The History of Durham Hall, Surry Hills

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Cover photographs:

Top: Durham Hall, 1984
Lower left: 203-205 Albion Street
Lower right: 197-201 Albion Street

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Foreword

When the convict Mary Johnson gave birth to George Hill in 1802, she and her convict partner William Hill had no idea that their eldest son would rise above his humble beginnings and limited schooling to build one of the finest houses in the colony and become one of its best known citizens. George grew up to become wealthy as a butcher, rural landowner and proprietor of three city inns, and was able to purchase an allotment in Surry Hills during the economic boom of the 1830s. On this site in 1835 he built a handsome Georgian-style villa with extensive gardens, then two groups of investment houses next door in the 1840s. He named the house Durham Hall, probably after the prized Durham cattle that helped make his fortune.

With Durham Hall as his base, George Hill became a City Councillor for many years, served a term as Mayor, and then was elected to the Legislative Council. He was active as a public benefactor to charities, and served on the committees of many public and sporting institutions. He was a magistrate for much of his life, serving tirelessly on the bench of the Central Police Court, and retained his involvement in politics after retiring from public office. By the time he died after an accident near his home in 1883, there were very few people in Sydney who did not know him by sight.

Durham Hall was used as a boarding house through the 1890s until it was purchased by the pioneering felt hat maker Charles Anderson. He built a large hat factory in the grounds to the rear and lived in the house until his death in 1924. This marked the end of Durham Hall as a residence, as the following year the German Concordia Club purchased it. Over the next few years the property was greatly extended to include a ballroom, large bar, dining room and skittle alley, making the original Georgian building almost unrecognisable. The Club was forced to close at the start of World War II when many members were interned as enemy aliens. The facilities were taken over by the US military and then the American Red Cross who ran a recreation club for African American servicemen until the end of the war. Durham Hall was one of the leading jazz venues in Sydney during this time.

After the war, the Commonwealth government purchased Durham Hall and the Commonwealth Bank used it as a garage and storage area until 1966 when the Bank applied to demolish the house and rebuild it as storage area for themselves and a factory for Smith's Potato Crisps. The application was turned down for zoning reasons, and a heritage classification by the National Trust in 1979 saved the house from further threats. The developer Wanroo Pty Ltd purchased Durham Hall and the factory behind it in 1979 and set about replacing the factory with the Durham Village apartments and fully restoring Durham Hall to its former glory. The Royal College of Pathologists purchased the house in 1984 and has remained there ever since.

The factories behind Durham Hall continued making hats after Charles Anderson died, amalgamating with United Felt Hats Pty Ltd in 1927. By 1939, Felt & Textiles of Australia was making Feltex carpets in part of the site, and other companies rented buildings there until they were all demolished in the early 1980s to make way for apartments. The two sets of investment properties built by George Hill next to Durham Hall were sold by his estate in 1907, and since then have had a great variety of uses, such as a fruit shop, a newsletter publishing house, an Italian restaurant, then

more recently a Gay and Lesbian counselling service, an art gallery and the expansion of the Royal College of Pathologists.

Durham Hall and George Hill's properties adjacent to it represent a rare group of intact Colonial Georgian buildings which were fortunate to survive efforts to demolish them. Their survival owes much to enlightened governments in the 1970s which saw value in the national heritage and legislated to preserve it, as well as architects who persuaded developers and councils that there were ways to restore and reuse derelict nineteenth century properties that were economically viable.

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Timeline for Durham Hall

1797: William Hill arrives in Sydney per convict ship *Ganges*.

1798: Mary Johnson arrives in Sydney per convict ship *Britannia*.

1802: George Hill is born in Parramatta.

1832: George Hill marries Mary Ann Hunter.

1833: Isaac David Nichols subdivides land and Thomas Broughton buys part of it.

1834: George Hill buys land from Thomas Broughton where Durham Hall will be built.

1835: Durham Hall is constructed.

1840: Mary Ann Hill dies at age 26.

1841: George Hill marries Jane Binnie.

1842: George Hill is elected to the Sydney City Council.

1844: George Hill becomes a magistrate.

1848: George Hill is elected to the Legislative Council.

1849: George Hill is elected mayor for the year 1850.

1850-1883: George Hill is a trustee of the New South Wales Savings Bank.

1856: George Hill is nominated to the Legislative Council.

1857-8: George Hill again represents Macquarie ward in the City Council.

1861: George Hill resigns from the Legislative Council.

1883: George Hill dies at home.

1889-99: Jane Hill rents Durham Hall out as a boarding house.

1889-93: Cecilia Andersen is the landlady of Durham Hall.

1894: Cecilia Andersen is convicted of the murder of John Fraser in Melbourne.

1896: George Hill's second wife Jane dies in Woollahra.

1899: Charles Anderson purchases Durham Hall.

1924: Charles Anderson dies.

1925: The German Concordia Club purchases Durham Hall.

1925-1926: A Bowling alley and dance hall are added to Durham Hall.

1933: A rendered facade is added to Durham Hall.

1939: Concordia Club closes after the internment of many members, but the Club retains ownership of Durham Hall.

1939-1942: Master Bakers Association uses Durham Hall as an educational and social club.

1941: Concordia Club is reopened by some members as the Belvedere Club for dances and skittles.

Early 1943: The Government takes over Durham Hall and the US military authorities open the Booker T Washington Club for African American servicemen.

December 1943: The American Red Cross takes over the Booker T Washington Club, making major additions to the building.

1945: The American Red Cross hands Durham Hall over to the Naval Branch of the British Centre.

1946: The Commonwealth government purchases Durham Hall from the Concordia Club.

1949: The Commonwealth Bank converts part of Durham Hall for use as a garage and storage area.

1949: A room is leased to the Department of Labour and National Service as a Commonwealth Employment Service district office.

1966: Commonwealth Bank proposes demolition and rebuilding Durham Hall as a factory for Smith's Potato Crisps.

1976: Marval Industries uses the north-east corner of the site as a warehouse for cardboard containers.

1979: Durham Hall is classified by the National Trust.

1979: Commonwealth Bank sells Durham Hall and buildings behind to developer Wanroo Pty Ltd.

January 1981: The restoration of Durham Hall commences.

1982: A Permanent Conservation Order protects Durham Hall.

1983: The restoration of Durham Hall is finished, including removal of previous additions and replacement of surviving 1835 fabric.

December 1983: Durham Hall is sold to restaurateurs Martin Poss and Lein Schuman, but the sale falls through when he fails to get Council approval for a restaurant.

May 1984: Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia purchases Durham Hall.

1986: The RCPA move into Durham Hall.

1987: The Durham Hall garden is reconstructed.

April 1999: Durham Hall is listed in the State Heritage Register.

Timeline for Durham Hall grounds

1902: Federal Hat Mills opens in the former grounds behind Durham Hall.

1905: Charles Anderson & Co starts to supply clothing for postal workers.

1921: Charles Anderson & Co becomes Anderson Industries Pty Ltd.

1926-1930: Anderson Industries leases part of the buildings.

1927: United Felt Hats Pty Ltd starts operation at 6-14 Nichols St making caps and embroidery.

1929: United Felt Hats Pty Ltd bulk store starts operating at 5-27 Hutchinson Street.

1931: Smith's Potato Crisps Australia Pty Ltd starts operating at 5-13 Hutchinson Street.

1935: Anderson Industries offers to lease or sell 18,000 square feet of the factory.

1935: Iolanthe Slipper Co is opened by Felt & Textiles of Australia at 6 Nichols Street.

1939: Felt & Textiles of Australia Ltd makes Feltex carpets at 6-10 Nichols St.

1948: Stack & Co. operates in a building owned by Anderson Industries.

1981-3: The factories are demolished and Durham Village of 75 residential flats is constructed.

Timeline for 197-201 Albion Street

1845-7: George Hill builds the houses.

1907: David Henry Smart purchases 197-201.

1921: Giovanni and Caterina Natoli are the owners of 197-201.

1925: The Natoli family operates a fruit shop in 197.

1969c: Casabressan Pty Ltd (aka Reliance Holdings P/L) purchases 197-201.

1971: Barry and Sandra Berner sell flowers, copper and brassware in 197.

1975-1978: Reliance Holdings submit three successive proposals to redevelop the site.

1979: Council approves the restoration of 197-201.

1980: Philip Luker and Staff Pty Ltd starts to use 197 as publishing offices.

1982: Marcomotivation Pty Ltd starts to use part of 199 as offices.

1985: Philip and Margaret Luker start to use 201 as publishing offices.

1991: Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service purchases 197.

2003: Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service sells 197.

2014: Badger & Fox Gallery opens in 201.

Timeline for 203-205 Albion Street

1840c: George Hill builds the houses.

1907: David Henry Smart purchases 203-205.

1918: Edwin A. Oatley purchases 203-205.

1948: The estate of the late Edwin Oatley is the owner of 203-205.

1971: Woolloomooloo Rentals Pty Ltd purchases 203-205.

1977: Restaurateurs Anne Taylor and Ian McCulloch purchase and restore 203-205.

1982: Taylor's Restaurant opens in 203-205.

1996: RCPA purchases 203-205.

Early history of Surry Hills – 1788-1835

Early settlers

In October 1793, Captain Joseph Foveaux of the New South Wales Corps was granted 85 acres of land east of the town boundary. A few weeks later, the grant was increased to 105 acres. He named it Surrey Hills Farm, and it took in most of present-day Surry Hills. Over the next few years, he was granted more land, and by the time he left for Norfolk Island in 1800, he was one of the largest sheep and cattle owners in the colony.

