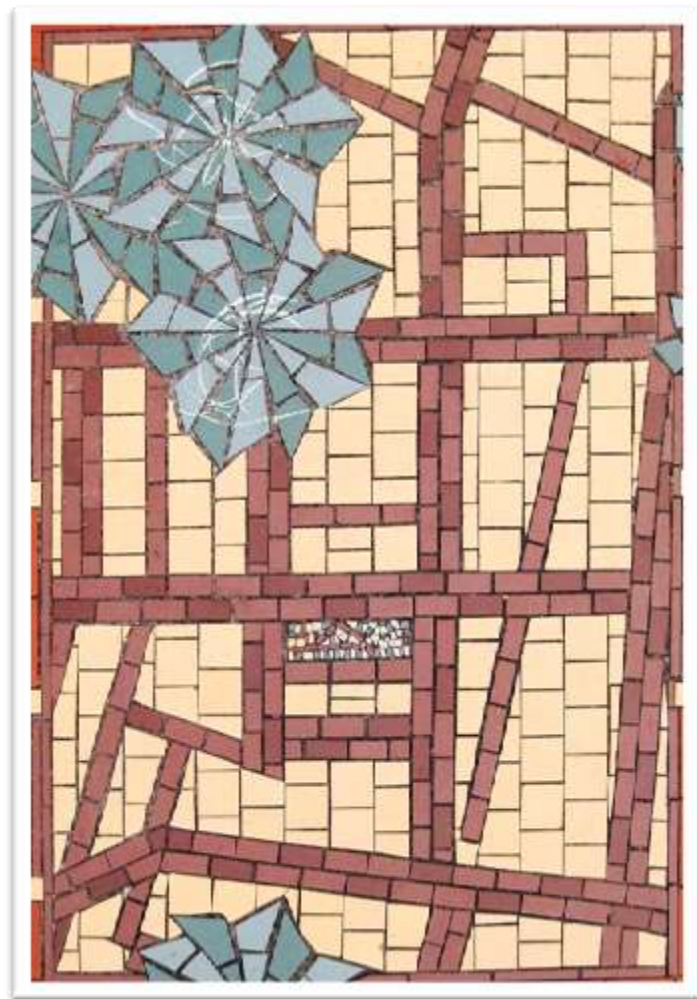


# **The History of Collins Street, Surry Hills**



**John Walter Ross**

Cover photograph: Detail of the mosaic in Shannon Reserve displaying the surrounding streets.

Streets running left to right are Riley Street (top) Crown Street (centre) and Bourke Street (bottom).

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## Introduction

This is the history of a street in the suburb of Surry Hills in inner city Sydney. I chose this street to research in detail because I've lived in it since 1997, and have discovered during that time that it has a long and interesting history of both residential and industrial development. Its story goes back to the early days of the colony of Port Jackson, starting with the land grants in the 1790s to Joseph Foveaux and John Palmer.

The street itself was created in the 1840s by a committee during the carving up of the large Riley Estate into small allotments to be raffled among the seven heirs to the estate. The result was that four different Riley heirs became owners of the four quadrants of the street. Over the next few decades, the Riley land was steadily sold off for housing development. The first houses in the street were built in the late 1850s.

The construction history of Collins Street follows that of Surry Hills as a whole, with an acceleration of building from the 1860s to the 1880s, after which the street was almost completely built. The street can be seen as something of a microcosm of the area, because it eventually contained a pub, a grocery, a fruit shop, a school, a library, a park, a children's welfare centre and a Scout Hall.

In addition, a variety of industrial activities sprang up in the eastern end of the street, starting with a large steam laundry in the 1880s, followed by a cannery, a carriage maker (who was in turn superseded by a motor body builder), and a patent medicine manufacturer. These early industries were eventually replaced by the activities of more recent professionals such as architects, medical suppliers, fashion designers, marketing agencies and mobile media developers.

Undoubtedly the great survivor in the street, apart from the strongly-built brick and stone houses, is the Clock Hotel, which spans the entire period of the street's history from the early 1860s until the present day, having expanded from a corner shop building to include five properties in all.

Probably the only aspect of Collins Street that does not characterise the early days of Surry Hills is that it managed to avoid the worst of the problems of drainage, sanitation and poor construction, due to its elevated location, and being blessed with builders who put up houses that were clearly designed to last.

This history has largely been written in order to gain further experience as a technical writer, and is not intended for commercial publication. For this reason, I haven't sought permission to use any of the written or photographic material mentioned. The history of Surry Hills has been mainly adapted from Christopher Keating's book and to a lesser extent from the earlier Master's thesis by Terry Kass.

The intended audience for this history is anyone who is interested in learning about the changes that have taken place in Sydney from its early settlement to the present day, from the perspective of a street that has been involved in many of these changes.

John Ross,  
43 Collins Street, Surry Hills.

September, 2011.



## Historical Time Line

1788 – First Fleet of convicts and settlers arrives in Port Jackson.

1794 – Land grant to John Palmer in present-day Surry Hills.

1808 – Governor Bligh is overthrown in the Rum Rebellion.

1814 – John Palmer’s lands are sold to pay his debts. Edward Riley gradually buys much of it.

1825 – Edward Riley suicides, leaving two conflicting wills and years of litigation.

1845 – The Riley Estate is divided among seven heirs and Collins Street is surveyed as part of the partition.

1858 – The first houses are built in Collins Street.

1863 – The Exchange (now the Clock) Hotel starts operations.

1876 – The Aston Terrace houses are completed.

1880s – A long economic boom. Most of Surry Hills is built during this decade, including the two warehouses near Richards Avenue and the Riley Street Public School.

1890s – A severe depression strikes. The last house is built in Collins Street in 1895 – number 53.

1927 – The last commercial building is constructed in Collins Street– number 4, which opens as the Children’s Welfare League.

1939 – Shannon Reserve opens.

1956 – The Anthony Doherty Community Centre opens.

1973 – W.E. Woods, manufacturing chemist, leaves both warehouses after nearly 70 years, and modern firms move in.

1989 – Riley Street Public School closes.

2009 – The new Surry Hills Public Library is completed.





## **Surry Hills Expansion –1790s to the 1880s**

### **Early grants**

In 1792, Governor Arthur Phillip marked out the boundaries of the town of Sydney. All the area outside the town was designated for farming. In 1793, the next governor Major Francis Grose allotted land grants to officers and other interested settlers of around 100 acres each. Captain Joseph Foveaux of the New South Wales Corps was the first Surry Hills landholder, being granted 105 acres on the eastern side of the town boundary. Foveaux called his land Surrey Hills Farm, thus giving the area its name. It was partly cleared by convicts and stocked with cattle. At some point, the name was modified to Surry Hills.

In 1794, Commissary-General John Palmer was granted 70 acres to the east of this, calling it George Farm. Palmer acquired 25 acres more, and then bought Foveaux's land when Foveaux left for Norfolk Island. By 1800, Palmer had about 200 acres in Surry Hills, plus 100 acres in Woolloomooloo. He was a successful farmer and grazier who pioneered efficient farming methods in the young colony.

In the 1808 Rum Rebellion in which the New South Wales Corps overthrew the government of William Bligh, Palmer supported the governor and was sacked by the rebel administration. Palmer was in fact having dinner with Bligh in Government House when the rebels stormed into the house and arrested the governor. Following this, Palmer spent six years in England at various inquiries into the rebellion, and his businesses in NSW went into debt.

In 1814, Palmer returned to NSW in a very bad financial state. The Sheriff, William Gore, ordered that his Surry Hills estate be auctioned to pay off his debts. So the estate was subdivided by the Surveyor-General James Meehan, who unsuccessfully tried to develop Surry Hills in an orderly way. Meehan proposed a grid pattern, regardless of terrain, but his streets were never proclaimed.

In 1814, the merchant Edward Riley started buying the allotments to try and reassemble Palmer's Surry Hills Estate. Then in February 1825, Edward Riley shot himself in a fit of depression, leaving two conflicting wills and years of litigation to try and sort out the inheritance of his large estate. During this time, Riley's 25 acres of prime land in the middle of Surry Hills remained largely undeveloped.

### **Breaking up the grants**

By the 1840s, the population of Sydney was increasing with the migration of free settlers, and there was pressure to provide housing close to the town. In 1845, the Riley estate was finally divided into seven parcels of equal value and raffled amongst the Riley heirs. The commission that oversaw the partition exerted the last major influence on Surry Hills' street patterns. The commissioners tried to create streets to divide the estate equally, while conforming to Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell's plan for the area. Ann, Gipps (now Reservoir), Arthur, Foveaux, Collins and Short streets were created during this exercise. The new streets were proclaimed in 1848.

By 1850, Wells' map of Sydney shows that while some lots were sold after the 1845 partition, most of the 25 acres of the Riley Estate was still undeveloped. Surry Hills was being established as a renters' area, with over 80% of houses to let, mostly to artisans, by a landlord class who were not very far above their tenants in social status. The only water supply was from a single pump on upper South Head Road (now Oxford Street), carried around the district by water carriers who sold water to residents. However, many people collected their own water in rum barrels in backyards. Unformed roads became quagmires in wet weather, and surface drains often sent effluent and stormwater into low-lying houses.

## **Surry Hills expands rapidly**

Surges in house-building coincided with periods of economic boom in NSW, starting with the gold rush in the early 1850s. Gold discoveries near Bathurst in 1851 caused a flood of new arrivals. The gold rush caused great social and economic dislocation: shopkeepers and mechanics abandoned their work to go to the diggings, leaving wives and children to find a living. Wages, prices and rents spiralled during this time. Rent on one Bourke St property rose from 8/- to 45/- per week during the two years of "gold field rage", forcing the occupant to sublet part of the house.

Since its partition in 1845, the vast Riley Estate effectively acted as a land bank, releasing land onto the market as it became necessary. The Estate was gradually sold off by the Riley trustees on a flexible time payment system, drawing many lower-middle class tradesmen to the area. For a minimal deposit, an investor could build a modest house on credit, then sell it and pay off his debt with a small profit.

By the mid-1850s, a great increase of Government funds meant that road works and water schemes proceeded steadily. The Crown Street reservoir was completed in 1859. Then there was a depression from the late 1850s, deflating the optimism of the gold-driven early 1850s. The new houses in Surry Hills weren't substandard as such, but the closeness of the population, lack of drainage and subletting made the area blossom into the archetypal slum of the Edwardian era in Sydney.

By the late 1850s, the older cottages, which were mostly weatherboard, were quite run down. New rows of two-storey brick or stone houses or detached cottages appeared. They were generally well built and not as crowded as the older area of Woolloomooloo or the city proper. Despite rapid development, Surry Hills retained much of its village atmosphere, and the social mix was still fairly evenly spread.

The 1860s and 1870s were the decades of the middle classes: growing number of skilled artisans, mechanics and shopkeepers dominated local life, and started displacing the gentry as local worthies. Much of the local economy was driven by the building trades, providing well-paid work for a wide variety of occupations. During the 1870s, small subdivisions continued to fill out the remaining open spaces in Surry Hills. Developers still had almost a free hand, and put in very narrow streets in order to maximise the number of lots in a given space. The developers were not concerned much with good drainage, and largely ignored this in laying out the estates. In the 1870s, most of Surry Hills had no sewers, and most drainage was on the surface, not underground.

## **Boom times and overcrowding**

By the time of the long economic boom of the 1880s, the Surry Hills street pattern was in disarray, as each estate was subdivided in its own way, in the locations of the new houses and the alignment of new streets. Health problems became more common, caused by the bad drainage, open sewers and general overcrowding. Measles, scarlet fever and typhoid broke out in the 1870s. There was general neglect by landlords, who normally lived far away from the area and who were not motivated to maintain their properties as there was always a ready supply of tenants willing to live there, whatever the conditions.

Despite the negative effects of this unregulated development on drainage, health and sanitation, a strong community spirit flourished in Surry Hills, as shown by the resilience of the people there. However, in spite of the deteriorating living conditions through the 1870s and 1880s, many people were relatively unaffected by the worst aspects of these conditions.

In 1881, there were several outbreaks of smallpox in Sydney, causing local panic near each house with a victim. From 1879, various council-led investigations toured the slums of Surry Hills and condemned hundreds of houses as unfit for habitation. The reformers didn't understand that bad living conditions were the result of poverty and lack of employment, and not the other way around. They wrongly thought they could remove poverty by simply removing the conditions that were created by poverty.

