

Taylor Square – Sydney's first hub



John W. Ross

Cover photograph:

Taylor Square, 1960 (City of Sydney Archives)



Sir Allen Taylor, Sydney Lord Mayor, 1905 (City of Sydney Archives)

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Foreword

In 1790, a signal station was established on South Head to alert the residents of Sydney of arriving ships, many carrying much-needed supplies for the struggling colony. In 1811, Governor Macquarie built a substantial road from the signal station to Hyde Park and named it South Head Road. As the population grew over the following decades, this road became not just a thoroughfare to the expanding eastern suburbs, but a destination in itself. Land subdivisions over much of Surry Hills and Darlinghurst from the 1840s and the construction of a gaol, courthouse, military barracks and many retail businesses along the road gradually transformed South Head Road into an important commercial high street.

In 1875 it was renamed Oxford Street, taking its London namesake as the model for the grand Victorian High Street that now led down to the elegant buildings lining Hyde Park. By the end of the nineteenth century, Oxford Street was an extremely busy place, with trams, wagons and other vehicles competing with pedestrians and street vendors for space. The construction of Central Station in 1906 provided the impetus to widen the major streets in the area, beautify the streetscape and generally modernise the city. The Sydney Council duly embarked on an ambitious program of widening Oxford Street followed by Flinders Street.

The principal architect of these reforms was an energetic businessman and Council Alderman from a modest background, named Allen Taylor. He became a consummate political operator who worked with the Sydney Council and State Government to transform the urban environment from the colonial era to embrace modern technology, while guided by the principles of the City Beautiful Movement. The major intersection of Bourke and Oxford Streets became a spacious square, and was named in his honour in 1908.

The large and very popular tram system, for which Taylor Square was a major junction, was finally abandoned in 1961 after a century of service, to be replaced by buses and ever more motor cars. Many of the buildings in the square have survived to the modern era, albeit with different uses: the gaol is now an art school, the bank became a hotel and nightclub, the funeral parlour also became a hotel, and other buildings were rebuilt for new purposes.

In the modern era, Taylor Square remains an important hub for both transport and the activities of city life. The wildly popular Mardi Gras parade passes through the square each year, the pubs remain as busy as ever, while the courthouse stands as the great survivor from the early days of Oxford Street's development.

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Timeline

Streets and improvements

- 1790: South Head signal station was established with a bridle trail to the city.
- 1811: South Head Road was constructed from Hyde Park to the signal station.
- 1827-1837: Busby's Bore passed under South Head Road from Hyde Park to Dowling Street.
- 1830s: William Street and New South Head Road were constructed.
- 1860-1866: Horse-drawn trams travelled between Circular Quay and Sydney Railway Station.
- 1875: Old South Head Road was renamed to Oxford Street.
- 1879: Steam trams commenced operation in Sydney.
- 1890s: The City Beautiful movement began to flourish in Sydney.
- 1894: Botany Road was renamed to Flinders Street.
- 1902: Electric trams commenced running along Oxford Street to Waverley.
- 1904: Electric lighting replaced gas lighting in Sydney.
- 1905: Allen Taylor was elected Lord Mayor of Sydney and embarked on civic reform.
- 1906: Central Station opened, prompting efforts to widen the surrounding streets.
- 1906-8: Campbell Street was extended to Flinders Street.
- 1908: Taylor Square was named in honour of Allen Taylor.
- 1910-1914: Oxford Street north side was widened between Liverpool and Bourke Streets.
- 1917-1918: Flinders Street west wide was widened from Taylor Square to Dowling Street.
- 1978: First gay and lesbian march was held from Taylor Square to Hyde Park.
- 2012: Taylor Square Farmers' Market commenced in Taylor Square north.

Buildings

- 1841: Darlinghurst Gaol opened. The National Art School opened there in 1996.
- 1842: Darlinghurst Courthouse opened.
- 1847: The Queen's Arms Hotel (later the Courthouse Hotel) opened.
- 1851: The Victoria Inn opened on South Head Road between Bourke and Flinders Streets.
- 1852: The Oxford Flour Mills opened at 379 Bourke Street.
- 1854: The Darlinghurst Watch house opened in Forbes Street.
- 1860: Grocer's shop established on the corner of Flinders and Old South Head Road, later the Darlinghurst Fruit Market.
- 1871: Johnson's Family Hotel (later the Oxford Hotel) opened.
- 1879: Cotton's Royal Hotel opened on the corner of Bourke and Campbell Streets. Rebuilt in 1937 as Belgenny Apartments.
- 1899: The Darlinghurst Police Station replaced the Watch House.
- 1904: The Electric Substation No. 6 opened in Taylor Square north.
- 1907: Men's underground conveniences opened in Taylor Square north.
- 1912: The Government Savings Bank of NSW (later the Taylor Square Hotel) opened.
- 1933: Charles Kinsela opened a funeral parlour (later Kinselas Hotel).

Main features of Taylor Square

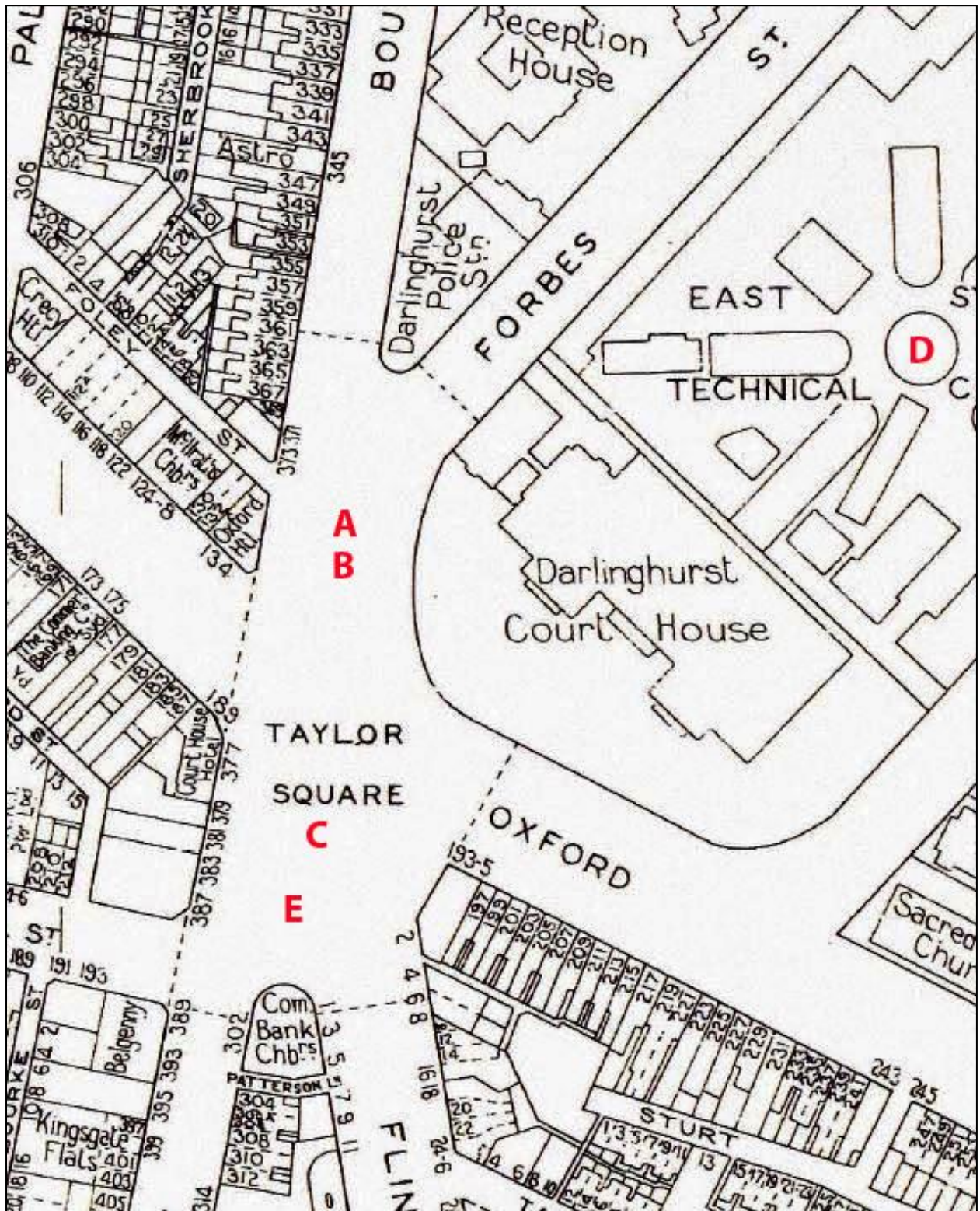


Figure 1 Taylor Square (City Building Surveyors Detail Sheets)

Unmarked features:

- A – No. 6 Electric Substation
- B – Men's underground conveniences
- C – Former Victoria Inn
- D – Darlington Gaol
- E – Former Gilligan's Island

Unnamed addresses:

- 379 Bourke Street – Former Oxford Flour Mills
- 383-387 Bourke Street – Kinsela's Hotel
- 193-195 Oxford Street – Former Darlington Fruit Market

Early history

The road to South Head

In the first years of the fledgling colony of Sydney, there was intense interest in the arrival of supply ships to replenish food, clothing and equipment. This was due to the inability of the early settlers to grow, catch, shoot, gather or manufacture enough for their own needs. A signal station was established by Captain (later Governor) John Hunter in 1790 on the eastern side of South Head. A house and flagstaff were erected very close to the modern Coast Guard buildings. From this site, approaching ships could be seen, and their impending arrival signalled to the colony with flags. The ships were met and guided in to Farm Cove by pilots stationed in Camp Cove.

In June 1790, the signal station created tremendous excitement among the near-starving residents of Sydney Town by conveying news of the sighting of the Second Fleet. In 1793, fires were lit for the first time to guide in the convict ship *Bellona*. There was always a fear that passing ships would not find the settlement inside the harbour and sail straight past¹.

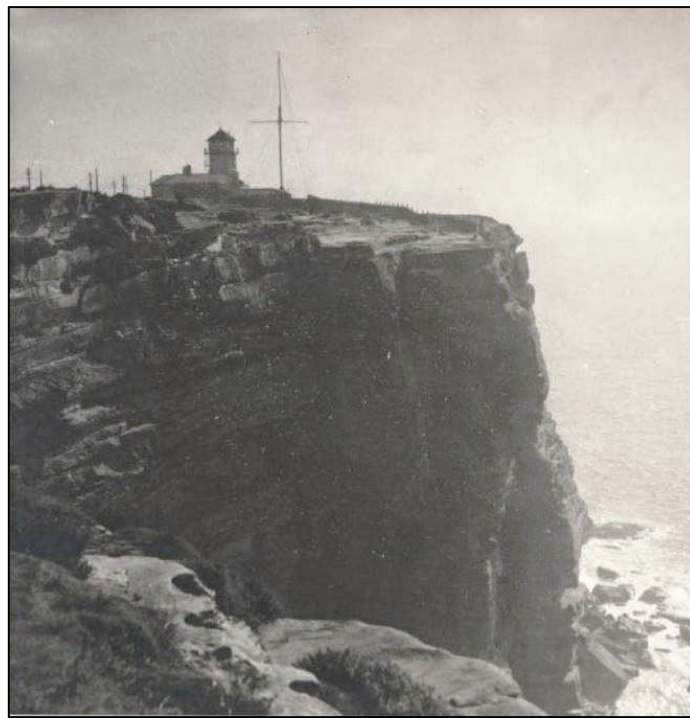


Figure 2 South Head signal station in 1935 (National Library of Australia)

The signal station was expanded over time, and in 1818 Governor Lachlan Macquarie instructed the architect Francis Greenway to construct a lighthouse. The station remained in use until the Maritime Services Board moved its operations to Millers Point in 1992, making it the country's longest-serving establishment to be used for the same purpose since European settlement². Originally, the signal station was supplied by boat, but a bridle path was soon created to South Head, mainly for riders on horseback, following the highest points of land to the south of the Harbour.