To the east of Surrey Hills Farm was George Farm, a 70 acre grant to John Palmer, the Commissary General. In 1795, he also acquired Alexander Donaldson's 25 acre block between Foveaux's farm and the South Head Road. In 1814, John Palmer's Surry Hills estate was sold to settle his debts after he went to England following the Rum Rebellion that deposed Governor Bligh. Palmer's large estate was broken up and sold to a large number of private owners in lots of 5 to 13 acres, contributing to the shambolic development of the suburb.

The earliest resident of Surry Hills was the banker, grazier and proprietor of *The Monitor*, Edward Smith Hall, who settled there in 1814. By the late 1820s, Surry Hills had attracted some of the colony's gentry. In 1824, the solicitor George Wigram Allen sold his country estate in Surry Hills and moved back in to a cottage in Elizabeth Street, because Surry Hills was too far from town for him. Another prominent early resident was Lancelot Iredale, an ex-convict who made his fortune as an ironmonger and lived in the former Auburn Cottage on the corner of Bourke and Albion Streets[1].

The site of Durham Hall

The 70 acre grant to John Palmer included the site that became Durham Hall. In the sale of Palmer's subdivided estate in 1814, Richard Brooks purchased Allotment 19. He kept this until 1831 when he instructed the surveyor Peter Bemi to subdivide the allotment, then in July that year the allotments were advertised for sale[2]. The location was likened to the exclusive North London suburb of Highgate, adjacent to the rolling hills of Hampstead Heath and one of the highest points in London:

> "Surry Hills, or the Hampstead and Highgate of New South Wales, and within Two Miles of the Seat of Government, and the Metropolis of Australia. Twenty-Eight Extensive Building Allotments of Good Land, Quit-rent of the Olden Times, a mere Peppercorn".

Each lot was advertised at about half an acre. The promoters enthusiastically painted a picture of the luxury and gentility of the future mansions, and even indulged in a spot of celebrity name-dropping to complete the scene:

> "The lots would suit the purpose of erecting elegant gentlemen's villas or genteel residences upon the most modern style….to erect a house and pleasure garden, comprising also a lawn, kitchen garden, with espaliers and small pathways of two feet wide between, covered vinery, with a seat at the termination, and all other domestic comforts, agreeable to the taste of the purchasers. The scenery of these allotments are so truly beautiful that it almost surpasses the limits of a mere advertisement to describe them: picturesque and sublime, and the situation is particularly inviting, commanding a view of the contiguity to the residences of their Honours Justices Stephen and Dowling, Colonel Shadworth, The Deputy Commissary General Laidley, James Busby Esq., and other Public officers."

> "In the vistas are seen the heads of Port Jackson, the Blue Mountains, The Cove, Government House, the Domain, Woolloomooloo and Botany Bay, the North Shore and the Town".

There is also a mention of the "healthful and salubrious situation" of the allotments. The 1833 sketch of the Surry Hills Estate by Peter Bemi shows that George Hill owned allotment 10, and that Thomas Broughton owned allotments 8 and 9. David Hill, presumably George's younger brother, owned the adjacent allotments 12 and 24. Later in 1833, George Hill acquired lots 8 and 9 from Broughton to form the site where Durham Hall was built in 1835[3].

William Hill and Mary Johnson

George Hill's parents were the convicts William Hill (c1767-1840) and Mary Johnson (c1772-1852). William was convicted of housebreaking in the Essex Assizes Court on 10 July 1793[4] and transported for life, arriving in Sydney in the *Ganges* on 2 June 1797. On 26 April 1797, Mary was convicted at the Old Bailey of stealing six yards of printed cotton, value 10 shillings, from a linen draper's shop[5]. She was transported for seven years, arriving in Sydney on the *Britannia* on 18 July 1798.

The couple lived for a few years in Parramatta, where George (1802-1883), his older sister Mary Harriett (1800-1855) and younger sister Sarah (1804-1844) were born and baptised at St John's Church of England[6]. The family then moved to Sydney, where brothers David (1806-1871), Richard (1810-1895), William Smith (1813-), Edward (1819) and Charles Henry (1824-1848) and sisters Elizabeth (1815-), Sophia (1817-) and Ann (1821) were born and baptised at St Phillip's Church[7].

William received an absolute pardon in 1813[8], worked as a butcher and was appointed superintendent of the new government slaughter house at Cockle Bay, at a salary of £50/pa, payable from the Police Fund[9]. The slaughterhouse was established by Governor Lachlan Macquarie to try and reduce the charges for slaughtering cattle imposed by private butchers in Sydney. A superintendant/inspector was appointed with a number of convicts working under him. Cattle rustling was also a big problem at this time, as the herds were widely dispersed and rarely visited by their owners, so the manager of a slaughterhouse was required to ascertain that a person supplying cattle was indeed the rightful owner. If not, he would be seized and delivered to a constable who would bring the suspected cattle rustler before a magistrate for trial.

William received three land grants, one of 30 acres in 1815 at Bringelly[10], one of 40 acres in 1823 at Bringelly[11] and one of 80 acres in 1819[12] at Prospect[13]. William was also associated with a timber yard in George St, and owned city inns[14]. He was the licensee of the Butcher's Arms in Upper Pitt Street from 1831 to 1834[15]. The licence of the Butcher's Arms was transferred to his son David in 1834[16].

William died in May 1840 at his home in Park Street, Sydney at the age of 69. The *Sydney Monitor* referred to him as "a very old and much respected colonist"[17]. Mary Johnson completed her sentence in 1805. She died in 1852 at the age of 80.

George Hill's early life

George didn't have much time for an education and was running cattle on the coast for his father by the age of ten[18]. In June 1825, he received a land grant from the Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane[19]. This would have greatly increased in value during the economic boom of the 1830s. By the time of the 1828 census, he was a publican and was living with his parents in Pitt Street.

Figure 1 George Hill

George became a butcher like his father, and eventually owned his own slaughterhouse. He was a "carcass butcher" who slaughtered his own cattle, and then sold whole or quartered carcasses to retail butchers who then sold cuts of meat to the public. An advertisement in 1841 advised that he was slaughtering 140 of the fattest bullocks at his slaughterhouse in Sussex Street[20].

In June 1832, he married Mary Ann Hunter in St James Church of England, Sydney. She was the recently widowed wife of Alexander Hunter, a warehouse owner in Pitt Street. By this time, he owned three inns in the city. Despite his lack of education and the social stigma of convict parentage, George was already a man of substance by the time of his marriage, and was ready to build a home that was fitting for someone who would become one of the most well-known men in the colony.

George Hill's residence – 1835-1889

George Hill purchased a number of lots in Albion Street and also in Bourke Street at the sale of Richard Brooks' subdivided allotment in 1833. This included the land where Durham Hall would be built, and also where the investment properties at numbers 197-201 and 203-205 Albion Street would be built a few years afterwards.

The architect and builder of Durham Hall are not known, but the result of their efforts was a very fine two-storey Colonial Georgian villa that commanded views in all directions, including Sydney Harbour and the Blue Mountains. George accumulated more land, and in the period 1838-1850 he owned Yanko, a 56,000 acre property on the Murrumbidgee River.

Mary Ann Hill died in 1840 at the age of 26, and the following year George married Jane Binnie, the daughter of businessman Richard Binnie of Park Street, Sydney. Over the years the couple had a very large family. Two of their daughters married into notable families of that time. In 1868, their eldest daughter Mary Jane married Fitzwilliam Wentworth, the son of barrister and statesman William Charles Wentworth. Another daughter Alice Helen married Sir William Charles Cooper, the eldest son of merchant and politician Sir Daniel Cooper. Through these marriages, George Hill had close ties with the Wentworth and Cooper families.

Durham Hall is built

Durham Hall is a large two-storey house built in 1835 of sandstock brick on a stone foundation. It has a slate roof, and broad verandahs on the front and both sides. It contains a hall, eight rooms, a dining room, pantry, kitchen with a servant's room above, a bathroom and a detached laundry. There are horse stables consisting of three stalls, a man's room and two coach houses. The house is surrounded by a garden, yards and enclosures[21]. It is similar to Willandra, the Colonial Georgian house built by James Devlin in the Sydney suburb of Ryde in the early 1840s.

Figure 2 Willandra, Ryde

The origin of the house's name is a mystery. Durham is in the far north of England, but George's parents were both tried in London, although their places of birth are not known. There are no known family members named Durham. The likely connection with George Hill is through his trade as a butcher, as the prized Durham breed of cattle was one of the first purebreds brought to the early colony, and was the basis of the Shorthorn variety that dominated the development of the beef industry in Australia[22].

203-205 Albion Street

This is a terrace of two single-storey Victorian Georgian style sandstock brick cottages constructed by George Hill in about 1840 as rental investment properties. They are located to the west of Durham Hall, across Nichols Street.

Number 205 was built first, according to the 1845 *Sheild's Plan of Sydney,* as Number 203 is not shown on the map, but both appear in the 1845 *Rate Assessment Book.* Initially, the houses were separate cottages, but by 1865 Number 205 has been extended to the eastern wall of Number 203. They appear in the *1845 Rate Assessment Book* as consisting of five rooms, and are called 8 and 9 Queen Street. This is an old name for Albion Street, which did not extend past Durham Hall to Flinders Street until 1917.