The indomitable Richard Seymour was the Inspector of Nuisances at the time, having been in the job since the 1860s. He oversaw a wide range of regulations, and regularly performed market inspections and took part in house-to-house inspections with the city councillors. He also approved and inspected opium dens, privies, abattoirs and tanneries. He even kept a watchful eye out for other activities that were frowned upon at the time, such as kite-flying. His graphic and detailed reports of activities in Chinese-run brothels and opium houses in the Wexford, Wentworth and lower Campbell Streets helped to fuel an anti-Chinese sentiment that saw this ethnic group targeted in the parts of Surry Hills that were chosen for demolition.

By 1890, Surry Hills was just about completely built. Until now, the colonial authorities had starved the Sydney Council of powers to regulate the rapid development of the area, resulting in the very poor living conditions and severe overcrowding. The area had become very densely populated, consisting of lower middle-class tradesmen and working-class labourers. The suburb's population doubled between 1871 and 1891, to 30,000. The Surry Hills population had peaked, but its reputation was at its lowest.



## Building Collins Street

As mentioned earlier, the land that includes Collins Street was part of John Palmer's George Farm land grant in 1794. Following this, it was in the parcel of land bought by Edward Smith Hall in 1814 following the forced subdivision of Palmer's lands. Edward Riley bought this parcel from Hall in 1822 when he tried to reassemble Palmer's original estate. Collins Street itself was surveyed in 1844 as part of the partition of the 25 acre Riley Estate into a large number of small allotments. The street was officially declared in 1848.

The inheritors in 1844 of the blocks of the Riley estate that contained Collins Street were:

- James John Riley: the north side, between Riley and Crown St (Block A19).
- George Riley, who mortgaged his share to Thomas Burdekin: the north side, between Crown and the present Davoren Lane (Block D18).
- Ann Sophia Campbell (nee Riley), wife of Robert Campbell: the south side, between Riley and Crown Streets (Block G22).
- Alexander William Riley: the south side, between Crown and Alexander St (Block C24).

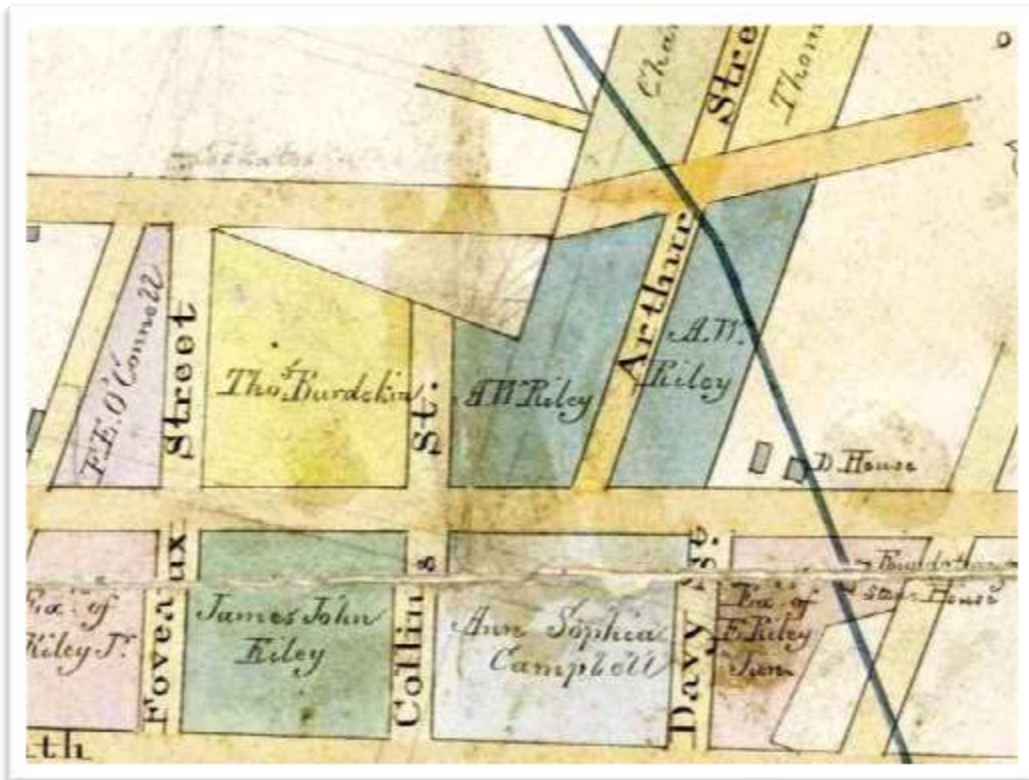


Figure 1: Riley Estate divisions, 1844

It is not really known how the street got its name, but the council thinks it was probably named after Colonel David Collins, a captain of marines in the First Fleet and later the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land. Two of the other streets created to partition the Riley Estate were named after governors (Arthur and Gipps). Collins Streets in Melbourne and Hobart are also named after David Collins.



Figure 2: Colonel David Collins

The street numbering in Surry Hills was fairly irregular until it was standardised in about 1880, when almost all of the empty blocks of land had been subdivided into housing lots. This makes it difficult to pin down which house is which in the records prior to 1880. The two main sources of information, Sands Directory and the council's Rate Assessment Books, are also somewhat inconsistent and incomplete. The following chronology of the growth of the street is the best estimate of the available data from these sources.

## 1850s

The Woollcott and Clarke map of Sydney in 1854 shows no development in Collins Street at this time. The nearest houses are the group of three in Crown Street south of Foveaux Street, of which the sandstone building at number 397 Crown Street, presently used by the Mille Vini wine bar, is the only survivor.

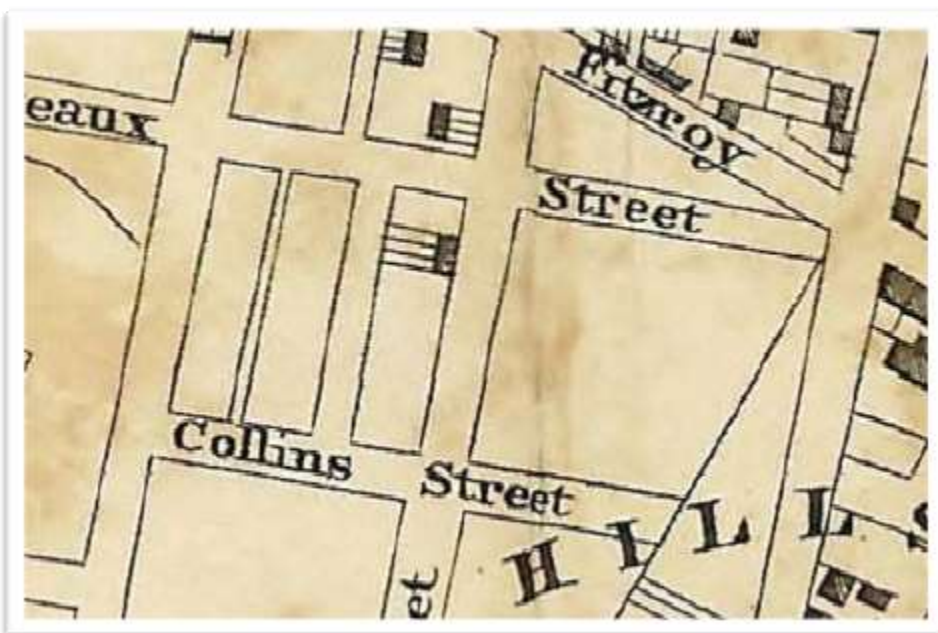


Figure 3: Woollcott & Clarke map, 1854

The historical records show that the first two houses in Collins Street were built in 1858.

#### **4 Collins Street**

Number 4 (first called number 10, then number 8 by 1867, and then number 4 by 1880), was bought by Adolphus Frederic Ostlund, a carpenter from Stockholm, Sweden. A single storey three-room wooden house with a shingle roof was built by 1858. He married Mary A. Hunter in 1854, and died in 1867, aged 43, in Sydney. After he died, Mary continued living there, working as a tailorless. Other residents of the house by 1889 were her sons Oscar Frederick, an agent, and Gustave Adolph, a wheelwright, until 1891. From 1892 until 1912, Mary Robeson, a dressmaker, lived there. Mary Ostlund owned the house until her death in 1925. It looks like the Ostlund family eventually moved away from the inner suburbs of Sydney, as Mary died in Eventide Home in Burwood, her son Oscar lived in Ashfield until his death in 1925, and Gustave lived in Carlton until he died in 1933. The original wooden house is no longer there.

#### **16 Collins Street**

Number 16 is on a block that was sold by James John Riley to Thomas and Jane Share in the 1850s. A two-storey, four-room sandstone house with a shingle roof was built by 1858. The house number started as number 20, and then became number 16 in 1880. Jane Share was the owner until her death in September 1876, when it was sold to William Williamson. She and her husband owned the Hibernian Hotel on the corner of Cumberland St and Cribbs Lane in the city (formerly known as the Bakers' Arms in the 1850s and 1860s). They also owned three cottages and a shop in the same street. Thomas Share died in July 1849 at the age of 50 when a rifle he was cleaning accidentally discharged. This house is still there.



Figure 4: 16 Collins Street



1860s

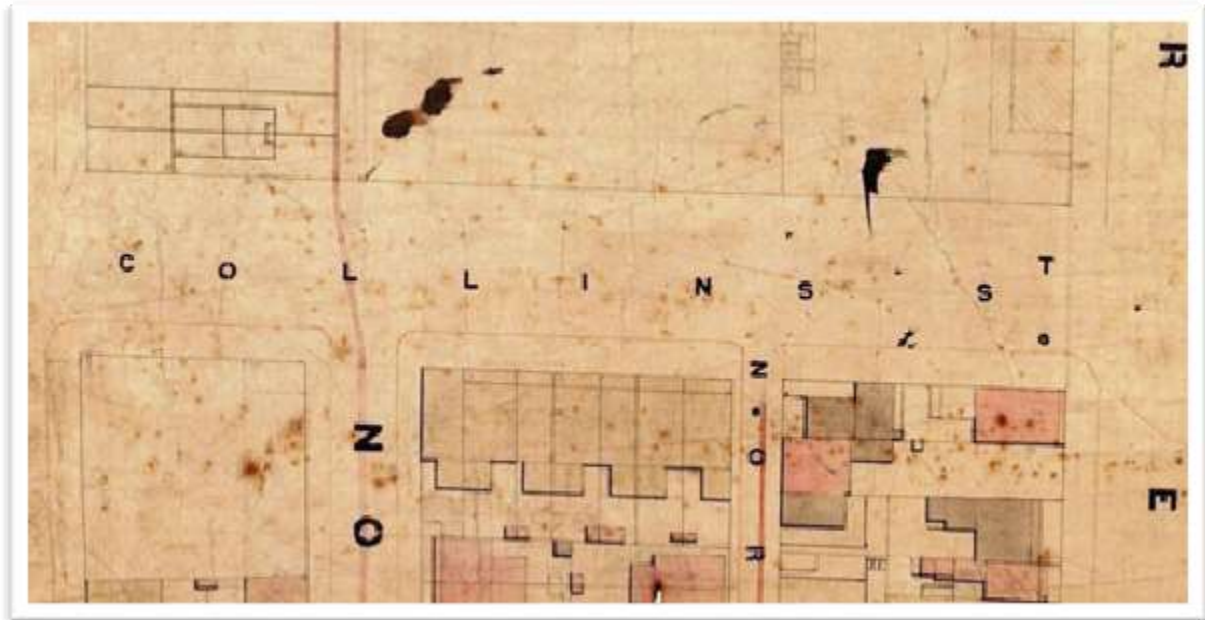


Figure 5: Trig map, 1865: Collins Street west, from Crown St (left) to Riley St (right)

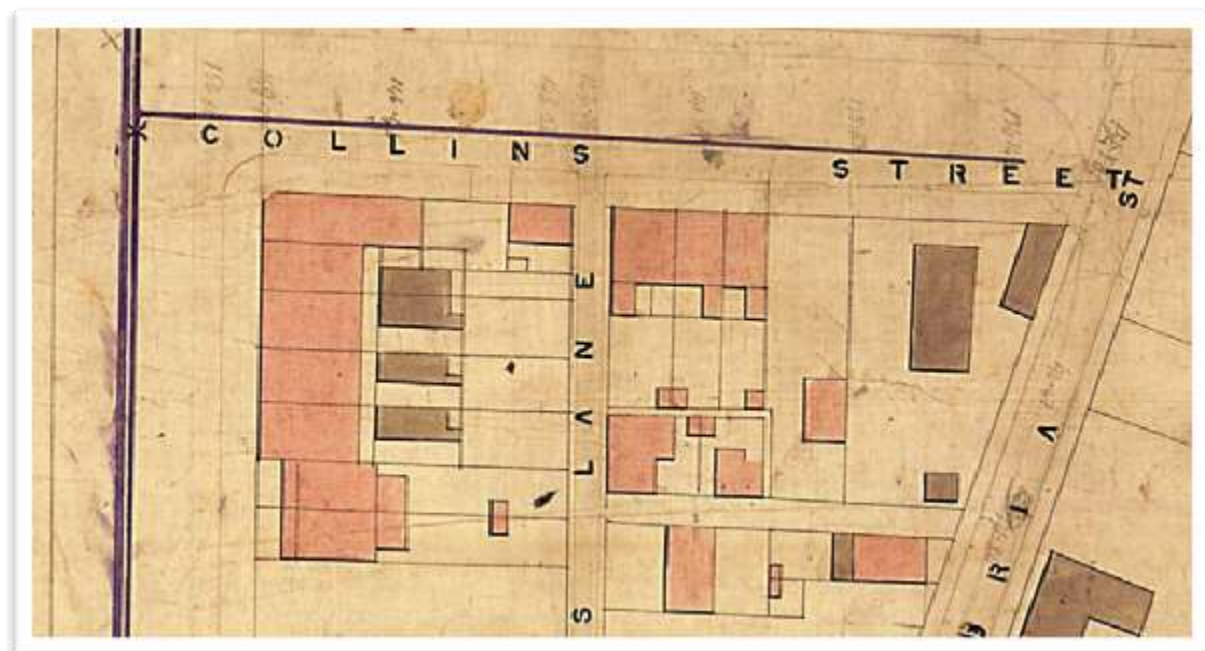


Figure 6: Trig map, 1865: Collins Street east, from Crown St (left) to Alexander St (right)

In the above trigonometric maps, pink buildings are brick, light brown buildings are stone and dark brown buildings are wooden.



