

WILLOW COURT PRECINCT

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION PLAN



Derwent Valley
COUNCIL

This document was prepared by Curio Projects on behalf of the Derwent Valley Council

Document Information

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Curio Projects acknowledges that Willow Court is located in wulawali (New Norfolk) on the unceded land of the Linawina¹ people.

We pay our respects to the Pakana community and to their Elders past and present.

This report was written on the land of the Muwinina people in nipaluna (Hobart).

1. Spelt 'Leenowenne' in english, Linawina is the palawa kani spelling for the people of wulawali (New Norfolk).



Curio Projects acknowledges that the Willow Court precinct is a place which holds enduring pain for many former patients, staff, and their families.

We recognise the ongoing impacts of institutionalisation and offer our respects to victims and survivors.

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Executive summary

Curio Projects Pty Ltd have been commissioned by the Derwent Valley Council (DVC) to prepare a Heritage Interpretation Plan for the Willow Court precinct (Willow Court), located in New Norfolk in the Derwent Valley Municipality.

The site incorporates the entire curtilage area identified under the Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR) as the Willow Court Asylum Complex (THR ID: 7019) and currently consists of 23 buildings representing over 170 years of institutional history. The site has undergone significant changes throughout its lifetime as both a place of heritage significance and a functional public health care centre. This plan will propose a practical guide to interpreting the site's unique story, through defining the themes and narrative structures that best encapsulate its values.

The key objectives are to:

01

Articulate the 'big picture' vision and goals of heritage interpretation for the precinct

02

Review and update the existing Interpretation Plan developed in 2006, including changes to ownership, adaptive reuse, heritage legislation, community sentiment and interpretive opportunities

03

Identify the major interpretive themes of the Willow Court precinct, and the corresponding storylines

04

Supply user guidelines, providing standards around permitted activities, including ethical interpretation principles

05

Provide interpretive recommendations to the Derwent Valley Council

This HIP has been prepared with reference to (but not limited to) key client, stakeholder and relevant historical documentation and current best practice guidelines as detailed throughout and at the rear of the document.

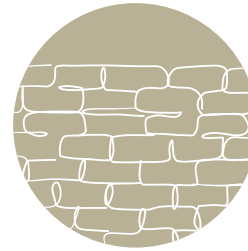
Through utilising contemporary heritage practice there is an opportunity to create cohesive, meaningful interpretation for the site that assists precinct partners, visitors, and community members to understand Willow Court and its relationship to wider Tasmania.

The information included in this report will guide potential detailed design and implementation of interpretive elements over a staged process.

The key themes, which are explored in section 4.2, have been identified as:



***Up the River and
Down the Road***



***Out of Sight,
Out of Mind***



***Care, Community
and Consciousness***



***Transformation
and Healing***

The key interpretive recommendations and corresponding actions are outlined in section 4.3, according to short-, medium- and long-term prioritisation.

These recommendations are:

Short-term

- 01 Heritage Partnerships
- 02 Printed Ephemera
- 03 Interpretive Signage
- 04 Community Crowdsourcing Project
- 05 Night-time Activation

Medium Term

- 06 Guided Tours
- 07 Website & Digital Presence
- 08 Healing Country & Community

Long Term

- 09 Visitor Experience Space
- 10 Artefact Displays
- 11 Written History
- 12 Education Program

1 Storytelling and Interpretation Vision



To recognise and amplify the unique heritage values, significance, and meanings of the Willow Court precinct through *engaging, respectful, and insightful interpretation*.

To create a pathway between the past and present which allows visitors, precinct partners, and locals *to understand the layered histories, deep time, uncovered stories, and evolution of the site*.

2 *Context*

2.1

Site Context

Willow Court is located in the Derwent Valley, in the town of New Norfolk, known to Tasmania's first people as wulawali. It sits approximately 36 kilometres northwest of nipaluna (Hobart). Situated on the outskirts of the town centre, Willow Court is bordered by Humphrey Street to the west, George Street to the north, and the Avenue, as well as the southern-flowing Lachlan River, a tributary of timtumili minanya (the Derwent River). The Complex currently consists of 23 structures and landscape elements spread across approximately 18 hectares, representing 170 years of continuous change in design and methodology for administering mental health and disability care. Various buildings have been sold or are being leased by tenants, with the DVC currently maintaining ownership of:

- The Barracks (1830-1833)
- Alonnah/Ward A (1965-1968)
- Carlton House/C Ward (1908-1909)
- Frascati (1834)
- Bronte House (1925)



The Barracks, Curio Projects, 2022



1. The Barracks (1830-1833)
2. Alonnah/Ward A (1965-1968)
3. Carlton House/C Ward (1908-1909)
4. Frascati (1834)
5. Bronte House (1925)
6. The Ladies' Cottage/J Ward (1868)
7. Olga/Ward O (1886-1888)
8. The Nurses' Home/Male Residential Building (1911-1913)
9. Administration Building & Hall (1940)
10. Lyprenny (Hastings) hostel/ Ward H (1966-1968)
11. Rehabilitation/Occupational Therapy (1966)
12. Lachlan House (1964-1965)
13. Masonic Lodge (formerly K2/ Female Refractory Ward) (1887) & Lions Club Building (1966)
14. The School/Derwent Valley Community Centre (1964-65)
15. Alcheringa House (Myrtle House/Ward M) (1931)
16. Mortuary (c1960)
17. Garden shed/arts & crafts building (c1896)
18. Derwent House/Ward D (1928-29)
19. Esperance House/Ward E (1928-29)
20. Industrial Therapy (1973)
21. Residence (c.1940s)

Figure 1:
Willow Court associated buildings
(source: Google Maps 2022)

The remaining buildings that are under private ownership and form part of the main precinct include:

- The Ladies' Cottage/J Ward (1868)
- Olga/Ward O (1886-1888)
- The Nurses' Home/Male Residential Building (1911-1913)
- Administration Building & Hall (c.1940)
- Lyprenny (Hastings) hostel/Ward H (1966-1968)
- Rehabilitation/Occupational Therapy (1966)
- Lachlan House (1964-1965)
- Masonic Lodge (formerly K2/Female Refractory Ward) (1887) & Lions Club Building (1966)
- The School/Formal Derwent Valley Community Centre (1964-65)
- Alcheringa House (Myrtle House/Ward M) (1964-66)
- Mortuary (c1960)
- Garden shed/arts & crafts building (c1896)
- Derwent House/Ward D (1928-29)
- Esperance House/Ward E (1928-29)
- Industrial Therapy (1973)
- Residence (c.1940s)

Interpretive activities undertaken within the Willow Court precinct have predominantly been developed and delivered by the former Friends of Willow Court and Friends of Frascati groups, formerly special committees of the DVC. These activities have included displays, tours, education, events, Open Days, as well as support through advocacy work, conservation, research and community outreach. Curio notes that despite the administrative decision to disestablish special committees, these volunteer groups have contributed enormously to the protection and recognition of Willow Court, and they continue to work closely with the DVC to deliver these activities and promote the heritage values of the precinct.

The Historical Information Centre, formerly a special committee which is currently operated as a volunteer workgroup, also performs an essential service in the Derwent Valley community, acting as a community research portal and repository for historical resources.

Curio Projects would also like to note the work of the Willow Court History Group in promoting, interpreting, and conserving the heritage of Willow Court, particularly through the comprehensive recording and sharing of contemporary and historical resources.



Administration Building,
Curio Projects, 2022

2.2

Purpose

This Heritage Interpretation Plan defines how the Derwent Valley Council, precinct partners, stakeholders, and those who engage with Willow Court can communicate its heritage values. It provides a framework for the development of interpretive projects which present the key themes and storylines through mediums that complement the heritage fabric of Willow Court and support its complex story.

By unpacking the layered histories of the precinct, implementation of the HIP will ensure that the interpretation of the site's past articulates what makes this place unique and communicates those stories clearly and empathetically. This report integrates the historic and contemporary elements of Aboriginal heritage across the site in a way that honours and reflects continuing connection, spiritual and cultural significance. A suite

of interpretive elements are recommended to communicate these themes through design, storytelling, digital and 2D media, and hard and soft landscaping. A set of guidelines will also delivered through this report, to support Council, tenants and operators working within Willow Court to ethically interpret its history.

By creating a forward-looking, staged plan for interpretation, this report creates a realistic, achievable pathway that will aid in deepening audiences' understanding of the site and help to reveal previously untold and marginalised stories.

2.3

Terminology, Language, and Nomenclature

Willow Court is a site steeped in the historical context of its many eras. As one of the longest continually running mental health facilities in Australia, it encapsulates the evolution of perceptions of mental health and disability, including changes in institutional facility design and architecture, medical models, diagnoses, treatments, and the terminologies used to describe them. The language and diagnostic terms used to describe mental health and associated institutions throughout this plan are historically accurate and reflect the attitudes, ideas, and language of the time. Curio acknowledges that in many instances this historic terminology is no longer acceptable or accurate in contemporary context and wishes to state that its use in an historic context is in no way intended to cause offence or hurt to those impacted by them.

Willow Court has had many changes of name since its establishment in the 1830s. In this report the name 'Willow Court' is used to refer to the group of buildings on the western side of the Lachlan River, and 'Willow Court Training Centre' is used to refer to the facility from the mid-1980s. 'Royal Derwent Hospital' refers to the post-1968 facility on the eastern side of the Lachlan River.

Throughout this plan, palawa kani is provided where knowledge and language permits. Palawa kani is derived from the records of the original languages and is a combination of most of those languages – a composite language, as is English. The palawa kani Language Program is run by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) and began in the early 1990s. The language is generally not shared outside of the Pakana Community, as decided by the Community. The Language Use Policy provides information on who and when the general public can use palawa kani. The palawa kani in this report is used under the authorship and advice of Theresa Sainty.