In 1811, Governor Macquarie ordered the construction of a more substantial road from the corner of Hyde Park to South Head, which was named South Head Road. An earlier attempt in 1806 by the surgeon John Harris to build a road fifteen feet wide failed over disputes about costs and bad

workmanship. Macquarie avoided these problems by initiating a public subscription to raise funds and using troops from his own 73rd Regiment to do the work. But the former Commissary-General John Palmer refused to allow any access across his land at Woolloomooloo Bay, so Macquarie was forced to begin the road at the south-eastern corner of the newly-proclaimed Hyde Park and skirt around Palmer's land.

The main advantage of the new road was that it allowed wagons to carry heavier supplies to and from the signal station. A notable feature for the time was that it was financed by the public with a toll for its use. This became a common model for financing major roads as the colony developed, such as the Parramatta and Windsor turnpike roads³.

In 1827, construction began on Busby's Bore, an underground tunnel that carried fresh water from Centennial Park to Hyde Park. A new water source was needed by the 1820s after the Tank Stream had become polluted, and water had to be laboriously carted to the town from the Lachlan Swamps in present-day Centennial Park. The Tank Stream ran to the harbour between Pitt and George Streets, and was named after the water tanks dug into the sides to store water in dry seasons⁴.

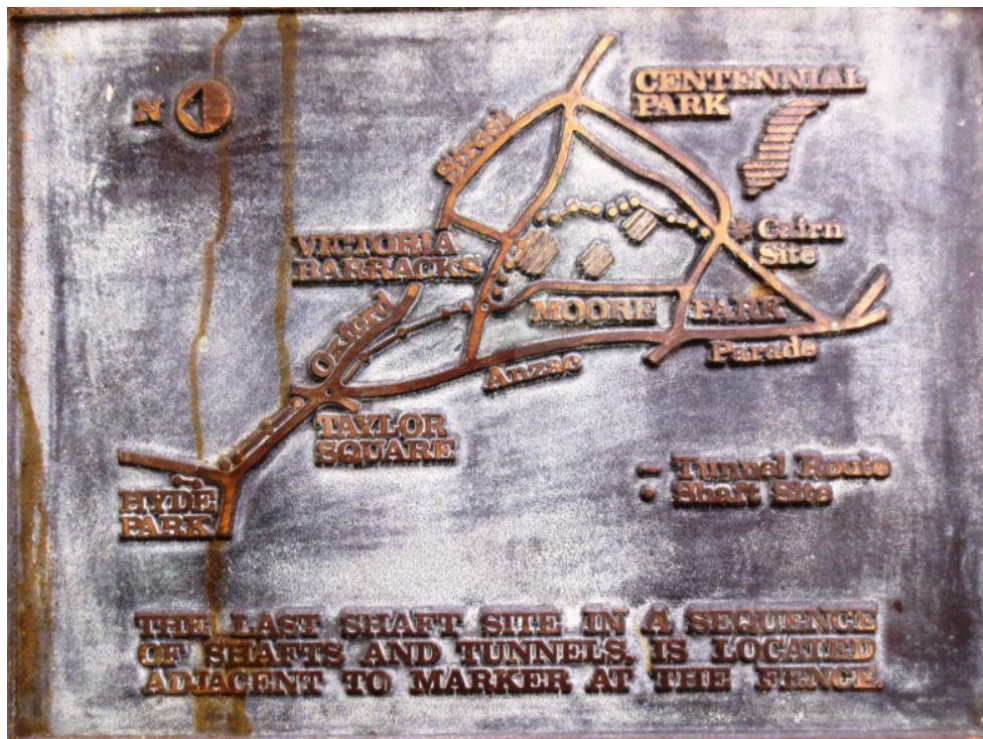


Figure 3 Busby's Bore cairn, Centennial Park

English engineer and surveyor John Busby was engaged to find a new supply of fresh water for the growing colony. The Lachlan Swamps remained the best option, and his first plan was to pump the water uphill through a pipe to South Head Road and then in to the city. This was reasonably cheap to build but expensive to operate and maintain. However, a careful survey of the proposed route showed (presumably to the surprise of all) that the destination in Hyde Park was about half a metre below the source in the Swamps. Busby's second plan, and the one approved by the Governor, was to dig a tunnel almost four kilometres long, starting at the Hyde Park end, then passing under South Head Road to Dowling Street where it turned south-west and meandered its way to the present-day

corner of Cook and Lang Roads. From this point an open channel was dug to allow water to flow under gravity from the nearest lake to the bore and thence to the town.

This option was very expensive to build and took ten years for unqualified and unwilling convicts to complete, although water began to flow by 1830 via underground springs and other water sources that were tapped along the way. However, its advantage was that it cost nothing to operate and hardly anything to maintain⁵. The British Army took advantage of the Bore in the 1840s to fix the site of the new Victoria Barracks so that two of the wells above the Bore were inside the walls of the barracks, providing the military with an independent water supply.

In the 1830s, William Street and New South Head Road were constructed to service the settlements and villas that were springing up along the southern shore of Sydney Harbour. This diverted some of the traffic from South Head Road, which then became known as the Old South Head Road. With the carve up of the large Riley Estate in 1844, Crown and Bourke Streets, already coming up from Woolloomooloo, were extended across Old South Head Road to become major thoroughfares through Surry Hills and beyond. Botany Road (now Flinders Street) is shown on Shields' 1845 map running north from Dowling Street about halfway to the Old South Head Road and Bourke Street intersection⁶. Woolcott and Clarke's 1854 City of Sydney map shows that by then Botany Road stretched south from this intersection across Dowling Street and into Sydney Common⁷ (the present-day Anzac Parade running through Moore Park).

A splendid High Street

The 1840s saw Old South Head Road begin to change from a thoroughfare to parts beyond to a destination in itself. Three major institutions constructed at this time were the main factors in this: Darlinghurst Gaol, opened in 1841, the large Courthouse next door which opened the following year, and Victoria Barracks in Paddington, completed in 1848. The long economic boom triggered by the gold rushes of the early 1850s turned the Old South Head Road into an impressive high street in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the era before refrigeration, people shopped for fresh food locally and frequently, and the steady subdivision of the Riley Estate land increased the population of Surry Hills and Darlinghurst, resulting in Old South Head Road being filled with small shops to meet the demand. By 1858-59 there were eight hotels operating in the short stretch between Riley Street and the Courthouse to refresh the thirsty workers (and shoppers).

As the Old South Head Road grew in commercial importance, the local businessmen thought that the name it was given to distinguish it from New South Head Road did not feel right for the grand High Street that led down to the elegant houses lining the greenness of Hyde Park. Led by the hairdresser and wigmaker Charles Wizgell, they looked around for a new name that reflected modernity and style. Wizgell was one of the successful entrepreneurs of the era, and by 1870 ran a hairdressing salon and Turkish baths in the busy section of the street between Crown and Bourke Streets⁸. Oxford Street in London was chosen as the epitome of a splendid Victorian High Street, and the name change was gazetted in 1875, after being in common use for some years. As development spread eastwards, the name was gradually extended to its current limit at Bondi Junction.

In 1893, local residents petitioned Sydney Municipal Council for Botany Road to be renamed Flinders Street, to reflect its development from a thoroughfare leading to Botany Bay into a residential and commercial street⁹. The new name was in use by 1894¹⁰.



Figure 4 Oxford and Bourke Streets intersection, 1875 (SLNSW)

The tram system

In 1861, horse-drawn trams began to travel along Pitt Street, connecting the old Sydney Railway Station (north of present-day Redfern station) and Circular Quay. They were not popular, as priority was given to hauling railway freight along a raised rail which damaged wagons that tried to cross it. Passenger traffic was only an afterthought. Lobbying by competing omnibus operators and pedestrian injuries resulted in the line closing in 1866.

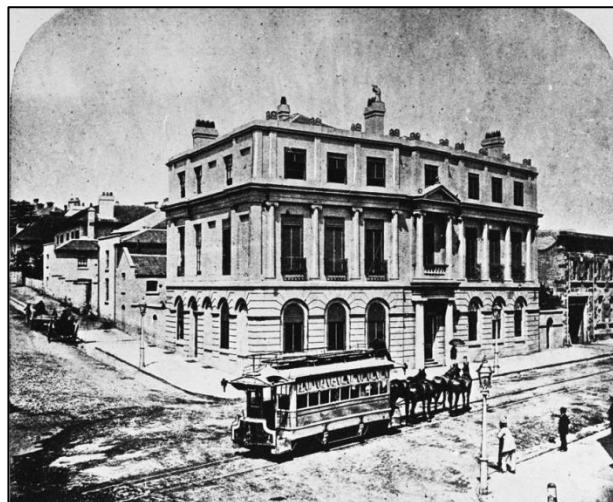


Figure 5 Horse-drawn tram, Pitt Street, 1865 (National Archives)

It was not until the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition in the Domain that trams were again attempted in Sydney. By then they were steam-powered and much faster than the old horse-drawn models. While the Government originally brought in the trams for use during the Exhibition, they were a great success, and the service was retained. The next year, the Government passed the

Tramways Extension Act 1880 which saw the tram network expand to the suburbs from the 1880s and beyond.



Figure 6 Steam tram, 1884 (alamy.com.au)

Taylor Square soon became a major tram junction. In 1880, the section of the La Perouse line through Taylor Square and Flinders Street opened as far as Alison Road. The Maroubra line branched off this line at the intersection of Anzac Parade and Maroubra Road. In 1884, a line was opened to North Bondi via Oxford Street and Bondi Junction. The Maroubra line was extended to La Perouse in 1902.

In 1902, a new generation of electric trams commenced operations along Oxford Street to Waverley, then to Bronte in 1911. In 1904, the No. 6 Electric Substation was opened in Taylor Square north, supplying increased power for the Oxford Street trams. Electric trams ran to La Perouse from 1905. In 1907, the Victoria Inn was demolished and Campbell Street was extended to Flinders Street, allowing a tram line to be laid along Campbell Street and then along Goulburn Street to the city¹¹.

For a long time, the trams were a great success, and the Sydney tramway system was the largest in the British Empire after London's, and was a central part of the city's life for a century. The extensive network created many new suburbs and helped Sydney become a modern city. By 1922, the tramway network had reached its maximum size, with nearly 300 kilometres of track extending to the edges of Sydney: to La Perouse, Narrabeen, Parramatta and Sutherland. As the network expanded, leisure destinations became more accessible, such as the harbour and ocean beaches. Special events such as the Royal Easter Show attracted thousands of patrons by tram.



Figure 7 Trams during rush hour in Taylor Square, 1948 (City of Sydney Archives)

However, by the middle of the twentieth century, trams had come to symbolise a bygone era and were seen as a sentimental anachronism in the new age of speed, so its demise was inevitable. Accidents involving workers, commuters and pedestrians were frequent as trams fought for space on Sydney's narrow and congested streets. By mid-century, trams shared the road with an increasing number of cars. The automobile lobby, led by an energetic NRMA, successfully persuaded the New South Wales Government that cars and buses were the transport of the future. In 1953 the Minister for Transport, Ernest Wetherell, announced that no more trams would be built, and that buses would replace all existing trams services¹².

