of resident activism, a more nuanced and subtle process of whiteness has emerged in the name of heritage.
There is … a nexus between the identities of places and the struggles between the social groups which seek to create, or to modify, these identities and it is this nexus which so often leads to the juxtaposition of such terms as ‘Dissonant’ … or ‘Contested’ with the word ‘Heritage’ (Shaw and Jones 1997, 2).

Just a few streets further from The Block (Figure 4.1 for Ivy Street), the ‘Darlington Resident Action Group’ (DRAG) formed in early 1997. Its stated purpose was to protect Darlington’s built heritage. A close investigation of the DRAG campaign reveals the association between efforts to protect heritage and an exclusionary middle-class, white identity politics. Such a politics invests in the cultural capital (Zukin 1995) of heritage buildings and architecture, and taste based consumption (Bourdieu 1984). Through a determination of the appropriateness of residential development in the case study area, DRAG flexed their political muscle as new gentrifiers who sought to reflect specific value systems through architectural expression. In this example, DRAG has enacted the logics of heritage and taste preference that were outlined in Chapter 6.

New developments in the case study area are increasingly required to respond to the existing heritage character. Such taste prescriptions are closely negotiated between local government (SSCC), developers and most recently, DRAG. In a recent example of an apartment development in Ivy Street, Darlington, a development that would align with newly prescribed DRAG tastes could not include low cost student accommodation (flats/home units) or any development that might encourage diverse groups of people to move into the area. DRAG architects and designers successfully negotiated themselves into council processes that determine what is appropriate development for the case study area.

7.5.1 Ivy Street Development: The birth of DRAG
Architecture and structure is one of the major physical attributes of our past that we bump into daily … there needs to be a lot more concern and consideration for things of the past … its really important to hold and admire and to talk about, otherwise we’re denying our past … [so] we convened a group called DRAG, Darlington Resident Action Group (Interview 9, DRAG coordinator, 4 February 1998).

In 1997, a ‘tasteless’ residential development (Interview 9, 4 February 1998 and DRAG campaign newsletters) had been proposed for a site at the western end of Ivy Street. The developer planned to ‘demolish existing buildings and erect a 2-3 storey building with 45 [home] units and 32 basement car spaces’ (SSCC letter to residents regarding development). A small warehouse and a larger factory were to be demolished. It was a controversial proposal and generated a protest that received widespread support from residents. Public meetings were well attended (Figure 7.9). DRAG mobilised a petition that objected to Development Application (DA) 1123/96, which was submitted to South Sydney City Council in December 1996. The rationale for the objection was based on desires to preserve the ‘heritage character’ of the local area, and the existing diversity of the built environment (Interview 9, 4 February 1998).

Crilley (1993) is suspicious of the use of the term ‘diversity’ in promoting an architectural embrace of difference that implies human diversity. Architecture is often used to promote or ‘advertise’ meanings and Crilley (1993) detailed the ways developers promote diversity to enhance the appeal of developments rather than to appeal to a diverse market. The ‘whitewash’ effect (Gabriel 1998) is that homogeneity is concealed within the appearance of diversity, as expressed through, for example, heritage architecture, at the expense of human diversity. ‘Diversity’ is often simply another consumable attribute for affluent tastes (cf Hage 1998, Bourdieu 1984) and rather than appealing to a range of types of people, only those with the necessary attributes (such as cash, class and/or ethnicity) can have membership in such a niche market.
It was the architectural diversity of industrial buildings that was threatened by the development proposed for Ivy Street. DRAG mobilised a campaign to save the heritage architecture of the oldest building on the site. According to the DRAG coordinator, ‘we managed to save the façade of the … warehouse … through 6 months work … we got what we wanted, in a way’ (Interview 9, 4 February 1998). The issue of preservation, for DRAG, reiterates the themes of ‘façadism’ discussed in Chapter 6. Far from a desire to protect human diversity (such as the memory of those may have toiled behind the façade that DRAG protected), the issue of who would occupy the new development was of greater concern at the DRAG meetings. There was a concern that the new residential development would attract (overseas) students, because of its proximity to two universities and various colleges (Public Meeting with South Sydney Council, Saturday, 14 June, 1997). A purpose-built development, that houses students attending the nearby University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), had become the benchmark of undesirable ‘tastelessness’ for the area. This was repeatedly reiterated during public meetings about the proposed development (Public Meeting with South Sydney Council, Saturday, 14 June, 1997). Heritage and taste were in this protest discourse, inextricably intertwined. That which was deemed to be ‘tasteless’ (the UTS building) was also considered to be anti-heritage. For DRAG, acceptable development depended on acknowledgment of heritage authenticity (Lowenthal 1985), and it is this that stood for tastefulness. DRAG is largely dominated by the aesthetic tastes of participating architects and an influential photographer. During the campaign, DRAG negotiated with the SSCC and the developer over what was ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ style while Darlington residents waited to see what would eventuate. Jacobs (1992) has observed that some activists have access to certain aesthetic discourses that are better able to register in wider planning discourses than others. DRAG certainly gained access to the decision-making process regarding the Ivy Street development. They were eventually called upon to participate in the final planning stage of the development. The experience of other concerned residents was that they became dependent on DRAG to represent their concerns. Only DRAG could determine what would be acceptable development in Darlington. Any new development would be strictly monitored by ‘the community’ (as represented by DRAG) to avoid repetition of the UTS design ‘mistake’. Acceptable development, according to DRAG, must acknowledge the existing built heritage of the area. This
‘diversity’ consists of old buildings based on the built styles of ‘British heritage’ (Victorian housing, old industrial buildings). Whether newer old buildings rate as ‘heritage’ is negotiable. The second criteria of acceptability is that new developments require the input of DRAG’s expertise and taste.

7.5.2 The DRAG process

DRAG resident action started with the formation of a self-appointed ‘committee’ of local professional people who mobilised to combat a proposed development for the lower end of Ivy Street, Darlington. Fuelled by a concern about the loss of an old industrial site, the committee held meetings and reported back to the wider community by letter-box dropped newsletters. There was one ‘street meeting’ in Ivy Lane on 8 February, 1997. Local residents were given various instructions about how to object to the Ivy Street development, and were also then invited to attend one public council meeting.

As part of its campaign, the DRAG committee surveyed the Darlington area to assess the opinions of the local people about the proposed development. The survey provided several responses from which residents could choose (survey results in Figure 7.10 below).

Figure 7.10 DRAG Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion Option</th>
<th>#1 choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No flats; build houses instead</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No development at all</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save warehouse no. 74 and develop the remainder of the site</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop entire site with community approval</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DRAG Newsletter #4, 24 February 1997)

The response tally indicated that 64% (35% plus 29%) of residents did not want a development of flats/home units on this site. In response, the DRAG committee then met with councillors and planners from SSCC and the developer. The DRAG committee then submitted a new development proposal to SSCC without consultation.
This proposal included a surveyor’s report and new architectural plans for a development of units. Instead of representing ‘the (surveyed) community’ by fighting the development, the self-elected DRAG ‘committee’ self-funded (with calls for donations from local residents) a redesign of the site that was suited to their own conception of appropriate development. Regardless of a majority position that a development of flats/home units was unwanted, the DRAG committee had decided to represent the taste choices of a local community.

This new design required that ‘the façades, skyline and materials used … [be] in keeping with the surrounding Conservation Area’ (DRAG newsletter #5, 3 March 1997) and the façade of the small warehouse (at 74 Ivy Street) was saved in the redesign (DRAG newsletter #8, 7 July 1997). The developer capitulated to the DRAG modifications for a development of upscale apartments that would probably not attract students. This was then accepted by SSCC.

The redesign outcome was promoted by DRAG as a ‘win’ for local area resident activism, and local ‘heritage’ (‘Thank You Darlington!’ DRAG newsletter #8, 7 July 1997). The members of DRAG applauded the other residents for winning the right to have a say about heritage and development in their area. That ‘say’ was, however, choosing between two plans: one presented by a property developer and the second, the modified version of that plan that was proposed by the DRAG committee. The local residents who were not on the DRAG committee were utilised – from filling out the survey, attending meetings, providing cash donations to the cause, and providing direct support by photocopying, folding and delivering the newsletters, making telephone calls and so on – but were removed from the decision making process. The notion of an ‘alternative’ plan seemed to provide an option for community-minded individuals.

### 7.5.3 Heritage and taste in Darlington

The façade of the small warehouse, as representative of the former diversity of land use in the area, was saved because of the DRAG campaign and the council’s preference for ‘recycling’ over demolition of old warehouses in the area.
The existing warehouse [at 74 Ivy Street] although modest … does represent the industrial history of the area … continued demolition of existing buildings within the area would … diminish [the area’s] heritage value. (SSCC Minute paper Item 9, Planning and Development Committee, Ref 2378/JGP/FMM, 11 June 1997).

Along with a campaign to save industrial heritage, the use of taste was a powerful force in the DRAG campaign. DRAG promoted its own architectural expertise to convince the SSCC to implement the ‘alternative’ (DRAG) plan for the development. The final decision about the number of units and the colours and features of the new development followed the DRAG plan. The acceptance of this ‘alternative’ plan was presented as council’s compromise with the local community. The question of who is included in this local community, remains (Sennett 1976). For one interviewee, DRAG was not committed to human diversity.

In the end all they were fighting for was balconies that didn’t overlook, overshadow their building, a little bit more open area on the corner, and I said, its the usage, you’ve lost the plot. Save the buildings? They managed to save a few façades … All they were after was a residential development that looked OK and didn’t impact on them, but … we need these warehouses, we need this sort of usage [artist and photographic studios…]. (Interview 16 29 April 1998).

Regardless of DRAG’s achievements and their failures to represent and protect the diversity of the community, there is widespread agreement on one issue. There is an increasing desire to preserve the built heritage in the area. This desire prioritises the symbols of select pasts, of terrace houses and old industrial façades, over contemporary expressions of human diversity. Such preoccupations assist in disengaging individuals from being concerned about human diversity. The preoccupation with protecting symbols from the colonial past, or allowing only those developments that are deemed tasteful to middle-class white sensibilities, enacts an architecture of denial. By this I mean it denies human diversity and subsumes such differences to an established heritage that excludes all others. The deeply embedded desires to preserve (colonial remnants) and protect (white space) are part of the escape
from everyday realities of a colonial aftermath that has produced, for example, overt Aboriginal poverty and dispossession.

7.6 Conclusions

This chapter has detailed how the activities of non-Aboriginal resident activism sustain and reinforce whiteness in a place with a postcolonial Aboriginal presence. It has built on the themes developed in Chapters 4 and 5 by adding empirical ‘flesh’ to the proposal that the fantasies of ‘whiteness’ in this context seek to arrest or deny the postcolonial paradox of The Block. The desires to contain and ultimately arrest an urban Aboriginal presence in inner Sydney, find expression through localised resident activism and government responses to issues such as racialised drug use. Such responses, by residents and governments, have left discursive and non-discursive evidence, markers that have been traced to reveal the ways that whiteness negotiates space and heritage in the case study area.

1 In the 19th Century, a European scientist, Francis Galton, had graded the ‘Australian Native’ at ‘at least one grade below the African … Negro race [which is] … two grades below our own’ (cited in Sibley 1995). This ‘level’ of humanity, base and animal like, would naturally be caged in their zoo-like ghetto (see also Anderson 2000 for discourses of animality, and Dyer 1997 for Simian Irish Celt parallel).

2 On 22 March, 2001, another resident and local business action group, the Chippendale Crime Control Committee, which had just formed, announced that it had hired a private security firm to patrol the streets near to The Block (The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 March 2001, 3). Most of the contributors to the fund are from the new apartment developments, hotels and businesses that have sprung up in the last 12 months in the area just to the North of The Block.

3 The development has not gone ahead but the reasons for this are unclear.

4 It was later, quietly, re-established away from the media and (non-Aboriginal) resident spotlight.

5 A local resident action group, Redfern Resident Action Group (RRAG) has since claimed that the mobile needle exchange unit (bus) now visits the Northern end of The Block area, away from non-Aboriginal residences, and many non-Aboriginal drug users.


8 Vic Smith, Mayor of South Sydney Council; Clover Moore, independent state MP; Tanya Plibersek, Federal Labour MP.

9 AIDS related services have received various responses from local residents from high acceptance to total hostility and strong resident action against facilities. Services for homeless people and homelessness itself, tends to shift position (Dear, 1992, 291).

10 Resident action groups, such as the Surry Hills Resident Action Group, have recently sprung up to fight the presence of existing welfare agencies in gentrifying inner-city.

11 This mistake has come about because of confusion between The Redfern Aboriginal Coalition (RAC) and the Aboriginal Housing Corporation (AHC). The politics of the two could not be more different as one represents ‘on the ground’ issues (RAC) and the other (AHC) is the much distrusted landlord organisation who plan to demolish the houses on The Block. The tension between the two organisations is generally considered (from outside) to be intra-racial but is actually a tenant-landlord issue that has been veiled by racialisation.

12 South Sydney City Council lost many records during a severe hailstorm in April 1999, but it appears that the corrugated asbestos roof of the Wilson Brothers factory site was the concern. These are
common all over Sydney. Many had to be replaced after the hailstorm (including the Council building) with corrugated iron which is the cheap alternative.

In July 2000 drawings of the site proposal were posted on a wall of the Wilson Bros factory compound which showed that the very small terrace-house could be used as an ‘artist in residence’ studio.

At a later stage of consultation with the community, a ‘Nitty Gritty Workshop’ was held on the 8 May 1999. John O’Grady, the appointed Landscape Architect stated that ‘employment training schemes that produce profitability for other than local community’ would not be allowed. Whether or not the RAC’s current usage would be appropriate usage of the site depends on the discretion of the SSCC. In July 2000 the SSCC changed from a Labor council to one with a conservative independent mayor. The future use of the remaining building on the Wilson Brothers factory site remains unknown.

For comparison, I attended 2 of these duplicated meetings. They differed greatly even though the formal content was the same. One meeting was held in Holden Street, in the RAC building on The Block on Saturday 14 November, 1998. This meeting was very poorly attended and chaired by Deborah Wall, the representative of the RRR. The other meeting was at Darlington Activity Centre in Ivy Street, Darlington on Tuesday 17 November, 1998. This meeting had a large, very vocal and at times racially charged crowd in attendance. It was chaired by Margaret Weir from the Redfern Residents Wilson Brothers Action Group. Weir gave a highly racialised and emotive presentation to the meeting.

Regarding ‘pre-aboriginal’, indigenous Australians have voiced their preference for the use of a capital letter if the term Aboriginal is to be used as a collective term for groups of indigenous people. This usage has become convention. The use of ‘aboriginal’ reduces the term to an adjective. Aboriginal Australians is an identifying title, whereas aboriginal Australians simply means ‘indigenous to’ Australia.

Sections 2.6 and 2.7 of the Draft Plan of Management are referenced to a facsimile from Mr Col James of the University of Sydney, dated March 1999. The community consultation process began in November 1998, and finished in July 1999. At the ‘Nitty Gritty’ workshop, in July 1999 this original purpose for the purchase of the Wilson Brothers factory site by the SSCC, was known to the consultants but was still not forthcoming in the public forum.
City imaginings are increasingly detached from urban reality … promotional rhetoric and issues of community conceal, and partly effect, gross economic and political inequalities and … the inner-city landscapes of gentrification and spectacular consumption divert attention from, and partly produce racialised poverty (Goss 1997, 181).

Following on from the examples of resident activism documented in Chapter 7, this chapter is concerned with the ways that contemporary projections of ‘urbanism’ contribute to more subtle processes of whiteness in inner-city Sydney.

A new phase in Sydney’s urban transformation, which is being dubbed as its Manhattanisation, includes Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome (Podmore 1998). Sydney’s Manhattanisation refers generally to the residential transformation of the Central Business District (CBD). It is, however, the most recent manifestation that is the focus of this chapter. In the late 1990s a surge of investment by large property development corporations (such as Mirvac) began the transformation of former industrial and commercial inner-city landscapes into New York style loft apartments. Sydney’s version of SoHo Syndrome is found in the trend of converting old buildings into loft apartments, or building new loft apartments. Once the trend started, it then snowballed.

In her account of a similar emergence of loft apartment developments in Montreal, Julie Podmore (1998) defined ‘SoHo Syndrome’ as:

a spatial and cultural process that involves more than simply copying the aesthetic of SoHo [New York] as a redevelopment strategy … cities are ‘locales’ … [SoHo Syndrome is] more than a universal valorization strategy: it is a socio-cultural process that involves a complex web of relationships between place, identity and
the media, that is diffused to, and (re)produced in, divergent inner-city locations (Podmore 1998, 284).

This chapter is concerned, then, with the complex socio-cultural processes at work in Sydney’s version of SoHo Syndrome. It considers the extent to which the production of cultural attributes, that are assigned to the consumption of the new residential landscapes, produce fields of whiteness in inner-city Sydney, most specifically in the case study area. Previous chapters have considered the activities and lifestyle imaginaries that deny aspects of the past and reproduced white privilege. In this chapter, I discuss a residential landscape that has been purpose-packaged to appeal to a specific type of property purchaser: those opting for inner-city loft apartments instead of the more traditional terrace houses. The specificities of inner-city Sydney as a locale, and the complexity of issues of identity that are promoted and not promoted by the media and real estate marketeers, are pertinent to Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome.

The commodification of lifestyle, particularly those associated with urbane style, gained unprecedented commercial importance in the selling of property in inner-city Sydney with the advent of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome has specific appeal. For those interested in protecting heritage, specifically with the rise of interest in the preservation of industrial heritage buildings (Chapter 7), Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome offers loft apartments in recycled, or part-recycled warehouses. The other feature is that even if there is no old building to recycle, specific kinds of urban lifestyles were (and are) offered. The promotion of such urban lifestyles, or urbanism, was the basis of a persuasive marketing campaign with all forms of ‘loft-living’.

A specific marketing strategy was used, en masse, to promote Sydney’s New York style loft apartments, the physical manifestation of SoHo Syndrome from 1997 to 2000. This was based on the production of imaginaries that reach to elsewhere to conjure specific urbanities based on the image of (white, upscale) Manhattan lifestyles. Included with the promise of ‘loft-living’ was the security offered with fortressing technologies, which were not dissimilar to that found in gated communities (Davis 1990b, Hillier and McManus 1994, McKenzie 1993, Morgan 1994, Soja 1990). Elegant Manhattan-like living, that specifically referenced ‘loft-living’ in the
SoHo neighbourhood of Manhattan, promised emotional security as well. Inside the homescape, the highly security-conscious loft or warehouse apartment (where the car is safely locked away below), lifestyles of elegance can proceed unhindered by life on-the-street.

