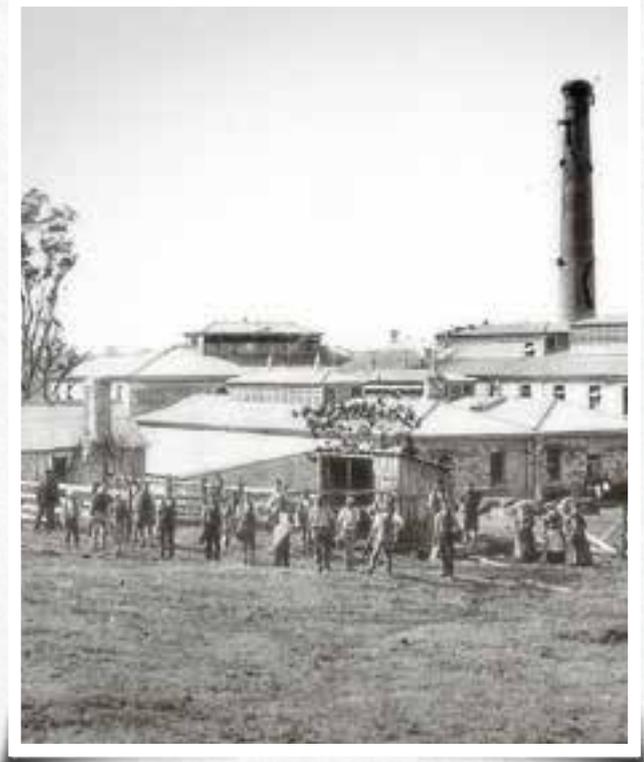


# THE PAPER MILL

ON GEORGES RIVER

## A HISTORY UNFOLDED



# THE PAPER MILL

ON GEORGES RIVER

## ONCE UPON A TIME



The paper mill and workers

### 1791 - PRESENT

The area around The Paper Mill on Georges River site is steeped in history – not only of local interest, but also some of national importance. It is for this reason that the surviving mill building on the crossroads of Atkinson and Shepherd Streets is being retained and restored as a unique historical marker and community hub.

A CONVICT SHIP'S CAPTAIN

LIGHT HORSE PARK

### 1791

Much of what is known as Liverpool today was once owned by an American whaling captain by the name of Ebenezer Bunker. Arriving in Australia as captain of a convict transport ship in 1791, he was granted a 400 acre (162ha) parcel of land which he called Bunker's Farm. A second grant of 500 acres was named Collingwood Dale and it was on this land that he built the historic Collingwood homestead, which still stands on Birkdale Crescent today. Built in 1810, the homestead is the oldest in Liverpool, the fifth oldest building in NSW and an excellent example of colonial Georgian architecture.

### 1890

In 1890 a gas works was opened to provide lighting for the growing town of Liverpool and town water came shortly after. Prior to World War One, the Liverpool region had become an important training ground for Australia's Armed Forces and the Light Horse Regiment in particular. It is for this reason that the area between Liverpool train station and the river is named Light Horse Park.



The 12th Light Horse Regiment

## THE PAPER MILL COMES TO LIVERPOOL

### 1868

A momentous change came in 1864 when Atkinson sold a large block of his riverside land to The Australian Paper Company who opened the purpose built Collingwood Paper Mill in 1868. It was the largest paper mill in Australia at the time with state-of-the-art equipment sent from Great Britain that was able to produce a phenomenal 20 tonnes of paper per week. In what was an early form of recycling, the mill collected rags, old sails, sugar bags

and rope and turned these into paper. The labour intensive process meant the paper mill was the largest employer in the Liverpool district with 122 men, women and children working across the 19-acre site. The importance of a source of locally made paper cannot be underestimated as an excerpt from an article in The Illustrated Sydney News from 1872 points out. *"...we consider this manufactory one of the most, if not the most, important in a young colony such as this. Giving, as it does, employment to a large number of hands, it carries along with it the march of progress, education, and enlightenment of the people"*.



