### History

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| **Historical notes:** | The area surrounding Hadley Park has a long history of occupation by the Mulgowie (Mulgoa) and Boorooberongal Aboriginal people. Excavation of rock shelters on the western side of the Nepean River has revealed evidence of Aboriginal activity extending back approximately 20,000 years. Artefacts identified in the immediate vicinity of Hadley Park suggests that Aboriginal people camped on the high ground next to Cranebrook Creek. While initial contact between European settlers and the local Aboriginal population was reported to be friendly, from about 1800 conflict between the groups along the Nepean, Hawkesbury and surrounding districts had escalated, leading to Governor Macquarie establishing a military detachment on the Nepean at Penrith in 1816. By this time, the Aboriginal population in the local region had significantly diminished due to disease, dislocation and open conflict, however Aboriginal people are recorded to still have been fishing and camping in the area in the 1850s. Hadley Park is part of a broader area that continues to be identified as a significant landscape by Darug groups and the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council today. European settlement along the Hawkesbury River at Windsor and Richmond was established by the mid-1790s. In June 1789, an exploration party led by Governor Phillip and Captain Watkin Tench reached the banks of the Nepean River near to the future sites of Penrith and Castlereagh, where they observed there to be good soil for planting crops and grazing, and exchanged food and gifts with the local Aboriginal people. The isolation of the Nepean region, however, precluded the establishment of permanent settlement around Castlereagh until the early nineteenth century and it was not until 1803 that any land claims in the area were officially recognised. Governor King made out 31 land grants, mostly to former soldiers, with some land also being granted to free settlers and emancipists. Most of the Castlereagh land grants had river frontage and, unlike the earlier grants in Richmond and Windsor in the north, were set out in an orderly fashion, with straight north and south boundaries and eastern boundaries aligned to (Old) Castlereagh Road, which had been established in 1803 to join the new farming district with Windsor. The grants were also larger than those in the north, ranging between 70 and 160 acres, with the size of the allotments reflecting social status and family size. For instance, married non-commissioned officers were entitled to grants of up to 150 acres plus 10 acres per child and a single private was entitled to up to 90 acres. The ex-soldiers were also entitled to seeds and equipment from the government stores, food and clothing for up to a year and the services of convicts if they could support and feed them. Land grants were given on the proviso that areas would be cleared, put under cultivation and not transferred for five years. The Castlereagh area (also known as 'Mulgrave Place' and the 'District of Evan') soon became one of the colony's major agricultural regions and by 1804, enough trees had been cleared from the banks of the Nepean River to cause Governor King to intervene and forbid any further clearances. The land on which Hadley Park is located was granted to Martin Mentz (also spelt as 'Mintz' or 'Mince') in 1803. Mentz arrived in the colony in 1791 as a free settler and enlisted in the NSW Corps as a private. He was discharged from the Corps in March 1803 and was one of the 24 ex-soldiers who were granted land in the Castlereagh area by Governor King. Mentz's grant, received on 30 June, was for a total of 80 acres with river frontage. Mentz proceeded to clear and cultivate his land in accordance with the terms of the grant. By 1805 he had cleared over 20 acres and planted wheat, maize and barley, and used another 29 acres for grazing. With his wife, child and two servants, Mentz seems to have had some early success on the property, purchasing a range of agricultural and household goods from the government stores at Parramatta and Toongabbie. In August 1806, he leased 30 acres of land to a Charles Hadley for (Pounds)45 and continued to live on a portion of his property. Mentz was granted a licence to sell alcohol in Sydney in 1810, and moved into town with his family, selling his remaining Nepean land holdings. In September of that year he transferred 50 acres to Anne Lander for (Pounds)150. The Old Register entry for Lander dated 6 September 1810 mentions the transfer of '50 acres of land at the Nepean and a dwelling house', with the addition of 'all buildings and appurtences' in the final transfer of property made in August 1811. This record points to the existence of a collection of buildings, including a dwelling house, on the property by at least 1810. Charles Hadley first arrived in NSW as a convict aboard the Matilda, one of the ships of the Third Fleet, which reached Sydney in 1791. Hadley gained an absolute pardon and went back to England, but returned to NSW several years later, arriving in Sydney in March 1806. By August of this year he was living at Castlereagh, on the land leased from Martin Mentz. In 1812, Hadley married Sarah Phillips, with who he already had a son (Charles Hadley Jr, born 1810). By 1825, Charles and Sarah had gone on to have seven more children. Hadley was also growing his farm during this period, and his house at Hadley Park soon became a local landmark in the district. He kept cattle on his property and supplied meat to the Emu Plains government stores from 1815. Hadley also acquired a publican's license to sell liquor in as early as April 1817, and his inn, known as the 'First and Last', was the only one operating in Castlereagh at this time. The exact location of this inn within his land holdings is unknown. By 1821, Hadley was listed as holding a total of 300 acres at Castlereagh in the District of Evan. His reputation in the district continued to grow and he took on several civic responsibilities, including serving as a juror in 1819 and benefactor to the Windsor Bible Association in 1822. On 20 August 1822, five armed men broken into Charles Hadley's house and attacked him and his family, but made away with only a watch. Nepean Park was also built in 1822 on the adjoining allotment directly south of Hadley Park. In early 1827, his wife Sarah left him for a neighbour, John Griffiths. Charles Hadley died in September the following year. In his will, he left Hadley Park to his oldest son, Charles Hadley Jr, who maintained the estate until his death in 1891. Hadley Park experienced several significant flood events during the mid-nineteenth century, the worst occurring in 1867 and reportedly washing away all of Hadley Jr's furniture and goods. An 1885 survey of landholders in the Castlereagh area noted that Charles Hadley Jr at Hadley Park had 80 acres with nine horses, five cattle and four pigs and more livestock on a nearby holding. A later return in 1900 states that the property was under cultivation with maize and barley, further indicating a shift away from cattle. With the death of Charles Hadley Jr in November 1891 and his wife Hannah only six days later, both from influenza, the northern lot with Hadley Park house passed to William Alvan Hadley Childs - the husband of their oldest daughter, Louisa Matilda Hadley. In April 1892, the 80 acre Hadley Park estate was assessed as having a value of (Pounds)800, with the most part being under cultivation. The property contained a brick house of seven rooms, a barn, stable and outbuildings, though they were in a dilapidated condition. William Charles Hadley Childs, the son of Louisa Matilda Hadley and William Alvan Childs, was listed as the owner of the property in 1898. In August 1905, he repurchased all the blocks of land that had been separated from Hadley Park in the will of Charles Hadley Jr, reuniting the farm estate to its original 80 acres. William ran the property as a dairy farm, building a dairy building on the property sometime during the 1930s. Dairying became a popular industry in the Castlereagh district by the mid-twentieth century, with a 1941 survey showing all the land between the (Old) Castlereagh Road and the Nepean River being used for dairying purposes. William died in July 1950 and his son, William George Childs, inherited the southern portion of the property, while his two daughters Hannah and Esla inherited the northern portion, including the house. Records from this time note that the northern portion equalled 44 acres 6.5 perches and included a brick cottage with attic, weatherboard kitchen, iron garage, two sheds, feeders, dairy and bails, four pit silos, water supply, clearing and fencing. The southern portion was 50 acres and contained pit silos, an orchard, water supply, clearing and fencing and an unfinished galvanised iron hay shed. Between 1940 and 1961 a few improvements were made to the property including the addition of a new hay shed to the south of the dairy buildings, and part of the southern portion was planted with orchards to the river front, however these were removed by 1978. Esla and Hannah Childs continued to own Hadley Park until 1972 when the western portions of the property closest to the river (Lots 1 and 2 DP87060) were sold to Quarries Pty Ltd, thus ending over 150 years of ownership by the Hadley-Childs family. Quarrying, gravel and sand extraction had started along the Nepean River at Castlereagh from as early as the 1880s. Mining activities significantly increased from the 1970s, and many properties around the river were bought by mine and gravel companies. In 1978, Quarries Pty Ltd transferred the Hadley Park property to a subsidiary, Blue Metal and Gravel Ltd, which later became Blue Metal Industries, which was later bought out by Boral Ltd. By 1979, the larger quarrying companies that were operating at Castlereagh had combined their interests and were operating as part of the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation (PLDC). PLDC has owned Hadley Park since 1998. Quarrying of the Hadley Park lots commenced c2001, in the areas west of Cranebrook Creek and east of the house to (Old) Castlereagh Road. Jacqueline Flower, a descendent of the Hadley family, moved into Hadley Park in 1996 and lived on the property (in a separate living quarters, not in the house) until 2008. The main house was propped in 2008-2009 and a series of physical surveys were undertaken to assess the fabric and condition of the buildings. The buildings at Hadley Park have since remained unoccupied. |