Imaginaries that are produced by looking to a romanticised and exclusive past (cf Lefebvre 1971, Eyles 1989 and Chapter 5) or, as in the case of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, by looking to elsewhere, avoid the everyday. This chapter traces the emergence of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome and the associated promotions of elsewhere. Through the discourses of property (and image) marketing, and the material manifestation of built landscapes, meanings were produced. But, a quasi New York-ness was being socially institutionalised (Collins 1995) well before loft apartments appeared in Sydney. Historical and contemporary promotions of the city of Sydney reveal its sometimes obvious and at other times subliminal identification with the metropolis of New York (Smyth 1998, Shaw 2000).

In this chapter I argue that non-identification with the local, promoted by New York style loft apartment developments in Sydney, promotes geographies of indifference to anything outside a (white) imaginary of New York(ness). Denial (that can become indifference in a more advanced state of dislocation), of the everyday (Simmel 1903), can activate a removal from any localised politics or struggles, but does not disable the capacity to engage with those that feed or protect the selected imaginaries of escape, if desired. Such selective engagement and disengagement is observable where selected (white, colonial) heritage has become the singular focus of resident activism and enclave consciousness whereby protecting the past ensures a means of escape from unpleasantness in the present, as detailed in Chapter 7. Where elsewhere is imagined, such as in the new white Manhattan imaginary of ‘loft-living’ in inner-Sydney, localised struggles, past or present, become largely inconsequential. The new lifestyle packages come with a promise of minimum engagement, through design, with the local. The new urban fantasy is one of metropolitan urbanity (Figure 8.1). The contradiction, considered later in this chapter, is that these cosmopolitan lifestyles rely on the presence of diversity (Gans 1991) to enable the urbane practice of consumption of the exotic, which includes food, clothing, home-wares or, in the
context of the case study area, even danger. The presence of the urban Aboriginal community has created somewhat un-predicted, though not damaging effects, on Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. This latest transformation of the case study area reproduces and consolidates whiteness in unique ways.

8.1 Manhattan dreaming in Sydney

Manhattanism ...[is] an unformulated theory ... whose program [is] to exist in a world totally fabricated by man [sic], ie to live inside fantasy... Manhattanism ...[is] an explicit doctrine that can transcend the island of its origins to claim its place among contemporary urbanisms (Koolhaas 1978, 7).

Demand for property escalates with increases in inner-city populations. With the gentrification of inner-Sydney, and the associated escalation of property prices, buyers and renters (myself included) turned to Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale (Chapter 4). The influx of population to the inner-city has dramatically urbanised the lifestyles of many in Australia. Training a keen eye on this residential refocus on the inner-city and Central Business District of Sydney, the media, wanting to encapsulate this shift away from conventional ideas about housing, have loosely engaged the term ‘Manhattanisation’. Manhattanisation and ‘loft-living’ recently entered the lexicon of urban living in Sydney.

Contrary to popular understandings, the Manhattanisation of Sydney began in the early part of the 20th Century. In its ongoing search for a global identity, city promoters looked to larger and older cities for inspiration and direction. As in many other cities, that are increasingly meeting the demands of economic globalisation and employment trends (Sassen 1991), inner Sydney recently began its residential transformation with a boom in apartment developments. Following on from ‘industrial chic’, New York style loft apartments flooded the real estate market in the late 1990s and had transformed the landscape of the inner-city of Sydney by 2000.

The sudden flurry of promotions that promised Manhattan-esque lifestyles, is not entirely unique to Sydney (New Jersey: Cole 1987, Minneapolis-Saint Paul: Jackson
1995, London: Bowman 1995, Montreal: Podmore 1998). Podmore (1998) argued that most investigations have over-emphasised consumption as a register of ‘culture’ by relegating loft developments to the realm of investment commodities. Jackson (1995), for example, has used arts-reinvestment and heritage preservation, and Cole’s analysis (1987) utilises Zukin’s (1982) ‘role of artists in gentrification’ thesis. Anna Bowman (1995) suggested that the preservation of warehouses in Hobart (Tasmania), for example, has occurred as a direct result of occupation and cheap or partial conversion by artists and community activists. Such occupations brought attention to alternative warehouse usage and their potential was thus realised. Warehouses in London, on the other hand were sold using New York loft promotions (Bowman 1995, 141). In Sydney, however, it is difficult to draw such neat distinctions either way. Podmore (1998) suggested that to understand SoHo Syndrome, spatial relations, aesthetic descriptions and social locations require serious interrogation.

There is evidence to suggest that Sydney version of SoHo Syndrome has transcended any recent cultural influences of, for example, trailblazing arts reinvestment or desires for preservation of industrial heritage. Other more localised relationships that provided cultural capital, and other foundations, for the rise to ‘loft’ development and associated meanings built into these urban expressions, have played their part.

Part of the specificity of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome rests on a cache of unacknowledged but traceable Manhattan imaginaries. There are localised socio-cultural moments that speak of Sydney’s New York-ness, that have been embedded over time. These kernels of cultural capital (Zukin 1995) have been called upon in the legitimisation of Sydney’s current SoHo Syndrome. The recent spate of promotions for ‘New York style loft apartments’ in inner-city Sydney has not, however, acknowledged local history but relied strictly on Manhattan images. For SoHo Syndrome to work (that is, sell), the commodity relied on by-passing local geographies and histories.

This thesis acknowledges a history of illegitimate warehouse/loft occupation that hitherto remain undocumented (Appendix 5 provides documentation of anecdotal evidence of this forgotten past). This history exposes the myth perpetuated in marketing that ‘loft-living’ in Sydney was derived solely from Manhattan’s SoHo
district. Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome is anchored in the local, with all its unimagined anomalies, pathologies and troubles and the cultural capital provided through such histories. Current marketing ignored this local by imagining new urban lifestyle options that exist away from the local. The two, however, the imagined elsewhere

ness and the local, are inextricably linked in Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome that relies, in part, on the pathologies of the local, of the street, to provide something to escape from into the imaginary of being elsewhere.

In the next section, a history of Sydney’s Manhattanisation is outlined. Then, the discursive environments that have dominated the recent phase of urban restructuring are contextualised. The process of denying the local and its histories, and the exclusionary lifestyle fantasy that consolidates whiteness in the inner-city of Sydney, is detailed. Unlike the promotional materials that deny the local, the Manhattan fantasies does not necessarily preclude the presence of The Block. The latter part of the chapter considers how the Harlemisation of The Block has transcended the promotional discourses of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. With the Manhattanisation of inner-Sydney, Sydney’s ‘black ghetto’ was ascribed new meanings. In effect, even the pathologies of the local provided a certain cultural capital for Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome.

### 8.1.1 Local history: Projecting Manhattan

Prior to the recent emergence of popular interest in built heritage and ‘loft-living’, successive Australian governments had been busy presenting an image of the city of Sydney to the world. Since the 1930s, New York or Manhattan themes have been directly or indirectly used in strategies to promote Sydney internationally. Rosaleen Smyth (1998), for example, documented a century of government propaganda films that were ‘designed to attract immigrants, tourists and trade, and win national prestige’ (Smyth 1998, 2). For Smyth (1998), the result of governmental strategies to promote Sydney through film is that:

At the end of the 20th century Sydney is a multiracial metropolis … And, thanks to a Manhattan-like skyline … Sydney has emerged as a ‘highly imageable’ city. (Smyth 1998, 2).
Smyth did not openly acknowledge the underlying projection of Manhattan-ness that is in evidence in her account. Hints and depictions of Sydney’s New York-ness do, however, pepper the narrative and images of the promotional films of Sydney. Overall, Sydney’s evolving New York/Manhattan metropolitanism can be ‘read’ throughout Smyth’s record. For Harvey (1989) and others (Kearns and Philo 1993) the promotion of cities represents the ‘postmodern hallmark … of place marketing’ (Kearns and Philo 1993, 30). A history of film-making by successive Australian governments that used a pastiche of images using visual and other triggers of Manhattan, to promote the city of Sydney as a desirable metropolis, follows.

From Smyth’s account, the first promotional film was Sydney’s Harbour Bridge (1932). The film’s commentary stated that ‘The north shore [of Sydney] would now be able to enter into its destiny as “the Brooklyn of the south seas”’ (Smyth, 1998, 5). Brooklyn in New York City lies just across the famous bridge (of the same name) from Manhattan, which is the hub of New York City. Sydney’s North Shore had just been similarly linked to the Central Business District which is the city’s centre, at that time. Images of Manhattan were also presented in films such as A Nation is Built (1937). The promotional poster exhibited ‘images of the first settlement [in Australia] … backed by a city scape of tall buildings’ (Smyth 1998, 6). Promoting Sydney’s maturing cityhood, this film was screened at the World Fair in New York in 1939. Also in 1939, Australia is Like This emphasised ‘how like America Australia and, particularly, Sydney is … “The first thing that hit us was that Sydney was so much like a city back home. This building might be in Chicago, New York or San Francisco while the skyline could be Manhattan”, said one of the GIs’ (Smyth 1998, 7).

By 1947 the mood shifted, slightly, to a more generic ‘metropolitanism’. City In the Sun set out to ‘document “the mood of Australian metropolitan life” … aiming to assure prospective immigrants that Australian cities … can boast all the sophistication and conveniences of city life in older countries’ (Smyth 1998, 9). Continuing the theme, Saga of a City (1957) described Sydney as ‘the metropolis of the South Pacific’ (Smyth 1998, 10) and, as Smyth pointed out, Sydney was depicted as sophisticated and modern in both films. Moreover, in Saga of a City, Martin Place
‘the heart of the city’ is presented as ‘Australia’s Champs Elysee, Trafalgar Square and Fifth Avenue’ (Smyth 1998, 10).

By 1965, in City of Millions, the old Sydney skyline had rapidly changed and ‘the stock exchange … [was] presented as the pulse of the city’s commercial life’ (Smyth 1998, 11). In many later promotional films the themes of sophistication, international finance, urbanity and metropolitanism were repeated. From Smyth’s account, Sydney was promoted as a city that is like the British empire’s first great white city. For Smyth Sydney is ‘… the empire’s “second greatest white city”’ (from title, Smyth 1998) but she did not, however, state which ‘greatest white city’ is the first. Presumably, it is London but the images that lurk throughout these filmic promotions of Sydney hint at New York.

On close reading of Smyth’s account, direct and indirect references to a Manhattan-esque skyline, international finance and growing metropolitanism appeared to be necessary in the construction of Sydney’s international profile. The promotion of Sydney as a proto-type or quasi-Manhattan aligns with an ethos of modernisation and progress, rather than looking back to London at the heart of empire. For a city striving for a post-colonisation identity, Manhattan carried the image of driving progress in the thriving metropolis of the New World. From this perspective, a smaller and newer city could look to modernity, as well as mimic the antiquity of empire. The propulsion forward towards modernity did not deny British heritage but added another dimension to the existing cache of (white) heritage for the city of Sydney.

The representations of Australian-ness, of muscular larrikin white masculinity that are so popular in the current genre of Australian commercial film, were downplayed in these government propaganda films. The emphasis was fixed firmly on promoting Sydney’s sophistication and urbanity. Such ‘cultural encoding’ (Jackson 1995, 181) embedded an affinity with New York in the Sydney collective imaginary. This coding can be awoken, as it was in the late 1990s, when a renewed self-consciousness emerged as the global spotlight began to focus on the city of Sydney for the 2000 Olympic Games. The dream of Gotham was being recalled.
8.1.2 Invoking Manhattan

The Manhattanisation of Sydney proceeds apace … As the central city workforce becomes more affluent … linkages between global cities – Sydney and New York, or London and Singapore – begin to rival linkages between nation states, those who work there reap the sophisticated benefits (SMH 27 February 1999, S1).

During the late 1990s, visual and other references to Manhattan increased around the city of Sydney. For some time a lone street performer had provided Circular Quay with its own, modest, Statue of Liberty. In early 1998, however, this was eclipsed by a series of advertisements, for an airline, featured on three of the most prominent billboards in the city, placed to catch the attention of Sydney’s main road users. One dominated the southern exit from the Sydney Harbour Bridge and captured the attention of South-bound and West-bound traffic; the second loomed over Taylor Square, a major arterial road junction for vehicles travelling East and South; the third looked down on Broadway, catching the attention of those travelling out of the CBD to the West or to the South. The advertisement featured an enormous image of the Statue of Liberty. The sails of the Sydney Opera House replaced the usual flames atop the statue’s torch. The image cleverly melded two cities: New York and Sydney. The advertisements, succumbing to the inevitable temporary life of billboards, were eventually removed. A new larger version was erected in early 1999. It was placed at eye height for commuters who cross one of Sydney’s more recent icons, the Anzac Bridge.

At first glance the advertisement appeared to be a marriage of the bigger older city (New York) and the smaller ‘baby showpiece’ city (Sydney). A famous New York icon (Statue of Liberty) held a famous Sydney icon (Sydney Opera House). A momentary glance, such as flashing past in a car, gave the quick and simple message that the airline being advertised was bringing New York and Sydney together. Of course there might also be a more sinister reading as the ‘big sister’ city appeared to be incinerating the little showpiece with her torch! Regardless of how the advertisement can be variously interpreted, there is an unmistakable New York referent and the Sydney-based advertising company used by the airline, were aware of
this link when appealing to consumers of airline tickets. For those traversing Sydney by road, the airline advertised was offering transport to New York City. At the same time, real estate promoters were promising something else: to bring New York to Sydney, perhaps turn Sydney into a quasi Manhattan by evoking Sydney’s own latent Manhattanism, and metaphorically igniting Sydney with that torch.

8.2 Towards SoHo Sydney
In 1981 John Roseth, head researcher at the former NSW Department of Environment and Planning, published a short article titled ‘Residential conversions in Sydney’ in which he reported on a new trend in ‘recycling old buildings’ in inner Sydney. The first application, to convert an old building into apartments, was made to Sydney City Council in 1979 (Roseth 1981). This marked an important turning point in the history of Sydney’s residential landscape.

8.2.1 Local history: Recycling Warehouses
From the start of formal ‘warehouse’ conversion in inner-city Sydney, through the heady days of ‘illegitimacy’, when inner-city warehouses were occupied by artists and musicians (Appendix 5), to the current developer-built ‘lofts’, the inner-city of Sydney has offered unconventional housing alternatives for at least 20 years. Unlike trends in other global cities, particularly as documented by Zukin on New York City (1982), inner Sydney warehouse occupations tended to remain largely informal and undocumented. Horvath and Engles (1985, 146) did note that ‘[t]he conversion of warehouses and light manufacturing structures into ‘loft-style’ residences … appeared in Sydney in at least the early 1980s’ but this activity was largely overshadowed by interest in other processes of gentrification, particularly of old inner-city residential areas. Where there is documentation of former commercial/industrial landscapes being transformed into residences, the focus has tended to remain on more classical gentrification analyses. As with most Sydney-based gentrification analyses, emphases have centred on economic factors and associated issues of displacement. In the now gentrified dock-side suburb of Pyrmont, for example, pockets of ‘working class’ residents were displaced with the wholesale redevelopment of the area (Kendig 1979, Fitzgerald 1987, Fitzgerald and Keating, 1991, Frost 1992, Howe 1994). The current
residential corporatisation and conversion of the inner-city landscape (see, for example, Bonyhady 1995 on redevelopment in Balmain) and the plethora of developer-built/converted ‘lofts’ and apartments have remained largely overlooked.

8.2.2 Industrial heritage chic

By the mid 1990s, the residential population of inner-Sydney increased for the first time since 1911, according to the 1996 Australian Census, (Daly 1998). Increases of approximately 16% per annum occurred between 1991 and 1996, then increasing by approximately 16.5% during 1996 to 1997 (Vipond et al. 1998). Vipond et al. (1998) also noted that since 1988 the inner-city has experienced the greatest rate of increase in construction of multi-unit dwellings. Part of this transformation has included the conversion of older industrial sites. These conversions range from refurbishment within an existing building, with floors and walls intact, through to the salvaging of one small section of the original façade that fronts an entirely new building. As noted in Chapter 7, some converted industrial buildings maintain a marker of their original purpose in their name. Old warehouses and factory buildings with such historic names and appearances can be filled with apartments that secure premium prices. These developments provided new spaces of consumption (of heritage and/or urbanity) in the postmodern residential city.

Developers soon realised that while this sanitised industrial heritage was of interest to some buyers, for others, a new promotional hook was needed to sell inner-city apartment living. Almost overnight, the ‘New York style loft apartment’ arrived (in 1997). These Sydney apartments could be built within existing industrial or commercial buildings, or they could simply be built anew. If the latter, they could be built en masse and were therefore more affordable than the painstakingly converted heritage sites. Convincing Sydneysiders that living in an apartment would be desirable did require aggressive marketing but the concept did take hold. Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome changed the face of the residential city.

This latest spate of residential transformation in inner Sydney captures the collective projections and the ever-evolving imaginary of Sydney’s own flexible and, at times, slightly irreverent, Manhattanism. The architecture of Manhattan skyscrapers may be
inspiring, but in the late 1990s, Sydney was entertained by the new ‘architectural’
thrill of the New York style loft apartment. This latest Manhattanism elicited
commentary and debate in the popular media. Examples include: ‘Fabulous
homebodies: Marketing the urban dream (SMH, 19 June 1999); a Good Weekend
cover story titled ‘Step up to life in the Style Zone’ (SMH, 17 July 1999); ‘Never mind
the unit – its a lifestyle, darling’ (SMH, 20 April 2000); and ‘Moveable modernism: A
Sydney design duo creates a buzz from New York’ (SMH, 20-26 April 2000). It
seems that industrial heritage had paved the way for prestigious living. The
desirability of prestige neighbourhoods and suburbs began to find competition from
individual inner-city buildings. Celebrities, too, were leading the charge in new urban
living (SMH, 19 June 1999).

It was not the shift from suburban to urban dream that was sudden. It was the
marketing (and building) of urban lifestyles and ‘New York style lofts’ that happened
quickly. Yet, the socio-cultural processes that enabled Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome to
emerge were set in train long before ‘lofts’ appeared in old industrial areas in the ring
of inner-city suburbs that surround the CBD.