#### 4-18 Collins Street



Figure 7: 6 - 12 Collins Street



Figure 8: 14-18 Collins Street

In 1863, the rest of the houses between Griffin St (then called Little Norton St) and Norton St were built. Number 6 was a two-storey brick house owned by John Fowler. Number 8 to 14 were two-storey stone houses owned by John Jesson. Number 18 was a two-storey stone house owned by Mrs Hardy.

#### 2 Collins Street

The land where number 2 now stands was sold by James John Riley to John Fowler, a carpenter, in July 1861.



Figure 9: 2 Collins Street

A two-storey freestanding brick house on the Riley Street end of this row was built in about 1871 for Russell Burgess, a tailor. The original attic was replaced by a third storey in about 1880. It has also been known in the records as 374 Riley Street, and in fact the council used this address for rate assessments until at least 1948.

### **The Exchange Hotel (now the Clock Hotel)**

The next construction in the street, although it now has a Crown street address, was the Exchange Hotel. This hotel has expanded over a period of almost a century from the corner draper's shop at number 468 Crown Street that was built in 1863 and became a hotel in 1864, owned by Thomas Hart, a carpenter who became a builder. He also owned several other properties in the area, including the three houses next to the hotel, the property behind (37 Collins St) and the grocer's shop across Crown St (35 Collins St). The Exchange Hotel expanded into number 470 Crown Street the same year. It was referred to as 27 Collins Street in the 1870-1 Sands Directories, when William Watson was the publican.



Figure 10: Clock Hotel

The existing clock tower was added during major renovations in 1923. In 1955, the third property at number 472 Crown Street was amalgamated into the hotel (and became the bottle shop), as was the commercial garage behind the hotel at number 37 Collins Street to become a pool room below and accommodation above. The final property, number 474 Crown Street, was added in 1969 and became the new bottle shop. The name was changed to the Clock Hotel at this time, as this had been its local nickname name for some time.

### 37 Collins Street (now part of the Clock Hotel)

This building was referred to in 1867 as a brick house of two floors and four rooms, owned by Thomas Hart. It was originally called number 29 Collins Street, and was occupied by Alfred Hayes, a carpenter and joiner, and his wife Elizabeth. It was separated from the Exchange Hotel by a yard.



Figure 11: 37 Collins Street (now the hotel smoking area)

### 39-43 Collins Street

Numbers 39 to 43 were all built by 1865. These houses were known as numbers 31 to 35 until about 1880. The present numbers 39 and 41 were bought as a double-sized lot by the builder Richard McCoy. It was subdivided, and two houses were constructed.

The land at number 43 was purchased by the builder Thomas Phelps for £80 from Alexander William Riley in January 1865. He then borrowed £300 two months later, probably to finance the construction of the two-storey brick house. The house was sold to Michael Purcell in 1868 for £480. A second dwelling was constructed at the rear of this block in its early days, and it is now a separate two-storey house called 3 Alexander Lane.



Figure 12: 39-43 Collins Street

#### 45-47 Collins Street

Number 45 (originally number 37) was built in about 1866 by Patrick Dacey, a bricklayer, as a single storey two-room cottage at the rear of the block, and which was also known as 5 Alexander Lane in the council's records. It looks like he also built number 47 (originally number 39) soon afterwards, as his wife Ann advertised herself as a laundress in the newspaper in 1868.



Figure 13: 45-47 Collins Street

## 49-53 Collins Street



Figure 14: 49-53 Collins Street

In the land where numbers 49 to 53 are now located, the carpenters Turner and Minty operated a workshop and timber yard from about 1867.

The houses at number 49 to 51 were built by Edward Turner in about 1880, and the end house (number 53) was built by Lewis Ernest Isaacs in about 1895.



## 1870s

### The Aston Terrace (15-33 Collins Street)

In 1869, Henry Phillips, an accountant and real estate developer, bought the land and started building the first six houses of the Aston Terrace, a fine set of ten mid-Victorian two storey brick houses that are now numbered 15 to 33 Collins Street. All the houses in the group were completed by 1876, and were initially numbered 1 to 10, starting at the Crown Street end. Henry Phillips and his family lived in number 10, next to the vacant lot at the Riley Street end. During construction, he had a dispute with the council about who was responsible for providing drainage for the houses.



Figure 15: 15-25 Collins Street



Figure 16: 25-33 Collins Street (Aston Terrace)

### 35 Collins Street – grocer's shop

In 1870, a large three-storey, nine-room grocer's shop and house was built at number 35 (originally number 25, but now called 413-415 Crown Street), owned by Thomas Hart. It was bought by Rosanna Thornton in about 1880, and she remained the owner until about 1907.



Figure 17: 35 Collins Street (now a modern building at 413-5 Crown Street)

## 1880s

A group of industrial buildings were constructed between the present Shannon Reserve and Davoren Lane. This area on the north side of Collins Street was taken over by Thomas Burdekin following the Riley Estate partition in 1845, and was held by his family until the middle of the twentieth century. At the time the land was first developed in the 1880s, it was owned by his son, Sydney.

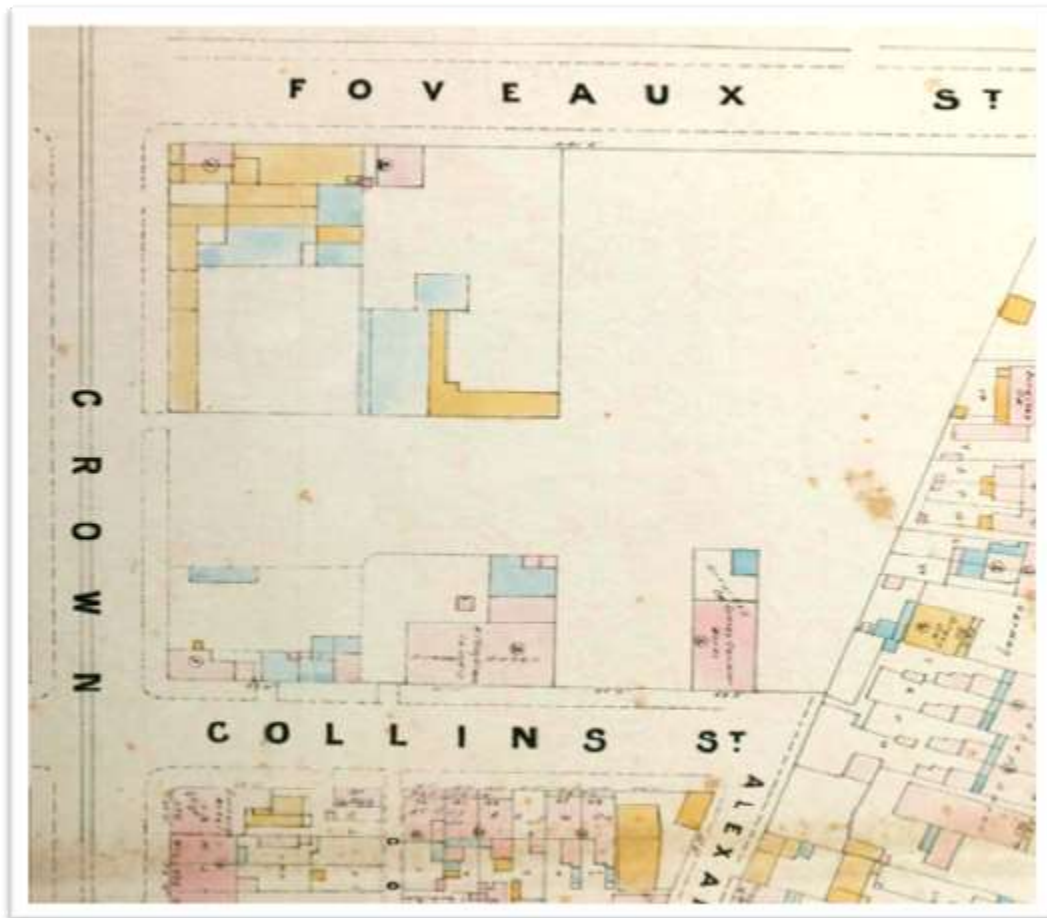


Figure 18: Rygate & West map, 1887 – Collins Street east



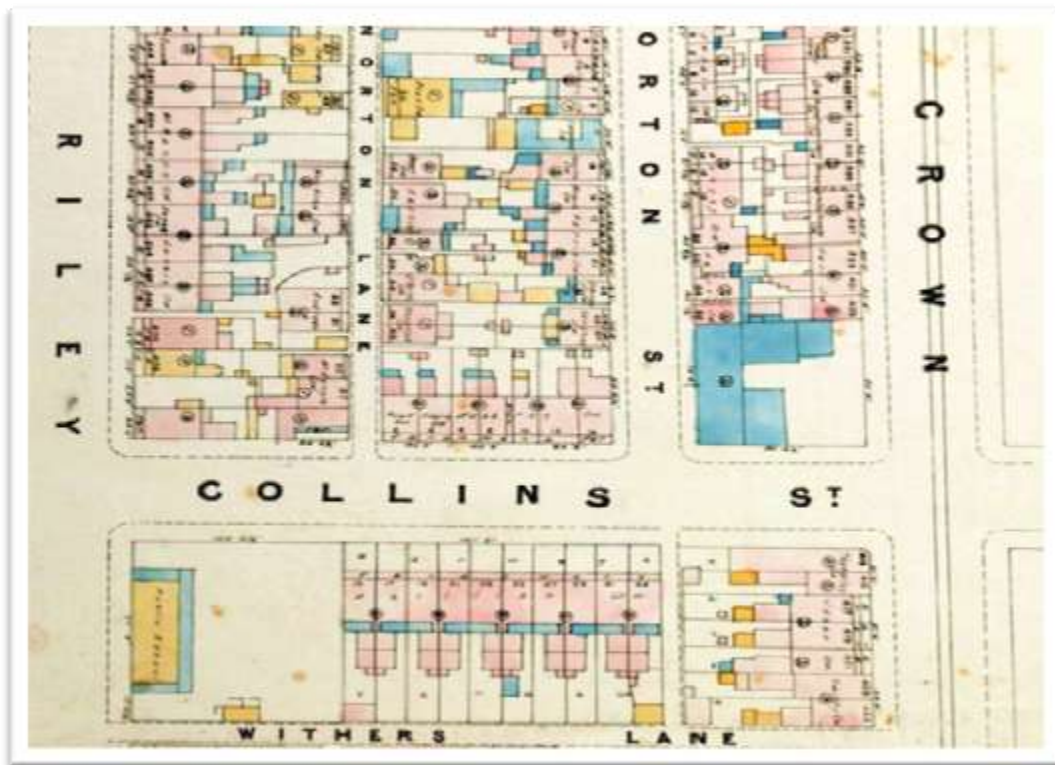


Figure 19: Rygate & West map, 1887 - Collins Street east

In the Rygate & West maps above, brick and stone buildings are shaded in pink, wooden buildings are brown, and metal buildings (or parts of buildings) are blue.