Old paper mill as seen from Georges River

## AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

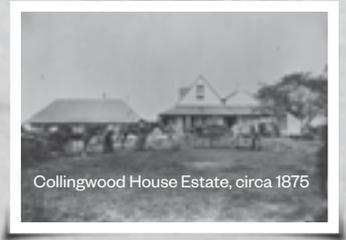
### 1855

The Collingwood homestead was later bought by the entrepreneurial wool merchant, James Atkinson. Committed to creating a modern industrialised zone he was aware of the need for a rail connection and in 1855 he turned the first sod of the Granville to Liverpool railway line, which opened the following year. Among Atkinson's many enterprises on the foreshores of the Georges River were a modern abattoir and a large wool washing operation but he also built terrace-style workers housing to accommodate the hundreds of people he employed.

## WOOL MILL

### 1905

While the Liverpool Paper Mill closed in 1905, it was replaced by the Challenge Woollen Mill in 1910, adapting the paper mill buildings to its new use in 1914. The Challenge Woollen Mill later changed its name to the Liverpool Woollen Mill and remained operational until 1975. One of the buildings from the wool mill still stands on Atkinson Street today and will be retained as the historic heart of The Paper Mill on river development. Once again the signature sawtooth roofs of the mill will become a feature of Liverpool.



Collingwood House Estate, circa 1875

## STEEPED IN HISTORY

### THE PAPER MILL SITE

The site lies on the west bank of the Georges River and to the east of the railway line. The current character of the area is a mix of c1980 medium density residential apartment blocks stretching north along the river with light industrial development to the south and west and along the opposite bank of the river. The character of the immediate industrial areas will change over time in response to the rezoning of the area. Across Atkinson Street the heritage listed Light Horse Park stretches along the river bank to the north.

The main vehicular entry to the site is off Atkinson Street onto a large area of hardstand across the north eastern corner of the site.

The site is generally level with no notable plantings.

The built component on the site is the 1914 former Challenge Woollen Mill factory which was modified in the 1970s for use as a vehicle service centre.

### 1914 FORMER FACTORY BUILDING

The building structure is made up of a series of steel trusses, columns and roof framing that support the glazed saw tooth roof. The roof is clad in corrugated iron, with glazed strip panels providing light into the factory floor. The soffit of the roofing structure is lined in beaded timber boarding. The steel columns are fixed into the concrete slab flooring.

The external wall of the western elevation is face brickwork, a series of twelve intact regular bays with a door or window opening centered in each, and a projecting brickwork plinth running the length of the building. The joinery to this phase of the building is generally painted timber.

Originally designed to reflect the rhythm of the western elevation, the arched brickwork to the eastern elevation has been substantially altered in response to the changing uses of the site. Some brickwork bays remain, divided up by a series of roller shutters and other openings to provide access to the service areas at the rear of the site. The face brickwork has also been painted over on this facade.

The northern elevation of the building was substantially modified some time during the c1970's, with alterations along the length of the elevation. These alterations included the removal of the northern projecting end of the 1914 saw toothed structure. The new building work included an entry and reception foyer off Shepherd Street with offices behind, and some garaging accessed from the hardstand off Atkinson Street. The form of the new structure is face brickwork with large modern fenestration and glazed entry doors.

The materials and design of this addition are contemporary and include a high metal clad parapet typical of a commercial building of this era.

The southern elevation appears to be made up of remnant brickwork sections of two earlier buildings believed to date from the earliest mill structures, circa 1865.

The western portion of the southern wall was originally two storey and has been cut down to suit the 1914 single storey structure. Historical photographs show the 1914 building butting up against the earlier two storey brick building. Some time during the late 1970's, presumably when the larger site was subdivided, the earlier buildings were demolished, leaving only what was required to secure the 1914 building.

Evidence of this earlier building remains in the form of the roughly cut off wall above the roof line, infilled door and window openings at ground and first

floor level and the remaining nib of what is believed to be the original east wall of the c1870 building, that was located on the adjacent site.

The small centre portion of the southern wall is identified by its 1914 saw tooth roof profile. Historical photographs indicate an earlier single storey building on the adjacent site facing onto the river in this location, and the existing pattern of the brickwork suggests the early single storey wall is still in place and has been extended to accommodate the 1914 roof line.

The eastern portion of the southern elevation supports a pitched roof, the structure of which appears to date from a much later period with contemporary infill brickwork to the southern wall below timber trusses.

Again, referencing historical photographs, the footprint of this space which creates an indent into the 1914 footprint, appears to follow earlier building lines. Elements of the walls that follow this indent line below the later pitched roof may be remnant fabric from the earlier riverside buildings.



Challenge Wool Mill, circa 1950