2.4

Statutory Context

In Tasmania, heritage items and known or potential archaeological resources considered to be of state significance are afforded statutory protection under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. This section of the report discusses the local and state planning context for the site with respect to its built heritage values associated with local heritage items and other relevant conservation considerations in the vicinity of the study area.

2.4.1

The Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995

The *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* (the Act) was developed to ensure the historic places that are of importance to the whole of Tasmania are recognised, protected, and managed effectively as part of the Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS). This approach is designed to complement the recognition, protection, and statutory management of places of local, national or world heritage significance by Planning Authorities, State Government and the Australian Government. Works to a place entered in the Tasmanian Heritage Register require the approval of the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

2.4.2

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme & the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) provides the resource management and planning system for Tasmania of which one of the nine major objectives of the planning process, established by the Act are: to conserve those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value (Schedule 1-Part 2 (g)). The objectives of LUPAA including conservation of heritage are primarily implemented through planning schemes and in this case, Willow Court is included on the Derwent Valley Interim Planning Scheme 2015 as a Heritage Place. Councils across Tasmania are in the process of transitioning to the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and once complete, the listing of the site as a place of State significance on the Tasmanian Heritage Register under the Historic Cultural Heritage Act will exempt the site from the local heritage provisions in planning schemes. At that point heritage conservation of places of State significance will be subject to a single determination by the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

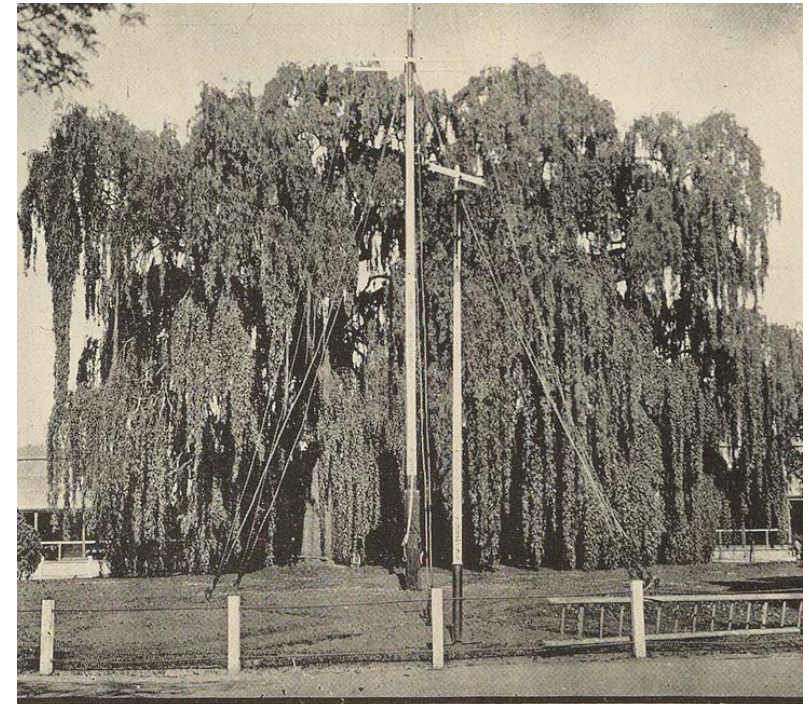
2.5

Historical context

When the Willow Court Training Centre closed in 2000, it was the oldest operational mental health and disability care facility still standing in its original location in Australia.

The site was originally established as a depot for the chronically ill, convicts in 1827. However, after complaints that the building was unfit for purpose, Governor George Arthur gave instructions to Colonial Architect, John Lee Archer, to begin designs for a new hospital. With construction completed in 1833, the institution, now known as the 'Lunatic Asylum', was expanded to include a section exclusively for the use of mentally ill patients.

From the beginning, the Asylum was plagued with issues of overcrowding, prompting many extensions to the site and administrative changes. To alleviate this pressure, from 1848, any ill patients who did not require immediate medical help were transferred to outlying depots. With this, the Asylum solely became a mental health care institution, with its governance being informed by the Lunacy Act, implemented several years earlier in 1841, followed by the Insane Persons Hospital Act, in 1858.



“Weeping Willows” in courtyard of Mental Diseases Hospital, New Norfolk, grown from cuttings taken from the grave of Napoleon at St. Helena, and planted there by Lady Franklin in 1839.

Willow trees in the Barracks courtyard,
Tasmania Mail 2 November 1916, p.19
(source: Tasmanian Archive and Heritage
Office, 1302864-11-1-37-2)

Over the proceeding 153 years, the site continued to experience upheaval as it responded to continued overcrowding, changes in site-governance, insufficient facilities, an Inquiry, and developments in the treatment of mental health and the care of people living with disabilities. From 1855 to the 1880s a Gentleman's and Ladies Cottage were constructed, as well as a series of wards, day rooms, verandas, a kitchen, bath house, laundry, Matron's Quarters and self-contained buildings.

The twentieth century saw gradual innovations in mental health treatment. Though there were still issues with the poor condition of many of the buildings prior to the 1960s, progression toward curative methods toward involving mental illness prevention, medication, occupational therapies and new technologies occurred.

Adam Marshall in an old sentry box at Willow Court, 7 November 1970 (source: Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, NS3195-2-967)



In the latter twentieth century the transition from the institutional care model to community care eventually resulted in the de-institutionalisation of the facility and the remaining patients were moved from the centre, to supported accommodation across the state.

After multiple changes of name and thousands of patients through its doors, the Willow Court Training Centre was finally closed in November 2000, and the neighbouring Royal Derwent Hospital in February 2001.

Today, the Willow Court precinct is a mixed-use facility comprised of a restaurant, distillery, arts space, antique shop, and an array of vacant historic buildings that continue to tell the story of the site.



Royal Derwent Hospital, c.1977-78
(source: Tasmanian Archive and
Heritage Office, AA193-1-291)

2.6

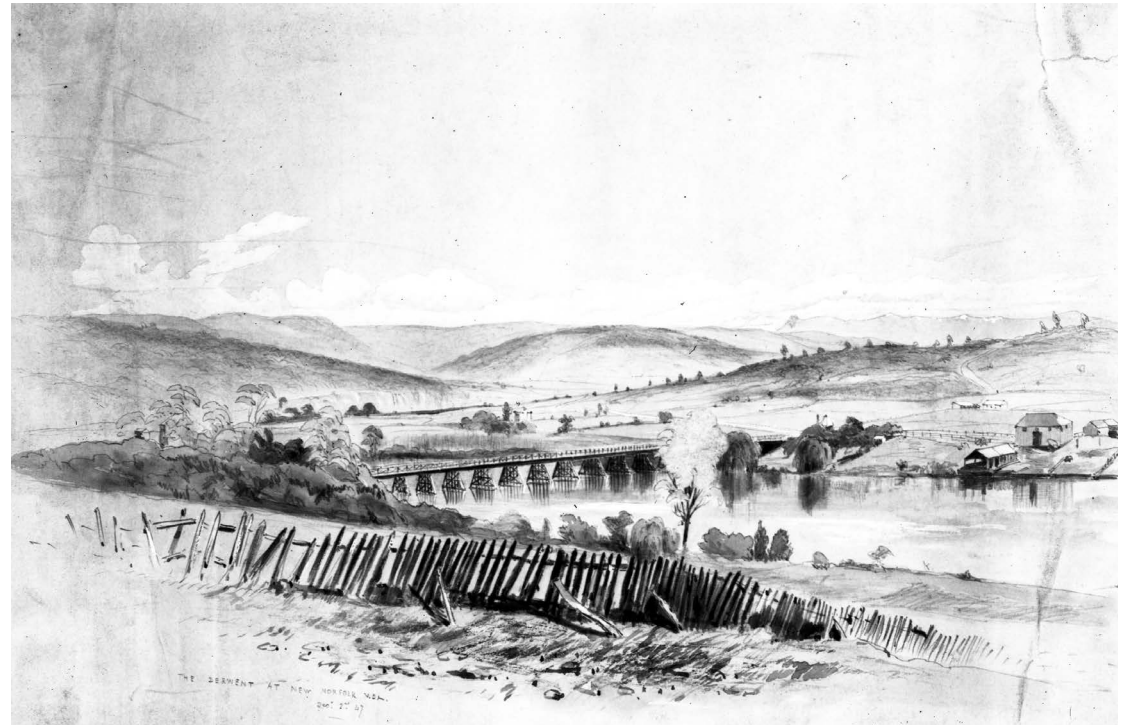
Heritage significance

The precinct is part of the rich and culturally significant landscape of the Derwent Valley. Following colonisation, the first settlers arrived in the area from Norfolk Island in 1807 and went on to establish a thriving community, with Willow Court being a central fixture in the region.

The site is located within a milieu of heritage places, including a collection of houses on Humphrey and George Streets, the former St. Steven's Church of England, the River Derwent Esplanade and the Bush Inn, reputedly the oldest continually licensed hotel in Australia.²

The precinct has a unique historic narrative as the first custom-built asylum in the Australian colonies, and the largest and longest continually running mental health care centre, operating for some 170 years.³ The site is highly significant for the way it demonstrates the evolution of philosophy behind the treatment of mental health and disability, and the responses to these changes through built infrastructure and design.

With its origins in the convict era, and as one of the last remaining nineteenth-century mental asylums in Australia, the Willow Court precinct has greater meaning to New Norfolk and wider Tasmania for its cultural, social and historic values. Throughout its history the institution was a mainstay of employment throughout the Derwent Valley, provided care to vulnerable Tasmanians and came to represent New Norfolk's identity in both positive and negative ways.