Far from what Zukin (1982) identified in Manhattan, there was no ‘historic
compromise’ between culture and capital in ‘the urban core’ in Sydney. In New York,
living in a warehouse or loft had been mostly illegal but was eventually legitimised
(Jackson 1995). Unlike what followed in New York, Sydney’s first-wave of
warehouse occupations, with squatters and renters, was never materially legitimised
(or commodified) in the same ways. The Sydney scene remained ‘illegal’ and was
then abandoned because of external pressures. It did, however, lay some of the
foundations for what followed.

8.3 From warehouse to ‘loft’ living

In the 1980s, small warehouses were being bought and converted into residential
warehouses around the inner-city. Occasionally the buildings were bought by former
‘illegal’ occupant(s) (including a precedent case in Darlington which was fought for
by a group of academics from the University of Sydney). Various buildings
maintained their ‘informal’ warehouse residents until they were redeveloped into
apartments. For example the former Shepherd and Newman Printery in East Sydney comprised of studios that artists and musicians lived in for many years. It was then converted into luxury apartments in 1997. In reverence to its heritage, the building bears the same name. The Spice Traders building in Smith Street in Surry Hills followed a similar path. It is now an expensive warehouse-apartment building but it previously housed a variety of tenancies, including residential occupants, until late 1995. The Silknit Building near Central station was similarly occupied and was one of the last of this form of unofficial residential occupation. After more than a decade of providing alternative and cheap housing and studios, it was eventually vacated in late 1997 and has been redeveloped into luxury warehouse apartments and offices.

Apart from the few survivors, the cheap rental alternative of illegally living in a cheaply rented warehouse, largely came to a halt with the mid to late 1980s with sudden increases in real estate prices. Local governments encouraged the recycling of buildings by altering policy in the early 1980s. As Roseth (1981, 77) noted ‘ordinance 70 allows councils full discretion regarding the extent to which the requirements it would make of a new building are applied to the alteration of an old one … one [economically productive option was] to convert [old ‘unproductive’ buildings] to residential’. This meant that once economic factors were in place, existing warehouses and old office buildings were attractive to developers and the conversion phenomenon. Some buildings were converted into warehouse apartments by the late 1980s but the economic recession of the early 1990s (Vipond et al. 1998, 215) stalled the conversion process. Many developers sat out the recession, as did many old buildings, until the mid to late 1990s when Sydney’s own SoHo syndrome mushroomed.

8.3.1 From industrial heritage to urban(e) chic

One of the earliest official warehouse conversions in Sydney was The Watertower in Redfern, which was completed in the early 1980s. This was an early expression of formalised residential ‘industrial chic’. This site now serves as a gateway to multifunctional, postmodern Australian Technology Park. The next phase of apartment developments such as Sydney Mansion (Avri Investment Pty Ltd), advertised in early 1998 as ‘Warehouse Style Loft and Level Living … Ultimate city living in heritage
building’, began to fetch prices that were above ordinary apartments or terrace houses in the same areas. (Sydney Mansion advertised prices that ranged from $215,000 for a one bedroom apartment, $300,000 for two, and $420,000 for three in early 1998). The premium prices that the ‘new style’ began to attract, indicated that there was (and is) a market that is affluent enough to make taste choices (Bourdieu 1984).

In the case study area, The Benedict, ‘Chippendale’s finest warehouse conversion’ was advertised in mid 1997 with apartment prices starting at $159,000 for one bedroom, and $269,000 for two. This was considerably cheaper than other areas, such as Surry Hills, at the time. In advertisements in the Inner Western Suburbs Courier (10 & 16 June 1997), Chippendale was described as ‘The “new Paddington” area of Sydney’.

The promotional discourses then started to include Manhattan references. The term ‘loft’ began to overshadow ‘heritage’ in promotions for inner-urban apartments. There were new-build apartments springing up. A method that was used to promote these new apartment buildings was to feign ‘heritage’.

At the same time as The Benedict was unveiled, The Buckland was advertised. Marketed by the same company as The Benedict (Globe Developments) and situated next door, the advertising campaign was very similar to that used for selling The Benedict. The difference was that unlike The Benedict, The Buckland was a new-build development. The advertisements promoted both properties together and it was easy to assume that both were warehouse conversions. The glossy brochure, obtained when inspecting the site of The Buckland, emphasised the ‘heritage sympathy’ of the development. ‘Even the bricks took three months [to make]; they’re a special colour … chosen to blend perfectly with the surrounding warehouse colourings of adjoining buildings’. The cultural capital of heritage can even imbue new sites if they are sympathetic enough with what surrounds them.

Gradually, however, the rusticity of industrial heritage began to fade in the discourses of apartment promotion. The new banner of urbanity was proving to have a more readily convinced market. In May 1998, Warehouse 82 in Chippendale was advertised as an ‘exquisite warehouse conversion’. The expensive promotional kit
featured a collage of inducements for buyers seeking ‘urbanity’ (postcards, cards with
details about fixtures, rolls of architectural plans, and a large, spiral bound
promotional booklet with a metal cover). The words and pictures emphasised high
ceilings, an urban skyline, the (heritage and urban) location, consumption at the
nearby ‘Lights and Action on Broadway’, and living environment that was ‘urban cool
… leafy, urbane, arty, academic’. The banner on the building shell simply stated
‘True warehouse conversion.’ Around the corner is The Savoy On Shepherd. The
asking prices were high for the area: studios (bedsits) started at $199,000 ranging to a
three bedroom apartment priced at $595,000\(^9\). The Savoy was advertised as ‘The
lifestyle of the City … Fully refurbished Historical building … 22 Spacious Loft
Apartments and 4 Elegant Studio Apartments’.

Not unlike the promotion of Sydney in old government films, the marketing of the
most recent spate of apartment developments, touted simply as ‘loft apartments’, used
specifically Manhattan-referenced discourses.

8.4 Lofting the urban psyche: SoHo Sydney Spectacular!

To appropriate is to take control over that which originated elsewhere for other
semiotic/ideological purposes (Collins 1995, 93).

New York lifestyles may be promised in real estate sales-pitches in gentrifying inner-
cities around the world (Podmore 1998) but the Sydney scenario became suddenly
literal. Figure 8.2 lists the developments with New York names and references, such
as The Manhattan, The Madison, The Lincoln and Tribeca. There is the Dakota
development, that mimics its infamous Manhattan counterpart rather than referencing
any ‘wild west’ US origins (Figure 8.3). The apartment block dubbed On Broadway
is close to a bustling new shopping complex The Broadway (promoted as ‘The
Greatest Show On Earth’). The Broadway occupies the old Grace Bros. complex of
restored heritage buildings. It is a landmark site located on Broadway, a main
thoroughfare to the CBD of Sydney. Another loft apartment development, Off
Broadway, and as the name suggests is just off to one side of Broadway. The
advertising campaigns of many new developments liberally use Empire State Building and Statue of Liberty imagery in promotional materials (Figure 8.1).

The property market activity in inner Sydney is reflected in the spiralling cost of property through the 1990s. House prices in the inner-city increased by 19% between 1993 and 1996 (compared to 9% and 8% in middle and outer city zones), and units/apartments increased by 24% over the same period (compared to 3% and 4% increases for middle and outer city zones) (Daly 1998, 60). The NSW governmental push for urban consolidation, and the strengthening vision of Sydney as an international/global city, have enmeshed with international trends of corporate-driven re-development of inner-cities (Sassen 1991, Daly 1998). A range of factors has ensured that there is a (perceived) need to house more people in the inner-city of Sydney. The 1996 Census recorded a reversal of the 80 year trend of decreasing inner-city population (Daly 1998, 60). Changing employment structures include a decrease in ‘blue-collar’ work and an increase in ‘white-collar’ work in the CBD and inner-city. Socio-economic market forces include demographic changes. All these changes have contributed to providing a market for the promoters of ‘loft-living’.

A detailed account of the emergence and consequent installation of a distinctly New York/Manhattan narrative for Sydney’s new residential landscape is traced in APPENDIX 6 and summarised in Figure 8.2. The recurring themes are of metropolitanism, cosmopolitanism, spaciousness (‘soaring ceilings), open (plan) style, access/location to the city and services, city views, and occasional European ‘style’ reference (stainless steel and clean lines are associated with Europe in some promotions, and SoHo lofts/industrial pasts in others). Occasionally industrial heritage is mentioned, but the Manhattan narratives dominate. New York-ness was embedded in this Sydney-specific imaginary of ‘loft-living’.

Figure 8.2 Contemporary imaginings: New York, New York!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Advertising copy/visual imagery</th>
<th>Location*</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>NYC ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Watertower</td>
<td>‘Property of the week’; ‘sensational warehouse apartment’</td>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>1982-1999</td>
<td>industrial, then SoHo in 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chatswood</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC neighbrhd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Printery</td>
<td>‘loft apartments’</td>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>‘Loft apartments’; ‘new two storey loft apartments’ (Statue of Liberty)</td>
<td>East Sydney</td>
<td>Apr 1997</td>
<td>Manhattan/ NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Madison</td>
<td>(Madison Square garden: city park parallel in advertising copy)</td>
<td>East Sydney</td>
<td>Apr 1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>‘new Manhattan style … apartments’</td>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>Apr 1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragon</td>
<td>‘Elegant living, New York style’</td>
<td>Pyrmont</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palladium</td>
<td>(New York Style with other Meriton pics)</td>
<td>Pyrmont</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramount</td>
<td>‘New York Style Loft Apartments’</td>
<td>Ultimo</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalgety Square</td>
<td>‘New York Style Living in Sydney’s Thriving Heart’; ‘Historic heritage Building’</td>
<td>Ultimo</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Powerhouse</td>
<td>‘classic city living elegance of New York’</td>
<td>Ultimo</td>
<td>Jun 1997</td>
<td>NYC ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>‘New York’ Style Apartments’</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>NYC landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Square</td>
<td>‘an absolutely authentic warehouse in the grand style!, New York style’</td>
<td>Ultimo</td>
<td>Jun 1997</td>
<td>NYC park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TriBeCa</td>
<td>‘epitomises New York warehouse style’; ‘Slice of New York with strong Sydney Flavour’, ‘loft-style’ apartments; ‘birdcage lift’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>mid 1997</td>
<td>NYC neighbourhd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Benedict</td>
<td>‘Chippendale’s finest warehouse conversion’; ‘loft apartments’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Mid 1997</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Buckland</td>
<td>‘heritage’ (advertised with The Benedict)</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Mid 1997</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mark</td>
<td>‘warehouse apartments’ (lofts); ‘Get in on the Act: New Star on Broadway’</td>
<td>Glebe/ Ultimo</td>
<td>Nov 1997</td>
<td>Broadway, NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Broadway</td>
<td>‘The investment all Sydney is applauding’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Sept. 1997</td>
<td>Broadway, NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Broadway</td>
<td>‘The all singing, all dancing, bright lights, great life apartments’ (glossy star studded theatrical brochure)</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Oct 1997</td>
<td>Broadway, NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Holborn</td>
<td>‘warehouse apartments’(lofts)</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>1997/8</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harrington Grande</td>
<td>‘New York lifestyle’ (Sydney heritage)</td>
<td>The Rocks</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>NYC ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclops</td>
<td>‘stunning warehouse apartments’ (heritage)</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Piano Factory</td>
<td>‘heritage’</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Mansion</td>
<td>‘warehouse style … heritage building’</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>early 1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Savoy</td>
<td>‘Spacious Loft Apartments’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Feb 1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoHo Apartments</td>
<td>‘The Centre Of Style’</td>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>Apr 1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome has been built, in part, on image-production. What those who become part of this ‘lifestyle alternative’ may not know about, or acknowledge, are the largely silent precursors and cultural capitals that the new lifestyles are built on. Warehouse occupations slowed the process of demolition or dereliction through occupation, particularly during times of economic difficulty. They helped to keep not only the buildings, which may or may not have survived to be converted (some simply became new warehouse style apartments), they maintained the warehouse concept.

There were moments of notoriety and visibility of former warehouse life and occasionally, such as with Alpha House in Newtown, near the case study area, there is documentation (Figure 8.4 and Appendix 5) . There were also warehouse parties and performances by local bands and later, in the early 1990s, the illegal rave scene\textsuperscript{10} that gave warehouses lifestyle associations. There were art gallery openings and exhibitions, the renting of music practice studios and the occasional encounter with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Landmark</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valentino’s Apartments</td>
<td>‘exclusive loft Apartments’ (Liza Minnelli in ‘Cabaret’ look-alike on brochure)</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>May 1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse 82</td>
<td>‘Exquisite Warehouse Conversion’ (lofts in heritage building)</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>May 1998</td>
<td>loft; SoHo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The York</td>
<td>‘‘New York, New York’ Loft Apartments’ (Statue of Liberty)</td>
<td>Waterfront, Concord (not inner Sydney)</td>
<td>Sept 1998</td>
<td>NYC; loft; SoHo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park Apartments</td>
<td>‘style, design … sleek … warehouse … The New Era’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>Sept 1998</td>
<td>NYC landmk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hordern Towers</td>
<td>‘Exciting Urban Dream’; ‘out of this world’</td>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Gotham image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth House</td>
<td>‘Art Deco … The Latest in New York Style City Living’</td>
<td>inner Sydney</td>
<td>Dec. 1998</td>
<td>NYC deco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tower</td>
<td>‘fifth Avenue’ (huge b/w Gotham ad)</td>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>1998 2000</td>
<td>Gotham/NYC landmk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Carlisle</td>
<td>‘Something Old … converted warehouse … lofts’</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>May 1999</td>
<td>NYC landmk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hudson</td>
<td>4 stage development: The Met; The Astoria; The Lincoln; The Carnegie</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>May 1999</td>
<td>River, NYC landmk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stijlvol Zone (top of Sydney Mansion)</td>
<td>‘Unfurl your imagination’; ‘Rem Koolhaas OMA designed’ in ‘old Mark Foys warehouse’; ‘all within a unique heritage façade’</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>July 1999</td>
<td>Koolhaas architect &amp; NYC commentator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Waldorf</td>
<td>Luxury apartments</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>NYC landmk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Yorker</td>
<td>‘make your debut off Broadway’</td>
<td>Chippendale</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>NYC, Broadway ref</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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*Location = all inner-Sydney (around or in case study area) unless stated
landmk = landmark (building or other); neighbrhd = neighbourhood; ref = reference;
police during protests over evictions or demolitions. These are the moments that have helped to embed acknowledgment of an urban phenomenon: the existence of residential warehouse occupations in Sydney. This urban culture is part of a city’s history. It is part of a long-lived ‘tradition’ of inventive and innovative, sometimes Bohemian ways of living in Sydney.

In the current urban imaginary, such linkages with the local have been submerged. The past has been deliberately truncated and institutionally ‘forgotten’ (Bennett 1993) through promotions that rely on images of Manhattan and New York to sell the inner-city.

In the promotions of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, Sinatra’s ‘New York, New York’ (Crilley 1993, 246) and 1930s film noir (Kaplan 1997) combined with a fantasy future of a hi-tech Gotham City. Comic book caricatures and selective visions of sophisticated urbanism assist the dislocation from the local and its histories. Truncated in such constructed imaginaries, national histories are also irrelevant to this new ‘globalised’ generic style (Podmore 1998). The New York style loft apartment is imagined to be largely severed from its location.

The capacity to ‘forget’ the outside world, past and present, as promoted through advertising discourses, can be institutionalised. For Simmel:

The essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinctions between things…. What appears … as dissociation is in reality … one of the elementary forms of socialization. (Simmel in Kasnitz 1995, 35-36).

Away from the street outside, and below, residents in loft apartments in the case study area can afford to be blasé to the distinction between things in the present, and in the local. The politics of forgetting, that can be institutionalised through the promotion of the commercially-manufactured urbanity, can become the mode of living, of coping, with the everyday (Bennett 1994). Indifference, or denial, is convenient.
As with the majority of films and television programs about Manhattan/New York, the images that persist in Sydney real estate marketing have been particularly explicit in their *non*-acknowledgment of the ethnic differences that exist in modern American cities. The promotions of ‘loft-living’ used images that were ethnically ‘white’. Silencing and removing other ethnicities relegates them to the status of ‘racial problem’ when they are present. The new forms of urbanism promoted by ‘loft-living’ in Sydney, refer to a specific version of (white) Manhattan but there is, however, another side to this story.

The Manhattan fantasy that was carefully *not* promoted by property marketeers but is ever-present in the case study area, is the presence of The Block. Along with the problems that gentrifiers associate with its presence, new ways of encountering The Block are emerging that fit existing associations. The urban Aboriginal community of The Block is commonly depicted as Sydney’s own Harlem-like ‘black ghetto’.

### 8.5 Harlemising The Block

In the Sydney context, a reversal of history has rendered the indigenous ‘other’ as the coloniser of non-Aboriginal territory. The contemporary city image is far removed from what Aboriginal people are often considered to be: traditionally tribal and nomadic (Thomas 1994). From the start, The Block was cast as a problematic form of settlement. Non-Aboriginal residents of Darlington, and others (such as the media), conjured the image of a ‘black ghetto’ as a basis for arguments against formation of The Block in the early 1970s (Anderson 1993a, b, 1999). For the media, reportage of The Block has been an ongoing promotion of the (Aboriginal equals ‘black’) ghetto, set in the midst of whiteness. Figure 8.5 lists examples of newspaper article headlines that refer to The Block (or ‘Redfern’ in these headlines) as a ghetto.

**Figure 8.5 Examples of ghetto-referenced headlines in newspaper articles.**

| ‘Redfern ‘ghetto’ - a BBC view’, Sydney Daily Telegraph, 1 September 1983 |
| ‘Violence: moderate blacks strive to get rid of ghetto image’, Sun Herald, 15 December 1985 |
| ‘Govt blamed for ‘ghetto’, The Australian, 23 December 1985 |
| ‘The two faces of Eveleigh St, Sydney’s no-go area’, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 May 1989 |
While Sydney’s loft landscape was being constructed, newspaper articles have likened The Block with Harlem or, on one occasion as South Bronx, in New York City. I refer to this as the ‘Harlemisation’ of The Block (Shaw 2000). Harlem is the quintessential ghetto of popular imaginings, regardless of the contemporary realities its of gentrification (Zukin 1995, Smith 1996).