197-201 Albion Street

This is a terrace of three two-storey Victorian Georgian style sandstock brick homes, constructed in about 1845. They were also built by George Hill as rental investment properties, and are located to the west of the cottages at 203-205 Albion Street, across a narrow lane. George Hill advertised one of these houses in 1846 as a "genteel cottage to rent: five rooms, store, and servant's room over, garden with a well of water"[23].

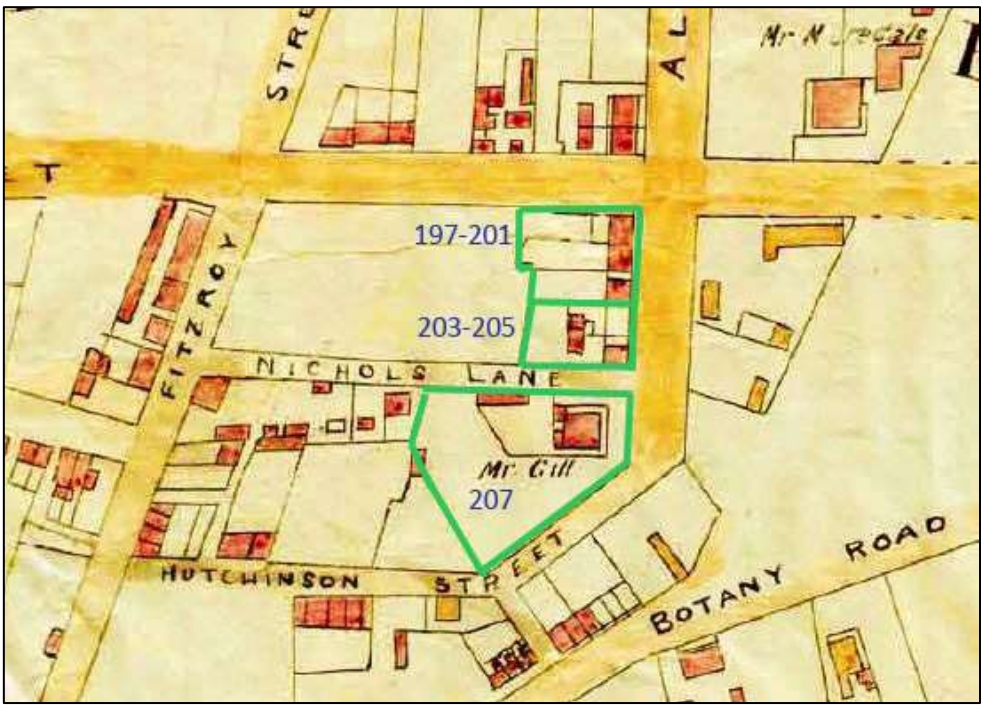


Figure 3 Sheild's 1845 Plan of Sydney

A city magistrate

From the early 1840s, George's career as a pillar of the community moved forward rapidly. In October 1844, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, allowing him to sit as a Magistrate, and this role would take up much of his time for the rest of his life. By 1850, he was the Chief Magistrate of the City of Sydney[24]. He mostly sat on the bench of the Central Police Court in George Street (on the site occupied by the Queen Victoria Building from 1893) where minor charges such as drunkenness were heard. On occasion, he also sat on the Court of Quarter Sessions[25], which considered more serious charges such as theft.

Figure 4 Central Police Court, George Street, 1842

He sat alongside other magistrates such as his wealthy neighbour the builder, pastoralist and politician Edward Flood. George and Edward Flood had much in common, including age, lack of schooling and convict parentage. A magistrate was a local official with limited power who mostly dealt with minor crimes in his local area, or committed more serious cases for trial in a higher court. The early magistrates were drawn from the colony's landowners, civil and military officers. Despite the limited power, the magistrate was a major figure in the colonial court system, and an active magistrate would deal with thousands of cases in a long career.

In 1864, George Hill was a magistrate at the inquiry into the charges brought against the bushranger Frank Gardiner, for the shooting of two troopers near Oberon, New South Wales, in July 1861. The case was controversial because the New South Wales police acted outside their jurisdiction by travelling to Queensland and arresting Gardiner at a store that he ran near Rockhampton[26].

In 1864, there was an attempt by the Government to exclude George Hill from the Sydney Bench of Magistrates in favour of his younger and much less experienced brother Richard. One newspaper[27] thought this may have been retribution for a severe but justified rebuke to a member of the current administration more than ten years earlier. At that time, the newspaper, *The Empire*, wrote an insulting article about George Hill[28] and was taken to court. The proprietor, Henry Parkes, only

avoided an expensive trial and compensation payment by satisfying the offended Mr. Hill with his explanation of the article[29].

However, in 1864 George Hill's career in the magistracy was defended by the newspapers, one pointing out that in the year from June 1861 to June 1862, he officiated on the bench 86 times in the Sydney Police Office, while his brother Richard sat only three times[30]. It was mentioned that his work on the Bench of Magistrates had gained the universal approval of his fellow citizens. In 1865, George was in the list of magistrates in the *Government Gazette*, but his brother Richard was not[31]. He continued to sit on the Bench of the Central Police Court to 1876[32], although much less frequently in the latter part of his life.

George was interested in other aspects of civic life, and in 1867, he proposed to the magistrates of Sydney that they discuss whether publicans should continue to be excluded from the lists of special jurors. This exclusion was established at the time of the first elected government in 1842. Newspaper references to publicans in the early days of the colony make it clear that they were looked down upon as disreputable types. However, George Hill thought that anyone who could be called Esquire should be eligible for special jury duty. Esquire was a form of address denoting respect, and while this may not have applied to many publicans, George thought that the exclusion should be more about individuals, not an entire field of employment. He had a personal interest in this matter, being a publican himself who was generally addressed as Esquire.

Early government in New South Wales

In the first few years after 1788, the growing population consisted almost entirely of convicts and the people looking after them. The Governor was the sole representative of both the King and the British Parliament and he made almost all the decisions. This included convict pardons, permission for convicts to marry, land grants, appointments, severe punishments and most administrative decisions.

While it was normal at the time for a penal colony to be run in this autocratic manner, it wasn't long before wealthy settlers such as John Macarthur began agitating for a say in the decisions that affected them. In 1823, the British Parliament agreed by establishing a Legislative Council of nominated citizens, including John Macarthur and Chief justice Francis Forbes.

This was the beginning of the process of decentralising political power, but it was not until the end of convict transportation in New South Wales in 1840 that Britain decided that it was a free colony and could begin to move towards self-government. The Municipality of the City of Sydney was first incorporated in 1842, and elections were held in November 1842, just preceding the first elections for the Legislative Council in December 1842. The difference was that only two-thirds of the Legislative Council was elected (with the other one third nominated by the Governor), whereas the City Council was fully elected.

Eligibility to vote and stand for election followed the British system that required property ownership to qualify. Any man owning property valued over £1,000 or with an annual rental value of over £50 could stand for election. This was thought to be a relatively low property qualification, and the press lectured voters about the importance of their choice: if they elected men of character, education and property they would show the Colonial Office in London that New South Wales was a

colony of "honest, virtuous and enlightened Britons"[33], and this might set the colony on the road to full self-government.

However, the *Herald* hinted that some candidates were of shady character and a few "were not competent to write a letter"[34]. This could have been a dig at George Hill, who was wealthy but had very little schooling. In the event, the *Herald* was horrified when three publicans were elected to the City Council: John Little of the *White Hart* in Clarence Street, Thomas Smidmore of the *Union Inn* in Kent Street, and George Hill. Members of the establishment did badly, with former Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay coming bottom of the poll in Cook Ward. Only one candidate (ex-soldier and landowner John Rose Holden) put Esquire after his name.

However, the voters of Sydney pragmatically decided to put their roads, sewers and water supply in the hands of merchants, warehousemen, builders and butchers – men who were the engines of the City economy. The early 1840s heralded an economic depression, and the first Mayor of Sydney, the merchant John Hosking, went bankrupt and had to retire from Council in 1843[35]. This was not an auspicious start for the new Council.

Sydney's city in 1842 was little more than an unruly village of dusty badly-lit lanes and unhygienic houses. There was no running water or sanitation system, and cattle were frequently driven through the streets. The Council in 1842 had insufficient funds to provide adequate services and was eventually abolished in 1853 and replaced by three commissioners. But the commissioners also failed to deliver water and sewerage services and the Council was restored by the newly-established Legislative Assembly in 1856.

Inadequate funding remained an impediment for the Council, and it suffered constant criticism for failing to solve all of Sydney's urban problems. The sacking of the Council in 1853 was repeated in 1928-30, 1967-69 and 1987-88, following allegations of incompetence and corruption.

City Councillor and Mayor

George Hill was elected to the Sydney Municipal Council in the first election in November 1842 and remained an alderman until he resigned at the end of 1851. Then in December 1849, George received the honour of being elected to Mayor of Sydney for a one year term during 1850. It was widely thought that he brought dignity and respect to the office of Mayor[36]. He dispensed liberal hospitality during his term and won popular acclaim by hosting a large Lord Mayor's Ball and an even larger Picnic.

It was normal at the time for a Mayor to serve a one-year term and then step aside, but George Hill was a popular Mayor, so he decided to stand for a second term. Previous elections for Mayor had been by the aldermen choosing a Mayor from among their number, but the Mayoral election in December 1850 involved all eligible citizens. George won the election by more than a thousand votes, but his election was challenged in the Supreme Court by the runner-up, William Thurlow. The result was overturned because George had acted as his own Returning Officer (who should be a wholly impartial person). William Thurlow, with only 229 votes, was declared the winner.