The tram services were systematically closed down through the 1950s, often by workmen quickly removing the overhead wiring the same night as a tram finished the last run on a particular line. Photographs of Taylor Square in 1960 show that tramlines still ran along Oxford Street and Flinders Street, but that the Campbell Street track had already been removed¹³. The La Perouse line was the last to close in February 1961.

Sir Allen Taylor

Allen Arthur Bate was born in Wagga Wagga in 1864 to father John and mother Martha Jane. From the age of twelve he worked as a railway "nipper" for two years, moving to Sydney in about 1882 where he worked with railway contractors, while attending night school¹⁴. In 1886, while working as a clerk, he married Adela Mary Elliot (1865 – 1924), daughter of a coachbuilder, and had one son¹⁵. He became a contractor and built up a successful business in timber supply and shipping. In April 1892 his mother married the contractor Henry Taylor¹⁶. Allen Bate changed his family's surname to Taylor soon after this. In July, 1892 his mother died at Petersham¹⁷, and from this time he was always known as Allen Taylor.

In 1895, he was elected to the Annandale Municipal Council¹⁸, becoming Mayor in 1897 to 1900 and 1901 to 1903. He remained on the Council until 1907. He founded the firm of Allen Taylor and Co., which in 1901 supplied timber for the Culcairn to Germanton (now Holbrook) railway¹⁹. In 1902 he was elected to the Sydney Municipal Council (while still on the Annandale Council) and became Lord Mayor from 1905 to 1906²⁰.

In 1905, as Lord Mayor, he embarked on an ambitious program of civic reform, using new powers of revenue-raising that he had persuaded the State Government to grant the Council. Over the following decade, he was the driving force representing the interests of local businesses to the Sydney Council and State Government. He displayed outstanding political skills in guiding through the great urban projects of the day, such as slum clearance around Wexford Street in 1908-9 to create Wentworth Avenue, the widening of Oxford Street to ease traffic and upgrade tram infrastructure, and the creation of the square that was named in his honour in 1908.



Figure 8 Sir Allen Taylor (Sydney's Aldermen website)

He was knighted in 1911 for his services to the city, on the occasion of the coronation of King George V. He resigned as Lord Mayor the next year due to the strains of office. He was given a life appointment to the New South Wales Legislative Council, and then in 1933 he was elected as a member after the abolition of life membership. A widower, in 1926, he married a widow Linda Turner Hawkes. He died in 1940 at his home in Lang Road, Centennial Park, survived by his second wife and son. During his life, he achieved a spectacular rise to wealth and influence for someone who started as a railway worker with little formal education. Taylor Square owes more to him than anyone else for its development as the first major traffic and commercial hub in Sydney.

Modernising the streets

The City Beautiful Movement

This movement was a reform philosophy of architecture and urban planning that originated in North America in the 1890s, and flourished in the early 1900s. Its aim was to introduce beautification and monumental grandeur to cities. It promoted beauty, partly for its own sake, but to improve moral and civic virtue among urban populations. The movement was originally associated with urban design in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Washington DC. Proponents of the movement believed that it would encourage a harmonious social order that would increase the quality of life. But critics complained that it was overly concerned with aesthetics and did little to achieve social reform.



Figure 9 Chicago, 1893 (Wikimedia)

Both European and North American cities provided models for the Australian City Beautiful Movement. A combination of factors around 1900 influenced the movement here: it was thought that Australia, as a relatively newly settled country, had wasted an opportunity to design cities comprehensively and aesthetically. They were seen as lacking beauty and civic pride. A lack of architectural features and extensive street advertising were seen as problems with our built environment. But in Australia the idea of City Beautiful was taken to mean that the beautification of a city must also be functional. Improvements should have a proven economic value.

Walter Burley Griffin incorporated City Beautiful principles into his 1912 design of Canberra. He was influenced by Washington DC, with grand axes and vistas and a strong central focal point. The architect John Sulman (1849-1934) was Australia's leading proponent of the movement. When the remodeling of Oxford Street was touted from 1907, there was widespread support for basing the new design on City Beautiful principles. A spate of newspaper pieces and editorials supported this idea, including a series of four articles by Sir John Sulman.

In 1908, the newly-elected State Government appointed a Royal Commission for the Improvement of Sydney and its Suburbs, to review the proposed remodelling and other projects. Sulman presented a plan that imagined a splendid vision for the city, with wide boulevards lined with large Victorian buildings, much like London's Regent Street or The Strand. He proposed only minimal

widening of Oxford Street, but included a gateway at Hyde Park similar to Oxford Circus. A railway line would run under Oxford Street to the eastern suburbs with a station at Taylor Square. The square itself would be remodeled to include the station in a semi-circular space with fountains and a large arch fronting onto Oxford Street.



Figure 10 Canberra from Mount Ainslie (Wikipedia)

Another proposal to the Commission by the Labor politician Jack Fitzgerald was for the removal of the Darlinghurst Gaol, long regarded by local gentry as a blot on the landscape, and the Courthouse, to be replaced by public service buildings. There was warm approval for these ambitious proposals, and while many of the Commission's recommendations were implemented, the remodelling of Taylor Square was quietly shelved for lack of finance and political will. Despite this, the idea of urban beautification had taken hold, and when the precinct around Taylor Square was remodeled over the next decade, there was an emphasis for the first time on such inclusions as wider streets lined with trees, drinking fountains, public toilets, landscaped parks and a decluttered streetscape²¹.

Campbell Street extension (1906-1908)

The first street remodelling project in the area was to extend the top of Campbell Street to Flinders Street, to reduce the heavy traffic in Oxford Street. In February 1906, the Sydney Municipal Council approved the project²². It would involve the resumption of a triangular piece of land bounded by Bourke Street, Flinders Street and Redgate Lane²³. This lane is marked, but not named, on contemporary maps, and corresponds to the location of present-day Patterson Lane²⁴.

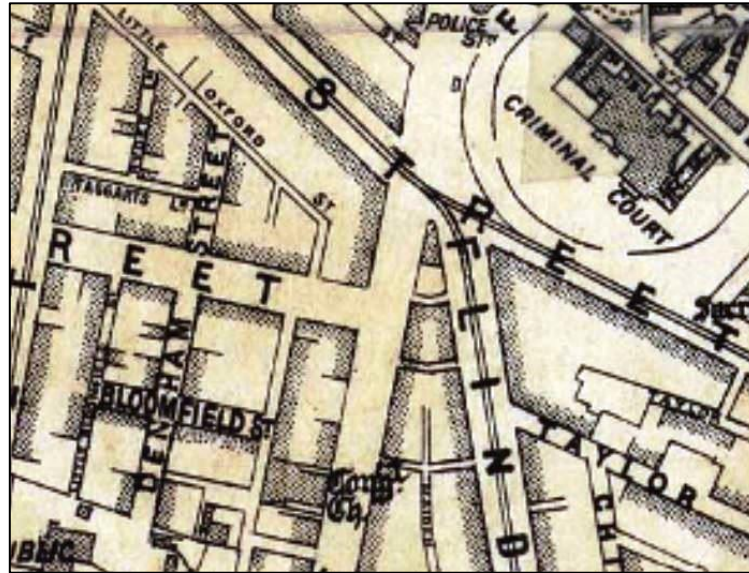


Figure 11 Campbell Street prior to extension, 1903 (COS Archives)

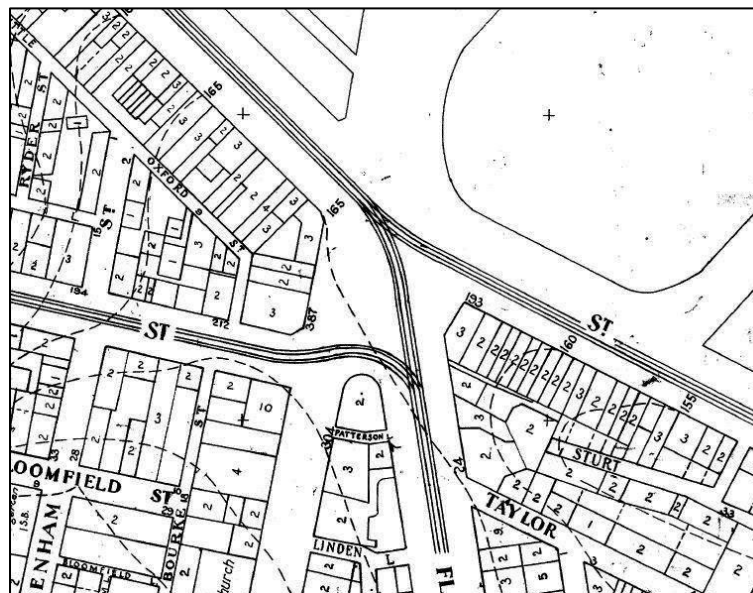


Figure 12 Campbell Street extended with tramline, 1938 (COS Archives)

The Victoria Inn was resumed and demolished in 1907²⁵, but completion of the project was delayed until 1908 by a drawn-out compensation claim from one of the building owners²⁶. After the extension was finished, a tramline was laid, to run down Campbell Street and Goulburn Street to the new Central Station²⁷.

Oxford Street widening (1911-1914)

Oxford Street was originally laid out to be sixty-six feet wide. By the start of the twentieth century, it was lined on both sides by rows of shops, pubs, churches and Marshall's Paddington Brewery on the Dowling Street corner. It was a busy place, filled with trams, wagons and carts of every shape and size, and even a few motor cars. These wheeled vehicles competed with many pedestrians and street vendors for the available space.

The worst congestion of all was at the large intersection with Bourke and Flinders Streets. Oxford Street brought traffic from the city, Bourke Street carried goods up from the Woolloomooloo docks, and Flinders Street channelled much of this traffic to the expanding eastern and south-eastern suburbs²⁸.



Figure 13 Oxford Street from Hyde Park, 1892 (COS Archives)

When Central Station was being planned at the beginning of the twentieth century, civic administrators were turning their minds to ways of beautifying the city, partly with an eye to conveying an increased number of rail passengers from the station to the eastern suburbs. Sydney had grown organically through the nineteenth century with no real thought given to how its road network would cope with greatly increased traffic in the following century. As part of a wider plan to realign many of the major streets and beautify the urban environment, the architect John Barlow produced a plan in 1904 for the widening of Oxford Street, initially to ninety feet.

He thought that the north side of the street was the more feasible for demolition, as the buildings on that side were less substantial, and it had lagged behind in commercial activity. In his scheme, the widened street would become a boulevard running down to an intersection with a replacement for Wexford Street, also ninety feet wide, which would in turn run to Central Station (this eventually became Wentworth Avenue). Barlow also suggested that street-widening should continue as far as Centennial Park.

Despite the general enthusiasm for urban improvement, the Sydney Municipal Council had very limited legal powers to carry out such work if it involved demolition of existing properties and infrastructure. The New South Wales Government had given the Sydney Council some powers for minor street realignment in 1900, but they were insufficient for the large-scale projects imagined by Barlow and encouraged by local businessmen. However, a white knight appeared in the form of Allen Taylor, businessman, Sydney Council Alderman and highly effective political operator. As Sydney Lord Mayor in 1905, he secured greater powers of resumption for the Council with the *Sydney Corporation (Amendment) Act 1905*.

The City Surveyor, William Gordon, drew up plans in 1907 for a widening of Oxford Street, but now extending it to 100 feet, with substantial regrading of the cross streets coming up from East Sydney. Sydney Council took the decision in May 1909 to resume the entire north side of the street between Liverpool and Bourke Streets, and the City Surveyor then developed detailed plans for the work. The project would be carried out in five stages between 1910 and 1914. The Sydney Council resumed each block of land and then paid compensation to the owners based on an independent commercial valuation. After this, tenders were called for demolition, from which the tenderers could sell or salvage the materials for reuse.

