

## On the Street Where We Live

Since 1829, the New South Wales Legislature has been part of the street which is the civic and historic axis of Sydney.

In December 1792 Governor Phillip proclaimed the open space which became the Botanic Gardens, Domain, Hyde Park and Macquarie Street for government use. The street itself was proclaimed in 1810 by Governor Macquarie. At first it only ran from Hyde Park to Bent St, but in 1845 was extended in both directions – north to Bennelong Point and south through Hyde Park to Surry Hills. The Hyde Park section was closed again in 1851. In the late 1980s Macquarie Street was given a facelift in keeping with its significance.

From its beginning, Macquarie Street has been central to many aspects of Sydney life.

**Centre of Society** - views, parks and Parliament attracted the middle classes to the street from the 1840s and soon there were many fine residences and clubs. By 1900, traffic and pollution had made the city less attractive as a residential area.

**Centre of Medicine** - as the wealthy moved out, Sydney Hospital began attracting the medical profession to the street. Purpose-built blocks of consulting rooms were built. Being a Macquarie Street specialist became prestigious and by 1928, 260 doctors and 100 dentists were here – far more than today.

**Centre of Ceremony** - ceremonial tradition began with the Waterloo Ball of 1816 (commemorating Wellington's victory seven months late because the colony had only just heard of it). The street has hosted Australian Centenary, Sesquicentenary, Bicentenary and Federation events, Royal and other official visits, parades, peace and victory celebrations, official openings of Parliament and, of course, demonstrations.

**Centre of Culture** - with Museums, Opera House, Gardens, Conservatorium, churches, Historic Houses Trust and Library.

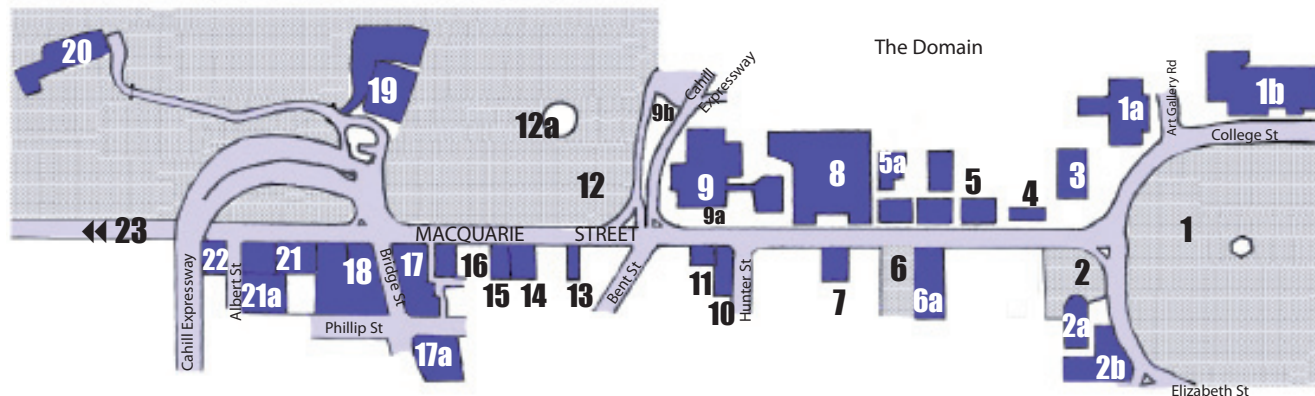
### A Tour of Macquarie Street

#### 1 Hyde Park

Part of Governor Phillip's 1792 Common, renamed Hyde Park by Macquarie, the Park served as a race track and cricket green last century. Upturned in the 1920s for construction of the underground railway, it was remodelled in the 30s, at which time the Archibald Fountain, a legacy of the former editor of *The Bulletin*, was added. The 1920s Land Titles Office (1a) and St Marys Cathedral (1b) – both Gothic Revival in style – add to the area's atmosphere and significance.

#### 2 Queens Square

The centrepiece of Macquarie's town plan provided a setting for the Francis Greenway-designed church, courthouse and barracks. Prince Albert's statue arrived in 1866, and that of his widow, Queen Victoria, was added in 1888 to celebrate the centenary of settlement. Both have changed locations at times. **St James Church (2a)** was designed by Greenway as a courthouse, but a review of Macquarie's expenditure by Commissioner Bigge led to it being converted into a church before its completion in 1822 – much to Greenway's fury. The interior is remarkable for its memorials and for its crypt which had been intended as cells for the court house. **St James Courthouse (2b)** was begun by



Greenway as a parish school in 1819 but after Bigge's review it became a courthouse, which it remains today. The project was completed in 1828 without Greenway. The Supreme Court was here until its move to Darlinghurst in 1842, although it is now back in Queens Square in the multi-storey Law Courts block. The building was extended in 1868 and the entrance switched from the Hyde Park side to King St.