### 38 Collins Street - Wilson's Steam Laundry

The site of 38 Collins Street (now 35 Richards Avenue) was leased to Louis Rosenthal Wilson for 21 years in 1882, and he constructed a steam laundry, using elements of Victorian Classical style in the detailing of decorative brickwork, with the front door located on the corner of Collins Street and the future Beaufort Lane (later renamed to Richards Lane). This was the largest single building in the street at the time, an imposing two-storey brick structure, complete with a tall chimney (still standing) and a tower on top (later demolished).

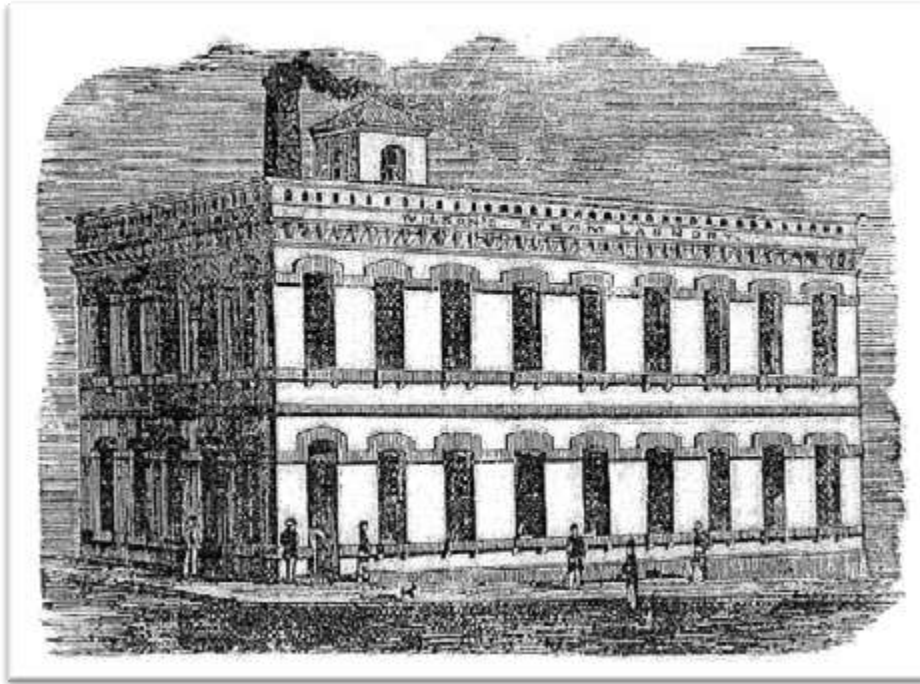


Figure 20: Wilson's Steam Laundry, 1880s

#### 40 Collins Street – Sydney Canister Works

The brick building between Richards Avenue and Davoren Lane was originally two separate properties, called number 40 and 42 Collins Street (both are now combined and called 28 Richards Avenue). Number 40 was the two-storey late Victorian warehouse with a dominant pediment-style parapet above the Collins Street wall. Number 40 first opened in about 1887 as the Sydney Canister Works, managed by Thomas Bengough, a tinsmith. In 1888, he was living in the house at number 49. By 1892, the building also housed the bedding manufacturing and upholstery business run by Robert A. Andrews. This building still has the original street number 40 on the Collins Street wall.



Figure 21: former Sydney Canister Works (No 40)

## **42 Collins Street – coach-building company**

Number 42 was the plainer single-storey building to the right of number 40 and was opened in about 1891 as a coach-building business run by Edward O’Brien. The large wooden door that was constructed to allow horse-drawn carriages into the building can still be seen on the Collins Street side, adjacent to Davoren Lane.



Figure 22: former United Carriage Works (No 42)

## **Library site**

The site of the Surry Hills Library has been referred to in various records as 20-22 Collins Street as well as 28-30 Norton Street, and (its more usual address) 405-411 Crown Street. It was not developed during the time covered by this section (up to the 1880s), but the northern part of the site was owned by William Charles Wentworth, and the southern 14 feet to Collins Street was bought by James Hume and William Goodman from James John Riley in 1856.

## **Riley Street school site**

The school on the southern corner with Riley Street was opened in 1884 as the Riley Street Infants School. It had been operating from 1874 as the Devonshire Street Public School in a rented hall of the Congregational Church in Devonshire Street. Following the loss of the rented premises by the Department of Public Instruction in 1883, the Infants Department of the school moved to the Collins & Riley Street site.

It was decided to move only the infants to this site due to the small area available, and the close proximity to both the Crown Street and Bourke Street schools. The school was originally run from a temporary wooden building along the Riley Street side with a wooden amenities block on the Withers Lane side.

In 1886, the headmistress Miss Elizabeth Banks introduced the German Froebel's Kindergarten system to the school, which used structured play to develop the children's mental, physical and moral faculties. This was in stark contrast to teaching methods of the time, where children sat lined up on forms and learned lessons by rote. Through the 1880s, the school won prizes for merit in education at several exhibitions, and became a model school for the new method of infant education, training many teachers in the new system.

### **Shannon Reserve site**

The final site in the street is the present Shannon Reserve. Although it has never had a Collins Street address, it is included because it is a significant part of the streetscape. It was part of the land that the Burdekin family acquired in the Riley Estate partition, and was first developed in the early 1880s when James Egan built livery stables on the Foveaux Street end of the site. He operated this until 1906.

The Collins Street end of the land was occupied by Samuel Maisey, a wood and coal merchant, from 1885 until 1922. The middle part of the block was never developed, and in fact H. E. C. Robinson's map at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century shows a short lane called Gore Street running from Crown Street through the centre. A brick-built shop on the Collins and Crown Street corner of the reserve site was a butcher's shop from 1882 through the 1890s.

## **Surry Hills in decline – the 1890s to the 1950s**

### **Depression arrives**

The economic boom of the 1880s ended with a wholesale collapse of the banks in 1893, after a frenzy of speculative buying and selling of assets. The building trades were among the worst affected, with nearly 50% of the carpenters and joiners out of work. Those still in work faced large pay cuts and shorter working hours. The depression of the 1890s was extended by the worst drought in colonial history, lasting until 1906.

Outbreaks of bubonic plague, the first one in 1900, were spread by the many rats in the area at the turn of the century. One unusual benefit of the plague was that anyone in the immediate area of an outbreak was quarantined, and then put to work in cleansing operations. In poor Surry Hills, this employment was much sought after, and in fact over 1,000 men actually camped out in the back lanes of the Darling Harbour goods yard in the hope of being quarantined and getting some paid work.

During this time, gangs of ratcatchers and cleansers combed the affected houses, many of which were demolished on the spot. The Town Clerk declared that bubonic plague was the greatest blessing that ever came to Sydney because of the impetus it gave to improvements in the welfare of the citizens. The most popular idea of improving (or "remodelling") the area at the time was to demolish houses and put up offices and factories.

### **Houses out, factories in**

From the 1890s, there had been various campaigns of slum clearances, supported enthusiastically by the church and the press. The council's grand plan over the next few decades was to take over (or "resume" as they called it) large areas of slum houses, pull them down, and then sell the land for the construction of factories and businesses, hopefully making a financial killing.

The first compulsory resumption of houses was around present-day Wentworth Avenue to provide a broad approach to the new Central Station. After the houses were pulled down, businesses such as Mark Foy's Ltd, Griffith Brothers Ltd Tea Merchants, and Soul Pattinson chemists were established.

Widening of many other main streets was undertaken at this time, including Goulburn, Campbell, Elizabeth, Oxford, and William streets, which meant demolishing whole streets of houses and replacing them with business premises built by the council. The north side of Oxford Street and the east side of William Street are examples of this.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 saw a great patriotic fervour sweep the country, and the young men of Surry Hills enlisted in large numbers. By 1917, resumption of inner-city housing had displaced about 9,000 people and destroyed some 1,700 houses. Not all council resumptions were a success, however. The Brisbane Street resumption resulted in a large cleared area that the council was never able to sell, and which eventually became the Surry Hills Police Station and Harmony Park.

By the 1920s, there was a proliferation of factories and workshops scattered among the residences of Surry Hills, causing complaints about pollution from chimney stacks, tanneries, curry makers, chemical factories and the like. In 1927, the City Engineer E. W. Coulson proposed a plan in which the whole of Surry Hills would be industrial within 50 years. In fact, city officials kept this dream alive for several decades to come.

## **Depression and war**

The depression of the 1930s was another challenge to the long-term problems of the area: poverty and unemployment. Many children were taken out of school to earn money to help keep the families going. However, community spirit continued in the area, and was strong during the 1930s, when neighbours helped each other to get by.

World War Two brought an end to the unemployment problem of the 1930s, but at a great human cost. Petrol rationing, food and clothing coupons and the black market were features of the war years.

There was a severe housing shortage in the 1940s in the area, caused by a combination of rapid industrial expansion following the slum clearances early in the century, and the by the reduced number of residences remaining. Council now reversed its previous policy of demolishing houses and building factories, as the long-term negative effect of this policy was now evident.

The area that contained Collins St: bounded by Riley, Fitzroy, Dowling and Cleveland Sts, contained 21 factories in 1926, but this had risen to 80 by 1938. Hardly any houses had been built in this area during this time. In fact, the City Engineer thought that this part of Surry Hills was unsuitable for residences, and should be completely converted to industrial use.

Eventually, in 1941, council declared this area to be residential, and it was saved from total industrialisation. The effect was that new factories were banned, but existing ones were allowed to continue operations. All the same, it was still considered at this time that the land was much more valuable for industrial purposes than residential.

## **Final resumptions**

The new strategy for civic improvement in the 1940s was to demolish the worst of the old houses and erect modern public housing. The district east of Marshall Street, including McElhone Place, was high on the list for modernisation. However, the site first chosen was a large area to the south of Devonshire Street, covering Marlborough, Lansdowne, Belvoir and Clisdell Streets, that included 240 houses and 21 businesses. Over 93% of the houses had been declared substandard. This final large scale resumption was grandly called the Devonshire Street Remodelling and Housing Scheme.

The plan was to pull down all existing buildings in this zone and erect 200 new residences in 4-storey blocks, housing at least 900 people. The flats would surround a central park complete with children's playground and community centre. Planning for this was underway by 1946. Council needed help from the State government with funding of this huge project, and this delayed progress for a few years. Demolition eventually began in the 1950s.



One of the outcomes of this was Northcott Place, a monolith of 14 stories and 428 flats, opened in 1961 with much enthusiasm by town planners and city fathers. Unfortunately, Northcott Place became a symbol of what can go wrong with official attempts at replacing existing housing with modern high-density equivalent. What was lost was the sense of community that existed in the old district.

It had been assumed that when Northcott was ready, the same members of the local community would return and inhabit it, thus continuing the community spirit that was alive there. However, the opposite happened, as the evicted residents were forced to disperse and settle all over Sydney when their houses were pulled down, and then it took many years to open the public housing. The new tenants come from all over the metropolis, and lacked the shared history and sense of place of the existing residents. Also, the origins of poverty were not in any way addressed by building modern housing. In the end, the slum wasn't eradicated, it was just modernised.

World War Two represented full employment for many people in Surry Hills, and some people emerged from the War with enough savings to move to the growing outer suburbs and buy a house. More and more housing was unoccupied as the population of Surry Hills fell. In fact, the population of the suburb dropped steadily throughout the 20th century: from 30,000 in 1890s, to 19,000 by 1947, and then to 12,000 by 1974. The 1940s seems to be the lowest ebb of the suburb's long deterioration, a reputation it had maintained for possibly 60 years, and which was a stigma that was hard to shake.



Figure 23: Crown Street and Albion Street corner, 1950s





## Collins Street industrialises – 1890s to the 1950s

By the 1890s, all the residential buildings in the street had been completed, and there were only occasional renovations to the dwellings, apart from the demolition of number 4. Despite this, there were major changes to the streetscape during this time, but they were to the non-residential buildings.

### Library site

On the site of the present Library, a bottle yard was operated by George Blackmore from 1907 in a single storey brick building. By the 1930s, stables had been added to the site. In 1948, it was called the Federal Bottle Exchange, and was owned by the Waterloo Bottle Exchange Pty Ltd, with George Blackmore still running it.



Figure 24: Surry Hills Library, 1956

In 1950, the site was acquired by the council for the establishment of a branch library. Construction started in 1953, and the building was intended to be a branch library and public recreation hall. It opened in 1956 as the Anthony Doherty Community Centre, being named after a Sydney Council alderman. It was later named the Surry Hills Library and Neighbourhood centre, as its use for public entertainment was replaced by neighbourhood activities, such as various group meetings and classes.

### 4 Collins Street

In about 1927, the original 1858 wooden house built by Adolphus Ostlund was demolished and the present two-storey brick building was erected with a factory above and four garages below. The owners were the brothers Frederick William Gardner and Albert H Gardner. In August 1927, there was an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald calling for tenders for the work of cementing the floors of four garages, and for the plastering of a 40'x18' ceiling.