In some cases, the Council erected its own buildings on the cleared sites, for example the whole block between Crown and Palmer Streets. The Council retained ownership of these buildings. In the case of the pubs, the details of the replacements were worked out with the original owners or licensees (see the section on the Oxford Hotel for an example of this). In other cases, long leases were auctioned, on the condition that new buildings had to be constructed within two years, with ground floor shop fronts and height limitations.

The result of this remodelling work was that the whole north side of Oxford Street up to Bourke Street became a continuous stretch of Federation-style commercial buildings. Almost all the buildings had basements (not difficult to include, as the land fell away towards the rear of the buildings) and were wider than the older Victorian commercial buildings across the road. In 1914, when most of the work was done, the Council decluttered the south side of the street by widening the footpath sixteen feet and ordering that all support posts be removed from awnings (much to the annoyance of the businessmen on that side, who had already endured four years of major disruption).

Despite the years of hard work by Sydney Council, there was widespread criticism from all sides, and by 1918 the Aldermen were thinking that the exercise had not been a success. The main problem was that the Council had required the new buildings to be at a higher standard (with correspondingly higher rents) than shopkeepers would have erected had they been allowed to build what suited their businesses. Many buildings were still vacant, and the situation was made worse by

an economic downturn in the aftermath of World War I, in which a whole generation had been lost²⁹.

Flinders Street widening (1917-1919)

The final urban beautification project in the Taylor Square area was the widening of the western side of Flinders Street from Taylor Square to beyond Dowling Street and into Randwick Road (now Anzac Parade). The Sydney Council first presented plans for this in February 1909³⁰. The Oxford Street widening was also being planned at the same time, and the Lord Mayor admitted that the Flinders Street widening was not as urgent, and he would concentrate on Oxford Street for the time being³¹. However, the Mayor did recommend that the property to be resumed should be acquired forthwith at a reasonable rate, because the property values would have greatly increased in a few years' time, and the cost of resumption would then be prohibitive³².

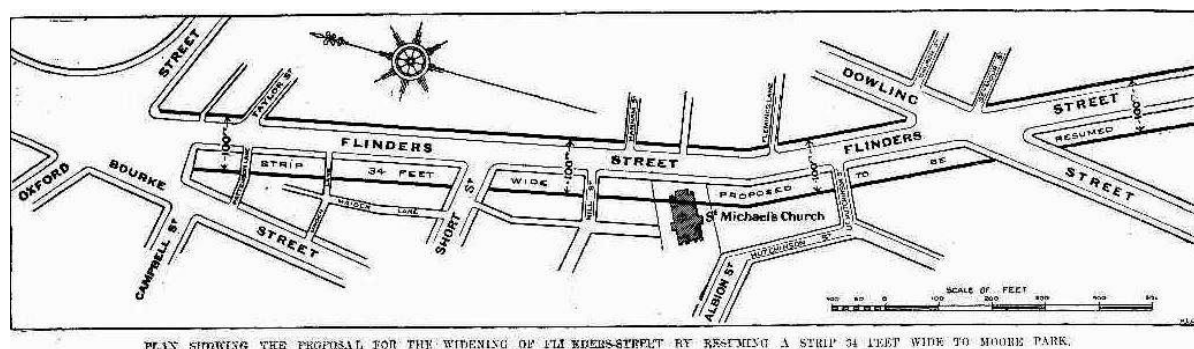


Figure 14 Flinders Street widening plan (*The Daily Telegraph*, 19 February 1909)

The resumption scheme for Flinders Street was finally approved by Sydney Council in May 1911. The Mayor said that he “hoped to make Flinders Street one of the finest avenues connecting Sydney and the suburbs”. He also said it “would considerably relieve trade to and from Randwick and the Sydney Cricket Ground”³³. However, the project went into abeyance until after the Oxford Street widening project was completed. In May 1917, the Council’s Works Committee was still recommending the street widening project be postponed until after the War, although a number of Aldermen wanted to get it started³⁴. The Council Finance Committee recommended that resumed land in Flinders Street be sold as freehold and not leasehold, as it was after the Oxford Street widening³⁵.

The widening was finally underway by August 1917, when numerous advertisements appeared for the sale of building materials, for example 50,000 sandstock bricks and other materials from 49 and 51 Flinders Street³⁶. The demolition of the grand three-storey building at 55 Flinders Street (accommodating John L. Esten’s piano warehouse and Yanco Tobacco Plantations Ltd)³⁷ resulted in 100,000 machine bricks for sale³⁸. The first subdivision of the redrawn building lots, between Patterson’s Lane and Short Street, was advertised in October 1917. The land was to be auctioned as freehold lots, and successful bidders were required to stump up a deposit of 25%, followed by three equal half-yearly payments at 5% to pay off their purchases³⁹.

Probably the two most prominent buildings affected by the widening were the Flinders Hotel on the corner of Hill Street and St Michael’s Church of England. In July 1917, the Council called for tenders to demolish and re-erect the hotel⁴⁰. The two-storey eleven-room hotel⁴¹ was replaced in 1918 by a larger three-storey fifteen-room building, owned by Tooth and Company Pty Ltd⁴² (as shown by the

year of construction on the corner of the parapet). Mrs. Mary Clements remained the licensee of the new hotel.



Figure 15 Original Flinders Hotel, 1916 (COS Archives)

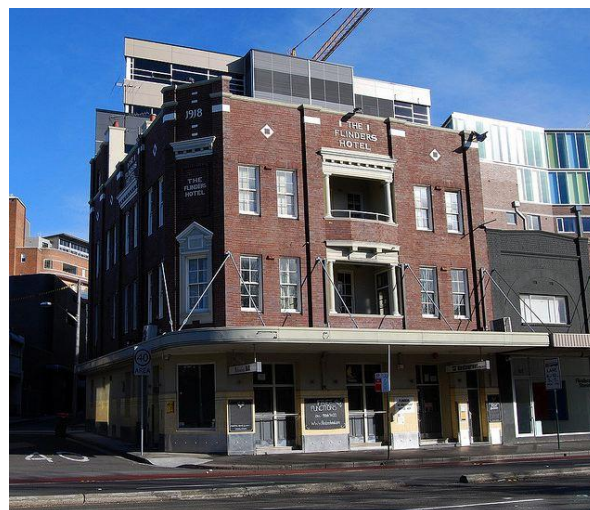


Figure 16 Flinders Hotel, 2013

St Michael's Church was designed by Edmund Blacket in 1854, and constructed of sandstone in the Gothic Revival style. The church building survived the street widening almost intact, apart from rebuilding the chancel to shift the eastern line back about 4.7 metres. During the work, the main foundations on Flinders Street were exposed, and after heavy rain displaced some cement around one particular stone, it was lifted up and cleaned, revealing the inscription "St Michael's Church September 29, 1854". After the work was completed, this foundation block was re-laid by Archbishop John Wright with the additional inscription:

"This stone was re-laid by the Most Reverend John Charles Wright, DD, Archbishop of Sydney, December 8 1917, to mark the rebuilding of the chancel, owing to the widening of the street".

The foundation stone is of polished Bowral trachyte, and at the re-laying ceremony, the Archbishop said that the original stone had mysteriously been laid on its face and covered up⁴³.



Figure 17 St Michael's Church of England, 1871 (SLNSW)

The final demolition of the resumed buildings in Flinders Street took place in May 1918 when materials from numbers 119 to 127 were advertised⁴⁴. Number 127 is on the corner of Dowling Street⁴⁵.

87-125/2

FLINDERS STREET SUBDIVISION

SPLENDID BUSINESS & RESIDENTIAL SITES.

CITY COUNCIL FREEHOLDS

MONDAY

FOR SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION AT THE ROOMS 92 PITT ST SYDNEY. **OCTOBER 8TH 1917.** AT 11-30 AM.

OFFICE PLAN. OFFICE PLAN.

TERMS: 25% DEPOSIT BALANCE in three equal half yearly payments with interest at 5% per annum.

AUCTIONEERS. RICHARDSON & WRENCH^{LS} in conjunction with RAINE & HORNE

FREEHOLD TITLE

Particulars can be obtained at the Auctioneers Rooms. All measurements are in Imperial Plan

Map showing Flinders Street, Bourke St, Short St, Hill St, Albion St, and Hutchinson St. Subdivisions are numbered 1 through 13. Other streets shown include Oxford St, Campbell St, and Taylor Square. A note mentions 'FOR FURTHER SUBDIVISION by the City Council' and 'Proposed extension of Flinders St to the City Council'.

Agents: A.H. Briggs, City Surveyor; Thomas H. Nesbitt, Town Clerk.

Figure 18 Flinders Street First Subdivision, 1917 (COS Archives)

The second and final auction of subdivided freehold lots, between Short Street and the Dowling Street intersection (apart from the Flinders Hotel and St Michael's Church), took place in March 1919. A number of resumed lots in Hutchison Street were included. By this time, Albion Street had been extended from its termination at Durham Hall through to Flinders Street⁴⁶. The City Council's condition of sale was that no factory or store buildings would be allowed facing Flinders Street, and no residences facing Hutchison Street⁴⁷.



Figure 19 Flinders Street Second Subdivision, 1919 (COS Archives)

Sands' Sydney Directories show that from 1919 a few businesses were operating in new buildings just south of Taylor Square. More buildings were erected over the next few years, and by 1924 the western side of Flinders Street seemed to be back to normal, with a wide variety of tradespeople, including a dressmaker, butcher, tobacconist, billiard saloon, grocer, the Flinders Motor Service, and to the south of Albion Street a large Commonwealth Bank building at number 81-97 (lots 31 to 39 in the 1919 subdivision)⁴⁸.

The buildings

Darlinghurst Gaol

Address: Forbes Street, bordered by Burton Street and Darlinghurst Road.

The gaol on the hill

The original Sydney Gaol, on the corner of George and Essex Streets, was a log building ordered by Governor John Hunter in 1796, not for transported convicts, but for offenders within the colony. Free landholders were required to supply the materials: ten logs per settler, or twenty from large properties. The response was so enthusiastic that the carpenters were inundated with logs faster than they could use them. When the gaol opened in 1797, prisoners were confined before and after trial, and public hangings outside its walls were commonplace, attracting a boisterous crowd.