#### 3 Hyde Park Barracks (1819)

Another Macquarie-Greenway project, the Barracks housed convict work gangs overnight. Numbers accommodated soon grew from the intended 600 to around 1,000. Georgian in style, the deep pediment above the entrance contains Australia's oldest clock. After transportation of convicts to NSW from Britain ended in 1840, the Barracks became a staging centre for immigrants, often for single women who were then selected as servants by employers. In 1862 it also became a government asylum for aged, infirm and destitute women. In 1887 the interior was partitioned to house courtrooms and Government legal departments. The Barracks survived several plans for total demolition and in 1976 the restoration work began which created the Historic Houses Trust museum of today.

#### 4 The Mint

Completed 1816 as part of the 'Rum Hospital' to house the Assistant Surgeon and medical stores, it is the 'twin' of Parliament House. Restored in the late 1970s, it appears today in near original condition with its colonnaded verandah, 24 pane windows, Georgian panelled doors and shingle roof. In 1853, during the Gold Rushes, it became a branch of the Royal Mint, operating until NSW gold production had declined by 1927. It was then used as government offices until restored as a museum in the 1970s. In 2004, it became the headquarters of the Historic Houses Trust, with additional accommodation imaginatively built into former factory buildings behind.

#### 5 Sydney Hospital

Sydney's hospital was a tent and hut affair in The Rocks. Macquarie recognised the need for a new hospital and chose the present site. As funds were not available, the builders were paid with a 3-year/45,000 gallon monopoly on the import of Rum to the colony and it thus became known as 'The Rum Hospital'. It had three two-storey blocks, the two outer blocks remaining today as the Mint and the Parliament. The long central block

was demolished in 1879 and replaced in 1894 by the present Victorian classical revival buildings designed by T.H. Rowe. Nurse training in Australia began here in 1868 with Lucy Osburn and 5 other English nurses sent by Florence Nightingale. The plans of the brick and sandstone Gothic Revival Nightingale Wing of 1869 off the central courtyard, with its colourful fountain, were approved by Nightingale to house the first nursing school. It is now a nursing museum (5a).

#### 6 Martin Place

Named for 19th century Premier Sir James Martin, Martin Place was extended up to Macquarie Street in 1935. Subsequently, most major banks located their head offices on Martin Place, with some still there. Most significant is the **Reserve Bank (6a)**, the Australian central bank. It contains an interesting **Museum of Australian Currency** which is open to visitors.

#### 7 St Stephens Church

St Stephen's predecessor was an iron Presbyterian Church which stood where the new wing of the State Library now stands. It was replaced in 1879 by a St Stephens in Phillip Street, in turn demolished when Martin Place was extended in the early 1930s. The present Macquarie Street site involved demolition of historic Burdekin House, built for merchant Thomas Burdekin in 1841, and in its time, a centre of Sydney fashion, society and politics. The present St Stephens Church opened in 1935.

#### 8 Parliament House

Originally the Principal Surgeon's Residence of 'the Rum Hospital', the fledgling Legislative Council began to meet in part of the building in 1829. Legislative Chambers were added in 1843 and 1856. See other *History Bulletins* in this series for more information on Parliament House.

#### 9 The State Library

In 1845 the Australian Subscription Library moved to the corner of Macquarie and Bent Streets. It was taken over by the Government in 1869 and renamed the Free Public Library of NSW. Part of it moved in 1881 into an old Iron Church (see 7), then on the site of the present library. David Scott Mitchell, who had devoted his life to collecting books and Australiana, agreed to bequeath his huge collection to the Government if a proper building was provided. The Mitchell Library, designed by W. L. Vernon, was begun in 1906. Mitchell died in 1907 before the Library was completed in 1910. The Dixson Wing was added

in 1929 to house the collection of Sir William Dixon, and the principal Reading Room in 1939-43. At the same time a new entrance area was provided, with bronze doors and a marble floor map of Abel Tasman's voyages. Work on the new six-level (mostly underground) Macquarie Street Wing began in 1983 and was completed in 1988. This is a good area for **statues**. Next to the Mitchell Wing are **Matthew Flinders** (and his cat, Trim) **(9a)** and Governor Sir Richard Bourke. In the middle of the freeway ramp is the statue group of famous characters at **Shakespeare Place (9b)**, erected in 1926 by the family of Henry Gullett (MLC, editor and Shakespeare enthusiast).

#### 10 Wyoming

One of the first 'skyscrapers' of Macquarie St in 1909, it was designed by W. Burcham Clamp with professional rooms for the medical profession on lower floors, and mansion flats above.

#### 11 Horbury Terrace

These are two survivors of a terrace of seven built in 1845 as gentlemen's residences. Early occupants included Robert Lowe (later Viscount Sherbrooke), Conrad Martens and a Spanish Consul who, in 1869, suicided from one of the windows.