It is not clear what the new owner had in mind for this new building, but by 1929 the local branch of the Children's Welfare League was located there. An article in the Sydney Morning Herald in December 1929 (after the stock market crash that triggered the Great Depression) mentioned that this organisation provided daily meals for over 300 poor children and poor expectant mothers, and that it found work for men with families. They were running a Christmas appeal for toys, goods and money, as their funds had nearly run out due to "continued trade depression and industrial upheaval" at this time.



The Free Milk Depot in Foveaux Street was an offshoot of the Children's Welfare League that opened in June 1927, providing milk and breakfast food to the poor children in Surry Hills. An advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1931 called for a pianist to play dance music in the hall on Saturday afternoons. The owner Frederick Gardner was referred to as the honorary treasurer of the organisation in a publicity notice for a boxing and vaudeville benefit for the League.

During the late 1930s or early 1940s, the site became a Scout Hall for the 1<sup>st</sup> Surry Hills Troop, with Robert Turner the scoutmaster. It was referred to in the Sydney Morning Herald as Lord Mayor Sir Samuel Walder's Own Troop. The owner of the hall, Frederick Gardner, gave it rent-free to the scouts. It was still in use as a Scout Hall in 1948.

## Shannon Reserve

In 1914, the site was resumed from the Burdekin estate by the Public Works Department for more than £10,000, with a plan to build a Workers' Institute, but this plan never proceeded. Meanwhile, Samuel Maisey continued operating his wood and coal business in the Collins Street end of the site until 1921. After this, Oliver E. Cooper operated a car-wrecking business in the former wood yard between 1929 and 1932. A variety of businesses operated in the brick-built shop on the Collins Street/Crown Street corner: James Mackey, saddler (1902-1910), George Howe, dealer in old wares (1913-1917), Edward S. Taylor, sign writer (1918-1923), Charles Blake, painter (1924-1928),



Figure 25: Shannon Reserve site, 1930s, showing Oliver Cooper's office

In 1936, the Parks and Playgrounds Movement suggested to the council that the State government hand the block over to the council for development as a park, which was agreed in 1937. By this time, the block had fallen into some disuse, and was reported to be a dump and an eyesore. Shannon Reserve was opened in August 1939 by the Lord Mayor, Sir Norman Nock, with Alderman Thomas John Shannon, MLA, speaking at the opening of his eponymous park. Shannon was an ALP council alderman for most of the period from 1921 to 1953, and the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Surry Hills from 1927 to 1930.



Figure 26: Thomas Shannon, MLA

Shannon reserve was initially declared a park for only 10 years, but it was mentioned at the opening ceremony that it would be a brave government that would try and take it back! During World War Two, a 245' concrete-lined trench was constructed in the park, as part of the local air-raid defence. By the 1950s, band concerts were being played in the Reserve on weekend afternoons, some of them broadcast on radio stations, such as 2CH.

### 38 Collins Street (now 35 Richards Avenue)

In 1898, Beaufort Lane and Beaufort Avenue were designated, and named after one of Sydney Burdekin's sons. But they were not officially declared until 1904. Prior to this, in 1900, there was a series of complaints to council about the laundry and its surrounds. Louis Wilson's son Oscar complained about the disgraceful conditions of the new lane and avenue, which he called a "swamp". At this time, the new street and lane were only half completed, having been laid out in 1898, but were still awaiting council to finish them.

In 1901, the undeveloped area of the Burdekin Estate between Wilson's Steam Laundry and Foveaux Street and east to the back of the Bourke St houses was subdivided into Torrens Title lots. In 1905, as part of the council's effort to standardise street names to avoid duplication, Beaufort Lane and Avenue were renamed to Richards Lane and Avenue, after Richard Watkins Richards, alderman and former mayor. In 1907, a local resident complained to council about the dense black smoke and soot that was pouring out of the laundry's chimney.

The laundry closed in 1907 (at the end of the 21 year lease), and moved to 498-510 Bourke St, on the corner of Arthur St (now the site of the Surry Mews home unit block). Louis R. Wilson died in 1919, and the Wilson Laundry in Bourke Street finally closed down for good in August 1947, due to an acute shortage of labour and materials. It was the largest in Sydney at one point, with 80 staff and an estimated business of £1,000 a week, processing half a million articles a year.



Figure 27: W E Woods Pty Ltd, 1920s

In 1907, the British pharmacist William Edward Woods leased the 30 Collins Street site from Sydney Burdekin and opened W. E. Woods Pty. Ltd., manufacturing chemists, in 1908. He had been operating in New Zealand since the early 1880s. The company's big seller was Woods' Great Peppermint Cure (a menthol-based expectorant for coughs and colds), and it was widely advertised in newspapers at this time. William Woods had developed this patent medicine in his laboratory in Wellington, NZ, in about 1891. The ads for the Great Peppermint Cure were frequently in the form of 8-line verses, extolling the virtues of the Great Cure in the last line, and all with some theme, such as Anzac Day or Ned Kelly, as in the following example:

***Ned Kelly in his suit of mail  
Was proof against all lead  
And how he laughed when all did fail  
To lodge it in his head***

***Then let us all be on our guard  
While long life we assure  
For coughs and colds have some regard  
Take Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.***

Soon after he arrived in Sydney from New Zealand in about 1903, William Woods held a verse-writing competition to award prizes for the best verses that were in this style. This competition seems to have been a publicity campaign as he prepared to start operations in Sydney.

William E Woods died in September 1927, but the company continued operating from the site. In 1936, the exterior of the building was rendered in cement in an Art Deco style, completely changing its appearance. By 1948, the company was also operating in both number 40 and 42 Collins Street, across Richards Avenue.



Figure 28: The Great Cure advertisement, 1930s

## 40 Collins Street (now part of 28 Richards Avenue)

In 1890, Thomas Bengough, manager of the Sydney Canister Works, was declared bankrupt, and his estate sold. After this, he ran the business in conjunction with a Mr Perry until about 1901. There was no mention of this company in the newspapers until 1920, when they advertised for staff at the address 32 Parramatta Road, Petersham.

In May 1892, there was a large fire in Robert Andrews' bedding factory in this building, destroying the stock and severely damaging the building. The Herald reported that it was apparently caused by ash from a cigar falling on some kapok, which is used as filling for mattresses. Mr Andrews had to escape from the upper floor by climbing through a window and down a ladder. The records show that his bedding business moved next door to number 42 in 1905.

From 1919 to 1923, Mark Foy Ltd used the building as a furniture factory. Also during these years, W. & E. Sidgreaves operated a business making showcases, and advertised for metal polishers and joiners to work there. The Sidgreaves firm fitted out a number of shop windows in Oxford Street during the 1920s. In 1923, the Sidgreaves' moved the business to Boronia St, Redfern.

By 1929, the building was occupied by T. S. Fraser & Co, metal craftsmen. Then, in 1932, W. E. Woods Pty Ltd took over the building to manufacture Fixol adhesives.



## **42 Collins Street (now part of 28 Richards Avenue)**

In 1892, Edward O'Brien closed his coach-building company and sold the machinery (and the horse). Then by 1899, the United Carriage & Buggy Co started operations in the building, managed by Terence Murray. In 1905, Robert Andrews combined his bedding and upholstery company (from number 40) with the United Carriage Company.

It looks like the United Carriage Company moved out of the building in about 1919, because the trustees of Sydney Burdekin advertised the premises for lease, as being suitable for a coachbuilder. Then in 1919, Thomas Mose, a motor body builder, started operations. This was a sign of the changing times, as the petrol engine was about to take over from the horse power following the mass production of motor cars from the 1920s.

By 1930, W. E. Woods Pty Ltd had taken over the building to expand their business, currently operating in number 38. W E Woods remained there until about 1973.

So number 40 and 42 were both operated by W. E. Woods by 1932, and the records show that by 1948 the two building were treated as one.

## **Riley Street school site**

Mary Simpson took over from Elizabeth Banks as the headmistress of the infants' school in 1889 and remained there until 1925, maintaining the Froebel's kindergarten system. By 1900, there were 272 enrolments, with a chronic lack of space and hygiene.

A builder was contracted to construct a brick school in 1902. A two-storey building was erected on the Collins Street side, backing on to the end of the Aston Terrace, and opened in 1903. The old timber buildings on the Riley Street side were still being used. By 1906, there were 302 enrolments, with an average daily attendance of 222.



Figure 29: Riley Street Infants' School



A new single-storey brick building was opened in 1907 and the old wooden ones removed. By 1930, enrolments had been declining over the previous five years, due to a kindergarten and crèche opposite the school (operated by the Royal Society for Welfare of Mothers and Babies at 443/451 Riley Street). In 1942, the kindergarten building was occupied by the National Emergency Services, and a pill-box (bomb shelter) was built in the playground, which was fully taken up for wartime defence purposes.

### 35 Collins Street

The larger building on the corner (now called 413 Crown Street) continued to be run as a grocery by the Thornton family until 1913. It was still a grocery in 1920, when George Brabham started a furniture shop there. He ran this until 1927, and then other retailers ran the shop until at least 1932.

The smaller building on the left of the corner shop (now called 415 Crown Street) was run as a fruit shop from 1909 by a series of Italian fruiterers, starting with Reginald Galeo, until about the 1980s. Other fruiterers here were Domenico and Genoveffa Gerardis who ran the shop from the early 1930s until he retired in 1956.



Figure 30: Gerardis family fruit shop, 1930s

After this, Francesco and Caterina Panuccio ran the shop from 1955 until at least 1978. While they were there, the building was largely demolished and rebuilt in 1961.



Figure 31: Panuccio family fruit shop, 1960s

### 37 Collins Street

In 1921, this was a brick house and garage, owned by John F. Dale. Then, from 1930, it was a flat and three garages, owned by Joseph Stanislaus Fallon, the owner of the Exchange Hotel at the time. The occupant between 1939 and 1948 was John Carroll.

In 1956, it was amalgamated into the Exchange Hotel, although none of the floor levels matched those of the hotel. The gap between the building and the hotel was filled in, and the bedrooms on the upper level became the accommodation area for the hotel, and the garage underneath became a pool room.

## Surry Hills in resurgence – 1960s to the present

### Migrants to the rescue

The salvation of Surry Hills as a vital neighbourhood was the post-war influx of migrants, particularly from the Mediterranean countries, and especially from Greece. Unlike the residents and landlords of the area for a very long time, they gave a high value to living in their own property, and proceeded to buy the very cheap terrace houses and renovate them. This was the first time in over sixty years that Surry Hills' residences had been seen as something to be valued and improved.

A sense of community returned to Surry Hills thanks to these immigrants, despite language and cultural differences with the older residents. By 1970, 70% of children in the Bourke Street Public School were of immigrant background. A sign of the times was seen in 1970 when St Paul's Anglican Church in Cleveland St was purchased by the Greek Orthodox Church.

Probably the most important contribution of the post-war immigrants was the realisation that the typical Surry Hilly terrace house was not an inherently bad form of housing that bred slums, crime and immorality. This idea had had official approval ever since the overcrowding and squalor of the 1890s.



Figure 32: Cypriot woman and grandson, 1977

### Gentrification

In the 1960s and 1970s, an urban middle class started moving into Surry Hills, looking for a more cosmopolitan life than the suburbs offered. Essentially, this influx represented the first group to make inner city living a conscious lifestyle choice. They were well educated, articulate, had good jobs in the city, and had high expectations for their own lives and for the area they had chosen to live in.

They were assertive and well-organised, and put pressure on the council to provide improvements in services and facilities. From the 1970s onwards, the new middle class residents of the area used a wide variety of tactics, such as lobbying and addressing council, co-opting the Builders' Labourers Federation into posting green bans, and generally making skilful use of the local power system to win such amenities as rezoning, street closures, child care centres, and more parks.

The 1980s saw a further influx of better-heeled professionals on high wages, which attracted antique shops, galleries and chic restaurants. House prices skyrocketed from the 1980s until the present day. One 3 bedroom house in Collins St was bought for \$10,000 in 1970, and is worth around a million dollars now. One accolade to the transformation of Surry Hills in the 1980s was that it was being touted by real estate agents as "the next Paddington".

Various Strategic Plans by the Sydney Council in the 1970s and 1980s sought to develop the village atmosphere of the area, with local shopping areas and road closures to create community playground and meeting areas.

The main difference from earlier generations of residents in Surry Hills is that residents today do not see their area as worthless, and themselves as powerless to act to change this. The widespread land resumptions of the 1920s had very little resistance from residents, and indeed they were hardly ever listened to, as the authorities (along with the church and the press) thought they knew what was good for them.