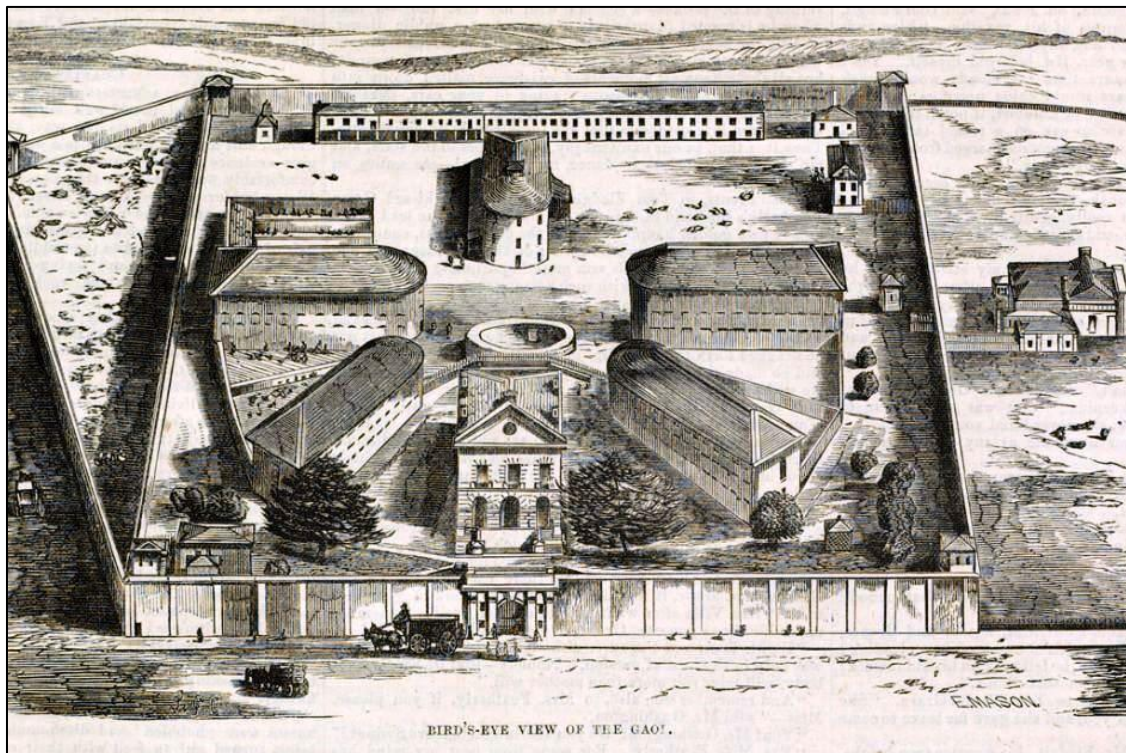


Figure 20 Darlinghurst Gaol, 1866 (*Illustrated Sydney News*, 1866)

The new gaol was burned down the year it was opened by unknown arsonists, and was rebuilt by convict labour in more substantial (and less flammable) sandstone. But the place was soon plagued by problems with security, sanitation and overcrowding. By the 1830s, the gaol, which was close to the expanding residential and commercial heart of the colony, was considered a terrible eyesore with shocking conditions for the prisoners. In 1836, a Select Committee recommended to Governor Sir Richard Bourke that the stop-start Darlinghurst Gaol project be completed as soon as possible.

The walls of the proposed gaol on Darlinghurst Hill had been erected in 1821, but further construction stalled in 1824 due to lack of funds. In 1836, a further £35,000 was voted by the Legislative Council to complete the building. Mortimer Lewis's original designs were radically altered by George Barney, who arrived that year to complete the project. Barney incorporated modern ideas of the British Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline, which advocated that optimal prison

conditions were necessary for prisoner reform. He also used Jeremy Bentham's wheel-shaped panopticon building design that allowed central surveillance by a single guard.

The gaol was built by a combination of convicts, ticket-of-leave tradesmen and other workers. It was constructed wholly of sandstone with extremely good workmanship. Still visible outside the Darlinghurst Road wall are the carved markings which represented the daily work targets for the stone masons. A tall circular chapel is located in the middle of the site, around which the six rectangular cellblocks radiate outwards. The gaol opened in 1841 while still unfinished. Construction was finally completed in 1885⁴⁹.



Figure 21 Darlinghurst Gaol wall markings

In its day, the gaol provided accommodation at His (or largely Her) Majesty's pleasure for some notable prisoners. The writer Henry Lawson had a number of stretches there for drunkenness and non-payment of alimony, calling it "Starvinghurst Gaol" due to the meagre rations. Louisa Collins, the supposed serial husband-poisoner, was the last woman hanged there in 1889⁵⁰. Henry O'Farrell, the Irishman who tried to assassinate the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868, was hanged for his trouble, despite evidence of insanity and the intervention of the Duke himself. In addition, a virtual Who's Who of the State's bushrangers spent time in the gaol: Frank Gardiner, John Vane, Andrew George Scott (Captain Moonlite), Thomas and John Clarke, and John Dunn. Many of these miscreants were members of Ben Hall's gang, but the eponymous Hall missed out on the hospitality at Darlinghurst after he was shot by police in 1865.

Executions were usually conducted publicly on a makeshift gallows just outside the in gate in Forbes Street, but others were conducted more privately on a permanent gallows just inside the walls of the Darlinghurst Road and Burton Street corner. The last execution at the gaol was of the murderer Nicholas Baxter in 1907. The gaol closed in 1914 when the Long Bay Penitentiary opened, after which Irish, Turkish and German nationals were interned in the old cells during World War I⁵¹.

The National Art School

The Sydney Technical College was formed in 1883 from an existing college by the government Board of Technical Education. The Department of Art within the Sydney Technical College was relocated to

the old Darlinghurst Gaol in 1922 and the National Art School was born. A period of upheaval from 1974 saw the Division of Fine Art move in 1975 to a new institution that evolved into the College of Fine Arts in Paddington (now called University of New South Wales Art and Design). This left a diminished School of Art and Design in the old gaol site, offering only short certificate courses. But the visual arts program was gradually rebuilt by dedicated staff and friends of the school.

In 1996, the National Art School became independent of TAFE (tertiary and further education) and began to offer degree and postgraduate courses. In 2009, the School was finally released from the umbrella of the Department of Education and Training to become a fully independent higher education facility.

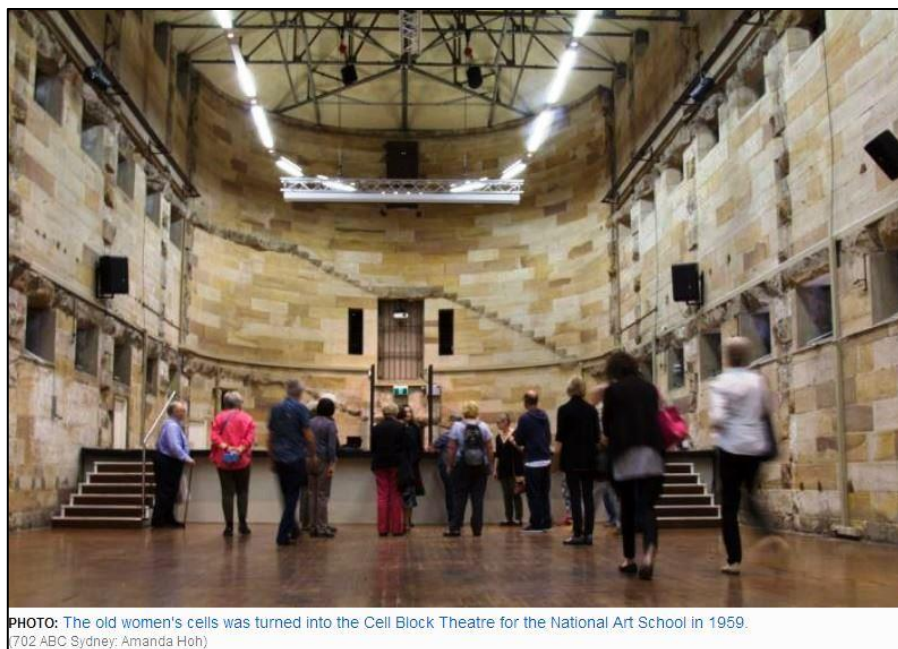


Figure 22 Cell Block Theatre (ABC website)

The Cell Block Theatre is now a part of the complex. There had been interest in the 1950s to convert part of the old gaol into a theatre, and this gained momentum when Katherine Hepburn and Robert Helpmann visited the Cell Block to announce the project. The venue has flourished as a home to avant-garde arts, hosting Ravi Shankar and a youthful John Bell. Since the 1980s, the theatre has served as a venue for the Art School's formal gatherings and as an exhibition space for student works⁵².

Darlinghurst Courthouse

Address: 138 Oxford Street.

When Sir Richard Bourke arrived as Governor in 1831, he instructed the Colonial Architect Ambrose Hallen to design a new courthouse next to the proposed Darlinghurst Gaol. This would locate the court close to the prisoners and far from the existing courts in town, which had become overcrowded and a magnet for a rowdy crowd of spectators looking for free entertainment.

But before construction began, Mortimer Lewis arrived as the new Colonial Architect, and in a move that was typical of the time, he tossed out Hallen's designs and drew up his own in 1834. Construction commenced in 1835. During construction, the building was used for community events

and church services, and opened for hearings in 1842 while still unfinished. It was completed in 1844. The court was to be operated in conjunction with the adjacent gaol, to which it was connected by an underground tunnel.



Figure 23 Darlinghurst Courthouse (sydney-city.blogspot.com)

Lewis's elegant Greek Revival building with classical pediment and pillars was visible for miles around. The prominent sandstone edifice became the template for courthouse design through New South Wales until the end of the century. While convicts dug the foundations, most of the construction was carried out by private contractors, marking a change from the convict-built structures of the past⁵³. The Courthouse and surrounds were fenced off in 1849 to keep out the many animals roaming Sydney's streets. Side pavilions were added in 1886-88 to designs by James Barnett⁵⁴.

The High Court of Australia held its Sydney sittings in the Darlinghurst Courthouse from 1903. The High Court is a Federal Supreme Court that was established in 1901 by Section 71 of the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*, although the first Bench of three judges was not appointed until the passage of the *Judiciary Act* in 1903. The roles of the High Court are to interpret and apply Australian law, decide certain cases of national significance including constitutional challenges, and hear appeals from other Australian courts.

The High Court shared facilities with other courts at Darlinghurst until separate rooms were provided in 1923. A permanent High Court building was finally opened on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra in 1980⁵⁵. The Darlinghurst Courthouse remains in use today, mainly for sittings of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

Courthouse Hotel

Address: 189 Oxford Street, on the corner of Bourke Street.

In April 1847, Thomas Hume Allison, the licensee of the Queen's Arms Inn in South Head Road transferred the licence to a new building⁵⁶ on the corner of Bourke Street and South Head Road. The

licensee advertised his pub with an eye to the nearby courthouse by providing a daily luncheon for “witnesses, jurymen and others”⁵⁷. He died at the age of 26 in May 1848 and his wife Jane took over the licence⁵⁸.

In 1882, William Kelly purchased the hotel, and the adjacent two-storey building at 377 Bourke Street⁵⁹. The next year, C. F. Stratton took over the licence⁶⁰, having previously been the licensee of Stratton’s Family Hotel in Moncur Street, Woollahra. The next year he renamed the Queen’s Arms Hotel to Stratton’s Family Hotel⁶¹. In 1886, Stratton transferred the licence to Lucy Easy⁶², who renamed the hotel to the Court House Hotel (later the Courthouse Hotel) by 1889⁶³.



Figure 24 Courthouse Hotel (Wikimedia)

William Kelly died in June 1899⁶⁴, and his widow Mary Ann became the owner until her death in 1922⁶⁵. In 1914, the hotel was expanded from 13 to 17 rooms by incorporating 377 Bourke Street into the hotel⁶⁶. Between 1922 and 1924, the large brewing company Tooth & Co. purchased the hotel from Mary Ann Kelly and expanded it to 20 rooms⁶⁷.

In 1930, Percy C Waterman became the licensee, and Tooth & Co. remodelled the hotel in the Interwar Free Classical Style⁶⁸, greatly increasing its size from three stories of 20 rooms to four stories of 28 rooms. The building at 377 Bourke Street was demolished and became part of the new hotel⁶⁹. The hotel still provides accommodation on the third level, with nine rooms available⁷⁰.

Former Victoria Inn

Address: 191 Bourke Street.

David McMakin operated an earlier Victoria Inn on South Head Road near Glenmore Road from about 1845⁷¹, where James McNees was the licensee from 1849⁷². The licence was transferred to Jeremiah Healey in September 1850⁷³. In March 1851, Healey transferred the licence and the name to a new building at Taylor Square⁷⁴. Sydney Council photographs in 1907, prior to demolition, show that it was an imposing triangular edifice fronting South Head Road⁷⁵.