The overthrowing of a popular mayor by a legal technicality after overwhelmingly winning the election caused a storm of controversy. Six petitions were presented to the City Council praying that Council would only recognise George as the Mayor. The Council accepted the petitions, but doubted

their recommendation could be adopted, as it contradicted a court judgment, and so would be unlawful[37].

The following month, George Hill's long talked-about Lord Mayor's Picnic took place at Vaucluse. The Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy (Governor 1846-1855) and his family attended. 2,000 people were present on a Friday afternoon, partially shutting down the town's business. George was called the "Citizen Mayor" in the newspaper reports[38].

Next year, in the November 1851 City Council election, George wasn't planning to stand as an alderman, but his friends persuaded him to stand at the last minute. Because he had not done much campaigning, he only came fifth out of six in the election[39]. However, the next month, George was also elected Mayor by a large margin: 1,258 votes compared to 300-odd for the other two candidates[40]. Then in January 1852, he announced he was resigning as Mayor due to considerable indisposition[41]. George Hill was sometimes referred to in the press as a thrice-elected Mayor of Sydney, but he only completed one Mayoral term[42].

After the City Council was re-established in 1857 following its sacking in 1853, George Hill was again elected as a Councillor in April 1857[43]. He then stood for election as Mayor, but was defeated by George Thornton[44]. He resigned from the City Council in December 1857. After his resignation, the *Herald* commented that he was certainly a useful man, but as he was also a Member of the Legislative Council, he should have been satisfied with this honour instead of seeking to combine it with office on the City Council[45].

By the 1870s, the Council was still in debt due to the mismatch between its responsibilities and its revenues. Building contractors and landlords were elected to Council year after year, and they passed the prize of Mayor around among their number.

Legislative Council career

In July 1848, George Hill was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council for the Counties of St Vincent and Auckland (located between Jervis Bay and Bateman's Bay), but decided to vacate his seat in May 1849[46] on the eve of taking his position in the Council. Then after the British Parliament granted full self-government to New South Wales in 1855, he served a five year term as a nominated member of the Legislative Council in the new bicameral Parliament from May 1856 to May 1861[47].

Public benefactor

George Hill sat on the committee of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales. It was reported that in 1848 he supplied the beef for a substantial Christmas dinner of beef and plum pudding at the Benevolent Asylum[48]. Following this, he supplied the entire dinner of beef, plum pudding and tea for 450 inmates of the Benevolent Asylum on the occasion of Queen Victoria's birthday in 1850[49].

The Benevolent Society was established in 1813 by Edward Smith Hall and primarily cared for the needy. The Benevolent Asylum was administered by the Society and was located in George Street near present-day Broadway. It backed on to the Old Sydney Burial Ground (the Devonshire Street Cemetery) and was demolished in 1901 to make way for Central Railway Station. It was an asylum in the sense of being a place of refuge for the poor, abandoned, destitute and sick in the nineteenth century.

Before St Michael's Church of England was built across the road from Durham Hall in 1854, George was the treasurer of a subscription fund to finance its construction. The Church Act required that £300 had to be available before trustees could be appointed or before any government assistance could be obtained[50].

George donated the food for the annual excursion of the Destitute Children's Asylum in Randwick, held at Douglass Park (80 km south-west of Sydney, on the Great Southern railway line). The Governor Sir John Young, Lady Young, and the Sydney Lord Mayor William Speer attended and 310 children were entertained for the day. Late in the previous year, there had been a similar excursion to Middle Harbour, and it was hoped that this would become an annual event[51].

When the foundation stone of the new St Michael's Church of England opposite Durham Hall was laid on 2 September 1854, it was mentioned that George Hill had from time to time contributed liberally to the erection of the church and school (£100 in all). After the ceremony, he invited the clergy, the committee, and their families to take refreshments in his house. Other wealthy colonists mentioned were Edward Riley, who donated land for the church and Robert Campbell, who donated land for a Parsonage[52].

Man of public affairs

By 1850, George was the president of the Sydney Butchers' Association, and organised meetings of its worthy members, namely the carcass and retail butchers and slaughterhouse salesmen, to discuss the meatier matters of the day[53].

In 1847, there were letters to the press recommending the removal of slaughterhouses to somewhere outside the city boundary. In the early days of the colony, there were no restrictions on the operation of industries that caused strong odours or toxic discharges into the water supply. Tanneries and slaughterhouses were the main culprits. Tanneries were eventually moved out to Surry Hills following legislation in 1848.

The slaughterhouses in the city were in Bathurst and Sussex Streets. George Hill had a piggery on the corner of Druitt and Sussex Streets with a slaughterhouse attached to it, and other piggeries in the city had boiling-down places attached[54]. George Hill gave evidence at an inquiry into moving the slaughterhouses to Glebe Island. He said he paid £40 a year rent, and 3d a head to the Corporation for the cattle slaughtered. Moving to Glebe Island would cause a material suffering in his trade[55].

From December 1857, George was on the management committee of the newly-formed Cumberland Agricultural Society. The President was the Governor, Sir William Denison. The first Annual General Meeting of the Society took in January 1858 and included an exhibition of livestock, farm products, and agricultural machinery[56]. The Society was formed to encourage better cultivation techniques and livestock production suited to the local environment and climate. An annual competitive display of animals and produce was a key activity of the Society, providing agricultural education to the public and enabling its members to meet and conduct business. The Society eventually became the Royal Agricultural Society and continues to hold the Royal Easter Show, from 1882 at Moore Park, then from 1998 at Homebush.

In 1861, George was one of five vice-presidents of the proposed New South Wales Free Trade Association. The purpose of the association was to disseminate correct information on the principles

of free trade and direct taxation[57]. From 1850 to 1883, he was a trustee of the New South Wales Savings Bank. He remained influential in the political life of the colony, and was regularly reported in the press when nominating candidates for Municipal and Legislative elections.

Patron of sports and the arts

In the 1830s, George Hill was treasurer of the Sydney races and a subscriber to the Parramatta races. In 1842, his horse Toby won a trotting race at Homebush[58].

In the 1850s, he was several times on the Anniversary Regatta Committee, including the 61st anniversary of settlement on 26 January 1849[59] (then called First Day). In November 1876, it was reported that George Hill, MLC, was one of two presidents of the Botany Bay Regatta to be held on Boxing Day 1876. There was a program of ten races[60].

He was well known for his patronage of the arts, and in 1851 sponsored a benefit night for the actress Mrs. Rodgers at the Royal Victoria Theatre[61]. Also in 1851, a publication called "The Australian Souvenir" was dedicated to him. It contained a variety of original tales, adventures, poetry, etc, handsomely bound, price 6 shillings[62].

There was a certain amount of envy of George's success in public life, probably because it was achieved despite humble beginnings and lack of education. An opinion piece in Henry Parkes' newspaper *The Empire* in 1851 provides a rare description of George. He was described as

> "a plain, bluff, good-natured, and rather wealthy individual, square-built and almost six feet high, and moreover, pretty well known for a good deal of slangish garrulity, and a pleasant style of swearing"[63].

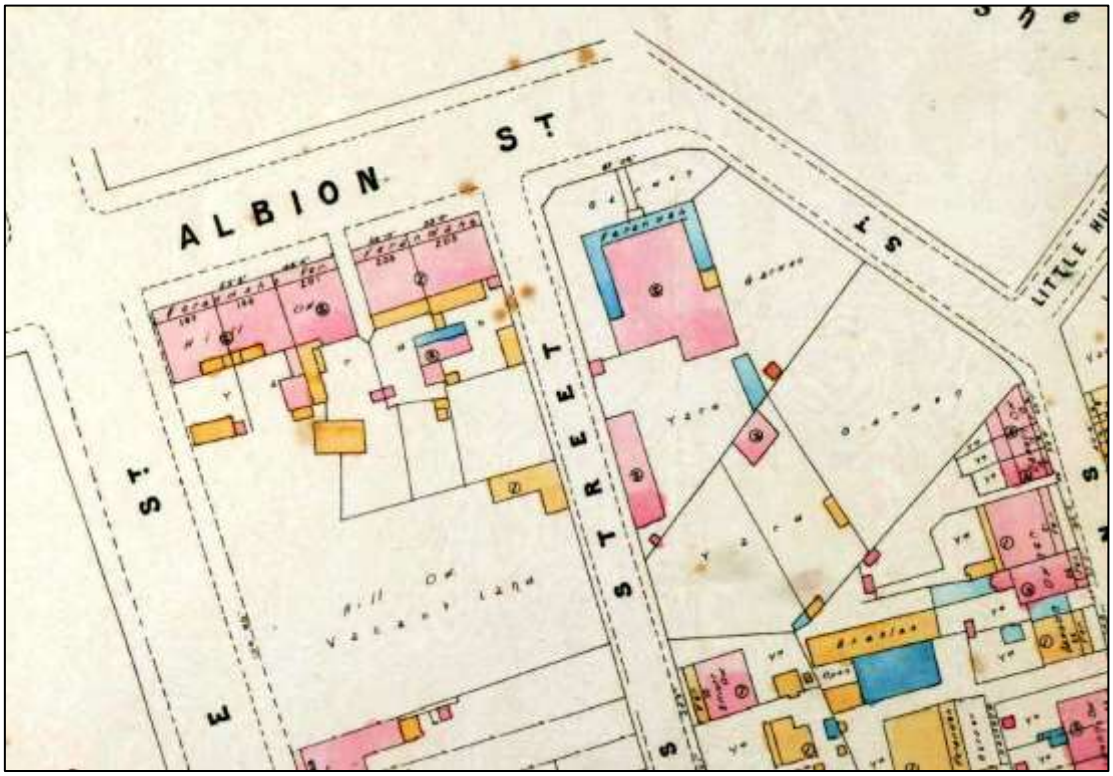


Figure 5 Rygate and West, Sheet 32, 1887

End of an era at Durham Hall

On one occasion when he was a witness in a trial in 1877 at the age of 76, George Hill mentioned that he still enjoyed good health, which he mainly put down to being an early riser. He also said that when he moved to Surry Hills in 1835, there were only three houses there, and none in Woolloomooloo[64].