There are striking differences between The Block and Harlem in their unique histories, their circumstances of ownership, their external ties, political struggles and symbolisms. But, the media’s apparent preoccupation with their similarities (Figure 8.5) is a way of parallelling the pathologies of racialised disadvantage. The Block is continually reinvented as Sydney’s own inevitable ‘black ghetto’ as a part of the evolution of Sydney into a big international city. This model of the global cosmopolitan metropolis, which is external to the lifestyle marketing and consumption associated with ‘loft-living’ in Sydney has recreated The Block as part of a fantasy of urban. Such pathologies can be bypassed through engagement with the lifestyle options that ‘loft-living’ offer, or, they can be consumed as part of the theatre of danger in the metropolis. The Harlemisation of The Block has continued in tandem to the promotion of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. Although actively avoided in the promotional discourses, for some new inner-urban consumers it is concomitant with the Manhattan fantasy of living in inner-city Sydney.

8.6 The Cosmopolitan Metropolis of whiteness

In that other metropolis of gentrifying Manhattan, Mayor Guilliani introduced ‘zero tolerance’ measures to reduce the presence of unwanted ‘others’ from a reinvented Manhattan. Far removed from the origin of the term ‘cosmopolitan’, defined (in part) as ‘free[dom] from national limitations or prejudices’ (Thompson 1995, 302), the
removal of homeless people and others from public places is part of a ‘cleaning up’ process. Ridding Manhattan of its ‘black ghetto’ is part of this cleansing (Smith 1996). That metropolis is being whitened as well as brightened (gentrified).

For non-Aboriginal Australia, the lifestyles offered by the ‘loft-living’ are very different to those offered where the majority of Australians live, in the suburbs. Life in the case study area is accompanied not only by the sounds of construction that come with rampant gentrification (including the construction of loft apartments), the distinct and familiar city sounds of police helicopters overhead and sirens in the streets, are commonplace. Alongside the clean and safe packages of ‘loft-living’, of caricatured (white) Manhattan, lurk the hard realities of increasingly polarised urban lives.

In his study of whiteness, Ghassan Hage (1993, 63) has proposed the existence of the Australian ‘cosmopolite’, defined as an ‘essentially “mega-urban” figure … a class (and classy) figure and a western (or culturally and physically Westernised person), capable of consuming “high-quality” commodities and cultures, including “ethnic” cultures’. For Hage, Sydney cosmopolitanism involves consumption of, rather than participation in, ‘multiculturalism’. Cosmopolitanism (or, more specifically according to Hage, cosmo-multiculturalism) is based on ‘European-ness’ (generic western-ness). It relies on the fantasy of an ethnically invisible (European/white) hegemony (Hage 1998). For Sydney, Manhattan(ism) and ‘loft-living’ have been (and are being) promoted as the pinnacle of contemporary urban ‘glamour’ and civilised (western-style) living.

Multiculturalism, at the centre of cosmopolitanism, often incorrectly includes indigeneity. As Darlington residents have noted during research interview, The Block community are part of the diversity of the city. As one Darlington resident stated during research interviews, ‘they are entitled to have their bit of ethnic Sydney’ (Interview 1, 22 September 1997). The difference is that The Block is an indigenous, rather than migrant community. It has not brought exotic ‘ethnic’ offerings into the city. Urban Aboriginal people are cast as non-traditional and therefore without cultural offerings. There is nothing for cosmopolite tastes. There are no ethnic-Aboriginal foods or artefacts on offer (cf Thomas, 1994, Hage, 1997). The Block is
When B and I first moved in here we had dinner over the other side … at a hotel there, and we came on back and we walked down through Eveleigh Street [The Block]. I knew there was a degree of risk attached, and I also knew that B was pretty non street-wise. And I’ve lived in a number of cities in the world that would only be considered highly dangerous, so I had a sense of what I was doing. And I was pretty alert and astute to what was going on. But I did it as an exposure to myself and particularly B because she really wanted to … It was night to start with, and also I attribute a certain street attitude, in so far as your walk and your body language, that takes you through those scenarios. I was a cab driver in [Washington] DC (Interview 9, 4 February 1998).

The Block as urban ghetto is a thrill for some. According to this resident, experience of other ‘highly dangerous’ cities in the world, and driving taxis in one of those cities, has equipped her/him to be a tour-guide in the theatre of danger that is The Block. Be it a New York fantasy, or any other ‘highly dangerous city’, The Block can serve a purpose, albeit, probably not a common one. There are not many who thrill-seek in this way but the sheer existence of The Block provides a theatre of danger that for some can be accessed, and for others is just there. As one real estate agent mentioned during a research interview (Interview 27, July 1998), the presence of The Block adds ‘culture and colour’ to the area. S/he remarked that the (case study) area is an emerging special-interest focal point with a burgeoning niche-market that is attracted to the area because of the Aboriginal community. This gives The Block a purpose. For some, it adds an edge of danger to living in the city (cf Smith 1996).

Identification of The Block as Australia’s Harlem provides an easy cultural anchor. The generic ‘black ghetto’ is recognisable in, for example, the imaginary worlds of film and television. It is all too easy to consider the presence of an urban Aboriginal community in Sydney in the same ways. For ‘black ghettos’, failure due to ‘race’ is the common emphasis. In the Sydney context, the label also renders The Block as foreign to Australia. It is de-indigenised and highly inappropriate in the clean and
safe, and largely ghetto-free Australian city; except perhaps, in the case of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome.

8.7 Conclusions

Manipulated … to represent the current social hierarchy as natural and permanent … we may speak of urban form as an ideological project (Kearns and Philo 1993, 13).

This chapter has detailed the transformation of part of the case study area through Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. By invoking a Manhattan imaginary the specificities of the local and its context are, on the one hand, easily forgotten or ignored. On the other hand, the presence of The Block complicates the clean white fantasy produced by the marketeers of ‘loft-living’. Everyday practises of denial or indifference to social inequalities and the pathologies they create, are socialised through discourse and landscape production. Alongside urban lifestyles that include sophisticated consumption practices (such as café cultures and multicultural culinary experiences), the postmodern metropolis does have an underbelly. The lives of others are, on occasion, commodified as part of consumption choices. The economic and social realities that polarise the experiences of the new loft dwellers and the residents on The Block are encountered in various ways.

New loft apartment dwellers have no reason to acknowledge that which has gone before, or exists in the local, in the consumption of the Manhattan lifestyle (and sales) package. Once disengaged from the pathologies of the city, which remain external to their high-tech security apartments, the ‘protective blanket’ (Simmel 1903) of denial, and indifference, that has been embedded into the lifestyle package of ‘loft-living’, is operational. Consumers can deny, be indifferent, and/or consume as they wish. The comfort zone, away from the world outside, has a range of offerings for the new cultural consumers in the city.
Sydney’s own histories, and the ‘cities of difference’ (Fincher and Jacobs 1998) that are part of those histories, are part of Sydney’s inner-urban residential landscape, but they are largely bypassed through its transformation. The warehouse occupations that preceded Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, the indigenous battles for recognition and territory in the city, the city’s multiple ethnicities, sexualities and physical/mental abilities, find no expression (except as consumables) in Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. The promotions of ‘loft-living’ promote a generic white Manhattanism that can be replicated in cities around the world. In the case study area it is responses to The Block, at the local level, that reinforce, and disrupt, globalised white identities (Bonnett 2000) in the manifestation of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome. Whiteness, as this thesis demonstrates in various ways thus far, is relationally constituted and expressed.

2 From March 1998 to March 1999 conversions of old industrial areas to the south of the CBD led the real estate market (Residex figures cited in the Sunday Telegraph).
3 In one new development, ‘The Tower’, skyscraper imagery is used, rather than lofts. This gleaming tower was promoted as ‘Sydney’s 5th Avenue’, and is one of the most prestigious apartment developments in the city.
4 Living in buildings with commercial leases and/or zonings is illegal in Sydney.
5 Col James, Department of Architecture, University of Sydney (also architect of the 1973 redevelopment of The Block)
6 I lived close to The Silknit and the Spicetraders buildings and was instrumental in organising a resident action campaign that tried to stop the conversion of the Spicetraders building. It backed directly onto a row of houses (including mine). After conversion, it was an unbearable presence and I moved out of the area (January 1996).
7 The Australian Technology Park (ATP) is a joint venture of 3 large Sydney universities. It acts as ‘a hub to link their world-class research facilities to industry and the wider community’ (ATP homepage, http://www.atp.com.au/whatis.html). It is located at the old Eveleigh Railway yards adjacent to Redfern Railway Station.
8 Paddington in the benchmark suburb of inner Sydney gentrification.
9 Later, in February of 1998, when promotions for ‘loft-living’ were in full flight, the remaining few not sold were offered at reduced prices, such as studios from $169,950.
10 In the late 1980s to 1995 warehouses were also used by the Sydney ‘rave’ scene (Chan 1998b; Gibson and Pagan 2000).
9 CONCLUSIONS

The concern of this thesis has been the performance and consolidation of whiteness through material and non-material processes of urban transformation. Specifically, this thesis has considered a variety of ways that historically embedded modalities of race relations operate to reproduce and consolidate whiteness through the contemporary processes of urban transformation in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale, in inner Sydney. The presence of an urban Aboriginal community provides a catalyst for specific performances of whiteness. The capture of some of these performances, during a particularly dynamic period of change in the case study area, provided empirical detail for this thesis.

Drawing on geographical studies of the city, this thesis has built on analyses of gentrification and racial segregation (Chapter 2). It has specifically considered the logics of settlement in a transforming (post)colonial urban setting, and the consumption practices associated with the gentrification of that setting. Overall, this thesis sought to engage with, and extend, existing critiques of the politics of gentrification and heritage by interrogating whiteness.

Increasingly, critical race studies in geography have sought to problematise privilege in order to make sense of processes that disadvantage others. By focusing on specific examples of the processes that racialise, marginalise and exclude, this thesis moved beyond conventional studies of disadvantaged groups to the study of processes that privilege. Furthermore, this thesis has questioned understandings of the concept of whiteness that tend to be confined to static categorisations of race or ethnicity. The analyses of whiteness presented in this thesis have tried to grasp the influences of colonially-based understandings of people and place, and specifically, of race. As such this thesis detailed whiteness in its multi-faceted, historically-referenced, flexible and processual forms of making privilege.
This chapter summarises the main elements of my argument and the main heuristic themes of this thesis. It then draws more general conclusions about the ways of whiteness in the case study area in inner-city Sydney. Where possible, the chapter points to directions for future research.

### 9.1 Thesis summary

In Chapter 1, I argued that geographical studies of racialisation need to consider processes of whiteness. I further suggested that such geographies need to go beyond the current themes that dominate ‘whiteness studies’, emerging from the US academy, for these tend to overemphasise the ethnicity of whiteness rather than the meaning, formation and context of whiteness. From early observations of whiteness in my neighbourhood of Darlington, I realised that one source of its strength as a privileging process, was its slipperiness. The value systems of whiteness (but not necessarily membership to an ascribed ethnicity as such) are open to all who conform, regardless of ethnicity. In Chapter 1, I tried to bring this point into view by way of the example of how Lawson Street had a ‘black’ and a ‘white’ side. This example demonstrated the temporary, spatially located, alliances that produce racialised categories, including the often ‘invisible’ category of whiteness (Hall 1992). Whiteness can racialise and exclude, or de-ethnicise otherwise ethnicised groups and include them, as required.

By maintaining the divide between us (non-Aboriginal people), and them (the Aboriginal other) in the case study area, ethnicities, in all their inner-city variations, tend to merge into the racial categories of black and white. As Ghassan Hage (1998) astutely observed, whiteness (and its benefits) is an aspiration which can be pursued regardless of one’s ethnicity or how one is identified by others.

As this thesis demonstrates, whiteness has the power to ascribe (and then remove) racialised ‘encodings’. Institutions, such as the mass media and the police force, regardless of the various ethnicities involved, are representatives of a status quo that has no apparent ethnicity, or are beyond ethnic identification, yet stand for the category ‘white’.

This thesis has detailed some of the specificities of whiteness in the case study area. These specificities are also linked to larger processes that replicate and reinforce
normative values in Australian society more generally. An example is the production of popular discourses about The Block that typecast Aboriginal people as generally incapable, and specifically unable to exercise self-determination. The case study context also provided details of local processes, such as turf-protecting resident activism, which are historically embedded in colonially-referenced value systems and structures of privilege. The location-specific study in this thesis enabled close examination of processes of racialisation and marginalisation of a racialised other, and the processes of consolidation of whiteness, in a unique location. This thesis has demonstrated that the racial binary evident in the case study area, is maintained and reinforced through contemporary strategies of settlement that continually privilege whiteness.

Chapter 3 detailed data generating methodologies that relied on remaining alert to information and events that occurred during the thesis process. As well as following a methodological plan, that drew on demographic trends and mapped out various discursive environments, the capture of unpredicted events enriched the detail of this thesis by providing important empirical moments of whiteness, in action, to chart. Such moments included the Caroline Lane incident, the series of responses to a proposal for a health facility in Little Eveleigh Street and the community consultation process to decide the fate of the Wilson Brothers Factory site that borders The Block.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis provided a background of events that gave foundation to some of the current ways of whiteness in the case study area. Chapter 4 outlined how a history of inner-city blight provided the foundations for the specific forms of racialisation that ensued in Darlington/Redfern and Chippendale. In what seemed like an act of class betrayal by Labor and the Trade Union movement, and regardless of explicit resistance to housing the Aboriginal presence, framed by racist understandings of Aboriginality, The Block was formalised as a gesture to a fledgling ‘Black Politics’ in Australia. A tradition of resident activism in Darlington is due, in part, to early resistances to the loss of working-class territory. Such losses included the swathe of Darlington subsumed by The University of Sydney in the late 1960s, and the small piece of land and housing stock that formed The Block. The earlier politics of class-emancipation, the battles to save working-class housing through
resident action, slipped into a reactionary politics of turf protection that has remained since the formation of The Block. Contemporary resident activism mobilises to protect colonial heritage and white space (Chapter 7).

The Block remains an unresolved paradox for many non-Aboriginal people, particularly for those living in the case study area. It is contrary to the belief that Aboriginal people belong in the Australian outback. Additionally, and importantly for investment purposes, The Block has hindered gentrification. As with its formation, its stigmatised status and the fear produced in the case study area because of it, are resented. Chapter 5 traced the ways that the mass media perpetuate a value system about the status of The Block which is portrayed as anachronistic, paradoxical and inappropriate in the city of Sydney. A trajectory of decline and finality was charted through media discourses.

The next part of the thesis turned the focus from the production of discourses that stigmatise the urban Aboriginal community in inner-city Sydney, to more complex processes of whiteness formation and consolidation. Chapter 6 and 7 traced various ways that whiteness captures specific pasts, through heritage recognition, consumption and protection. The symbols of white colonial pasts are represented in colonial architecture and motifs, and in the evolving taste choices that select white histories. For example, Victorian architecture echoes its British (colonial) origins. Such selectiveness in the register of heritage in the case study area does not acknowledge other histories. The forgotten histories, which include dispossessing the indigenous populations of land, have been sanitised out of the ‘collective memory’ of a more neutral past. For many who appreciate select colonially-referenced heritage in the case study area, examples of anti-heritage include migrant renovations to, and Aboriginal occupations of, Victorian housing (see Postscript to this thesis).

Chapter 7 traced specific moments of resident activism in the case study area. The battles that residents have fought have overwhelmingly been waged to preserve the heritage of whiteness, and white space. Resident action groups have formed or reformed to protect, and sometimes expand, white space. An example of such expansion occurred in the contest for the Wilson Brothers Factory site (Chapter 7).
Chapter 8, ‘The Cosmopolitan Metropolis’, dealt with a different performance of whiteness in the case study area. It detailed the recent manifestation of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome that was promoted using Manhattanised images of ‘loft-living’. Promotions of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome elided the local, and especially local histories. With the sudden onset of apartment development in the old industrial areas of inner Sydney, such as Chippendale, and in a less wholesale way, in select warehouses and factory sites around Darlington/Redfern, a specific kind of urbanism was promoted in the late 1990s in inner-Sydney. Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome brought into being a whole new way of consuming the city regardless of the local, its politics or its problems. Away from such promotions for new urban lifestyles, urban consumption practices cannot always be predicted. In tandem with the advent of SoHo-style ‘loft-living’ in Sydney, the portrayal of The Block as an urban ‘black ghetto’ continues. As the inner-city of Sydney is New York-ed, The Block continues to be Harlemised. This has added another dimension to ‘loft-living’ in the metropolis.

In the following sections, several broader themes relating to the theoretical foundations of this thesis are revisited. I begin by considering the themes of urban transformation and gentrification that are so central to the rapidly changing physical and social landscapes of inner-city Sydney. Considerations of the relationship between urban transformation and racialisation or racial segregation are less common in Australian urban scholarship. A second thematic touchstone for this thesis is the re-emergence of thinking about urbanism as a way of life in human geography. The observations and considerations of urbanism in this thesis have gone beyond the dilemma of what is, and what is not, postmodern about urbanism. New consumption options are emerging in the residential landscapes of inner-city Sydney that enable whiteness to be reproduced and consolidated in new ways and suggest that whiteness, as an identity-formation, has global tendencies, at least in commercial discourses through the promotional rhetoric of ‘loft-living’. The third general theme relevant to this thesis relates to theorisations of race and racism. As noted, whiteness studies have emerged from outside geography and have a distinct North American focus. This thesis has used a locally-based study of whiteness as a critical focus for
racialisation and marginalisation processes, within the larger context of Australian race relations. I have also attempted to put whiteness themes in touch with a postcolonial perspective by paying attention to colonial histories and legacies, and considering such processes of racialisation and marginalisation in respect to an urban Aboriginal community in an awkwardly postcolonising nation.

9.2 Urban Transformation in the inner-city of Sydney

Following other contemporary studies of urban transformation in geography, this thesis has teased out localised politics that are linked to broader political economics and identity formations. This thesis has explicitly detailed processes of gentrification and urban transformations and the ways in which these constitute and are constituted by identity formations through the consumption of housing (heritage housing and loft apartments). These are inextricably linked to value-systems that are anchored to the colonial. Beliefs about heritage and entitlement to place replicate the colonial project of excluding the indigenous other in the (post)colonial gentrifying city. The interdependence of culture and capital is demonstrated by the ways that they work together in the processes that perform and consolidate white hegemonic formations.

