

**1877:** A new laundry and wash-house is built and new quarters for female servants are erected.

**1878:** Western wall of Legislative Assembly Chamber redesigned and moved towards Macquarie Street; plaster ceiling, elaborately decorated with a multi-coloured stencilled border and centre roses over a painted sky with billowing clouds; walls stencilled in sienna and black on beige with bands of decoration in ochre, beige and brown on a sienna ground between upper and lower walls; lower part of wall partly stencilled in imitation of ceramic wall tiles; polished cedar screens on galleries; bordered patterned carpet and runners (colours unknown); lobby, formerly at this end, relocated to Domain end; Semi-circular seating now created in Chamber.

**1879:** Crown acquires Richmond Villa; Parliamentary Reporting Staff (“Hansard”) instituted; special gallery built shortly thereafter in Legislative Assembly south wall.

**1884:** Electric light introduced into Parliament House

**1888:** Foundation stone for new Parliament House laid; removed in 1906 when site used for Mitchell Library.

**1891:** Speaker’s Suite built next to Assembly Chamber.

**1892:** Legislative Council facade dismantled and rebuilt 10 feet closer to Macquarie Street; Chamber redecorated; red wall paper and red patterned carpet (reproduced in 1975–1985 renovations); red leather upholstery.

**1897:** Inquiry into proposed new Houses of Parliament tabled by Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works; proposals not adopted due to lack of funding.

**1900:** Lending Library (former Church) next to Assembly Chamber dismantled (re-erected at Lidcombe Hospital); bowling green and tennis court installed on site.

**1904-06:** Stables and Coach-house demolished for construction of Parliamentary Library Reading Room (now Jubilee Room); Assembly Record Room with Press Room and Premier’s Wing erected overlooking bowling green.

**1908:** Legislative Assembly Chamber redecorated: coffered, pressed-metal ceiling, possibly bronze, replaced 1880 plaster; green carpet; walls painted and stencilled in sage and emerald greens; all polished cedar painted in brown and green tones at the upper level.

**1909:** Inquiry into proposed remodelling of Parliamentary buildings tabled by Standing Committee on Public Works.

**1915:** Lower back verandah on Council side removed and Lounge and Ministers’ Room erected.

**1919:** Excavation of Library stacks under former hospital.

**1937:** Premier’s Suite re-built and party rooms erected on the Assembly side; Richmond Terrace demolished for further extensions to State Library building.

**1954–1958:** Fluorescent lighting installed in ceilings of both Chambers; both Chambers painted white.

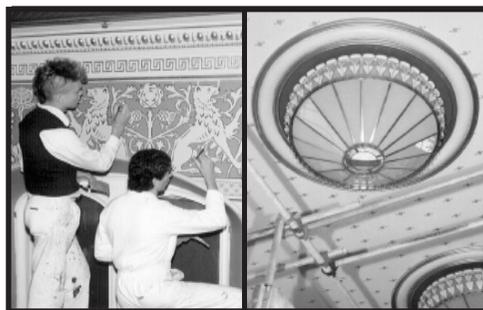
**1972:** Report tabled on new accommodation for Parliament.

**1974-1985:** Renovation and restoration of old Parliament House; demolition of back buildings and construction of new building behind restored Chambers, lobbies and central block to house Members and staff; 1892 and 1908 decor used as basis of present Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly decorations respectively; Richmond Villa is removed to Kent Street.

**1983-88:** New Macquarie Street wing for State Library built on the Parliament bowling green site.

**2009:** New Guard House constructed in north-western corner of the Speaker’s Garden, providing new security entrance for the Parliament. Southern exit gates also constructed.

**2015:** Construction of additional office space adjacent to the Level 9 Roof Garden and restoration and replacement of heritage roof on original Rum Hospital building.



**Restoration of the Chambers in the 1980s: re-stencilling the frieze in the Legislative Assembly Chamber; light fittings for the Legislative Council Chamber reproduced from photographs.**

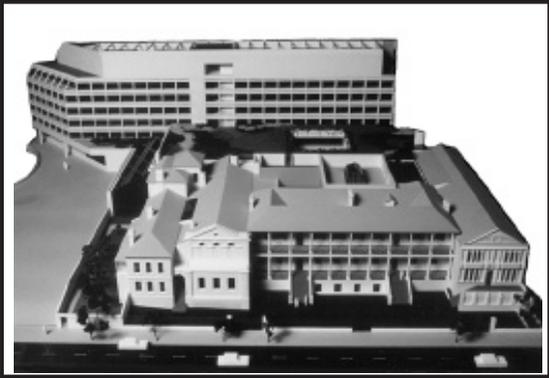


# PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

## HISTORY BULLETIN **2**

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### The Architecture and Decorations of Parliament House