George was critically injured when his buggy collided with a tram in Crown Street, Surry Hills in July 1883, and he passed away at Durham Hall a few days later. He left a widow, five sons, eight daughters and a number of grandchildren. The *Evening News* reported that his jovial face and bluff, kindly ways will be missed by many, and *Freeman's Journal* wrote that until a few days before his death, he was as hale and hearty as a man of thirty[65].

When probate was granted on his will, his estate was worth £59,200[66]. His widow Jane lived in Durham Hall for a few more years before moving to the stately house *Akaroa* in Trelawney Street, Woollahra. She died there in January 1896[67]. Durham Hall was used a boarding house for ten years from 1889 until it was sold by George Hill's estate in 1899.

Boarding House – 1889-1899

In 1889, Jane Hill moved to *Akaroa* in Woollahra and rented Durham Hall as a boarding house. The first landlady until 1893 was Mrs. Cecilia Andersen (aka Cecilia Javorsky), a Danish-born widow. There were generally 20 to 30 persons living in the house at any time[68]. The year after she left, there was a sensational court case involving her and one of the boarders[69].

Figure 6 Cecilia Andersen, 1903

Hell hath no fury

Former boarders at Durham Hall spoke of Mrs. Andersen as a woman of kindly disposition, and that the house was well kept and attractive[70]. One of the earliest tenants was John Fraser (1844-1894). A widower with two children, he was the son of the late William Fraser, grazier of Shepparton, Victoria. He had been a prominent mining speculator while staying for some years in Sydney, but had suffered losses, and borrowed money from Mrs. Andersen to try and recoup these losses through further speculation[71]. Also, out of friendship and goodwill she allowed him to live in Durham Hall for years without paying board. A close relationship developed between the two, and when her husband died, Mrs. Andersen wanted to marry Fraser, but he refused.

In June 1893, she decided to retire and live off her savings. Accordingly, she sold out her interest in the boarding house for a considerable sum, but wanted to increase that amount by recovering the rent and other money owed to her by Fraser (£387 plus £50 costs)[72]. When Fraser seemed in no hurry to pay after several months, she took out a Supreme Court writ in November 1893. But because Fraser had no money in New South Wales, and expected to receive an inheritance from his late father's estate, the court judgment was transferred to Victoria.

Fraser moved to Melbourne early in 1894 but found that his late father had given away most of his fortune to the grandchildren, leaving Fraser with only a small family allowance to live on[73]. Then he announced his engagement to Nellie Leahy, a widow he had known for some twenty years. When Mrs. Andersen heard of the impending marriage, she took a train to Melbourne containing in her handbag an itemised list of the amounts owed by Fraser, a Webley service revolver and five bullets. Fraser and Mrs. Leahy were married in March 1894, three days before Mrs. Andersen's arrival.

In Melbourne, Mrs. Andersen proceeded to badger Fraser with requests for meetings, during which she made it clear she wanted him to leave his wife and elope with her as well as repaying the money he owed her. When he said he still couldn't pay and was now married, she showed him the revolver and threatened to shoot him[74]. Fraser reported this harassment to Police Superintendent Brown, who advised him to move away and avoid Mrs. Andersen until she had calmed down. Fraser and his wife moved further out to Malvern.

But Fraser apparently didn't take the threats too seriously, because he continued to meet with Mrs. Anderson, including once at his family's solicitors where an agreement was drawn up with a payment schedule for repaying the debt. He objected to some of the details, and would not sign it. The next day, 19 June 1894, Fraser and Mrs. Andersen spent much of the day together in discussions, finally entering the Southern Cross Hotel in Bourke Street in the evening where they sat in a private parlour and drank moderately for a couple of hours.

Hotel patrons heard no disturbance or raised voices from the couple, but suddenly at about 10 o'clock, two shots were heard from the room, and when the staff rushed in they found the shocking sight of Fraser lying dead with a bullet in his head and a smoking gun at his feet, and Mrs. Andersen apparently lifeless on the couch next to him with a bullet wound behind the ear.

It was first thought that Fraser must have shot Mrs. Andersen and then shot himself[75]. but when the detectives examined the position of the couple, the locations of the bullet wounds, and learned that Mrs. Andersen carried a revolver and had previously threatened Fraser's life, they realised it was indeed a murder suicide, but the other way around – she had finally carried out her threat to shoot John Fraser, and then shot herself.

It seemed that Mrs. Andersen's real motive in following Fraser to Melbourne stemmed from an infatuation with him and jealousy that he was going to marry someone else. The unpaid money was mainly a pretext to talk to him and try and persuade him to run off with her. She was financially well off in Sydney after selling her stake in Durham Hall, and only decided to travel to Melbourne to confront Fraser after learning that he was planning to marry Mrs. Leahy.

Despite being seriously wounded, Mrs. Andersen slowly recovered from her self-inflicted injuries, and was tried and found guilty of murder in August, 1894. The Chief Justice (Sir John Madden) then passed the death sentence, advising the prisoner "do not expect this to be commuted, but make preparation for another world"[76].

After the details of the case were published in the press, there was a great deal of public sympathy for Cecilia Andersen, who was seen as a severely wronged woman and John Fraser as a heartless scoundrel. A deputation consisting of the Danish Consul (Mr. T. W. Were) and a Scandinavian Minister (Reverend Pederson) presented a petition of 18,000 signatures to the Governor, the Earl of

Hopetoun, asking for a commutation of the death sentence. It was the largest petition ever raised in the colony for such a matter, and even Mr. Fraser's brother was very sympathetic with the reprieve request[77].

The Governor discussed the petition with the Cabinet and decided to commute the death sentence to life imprisonment. After another appeal to reduce the sentence following a public meeting of Danish citizens, the Governor decided not to interfere further in the matter[78]. Cecilia Andersen was eventually released from the Female Prison at Coburg in June 1903[79].

Boarding house life goes on

By April 1894, Durham Hall had a new landlady, and an advertisement mentioned that it was under new management and was entirely redecorated with tennis court, yard and stables[80]. The new landlady was Mrs. Mary Parker, the widow of Henry Parker who died in 1893 in Queensland. She advertised frequently in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Durham Hall must have maintained much of its gentility during the 1890s depression, as tenants Mr. and Mrs. Munro hosted a dance evening for their friends in the large drawing room in 1894. Vocal and instrumental selections were offered by local musicians, and supper was provided for the guests[81]. In August 1899, Durham Hall and the adjacent houses at 197 to 205 Albion Street were put up for sale by George Hill's Estate, marking the end of 64 years of ownership by George Hill and his family[82].

Charles Anderson's residence – 1899-1924

In 1899, three years after Jane Hill's death, Durham Hall and its grounds were sold by the Estate of George Hill to Charles Anderson for £3,400[83]. The adjacent houses at 197-205 Albion Street were not sold, and remained in the Hill family's hands until 1907. Charles Anderson was born in Banffshire in Scotland in 1838 and came to Australia with his wife Mary Jane in c1880. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace and magistrate in 1900[84]. He also acted as the returning officer for the electoral district of Sydney, Flinders Division, in Legislative Assembly elections between 1901[85] and 1904[86].

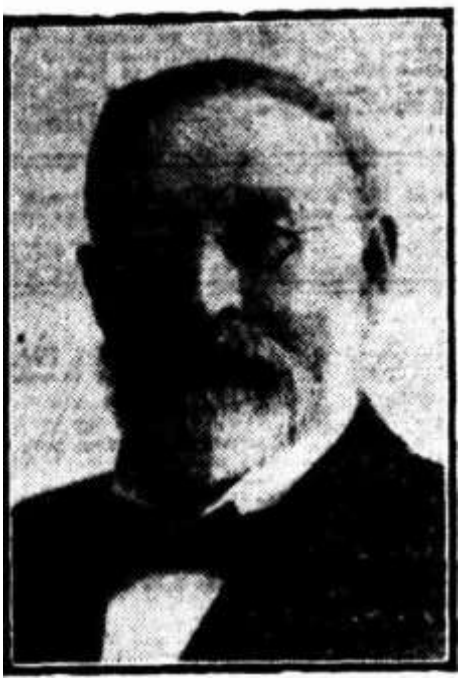


Figure 7 Charles Anderson

Pioneer of the felt hat

Charles Anderson was a pioneer of felt hat manufacturing in Australia. Felt is a strong and light material produced by matting, condensing and pressing fibres together. It can be made of natural fibres such as wool or fur or synthetic fibres such as acrylic. Beaver pelts were the main source of felt in Europe, but rabbit fur became widely used in Australia. Men's hats are made of a good quality felt, but early felt hat factories used different toxic solutions whose vapours produced many cases of mercury poisoning among hatters. This is possibly the derivation of the phrase "mad as a hatter", as some hat workers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries developed dementia from mercury poisoning.