This thesis demonstrates how, through use of a case study, urban transformation is shaped by a uniquely visible racialised binary. Practices of consumption of, for example, heritage, are directly affected by the presence of The Block and what it represents to those who live near it. The formations that define and constitute heritage in the case study area is politically activated. Denial of, and indifference to, indigenous (and other) heritages ensure the ongoing dominance of whiteness. In the example of Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, the physical and metaphorical removal from the realities of the street, in the case study area, provide refuge from the presence of danger that is deemed to exist because of the Aboriginal community. Any engagement with the street is by choice, not by necessity. The attributes of heritage and fortressed urbanity are used to sell the gentrifying city. Urban transformation processes are revealed to vehicles for the performance of whiteness, and socialisation of the assumption that whiteness is the dominant social ideal. Urban transformations, entailing the gentrification of old housing in the case study area and the emergence of a Sydney-specific SoHo Syndrome, have been tied to a white social ideal. In this
context notions of what constitutes self/us/desirability as opposed to others/them/un-desirability is highly racialised.

Whiteness is performed through built heritage and the processes of heritage appreciation, consumption and protection that attach to it. These are processes that sanction select, sanitised, de-indigenised histories. Specifically neo-colonial effects include the replication of specific historical geographies of whiteness, which are reproduced through heritage preservation and gentrification. Racialisation and marginalisation are almost necessary supplements to processes such as these, which in various ways assume that whiteness was historically the dominant ideal that should be brought into the present. Because indigenous heritage is only recognised in the artefacts of pre-colonial authenticity, there is not recognised heritage in the contemporary part-assimilated, marginalised and dispossessed status of The Block. When the case study area became an official ‘heritage and conservation area’ in 1996, the heritage of The Block as an Aboriginal place was not recognised. The recognition, consumption and protection of heritage in the case study area are part of the processes of whiteness that selectively forgets the significance of the indigenous presence in the city.

Whiteness is performed in the new urban residential formation and promotions of ‘loft-living’ that seek internationally-linked identity formations, at the expense of the local, its histories and its indigenous peoples. Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome denies the local and its colonial history by celebrating its apparent reflection of an whitened and increasingly genericised, metropolitan urbanity.

Recent considerations of the way in which gentrification is context specific have highlighted that gentrification occurs in cycles. In the case study scrutinised in this thesis, the presence of an urban Aboriginal community acts as a stigma and hindrance to what might be though of as the ideal style of gentrification. The way that gentrification capital has worked to circumnavigate this stigma through investment in housing forms that deny, or are indifferent to the local, has brought its flexibility and capacity to find new and ingenious ways of moving into one of Sydney’s final frontiers, into view. The conversions of old industrial sites that were hitherto
undercapitalised, have proved to be highly effective and profitable beachheads in what was an investment ‘dead space’ in the inner-city of Sydney. The dramatic re-invention of these spaces is culturally encoded through the image-promotions that accompany ‘loft-living’. This re-imagining of these spaces works to reorient the style and function of this part of the city in spectacular ways. By doing so, however, the human and other diversity of the local is denied, ignored or, in some cases, consumed. Encircling and butting up against Aboriginal land, the new fields of affluent whiteness are enculturated with new ways of identifying with the urban. These new urban identities consolidate whiteness.

9.3 Rethinking urbanism in geography

Thinking about urbanism in human geography is distinct from ideas about new urbanism that now inhabit discourses of town planning and architecture. This thesis explored the formation of urbanism as a lifestyle option in the production of urban residential landscapes. In the specific example of New York style ‘loft-living’, exemplified in Sydney’s version of SoHo Syndrome, for example, urbanism is modelled on imaginaries of elsewhere. The racialising and marginalising effects of the production of such urbanism, and associated consumption practices of cosmopolitan living, have very material consequences for the urban Aboriginal community.

With idealised Manhattan lifestyles promoted in Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, the ongoing Harlemisation of The Block, its portrayal as a quasi African-American ‘black ghetto’, has gained new currency. The Harlem-like ghetto fantasy has two seemingly contradictory effects on The Block. The first is that it de-indigenises The Block by rendering it as just another generic (North American-style) black ghetto. As such anti-ghetto responses seem justifiable. The other effect is that there are those who believe that with Sydney’s Manhattanisation, its emergent skyscraper landscape and residential SoHo Syndrome, the presence of The Block is to be expected. The black ghetto is simply part of Sydney’s maturing cityhood. This ghetto-caricature, along with the zero-tolerance responses, the police sirens and media coverage, are simply consumable parts of Sydney’s emergent urbanity that draws on increasingly globalised images of fast, edgy lifestyles in (post)modern cosmopolitan metropolises.
The conceptualisations of urbanism discussed in this thesis do not fit a ‘grand narrative’ of urbanism that might hint of singular cultural traits. Local experience tells its own urbanism story, through its own urban histories. Such urbanisms do, however, reflect a trend in consumption practices. For example, the consumption of heritage and old industrial landscapes (as New York style loft apartments) is found in many other ‘western, industrialised’ cities. As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, however, the production of urbanism in inner-city Sydney cannot be separated from its colonial past. It is, perhaps, such ties in other (post)colonial urban contexts that need investigation. The acknowledgment of such pasts have brought the reproduction and consolidation tendencies of whiteness, expressed in the emergent forms of urbanism considered in this thesis, into view.

9.4 Beyond racial segregation: Particularities of whiteness in inner-Sydney

This thesis has followed on from studies that go beyond the identification of victims of racialisation processes, to interrogate specific processes of whiteness that perform and consolidate privilege. Whiteness, in this thesis, is more than an ethnicity, or ethnic identification. It is membership to privileges, and processes of privileging, that are not necessarily fixed in time or space, or even to specific bodies. This thesis has traced complex and specific processes of whiteness in a case study. It has shown that a feature of whiteness and part of its strength rests in its propensity to be flexible and responsive to context. The case study has shown that different whiteness processes can operate around separate issues to the same ends: to privilege some people over others. Although there are general tendencies of whiteness, such as its perceived non-ethnicity and capacity to seem invisible, specific strategies of whiteness processes are largely context-dependent.

This thesis has avoided categorisation with the school of ‘whiteness studies’ that have grown in the US. It has analysed examples of how whiteness is performed as a social ideal, and the processes that contribute to its normative production, and embodiment in the case study area. This thesis has attempted to document some of the ‘plural constitutions and multiple lived experiences of whiteness’ (Bonnett 2000, 134). These specific performances of whiteness, in a place, consolidate the power of whiteness in the larger context that is Australian society.
9.5 Fantasies of whiteness and the reality of cohabitation

From my home in Darlington, I have been able to observe how whiteness performs and consolidates itself through urban transformation. Desires to protect, renovate and restore the built heritage in the case study area, the housing and industrial building stock, and the wholesale redefinition of the former industrial landscape into New York style loft apartments, exert a range of pressures on the presence and continuation of the Aboriginal community on The Block. Socio-cultural shifts that have accompanied such rapid change in the case study area, have consolidated whiteness in its newest expressions of (select) heritage sensibilities and new urbanities, to the detriment of what was originally and hopefully conceived as the ‘Black Capital’ of Australia.

Whiteness is assumed, socialised and institutionalised in Australia. An example of an encounter that I experienced when I embarked on the journey of this thesis, is worthy of mention. Gaining ethics clearance from The University of Melbourne to carry out this research was not a smooth process. After submitting the thesis research proposal, the committee decided that there were ethical problems with the research because it involved an Aboriginal community, but did not seek to gain research approval from that community. As directed, I approached several Elders of The Block about this issue. They were bemused by what was essentially a request for them to give their permission for me to carry out research on ‘gubbas’ (non-Aboriginal people). The research interviews had been designed to find out about ‘white’ folk, and their opinions about the Aboriginal community, as well as about the media, about heritage and about resident activism/groups, but from the point of view of the Ethics Committee, ‘permission’ was only needed from the Aboriginal community. This ‘permission’ point was not lost on the Elders, who stated that they were pleased that someone wanted to carry out research on the ‘white mob’ as it was well overdue. I reported back to the Ethics Committee who, with slight embarrassment, agreed to let me proceed with my research. The Aboriginal community had been singled out by the Ethics Committee as a vulnerable group, and it was wrongly assumed that permission was being sought for research ‘on’ them, albeit through the refracted views of their non-Aboriginal neighbours. The ethnicity of the other group – those who were the actual subjects of the thesis (the non-Aboriginal neighbours, the media and so on) had
slipped by the Ethics Committee, unnoticed. As with institutions that offer ‘Ethnic Studies’, in which the definition of ‘ethnic’ includes only minority ethnicities, or those other to the dominant one, the ethnicity of the predominantly non-Aboriginal media and heritage groups, was unacknowledged by the Ethics Committee.

A second obstacle to the research for this thesis was my inability to gain interviews from apartment developments in the case study area. Rather than despair at the complete lack of interest and the fear/hostility exhibited by the residents of the first new development that I canvassed, *Abercrombie Rooftops*, I concluded that the overwhelming ‘no comment’ was concomitant with notions of closed communities and a perceived need for high security. *Abercrombie Rooftops* is on the corner of Caroline and Abercrombie Streets (Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4) and was one of the first warehouse conversions in Darlington. It is very close to The Block and was a first ‘beachhead’ apartment development in the area. Although it is possible to speculate about the reasons for the (non)responses I received from residents of *Abercrombie Rooftops*, the cultures and lifestyles of the new apartment dwellers, those who have bought into Sydney’s SoHo Syndrome, is a challenging field for future research.

It is clear that in the case study area there is a desperate need for workable strategies that will assist the cohabitation of the urban Aboriginal community of The Block and the predominantly non-Aboriginal community that surrounds it. Thus far, any efforts that might assist cohabitation by, for example, attempting to alleviate the drug problem in the area, are too easily stymied by the power of resident activism. An example of the sort of strategies that appear to promote cohabitation, but do so at the expense of the Aboriginal community, was the resolution of the contest over the future of the Wilson Brothers Factory site. South Sydney City Council’s community consultation process engaged a notion of ‘grass roots democracy’ in its planning. This was flawed because democracy was the exclusive domain of whiteness. Equal access to democratic processes can never be assumed.

For the non-Aboriginal majority, including many of those who can walk *en masse* across The Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of reconciliation\(^1\), The Block remains a disgrace, a thorn in the side of nationhood. It is easier to blame indigenous people for
the state of The Block, than confront the issues it manifests so abjectly. In the case study area, there are voices that go largely unheard. The Aboriginal elders on The Block, the various agencies that support it, such as Redfern Legal Service and Redfern Medical Service, The Settlement, the Redfern Residents for Reconciliation and others, try to counter the logics and mechanism of whiteness. Generally, the voices that resist whiteness are marginalised, sometimes even by their (our) own unconscious engagements with the subtleties of whiteness processes. It is clear that more pragmatic ways of dealing with the difficulties of cohabitation include de-fantasising whiteness from its sometimes romantic but often hostile and resentful ideas about the indigenous people of Australia.

As bulldozers recently demolished more precious buildings on The Block, the Elders reiterated that the significance of this place will always be that it is the essential meeting place for dispossessed Aboriginal peoples. Where houses once stood, tents and tarpaulins shelter the homeless but, regardless of its state and against the odds, the tiny messy Aboriginal community known as The Block continues to survive at the heart of the rapidly transforming (post)colonial city of Sydney.

1 Reconciliation is a fraught and debated term. For some it suggests bringing together two ‘sides’ without necessarily acknowledging the power relations of colonialism, the vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is “a united Australia that respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage, and provides justice and equity for all” (Draft Declaration for Reconciliation, Council for Reconciliation).
On 25 October 2000, the Australian Heritage Commission announced that The Block had been listed on the National Heritage Register of Australia as a site of indigenous significance. The site was listed because, according to the Commission, it was ‘a national symbol of an Aboriginal community’s ability to maintain their identity in a city setting’. The Block, as the chairperson of the Australian Heritage Commission noted, was associated with ‘some wonderful Australians’ (ABC News Online http://www.abc.net.au/news/indigenous/ab-25oct2000-10.htm).

The listing came just after the controversial demolition of a row of houses over the previous weekend. Although this listing does not protect buildings (the site is listed, not the buildings) it does mean that all Development Applications received by South Sydney City Council must be scrutinised by the Australian Heritage Commission’s Indigenous Heritage Section. This listing on the National Heritage Register has been followed by efforts to have The Block listed under the NSW ‘ATSI Heritage Protection Act, 1984’. In accordance with the Act, this will secure buildings on The Block for the function they provide to indigenous people (not as Victorian heritage buildings). If activated, the NSW ATSI Heritage Protection Act, 1984 will protect the site and its cultural heritage against ‘threat of injury or desecration’.

Clearly, the Australian Heritage Commission’s heritage listing gives official sanction to the heritage value of The Block that goes beyond the remaining buildings. The Australian Heritage Commission recognises the centrality of The Block to the recent history of Aboriginal land rights and urban survival. The listing has not, however, protected the built environment that is The Block from destruction and, since listing, an old factory that was used as a community church by the Aboriginal community on The Block was demolished. Although this heritage listing has not guaranteed protection of the existing built environment of The Block it does meant that it will remain as Aboriginal land.
How the non-Aboriginal community in the case study area, and the local South Sydney City Council, will respond to this listing of indigenous heritage is open to speculation. The conceptions of heritage, as considered in this thesis, suggest that existing concerns for colonial architecture and motifs, and the associated resident activisms that mobilise to protect such heritages and identities, will continue. Regardless of its heritage listing, it is difficult to imagine ways by which the heritage of The Block and its residents will be incorporated into current heritage sensibilities and priorities in the case study area.

Although a step towards ensuring the security of The Block as an Aboriginal place in the city of Sydney, the impact that this heritage listing has on the myriad ways that whiteness operates in the case study area, as exemplified in the chapters of this thesis, awaits further examination. In the interim, evidence presented in Chapter 8 suggests that along with the pathologies of the city, the heritage of The Block could, at worst, become another theme in the field of consumption for new urban dwellers. The importance of the activation of the NSW ATSI Heritage Protection Act (1984) is that if it proceeds the shelter provided by existing buildings will be officially protected and sanctioned as part of indigenous heritage of The Block, which includes its current usage. The extent to which this will protect the site, and Aboriginal people, from becoming an indigenous theatre in the consumption landscape of the cosmopolitan metropolis, and the effects of this on the indigenous community, or subject to a new round of antagonisms over ‘white’ versus ‘black’ heritage, awaits further investigation.

1 There were grave concerns, and many rumours, before The Block’s heritage listing, of an impending sale to property developers.
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APPENDIX 1

ETHICS APPLICATION FORM, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Section 6: For completion by the investigators as an attachment (as per Ethics Application, p11).

APPLICANT DETAILS
1. Name of principal investigator(s): Dr Jane M. Jacobs
2. Name(s) of other investigators: Wendy Susan Shaw
3. Department/School/Faculty: Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne.
4. Degree for which research is undertaken (if applicable): Doctor of Philosophy

PROJECT DETAILS
5. Project title: Ways of Whiteness: Negotiating settlement agendas in (post)colonial inner-Sydney

6. Description of the project
6.1 Lay description: In recent times there have been lots of reports about the Darlington/Redfern Aboriginal community known as ‘The Block’. The Block sits in the middle of what might be described as a ‘gentrifying’ or ‘yuppifying’ area. The media tends to focus on negative aspects of The Block community, such as crime and drugs, and most recently, its apparent demise as an Aboriginal neighbourhood. This research intends to find out how the (other/non-Aboriginal) local residents who live in areas around The Block feel about: the current changes to the local area, including the (apparent) loss of The Block. The opinions of the locals about media coverage, the local police activities (including the new mobile police unit) will also be analysed. Do these opinions support the prevailing view that The Block is out-of-place in the centre of this gentrifying area?

6.2 Detailed description:

- aims and significance of the project
  The inner Sydney Aboriginal settlement known as The Block is a unique place in contemporary Sydney. Since its inception as a designated Aboriginal neighbourhood in 1972-3 it has been constantly monitored by welfare organisations, the police and the media. This settlement is the subject of an ongoing commentary by (mostly) non-Aboriginal Australia, a commentary invested in what might be thought of as a ‘discourse of decline’.

  The current project plans to investigate the ways in which such discourse might or might not have shaped the views of The Block held by those who live in surrounding areas. The concern of this research is, then, with how those who live and work in the vicinity of The Block view this most distinctive and controversial part of the neighbourhood. A complementary concern is with how these views are related to how those who live near The Block see themselves and their own neighbourhood. This data will help build an understanding of the structuring of values-systems that may contribute to understandings of ‘whiteness’ and everyday racism.

- proposed methodology:

  This project is concerned with The Block as it is seen by those who live and work near it. These views will be explored through in-depth interviews with various local residents in three
specific areas: a) The Block neighbours (terrace houses); b) New development residents in Darlington and Chippendale; c) Darlington terrace house occupants.

In-depth interviews with locals will be used to explore opinions, feelings and fears, about the local area and the existence of The Block, particularly in the face of current transformation of the area.

It is hypothesised that there may be a relationship between certain features of residency and the attitudes of neighbours to The Block. For this reason the interviews will also collect data on length of residency, housing tenure, and aspects of home renovation. Questions will also be asked about why people chose to live in this area. This data will help build a picture of the complexity of values about self and home.

‘In-depth interview’ techniques will be used to gather the views/opinions to the existence of The Block in 3 case study area. Interviews will include a fact-finding component, which is the same for the 3 case study areas. The statistics will help establish the demographic background of each interviewee. Although it is not expected that the sample will necessarily be statistically representative, it is more of ‘building a picture’ about the case study area, the statistics are necessary simply to establish some grounds on which to interview. Such questions include asking the interviewee’s:
- address - to establish that the interviewee actually lives in the case study location, also may influence opinions about the existence of The Block;
- length of occupancy - to give a basis for familiarity with the area;
- rent/own - may influence opinions about change/gentrification
- house/dwelling type, size, state, renovation type - may also influence opinions about change/gentrification.

For each case study area separate ‘in-depth’ surveys will be administered. In addition, local businesses/shops in Abercrombie Street will also be invited to be interviewed (Interview formats in Appendix 3 of this thesis).