The Derwent at New Norfolk, 1847 (copy, c.1956)
(source: Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office,
AB713-1-5252)

2. Tasmanian Heritage Council, *Bush Inn Heritage Datasheet*

3. Scripps, L., Knaggs, M., Barwick, P., & Loveday, K., 'Willow Court Conservation Management Plan – Stage C', p. 39.

2.6.1

The State Heritage Register Listing

Willow Court Asylum Complex is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register under the following criteria of the Historic Cultural 'Heritage Act 1995': the following excerpts are taken directly from the Tasmanian Heritage Register datasheet:

- a** **The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history**
The Willow Court Asylum Complex evolved as a mental institution from the late 1830s through to its closure in 2001. The complex has the longest continuous history of any mental institution within Australia.
- b** **The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history**
The Willow Court Asylum Complex is the only fully preserved example of a mental institution remaining in Tasmania. A large institution, such as Willow Court demonstrates a way of life and treatment that is no longer practised.
- c** **The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history**
Through its rich documentary history the Willow Court Asylum Complex has the potential to contribute to an understanding of many aspects of Tasmanian history including; changing philosophies for the care and housing of mental patients, from housing them to attempting to cure and treat illnesses; changes in Government provision for the care of the mentally ill, from control by the English Crown to later control by the Tasmanian Parliament and then to semi-autonomous institutions; the development of Tasmania's health system, from its origins as part of the convict system to public hospitals; changes in public attitudes to the mentally ill, from providing a spectacle to look at, to public concern for their proper housing and treatment.
- d** **The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history**
The Willow Court Asylum Complex is one of a small group of large mental institutions across Australia including Kenmore Hospital Precinct, NSW (1894-c1990) and Aradale Lunatic Asylum, Victoria (1865-1993). Willow Court exhibits the general characteristics of a mental institution and has an unparalleled record of continuous use.

e The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement

The collective value of the span of architectural design and style at Willow Court is high. A number of buildings within the complex are of interest for technical, creative and innovative elements and design.

f The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons

Willow Court has played an important role in the social history of New Norfolk, and has contributed significantly to the economic viability and survival of the town. The size and prominent setting of the complex has had an important and long lived social and economic impact on the town and region. The complex is a dominant feature in the local landscape and is integral to the character and identity of New Norfolk. Many Tasmanians have a connection with the Willow Court Complex. The site has both positive and negative associations within the local community and Tasmania.

g The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history

John Lee Archer, the architect attributed with the design of the Barracks, was influential in the development of early Tasmanian architecture. Frascati was built by Colonial Secretary John Burnett in 1834. Frascati was built by Burnett as a country residence and place to stay when the Governor was at Government Cottage.

2.7 Timeline of Key Events

Pre 1807

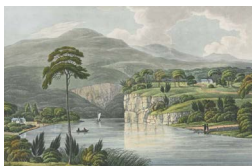
wulawali (New Norfolk) is the home of the Linawina people

Before invasion and colonisation, wulawali (New Norfolk) and the place where Willow Court now stands were part of the traditional country of the Linawina people.⁴

1807

First settlers arrive

Over 150 residents from Norfolk Island were resettled in 'the Hills', what would become New Norfolk, from November 1807 to October 1808.



1827

Establishment of the Invalid Depot

Originally established as a depot for the sick and infirm, the first people admitted were male convicts in 1827.⁵

1829

A 'Lunatics Ward' established in the facility

1830

The first female patients are admitted to the facility

1833

An extension is constructed solely to house 'insane' convicts

A provision was made for the care of both male and female convicts who had been declared 'insane' it was now the 'Lunatic Asylum, New Norfolk'. The overall design included exercise yards, a surgery, dispensary, store, kitchen, washhouse, mortuary, offices, privies, and overseer's rooms.

1834

'Frascati' completed

'Frascati' was constructed by Colonial Secretary, John Burnett, and was almost continuously leased to staff until it was transferred to the ownership of the Asylum in 1861.

Client population rises from 109 to 136

The rise of the client population prompted Governor Arthur to restrict the admission of free persons to the Asylum, it was now exclusively for the use of convicts.

1836

Client population rises to 300

Originally designed to facilitate 210 patients, overcrowding urged Colonial Surgeon, Doctor James Scott, to convey a request for an Assistant Surgeon to help in running the establishment.

1840 – 1841

New wing to house female lunatic patients is completed

1841

The first lunacy legislation in Van Diemen's Land is passed, called the Lunacy Act (Act Vic. 10, No. 9)

1845

A riot is reported in the Colonial Times

The riot is said to be the result of friction between the patients and the staff, with reports that Doctor Brock was '...universally hated by the inmates of the establishment'.

1855

Administrative control is transferred from the Crown to the Tasmanian Government

Upon becoming a self-governing colony and forming a bicameral parliament, administrative control of the Asylum shifted to the hands of the Tasmanian Government and a Board of Commissioners was instated to govern the site.

The Lunacy Act is updated to the Insane Persons Hospital Act 1858 (Act Vict. 22, No. 23)

Under this new Act, the New Norfolk Asylum was placed under the authority of a Board of Commissioners made up of seven men.

1858

Legislation reviewed

Consequent to existing legislation being reviewed, committals were now regulated through the courts and were enacted on the approval of medical officers.

1859

Gentleman's Cottage completed

The Gentleman's Cottage was constructed to house the fee-paying 'superior class' of male patients and separate them from the lower classes.



Name changed to the 'Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk'

The various changes in the name of the institution reflect evolving attitudes and medical techniques to treating mental illness over time.

1860 – 1861

Substantial expansion and reconstruction take place

Additions included upgrading lighting and ventilation, converting cells into wards, building a day room, veranda, kitchen, bath house, laundry and Matron's Quarters.

1869

Ladies Cottage completed

Similar to the Gentleman's Cottage, the Ladies Cottage was built to house ladies of the 'superior class'.

1882

Royal Commission appointed

In 1882 a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the conditions of asylums in Tasmania. Following an inspection in 1883, it was reported that the facility buildings were in poor condition and substantial renovations should occur.

4. The Pakana presence in Lutruwita is timeless. This has always been and will always be Aboriginal land.

5. Snowden, D. & Harrington, J. 2020, *Convict Lives: Female Convicts at the New Norfolk Asylum*, South Hobart, Convict Women's Press, p. 4.

1888

Idiots building completed

1889

Female Refractory building completed

1890

First professional development program recommended

Some time later a series of lectures and examinations were conducted for the professional development of the patient attendants.

The Hospital becomes the sole asylum in Tasmania

After the closure of the Cascades Asylum in South Hobart in 1890, all remaining patients were transferred to the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, now the last remaining operational asylum in Tasmania.

1893

Male 'refractory' building completed

1913

Nurses home completed



1915

Name changed to the 'Mental Diseases Hospital, New Norfolk'

1920

The Mental Deficiency Act 1920 is introduced

The Act established the Mental Deficiency Board which oversaw the management of children and adults classified mentally ill. It specified four categories of mental deficiency, including 'idiots', 'imbeciles', 'feeble-minded' and 'moral imbeciles'.⁶

1925

Bronte Building added

1937

Name changed to 'Lachlan Park'

By 1937 the institution had undergone a change of identity when any reference to the term 'asylum' was removed. Now known as 'Lachlan Park', this was its fourth name change and one that sought to distance itself from the stigma attached to mental illness in the early twentieth century.

Hospital registered as a training school for mental health nurses

1939

Franklin and Glenora House completed

1940

Administration block completed



Post-1945

War veterans admitted and treated at Millbrook Rise facility

1962

Willow trees cut down

The willow trees planted in the courtyard of the Barracks, and where the institution gets its current name, were said to have been cuttings from Napoleon's grave planted by Lady Jane Franklin.⁷

1965 – 1968

Alonnah, Alcheringa, Lachlan, Lyprenny and the school completed



1968

Name changed to the 'Royal Derwent Hospital'

Along with the change of name and the incorporation of the Lachlan Park Hospital, administrative control was transferred from the Government Department of Psychiatric Services to an internal Board of Management.

1978

Listed on the Register of the National Estate

1987

The institution now houses just over 300 residents.⁸

The movement toward closure saw many residents moved from the institutional setting to community-based services.

1997

Royal Derwent Hospital has 70 patients remaining.⁹

November 2000

The facility officially closes

By the time the site officially closed in 2000, it was the oldest continually running institution of its type, having been in operation for approximately 170 years.



6. *The Mental Deficiency Act 1920* (11 Geo V, No 50), (Austl.).