Figure 25 Victoria Inn/Hotel, 1907 (COS Archives)

In July 1907, the Victoria Inn was resumed by the Sydney Council and demolished as part of the extension of Campbell Street to Flinders Street⁷⁶. Some trams travelling towards the city along Flinders Street then ran down Campbell Street instead of Oxford Street. This created a large open space on the south side of the intersection of Oxford, Bourke and Finders Streets for the first time, and in 1908 it was named Taylor Square by the Sydney Council⁷⁷.

Oxford Hotel

Address: 134 Oxford Street, on the corner of Bourke Street.

In 1859, the Cottage of Content Hotel was opened by Edward Johnston at 160 South Head Road⁷⁸. The hotel closed in 1871, and in October of that year he opened Johnston's Family Hotel two doors away at 164 South Head Road, on the corner of Bourke Street⁷⁹. The former hotel at number 160 became a steam bedding factory by 1875⁸⁰. Like his fellow licensee across the road, Mr. Johnston saw the commercial potential of the Darlinghurst Court by enticing jurymen and court workers into his establishment⁸¹.

In April 1884, the new licensee James Ryan changed the hotel's name to Ryan's Family Hotel⁸². In 1903, another licensee, Arthur Miller, changed the name to the Midland hotel⁸³, and then again by John McClusky to the Oxford Hotel in about 1905⁸⁴. In September 1907, John McClusky transferred

the licence to Theodore Trautwein⁸⁵. In 1909, the building was resumed by the Sydney Council and demolished as part of the Oxford Street widening project⁸⁶.

In 1910, the licence was transferred from Theodore Trautwein to his brother William⁸⁷. Theodore then became the licensee of Traut's Hotel, King and Pitt Streets⁸⁸. The Council leased the Bourke Street corner site (which was slightly different to the original site) to William Trautwein in January 1911 for thirty years, on the condition that he erected a substantial building at a cost of not less than £4,500⁸⁹. In 1913 a new hotel was constructed in the Federation Free Style to a design by E. Lyndsay Thompson⁹⁰.



Figure 26 Original Oxford Hotel, 1910 (COS Archives)



Figure 27 Oxford Hotel (oxfordhotel.com.au)

Pubs and banks were treated differently from other resumed buildings in this project: after resumption and demolition of the building, most allotments were auctioned by the City Council on long leases, and the new lessee had to erect a building at their own expense (in many cases using the compensation awarded from the resumption of their former building on the street). But the hotels (and banks) were usually rebuilt by the original owners. The bespoke tailors Zink and Sons, who had been operating a shop at 112 Oxford Street since 1895, found themselves homeless in 1911 after the resumption of their building. The founder Gastav A. Zink soon bought a fifty-year lease further down the road at 56 Oxford Street and erected a four-storey building, from which they operate today⁹¹.



Figure 28 Zink and Sons original site, 1910 (COS Archives)

In 1960, the Council sold the hotel to the company Hopetoun Pty Ltd. During the mid-1970s, it was the venue for innovative bands, including the pioneering punk rock group Radio Birdman, who christened the hotel The Funhouse⁹². From the mid-1980s, the upper two levels hosted Gilligan's Bar, commemorating the time when Taylor Square was known as Gilligan's Island. Then, after a major renovation in 2004, the first floor became the Supper Club (it is now Ginger's, a New York-style cocktail bar), and the second floor is the Polo Lounge, a bar reminiscent of Gilligan's⁹³.

Darlinghurst Police Station

Address: Intersection of Bourke and Forbes Streets.

In 1853, the members of the New South Wales Legislative Council were alerted to the "disgraceful state" of the colony's police watch houses, which may have meant the lack of them at a time of social disruption caused by the gold rushes of the early 1850s. They responded by allocating funds for the erection of a number of new facilities throughout Sydney and country towns⁹⁴. The Darlinghurst Watch House was initially allocated £800, then a further \$250 in 1854, and was erected near the Bourke and Forbes Street intersection⁹⁵. A Receiving House for Lunatics was constructed between the Watch House and Burton Street about 1868, with Frederick Fowler appointed

Superintendent⁹⁶. It was renamed (marginally) to the Receiving House for the Insane in 1895, when J. E. Moore was Superintendent⁹⁷.

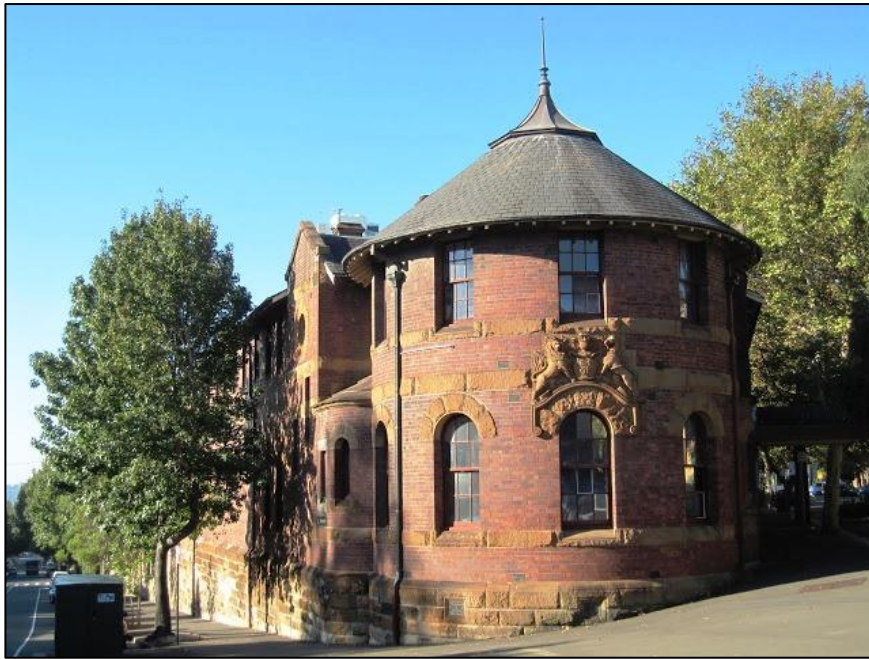


Figure 29 Darlinghurst Police Station (sydney-city.blogspot.com)

In 1896, the old Watch House was replaced by the Darlinghurst Police Station, designed for the No. 3 Police Division by Walter Vernon, the Colonial Architect. The police officers' quarters were completed that year, and the station was fully operational in 1899 when the lockup was completed. The building is a fine example of Edwardian style architecture. The prison section has a padded cell, the original cells and exercise yard⁹⁸. The No. 3 Division had jurisdiction over Darlinghurst, Kings Cross, Woolloomooloo, Paddington, Rushcutters Bay, Moore Park and Edgecliff. Because it covered such notorious areas as the Cross and the razor gangs of the 1930s, the station had the biggest police strength in the State.



Figure 30 Frank "Bumper" Farrell (*Scratching Sydney's Surface*)

Frank "Bumper" Farrell (1916-1985) was a long-serving policeman and detective at Darlinghurst Police Station. From his first posting to Darlinghurst as a Police Constable in 1938, he is remembered

as a tough but honest member of the Vice Squad, rising to the rank of Inspector First Class. He became one of Sydney's most famous policemen, and featured in hundreds of media reports during his career. The redoubtable Bumper's beat covered brothels, gambling dens, SP bookies, sly grog shops, pubs that held bare-knuckle fights and cafes that sold cocaine. He made the district his own, getting to know everyone on the streets, whether good or bad. He was admired by the law-abiding and feared by everyone else.

He had sympathy for the many prostitutes on his beat, seeing them not as the real criminals but victims of unscrupulous madams (such as Tilly Devine) or violent pimps. While he was a detective in the Vice Squad, he left no stone (or shortage of evidence) unturned in getting a conviction if he was sure a suspect deserved it. On one occasion, a magistrate carefully examined the serial number of a gun Bumper had submitted as evidence in court, and remarked wryly that he was pretty sure it was the same gun Bumper had offered as evidence a month or two earlier⁹⁹.

The police station was closed in 1987 when the Sydney Police Centre was opened at Surry Hills. The administration offices for a range of community health services operate from the building now.

No. 6 Electric Substation and men's conveniences

Location: Taylor Square north.

Lighting the streets and powering the trams

Electricity for lighting was first used in Sydney in 1878, to allow extended working hours in preparation for the 1879 International Exhibition, to be held at the Garden Palace in the Botanic Gardens. As early as 1882, the Sydney Municipal Council consulted overseas experts, including Thomas Edison, on the feasibility and cost of illuminating the city streets with electric light. Soon afterwards, some 80 electric light plants were imported, which were sold to private individuals and Government departments.

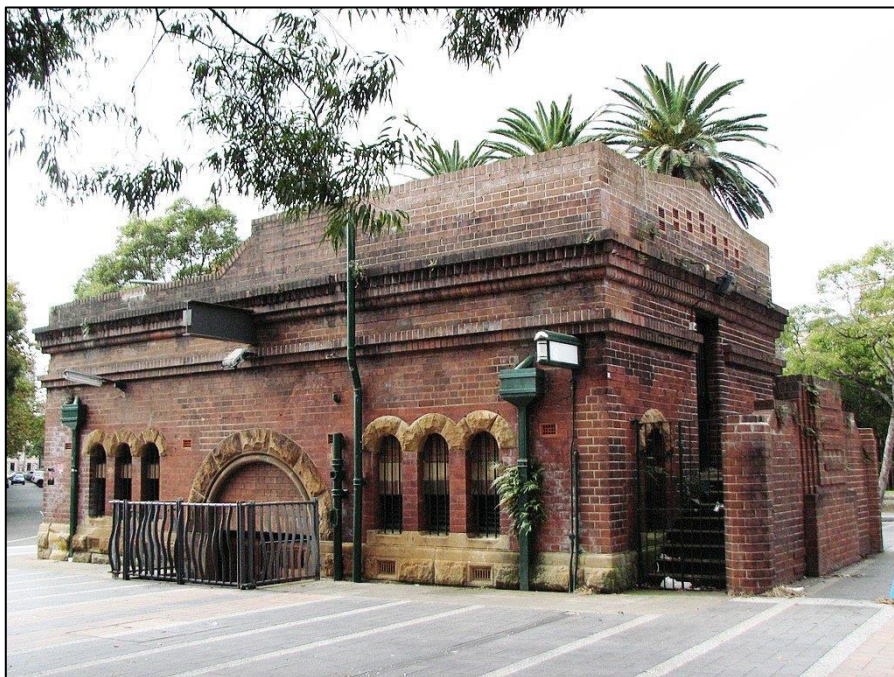


Figure 31 No. 6 Electric Substation (Wikimedia)

In 1896, the *Municipal Council of Sydney Electric Lighting Act* enabled the Sydney Municipal Council to raise funds to provide power for lighting the streets and people's homes¹⁰⁰. The Council appointed two British electrical engineers, Sir William Preece and Major Philip Cardew. Cardew arrived in Sydney in March 1900 and submitted a scheme to supply electricity to districts up to five miles from a power station, which was built on Pyrmont Bay, on the site now occupied by The Star Casino. Through 1902 and 1903, the system was constructed with imported British machinery and plant.

In 1883, a public urinal was built in Taylor Square north, and two years later a 20,000 gallon steel tank was erected above it to hold saltwater, to be used by cleaners to wash the streets¹⁰¹. The No. 6 Substation in Taylor Square was erected under the tank in 1904. It was designed in the Edwardian Civic style by the prominent City Surveyor and Architect Robert Hargreave Brodrick. The Substation is constructed of load-bearing face brick dressed with sandstone top coursing, window sills and window heads. It stands as an example of the City Beautiful Movement which influenced the development of Taylor Square¹⁰².