The interviews will be carried out by finding prospective/interested participants by dropping notices of intention in letter-boxes, then following up, with a door-knock to arrange times for interviews of those interested.

The case study areas are:

- a) ‘The Block Neighbours’: who are they and how do they feel about living near this (highly publicised) community? The following in-depth interview format will be administered to households living adjacent to The Block site.
- b) Residents of new developments in Darlington and Chippendale: Darlington and Chippendale are areas of rapid demographic change: How are new developments/warehouse conversions promoted? What enticed newcomers to buy/live in such developments? Do they know about ‘The Block’ which is close by, and what do they think about it? Is there a discourse of decline operating?
- c) Darlington terrace-house residents: Darlington is the suburb in which ‘The Block’ actually sits. This suburb has strong resident action: who are the residents and what are their views on this community which is nearby, but not in the immediate vicinity? Do the resident action struggles in this area bear any relationship to the existence of ‘The Block’? Is there ‘heritage’ value to be fought for? And, is there a ‘culture of acceptability’, perhaps conflated with ‘heritage’ developing/operating which will not accommodate ‘The Block’?
• full explanation of what subjects will be required to do: answer questions detailed by interviewer in their own homes or workplaces, at a time which is suitable for them. The interviews will be carried out by finding prospective/interested participants by dropping notices of intention in letter-boxes, then following up, with a door-knock to arrange times for interviews of those interested. Interview length will vary depending on the length of responses. It is envisaged that interview time will range from 20 minutes to approximately an hour.

• full description of any procedure which is beyond already established and accepted techniques: N/A.

7. Proposed commencement of project: Enrolled on 30th June, 1996. Plan to commence fieldwork (interviews) as soon as approval is granted.
8. Proposed duration of project: PhD is 3 years. It is expected that the fieldwork component will take approximately 6 months.

DETAILS OF SUBJECTS
9. Number, type and age range of subjects: In-depth interviews will be carried out in the 3 case study locations
   a) The near Block neighbours (terrace houses): A letter-box drop will be carried out. Every 4th houses on the North side of Lawson Street (Darlington end only - west of railway line) and Abercrombie Street (east side only) between Lawson Street and Vine Street, Darlington, will receive an invitation for interview (see attach 1). Approximately 25 households, mostly terraced houses will receive a letter. I will then door-knock to arrange interview times with those who are interested in being interviewed. If the response is less than 20, I will letter-box drop again, to every 3rd house not previously in receipt of a letter.
   b) Residents of new developments in Darlington and Chippendale: Only recently converted warehouse/loft apartment blocks will be surveyed to provide information about why people choose to move to this area in recent times. The residents will have only recently moved into the area (up to 2 years ago). The most recent developments are: ‘Abercrombie Rooftops’ on the corner of Abercrombie and Caroline Streets, ‘Citipoint’ in Abercrombie Street, ‘Moorgate’ in Moorgate Rd, ‘TriBeCa’ in Abercrombie St, ‘The Benedict’ in O’Connor St. and ‘The Buckland’ in Buckland St. These buildings consist of approximately 80 apartments. All letterboxes in these buildings will receive invitations for interview followed by a door-knock to arrange interview times for those interested. If I am unable to get 20 - 25 interested residents, I will letter-box drop in the next newest warehouse/loft apartment developments in Buckland Street and Dangar Place.
   b) Darlington terrace houses: Every 5th household in Edward, Thomas, Ivy, Calder and Lander Streets (approx. 300 households) will receive at letter-boxed invitation to be interviewed. This should provide 20 - 25 interviews.

In all 3 case study areas the type and age range of subject is open. It is expected that adults will be interviewed. If younger people want to be interviewed, this will depend on parental consent.

10. Source of subjects:
   a) The near Block neighbours (terrace houses): A letter-box drop will be carried out. Every 4th houses on the North side of Lawson Street (Darlington end only - west of railway line) and Abercrombie Street (east side only) between Lawson Street and Vine Street, Darlington, will receive an invitation for interview (see attach 1). Approximately 25 household, mostly terraced houses will receive a letter. I will then door-knock to
arrange interview times with those who are interested in being interviewed. If the response is less than 20, I will letter-box drop again, to every 3rd house not previously in receipt of a letter.

b) Residents of new developments in Darlington and Chippendale: Only recently converted warehouse/loft apartment blocks will be surveyed to provide information about why people choose to move to this area in recent times. The residents will have only recently moved into the area (up to 2 years ago). The most recent developments are: ‘Abercrombie Rooftops’ on the corner of Abercrombie and Caroline Streets, ‘Citipoint’ in Abercrombie Street, ‘Moorgate’ in Moorgate Rd, ‘TriBeCa’ in Abercrombie St, ‘The Benedict’ in O’Connor St. and ‘The Buckland’ in Buckland St. These buildings consist of approximately 80 apartments. All letterboxes in these buildings will receive invitations for interview followed by a door-knock to arrange interview times for those interested. If I am unable to get 20 - 25 interested residents, I will letter-box drop in the next newest warehouse/loft apartment developments in Buckland Street and Dangar Place.

c) Darlington terrace-houses: Every 5th household in Edward, Thomas, Ivy, Calder and Lander Streets (approx. 300 households) will receive at letter-boxed invitation to be interviewed. This should provide 20 - 25 interviews.

11. Means be which subjects are to be recruited: Wendy Shaw will recruit subjects by:
   a) Near Block Neighbours (terrace houses): letter-box drop every 3rd or 4th household as required.
   b) Residents of new developments in Darlington and Chippendale: letter-box drop every household in specific developments.
   c) Darlington terrace-houses: letter-box drop every 5th household.

12. Are any of the subjects in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators, particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project? No

ESTIMATION OF POTENTIAL RISK TO SUBJECTS
Please identify all potential risks to subjects associated with the proposed procedures. Please explain how you intend to protect subjects against or minimise these risks…..

There no immediate risks. Confidentiality is assured because the results will not be associated with any specific individual or property.

Confidentiality/anonymity is assured because although sampling is address specific, there will be no way of accessing addresses. Numbers, not names, will be allocated to interviews. (All interviews will end up as numbers, eg. C2, Chippendale interview 2 after completion of interview process). Interviews will be recorded in full, as data, in an appendix of the final thesis, without names or addresses. Only general locations will be referred to.

14. Please explain how the potential benefits to the subject, or contributions to the general body of knowledge, outweigh the risks:
As the risks of this research are negligible, the benefits easily outweigh the risks. The benefits for the subject include: discussion of local issues with an interested party/airing of views; clarification of issues that may not have been fully understood; becoming informed of events in local area; networking (subjects may gain a reason to speak to their next-door neighbour for instance). Subjects may also feel less uneasy about living in the area with knowledge gained. They may also enjoy being a participant in the process of knowledge production.
Contributions to the general body of knowledge include: advancing knowledge of critical racial studies in this location; providing an alternative reading of the area to that provided by dominant narratives (in the media etc).

15. Please detail any other ethical issues...
There are no other ethical issues.

INFORMED CONSENT
16. Please find attached: (i) a copy of the written information
(ii) a copy of consent form } both in Appendix 2

CONFIDENTIALITY
17. Describe the procedures you will adopt to ensure confidentiality:
All subjects will be given a pseudonym in the final document. The interview records will be stored in a way whereby the exact address of the informant is not recorded with the results.

18. Who will be responsible for security of confidential data and where will it be kept?
The principal investigator (Dr Jane Jacobs) will be responsible for the data collected and it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne.

19. How long will data be held? Hard copies will be shredded after data is transcribed into computer and back up copies made. Interviews will not have participants names on them, only numbers.

20. Who will have access to the data, and for what purpose? What is their relationship to the project? The investigators, Wendy Shaw and Dr Jane M. Jacobs, only will have access to data. On request interviewees will be provided with a copy of the interview transcript.

FUNDING
21. Source of funding (where applicable): Melbourne University Postgraduate Scholarship (with stipend: 3 years) and Internal Research Grant (Department of Geography and Environmental Studies); other funding may become available (travel/fieldwork grants)
22. Project grant title; proposed duration of grant (where applicable): N/A

PAYMENT TO SUBJECTS
23. N/A

PRIVACY
24. N/A

IONIZING RADIATION
25. N/A

PLACE FOR CONDUCT OF PROJECT
26. Where will the project be conducted? In the homes/workplaces of the subjects.

OTHER DECISIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT
27. Is this protocol being submitted to another ethics committee, or has it been previously submitted to an ethics committee? No.
APPENDIX 2

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE LETTER; INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION AND AUTHORISATION LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY
Project description:

In recent times there has been a lot of change in the Darlington/Chippendale area. There have also been lots of reports about the Darlington/Redfern Aboriginal community known as ‘The Block’. The Block sits in the middle of what might be described as a ‘gentrifying’ or ‘yuppifying’ area. The media tends to focus on negative aspects of this community, such as crime and drugs, and most recently, its apparent demise as an Aboriginal neighbourhood. This research intends to find out how the (other/non-Aboriginal) local residents who live in areas around The Block feel about current issues in the area, such as the changes and developments in the area, the new developments, the warehouse conversions etc., and the potential/apparent loss of The Block. The opinions of the local people about such changes to the area will be collected and used as data to build an ethnography or cultural ‘picture’ of a changing area.

Upon your agreement to being interviewed, interviews will be conducted at a time suited to you, in your home/shop/place of business. Interviews are based on a series of questions. There are several statistics-based questions at the start, then 8 or 9 discussion questions. These discussion questions are open-ended, rather than yes/no questions, which allow you to respond to the issues raised. Interviews will probably take upwards of 20 minutes. What you say and how much you say is up to you. The interviews will be audio-taped. You are free to halt the process at any time and you may request withdrawal of any information. All information is completely confidential and your name and address will be removed before processing. This information is only required in the first stage of the project for logistical purposes - such as avoiding interviewing the same person twice. It is intended that the interview process be relaxed and informal and stress-free. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions and your participation is greatly appreciated!

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

Name of participant: _______________________________________________________
Name of investigator(s): Wendy Shaw

1. I consent to participate in the above project.
2. I authorise the investigator to interview me, and tape the interview, for the above project.
3. I acknowledge that:
   a) I have been informed that data collected in the interview process will be used for the above project analysis;
   b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data (information);
   c) The project is for the purpose of research;
   d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements, and that my identification will be removed before processing.

Signature ______________________________________    Date ________________________
(Participant)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:
I consent to the participation of ____________________________________________ in the above project.
Signature ______________________________________    Date ________________________
To the resident/store-holder/business operator.

I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a research project on how this local area is changing and the impacts of such change on residents/businesses. I would very much like to talk to local residents and business operators, like yourselves, about your views on such changes.

The interview process does not need to take up much of your time. You are free to speak about whatever you think is important in terms of changes to the area. In addition, I would be asking you some specific questions about matters that I imagine might be important to locals.

All interviews will be carried out in strict confidence and will be used solely for academic research. A copy of the interview results can be returned to you on request for your own records. The interview results will not be stored with names or other details which may identify you, so this really will be in the strictest of confidence.

I will be contacting you again shortly to see if you are interested in being interviewed. If so, we can organise a time for the interview, or if you want to contact me, you can ring me on 9318 1247. Either way I welcome your contribution.

I will provide more formal written information about the project before the interview.

Enclosed is a letter from Dr Jane M. Jacobs, project supervisor at The University of Melbourne, verifying that this research is bona fide and for academic purposes.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Shaw
20 Ivy St,
Tel: 9318 1247

Dr Jane M. Jacobs can be contacted on 03 9344 6552. Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052.
APPENDIX 3

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions were formulated to be as open-ended as possible with specific prompt questions about changes to the area, development and heritage and the Aboriginal presence, in the case study area, as needed. Ideally, information gathered would produce data on:

1) ideas about ‘race relations’ from a ‘white’ perspective; views about development, and whether there was any relationship identified between the two; views about heritage.
2) any relationships between ideas about race, development and heritage.

Interview formats were arranged so that questions for residents/business holders in the 3 sites were not dissimilar, but varied slightly to fit the context/location. Below are interview formats for each context including interview questions and rationales.

---

Basic interview format (residents):

- Written pre-interview explanation (Appendix 2), following University Ethics Guidelines
- Interview consent form (if required)

- **Statistics:**
  - **name:** for my records only, to save double interviewing
  - **address:** same as for ‘name’
  - **length of occupancy:** longer term residents may have different views to shorter term based on their length of occupancy
  - **previous location (suburb/town):** to ascertain whether or not residents fitted typical ‘gentrifier’ typology, ie whether or not they were from more affluent suburbs
  - **rent own** to identify proportion of renters/owners -- not a representative sample
  - **household type:** to identify, again, whether or not the occupant fits a ‘gentrifiers’ typology. The following question is also for this purpose.
  - **house/dwelling - type:** terraced house ; flat ; cottage ; other ____________
    - **size:** small (2 br or less) ; medium (2/4 br) ; large (>4br) ;
    - **state:** renovated ; un-renovated ; partially renovated ;
    - **renovation:** DIY ; professional ; both ; none ; don’t know ;
  - **interviewees - occupation:** to assess general picture of ‘class’ of occupants.
    - **ethnicity/race:** to ascertain how interviewees identify themselves in terms of ethnic labelling (vis a vis ‘whiteness’)
  - **age group:** young adult ; mid 30s to retire ; older

---

*General demographic question*
Specific interview questions for ‘near Block neighbours’ (residents) and rationales:

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about living here such as: why do you live here; and what are your opinions about the area? This is a general open-ended question

2. In your point of view, what are the main changes that have occurred in the area: in the shorter term (up to the last few years), and over the longer term? Again, this was open-ended to allow for interviewees to speak to issues that they considered important

3. How do you feel about such changes? What are the fears, comforts etc of the participants about changes that they have identified. Are they afraid of certain changes, and why?

From herein the questions become specific and directed

4. What do you think are the important heritage attributes of this area? Questions 4, 5 and 6 were asked to begin identifying notions of heritage and to find out whether or not The Block is regarded as having heritage in the area

5. Are you aware that this is a designated ‘Heritage and Conservation’ area (South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1996: Heritage and Conservation), and does this have any bearing on why you live here?

6. What do you think of ‘heritage’, is it important, and what might it mean for this area?

7. Have you been involved in any resident action in the area? When was it? What was/is it all about? This question is specifically targeted to identify resident action groups in the area

8. How would you describe the ‘social character’ of this area, what kinds of people live here? This question was asked to elicit ideas about diversity. What categories of difference are used by interviewees?

9. There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Eveleigh St, do you have any opinions about the issues that have been raised? Is there anything else you’d like to say about this? This question is specifically about The Block. It allowed for respondents to give opinions about The Block after first addressing media coverage, ie via a 3rd party

10. How has The Block affected your everyday living circumstances - in this area? Once warmed to talking about The Block, respondents may be more direct about their experience of it

11. Can you think of any positive things that come with living close to The Block? This question allows for respondents to reflect on experiences that they may have forgotten or elided because of ongoing bad press about The Block

12. Is there anything else you consider important, that you would like to mention about this area? Asked at the end of the interview so that interviewees were again able to direct the information agenda through the use of an open-ended question
The following question rationales are the same as those above (residents). Resident and business operators/staff/shopkeepers are almost synonymous with residents for interview purposes.

Interview format for ‘Near Block Neighbours’ (business operators/staff/shopkeepers):

- Written pre-interview explanation (Appendix 2), following University Ethics Guidelines

- **Statistics:**
  - name (to be removed from documentation):
  - business address (to be removed from documentation):
  - type of business - shop/pub/etc.:
  - length of time at this location/in this job:
  - previous location (suburb/town):
  - interviewees - occupation:
    - ethnicity/race:
    - age group: young adult; mid 30s to retire; older;

---

**Interview questions (business operators/staff/shopkeepers):**

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about working in this area, the pros and cons of working in this location?
2. From your point of view, what are the main changes that have occurred in the area: in the shorter term (up to the last few years), and over the longer term?
3. How do you feel about such changes?
4. What do you think are the important heritage attributes of this area?
5. Are you aware that this is a ‘heritage and conservation’ area (South Sydney Council Local and Environment Plan 1996, Heritage and Conservation), and do you think that this is of any importance, in any way, to this area?
6. What do you think of ‘heritage’, is it important, and what might it mean for this area?
7. Have you been included or involved in any resident action in the area? When was it? What was/is it all about?
8. How would you describe the ‘social character’ of this area, what kinds of people live here?
9. There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Eveleigh St, do you have any opinions about the issues that have been raised? Is there anything else you’d like to say about this?
10. How has The Block affected your everyday working/living circumstances - in this area?
11. Can you think of any positive things that come with working/living close to The Block?
12. Is there anything else you consider important, that you would like to mention about this area?
The following generally follows questions for ‘near Block neighbours’ (residents) rationale. Extra questions added:

Interview format for Chippendale/Darlington ‘new development’ residents:

- Written pre-interview explanation (Appendix 2), following University Ethics Guidelines
- Interview consent form (if required)

- Statistics:
  name:
  address:
  length of occupancy:
  previous location (suburb/town):
  rent  own
  household type:
  house/dwelling - type: terraced house ; flat ; cottage ; other ______________
  - size: small (2 br or less) ; medium (2/4 br) ; large (>4br) ;
  - state: renovated ; unrenovated ; partially renovated ;
  - renovation: DIY ; professional ; both ; none ; don’t know ;
  interviewees - occupation:
  - ethnicity/race:
  - age group: young adult ; mid 30s to retire ; older ;

Interview questions for Chippendale/Darlington ‘new development’ residents:

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about living here such as: why have you moved into this area? What attracted you to living/buying here; and what are your opinions about the suburb/area?
2. Do you know of any major main changes that have occurred in the area: in the shorter term (up to the last few years), and over the longer term?
3. How do you feel about such changes?
4. What do you think are the important heritage attributes of this area?
5. Are you aware that this is a designated ‘Heritage and Conservation’ area (South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1996: Heritage and Conservation), and does this have any bearing on why you live here?
6. What do you think of ‘heritage’, is it important, and what might it mean for this area?
7. Do you know of, or have you become involved in any resident action in the area? When? What was/is it all about?
8. how would you describe the ‘social character’ of this area, what kinds of people live here?
9. There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Eveleigh St, are you aware of any of the issues that have been raised and does this have any bearing on you living here?
10. How has The Block affected your everyday living circumstances since you moved in?
11. Can you think of any positive things that come with living close to The Block?
12. Is there anything else you’d like to say about this (The Block)?
13. Is there anything else you consider important, that you would like to mention about this area?

