The period from the late 1880's through the 1890's saw the commercial centre of Parramatta move to the area immediately surrounding the railway station.
0.1 OVERVIEW

1. STUDY AREA
The study area comprises the land surrounding the railway station and taking in significant local places such as the Arthur Phillip High School, Parramatta Public School, the NSW Police Headquarters (now under construction) and the proposed Public Transport Interchange.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide the development framework for the civic centre of Parramatta that will guide the development and redevelopment of private and public land including public domain areas, public facilities and services.

2. WHY IS THE CIVIC PLACE MASTERPLAN BEING DEVELOPED?
Within the study area is an area -- Civic Place -- bounded by Smith, Darcy, Church and Macquarie Streets for which, under the provisions of the Parramatta Regional Environmental Plan (REP), a Master Plan is required to be adopted prior to development occurring.

3. PREPARATION OF THE MASTER PLAN
This Master Plan has been prepared by the NSW Government Architect and the NSW Department of Public Works and Services under the guidance and direction of the Parramatta City Council project team lead by David Collett. Lexie Macdonald has taken prime responsibility for the Master Plan Report. Subconsultancy advice has been sought in the areas of land values, heritage and archaeology, geotechnology, transport planning, public art, retail planning and project feasibility.

4. EXHIBITION OF THE PLAN
The Master Plan was exhibited as part of the process of obtaining comments on the document prior to its consideration by the Central Parramatta Planning Committee. It was exhibited concurrently with the Draft Parramatta Transport Management & Accessibility Plan, and the Design Report for the Parramatta Transport Interchange to ensure that the community and interested parties were given an opportunity to understand how the different components of development are integrated and coordinated.

5. THE PLANNING CONTEXT
Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 28 – Parramatta (SREP 28) was prepared in 1999 to effect the planning strategies identified in Shaping Our Cities and Shaping Western Sydney.

This Master Plan is intended to supplement the requirements of SREP 28 and should be read in conjunction with SREP 28. If there is any inconsistency between this Master Plan and SREP 28 the SREP 28 shall prevail.

The REP establishes a range of Precincts and Special Areas with related planning controls for each. The master plan area is situated in the City Centre Precinct of the REP, and the site closely correlates with the extent of the Civic Centre Special Area identified in the REP. The REP also identifies the requirements for the preparation of a master plan consisting of written information, maps and diagrams which outline detailed provisions relating to the development and explain how the planning aims and objectives of the REP are applied.
6. OTHER PLANS AND STUDIES

The Parramatta City Centre Plan comprises the Parramatta City Centre Development Control Plan and the Public Domain Strategy. That plan provides the detailed controls for development in the city centre. It is intended that the Master Plan stand alongside the Parramatta City Centre Plan and be read in conjunction with it.

A draft Transport Management and Accessibility Plan (TMAP) has been prepared for the Parramatta City Centre. It reviews and reinforces the strategic framework for transport planning in the City Centre while also providing detailed technical advice on a range of transport planning issues.

7. URBAN CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

The study area is in the middle of the city centre and stands between the major commercial areas in Smith and George Streets and the proposed Parramatta Transport Interchange. In this sense it truly is the gateway to the city.

The site currently accommodates the majority of the Council’s civic buildings and functions. However, apart from these and the high quality public and retail spaces on Church Street, the area is run down, with generally poor quality buildings from the sixties and seventies, poorly defined pedestrian routes and a dominance of surface carparking.

8. VISTAS AND AXES

The areas surrounding the various heritage buildings on the site and the views and vistas to and from these elements are of prime importance and have been used as urban design generators for the scheme. In particular the axis between St John’s Cathedral and Lancer Barracks has been used as the major organising geometry and the pedestrian link.

9. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Civic Place, when completed will become a major focus of civic and public space in Parramatta. It will will together streetscape improvements currently underway through Council’s Infrastructure Enhancement Program and reinforce the role of Church Street as the city’s ‘main street’.

10. ACCESS

Work undertaken as part of the TMAP study demonstrates that vehicular circulation in Parramatta can operate satisfactorily at a strategic level up to the REP target date of 2021. At a localised level Smith Street forms an important link in the Transitway system. More detailed study and design resolution will be required to ensure that access to and from the study area, particularly during the afternoon peak does not unreasonably impact on the operation of public transport in Smith Street.