By July 1904 a system of arc lamps was able to give the citizens of Sydney a source of bright light, heat and power previously unavailable to most people. The new electric lamps were 2,000 candlepower each, while the existing gas lamps were 40 candlepower (with 400 candlepower lamps on the main street corners)¹⁰³. On 9 July 1904, the *Sydney Morning Herald* marveled at the brilliant effect of the new arc lamps¹⁰⁴. The new Taylor Square Substation was also designed to power the electric trams then running through the Square.

After much lobbying by women's groups, in 1938 the first female public toilet in Taylor Square was built in the upper level of the Substation building, demonstrating the growing activism of feminist groups in Sydney, and the changing public role of women in the early twentieth century. The building marks the beginning of the major technological transformation of the new century associated with the development of the modern city and state, and was in continuous operation until being decommissioned in 1993¹⁰⁵.

In the current century, the building has been used for a number of art installations and events, such as Cycle-In Cinema in 2012. The same year, the City of Sydney Council announced plans to reactivate the building as a café, shop or art gallery¹⁰⁶, but nothing permanent has eventuated. The building's only current use is that the upper floor is used as a storage space for the Sydney Sustainable Markets on Saturday mornings.

Conveniently underground

In 1900, the bubonic plague reached Sydney, prompting Government action to improve public hygiene. One of the Sydney Council's projects was the provision of twelve underground public toilets in the city, about one per year between 1901 and 1911. It was thought that public toilets were more hygienic if they were located underground.



Figure 32 Men's conveniences, 1934 (COS Archives)

In 1907, Robert Hargreave Brodrick designed a men's underground toilet in Taylor Square north, replacing the public urinals and salt water tank. They were mainly intended to serve the large volume of tram passengers waiting in Taylor Square, by then a major tram junction. Like his 1904 Electric Substation nearby, Brodrick incorporated City Beautiful principles in his design, including Art Nouveau detailing set on a painted sandstone base. Much of the original joinery has survived, including timber framed doors and louvres and moulded timber architraves. This is the only extant example of the original twelve facilities. In 1988, the men's underground conveniences were closed¹⁰⁷.

Former Government Savings Bank of New South Wales

Address: 1-5 Flinders Street or 302 Bourke Street, Surry Hills.

A bank for the people

The Government Savings Bank of New South Wales was founded by the New South Wales Government in 1871 to expand the facilities for small depositors throughout the colony. It would allow them to accrue savings with the security of the Government, and be operated by postmasters and shipping masters¹⁰⁸. In 1911, the branch of the bank at 151 Oxford Street closed and reopened in a new building on the southern end of Taylor Square, south of the Campbell Street extension to Flinders Street¹⁰⁹. The semicircular building is a good example of a Federation Free Style bank building located on a prominent corner site, and consists of two storeys and a basement level. Located inside the building were the bank chambers, three shops and eight offices¹¹⁰.



Figure 33 Commonwealth Bank Taylor Square, 1961 (COS Archives)

The Commonwealth Bank was founded under the *Commonwealth Bank Act* in 1911, to provide a bank for the new nation that was guaranteed by the Federal Government. Operations commenced in 1912. The Government Savings Bank of New South Wales absorbed the Savings Bank of New South Wales in 1914 (which was founded in 1832 as the Barrack Street Bank)¹¹¹. In 1931, the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales collapsed during the Great Depression and was amalgamated with the Commonwealth Bank.

The Rural Bank of New South Wales was established in 1933 by the State Government, primarily dealing with farmers. In 1982, the Rural Bank became the State Bank of New South Wales, and its mandate changed to a standard commercial bank. In 1994, the State Bank was taken over by Colonial, a financial services company, which changed its name in 1996 to the Colonial State Bank. In 2000 it was taken over by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia¹¹².

A lively hotel and more

The building was sold by the Commonwealth Bank and in the early 2000s became the Taylor Square Hotel, including the T2 nightclub and Vegas Lounge. A history of numerous alcohol-fuelled assaults prompted years of lobbying from local residents and police for its closure, which occurred in 2009.



Figure 34 Taylor Square Hotel (Gday Pubs website)

In 2010, the Sydney City Council purchased the building from the owners, Raglen Investments, reportedly for \$5.5 million. The Council planned to turn the building into a cycling hub for commuters riding in and out of the city along the Bourke Street bike path¹¹³, but this has not eventuated. In 2012, the indigenous artist Raiko Rennie was commissioned by the City of Sydney to paint the building in a pink diagonally-striped pattern entitled “always was, always will be”. This temporary artwork was painted over in 2017 by the Council when it decided to sell the building.



Figure 35 Raiko Rennie artwork, 2012

In 2020, the global fashion brand BooHoo will establish its Sydney headquarters in the building, retaining the interior heritage features¹¹⁴.

Kinsela's Hotel

Address: 383 Bourke Street, Darlinghurst.

Fraser & Hughes, drapers and mercers

In 1845, Ann Sophia Campbell (daughter of Edward Riley and wife of Robert Campbell) inherited a block of land bounded on the south-east by Bourke and Campbell Streets as Lot G5 of the Riley Estate. In January 1852, the shoemaker James Clegg purchased three allotments to the north of Campbell Street and erected a two-storey residential building on each one.

In 1910, the drapers James Fraser and David Hughes purchased the three houses and amalgamated them into a single building, known as Mansion House. By 1921, the partnership operated a second shop at 171 Oxford Street¹¹⁵. The Mansion House business employed drapers (dealers in cloths of materials such as wool and cotton), while the Oxford Street outlet employed mercers (dealers in finer cloths such as silk and velvet).

David Hughes died in 1933¹¹⁶, and after the death of James Fraser in 1937¹¹⁷, the building was owned by Mrs. Isadine Alma Fraser and the estate of David Hughes¹¹⁸. The firm of Fraser and Hughes continued operating in the Oxford Street after the death of the original partners, but Mansion House was leased to Charles Kinsela in 1932.

Kinsela's - funerals with Californian flair, hotel food with French flair

In 1830, the young Charles Kinsela (1814-1883) opened an undertaking firm in Liverpool, outside Sydney¹¹⁹. His funeral business flourished, and in 1857 was relocated to the corner of Goulburn and Sussex Streets. In 1860 a branch was established at 111 South Head Road, and then another in George Street in 1870. The business was then known as Charles Kinsela and Son. After Charles retired, his son Charles (1854-1900) took over the business until his death. His own son Charles (1886-1944), grandson of the firm's founder, was born in Sydney, and became manager in 1906.



Figure 36 Early Kinsela's ad (*Sydney Herald*, 1 August 1836)

Charles Kinsela took over the undertaking firm in 1914¹²⁰, and as a profitable sideline he started providing carriages or motor cars for weddings. In 1920, he was the first undertaker in Sydney to use motor hearses and a mortuary ambulance. He visited California several times, bringing back to Sydney the most advanced ideas of the American way of death¹²¹.



Figure 37 Kinsela's motor funeral, 1940s (St Bartholomew's website)

In 1932, Kinsela leased the building and hired the architect C. Bruce Dellit to remodel it for use as an Art Deco funeral parlour, with new chapels, office and residential accommodation. Kinsela's funeral parlour opened in 1933. By 1938, the firm had 38 branches and agencies, mainly in Sydney's eastern suburbs, modern equipment and a solid reputation. By the late 1930s, Kinsela conducted 1,700 to 1,900 funerals per year, or about 15% of the Sydney market. Charles Kinsela died at his Bondi home in 1944. He was a dynamic and colourful businessman who combined the traditions of an old family firm with the flamboyance of a Californian funeral director¹²².



Figure 38 Kinsela's funeral parlour (Sydney Dance Company website)

In 1981, Charles Kinsela Pty Ltd went into voluntary liquidation following internal disputes, and the building was sold to Leap Nominees. The next year, the building became a brasserie and theatre under the ownership of Leon Fink and head chef Tony Bilson¹²³. Bilson, with apprentice chef Tetsuya Wakuda, served smart French food until after midnight. By the mid-1980s, Kinselas was a high-class

cabaret venue, and later a venue for big-name rock music groups. Today, Kinselas operates as a pub, with the Middle Bar and Johnny Wong's Dumpling Bar on the first floor, and the Standard Bowl nightclub and four-lane bowling alley on the second floor¹²⁴.



Figure 39 Kinsela's Hotel, 2009 (Decoworks Pty Ltd)

Former Oxford Flour Mills

Address: 379-379a Bourke Street, Darlinghurst.

In 1844, the miller George Luker married Louisa Hobbs, eldest daughter of another miller Charles Hobbs. Both Luker and Hobbs were from Stroudwater in Gloucestershire¹²⁵. The two families were to have a long association in the field of flour milling and baking in Sydney. By 1845, Luker was in partnership with Reuben Beard in the milling firm of Beard and Luker, operating in Old South Head Road¹²⁶. This partnership was dissolved in August 1848¹²⁷.

By 1854, George Luker and John Rowling were operating a steam flour mill in a new three-storey sandstone building at the present 379 Bourke Street as the firm Luker and Rowling¹²⁸, until dissolving their partnership in 1861¹²⁹. George Luker retired from the business in 1873 and advertised the mill to rent¹³⁰. In 1875, the mill was taken over by the firm Luker and Hobbs, run by Walter Luker (George's eldest son) and Henry Thomas Hobbs¹³¹, who named it the Oxford Flour Mills¹³².



Figure 40 379-379a Bourke Street

The sandstone building was demolished in 1887 and replaced by the present two-storey brick building, owned by J. C. Walker, who inscribed “1887” on the parapet¹³³. The first occupant was the furniture dealer George Goldsmidt¹³⁴. James Gordon sold imported pianos in the building from about 1895¹³⁵ until 1906¹³⁶. From 1910, George Palmer was advertising billiard rooms there¹³⁷.

During the last twenty years, the Russian Accent Restaurant operated from the first floor, which is now known as 379a Bourke Street. After this closed, the Body 777 Art Restaurant operated there, but this has also closed. The Gebara City Convenience Store currently operates from the ground floor.

Former Queen's Arms Hotel (Belgenny Apartments)

Address: 389 Bourke Street, corner Campbell Street.



Figure 41 Queen's Arms Hotel, c1920 (State Records of NSW)

In 1879, John Bourke constructed a two-storey brick hotel on the corner of Bourke and Campbell Street¹³⁸, which was known as Cotton's Royal Hotel after the licensee William John Cotton¹³⁹. The licensee became insolvent in 1881¹⁴⁰ and the licence was transferred to Joseph Kelsey¹⁴¹. John Bourke took over the licence in 1888¹⁴², and added a third storey that year, creating an imposing landmark in the district. This extra floor may have contained a ballroom or large meeting room, as the Rate Assessment Books from 1891 record an increase in the number of floors from two to three, but the number of rooms only increases by one (to twelve)¹⁴³. The photograph of the hotel taken in the early 1920s shows the date "1888" on the Bourke Street parapet to commemorate this major renovation¹⁴⁴.