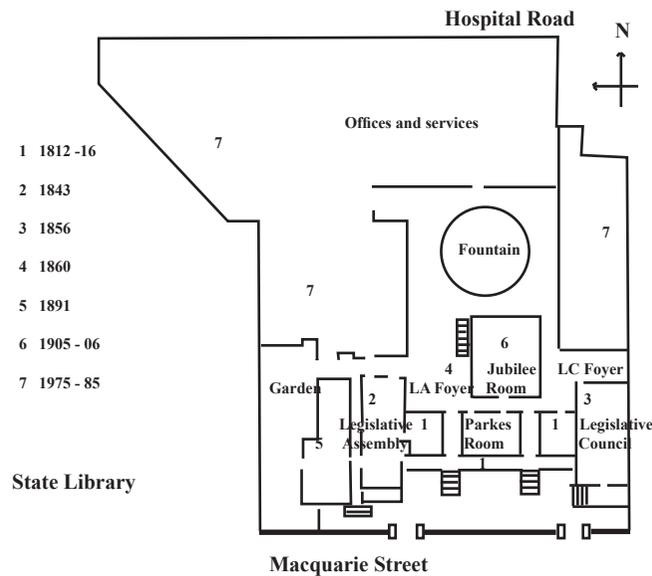
**An architectural model of Parliament House showing how the Macquarie Street heritage facade was retained and linked to the new 1970s offices by the Roof Garden and Fountain Court**

## THE COLOURS AND DECORATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBERS

The use of red and green as the respective colours of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly Chambers is a tradition inherited from the British Parliament at Westminster. The use of red for the House of Lords and for most Upper Houses in the Westminster system, is attributed to red traditionally being a royal colour. The Lords' Chamber was decorated in this way to honour the Monarchs. One theory for the use of green in the Lower House was that in the fourteenth century, the general decoration of the Palace of Westminster was green, this being a favourite colour of King Henry III (reigned 1216–1272) who built much of the Palace of Westminster, including St Stephen's chapel where the Commons met regularly from about 1547 to 1823.

When the Chamber was built in 1843 for the newly constituted Legislative Council the windows were painted green to reduce the glare. Two contemporary watercolours (Janssen in 1844 and Leigh in 1853) show the upholstery of this new chamber as being green. The walls were distempered in a light stone colour. A major feature of the Chamber was the cedar Gothic style Speaker's Chair. Nineteenth century photographs show the Assembly Chamber to have been enlarged from 1853, and still with the green upholstery. During the 1908 renovations, the Chamber was painted and stencilled in sage and emerald greens.

It is not known if the Legislative Council Chambers were given red upholstery after the new building was erected in 1856, however the new chamber was papered in a rich white and gold with a cedar, gold edged cornice on both the wall sides. Floor to ceiling gold beading was placed on the corners. It is known that in 1892 red was used for the wallpaper and carpets and this was the basis for the patterns and colours of the 1975 - 1985 Chamber renovations.



## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE AND ITS RENOVATIONS AND REDECORATIONS

**1810:** Contract signed with Blaxcell, Riley and, later, Wentworth for construction of new General Hospital.

**1815:** Scathing report by Greenway on construction of Hospital; builders make costly alterations.

**1816:** "Rum Hospital" receives its first patients.

**1824:** Newly constituted Legislative Council Members convene in old Government House.

**1829:** Governor Darling's despatch indicates proposed appropriation of the north wing of Principal Surgeon's Quarters at the General Hospital to accommodate the Legislative Council and Executive Council.

**1829:** First meeting of 14 Member Legislative Council in Surgeon's Quarters. This room later used by Parliamentary Library. It still has "Library" on the glass door into the present Legislative Assembly Chamber.

**1838:** Strangers' Gallery erected in the Chamber; a Press Gallery was also erected at the opposite end.

**1843:** Newly constituted Legislative Council (partly elected and partly appointed) meets in new Chamber designed for it by Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis.

**1849:** Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis, erects Richmond Villa as his private residence at back of Parliament House.

**1855:** St Stephen's Presbyterian Church ("the Iron Church") built on present State Library site.

**1856:** Old Council Chamber becomes new Legislative Assembly Chamber with the constitution of responsible government and a bicameral Parliament; new Chamber erected at southern end of building to house new Legislative Council (a pre-fabricated cast-iron building purchased for £1,835); President's Chair (now the Governor's Chair) upholstered in crimson velvet.

**1859:** Curved corrugated iron roof of new Legislative Council Chamber replaced by pitched slate roof. Legislative Assembly Chamber redecorated; plaster ceiling with frieze; upper walls papered with a diapered pattern; lower walls papered with diapered pattern in blocks of marbled paper and varnished (paper in white with red and blue veining); green upholstery retained; Brussels carpet in plain colour (unknown) with small motif; Legislative Assembly Chamber lengthened 15 feet towards Domain; Speaker's Room is also constructed at the rear.

**1860:** New Refreshment Room constructed at back (approximately where the Jubilee Room is now); back verandah of the old Surgeon's Quarters enclosed and turned into corridor linking two Houses (the present Premier's Corridor outside the Jubilee Room). Gas lighting introduced into Parliament House.

**1861:** International design competition for new grand neo-Gothic Parliament House won by Henry Lynn of Dublin. Funds were never provided for its construction.

**c1865:** Mr Speaker Arnold orders Legislative Assembly Table to be boarded in.

**1867:** Erection of Legislative Assembly Entrance Lobby.

**1869:** 1860 Refreshment Room demolished and new Dining Room erected (now Fountain site);

**1874:** St Stephen's Church re-established in Phillip Street and former Iron Church becomes part of Public Library.