Felt making is an ancient craft going back at least to the Sumerians, and felt rugs, tents and clothing are still made by nomadic peoples. However, there is a legend that St. Clement, an Irish monk on a pilgrimage, stuffed his sandals with pieces of wool to ease his weary feet. Finding that the moisture and pressure of his feet matted the fibres together into a firm and comfortable sole, he kept this knowledge to himself until he became the third Pope, at which time he set about instructing people in the process of felting. St. Clement is the patron saint of hatters, celebrated on 23 November[87].

In 1901, Charles Anderson was the owner of the Sydney Hat Manufacturing Company in Ann Street, Surry Hills when it was partly destroyed by fire. The damage was extensive, including imported

specialist machinery and material. 2,000 felt hats had just been made and delivered to the Federal Contingent of the Army who were preparing to leave for the Boer War in South Africa. Over 100 workers were employed in the factory. Mr. Anderson had intended to move the factory to new premises in Albion Street[88]. Following the fire, a larger hat factory called the Federal Hat Mills was established in Surry Hills in the grounds to the rear of Durham Hall.

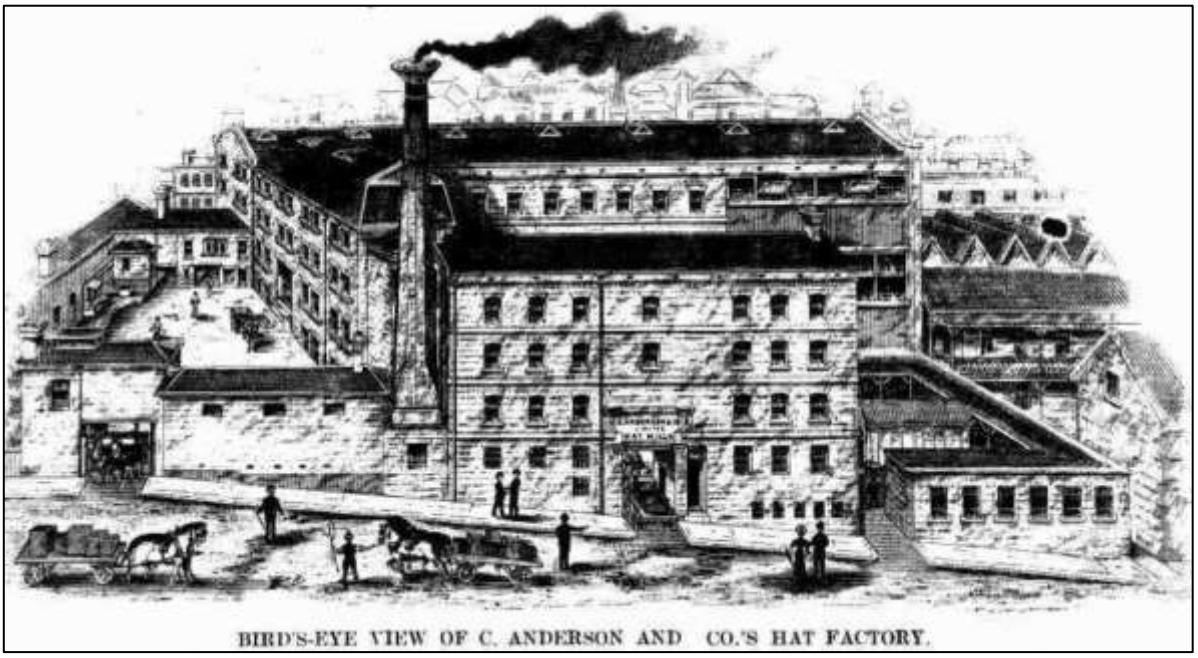


Figure 8 Federal Hat Mills

End of Durham Hall as a residence

Throughout his working life, Charles Anderson was a benefactor of many charities. In 1903, he was one of the donors to the newly-opened St. Francis presbytery in Albion Street. Then in 1911, he gave the first instalment of a £100 donation to the St Mary's Cathedral Building Fund**.** This was as large as any other donation[89]. He contributed to the development of the Westmead Boys' Home[90].

He was for a long time a director of City Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd. His wife Mary Jane died at Durham Hall in 1910, and Charles Anderson continued to live at Durham Hall until his death in 1924.

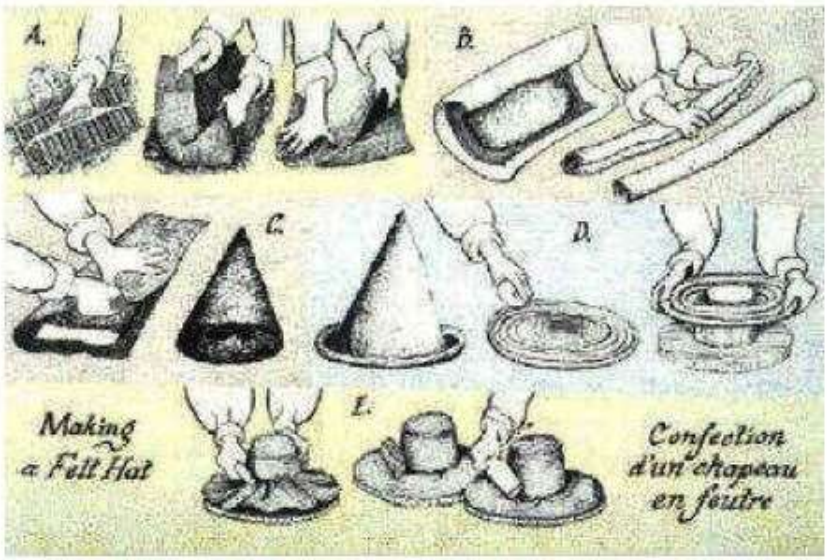
Industries behind Durham Hall – 1902-1983

Federal Hat Mills

Previous efforts to establish felt hat manufacturing in New South Wales were primitive and limited. Some ten years previously, a company attempted to produce hats, but they imported each hat body and then finished and trimmed it in Sydney. The abolition of the 10% import duty saw them go into liquidation.

On the advent of Federation in 1901 came the Federal Hat Mills, founded by Charles Anderson, well known in Sydney as a very enterprising citizen. The mills contain the most up-to-date machinery, capable of treating the raw material to the finished hat, and its expert staff were mainly gathered from the manufacturing centres of Europe and America. Charles Anderson's motto was "Australian hats for Australian heads"[91].

Hat making is a complicated business, and there are about 25 separate processes involved in the manufacture of a felt hat from the raw material. The machine that separates the coarse hair from the real fur on the skins is an ingenious machine of Charles Anderson's own patent. The separated hair is baled and sent to England, where it is used as fertilizer in hop cultivation in Kent. On average, 20 rabbit skins yield one pound of fur[92].



A. Carding (combing the fibers),
Bowing (cleaning and fluffing)
B. Matting (various layers of the fiber into felt)
C. Basoning (manipulated the batt of felt
into a triangular shape called a capade
or gore that will become the crown of the Hat)
D. Flanging (attaching the brim)
E. Blocking (forcing the hat body onto a wood form
and stamping the moisture from it)

Figure 9 Stages in making a felt hat

In 1907, there was a long strike when the Felt Hatters Union objected to the employment of 42 hatters that the Federal Hat Mills wanted to import to fill a local skill shortage[93]. Press reports of the time show that the company was plagued by industrial action such as this, and Charles Anderson was kept busy dealing with this in court and on the shop floor.

By 1912, hats made of rabbit fur (called "imitation beaver") were outselling all classes of men's hats, and Australia has the raw material in abundance. The company started making rabbit fur hats as soon as it realised how popular they were. The factory used nearly 1.5 million rabbit skins annually, mainly purchased in winter when the rabbits had a thicker coat of fur. In the factory, the outside hair was removed from the skins leaving the soft fur which was separated from the skins in another machine. The skins were then cut into small thin strips and exported to England where they were used to manufacture gelatin for sweets[94].

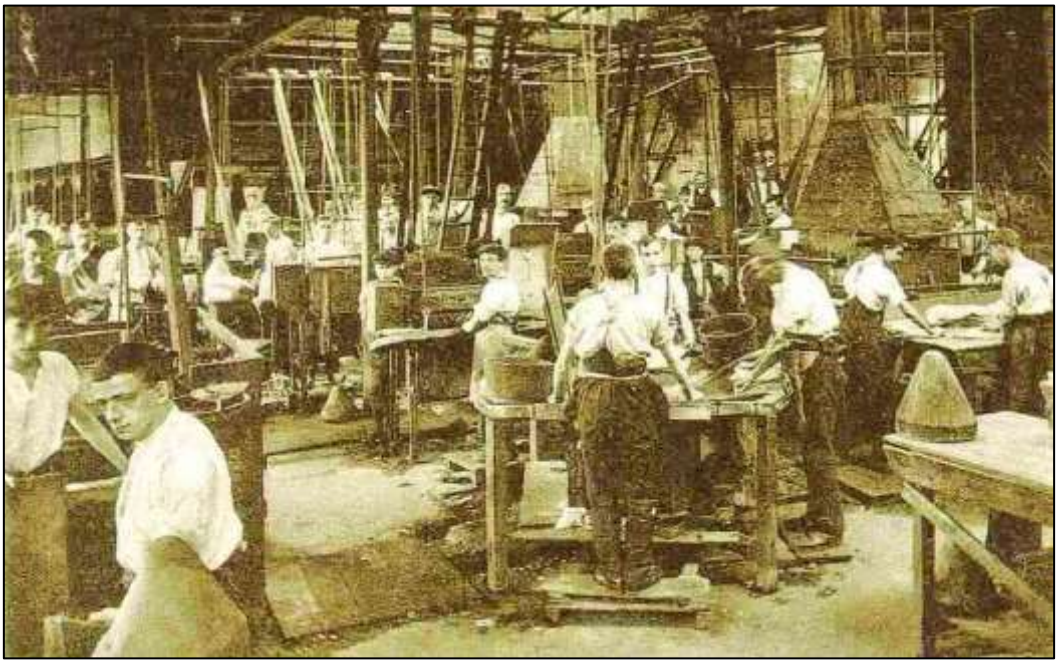


Figure 10 Felt hat factory, Stockton, 1911

The Federal Hat Mills building was quite imposing: built of brick on a sandstone foundation, with three floors and a basement. The entrance was in Nichols Street. It had a surface floor area of over 50,000 sq. feet. The cellar was specially constructed for the cool storage of the fur while waiting initial treatment. Once in full operation, the weekly output of the mills was 3,600 woollen hats, 2,400 fur hats, 3,600 straw hats, 1,200 helmets, 1,200 caps, as well as silk hats and every type of headgear including the naval cocked hat. This output required the employment of 500 workers[95].