Interview format for Darlington (residents):
- Written pre-interview explanation (Appendix 2), following University Ethics Guidelines
- Interview consent form (if required)

- Statistics:
  - name:
  - address:
  - length of occupancy:
  - previous location (suburb/town):
  - rent  own
  - household type:
    - house/dwelling - type: terraced house ; flat ; cottage ; other
    - size: small (2 br or less) ; medium (2/4 br) ; large (>4br)
    - state: renovated ; unrenovated ; partially renovated
    - renovation: DIY ; professional ; both ; none ; don’t know
  - interviewees - occupation:
    - ethnicity/race:
    - age group: young adult ; mid 30s to retire ; older

---

**Interview questions for Darlington (residents):**

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about living here such as: why do you live here; and what are your opinions about the suburb/area?
2. From your point of view, what are the main changes that have occurred in the area: in the shorter term (up to the last few years), and over the longer term?
3. How do you feel about such changes?
4. What do you think are the important heritage attributes of this area?
5. Are you aware that this is a designated ‘Heritage and Conservation’ area (South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1996: Heritage and Conservation), and does this have any bearing on why you live here?
6. What do you think of ‘heritage’, is it important, and what might it mean for this area?
7. how would you describe the ‘social character’ of this area, what kinds of people live here?
8. Have you been involved in any resident action in the area? When was it? What was/is it all about?
9. There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Everleigh St, do you have any opinions about the issues that have been raised? Is there anything else you’d like to say about this?
10. How has The Block affected your everyday living circumstances - in this area?
11. Can you think of any positive things that come with living close to The Block?
12. Is there anything else you consider important, that you would like to mention about this area?
Interview format and interview question rationales for interviewing Real Estate Agents:

Interview format for Real Estate Agents:
- Agency Location: for my records only
- 1st name of agent interviewed: for my records only
- length of time of agent at this agency: from what experience does the agent speak.
- length of time as a real estate agent: length of time of experience in the area
- Name/location of development(s) sold/selling/to be marketed in the area: how close to The Block are they?
- Type of property: warehouse conversion/apartment development/individual terrace/other

Interview Questions for Real Estate Agents (rationales):

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about how you go about marketing a development such as…(development)? Asked to identify marketing strategies of particular sites...is there variation with proximity to The Block?

2. What do you have to think about when marketing such developments, such as target market etc? As with 1

3. Does heritage have any bearing on marketing developments in the Darlington/Chippendale/Redfern area? If so, in what ways? Is heritage a selling point? What sort of heritage?

4. I have noticed a kind of ‘New York’ theme occurring with some of the developments, what do you think of this, what’s it all about?

5. What kind of portrayal do you think is most appropriate for such developments as: i) warehouse/loft conversions, ii) new apartment developments, iii) terrace houses, in the Darlington/Chippendale/Redfern area? Is there any consideration of heritage, New York lifestyle or other?

6. Are there any issues that you raise with prospective buyers about these areas, or are there any that you actively avoid? Do agents avoid The Block, how do they do it if they do?

Questions 7 and 8 are questions about The Block
7. There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Eveleigh St, do you have any opinions about the issues that have been raised? Is there anything else you’d like to say about this?

8. How has the presence of The Block impacted on how you go about selling in and around that area?
Interview format and interview question rationales for interviewing Police:

**Interview Format for Police**

- 1st name of officer interviewed
- rank of officer interviewed
- length of time in police force
- length of time in current/former/relevant (Redfern/other) position
- age group
- ethnicity/racial group
- Are there any statistics on crime rates in this area that might be available?
- Are there any other statistics/info … that might be available?

---

**Interview questions for Police (rationales):**

1. Would you like to tell me a bit about working in this area, the pros and cons of working in this location? *This is an ‘ice-breaker’ question. It allows respondent to relax and speak of their own opinions and experiences (anecdotes)*

2. From your point of view, what are the main changes that have occurred in the area: in the shorter term (up to the last few years), and over the longer term? *This is more of a ‘nuts and bolts’ question calling for knowledge about changes, from a policing point of view*

3. How do you feel about such changes, generally, and in how they might affect your working experiences? *Has the area ‘improved’ or become more difficult, from a policing perspective*

4. How would you describe the ‘social character’ of this area, what kinds of people live here? *What is the police understanding of the area’s diversity, what is the focus in characterising the area?*

5. If you can discuss such issues, how would you describe the changes in types of crimes occurring in the area, and associated police response, which might be changes to the levels of policing, or the style of policing? *Policing details. What are the influences…are they locally based, such as Resident Action Groups?*

6. What might be the main influences on shifts in levels of policing in this area? *direct question*

7. Are you aware of any resident action in the area? When was it? What was/is it all about? *What detail do the police have on this, are they aware of race-based motivations?*

8. Do these groups have any influence on policing in the area? *A direct question about power over policing.*
9. Are you aware that this is a ‘heritage and conservation’ area (South Sydney Council Local and Environment Plan 1996, Heritage and Conservation), and do you think that this is of any importance, in any way, to this area? In case police have opinions about such issues...as for

10. Do you think there are any important heritage attributes in this area?

11. Of perhaps more relevance to police in the area: There has been a lot of media coverage about ‘The Block’ or Eveleigh St, do you have any opinions about the issues that have been raised? Is there anything else you’d like to say about this? What is the police response to media coverage, such as the ‘cop it sweet’ documentary on police racism?

12. Has the media coverage of The Block, and associated policing issues in some cases, had any impact on you and other police working in this area, are there pros and cons with media coverage at all? Influence of the media on policing in the case study area and The Block

13. There are currently 2 strongly held views about policing in this area: one is that it is under-policed...that there should be more beat-cops etc, and the opposing view that it is over-policed...with police helicopters overhead etc...do you have any comments on this? Raising a 'central dilemma' in the community with the agency, the police

14. How has The Block affected your everyday working/living circumstances - in this area? An individual (police) opinion

15. Can you think of any positive things that come with working/living close to The Block? An individual (police) opinion

16. Is there anything else you consider important, that you would like to mention about working in this area? Finishing on an open-ended question
## APPENDIX 4

**CODING INTERVIEW DATA**

**(RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Area attraction; changes</th>
<th>The Block</th>
<th>Feel about Block</th>
<th>Anomalies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 resident</td>
<td>location, diversity; mixed feelings about gentrification</td>
<td>policing</td>
<td>accepted as part of diversity but ‘other’</td>
<td>confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 resident</td>
<td>diversity, location. Anti apartments</td>
<td>‘lost’, media a problem</td>
<td>to be fought for</td>
<td>very pro-Koori but supports discourse of decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 residents</td>
<td>diversity; unhappy about gentrification monoculture</td>
<td>pro LOCAL Kooris but ‘blow ins’ a problem</td>
<td>empathy with ‘authentic’ Koori residents. Others ‘dysfunctional’</td>
<td>‘pathology’ to a point, staunchly anti-yuppie but came from swank suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and local business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 business</td>
<td>friendly, anti-development</td>
<td>99% fine, uncontrolled kids the problem</td>
<td>danger to elderly in area. Pro ‘authentic’ Koori residents only</td>
<td>embedded in area, but moved away in early 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 resident</td>
<td>diversity; anti yuppie, and anti drugs</td>
<td>‘failed human experiment’. Urban Koori has no culture</td>
<td>Raze The Block and start Koori businesses</td>
<td>heroin and ‘junkies’ = evil, but smokes a lot of marijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 resident</td>
<td>cheap to buy; decreased diversity a problem</td>
<td>‘Vaporise it’ because of domestic violence and state of children</td>
<td>ambivalent about it because of child focus</td>
<td>aware of Koori heritage; not concerned about drugs but focus on environment for child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 railway</td>
<td>‘better and better’</td>
<td>media exaggerates</td>
<td>pro Koori and pro Redfern station as a worker</td>
<td>the station is not a scary place as the reputation suggests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Koori</td>
<td>improving</td>
<td>troubled, but</td>
<td>self help needed</td>
<td>aware of dispossession but believes only Kooris can solve problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>hopeful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 resident</td>
<td>diversity, location. Anti-‘flats’</td>
<td>Hyped by media; no involvement</td>
<td>‘city ghetto’ (OK, like NYC)</td>
<td>pro Koori but basically indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 resident</td>
<td>cheap, location, wanted to be near Koori community</td>
<td>proactive pro Block</td>
<td>desire to bring issues out into wider ‘white’ world</td>
<td>long term proactive non-Aboriginal resident, raised kids here but feels they are excluded from The Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Location; Anti Removal of Pedestrian Crossing</td>
<td>‘let them be part of city life; ambivalent yet empathetic</td>
<td>Cool New Urban Type. City Life Warts and All.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Community Oriented; Anti Increase Policing</td>
<td>Drugs, Not Race the Problem</td>
<td>Accept It Warts and All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>‘Always Been Here’, Anti University; Anti Koori; Anti Developer</td>
<td>Used to Be Good People, But Not Now</td>
<td>‘They’ Have Too Much; Criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Cheap Area; Anti Development</td>
<td>Concentration of Disadvantage Is the Problem</td>
<td>Empathetic, Not Really a Big Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Cheap to Buy, Profitable Potential</td>
<td>Crisis with Heroin; ‘The Suburb Is One of Fear’</td>
<td>Pressure Cooker Ready to Explode Conspiracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Diversity, Location, Community; Anti Developers and Koori Drug Problem</td>
<td>Now Anti Block because of Drugs</td>
<td>Race Is the Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Location, Lifestyle; Anti Crime and Development</td>
<td>Ambivalent Yet Empathetic</td>
<td>No Local Attachment, Only ‘Gay Community’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Location, Like a Country Town; Anti Koori Drug Problem and Crime</td>
<td>‘Failed Experiment’</td>
<td>‘Have Too Much’, Race Based Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Community Feel; Vibrant; Location. Anti Development</td>
<td>‘A Real Problem’, Hope ‘They’ Fix It</td>
<td>Aboriginality Exoticised … Needs to Be ‘Cultural’, With Art Galleries etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Village-Like; Urban Location, Reconciliation. Anti-Development</td>
<td>Pro Block</td>
<td>Pro Koori as Australian Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Village-Like Community, Location. Work and Live; Anti Development and Monoculture</td>
<td>Pro Koori But See No Future</td>
<td>Aboriginal Presence as ‘Cultural’ (Dance, Eora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Village-Like Location, Reconciliation. Anti-Development</td>
<td>Pro Block</td>
<td>Pro Koori as Australian Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Community Feel; Vibrant; Location. Anti Development</td>
<td>‘A Real Problem’, Hope ‘They’ Fix It</td>
<td>Aboriginality Exoticised … Needs to Be ‘Cultural’, With Art Galleries etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>REAs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>reconciliation desires; affiliation with ‘working class’; anti drugs and gentrification</td>
<td>pro Block</td>
<td>some fear of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Chippo Politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>CRIG</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>cheap area; anti Aboriginal ‘junkies’</td>
<td>must go</td>
<td>fearful ‘victim’ of crime; anti Block activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>cheap and ‘seedy’; pro gentrification</td>
<td>‘got us into the market’ (now it should go)</td>
<td>expects gentrification will push Block out, anti Block activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>friends in area; pro gentrification</td>
<td>must go</td>
<td>anti Block; wants Victorian terrace houses on The Block saved for gentrification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘diversity’ mentioned = 7; location = 11; cheap ‘entry’ = 6
8 want Block gone; 11 are ‘pro’ Block;

Key: REA = Real Estate Agent; Empty rows indicate that different were questions asked. These were considered separately (not coded in this way). Appendix 3 for interview questions.
APPENDIX 5

ILLEGITIMATE HISTORIES: SYDNEY’S WAREHOUSE OCCUPATIONS

This short essay documents a unique, largely unacknowledged history that has assisted the legitimisation of ‘loft-living’ in the inner-city of Sydney. ‘Warehouse-living’, a predecessor of ‘loft-living’ in Sydney, has contributed to the cultural capital(s) of these specific built forms and the lifestyle they are seen to offer. The significance of the recent trend in ‘loft’ apartments, as a viable investment option for developers and purchasers, and as a desirable cultural form for owner-occupiers and investors, is valorised by a reference to New York but, without the embedded history of the local to draw from, apartment living in Sydney may have simply remained the ‘poor cousin’ to a house in the suburbs.

By the time Sharon Zukin’s *Loft Living* was published (1982), the inner-city of Sydney was also experiencing its own determined residential occupation of former industrial and commercial buildings. Low income students, artists and musicians, and others of the city’s fringe-dwelling demi monde, had sought ‘creative’ refuge from suburbia and conventional inner-city housing (mostly terraces and old flats) in warehouses and unused old office buildings. Some were drawn to the city because they preferred the social interaction afforded by living amongst ‘like-minded’ people. Universities, colleges, diverse lifestyles and night life were all close together. Some, oppressed by suburbia, found greater freedom in the inner-city. The move from a conventional suburban house to a work/living space in a spacious but shabby warehouse, soon became desirable urban chic for some. An oversupply of warehousing in the city meant that some were empty. This provided a new vein of alternative accommodation in the inner-city throughout the 1980s.

In 1979, John Roseth, the former head of the NSW Department of Environment and Planning, recorded the advent of the formal conversion of warehouses into apartments in the Central Business District of Sydney. The first was on the corner of King, Clarence and Kent Streets in the centre of the CBD. According to Roseth, approximately 77 sites were at various stages of conversion between 1979 and 1981. In
addition to these formal conversions, there was the trend for informal residential occupancy. It was not until the 1990s, after years of comparatively low levels of warehouse occupations and conversions, that developers were suddenly interested. Only then did major restructuring of inner Sydney, the *en masse* conversion of old warehouses to warehouse and ‘loft’ apartments and the construction of new build ‘loft’ apartments, housed in warehouse look-alike architectural designs, begin in earnest (Vipond et al. 1998).

### Emerging (spaces for) warehouse culture

Unconventional residential accommodation probably started in inner Sydney just after World War II when residential accommodation was in short supply. The CBD had also became home, from the late 1940s, to the Sydney Libertarians who were later known as ‘The Sydney Push’. This ‘notorious group of anarchic intellectuals’ (Coombs 1996, viii) deliberately shunned conventional suburban living arrangements and *chose* low-rent boarding houses, run-down terrace houses, pubs and otherwise decreasingly desirable forms of accommodation.

By the late 1970s warehouse living had become an established life-style alternative for those who were involved in the inner-city art/music scene. Formerly empty office and warehouse buildings, in Paddington, Darlinghurst, East Sydney, Surry Hills, Redfern, Alexandria and the CBD, became increasingly occupied for residential purposes. Generally, living in a warehouse or office building was deemed to be ‘illegal’ because commercial or industrial zoning made no provision for habitation. Most warehouse sites in the inner-city occupied business or industrial zones (zone 3 = business, zone 4 = industrial), rather than residential zonings. Zoning regulations of South Sydney and Sydney City Councils have since changed to enable warehouses and old office blocks to undergo residential conversion. Many industrial/business zonings have been changed to Zone Number 2b, ‘medium density residential’, and Zone Number 10, ‘mixed use’. At a time of high vacancy rates, before zonings were altered, the ‘illegality’ of residential occupation of warehouses and old office buildings was of secondary importance to collecting rents.

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1 For example, see Murphy P and Watson S (1997) on urban and suburban homosexual spaces.
Roseth noted that ‘Sydney had a boom in office buildings in the early 1970s … [that] … left the owners of the old office buildings with few options of how to keep their properties economically productive’ (1981 77). The city was also experiencing wholesale office and warehouse abandonment which culminated in an office glut in the late 1980s (Vipond et al. 1998). Firms and industries were either decentralising, moving out of the inner-city areas, to cheaper locations on the city fringes (Vipond et al. 1998, 216), or moving ‘off-shore’. Some were simply succumbing to larger global economic shifts at the time, with many industries, such as the local clothing and footwear manufacturers, losing business because of cheaper imports from the ‘Newly Industrialised Countries’ of Latin America and Asia (Sassen-Koob 1985, Daly 1992). These economic shifts, and the associated increasing number of available commercial properties in the inner-city, enabled a variety of uses for large, increasingly ‘run-down’ buildings. Alternative uses, such as the ubiquitous ‘artists studios’, provided a ‘stop gap’ measure until usage regulations were later enforced with a turn in commercial economic fortunes.

Roseth (1981) did attempt several forecasts about the development of warehouse apartments. He argued that because conversion of existing buildings was cheaper than redevelopment, the saving would stimulate lower-cost purchasing power in the inner-city. This somewhat naïve economic forecast was accompanied by an interesting attempt at explaining why there might be interest in such real estate. He stated that ‘[b]eyond these [other, including economic] reasons, there hovers that rather nebulous motive – what society considers chic or fashionable – which does not always spring from compelling logic, but which seems to exercise a compelling force on behaviour’ (1981, 77). Along with the seemingly illogical cultural considerations, Roseth did not completely ignore the political economy of gentrification either. He stated that ‘[c]ertainly history has shown that when a residential area suddenly becomes desirable, the wealthy tend to displace the poor who used to live there’. He qualified this with ‘residential development in the Central Business District cannot be seen in the same terms as the resurgence of those inner suburbs … The Central Business District has been without a residential population; there is no question of displacing low-income residents … buildings proposed for recycling are usually those which have stood empty or half-occupied for some years’ (Roseth 1981, 77).
Two points should be made about these half-occupations. Firstly, the informal or ‘illegal’ sector of warehouse occupation, the informal residential occupiers, were largely ‘invisible’ in official terms. Certainly commercial or industrial leases did not record residential occupations but it is the ambiguous half-occupations that Roseth notes, but does not identify, that were the displaced resident occupiers. This displacement from unconventional warehouse homes/studios was unnoticed in official terms but along with the counterpart warehouse and loft occupations in other parts of the world (Zukin 1982, Podmore 1998), the residential occupations were not completely unnoticed, perhaps not even by Roseth who did note the half-occupations.

The second point about the half-occupations is that economic forces may be indifferent to the fate of people living in the margins and interstices of mainstream society but, at that time in Sydney the machinations of ‘free market forces’ actually provided the moment of alternative housing opportunity. The culture of warehouse chic emerged to fill in the gaps of the economies of Central Business District and inner-city commercial property ownership. These gaps closed when the time was economically ‘right’ for warehouse chic to undergo mass commodification.