7. Gowlland, R. W., 1981, *Troubled Asylum*, p. 178.

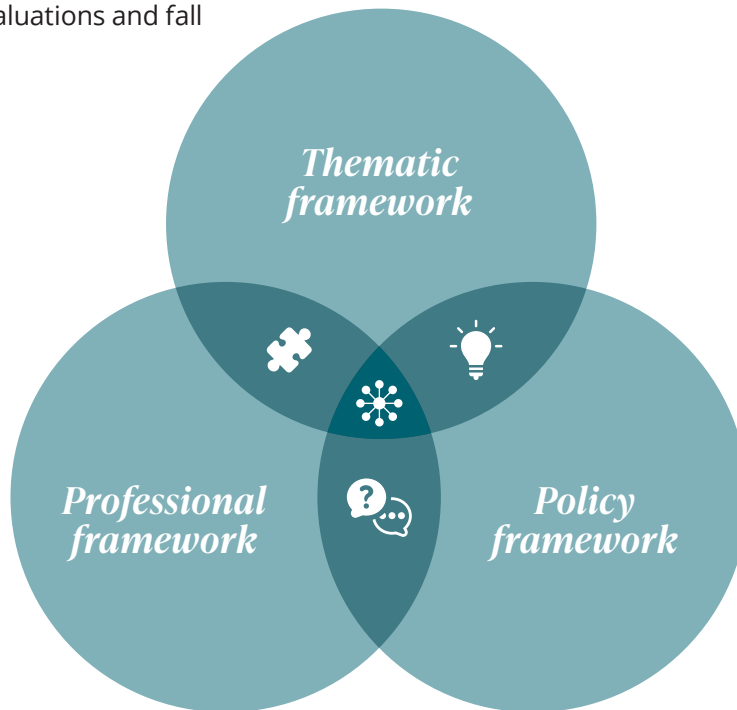
8. Smith, P, 2020, 'Insights into the Closure of Willow Court', *Marking the 20th Anniversary of the Closure of the Willow Court Centre*, p. 3.

9. Ibid, p. 4.

2.8 Interpretive framework

Successful heritage interpretation must address all the necessary policy for the site, meet the requisite professional guidelines and crucially, must be thematic. Thematic in this context differs from Historical Themes (which tend to relate to chronologies, event and design definitions such as those in heritage significance evaluations and fall under 'policy').

When done well, heritage interpretation should achieve the perfect balance in this three-pronged approach, offering the audience the missing piece to their puzzle, the answer to their enquiry & sparking their imagination.



10. Australia ICOMOS, 2013, The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)

2.8.1 Professional Framework – Burra & Ename Charters

In 2013 the Burra Charter was revised in order to emphasise the importance of interpretation to the process of conserving significant cultural heritage sites and places. According to Article 1.17 of the Burra Charter¹⁰, 'Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place'. This is further explained the notes as, '**a combination of the treatment of the fabric (e.g., maintenance, restoration, reconstruction); the use and activities at the place; and the use of introduced explanatory material**'.

Article 24.1 of the Burra Charter states that significant associations between people and a place should be respected and retained, and that, '**Opportunities for the interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented**'.

Article 25 also notes that, '**The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and enjoyment and be culturally appropriate**'.

The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, 2008 (The Ename Charter), provides a set of guiding principles for interpretation and presentation as essential components of heritage conservation efforts, and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites.

Principle 1.1 of the Ename Charter states that '**Effective interpretation and presentation should enhance personal experience, increase public respect and understanding, and communicate the importance of the conservation of cultural heritage sites**'.

In relation to sources of information, Principle 2.1 states that '**Interpretation should show the range of oral and written information, material remains, traditions, and meanings attributed to a site. The sources of this information should be documented, archived, and made accessible to the public**'.

According to Principle 3.5, it is crucial that intangible elements of a site's heritage, including stories and local customs, are also considered in its interpretation.

2.8.2 Policy Framework

Heritage Tasmania defines interpretation in the following way:

“Interpretation is all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place. The aim of interpretation is to reveal and help retain this significance. Interpretation can take many forms, such as the way in which a place is used, investigated, or presented through a range of different media, such as signs, displays, activities, publications, activities and events. Conservation works, such as restoration, preservation and reconstruction, can also be seen as types of interpretation, having the potential to reveal significance and assist in its understanding”.

2.8.3 Thematic Framework

It is here, as interpreters, that the Curio team pay homage to Freeman Tilden; in 1957, he published the book *Interpreting Our Heritage*¹¹, which established not only the philosophical basis for heritage interpretation but also the fundamental principles for interpretation as an art defining the then new discipline as the:

“activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships . . . rather than simply to communicate factual information”ⁱ

01

Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

02

Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

03

Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

04

The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

05

Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man (sic - humankind) rather than any phase.

06

Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentations to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.ⁱⁱ

Building on Tilden, Interpreter Sam Ham developed four basic principles to develop good interpretation¹². He and many who have followed insist that excellence in interpretation can only be achieved if it is:

***Entertaining
Relevant
Themed
Organised***

This is expressed by Ham as the EROT rule. These four principles are all interrelated – if something is organised and relevant it is more likely to be entertaining and vice versa. However, it is helpful to consider each in isolation first.

11. Tilden, F., 1957, *Interpreting our heritage*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press

12. Ham, S., 2013, *Interpretation – Making a Difference on Purpose*, Fulcrum Publishing, Colorado

Good interpretation is...

Entertaining

This does not mean that entertainment is interpretation's primary goal; it means that it is one of its essential qualities. Nor does it mean that the site's history and meanings should be trivialised. If something is entertaining, according to various dictionary definitions, the experience is 'enjoyable', 'interesting', 'amusing', 'holds your attention', 'occupies one in an agreeable and pleasant manner' and 'provides recreation'. The stress upon entertainment is located within the inescapable fact that visiting heritage sites is, more often than not, a recreational activity. This principle refers to the ways in which serious ideas and information can be best communicated and subsequently consumed through an enjoyable experience.

A number of qualities distinguish entertaining communication. Entertaining communication is informal and not reminiscent of a classroom or a textbook. It is conversational in tone, and uses the active voice, metaphors, anecdotes, analogies, examples, and other strategies to clarify processes and relationships. While it may also utilise humour, music, games, or art, this is not essential. Most importantly, it should be friendly and participatory.

Relevant

This means that it is both meaningful and personal. To be meaningful, visitors must be able to connect the new information/ ideas with something they already know. This is the principle on which learning theory is founded. And to be personal, the new information/ideas must relate to something that the visitor cares about.

Organised

Interpretation that is organised is presented in a way that is easy to follow. People don't have to work hard to understand what is being communicated to them. It is logically arranged, connections between different elements are explicitly made and it all relates clearly to a bigger picture that has also been clearly explained. The relationships between the theme, and the facts presented to support and develop it, are made obvious.

Themed

This is the message, the major point or points to be made in the whole interpretation. Themes are not a substitute for basic information, they are the way in which information is organised to make it meaningful and memorable. It is essential at this point in the plan to clearly distinguish between 'theme' and 'topic' since real confusion often exists between the two.

Within a thematic framework, information can be organised so that the audience can easily understand what is being communicated. Each theme has its own set of relevant facts, concepts, and main points; but they are selected for clarity of the message, not because they are individually interesting to the writer, guide, or interpreter. Their presentations must be built around the central message of the story they are telling whether it is about sustainability, or culture.

Unless these principles are followed, audiences become lost in a sea of apparently unconnected, irrelevant facts that seem to have no connection with their lives, no use, and ultimately no meaning.

2.9

Overview of Existing Interpretation Onsite

Currently, heritage interpretation of the Willow Court precinct is undertaken by secondary providers. There is no formal interpretation program established by the Derwent Valley Council to convey the stories of the precinct in a coordinated and strategic manner.

A number of fixed interpretative signs are installed outside of notable buildings, including the Barracks, the Administration Building, Carlton Ward and Frascati.

The panels are large enough to draw the attention of visitors, and the content is both historically accurate and thorough. However, their design and crowded aesthetic are not accessible for diverse learning styles and could deter visitors from reading and consuming the information in full.

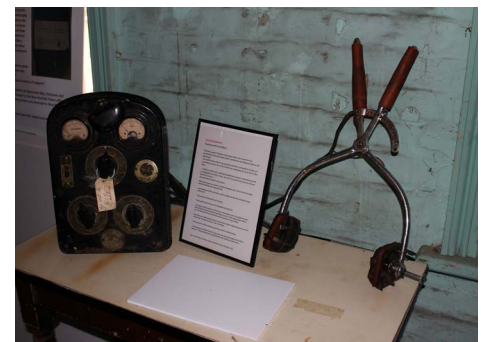
At the time this plan was commissioned, infrequent guided tours and open days were operated by the volunteer-run group, the former Friends of Willow Court prior to 2023. Running every few months, they included access to the exterior areas of Bronte, Alonnah and Carlton Ward, as well as the exterior and interior of elements of the Barracks. To accompany the tours, an interpretive space was set up in the Barracks with a series of printed panels on display, and some artefacts. The panels included recollections from past staff and patients, historical information, and extracts from various conservation management plans and the Tasmanian

Heritage Register listing.¹³ While the panels filled a gap in an otherwise bare interpretive landscape, they could only be viewed by those taking part in the tour and, similar to the signage placed outside, the amount of content and level of detail could appear overwhelming to visitors.

In 2013 the 'Walking Through Time' trail was launched by the DVC. The trail incorporates several signs throughout New Norfolk, including one at the gateway of Willow Court, as well as an accompanying podcast. The podcast episodes related to Willow Court and Frascati include discussions with former employees about their experience working in the precinct.

Daytime History Tours are also currently offered by Tasmania's Most Haunted, in addition to their ghost and paranormal tours, which offer limited night-time visitation to the site.

Some precinct partners currently provide limited heritage interpretation of the sites they lease; however, Curio acknowledges that this has not been endorsed or provided by the Derwent Valley Council.



Examples of current onsite interpretive elements (Curio Projects, 2022)

13. GML Heritage, 1992, 'Willow Court Barracks Building, Royal Derwent Hospital, Conservation Plan'

2.10

Stakeholder Consultation

Curio Projects undertook an extensive consultation program with key stakeholders prior to the development of this draft interpretation report. Through this process, Curio sought to identify the relevant issues which have potential to impact upon future interpretive activities at Willow Court, as well as the themes and stories which should be interpreted across the precinct. A record of the consultation program, including methodology, record of stakeholders engaged, and outcomes, is provided at Appendix A.