The scandal of the Six Hatters

Soon after the new hat factory behind Durham Hall began operation in 1902, Charles Anderson had to import 48 skilled hatters from England, due to a lack of suitable workers in Australia. The hatters were brought to Australia at the end of 1902 in groups of six, and most had landed without any trouble when a storm arose over the second last group.

In December 1902, six felt hatters arrived in Sydney on the Royal Mail Steamer *Orontes* but were prevented from working under the *Immigration Restriction Act*, on the grounds that they were under

contract to perform manual work in the Commonwealth, which was prohibited under the Act. When the hatters stopped off in Melbourne en route to Sydney, members of the Victorian Felt Hatters Union complained to the Ministry of External Affairs that they were contracted workers and therefore in breach of the Act. This prompted immigration officials to keep them in detention when they arrived in Sydney.

The detention of the hatters caused a huge controversy because British subjects were being refused permission to land in Australia, a dependency of the British Empire. The public outrage was so great that the Prime Minister Sir Edmund Barton felt he had to intervene. He said that the restriction did not apply to workmen with special skills required by Australia, but no such exemption had been applied for in this case[96]. By this time, the last group of six hatters had arrived in Fremantle on the *RMS Oruba* and were also refused entry.

The *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901* marked the beginning of a series of laws known as the *White Australia Policy*, and prohibited various classes of people from migrating to Australia. While none of these classes involved racial origin, the infamous Language Test was frequently used selectively to bar people on the basis of race by giving them a dictation test in a European language chosen by an official to deliberately fail them.

The Prime Minister investigated the matter and found that Charles Anderson had spent some £30,000 in premises and machinery for hat manufacture in Sydney, and when it was in full production, he estimated he would need to employ 72 skilled artisans to keep the extra 200-odd employees fully occupied. He had advertised in Melbourne four months ago for bodymakers, plankers, finishers, framers and binders, but could not find enough. After some consideration, the Prime Minister ordered the release of the hatters[97].

Figure 11 Felt hat finishing room

The Six Hatters scandal was still being aired in the press a year later, under headlines such as "BRITISHERS BLOCKED AT THE WHARF", and "SOCIALISM RUN MAD". It was pointed out that the clause in the Act used to detain the hatters was originally designed to stop strike-breakers and non-British contractors[98]. The affair triggered a change in the legislation in 1905 to allow any British contract worker to enter Australia provided they were not affecting a union dispute.

In 1905, the Governor, Lord Northcote, inspected the Federal Hat Mills, and his party had the opportunity of seeing the celebrated Six Hatters hard at work. The Governor was very impressed with the factory as an example of local manufacturing[99].

United Felt Hats

Victoria was the centre of hat making in Australia by the 1920s, but business had suffered for some time from cheaper imports from Italy and Britain, despite the high 50% import tariff. In order to improve their market position, the United Felt Hat Company Pty Ltd was formed to amalgamate and co-ordinate the larger hat factories in that State[100]. Soon after this, the Adelaide Hat Manufacturing Company Ltd considered joining forces with the United felt Hats Pty Ltd[101]. By the following year, the amalgamation of Victorian hat makers was so successful that Sydney companies such as Anderson's Industries Limited were also in negotiations to amalgamate[102].

Anderson's Industries may have been winding down their activities by this time, as the company was advertising 7,140 square feet of factory space to rent[103]. Then in 1927, the company started advertising for staff under the United Felt Hats Pty Ltd banner. United Felt Hats continued to operate until at least 1933[104]. In 1931, Frank Smith and George Esnar opened a local offshoot of the British company Smith's Potato Crisps Ltd ("The original and best!") in a single storey building owned by Anderson's Industries facing Hutchinson Street. The factory had 20 gas-fired cooking pots where they produced three-penny packets of their hand-packed chips that included a small sachet of salt.

Figure 12 Smith's Potato Crisps sign, 1930

Anderson Industries continued to advertise different parts of the factory for lease until 1935, when 18,000 square feet were advertised, with the incentive that the company was prepared to erect a suitable building to suit a long term lease, with the option to purchase the site[105].

Felt & Textiles of Australia

By 1935, Felt and Textiles of Australia Ltd was leasing 6-10 Nichols Street from Anderson Industries, and by 1939 the company had purchased it[106]. Anderson Industries retained ownership of the adjacent site 12-14 Nichols Street.

The company was started in 1921 by the Belgian felt manufacturer Henri van de Velde (1878-1947) as Sydney Felt and Textiles Ltd. It expanded rapidly and changed its name to Felt and Textiles of Australia in 1924. It was to become widely known for the ubiquitous floor covering Feltex[107].

The company also made a variety of footwear via its subsidiaries. Among these were Australian Slippers Pty Ltd, and the romantically-named Iolanthe Slipper Company and Cinderella Shoes Pty Ltd (maker of shoes for children). The first two operated in the Nichols Street factory, and the last in Waterloo. By 1949, the company had 65 factories in Australia[108].

The Iolanthe Slipper Co was operating at 159 Elizabeth Street Redfern in 1936[109] before moving to Anderson's Buildings at 6 Nichols Street later that year and advertising for a variety of staff, such as machinists, fur machinists, binders and girls just out of school to learn the trade[110]. The company continued to advertise for staff until 1937.

The two-storey Australian Slippers Pty Ltd factory in Alexandria was almost completely destroyed by fire just before Christmas in 1935[111]. 30,000 pairs of completed slippers and 35,000 pairs of incomplete slippers were all destroyed. Foul play was suspected as the insurance cover had recently been raised, but an enquiry found no evidence of arson[112]. The company set up a new operation in Leichhardt[113] before moving to 6 Nichols Street by 1938 when they advertised for a variety of staff[114]. The Australian Slipper Co. continued to operate at the site until at least 1948[115].

Other companies leased part of the site until all the buildings were demolished in 1983 to make way for a block of apartments. Stack and Company, importers of the Pontiac motor car, were leasing a single storey building at 12-14 Nichols Street from Anderson Industries in 1948[116]. In 1956, Felt and Textiles of Australia Ltd was still operating at 6-10 Nichols Street, occupying the majority of the site[117].