Memorable warehouse cultures
The temporarily acceptable though unregistered use of warehouses and office buildings for residential purposes, was a very different way of living in an era of predominantly suburban lifestyles. Although there are few records of this kind of occupation in Sydney those who have lived in the inner-city for several decades, be they previous occupants or not, remember various warehouse communities. Some were glorified.

Examples of residential warehouse occupations include various buildings along the Southern end of Pitt Street in the CBD. Some of these are remembered because of huge

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2 A Media and Communications student at the University of NSW has compiled a CD-Rom memento of a very memorable warehouse and its culture, ‘Alpha House’ which was described as ‘once a haven for the creative, [it] is one of the wounded prey of the economically rational status quo’. (http://mdcm.students.arts.unsw.edu.au/click/alpha_house/preview.html). The new ‘loft-apartment’ development has retained the Alpha House name and history.
warehouse parties held during the 1980s. These were the precursors to some of the large dance parties, including the internationally acclaimed Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras dance party, held annually, which now occupies The Hordern Pavilion in the former Sydney Show Ground (now Fox Studios). An example was the Anthony Horderns building which sat on a site now occupied by the World Square, in the CBD. The Anthony Horderns building was home to artists and musicians for several years from the late 1970s to the mid 1980s. The enormous, now demolished, Rank-Xerox building in Alexandria similarly housed (fringe) artists and musicians, as did various smaller buildings dotted around Darlinghurst/East Sydney and Surry Hills.

In and around the case study area, many buildings earmarked for redevelopment have been demolished, or partially demolished. Cultural moments of some of the former occupations can, however, be traced. For example, the now demolished Slaughterhouse (former abattoir and meat-packing building), later identified simply as Renwick Street, in Renwick Street, Redfern, was a huge, constantly evolving multi-purpose concern with music recording and practice studios, artists’ lofts, several art galleries and separate ‘living spaces’. This unofficial occupation, which lasted for well over a decade, left legacies through the provision of material and non-material artefacts, be they pieces of art made and purchased on the site in various art galleries, or simply the place that provided cheap practice spaces for musicians. The availability of cheap ‘spaces’ in the city, to rehearse, paint, sculpt and/or live, is remembered and the loss is lamented. During research interviews for this thesis, one interviewee reflected:

There was light industry, then it became a lot more artistic in usage. Those sorts of people, the photographers and architects, need large warehouse spaces close to the city, with character, fairly high ceilings, lower rentals, in order to pursue the things that they do pursue. They’re getting squeezed out, there’s nowhere for them to go, and so a whole artistic community in Sydney is just being pushed out. Where are

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3 My personal experience of warehouse living and party-going spanned from the early 1980s to the early 1990s. The details of much of this account has been a culmination of personal experience, research of available literature and informal discussions with other ‘survivors’ of the warehouse-era. Further research would include the compilation of an archive of party-promotions and stories from the alternative Sydney media.

4 As I did, in various bands, in the mid to late 1980s and again in the early 1990s.
they going to end up? I mean we’ve really got the death throes on a lot of artists here (Interview 16, 29 April 1998).

And another interviewee stated:

I think that an opportunity was lost with many of these developments to incorporate certain sorts of business activities which are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in the city such as artists, photographic studios, places that require a lot of space, high ceilings, open plan, and, for example one local photographic business from Ivy St has actually closed down because it can no longer continue ... It can no longer continue in the way it was operating - it just cannot find inner-city space to do that sort of thing. I think this is very sad (Interview 3, 17 October 1997).

Other examples of residentially occupied warehouses, with notable warehouse cultures, included Alpha House, and the former Beta House at 58 to 72 King Street, Newtown, which is just South of Darlington. The two warehouses have had diverse fortunes. Beta House is now Georgina Apartments. It was converted into 29 ‘loft apartments’ and sold off at ‘luxury’ prices in the mid 1990s. The larger and more imposing building of the two, Alpha House, formerly a thriving rent-paying and at times infamous party-throwing community, sat empty and gutted throughout the 1990s. A Development Application was submitted by the developer (Robmet Investments Pty. Ltd.) in 1993, ready for the impending boom in ‘loft’ developments but the conversion was stalled. Alpha House sits as a testimony to developer speculation and, perhaps less obviously, to former informal occupancy. Its former ‘life’ has been immortalised in a CD Rom publication (Chapter 8, Figure 8.4). It has also been the subject of local media attention. After running a story on the ‘former glory’ of Alpha House, The Newtown Times, a local independent newspaper, was inundated with phone calls from those who wanted to know more, or had lived there, or knew about it (from telephone interview

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5 There were protests by occupants and local students who objected to development proposals for the two sites. There were objections to the loss of a viable art and music community, and 30 letters of objection to the development application were forwarded to SSCC. Ivanhoe Pty. Ltd. had submitted plans to the SSCC to convert Beta House into apartments (Planning and Building Department, SSCC). From the late 1980s to 1995 warehouses were also used by the Sydney ‘rave’ scene (Chan 1998b, Gibson and Pagan 2000).
with spokesperson at The Newtown Times). This site of inner-urban ‘underground’ culture is well remembered.

These are but a few examples of the informal/illega! occupations of cheap, somewhat ‘bohemian’ rental alternatives in the inner-city, with existences and futures dependant on a variety of economic and other contingencies. These lifestyles, and the traces of them that remain, are part of the basic currency of the cultural capital that was traded in legitimising the commercial version of ‘loft-living’ that is now available in inner-Sydney (as discussed in Chapter 8).

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6 A spokesperson for Robmet stated (during telephone interview) that the development of 66 apartments will be completed in 2001.
APPENDIX 6
DETAIL OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL FOR NEW YORK STYLE APARTMENTS
(See Figure 8.2)

An obvious way to identify the New York theme in new developments/conversions is to note the tendency for specific New York nomenclature that was adopted in many advertising campaigns. Through the late 1990s in inner-city Sydney, Manhattan-esque names and other identifiers of the building of a Manhattan ‘loft apartment’ fantasy were used in Sydney apartment promotions.

An editorial in *The Glebe & Inner Western Weekly* (3/9/97), conjectured that the first New York theme apartment development was the Central Park warehouse conversion in Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, with ‘70 “loft-style” apartments’ (with a confusingly similar name is the newer Central Park Apartments, in Chippendale, and promoted during September 1998). One of the earliest ‘loft conversions’ was actually in the Darlington/Redfern area. The promotion of Lacey on Regent in February 1997, marked a notable change in real estate promotional technologies. A huge banner was slung from the top of the existing building in Redfern, in which the development was to take place. The banner resembled one of enormous advertisements on the sides of Manhattan buildings in Times Square or Houston Street which separates SoHo (South-of-Houston) from the more central Greenwich Village district. Slung from the building, a larger-than-life photo of a woman, with seductive composure carried the caption ‘When Size Matters’ (obviously a reference to the size of the lofts) loomed over Regent Street. To assure prospective buyers that the otherwise stigmatised Redfern area would not be problematic, a section of the brochure was dedicated to a discussion of ‘security’, and displayed a photo of a security camera. The brochure also assured prospective buyers that Lacey on Regent was ‘Sydney’s hot spot of growing value … a hot investment’ in an area that might be the next Paddington.

Throughout the inner-city of Sydney, direct New York referencing began with a spate of loft-style developments with distinctly New York names. Referring to Figure 8.2, a first New-York name was the Manhattan. These ‘loft apartments’ were advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) in April and May, 1997 (and at various other times
since such as in June 1998). This was an early use of the word ‘loft’ and New York referenced building names which was to became a recognised theme. Included in the right hand corner of the advertisement was a shadowy image of statue of liberty. The Madison, referencing Madison Square Gardens in Manhattan, promised a ‘Manhattan Lifestyle’ in April, 1997 in Chippendale. Around the same time Dakota was advertised. An accompanying photo of the development echoed the design of the Manhattan original (Chapter 8, Figure 8.3). ‘The new Manhattan style Dakota apartments offer the vibrance and excitement of the city … at your door. … video/intercom security and parking/highspeed lifts’. This Sydney version of the famous Manhattan residential building offered a formula for a dynamic Manhattan-style apartment, complete with high security.

Dakota is one of the many Meriton developments in the city. Meriton is a large Sydney-based property-development corporation. Meriton followed the Dakota development with the release of Paragon, the Paramount and The Palladium and used explicit New York referencing for ‘Dalgety Square: New York Style! … in a reconstructed heritage building’, and again in July, 1998 ‘New York Style Living in Sydney’s thriving heart’. In April/May in 1997, Meriton started prominent full page advertising in the main real-estate promotional medium: the Saturday SMH Real Estate section. Meriton had cornered the market in residential city tower developments in the Central Business District of Sydney. The New York theme prevailed with stepped roof-lines, use of two-tone colours, and echoes of 1920s and 1930s Manhattan architectural styles. These developments include The Windsor in Kent Street, Millennium Tower on the corner of Sussex, Day and Bathurst Streets, Campbell Tower, Castlereagh Tower and The Regis Tower on Castlereagh and Campbell Streets. The New York theme is recognisable in these developments even without Manhattan-style names.

A spate of promotions continued throughout 1997 with ‘Elegant living, New York Style’ in the ‘The Powerhouse Apartments’; The Lincoln offered ‘New York’ Style Apartments with soaring ceilings and polished timber floors’ (Lincoln referenced the famous Lincoln Centre, a major Manhattan landmark). Union Square, a Whitehall Holdings development, was advertised as ‘an absolutely authentic warehouse

Taking the SoHo syndrome to a new level, TriBeCa (Lismore Developments) burst on the scene in mid 1997 in Chippendale with ‘Warehouse Living that exceeds your expectations’ and, ‘TriBeCa epitomises New York warehouse style … a birdcage steel lift … unrestricted skyline’. The promoters were well aware of the New York connotations of naming the development after a Manhattan neighbourhood that is also in the throes of loft development. ‘TriBeCa, which takes its name from a fashionable area in lower Manhattan, New York’ (The Glebe & Inner Western Weekly, 3 September 1997). The sales brochure also noted that ‘you can keep an eye on your neighbourhood through large windows…’

Just to the north of the case study area, in Ultimo, a warehouse apartment development, called The Mark was advertised in November 1997 advertised using the heading ‘Broadway’. The later advertisement stated ‘Get in on the Act: New Star on Broadway’, utilising another take on the New York theme.

Suddenly the Theatre District of Manhattan became the theme for anything near Sydney’s own Broadway, a main thoroughfare to the CBD. In September 1997, On Broadway had its ‘Grand Opening: The Investment all Sydney is applauding’. ‘A choice of superb units and lofts at a price that’s a steal on any other show in town … at the heart of the city’s restaurant and entertainment belt’ could not be more explicit. Seizing the opportunity, the promoters of Off Broadway, in Chippendale, produced a glossy brochure with the words Off Broadway surrounded by a circle of yellow stars, with a photo of a model of the development lit by spotlights, as if on a stage. The caption below read ‘The all singing, all dancing, bright lights, great life apartments’. On the flip side were three stills from black and white Hollywood movies from the 1940s/50s.

Following the Broadway Spectacular theme, Valeninto’s: Apartments on Crown (SMH 30 May 1998) featured a Liza Minnelli (in the film Cabaret) look-alike in the advertisement, and photos of slick, minimalist loft apartments. ‘Exclusive loft
apartments … dazzling lights … a tantalising way of life, as distinctive as you are … or want to be’, provided a less explicit theatrical reference. This development is in the heart of Sydney’s gay precinct.

A full page advertisement, carrying the text ‘Start spreading the news … I’m Leaving Today … I’ll make a brand new start … If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere! … I want to be a part of it … It’s up to you, new York, new York’, followed the Broadway spectacular theme. For the ‘New Release … A new YORK Apartment’ (The Inner Western Courier, 7 September, 1998).

Manhattanisation continued well into 1998. In March, 1998, the Metro (a cosmopolitan or metropolitan reference rather than a literal Manhattan reference) in Erskineville was advertised in a glossy L.J.Hooker letter-box drop as a ‘warehouse conversion apartment [building] … best of old world architecture and space with the ultimate in today’s conveniences … cosmopolitan … video intercom … security parking’. This complete package was advertised under the banner ‘Metro - The Warehouse Erskineville Via New York’. The Manhattan/New York theme seemed to have reached a level of self-parody.

The Manhattan nomenclature, however, continued. SoHo Apartments - The Centre of Style (SMH 11/4/98) development in Paddington speaks for itself. Central Park Apartments (The Inner Western Suburbs Courier, 17 September, 1998) is situated at the far North Western end of Chippendale. Sydney does not have a centrally located Central Park, and this development is actually very close to Victoria Park. The distance and the name suggest that this is a Manhattan reference rather than a Sydney one. The advertisement focused on warehouse imagery. The theme was old Sydney reinvented with the inspiration of modern Milan, and a Manhattan-referenced name. This advertisement attempted to add a new element to the Manhattan/New York loft/warehouse formula. Milan is commonly regarded to be a style-capital of Europe. This is not dissimilar to Manhattan being regarded as the style-capital of the USA. This promotion hinted at a slightly more exclusive imaginary edge in a market that was saturated with New York themes.
Arguably the most spectacular and exclusive Manhattan statement and development was advertised in the *SMH* in early 1998. The advertisement was for The Tower, to be built atop the redeveloped Grace Brothers site on Pitt Street, in the commercial heart of the Central Business District. ‘The city’s most exclusive residential offering’, featured a long narrow, full-length broadsheet advertisement. This enhanced the New York imagery of the artist’s impression of the development (Chapter 8, Figure 8.1). It appeared to have been set in a drizzly night-scape (or perhaps dusk-scape). The stepped building of grand proportions is bottom lit. The image is a distinctly Gotham City caricature of Manhattan. The image could be from 5th Avenue. Initial advertisements carried no direct written reference to New York but in January 1999, the advertisements stated: ‘The vibrancy and pulse of a Manhattan lifestyle’. In February, 1999 another version of the advertisement appeared. This time the same Gotham City image appeared atmospheric in blue ink, with the words ‘The Tower Sydney … ‘5th Avenue’ Residences’. The Manhattan imaginary for The Tower had been completed. Manhattanism was moving across the boundaries of residential and commercial urban landscapes in inner-city Sydney and the CBD in the late 1990s. It had become part of the character of Sydney.
APPENDIX 6

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CASE STUDY AREA

Comparison of census data for years 1981 (Sydney LGA), 1991 and 1996 (South Sydney LGA) indicating demographic changes in the case study area.

**Birthplace**

Figures indicate that between 1981 and 1991 the proportion of people born in Australia dropped, then between 1991 and 1996, the rate of drop lessened. In 1981, 53% of the Sydney City LGA population were Australian Born, as compared to 51% in 1996, which was 6.6% more than 1991.

In 1981 38% of the population were born overseas compared to 33% in 1996, which was a drop of 4.6% from 1991.

The composition shift occurred due to an increase in the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander population. In 1981, 0.4% of the population registered as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders but by 1996, 2% of the South Sydney LGA registered as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders, which represents an increase of 49.5% from 1991 figures.

**Ethnicity**

Of those born overseas, the birthplace figures show that in 1981 the majority of migrants were born in the UK and Ireland with 24.1%, and New Zealand with 18.4%, followed by a generic ‘Asia’ category, with 8.1% of the population of Sydney LGA (which includes Chinatown). This indicates a high proportion of ‘Anglo’-based origin in the case study area. This is changing with migrations from other parts of the world, particularly from East and South East Asia.

In 1996, birthplace figures show that the majority of migrants were still from the UK and Ireland (18.9+1.9 = 20.8%) and New Zealand (11.5%) but these rates had dropped. The areas of highest increase include migrants from Korea comprising 2% of the overseas born population in South Sydney LGA, which was an increase of 75% from 1991 figures; Singapore comprising 1.1% of the population (and an increase of 76.9% since 1991): and South Africans (1.2%, which represents an increase of 71% from 1991).

**Household Income**

In 1981, most of the population living in Sydney LGA were earning in the lower to middle income brackets (with 8.8% earning below $1000 per annum, 10.8% earning $3001-$4000, and 10.1% earning $10,001-$12,000, and 1.7% earning between $18,001 and $22,000, which is the highest census category other than $22,000+). By 1996, the range of income earnings was more evenly spread between low to high incomes. The highest category (other than those earning above $1500 per week), those earning between $1,000 and $,1499 per week recorded 6.8%. This represents an increase in earnings in the case study area between 1981 and 1996.

**Occupation**

In 1981, 46.4% of the Sydney City population were employed as wage or salary earners, with 43.2% not in the labour force and 4.4% self employed or employers. By 1996, 57% of the South Sydney LGA were in the labour force and 29.5% were not. The increase includes

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7 South Sydney and Sydney City were counted as one Local Government Area in 1981 so the figures include the Central Business District, which had very few residents at that time. For comparison purposes percentages, rather than raw figures, have been used with most indicators.
proportion of women in the labour force with 36.7% in 1981, 39.2% in 1986 and 42.6% in 1996. In 1981, 19.8% were employed in professions or technical occupations, with the majority working in health-related community services (9.5%). 16.1% worked in clerical jobs, and 17.8% were tradespeople.

By 1996, 16.5% of employed persons in South Sydney LGA worked in Property and Business Service occupations followed by 10% working in Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants, and 9.3% working in the Retail Trade.

**Family, Household and Tenure**
Lone person households are decreasing and single family households are increasing, as are group households. In 1981, 26.6% of the Sydney LGA lived alone (‘Head Only’), followed by 11.45 living with spouse only and 10.1% living with spouse and children. 38.2% of households contained ‘Non Family Members’. By 1996, 26.3% of the South Sydney LGA lived alone, with 52% of households containing ‘One family’ only. Group households comprised 19.4%, which was an increase from the 1986 census of 3.2%.

In 1981, 58.7% of households in Sydney LGA were renting their homes compared to 54.8% in South Sydney LGA in 1996. The rate of home ownership (owner and purchasing) has changed from 27.5% in 1981 to 33.3% in 1996.

**Age Structures**
In 1981, 34% of the Sydney LGA population were aged between 20 and 34 years. Interestingly, 6.3% of the population were 75+ year olds. BY 1996,
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