#### 12 The Royal Botanic Gardens

The first (and unsuccessful) farm was started here. Later, Governor Bligh's daughter, Mary, had more success with gardening. The botanic collection was initially restricted but the enlarged gardens were opened to the public in 1831, and the basis of the present gardens established 1848-1896 by superintendent Charles Moore. Despite the impact of celebrations, wars, depressions, land lost to government projects, roadways and other pressures, the Gardens continue as one of Sydney's great treasures. The short-lived (1879-83) **Garden Palace (12a)** was in its time the grandest building in Australia. It stretched through the Gardens from almost the State Library to the Conservatorium. The Palace was designed by James Barnet for the Sydney Exhibition of 1879-80, putting world technology on display for 185 days, and attracting 1.1 million visitors. Intended as temporary, it remained to become a ballroom, concert hall, government offices, museum and art gallery. However, on the morning of 22 September, 1883, the Palace burnt to the ground in a tremendous fire – arson was suspected. Barnet designed the Macquarie Street commemorative Garden Palace gates in 1888.

#### 13 Royal College of Physicians

No 145 was the home of John Fairfax, owner of the Sydney Morning Herald. By 1910 the Warrigal Club occupied it, adding two storeys.

#### 14 BMA House

The British (now Australian) Medical Association House was built in 1929 as medical chambers with a lecture hall on the ground floor. Its gothic and art deco features include British, Australian and traditional medical symbols on its facade. Look up high for the koalas.

#### 15 History House (Royal Australian Historical Society)

Another remnant gentlemen's residence, this Italianate town house by architect George Mansfield housed the 1870s Reform Club. As the middle classes moved away from the city, it became a boarding house and then homes and rooms of medical practitioners until acquired by the RAHS in 1969.

#### 16 The Astor

In 1914 John O'Brien built the exclusive 13-storey Astor Apartments designed with a basement restaurant linked by service lifts to each apartment, enabling dinner deliveries to residents. The roof garden included a glasshouse, fernery and dance floor.

#### 17 Chief Secretary's Building (1878)

The fine interior of this French Second Empire style government office designed by Government Architect James Barnet, was recently extensively restored. The Governor of NSW now occupies the office built for 19th century Premier, Sir Henry Parkes. Downhill, across Phillip St is the **Museum of Sydney (17a)** on the site of NSW's first Government House.

#### 18 Treasury Building

Now included in the Intercontinental Hotel, this former government office was built in two stages, beginning with the Treasury (the Bridge St corner) in 1849 in a classical revival style by Mortimer Lewis. In 1894 it was extended on both Macquarie and Bridge Streets by W. L. Vernon to include the Premier's Office. The larger of the Macquarie St entrance porticos with its carved coats of arms, forms part of this extension.

#### 19 Conservatorium of Music

Beyond the equestrian statue of Edward VII is the elaborate stable block built by Greenway in 1817-21 for his proposed Government House. It could accommodate 30 horses plus servants. Rebuilt by W. L. Vernon in 1914 as the Conservatorium, a covered concert hall replaced the former courtyard. Conservatorium High School was later added to the site. A major redevelopment, completed in 2001, restored the old building, relocating most of the working areas underground, and incorporating a fascinating display of the site's archaeology.

#### 20 Government House

Beyond the gatehouse and down the roadway to the north of the former stables is the Gothic castle-style Government House. Still used by the State Governor but no longer as a residence, the grounds and, on several days a week, the house is open to the public. Designed in England by Edward Blore and constructed under Mortimer Lewis' supervision 1837-45, its porch and cloistered verandah were added later.

#### 21 Transport House (1938) and Sir Stamford Hotel (1896)

Two more former government buildings (once used by transport and health) now converted to a hotel school and a hotel. Downhill on the Albert and Phillip Streets corner, the former Water Police station and courts have become the **Justice and Police Museum (21a)**.

#### 22 Royal Automobile Club

One of the last of the Macquarie Street 'Gentlemen's Clubs', a renaissance palazzo-style building designed by H. R. Rowe.

#### 23 Bennelong Point

Beyond the 1958 Cahill Expressway overbridge, the East Circular Quay buildings replace sandstone Wool and Bond Stores which once lined a busy commercial wharf area. The roadway cuts through the 'Tarpeian Rock' down to the point named for Governor Phillip's Aboriginal friend, Bennelong. In 1973, the Opera House replaced a castle-like tram shed which, in 1903, had replaced Fort Macquarie, another Francis Greenway work.



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## A Guided Tour of Macquarie Street



A largely sandstone Macquarie Street in 1931 with Sydney Hospital, Parliament House and the Mitchell Library on the right and the Gardens and Conservatorium beyond. Little on the left side survives today, including the terraces in the foreground standing where Martin Place would be extended up to Macquarie Street in 1935. Across the low-rise buildings, the new Harbour Bridge is nearing completion.