2.11

Aboriginal Community Consultation

Any development of interpretive content which includes reference to Aboriginal culture, history and language should allow for consultation with relevant organisations and knowledge holders.



New Norfolk, Insane Asylum,
(source: Tasmanian Archive and
Heritage Office, PH30-1-5093)

HOSPITAL OF INSANE NEW NORFOLK 68

W. J. Little, Photo.

2.12

Constraints

Curio has identified several constraints which could potentially limit prospective interpretive elements at Willow Court and will need to be taken into consideration when planning, designing and implementing the interpretive recommendations. These constraints include:

Economic limitations

Although there is a desire to see Willow Court's full interpretive potential reached, it is acknowledged that economic limitations and a lack of available resources may prevent the DVC from adopting all recommended changes. With this in mind, Curio have recommended interpretive projects that can be adopted in the short, medium, and long term, thereby facilitating a staged roll-out of the interpretation program as funds become available.

No central management

Until recently there has been no central management of the site's heritage interpretation and visitor experience. Without consistent oversight moving forward there is a possibility that any heritage interpretation planning could lack consistent direction, resulting in a disjointed approach to the interpretive scheme and any on-site execution of a program.

Lack of digital presence

There is no centralised, DVC-endorsed or managed online presence for Willow Court. Rather, various site-advocacy groups and individuals have established their own websites and social media pages, providing a rich, but scattered, digital footprint.

Uncertain future use

With the future uses of the site uncertain, it is difficult to make long-term interpretive recommendations that are reliant on the availability of physical spaces. Further adaptive reuse, sale of the buildings, and the retraction or extension of leases may limit the feasibility of certain interpretive elements.

Scattered archaeological artefacts, fabric, furnishings, and moveable heritage objects

Following on from the closure of the Royal Derwent Hospital in 2000, there has been efforts made toward cataloguing and storing historic objects and artefacts from Willow Court. It is Curio Projects' understanding that some objects are located in secure facilities under the ownership of or leased by the DVC, others are stored at Flinders University in South Australia, and many others have ended up in private hands.

Condition of the buildings

The current state of many of the buildings, particularly the Barracks, renders them uninhabitable, some with risks to users. Without significant conservation work, few internal interpretive elements are able to progress while spaces are in a fragile conservation state or risks/hazards exist unmitigated.

Trauma associated with the site

Residual trauma experienced by former patients, staff and family members needs to be a key consideration of interpretation planning. Content which refers to the more difficult aspects of the precinct's history needs to be conveyed sensitively, with priority consideration given to the privacy and emotional wellbeing of individuals.

2.13

Opportunities

Curio has also identified several opportunities that have the potential to enrich the interpretive experience at Willow Court. These include:

Shedding stigma

Through best practice heritage interpretation there is an opportunity to respond to the stigma and myths associated with Willow Court and reinvigorate community pride in the precinct.

Create tourism opportunities

The incorporation of heritage interpretation throughout the precinct has the potential to increase visitation and tourism generated revenue, with positive flow on effects for local investment and employment.

Platform for advocacy

Increased awareness of, and access to the heritage fabric of Willow Court will create opportunities for the DVC to advocate for increased funding for conservation works within the precinct.

History projects

A collective focus on the interpretive future of Willow Court presents an opportunity to develop a consistent approach to telling a comprehensive history of the precinct through a council-sponsored written history, incorporating all time periods and phases.

Reunification of the site

In its current state, the Willow Court precinct is difficult to read as a single, unified precinct, and many of the relationships between the buildings and landscape features have been interrupted, hidden, or lost. Through strategic interpretive planning, there is an opportunity to both physically and intellectually 'reunify' the site and capture the essence of its heritage significance.

Cultural heritage partnerships

Through its complex and multi-faceted history, Willow Court has amassed a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties across a variety of professional fields. This interest in the precinct presents an invaluable opportunity for partnerships with institutions, projects, professionals and students, who have the motivation and capacity to contribute to the ongoing conservation, interpretation, and promotion of the site.

Physical presence

Through increased presence, activity, and use of the Willow Court precinct during the day and in the evening, there is an opportunity to prevent further vandalism of the heritage fabric.

3 *Audiences*

Accessible and engaging interpretation of Willow Court will help to ensure that its heritage significance is appreciated by a range of audiences well into the future.

Interpretation is most successful when it is targeted specifically to audience needs, including learning styles and preferred means of experiencing places. It should also be designed and presented in ways that provide opportunities for all potential audiences to engage with deeper layers of context and meaning.

While Willow Court is a prominent and recognisable southern Tasmanian landmark, its history and heritage significance has not been accessible to a wide audience, owing to its previous use as a public health facility and current lack of centralised visitor services as a historic site.

A breakdown of potential audiences of Willow Court is provided in this section. However, it is recommended that further targeted audience research is undertaken prior to the development of substantial interpretive elements.

3.1.1 Local Residents & Community

Including residents of New Norfolk, and those who live in the wider vicinity of the Derwent Valley, who may have an interest in, or personal connection with the site as a former employee, patient, family member or friend of patient(s) or other social connection. This audience is likely to show a strong level of interest in any developments of the precinct and are likely to engage with interpretation out of both direct interest and casual surveillance. This audience is likely to have some understanding of the history of the site.

3.1.2 Tourists/Visitors

Willow Court has only recently been considered as a tourist destination. Since its closure as a health facility in 2000, a gradual effort has been made to ignite curiosity about the site and its history. The site showcases architecture and design across two centuries, offering a significant drawcard for tourists with interests in heritage buildings and their associated stories. Likewise, ghost and paranormal tours have offered night-time visitation to the site, and infrequent tours run by site-advocacy groups have offered a gateway for visitors to understand its historical significance and place within New Norfolk. Adaptive reuse projects and businesses offer an alternative drawcard for visitors in the form of dining, drinking, and retail. Anecdotal feedback suggests that people who visit the dining and retail venues situated in the precinct often demonstrate interest in the history of Willow Court and seek information, particularly regarding the buildings they visit.

3.1.3 Special Interest Groups

The heritage of Willow Court is of particular interest to groups such as former Friends of Willow Court, local historic societies, mental health practitioners, disability advocates and support workers as well as people with interests in Tasmanian, medical and Derwent Valley history, convictism, and built heritage. These groups are more likely to seek a dedicated space to experience the site, seek off-site information and make one or more visits to view on-site interpretation. These groups require detailed, technical information tailored toward their site-based focus.

3.1.4 Education Groups

This audience seeks out formal learning in the form of tailored, curriculum based and immersive experiences. Willow Court has the potential to offer education programs for students from primary to tertiary levels on themes of Tasmanian history, convictism, philosophies of mental health care, and built heritage. Education groups seek a greater depth of expertise than other audiences and are likely to engage with the history and heritage significance of the site through both on-site and off-site interpretation.

3.1.5 Off-Site Audiences

These audiences include those who may not have the opportunity or capacity to visit the site but are interested in the history of Willow Court and surrounds. Off-site audiences may include students, historians, heritage professionals and the special interest groups previously outlined. Interpretation for these audiences needs to be delivered via online, print mediums or through connections with related sites and/or their resources.

4 *Storytelling Principles*

4.1

National and State Historic Themes

To place the history and significance of a place within a broader Australian context, it is important to be able to use an established and widely recognised framework of historic themes as the basis for determining what are the key historic events at a site that would be considered significant at a local, and then possibly State and National level.

4.1.1

National Historic Themes

To provide a consistent framework for determining appropriate historic themes for a place of cultural significance, the Australian Heritage Commission published a national framework of historic themes in 2001. Nine national key theme groups were identified, with a subset of 84 national subthemes and a further sub-set of 116 themes. The key National historic themes are identified as:

1. Tracing the Natural Evolution of the Australian Environment
2. Peopling Australia
3. Developing Local, Regional and National Economies
4. Building Settlements, Towns and Cities
5. Working
6. Educating
7. Governing
8. Australia's Cultural Life
9. Marking the Phases of Life

4.1.2

State Heritage Themes

In 2021 the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania released Version 6 of Assessing Historic Heritage Significance. This document provides an overview of the approach used to determine whether a place is of historic heritage significance under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. It provides a list of key historical themes with which places can have strong associations with, and therefore be considered to possess historical value at a state level.

These historical themes are:

1. European colonisation, contact with Aboriginal peoples and evolving relationships
2. Later migration
3. Defence of colony and state
4. Exploration and survey
5. The convict experience
6. Maritime communications and the maritime activity and industry (including whaling, sealing)
7. Agricultural, orcharding and pastoral industries
8. Natural resource utilisation (e.g., mining and forestry)
9. Hydro power and water management
10. Developing centres for trade, governance, patterns of domestic life and health and welfare
11. Human interaction with the natural environment, remote places and defence of the environment
12. Memorialising the past, people and society's achievements
13. Secondary and tertiary industry and communications
14. Education, spiritual and cultural life



The Administration Building, c.1977-78
(source: Tasmanian Archive and Heritage
Office, AA193-1-273)

4.2

Willow Court Precinct Themes and Storylines

Based on an analysis of the history and heritage values of Willow Court outcomes of community consultation, the State Heritage Register listing, and both national and state historical themes, the themes and storylines specific to the subject site have been developed as follows:



Willow Court Theme ***'Up the River and Down the Road'***

Australian Theme

Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

State Theme

Peopling Australia
European colonisation,
contact with Aboriginal
peoples and evolving
relationships

Thematic storylines

This theme explores the landscape of the Derwent Valley and ask the question, 'how did Willow Court come to be here?'

timtumili minanya (the Derwent River) flows for over 200 kilometres, from lutruwita/ Tasmania's heartland in liyawulina (Lake St Clair), through to the state's capital in nipaluna (Hobart), meandering through the Derwent Valley on its way. Providing water, food, and transport, the Derwent River was the life force of wulawali (New Norfolk), and for the Linawina people who called it home.