## **The modern era**

The factories and warehouses largely remain intact, and are very often heritage listed, and so can't be substantially changed in any case. But there is no more smoke or toxic waste belching from them, or the roar of machinery inside. The only smoke now is the odd puff from a cigarette as white-collar workers keep up the ritual of the "smoko", and the only noise is likely to be the quiet hum of computers, printers and fax machines from inside the renovated warehouses.

The reversal of Surry Hills' fortunes has been quite remarkable. All the same, many elements of the old Surry Hills remain: the rag trade, the brothels, the public housing and the welfare sector. It can be said now that comparisons with Paddington seem inadequate for this stylish and hip area.

## **Collins Street regenerates**

During this era, widespread renovations to residences have taken place. A previous owner of number 43 said that when she and her husband bought the house in 1969 to renovate it, the house had been vacant for several years and had no staircase or ground-level floorboards. She also said that they were the only native English speakers in the street at the time, as all other residents were migrants.

As well as ongoing renovation of housing, major changes to the street from the 1960s continue to be in the non-residential buildings.

### **Riley Street school site**

By 1970, there were only 95 enrolments, and by 1975, it was down to 50. The school closed in December 1989, despite objections by the Parents and Citizens Association, and other interested bodies.

The Forest House School for Specific Purposes operated from this site from the 1990s. It was operating from 1969 as the Forest Road School for Specific Purposes, and was renamed to the Forest House School in 1997. Specific Purpose schools are designed for primary children with specialised needs, including the hospitalised, the physically and mentally handicapped, and the emotionally disturbed. Some of these schools have no regular enrolments, and the children are regarded as temporarily absent from their ordinary school.

Forest House School was designed to cater for primary children with high support needs due to behaviour difficulties, and it has the ultimate goal of reintegration of the children into mainstream schooling. The school closed in about 2007.

The site has recently become active again as the Sydney Distance Education Primary School, with the address 1 Collins Street. This school serves primary-age students from the Sydney Metropolitan, Hunter and Wollongong areas that are not able to attend schools in their local areas for various reasons. Most of its students are temporarily overseas or travelling within Australia for family holidays or work. Students are given individual programs in all key learning areas.

## **4 Collins Street**

In 1971, this building was converted for use as a photographic studio by Phillip Gray Photographics. By 1972, it was also used as a Design-Artist studio by Hinke and Wally Zieck. They created the fashion range Ink Attire here in about 1973, and it was still operating as a warehouse until the building was sold in 1989. Her collection was unusual among local designers as it included accessories as well as clothing, aiming for what she called a “total look”. According to the newspaper ad for the auctioning of the business, it included number 2 Collins Street, as the warehouse was referred to as three stories, with three street frontages and surrounding a central courtyard.



Figure 33: Ink Attire (4 Collins Street), 1989

In the last ten years, it was used by Precise Medical Supplies Pty Ltd, a supplier of medical equipment and consumables to hospitals and healthcare professionals.



Figure 34: 4 Collins Street, 2011



## Library site



Figure 35: Surry Hills Library, 1990

In 2007, the building was demolished to make way for a new library and community centre. In November 2007, the Indian Chilli Restaurant next door at 403 Crown St started collapsing late one night when the deep excavations for the library basement together with heavy rain combined to weaken the restaurant's walls. It has been pointed out that this building was constructed of builders' rubble (off-cuts of sandstone and other leftover materials from building sites), so was not as strong as other houses in the area that are mainly built with sandstock bricks on a stone foundation.

The new Surry Hills Library and Community Centre opened in 2009, at a cost of nearly \$19 million, to widespread acclaim for its design and emphasis on sustainability and energy efficiency.



Figure 36: Surry Hills Library, 2011



## **Shannon Reserve site**

The park was upgraded in 1994. It is the home to the Surry Hills flea market, on the first Saturday of each month, and has been the site of the annual Surry Hills Festival, until it moved in recent years to an off-street location in Prince Alfred Park.



Figure 37: Shannon Reserve, 2011

## **38 Collins Street (now 35 Richards Avenue):**

W.E. Woods Pty Ltd moved their operations out of 38, 40 and 42 Collins Street by 1973. In this year, McConnell Smith Johnson (MSJ), architects, bought the site and commenced operation there. MSJ renovated the building extensively, turning the Collins Street and Richards Lane doorways into windows, and opening the Richards Avenue wall to a main entrance with stairway and vestibule.

It was probably called 35 Richards Avenue from this time, as this is how it is referred to in the next council development application in 1983.

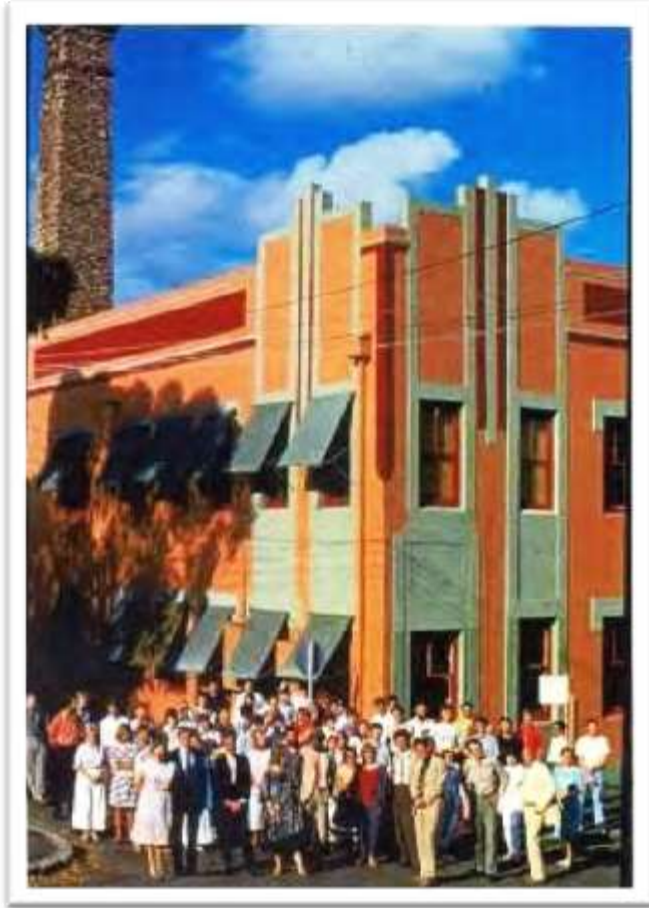


Figure 28: 38 Collins Street, 1970s



Figure 38: 38 Collins Street, 2011

In 2004, the property was transferred to Stasia Pty Ltd, property developers, although MSJ continue to operate there. The building is a rare example in this area of an Interwar Art Deco style that has been applied to a utilitarian building of this type.

### **40/42 Collins Street (now 28 Richards Avenue):**

In 1973, Ian McKay and partners (architects) applied to council for a change of use to warehouse and three dwellings. Three units were constructed on the northern end of the block at this time, becoming 22-26 Richards Ave, and opening in 1978, when a Certificate of Compliance was issued. In 1974, the main building was used as a film production studio. Later, the firm of architects Anchor, Mortlock & Woolley owned the building and operated their business there until it was sold in 1989, still referring to it as 40 Collins Street.

During the last 20 years, Samuelson Talbot & Partners Pty Ltd, a marketing and advertising firm, operated there. Presumably it was this company that changed the main entrance from Collins Street to Richards Avenue, as they gave their address as “The Cannery”, 28 Richards Avenue. They have now moved to Level 1, 490 Crown Street. During this period also, Synman Justin Bialek Architects worked there. They are now in Level 2, 490 Crown Street. A sign with the original street number “40” is still attached to the Collins Street wall of the building.

At present, two companies operate from the building: TigerSpike (developers of applications and other software for personal media, such as mobile phones), and MaCher, a design studio.

## Collins Street at work

Because of its central location in Surry Hills, the occupations of Collins Street residents might be a good illustration of the range of employment during the era of its expansion, up to the 1890s. The Sands' Directories were used for this information. The directories are most useful up to the 1880s, as the Sands' agents collected the majority of the occupations in the street. However, for some reason there are progressively less occupations listed after this, and beyond 1900, there are very few. The occupations were summarised by decade, and put into categories in each decade.

Note that no-one is referred to as a labourer, even though there must have been many of these. In fact, up to half of the residents have no occupation listed, which means they were either unemployed at the time they were surveyed (quite possible), or they were unskilled labourers and did not have an identifiable occupation as such. Note also that these lists indicate a shifting population of workers. For example, of the 6 carpenters in the 1880s, about half of them were resident for only a few years.

### 1860s:

- Building trades: 4 carpenters, plasterer
- Other trades: tanner, master mariner, boilermaker
- Unskilled: warehouseman
- Retail: 4 drapers, 2 tailors, furniture dealer
- White collar: herbalist, ship agent
- Middle class: doctor, professor of music

### 1870s:

- Building trades: 2 carpenters, builder, sawyer, bricklayer
- Other trades: embosser
- Unskilled: 2 warehousemen, drayman
- White collar: 2 agents, 2 commercial travellers, law stationer, bookkeeper
- Retail: tailor, 2 drapers, grocer, ironmonger
- Middle class: 2 accountants, musician

### 1880s:

- Building trades: 2 builders, 6 carpenters, 3 stone masons, 2 painters, bricklayer
- Other trades: 2 engineers, engine driver, carriage builder, two wheelwrights, boot maker, tinsmith, lithographer, French polisher
- Unskilled: warehouseman
- Retail: tailor, grocer, ironmonger, produce merchant, storekeeper, draper
- White collar: 2 clerks, telegraph operator, government disinfecter, 2 boarding house keepers, commercial traveller, two agents, bookkeeper
- Middle class: savings bank manager, school teacher, two accountants, musician, government surveyor, manufacturing chemist

### **1890s:**

- Building trades: 3 carpenters, 2 painters, bricklayer
- Other trades: wheelwright, millwright, coach builder, dressmaker, compositor, printer, harness maker, cordial manufacturer, drainer, electrician
- Retail: newsagent, storekeeper, grocer
- White collar: 3 commercial travellers
- Middle class: captain, school teacher, music teacher

It is fairly obvious from this summary that the building trades have dominated the employment in the street, and this reflects the rapid expansion of the population, especially in the long boom of the 1880s. As well as this, other local industries such as tanneries, coach-building works, printing works and the rag trade are represented.

A couple of more modern occupations such as telegraph operator and electrician indicate the development of electricity from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first telegram was sent from Sydney in 1859, and the first street lighting in the city (up to a five mile radius from the Pyrmont power station) started in 1904. An unusual occupation that appears in the summary is that of government disinfecter. This highlights the number of outbreaks of infectious diseases that afflicted the growing colony at this time.

As for the distribution of occupations throughout the street, the only trend that stands out is that the best paid workers lived in the ten houses of the Aston Terrace (15-33 Collins Street): the accountant, bank manager, teacher and chemist all lived there. Most of the white collar workers lived there as well: clerks, a law stationer, agents and commercial travellers.

## Notable characters of Collins Street

From the early days of the colony of Port Jackson right up to the present day, Sydney has been enlivened by larger-than-life characters, and Collins Street has had its share of them. This section presents the main people who have been identified in the evolving story of the street and its buildings.

### John Palmer

John Palmer was born in England in 1760, and seems to have been educated in the Royal Navy. He came to Australia in 1788 with the First Fleet, in which he was a purser on board the *Sirius* under Captain John Hunter.

He became the Commissary General to the colony in June 1791, which meant he was in charge of food and transport supplies for the colony. From all accounts, he fulfilled very well this rather tricky role in which he was at the same time official supplier, contractor and banker to the settlement, keeping its public accounts and funds. Palmer was one of the most enterprising of the early colonists. His first grant was 100 acres in Garden Island Cove, on which he built Woolloomooloo Farm. This was set in an extensive orchard, and on it he built one of the first permanent residences in the colony.



Figure 40: John Palmer

He also had a 300 acre Hawkesbury farm, which demonstrated much improved farming methods to those seen in the colony to date. As a farmer and grazier, he was an unqualified success. In addition, he acquired 70 acres to the east of Joseph Foveaux's Surrey Hills Farm, and called it George Farm. Eventually, he acquired about 200 acres in various parts of Surry Hills. By 1803, he owned several small locally-built vessels, employed in sealing in Bass Strait, and in hauling timber, grain and coal on the Hawkesbury River.

However, Palmer was no friend to the powerful John Macarthur or most of the New South Wales Corps. During the Rum Rebellion of 1808 in which Corps officers overthrew the Governor and installed themselves in charge of the colony, he support Governor William Bligh. He was arrested by the rebels, and suspended from his official duties. After this, Palmer spent most of the next six years giving evidence at various British government inquiries into the rebellion, and was forced to neglect his enterprises in NSW, going into debt as a consequence.