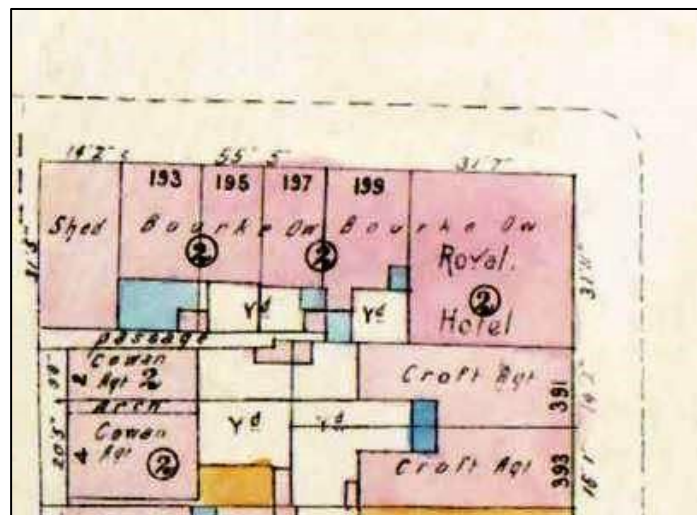


Figure 42 Queen's Arms Hotel, 1888 (Rygate and West map)

John Bourke transferred the licence to Julia Marsh in 1889, and the hotel was renamed the Geebung Hotel¹⁴⁵. However, things did not go well under Ms. Marsh's management, as a licence renewal was refused in June 1891¹⁴⁶, and the transfer of the licence back to John Bourke was also refused "due to strong objections from the public"¹⁴⁷. Eliza Jane Vye became the licensee in October 1895¹⁴⁸ and renamed the hotel to the Newcastle Family Hotel. In March 1896 she was fined for selling liquor during unlawful hours¹⁴⁹, and in May the Licensing Court refused her licence transfer request to Jeremiah Healey¹⁵⁰.

Robert Walsh became the licensee in 1897¹⁵¹ and by January 1898 he had changed the name to the Wicklow Hotel¹⁵² (it was also called the Wicklow Arms Hotel in the press). The hotel's final name of the Queen's Arms Hotel was acquired after Frederick Dollar became the licensee in April 1902¹⁵³. The Rate Assessment Books show that the large brewer Tooth & Co. took over the hotel in about 1911¹⁵⁴. The owner and licensee (Phillip Whitty) were called before a Licences Reduction Board hearing in September 1922. The details of the hearing are not known, but the Board decided to close the hotel, which occurred in November 1923¹⁵⁵.



Figure 43 Belgenny Apartments (sydney-city.blogspot.com)

The building then became a shop and dwellings, with Roach and McDermott's café operating in 1930¹⁵⁶. By 1932, Mrs. Valda Hume was the building owner, and Carew's Tyre Service occupied the ground floor¹⁵⁷. Then in about 1937 the group of buildings from 389 to 393 Bourke Street was purchased by Belgenny Pty Ltd, and the hotel and adjacent buildings were demolished to make way for a ten-storey block of 81 apartments. The Belgenny apartment building is on the New South Wales State Heritage Register as an intact example of Inter-War Art Deco architecture¹⁵⁸. The Serafim Pharmacy operates on the ground floor.

Former Darlinghurst Fruit Market

Address: 191 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst.

In 1860, a two-storey building was constructed on the eastern corner of Flinders Street, known at the time as 195-197 South Head Road. George C. Aitken established a grocer's shop there¹⁵⁹, and by 1863, the building was owned by William Clarke¹⁶⁰. Edwin Clarke took over the grocery in 1869¹⁶¹ and began to advertise his produce. His goods reflected the Eastern Mediterranean origin of many nuts and dried fruits at the time: Patras currants (from Greece), Eleme Raisins (from Smyrna in Turkey), Muscatels, Valencia and Sultana Raisins, Turkey Figs, Soft Shell and Jordan Almonds¹⁶².

From 1871, Miss W. Clarke was the ratepayer¹⁶³, then Charlotte Clarke in 1877¹⁶⁴. The grocery was owned by the auctioneer Myer Suttonberg from 1887¹⁶⁵ until George Walsh took it over in 1889, along with the licence to sell colonial wine¹⁶⁶. Antonio Locantro operated a fruit shop from about 1900¹⁶⁷ until 1909¹⁶⁸, which was known as the Darlinghurst Fruit Market.

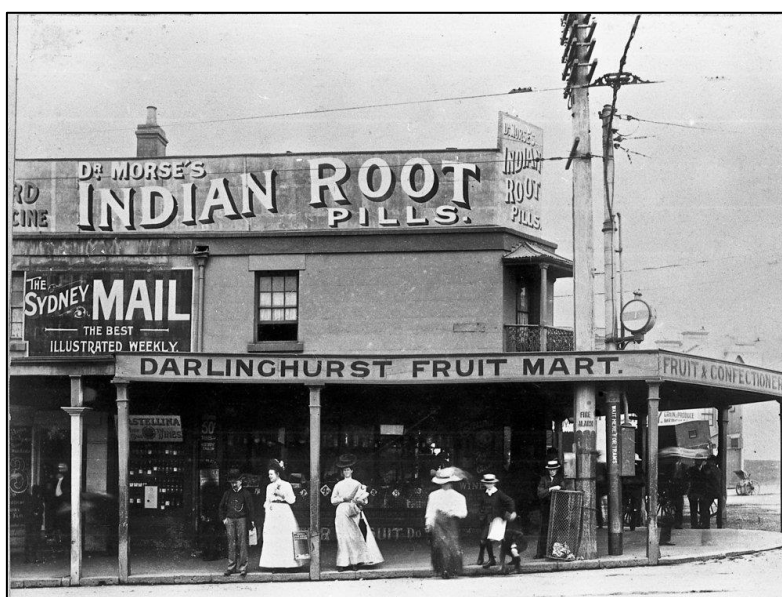


Figure 44 Darlinghurst Fruit Market, 1909 (COS Archives)

In 1910¹⁶⁹, the building was demolished and replaced with a much larger three-storey brick building called Taylor Chambers, owned by Jane Stewart¹⁷⁰. From 1911, the building accommodated a great variety of businesses, indicative of the needs and activities of the local population in this era. As an example, the following businesses were operating in Taylor Chambers in 1913:

- Ground floor:
 - Clifford & Co, estate agents.
 - Miss D. Solomon, dyer.
- First floor,
 - F. Dare, dentist.
 - A. & E. Coy, jewellers.
 - New York Library, Misses Green and Craswell, proprietors.
 - J. Burnstein, ladies' tailor.

- Second floor,
 - McKenzie & Burke, military tailors.
 - J. H. Jones & Co, indent agents.
 - William Mills, electrician.
 - Woods & Stephenson, tailors.
 - Pictro-Silhouette Studios¹⁷¹.



Figure 45 Taylor Chambers, 1954 (COS Archives)

The Covent Garden Fruit Store operated in the building from 1916¹⁷² until the 1920s¹⁷³, advertising that they could deliver bushel cases of apples (roughly 125 medium-sized apples) to anywhere in Sydney. From 1924¹⁷⁴ until after 1948¹⁷⁵, the owner was Ethel Blanche Westley, who purchased it from the estate of the late Jane Stewart.



Figure 46 Sir Allen Taylor & Co., 2018

The City of Sydney Archives record that the site was used for a series of cafes and restaurants from the 1970s onwards¹⁷⁶. A recent occupant was Coco Cubano, a Cuban-inspired bar and café chain, from December 2011 to August 2017¹⁷⁷. This was followed soon afterwards by the bar and eatery Sir Allen Taylor & Co, operated by Ben Sweeten, the owner of Tuxedo and the Kansas City Shuffle in The Rocks¹⁷⁸. The Sir Allen Taylor & Co closed in mid-2018. From 2015, Levels 1 and 2 have been occupied by the Oxford Performance Centre, a personal training and lifestyle coaching centre¹⁷⁹.

Taylor Square Farmers' Market

Address: Taylor Square north.

In December 2012, a community not-for-profit food market began to operate every Saturday morning in Taylor Square north from 8am to 1pm. It is known as the Taylor Square Farmers' Market or the Sydney Sustainable Markets¹⁸⁰. Stallholders sell what they grow, farm, pickle, preserve, bake, smoke or catch themselves from a defined regional area¹⁸¹.



Figure 47 Taylor Square Farmers' Market (Salvador Coffee Facebook page)

Modern times

Gilligan's Island

After the trams ceased running in 1961, the traffic routes through Taylor Square were remodelled, leaving a triangular pedestrian island between the bank building and Oxford Street. By the early 1980s, this island was banked up with soil and planted with grass and four large palm trees. Its resemblance to a tropical island inspired the locals to affectionately name it Gilligan's Island.



Figure 48 Taylor Square palm trees, early 1980s (COS Archives)

Gilligan's Island was an American television sitcom, created by Sherwood Schwartz, which ran for three seasons from September 1964 to April 1967. The series followed the comic adventures of seven castaways as they tried to survive on (and in particular to escape from) a tropical island after being shipwrecked in a storm. The title character, played by Bob Denver, was the inept, accident-prone first mate of the small cruise boat *SS Minnow*, who was frequently responsible for the failure of the many attempts to leave the island.



Figure 49 Gilligan's Island cast (Warner Bros website)

The cast was selected by the creator to represent a social microcosm of American life, and apart from Gilligan and the ship's captain, included a millionaire and his socialite wife, a glamorous B-grade movie actress, a high school science teacher, and a down-to-earth girl next door. The program

rated well in its day, and grew in popularity during decades of syndication, especially during the 1970s and 1980s.

Fountain

Nowadays, the whole area between the former bank building and Oxford Street (and extending to Kinsela's) is a pedestrian mall. During the construction of the Eastern Distributor under Taylor Square in the late 1990s, Bourke Street was closed off on both sides of Oxford Street. There is still a raised lawn running along the Flinders Street side of the mall, but next to this is a part-time fountain that can catch out unwary pedestrians who are crossing it when the water starts spouting. The fountain was installed as part of the Taylor Square refurbishment in 2005.



Figure 50 Taylor Square fountain and mall (alchetron.com)

Mardi Gras parade

On a cold night in June 1978, a truck equipped with a small music and sound system drove from Taylor Square down Oxford Street to Hyde Park, followed by hundreds of gay and lesbian people in support of the day of international gay solidarity that was being celebrated around the world. When the truck arrived in Hyde Park, police arrested the driver, resulting in an outcry from supporters, followed by many more arrests and beatings by the Darlinghurst police. Over the following months, more protests and arrests took place, but the police action was eventually seen as heavy-handed, and in April 1979 the New South Wales Government repealed the *Summary Offences Act* that allowed such arrests to be made.

The 1978 march thus became a civil rights milestone in the gay community and beyond. The 1979 march attracted up to 3,000 marchers and was incident-free. Today the annual Mardi Gras parade is an extremely popular event in late February or early March, starting in Hyde Park, travelling through Taylor Square to Moore Park¹⁸². In a strong sign of changing official attitudes, New South Wales police officers have joined in the march from 1998. Assistant Police Commissioner Christine Nixon was instrumental in uniformed police being allowed to march. She later told ABC radio that she heard criticism such as “This will be the end of the New South Wales Police as we know it”, to which she replied “Yes, I hope it is!”¹⁸³.



Figure 51 Mardi Gras parade, 2013 (hasithatudugalle website)

Transport

Taylor Square remains a major transport hub for the eastern and south-eastern suburbs of Sydney, although only buses provide public transport now. However, the success of former tram system has not been completely forgotten. In 1979 a light rail system opened along the old goods train line from the city to the inner west, and now runs to Dulwich Hill. Then in 2019 a second light rail system opened from the city to the south-eastern suburb of Randwick, and in 2020 will run to Kingsford.

One of the options considered for the south-eastern light rail route was to follow the original tramline along Oxford Street through Taylor Square and then down Flinders Street and eventually joining the still-existing tram corridor next to Anzac Parade. The New South Wales Government eventually decided to run the track along a more direct route from the city through Surry Hills to Moore Park and beyond. But the Government has left the door open for a future light rail to run along Oxford Street to Bondi Junction. So it could be back to the future when the clanging of tram bells once again echoes around Taylor Square¹⁸⁴.

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