Following invasion of lutruwita in 1803, the area of wulawali was occupied by former convicts from Norfolk Island, who began arriving after the closure of the Norfolk Island settlement in 1807. wulawali was named New Norfolk, and became a centre for farming, and later, the rehabilitation of unwell convicts. The Linawina people were subsequently dispossessed from their land, and the Aboriginal landscape of wulawali was corrupted and concealed by layers of colonial expansion.

Invalid convicts were transported by open boat up the Derwent River, and later, by road, to the Convict Invalid Establishment. When the site later incorporated the care of mentally ill patients in the 1830s, it was renamed the 'Lunatic Asylum, New Norfolk'.

Nineteenth century mental health treatments are reflected in Willow Court's early design and buildings, including the Barracks and Frascati, as well as the urban myths associated with the site.

Life in the Asylum was bleak. Basic, cramped accommodation, little natural light, no activities to provide entertainment for the patients, and limited treatments oft created a severe environment for recuperation.¹⁴

As Willow Court evolved to purely become a facility for mental illness, being sent 'up the river' for those in Southern Tasmania, and 'down the road', for those in the north, would become synonymous with accessing mental health care.

Key Topics

- The geographical landscape of wulawali (New Norfolk)
- The resettlement of Norfolk Islanders to The Derwent Valley
- Urban myths
- Construction and use of Frascati
- The convict system
- Treatment of mentally ill people in the nineteenth century

People

- The Linawina
- Governor George Arthur
- John Lee Archer
- Robert Kelsall

¹⁴ Piddock, S. 2007, Space of Their Own: The Archaeology of Nineteenth Century Lunatic Asylums in Britain, South Australia and Tasmania', Springer Science & Business Media, p. 176.

* Key Topics and People identified are indicative, raised during consultation and subsequent research, and are by no means exhaustive.



Willow Court Theme

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Australian Theme

Building settlements,
towns and cities

State Theme

Developing centres
for trade, governance,
patterns of domestic life
and health and welfare

Thematic storylines

Willow Court is a place defined by its enclosed yards, impenetrable fences and imposing walls.¹⁵

Designed to keep patients in and others out, the physical structures of Willow Court during the nineteenth century shrouded the presence of those deemed 'abnormal' and became representative of a shame and stigma associated with mental illness and disability.

Willow Court is a tangible reminder of the consequences of invasion and colonisation. With the resettlement of Norfolk Islanders in 1807 and their gradual encroachment on Country, the Linawina people suffered dispossession and death. Their stories have been forced 'out of sight and out of mind' in this landscape for too long.

This theme uses the nineteenth century as a backdrop to understanding how early attitudes towards mental health and disability in Tasmania impacted patients at Willow Court. As a community of people whose stories, identity, and sexuality were forcibly hidden, the treatment, and its enduring impacts, of LGBTQ+ people at Willow Court will be explored. Other discriminatory aspects include the labels used to categorise patients, the terminology to explain their diagnosis, and gendered and classist treatments.

Key Topics

- How architecture reflects models of care
- Walls – both literal and figurative
- Gendered treatment of patients (Ladies Cottage, Allonah, gendered task work)¹⁶
- Class distinctions (Gentleman's cottage, only penal patients doing the washing)
- Objects of treatment (i.e., straitjackets etc.)
- Labels applied to mental health
- Distinctions between treatment of LGBTQ+ people

People

- Robert William Wilson
- The Linawina
- Gertrude Kenny

¹⁵. Housego, A. 2006, 'Interpretation Plan, Art and Life Behind the Wall', p. 16. In they're 2006 Interpretation Plan Housego refers to the architectural importance of walls in understanding the enclosed nature of Willow Court and their impacts on the clients and visitors.

¹⁶. Ibid



Willow Court Theme

Care, Community and Consciousness

Australian Theme

Australia's cultural life

State Theme

Education, spiritual and cultural life

Thematic storylines

Willow Court is deeply intertwined with the identity of New Norfolk. The institution provided care to vulnerable Tasmanians, employment for the community, and inspired a sense of compassion and empathy that made it the beating heart of New Norfolk.

Willow Court was designed to meet every need of the patients and staff, incorporating a dentist, surgery, food production, gyms, clothing, occupational therapy, and much more. This theme will unpack the self-sufficiency that characterised the site as a 'town within a town', supporting both the patients living within the facility and members of the community living outside of it.¹⁷

First-hand accounts reveal what twentieth century life was like in Willow Court, the intentions behind providing care, and how the institution has been remembered and memorialised in the present day. The stories of individuals and their experiences define the character of Willow Court and it is through past patients, their families, and staff that we can come to understand what life was like inside.

This theme interprets the experiences and associations connected with the institution by members of the Derwent Valley community, and how the site became synonymous with 'normalising' individual differences.

Key Topics

- Therapies (OT, industrial, artistic, recreation)
- 'Cradle to grave' institution
- Good intentions
- Children's stories
- Staff
- Oral histories/individual stories

People

- Margaret Reynolds
- Eric Cunningham Dax
- Former patients and employees
- Former Staff

17. The concept of Willow Court representing a 'town within a town' is one shared amongst stakeholders, as exemplified in Housego's 2006 Interpretation Plan (p. 17).



Willow Court Theme
***Transformation
and Healing***

Australian Theme

Marking the phases of life

State Theme

Memorialising the past,
people and society's
achievements

Thematic storylines

This theme outlines the evolution of Willow Court from its inception in the 1820s through to the present day.

Through describing the changing language, design and methodologies used to explain and treat mental illness and disability, this theme explores how Willow Court has transformed to become a place that reconciles with the past and embodies a place of healing.¹⁸

The site not only changed physically, but mental health and disability care models and treatment philosophies also shifted dramatically throughout its use and occupation, ultimately informing the process of closure and thus impacting on multiple communities.

Visitors to Willow Court, and the current community of wulawali (New Norfolk) can join with the Palawa community and begin to heal Country, through remembering and honouring the Old People - the Linawina People - and paying tribute to their strength and ingenuity.

By investigating what has remained at the site and what has been removed, this theme will provide people, and the place, with a space to reflect on its past and look toward the future.

Key Topics

- Changing mental health methodologies
- What's been removed
- Giving people a voice
- Process of closure, subsequent trauma
- Architecture reflects models of care
- Conservation and adaptive re-use
- Reconciliation

People

- The contemporary Pakana community
- The contemporary Derwent Valley Community¹⁹
- Former patients and employees
- The LGBTQ+ community

18. Housego, A. 2006, 'Interpretation Plan, Art and Life Behind the Wall'.

19. Using the voices and stories of real people impacted by Willow Court is a continuation of Housego's (2006, p. 20) recommendation that 'original voice' be used throughout future interpretation to 'illuminate themes' and experiences.

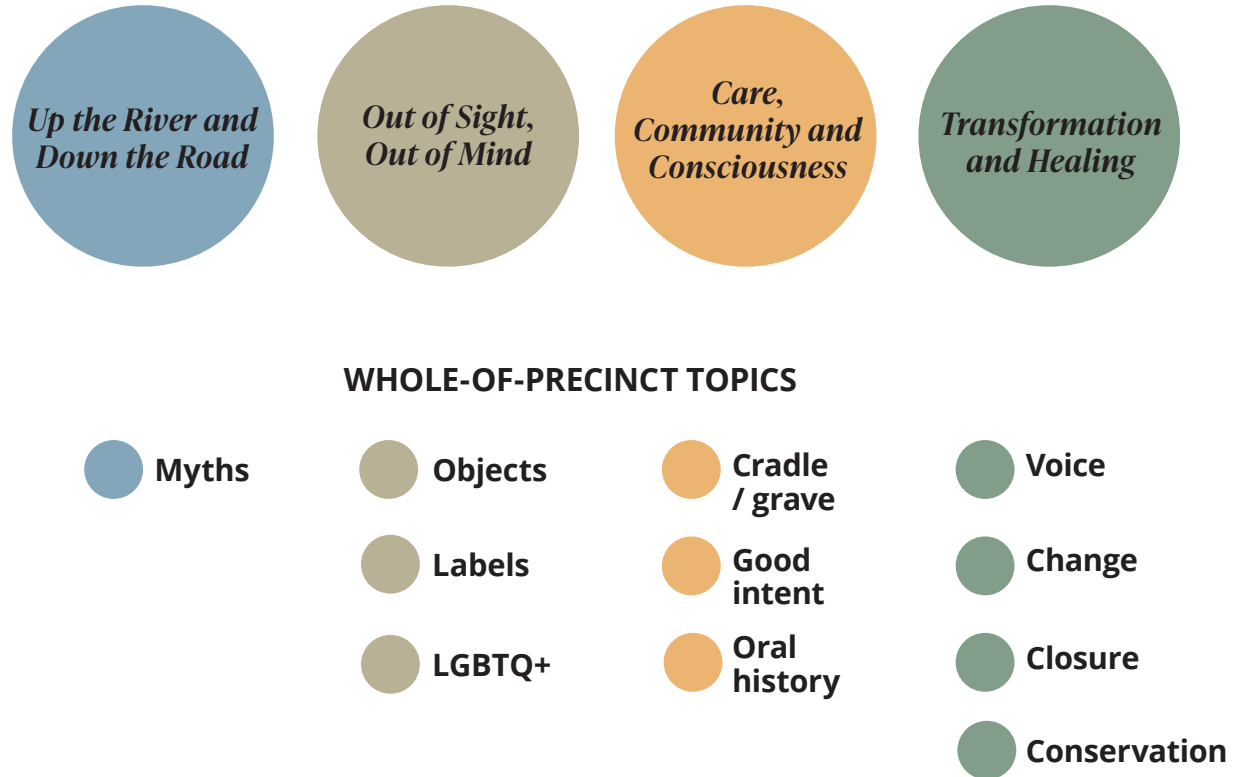


The Barracks, c.1960s
(source: Tasmanian Archive and
Heritage Office, AA193-1-2320)

4.3

Location map of themes

The following map provides a guide to places within the Willow Court precinct which have close associations with each of the topics listed above. The placement of these topics is for use as a general guide only and should not be read as a definitive geographical locator for the design and content of future interpretive elements.