On returning to Sydney in 1814, his financial situation was very bad. The Sheriff, William Gore, ordered that his Surry Hills estate be subdivided and auctioned off. The division of Palmer's 70 acres in Surry Hills into 13 lots of 5 to 13 acres was done by Surveyor General James Meehan by drawing up dividing roads, many of which didn't exist as public thoroughfares for a long time. This contributed to the jumble of roads that was to characterise Surry Hills from then on. In 1814, Edward Riley started buying up the allotments in an attempt to try and reassemble Palmer's Surry Hills estate.



John Palmer died near Parramatta in 1833, being the last surviving officer of the First Fleet. He had a friendly manner and cheerful nature, and had a reputation for discreet benevolence. The power and responsibility inherent in his office as commissary were wielded both discreetly and efficiently.

## **Edward Riley**

He was born in London to George Riley Senior, a well-educated bookseller, and Margaret Raby, on 30/1/1784. He first went to Calcutta to work as a colonial trader. In 1805, he married Ann Moran, who had 3 sons and a daughter. He shipped all kinds of produce to China and the Australian colonies.

His elder brother Alexander had been in NSW since 1804, and Edward regularly shipped cargoes of rum, clothing and food to his brother's company. His fortunes fluctuated in Calcutta, and he acquired a taste for extravagant living. However, he was not a good businessman, and relied on his older brother's business advice. His wife died in 1810, throwing him into deep bouts of depression. His brother urged him to come out to NSW to settle, and he had already visited it several times. At one point he rallied, married Ann Wilkinson in Calcutta in 1813, then they moved to Sydney in 1816 to live.

He quickly became a leading citizen of the colony. Governor Lachlan Macquarie gave him a grant of land and made him a magistrate, and by 1818 he was a director of the Bank of NSW. He bought the largest house in the colony, Ultimo House, and began to live the luxurious life of a British grandee that had been little known in NSW until then. It has been estimated that he was the ninth richest man ever in the country in percentage of GDP terms.

His second wife bore him 3 sons and 2 daughters, but his business affairs did not go well. At one point, he had to sell the contents of Ultimo House and move into a smaller house at Woolloomooloo where he had a tract of land. From 1814, he started buying up allotments in John Palmer's George Farm (which was originally 70 acres), but only succeeded in buying about 25 acres of it, including Palmer's grand residence, Woolloomooloo House.

His health deteriorated through the early 1820s, and his mood swings became more and more violent. He suffered badly from gout, and became increasingly irritated at the limitations of colonial life. One night in February 1825, he retired to his room after dinner and shot himself with his shotgun.

Despite his troubles, Riley had great charm and honesty, and was a devoted family man. After his death, there was considerable confusion about the validity of two conflicting wills, which resulted in an immense amount of litigation before his estate was settled. It proved to be of great value, despite the neglect of the land and buildings at Raby. Most of his properties had not been developed, including the land in Sydney.

## Summary of the Riley family

- Alexander Riley (1778-1833), arrived in Sydney in 1804, left Sydney in 1817 for England. Owner of the Raby Estate near Campbelltown, NSW.
- Edward Riley (1784-1825) arrived in Sydney in 1816.
- First wife: Ann Moran, 1805, married in Calcutta (died in Calcutta 1810). Children:
  - Edward (1806-1840)
  - George (1810 - )
- Second wife: Ann Wilkinson, 1815, married in Calcutta (died in 1830 in Sydney). Children:
  - Ann Sophia (1817 - 1881)
  - Alexander William (c1820- )
  - James John (1821 – 1882)
  - Charles (1823 - )
  - Frances Elizabeth (1824 - )



Figure 41: James John Riley

## The Riley Estate heirs

- Estate of Edward Riley junior (1806-1840)
- George Riley (1810- ).
- Ann Sophia Riley (1817- ): married Robert Campbell (Colonial Treasurer) in 1835.
- Alexander William Riley (c1820- ).
- James John Riley (1821-1882): became the first mayor of Penrith, 1871-1875. Lived at Glenmore, Mulgoa. Married Christina Eliza Passmore Blomfield in 1845.
- Charles Riley (1823- ).
- Frances Elizabeth Riley (1824- ): married Charles Daniel O'Connell on 10/3/1842.

## Edward Smith Hall

He was born in 1786 in London, and died in 1860 in Sydney. He was one of the original purchasers of some of Palmer's allotments in 1814.

He was a banker, grazier and the controversial editor of *The Monitor*, which he founded in 1826. He established a farm on two of Palmer's former lots, and lived on his land from 1815 to 1822, making him the earliest resident of SH. He sold his lots to Edward Riley in 1822, but soon afterwards was granted 1,856 acres immediately to the south of Foveaux's old Surry Hills Estate.

As founder of *The Monitor*, he was a strident critic of Governor Ralph Darling, and after being jailed for multiple libels in 1829, he sold his remaining Surry Hills land to cover legal costs. Hall was a strenuous and fearless advocate for a free press, and while in jail continued to run *The Monitor*, and to prepare further libels.

*The Monitor* was a promoter of such now-accepted issues as trial by jury and a popular legislature. In addition it condemned the oppression of convicts and public immorality by officers. Hall was largely responsible for Darling's removal as governor in 1831, and had the satisfaction of announcing this personal victory in his newspaper.



Figure 42: Edward Smith Hall

## Burdekin family (owners of Shannon Reserve, 38, 40, 42 Collins Street)

Thomas Burdekin arrived in Sydney in 1828, and established a branch of Burdekin & Hawley, ironmongers and general merchants. He proceeded to build a fortune, initially as an ironmonger (or hardware dealer, as it would now be called), then as a property speculator and developer.

The Burdekins were big landlords – eventually they owned hundreds of properties from the harbour to the inner city and beyond. Thomas married Mary Ann Bossley, and when he died in 1844, left considerable real estate holdings, mainly in Sydney and Singleton.



Figure 43: Sydney Burdekin, MLA

George Riley inherited block D18 of the Riley Estate, north of Collins St, between Crown Street and the rear of the Bourke St houses (present day Davoren Lane), but he was heavily in debt, and Thomas Burdekin was the major creditor. Thomas Burdekin and George Riley applied through the Supreme Court in 1841 for subdivision of the Riley Estate, so that George's share could be isolated to pay off Burdekin's loan.

A Board of Commissioners was established by Chief Justice Sir James Dowling, surveyors were appointed, the Estate was valued at about £97,300, and the seven heirs drew lots. George Riley's debt to Burdekin was settled in 1843, and Burdekin became the owner of block D18.

After Thomas Burdekin died in 1844, and the three surviving children had all reached 21 (by 1860), the estate was divided between Mary Ann and his three sons Bossley, Marshall and Sydney. Sydney was born in 1839, and became a pastoralist, landlord and politician. For several years, he managed the family's pastoral runs in Queensland and northern NSW. Then, after he moved permanently to Sydney, he became a Member of the Legislative Assembly almost continuously between 1880 and 1894, representing Tamworth, East Sydney and Hawkesbury.

Sydney Burdekin was an alderman in Sydney Municipal council in 1883-1898, and mayor in 1890-1891. He married Catherine Byrne in 1872, and they had 8 children, one of them a son named Beaufort. He died in 1899.

### **Louis Rosenthal Wilson (owner of Wilson's Steam Laundry, 38 Collins Street)**

He was born in about 1845, of Jewish parents. He married Marie Bertha Sadling on 19/9/1877 in Sydney. The marriage notice in the Sydney Morning Herald said he was from Cooktown (but he was not born in Queensland).

Louis died on 8/6/1919 at his residence 639 Dowling St, Moore Park, age 74, and was buried at the Jewish Cemetery, Rookwood. His sons were Oscar Samuel (1880-1950), Victor Ezekiel (1883-1940), Aubrey M. R. (1885-1911).

### **William Edward Woods (owner of W.E. Woods Pty Ltd, 38/40/42 Collins Street)**

He was born in about 1856 in Cardiff, Wales. He apparently lived in a number of countries, coming to Australia from New Zealand, where he worked for many years as a pharmaceutical chemist. The Hawkes Bay Herald reported in 1881 that he had worked for some years with Messrs Kempthorne, Prosser & Co, a wholesale drug warehouse in Wellington.

In October 1881, he opened a retail druggist's and chemist's shop in Hastings St, Napier. The rear of the shop was adapted as a laboratory. He sold a variety of products, including homeopathic medicines until April, 1883, when his house was put up for sale and notices of meetings with creditors appeared in the Hawkes Bay Herald at the end of this year. It looks like his business didn't do well in Napier.

Then, in January 1891, he opened a chemist's and druggist's establishment at 3 Cuba Street, Wellington, called the Co-Operative Drug Store, stating that he had 22 years experience in the trade. He sold this business to G W Wilton in October 1899.

By 1900, his products were being sold all over New Zealand. His big seller was Woods' Great Peppermint Cure for Coughs and Colds, which he developed in about 1891 in the laboratory. The first mention of the Great Peppermint Cure in New Zealand papers was in the Hawkes Bay Herald in June, 1895, when Wood, referred to as "Wellington's principal chemist", started distributing the Cure throughout the country. The first ads for the Great Peppermint Cure in Australian papers appeared in April 1898. He applied for a trademark for the Peppermint Cure in the Victorian Government Gazette on 26/7/1901.

In November 1901, his villa residence in 84 Ghuznee St, Wellington, with large factory at the rear, 84a, occupied by W E Woods Peppermint Cure Co was put up for auction (Evening Post, 2/11/1901). It looks like he moved to Sydney by 1904, and took over the premises in 38 Collins Street from the Wilson's Steam Laundry in 1907. The 1918 Sand's Directory lists the company under Wholesale and Manufacturing Chemists, but not under Chemists and Druggists. So it looks like he was not a retailer in Sydney.

The company ran an entertaining line of advertisements for the Great Peppermint Cure in newspapers. The first one found was in New Zealand in 1897. A verse competition advertised in the SMH in 1903 said that William Woods had 30 years experience as a pharmaceutical chemist in Britain, the Americas and the Colonies. Some 12 years before (i.e. about 1891) he experimented with menthol, the active ingredient in peppermint, and found it was useful as an expectorant for treating colds. This resulted in the Great Peppermint Cure, the largest-selling cough medicine in Australasia. The verse writing competition was probably a way of getting some publicity for his business in Sydney after moving there at about this time.

In later life, he lived in Darling Point, Sydney. He died in September 1927, and was survived by a wife and two sons, W. G. and A. E. Woods, and a daughter.

There was an interesting story in a New Zealand paper on a Supreme Court case in which W. E. Woods sued a marketing agent for not placing ads for his patent medicines in South Island papers for some months in 1896, claiming significant loss of business as a result. The trial seems to highlight the sceptical view taken of such medicines, based on some of the questions asked of Mr Woods' distributor by the defence lawyer.

The defendant's lawyer suggested that perhaps no-one suffered from coughs or colds during this period, or that other cures were advertised with better poetry (to laughter in court). It also suggested that the court action was an advertising strategy in itself. The distributor was asked how many bottles of the Cure it took to cure a cold – the distributor said he wasn't qualified to say (to more laughter). When pressed, he admitted that he had faith in it as a saleable item, not necessarily as a curative item (to even more laughter).

## **Henry Phillips (builder of the Aston Terrace, 15-33 Collins Street)**

Henry Phillips was an accountant for the Pacific Insurance Company. His wife was Margaret Thomson Phillips.

He often had property dealings in partnership with his brother Frederick. In the 1860s, they built the large Phillips Terrace in Crown Street.

Henry bought part of the Riley Estate block G22 in Collins Street. A mortgage was taken out on the Phillips Terrace for £3,000 to finance the first six houses of the terrace. A second mortgage in 1873, also for £3,000 probably paid for the rest.

The Aston Terrace had a rare feature in Surry Hills of sizeable front yards. They were planned as a unified conception, and form a balanced composition.

At one point, Henry Phillips complained to council of the unhealthy state of the rear lane (Withers Lane). He died of typhoid in 1884, while living at Number 10, Aston Terrace (next to the Riley Street Infants' School).



Figure 44: Henry Phillips' house (No. 15)

## **Elizabeth Banks (headmistress of Riley Street Infants School)**

Elizabeth Lindsay Banks was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1849, the daughter of a schoolmaster. She was trained as a kindergarten teacher in Scotland, and under a pupil of Friedrich Froebel in Germany. She accompanied an invalid sister to Australia, not intending to stay here. However, she applied for a teaching position, and in 1886 was appointed infant mistress at the newly established Public Kindergarten Infants School at Riley Street, Sydney.