11. ACCESS INITIATIVES

Parramatta Rail Link (PRL) is currently managing the delivery of the Parramatta Transport Interchange which integrates improvements to the rail station, a new concourse and station box for the Chatswood/Parramatta Rail Line and the Transitway bus system. The Master Plan makes very significant improvements to the ease, amenity and safety of pedestrians accessing the Transport Interchange and as such it’s implementation will make a major contribution to the success and viability of that facility.
0.1 OVERVIEW

12. HERITAGE
The master plan area includes and abuts significant heritage sites in Parramatta. The conservation, interpretation, protection and integration of those items and the views and vistas to and from them are a major objective of the Master Plan.

The ‘Parramatta Historical Archaeological Landscape Management Study (PHALMS) 2001 divides the site into 8 Archeological Management Units (AMU). The Draft Aboriginal Heritage Study 2002 has undertaken a review of the Aboriginal heritage, including the potential significance of archaeological areas. Works within the Master Plan area will be required to be consistent with an approved archaeological plan based on these two studies.

13. TOPOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT
The site has a gentle crossfall of approximately 5 metres from the south east to the north west corners. This has been utilised in the design to add interest and to provide access to two major levels of retail, cultural and civic uses.

14. OWNERSHIP AND USE
The Civic Place site has an area of approximately 31,950 m². The Parramatta City Council owns 17,598 m², which is just over 50% of this land, and is the largest landholder.

The other landholders in Civic Place include;
- Australia Post
- Uniting Church Mission
- State Rail Assets
- Private landholders

15. MASTER PLAN VISION
The redevelopment of Civic Place will reposition Parramatta as the capital of the western Sydney and a centre of business, tourism, entertainment, culture and heritage. It will build on the $100M investment that the NSW Government is making in the development of the Public Transport Interchange by creating a gateway to the city. The Master Plan is pivotal in achieving the ambitious REP targets for employment and for public transport use both through its direct contribution and through the flow on effect for the rest of the city centre.

16. MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
As envisaged Civic Place will include approximately 65,000m² of commercial accommodation, more than 60,000m² of residential development, 3,000m² of entertainment and leisure, 5,000m² of community facilities and 35,000m² of retailing.

17. LAND
The Master Plan encourages land amalgamation and it is critical that the open space the pedestrian circulation, parking and access and the retail planning are integrated across the whole site.

18. URBAN STRUCTURE
The master plan utilises the historic axis between St Johns Church and Lancer Barracks as a major circulation route and to define the site layout. To the south of that line, backing onto Darcy Street and the rail station are the taller buildings, trapping the sun and creating a high quality northern face to the sequence of public places. To the north the buildings are reduced in height establishing an appropriate setting for the heritage buildings and ensuring sun access to the public spaces.
0.1 OVERVIEW

19. SUSTAINABILITY
The master plan will achieve high standards in environmental, social and economic sustainability. These will be based on the objectives and controls of the Parramatta City Centre Plan.

20. CHARACTER
The master plan ensures that the design development of Civic Place will deliver a character that is local to Parramatta, focused on public amenity and quality, warm and responsive, inclusive and populist, active and safe. This is ensured through the definition of the elements of the public realm including, streets and arcades, colonnades and squares. The buildings and built forms are defined in terms of scale and proportion, building appearance, materials and colour, shading, signage and roof treatments.

21. ART AND CULTURE
The master plan proposes the development of an Arts and Cultural Plan for the site. This will ensure that the design themes and elements, reflect Parramatta identity, respond to its cultural heritage, identify the site as a gateway to the city, provide opportunities for exploration, discovery and interaction and are integrated across the site through internal and external spaces.

22. HERITAGE INTERPRETATION
The very significant heritage resources of the site will be protected, interpreted and incorporated into the new Civic Place and integrated with the Art and Cultural Plans.

23. ADOPTION OF THE CIVIC PLACE MASTER PLAN
This Master Plan was adopted by the Central Parramatta Planning Committee at its meeting of 14 May 2003 and came into effect on 1 June 2003.