4.4

Interpretive Recommendations

This section of the interpretation report provides an outline of the heritage interpretation products proposed for Willow Court. Refinement of these options will take place following client review of the draft interpretation report.

Due to the currently limited resourcing for interpretation at Willow Court, the following proposals have been developed according to short, medium, and long-term stages. The following interpretive products are representative options only, and it is anticipated that an interpretive scheme, including detailed scope, design and content, will be developed in consultation with the Derwent Valley Council and key stakeholders of the site following endorsement of selected recommendations.

Curio Projects notes that the viability of the following recommendations is contingent on an internal management and resourcing structure which would provide ongoing administrative and strategic support to the Willow Court interpretive scheme, in the form of a permanent position.

While conservation of the physical heritage fabric of Willow Court is beyond the scope of this plan, Curio also recommends that the DVC commission an updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the precinct as a matter of high priority. This CMP would provide the necessary guidance regarding conservation work and interventions required to ensure the viability of the proposed interpretive elements, and associated risk mitigation.

4.4.1 Short Term

1 Interpretive Recommendation Heritage Partnerships

Curio Projects recommends that the Derwent Valley Council actively seek out opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with heritage focused Tasmanian institutions and groups.²⁰

Through fostering connections with related heritage sites and groups, the DVC can engage with projects and activities which encourage and promote visitation to, and interest in Willow Court.

Partnerships can also lead to engagement in co-funded heritage events, trails, research projects, marketing opportunities, artefact loans, and travelling exhibitions.

A potential collaboration identified by Curio Projects is the National Trust of Tasmania's Convict Memorial Hub, which will be physically located at the Penitentiary Chapel in Hobart and will direct visitation to key convict sites across the state. The online component of the project will provide visitors with opportunities to engage remotely with an extensive database of convicts who spent time in New Norfolk and the wider Derwent Valley. Users will have the opportunity to 'follow in the footsteps' of their convict ancestors.

Examples of potential partner organisations:

- New Norfolk History Information Centre
- Willow Court and Frascati House volunteer groups
- The National Trust - Convict Memorial Hub
- Female Convict Research Centre
- Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority
- Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery
- Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
- Collection of Medical Artefacts Tasmania
- palawa kipli
- takara nipaluna

Examples of collaborative projects (past, present and ongoing):

- Convict Memorial Hub (The National Trust)
- Founders and Survivors
- A Convict in the Family exhibition
- The National Trust Australian Heritage Festival
- National Family History Month (Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office)
- Open House Hobart

Potential Location

Onsite and offsite – various locations

Actionable Steps

1. Establish contact with relevant organisations to determine partnership scope
2. Establish a series of MOUs with relevant organisations
3. Determine the relevant infrastructure (technological and physical) and funding necessary for potential projects

20. Curio Projects supports Housego's (2006, p. 20) recommendation that Willow Court seek partnerships, this time across a range of heritage, tourism and events programs and organisations.

2 Interpretive Recommendation Printed ephemera

A gap has been identified in the availability of base-level visitor information and heritage interpretation in the Willow Court precinct.

The DVC tourism campaign, 'Bigger, Deeper, Wilder, Weirder' currently provides a website and a printed tourism guide. The guide is free of charge and available from a range of outlets in the Derwent Valley and beyond. The Guide currently provides a brief paragraph about Willow Court, a link to the DVC website page about the precinct, and a QR code link to the 'Walking Through Time' podcast.

Curio recommends that the DVC produce a supplementary booklet to this suite of promotional products, that provides a succinct history of the Willow Court precinct and encourages visitors to explore at their own pace using a map and place-based histories and visuals.

Additional web-based content should also be made available via the Derwent Valley tourism website (derwentvalleytasmania.org.au) and/or the Derwent Valley Council website's Willow Court page (derwentvalley.tas.gov.au/tourism-and-leisure/willow-court).

Potential Location

Printed booklets available at the site, precinct partner sites, council offices and the Visitor Information Centre.

Actionable Steps

1. Establish feasibility of the project and assess against internal resourcing capacity and budgets
2. Contract heritage specialists to produce content and collaborate with the DVC on design
3. Consult with relevant stakeholders and knowledge-keepers regarding content

3 Interpretive Recommendation Interpretive Signage

Curio recommends that the DVC commission an interpretive signage strategy to guide the development, design and installation of signage at key locations in the Willow Court precinct.²¹

In order to achieve the goals of site unification, improved visitor information, and multichannel storytelling, the short-term priorities for signage have been identified as wayfinding/orientation and building identifiers.

Wayfinding/orientation signage should be located at key points of entry and gathering, with a central introductory interpretive node located in the vicinity of the Barracks. Building identifiers should be developed for each significant heritage structure within the precinct and positioned according to accessibility and appropriate view lines.

Interpretive signage has the potential to be incorporated into a localised 'heritage trail' that facilitates a self-guided exploration of the precinct. Engaging signage should incorporate photographs, illustrations, and first-person accounts, and QR codes can be incorporated to link to web content (see Recommendation 7), allowing visitors to access extended content.

Potential Location

Various locations

Actionable Steps

1. Contract heritage specialists to develop signage strategy
2. Consult with relevant stakeholders and knowledge-keepers regarding content
3. Contract for design and production

21. Housego shared a similar sentiment in their 2006 Interpretation Plan (p. 19). In addition to the suggestion that interpretive signage should be 'implicit', Curio recommends that some signage, such as wayfinding and orientation signs, should be obvious so as to direct the attention of visitors in a clear and defined way.

4

Interpretive Recommendation Community Crowdsourcing Project

Curio recommends that the DVC commission a community crowdsourcing project with the aim of identifying and recording people, stories, and materials that are integral to the cultural heritage of Willow Court and the precinct's storytelling potential.²²

Through this process there is an opportunity to highlight the importance of primary source materials in understanding heritage places and their evolution. These materials can include photographs, documentation, memorabilia, artefacts and oral histories. This project is also an opportunity to widely promote the heritage values of the precinct and develop a sense of community pride and custodianship.

A community crowdsourcing project is also an opportunity for the DVC to initiate a process for the recording and/or return

of cultural materials that have provenance to the site. Anecdotal evidence suggests that during the process of closing the Royal Derwent Hospital in the early 2000s, many significant items were disposed of or taken into private collections. In many cases, this was an act of preservation that prevented permanent loss of valuable cultural material.

Recording and, where appropriate, facilitating the return of significant items is now a key step forward for the future conservation and heritage interpretation of Willow Court.

Curio recommends that this project take the form of an 'Open Weekend' event/s and ongoing digital portal, supported by a media-based campaign to promote the dual community and heritage benefits.

Potential Location

Digital and printed platform, Council offices

Actionable Steps

1. Conduct an audit of collection materials in known collections, including current conditions and storage
2. Determine future storage capacity (temporary and long-term)
3. Develop a communication strategy for a community event, including 'object amnesty' and collection and recording of site-based stories and reflections
4. Build a continuous call-out into a long-term digital platform such as a DVC-endorsed Willow Court website.

²² This is an extension of Housego's 2006 recommendation (p. 11) that lost artefacts and historical objects be identified and sourced as a matter of urgency.

5 Interpretive Recommendation Night-time Activation

Curio recommends that the DVC investigates opportunities for heritage interpretation through night-time activation of the precinct and develop a pilot-project to trial a performance and/or multimedia event.

The night-time atmosphere of Willow Court provides a setting for impactful interpretation which takes advantage of the heightened senses of visitors, and the associated feeling of enclosure and intimacy. Night-time visitation has the capacity to draw focus to the historic fabric, conceal the contemporary landscape, and provide an authentic and unique experience.

This project has the potential to be extended to include long-term outcomes such as night-time tours, events, exhibitions, and performances.

Potential Location

Central Barracks precinct

Actionable Steps

1. Work with Heritage professionals to determine a storytelling/interpretive approach to night-time activation
2. Collaborate with existing groups such as former Friends of Willow Court/Willow Court History Group to collate appropriate documentation and imagery.
3. Develop concepts, ensuring that they are within the realms of economic and technological feasibility
4. Host an 'opening night' and/or create a themed program that will encourage visitation over a given time frame.
5. Document the results of the pilot project and critically assess the benefits from a cultural heritage perspective (e.g., impacts on heritage fabric, visitor survey)

4.4.2 Medium Term

6 Interpretive Recommendation Guided Tours

Curio Projects recommends that the DVC investigate options for a model of guided tour delivery which will achieve the following objectives:

- Provide an extended suite of products including thematic, behind the scenes, dramatic and educational tour options
- Generate revenue which can be re-invested into the interpretive program and the future conservation of the precinct
- Establish a set of tour guiding policies and guidelines which direct the content, delivery, and format of tours.
- Provide training and assessment for a team of professional Tour Guides

- Provide exclusive access to the precinct, under the oversight of the DVC and according to agreed terms with relevant owners and lessees

- Employ best practice interpretation techniques and visitor management procedures
- Offer a world-class visitor experience befitting the heritage significance of the Willow Court precinct

The achievement of these objectives will require a staged approach, according to available resourcing. The DVC should investigate the potential for partnerships and contractual agreements with relevant heritage organisations to facilitate this approach (see Recommendation 1).