The "Kindergarten System" had aroused some interest in NSW, but an experiment with "pure" kindergarten teaching was not well received, and the Department was only tentatively introducing parts of it in infants' schools. Miss Banks' concept of kindergarten fitted very well with this pattern, and her work in Riley Street profoundly influenced the training in infant school teachers in the colony. For the next 15 years, she was the authority on kindergarten methods.

Despite poor accommodation and lack of equipment, her work at Riley Street quickly won recognition. The children's work gained medals at International Exhibitions in Adelaide and Melbourne in 1887 and 1888. In 1889, Miss Banks was appointed to Fort Street Model School as a special kindergarten instructor. As well as demonstrating kindergarten methods, she also trained student teachers in kindergarten theory and practice. She remained at Fort Street until her retirement in 1917. She died in September 1933 at her home in Cremorne, aged 84.

## **Thomas Phelps (builder of 43 Collins Street)**

He was born in about 1836 in Pembrokeshire, Wales, and married Mary Cummins in Sydney in 1857. He was a plasterer by trade, and was a major contributor to the early building boom in Surry Hills. By 1867, he owned 5 properties in the area: in Arthur St, off Alexander St and in Collins Street, including the Pembroke Castle Hotel, and number 22 Arthur Street (now number 52), where he lived at the time.

The Pembroke Castle Hotel, on the corner Arthur and Alexander Streets was built between 1863 and 1865, with Thomas Phelps listed as the owner in 1867 rate books. He probably built this hotel himself and named it after the most famous castle in his home county in Wales. Initially it had two stories and six rooms, but by 1880, it was referred to as having three stories in the council rate books. The hotel changed its name to the Athletic Club Hotel in 1886, and was then sold in 1887 in the estate of his wife, the late Mary Phelps for £1,750.

Pembroke Castle on the coast of West Wales was first built in 1093 during the Norman invasion of Wales, and then rebuilt more strongly in stone in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was destroyed by Cromwell's army during the English Civil War in 1648, and lay in ruins until 1880. From then until the late 1920s, various restoration efforts rebuilt the original stone castle, and today it is the largest privately-owned castle in Wales.

It seems that this hotel was built not for drinking as much as accommodation purposes. There is still a cellar under the front corner room, showing that this room was a front bar, and it was licensed to sell alcohol, but the auction notice in 1887 only mentioned that there were 12 rooms, a bathroom, a cellar and balconies. Evelyn Swift, a long-time resident of Alexander Street, said that she was always told when she was growing up that this was "the pub that never opened". Today it is a three-storey apartment building.

Thomas Phelps ran a small fleet of horse-drawn omnibuses in Sydney, and in 1869, advertised the buses, horses and harnesses for sale. The buses were named the City of Sydney (carrying 37 passengers), the Rob Roy and the Invincible (both carrying 20 passengers).

By 1877, he owned 28 properties in Surry Hills: 17 in and off Phelps St, 7 in Arthur St and 4 in Bourke Street – he is listed as the resident of 582, 584 and 586 Bourke Street. He died in 1880 at his then-residence 20 Glenmore Road, Paddington, at age 44 years. His wife Mary died in 1883 in Sydney.

Jamison Street was changed to Phelps Street by the council in 1873, in recognition of his contribution to the building of the street. The renaming of streets was an attempt to remove duplication of street names. At the same time, Victoria Street became Davies St, Church Street became Arthur Street (at least the extension of the Arthur Street to Riley Street), Jones Street became Mort Street and Surry Street became Little Arthur Street.



## Appendix 1 – Heritage listed buildings

The majority of the Collins Street buildings are now listed on the State Heritage Register, and the Aston Terrace is also on the Australian Heritage Places inventory. The following entries are taken from the State Heritage website, and are included for some extra information.

### Riley Street Public School

- **Name of Item:** Riley Street Public School Group
- **Other Name/s:** Riley Street Infants School
- **Statement of Significance:** The school complex dates from one of the key period of layers for the development of Surry Hills as a direct result of the subdivision of the Riley Estate. It is a good example of a Federation Arts and Crafts school complex part of which was designed by prominent Government architect Walter Liberty Vernon.
- **Designer/Maker:** Main Building - J. Wigram, Kindergarten - W.L. Vernon
- **Builder/Maker:** Main Building - Fallick & Nunn, Kindergarten - Leggo
- **Construction Years:** 1902 - 1903
- **Physical Description:** Riley Street Public School Group includes a two-storey Federation building constructed of face brickwork with gabled and parapeted tiled roof. The building is symmetrical fronting Riley Street and is simply detailed with string and header coursing to the brickwork with timber double hung windows and timber doors. The adjacent single storey kindergarten building is also constructed of face brickwork with roughcast render gables and a hipped and gabled corrugated iron roof (originally slate) and timber windows and doors.
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** In good condition with a high degree of original fabric intact and high potential for restoration.
- **Modifications and Dates:** In 1910, the windows were lowered and the timber floors replaced
- **Historical Notes:** The site originally contained terraces but was resumed in 1881 and the Riley Street School has occupied the site since 1884. The original school was timber and had been relocated from the Congregational Church in nearby Devonshire Street. The current buildings were constructed in 1902 and 1907. The school was closed in 1989.

### 2 Collins St

- **Statement of Significance:** A good and relatively intact example of a mid-Victorian terrace that illustrates the form and scale of development common to Sydney's inner-city area during the late 19th to early 20th century to accommodate the growing working class populations
- **Construction Years:** 1873 - 1874
- **Physical Description:** Originally two storey freestanding late-Victorian terrace with the original attic replaced by the third storey featuring a high parapet with a castellated motif and urn, flat symmetrical façade and two windows with rendered sills. The original characteristics of the terrace that have been retained include a corrugated iron skillion roof to balcony with twin French doors and decorative iron balustrading, twin French doors to the ground floor, raised verandah area with sandstone flagging and retaining wall, and a side entrance with a four panel door. The windows along the Collins Street frontage have been retained and include double hung sash windows with rendered sills.
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** The terrace is in good physical condition.

- **Modifications and Dates:** 1997 – Alterations to attic to provide an additional floor.

## 6-18 Collins St

- **Statement of Significance:** A group of seven attached sandstone Victorian Filigree terraces that represent the period of early speculative housing in Surry Hills to accommodate the working class population
- **Construction Years:** 1862 - 1866
- **Physical Description:** Group of seven attached two storey Victorian Georgian sandstone terraces characterised by corrugated iron roofs, twin French doors to balcony with decorative iron balustrading, ground floor double hung sash windows, iron palisade fence and gate, and four panel front doors. The terraces at either end of the row have a hipped roof. The front door at number 6 is located along the side lane, and has retained the decorative iron frieze to verandah and urns situated on top of the firewall. The sandstone flagging at number 8 has been covered in tessellated tiles. Additional features at number 10 include timber shutters around the ground floor opening and single French door, brick front fence and front dormer window. The iron balustrading and palisade fence has been replaced with a simple timber design at number 12, and an additional front door constructed on the ground floor. The front fence at number 14 has been replaced with a simple brick design, has had the iron balustrading replaced with timber panels and front dormer window constructed.
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** The terrace group is in good physical condition.
- **Modifications and Dates:** 1995 – Internal and external renovations to number 6, including restoration of façade and openings.

## 35 Richards Avenue (was 38 Collins St)

- **Name of Item:** Federation Warehouse
- **Statement of Significance:** The building dates from one of the key period of layers for the development of Surry Hills as a direct result of the subdivision of the Riley Estate. It is a good example of a Federation warehouse with art deco alterations and dominant chimney which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape.
- **Physical Description:** The building is a 2 storey Federation style Warehouse constructed of rendered brickwork with art deco detailing, and timber windows and doors. A simply detailed stepped parapet with moulded detailing and dominant chimney to the western side
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** In good condition with a high degree of original fabric intact externally level and high potential for restoration.
- **Modifications and Dates:** The building has had several minor modifications primarily confined to the ground floor level.

## 28 Richards Avenue (was 40-2 Collins St)

- **Name of Item:** Late Victorian Warehouse
- **Statement of Significance:** The building dates from one of the key period of layers for the development of Surry Hills as a direct result of the subdivision of the Riley Estate. It is a good example of a late Victorian warehouse building which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape.

- **Physical Description:** Two-storey Federation Warehouse. The building is a symmetrical 2 storey Federation style Warehouse constructed of face brickwork with render detailing and timber windows and doors and central dominant pediment style parapet.
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** In good condition with a high degree of original fabric intact externally.
- **Modifications and Dates:** The building has had several minor modifications primarily confined to the ground floor level and interior.
- **Historical Notes:** The existing building was built c 1900.

## 15-33 Collins St

- **Statement of Significance:** Fine and remarkably intact group of ten attached and mid-Victorian terraces with generous front landscaped setback, which makes an important contribution to the streetscape. It is indicative of the middle class housing constructed in Sydney's inner-city areas during the late 19th century.
- **Construction Years:** 1872 - 1873
- **Physical Description:** A group of ten attached mid-Victorian terraces with a painted facebrick façade and characteristics include intact chimneystacks located at each firewall, corrugated iron roofs, single French doors to balcony and decorative iron balustrading. The ground floor features include timber double hung sash windows, four panel front door and tessellated tiling to verandah. The row is uniformly setback from the street frontage with a small landscape area with timber picket fencing. Each of the terraces has a front dormer with timber casement window and bargeboard.
- **Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential:** The terrace group is in good physical condition.

## Clock Hotel

- **Name of Item:** The Clock Hotel
- **Other Name/s:** The Exchange Hotel
- **Physical Description:** Two storey Victorian Italianate style hotel, with splayed corner entrance to the public bar.
- **Historical Notes:** The Clock Hotel was built in the late 19th century, and the detail on the 1910 plans exhibits typical late Victorian detailing. Original plans for the hotel do not appear to have survived, however there are surviving drawings for alterations to the hotel in 1910. For the greater part of its existence, the hotel was known as The Exchange Hotel, The name was changed to The Clock Hotel on 14/5/1969. The hotel was well established by 1910 when the earliest surviving plans, dated 11/1/1910 titled "Proposed alterations and additions to the Exchange Hotel Corner of Crown and Collins Streets for J.F. Dale Esq." were submitted. These plans were for additional bedrooms on the Collins Street frontage of the hotel.
- **Modifications and Dates:** The Hotel has been extensively altered throughout its existence, with alterations in 1910, 1912, 1923, and later. It is likely that the clock and tower were constructed in 1923.

## Appendix 2 – World War 1 participants

These are the residents of both Collins Street and Little Collins Street (its extension on the other side of Riley Street) who saw service in the Australian Imperial Force during World War 1. For a short street, the participation was high, which was characteristic of the patriotic fervour at the time.

Alfred James Anderson, 1 Little Collins Street – Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, G Company

Thomas Alfred Anderson, Little Collins Street – 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, B Company

Herbert Bennett, 51 Collins Street – 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Company

Joseph Browning, 19 Collins Street – 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcement

Thomas Francis Green, 1 Little Collins Street – 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement

Thomas Jackson, 19 Collins Street – 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement

Charles Lawrie, 43 Collins Street – 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement

Thomas Hammon Pearman, 10 Collins Street – Light Trench Mortar Battery, Reinforcement 2

Ernest Albert Sutton, 19 Collins Street – 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Brigade Train

The fate of these men was that Thomas Anderson and Joseph Browning were killed in action, and the rest returned to Australia.

## Land Title information

The following details are selected from a conveyancing document of 43 Collins Street, which was part of block C24 of the Riley Estate. It is part of the Schedule of past transactions on land that includes the present property, and it demonstrates the history of ownership of the land before its sale by Alexander William Riley to Thomas Phelps, who the built the house in 1865.

1<sup>st</sup> April 1794    Grant to John Palmer of 70 acres of land on the Surry Hills known by the name of George Farm.

25 October 1814  
Conveyance from William Gore Provost Marshall to Edward Smith Hall of Lot    twenty two of the said John Palmer's lands containing seven acres and two roods.

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1822    Conveyance of the same and other lands made between Edward Smith Hall and wife of the first part, Edward Riley of the second part and William Walker of the third part.

7 August 1844    Deed of partition of the Riley Estate in pursuance of a decree of the Supreme Court in a suit in Equity Burdekin against Campbell and others

26 May 1847    Deed of Covenant between John Brown Bossley and Mary Ann Burdekin of the first part and John Nepean McIntosh of the second part and Alexander William Riley of the third part

Summary of these transactions:

- Original land grant to John Palmer in 1794
- Forced sale of 7 acres of Palmer's estate to Edward Smith Hall in 1814
- Purchase of the same 7 acres by Edward Riley in 1822
- Partition of the Riley Estate in 1844, in which this land was on block C24
- Mention of the inheritor Alexander William Riley in 1847

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