Potential Location

Whole-of-precinct

Actionable Steps

1. Establish an internal DVC management model for oversight of a Guided Tour program
2. Develop a Guided Site experience (including tour routes, content, point of sale methods, execution, and training)²³
3. Review lease and contractual frameworks and arrangements with tenants and precinct partners for appropriate access and collaboration
4. Develop a plan for a staged approach to tour development

23. Housego, A. 2006, 'Interpretation Plan, Art and Life Behind the Wall', p. 28 – 29.

7 Interpretive Recommendation Website & Digital presence

As an extension of the outcomes outlined in Recommendation 2, Curio Projects recommends that the DVC commission an 'official' Willow Court online presence in the form of a DVC managed stand-alone website and associated social media accounts.

An official DVC endorsed digital presence would provide a centralised place for historical information, storytelling, visitor information, educational resources, and a booking portal for future events and programs.

Dedicated social media accounts, such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, would provide the DVC with additional platforms for promoting heritage events and activities, and facilitating open dialogue with the broader Willow Court community.

Potential Location

Digital platform

Actionable Steps

1. Develop a brief for website content: i.e., historical content, map, tourist information, point of sale portal/donation page, links to affiliated groups, further resources, events page, integrated social media. Consider integration into onsite experiences.
2. Contract the necessary professional expertise

8 Interpretive Recommendation Healing Country & Community

Curio recommends the development of a dedicated onsite space for people to gather for ceremony, education, storytelling and reflection, with a focus on truth telling and reconciliation.

It is recommended that the DVC collaborate with the Pakana community to develop this space, which will interpret the Aboriginal significance of the Willow Court landscape, and associated stories.

The courtyard located between the Barracks and Carlton Ward has been identified as an appropriate location for this space, which would take the form of a landscaped garden containing a central fire pit and endemic plants native to the Derwent Valley. The high walls of the courtyard provide a sense of intimacy and privacy, and a physical setting conducive to interpretive activities that incorporate sound, lights and projections.

The interpretive intent of the experience is to bring back a sense of what has been lost from this space, due to the impacts of invasion. Visitors to the space will experience 'whispers of the past' through representations of how the 'old people' used the landscape, and native flora and fauna associated with the Derwent Valley such as fagus and thylacines.

Potential Location

Courtyard between Carlton Ward and the Barracks²⁴

Actionable Steps

1. Conduct a feasibility study/risk assessment of the proposed location to determine any barriers to use
2. Establish connections with members of the Aboriginal community to consult and develop concepts and design

²⁴ In their 2006 plan (p. 9), Housego recommended that this area be explored as a potential interpretive space.

4.4.3 Long Term

9 Interpretive Recommendation Visitor Experience Space

A dedicated interpretive/visitor experience space is required for the long-term growth of the interpretive experience at Willow Court.²⁵

Curio recommends that the DVC investigate potential spaces and operational models appropriate for a permanent, accessible space suitable for a multifunctional facility which can provide visitor information and introductory interpretive content. Other uses could include temporary exhibition space, workshop and/or presentation space, a research portal, and resource centre/book shop.

This recommendation is reliant on the DVC securing development funding, and an ongoing revenue source to cover operational costs.

25. Building on Housego's (2006, 'Interpretation Plan, Art and Life Behind the Wall', p. 20) recommendation, a dedicated visitor experience space could incorporate a resource centre which would facilitate researchers, family historians, and visitors to conduct their own self-directed learning.

Potential Location

A space within the central Barracks precinct

Actionable Steps

1. Map the visitor journey throughout the precinct to determine the key interpretation zones
2. Identify appropriate spaces within the Barracks precinct
3. Conduct a feasibility study/risk assessment of the proposed location to determine any barriers to use, including conservation works and relevant compliance issues
4. Contract heritage interpretation specialists to develop a permanent exhibition strategy (incorporating the visitor experience space and the artefact displays referenced in Recommendation 10)

10 Interpretive Recommendation Artefact exhibit/display

Curio recommends that the DVC develop a long-term strategy for whole-of-site heritage interpretation based on a 'deconstructed' visitor experience that would see physical interpretive elements incorporated across the precinct, including leased buildings.

A key component of this interpretive element would be the display of archaeological and artefact material connected to Willow Court, displayed, and interpreted in locations that are contextually appropriate, and reflect their origin and use.

The display of cultural materials in situ is a powerful interpretive tool as artefacts provide immediate and tangible reminders of the layers of history that contribute to the precinct's rich cultural heritage.

This recommendation would require financial and/or in-kind support from tenants and precinct partners.

Potential Location

Locations throughout the Willow Court precinct

Actionable Steps

1. Access the audited collection register of available archaeological material and artefacts, to determine placement throughout the precinct
2. Develop the scope for individual installations
3. Establish terms of agreement with relevant tenants and precinct partners

11 Interpretive Recommendation Written History

Curio recommends that the DVC commission a comprehensive written history of the site, incorporating all relevant time periods and phases to provide a cohesive story of the entire Willow Court precinct.²⁶

This work would inform the ongoing development of the Willow Court interpretation scheme and provide a much-needed resource for the wider community.

Profits from the sale of a book could be reinvested into the ongoing conservation of Willow Court.

Potential Location

Written and digital platform

Actionable Steps

1. Scope, brief and commission a suitably qualified Historian to write a comprehensive history suitable for a general audience

12 Interpretive Recommendation Education Program

In the complex and layered history of Willow Court there are countless stories and case studies which provide opportunities for learning about ourselves and our world, both locally and globally.

Curio recommends the development of a curriculum-based education program for Willow Court, catering to years k-12 through the provision of onsite programs and offsite educational resources.

The site is uniquely placed to provide invaluable site-based learning opportunities in areas including humanities and social sciences, the arts, science and health.

There is also an opportunity to conduct school holidays programs to provide informal learning opportunities and attract visitation to the precinct by the local and interstate family tourist market.

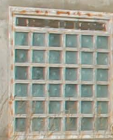
Potential Location

various locations

Actionable Steps

1. Contract heritage education specialists to develop a customized heritage education program
2. Determine delivery model, inclusive of staffing, resourcing, and venues
3. Pilot program with local schools

26. Similar to Housego's (2006, 'Interpretation Plan, Art and Life Behind the Wall', p. 20) recommendation, a research project is essential to the storytelling experience at Willow Court and has the potential to incorporate oral histories and primary sources to create a cohesive, thorough and highly marketable history of the site.



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5 *Grants Potential*

There are a number of grants that could assist Willow Court in realising selected interpretive recommendations. It is acknowledged that Willow Court as it currently stands may not meet all eligibility requirements for the below grants, however an indicative list is as follows:

Cultural Heritage Organisations

This program supports museums, galleries and collections to deliver a range of high-quality cultural heritage activities that strengthen Tasmania's robust, diverse and vibrant cultural heritage sector, engage and inspire audiences and the wider community, and preserve Tasmania's movable cultural heritage.

Individuals and groups

This program supports individuals and groups to take up activities that further their careers, enrich their artistic practice and contribute to Tasmania's arts sector.

Eligible activities include:

- creative development and research
- presenting work (exhibitions, performances and publications)
- recording or producing work
- local, national or international residencies
- professional development opportunities
- market and audience development (including promotion)

Roving Curators

The Roving Curator program gives museums, galleries and collections access to our museum professionals for up to 25 days.

Eligibility includes:

Tasmanian museums, galleries and collections that:

- manage publicly owned, publicly accessible, permanent collections of movable cultural heritage objects or artworks; and,
- have (or are working towards) regular opening hours

Business Growth Loan Scheme

The \$60 million Business Growth Loan Scheme will provide concessional loan funding to support:

The State's businesses to recover, adapt, grow and develop enhanced business models that support employment retention and business growth, and

New projects that contribute towards employment and growth of the Tasmanian economy.

Tourism Innovation Grant Program

The Tourism Innovation Grant Program is designed to assist existing and prospective Tasmanian tourism and hospitality businesses to realise projects that will increase and expand visitor demand to the broader benefit of the sectors.

Community Heritage Grants National Library of Australia

The Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program supports community organisations to look after Australian cultural heritage collections.



6 *Conclusion*

This Heritage Interpretation Report for Willow Court establishes a framework for interpretive projects to be planned, designed and implemented within the Willow Court precinct over the next 10+ years.

This report incorporates a thematic approach to interpretation, which identifies both the historic and contemporary aspects of the precinct's significance. The key themes and storylines provide a strong basis for developing heritage interpretation that is relevant to the history of the precinct.

Through the implementation of this report, there is an opportunity for the Derwent Valley Council to develop meaningful interpretive elements that not only celebrate the significance of Willow Court and its relationship to the surrounding township and cultural landscape, but to also promote a process of healing and truth telling through acknowledging and examining the more difficult aspects of the precinct's history.

The Willow Court Heritage Interpretation Report recognises that the development of a robust interpretive scheme is an ongoing and evolving process, and that as development of the precinct continues, as the tourism market grows and as new tenancies are introduced, the interpretive priorities and opportunities will continue to evolve. In light of this, Curio Projects recommends that the Derwent Valley Council adopt a staged approach according to the short, medium and long term recommendations identified in this report.

7 *References and Endnotes*

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