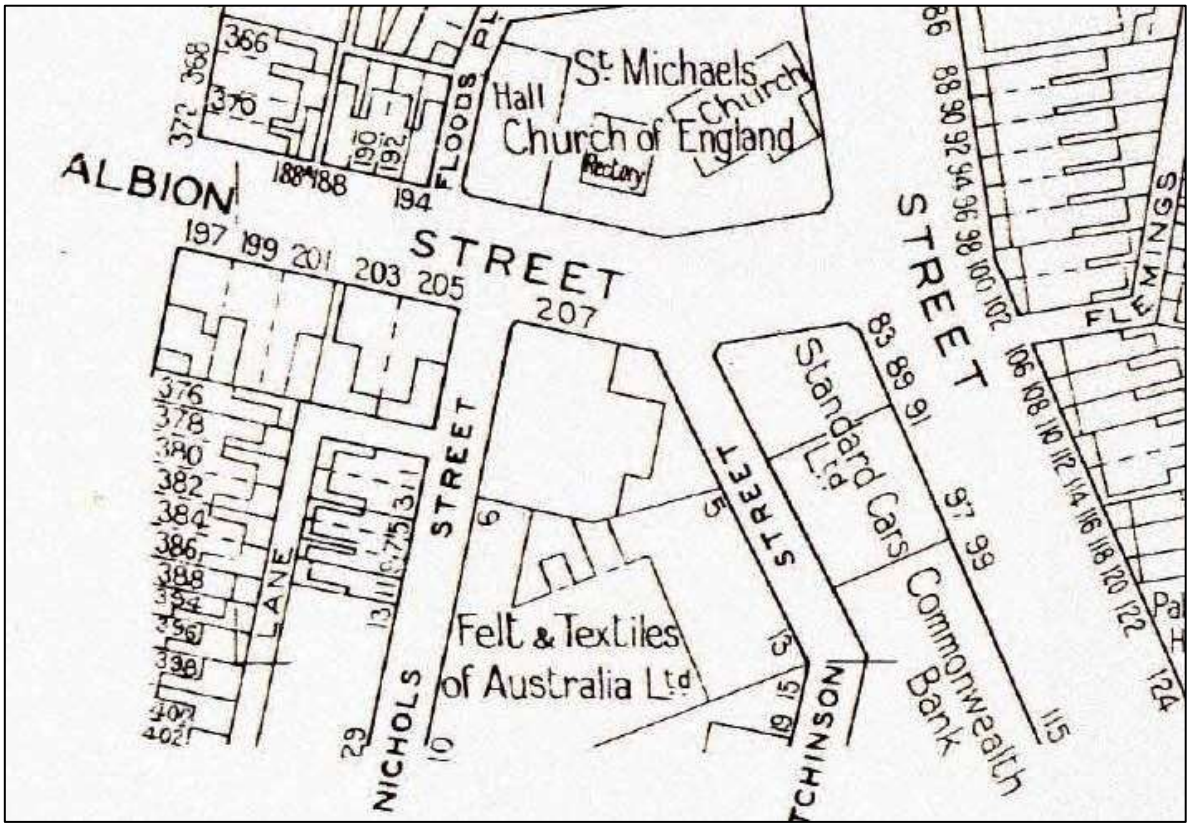


Figure 13 City Building Surveyor's Sheet 11, 1956

Concordia Club – 1925-1939

Germans in Australia

There were few Germans in New South Wales in the early colony, as the assisted migration scheme from 1828 attracted predominately British settlers. But from 1847, the scheme was widened to include European workers with special skills, such as vine dressing and carpentry. By 1856, there were 5,245 Germans in the colony and almost double that by 1891. German settlers were generally absorbed into their local communities, but they maintained strong cultural ties with their German heritage[118].

The German Concordia Club began life in Sydney in 1883, and is one of the city's oldest community clubs. Its aims are to provide a rendezvous for German residents in Sydney, and to foster a national spirit of fellowship amongst Germans and to help maintain cordial relations with their fellow Australians. It began life at 150-152 Elizabeth Street, and when the street was widened in 1911, the Club radically renovated and extended the building, creating a sandstone-fronted building in the Federation Romanesque style. To this building were added the features that Durham Hall would later acquire: a dance hall, a large bar, dining room, and a double kegelbahn (skittle alley)[119].

But in a move that was repeated in World War II, the Club was forced to close in May 1915 when the government reacted to anti-German hysteria by interning over 60 of its members as enemy aliens. The Club trustees sold the building in 1920 to the Knights of the Southern Cross, a conservative Catholic organisation which renamed it to Australia Hall in 1923[120].

Figure 14 Anti-German League button, 1917

Skittles and dancing in Durham Hall

After Charles Anderson's death in 1924, the real estate agents Raine and Horne put Durham Hall up for sale. They suggested it was "most suitable for Medical Men, Private Hospital, Educational or Religious Institutions or for conversion into Flats, with ample room for extension"[121].

The Concordia Club was resurrected after World War I, and the directors looked for new premises. They purchased Durham Hall in February 1925[122] and soon began alterations and additions to suit their needs[123]. The result was a new façade and a hotchpotch of banquet hall, dance hall with orchestra gallery, gymnasium and bowling alley. Durham Hall was almost unrecognisable from its original form[124].

Figure 15 Nichols Street corner of Durham Hall, 1976

Figure 16 Hutchinson Street Corner of Durham Hall, 1976

The official opening of the new dance hall was held in December 1926, but the air of respectability added by the Lord Mayor's presence earlier in the day did not deter the Surry Hills constabulary from raiding the Club at nine o'clock that night and seizing many bottles of beer[125]. Six o'clock closing was alive and well in Sydney, despite its universal unpopularity among the drinking classes.

Kegel, the German version of skittles (or nine-pin bowling) was a precursor to ten-pin bowling which became a worldwide craze. It was introduced to South Australia by German settlers in the nineteenth century and remains popular in areas where Germans settled, such as the Barossa Valley where Tanunda has a kegel club. Nine-pin bowling is still practised a few blocks from Durham Hall at the Standard Bowl, upstairs in Kinselas Hotel, Darlinghurst.

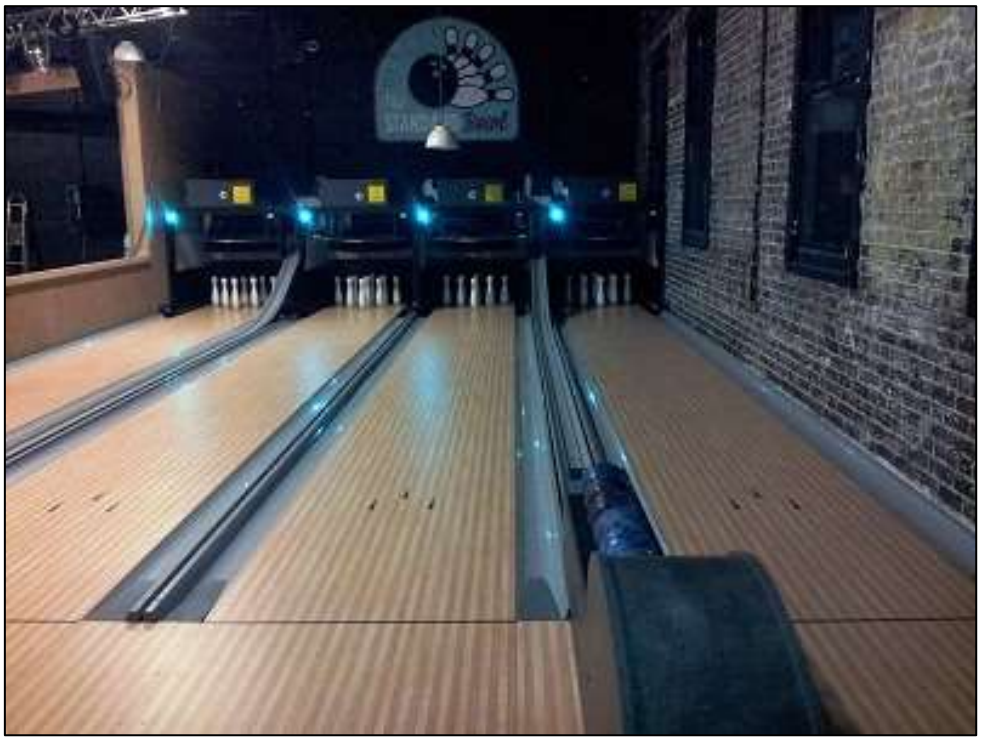


Figure 17 The Standard Bowl, Kinselas, Darlinghurst

The kegelbahn at Durham Hall was possibly Sydney's first skittle alley, and was probably part of the large extension on the Nichols Street side of the house. Skittle tournaments were held at the Club through the 1930s[126].

An unusual story entitled "Skittles by Post – a Picturesque Game" in the *Australian Women's Weekly* in 1933 reported that women from the Goodwood Ladies' Skittles Club in Punchbowl, Sydney practised at the Concordia Club prior to an interstate match with the Gotholz Ladies' Skittles Club from the German Club in East Richmond, Melbourne. The unusual feature was that both teams played on their home alleys and the day's scores were exchanged by post. The Sydney team was victorious over the Melbourne ladies, and went on to defeat their men's team as well[127].


SKITTLES *by* POST

MRS. WROBEL, vice-president, and Mrs. Seibel, president, of the Goodwood Ladies' Skittles Club, in a practice game at the skittle alleys of the Concordia Club.

—Women's Weekly photo.

Figure 18 Skittles by post, 1933

After the Nazi Party came to power in Germany in 1933, the Club regularly celebrated Hitler's birthday[128]. On the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the Nazi government, the Concordia Club held a celebratory dinner, and a speaker offered the opinion that Germany did not want war[129].

During 1939, as war in Europe was approaching, there was a split in the Concordia Club between Nazi sympathisers and those who wanted a purely social club. But the Club successfully resisted the spread of Nazism among its members[130]. Some 70 unnaturalised Germans had formed a branch of the Nazi Party in Sydney some time ago and used the Club for meetings. A room in the Club was decked out in swastikas and Nazi flags, and non-party members were denied admittance to this room[131]. The Nazi Party was distinct from the Club itself, as both naturalised and unnaturalised Germans could become Club members[132].

Another World War closes the Club

A few days after World War II broke out on 1 September 1939, a government proclamation empowered the Minister of Defence to close any club where refreshment was sold, if this was in the public interest. The legislation effectively gave the Government power to close the many German clubs in Australia[133]. Many members of the Club were interned as enemy aliens, and it was reported that many regular church-goers at the Lutheran Church in Bathurst Street in the city were missing, also interned[134].

A few days after the government's proclamation, the trustees decided to voluntarily close the Concordia Club and offer Durham Hall for hire. The first tenant, at the end of 1939, was the Master Bakers' Association, which established a social and educational club for master bakers and their employees, the first of its kind in the country. It aimed to foster a better spirit of understanding

between employer and employee. The Master Bakers hoped to add a bakery school, a laboratory and a library for the education of the public[135].

The bakers' club operated until it was forced to close early in 1942 when the Military authorities announced that all employees of the baking industry of military age would soon be called up for service, and this would involve about half the present employees[136]. Durham Hall was then closed for a few months. Finally, some of the original members of the Concordia Club reopened the premises, forming a new club called the Belvedere Club, for dancing and skittles. This new club operated until the Government decided to use the property as a recreation club for American servicemen in 1943, although the Concordia Club was still the owner[137].

Booker T Washington Club – 1943-1945

Overpaid, oversexed and over here

The attack on Pearl Harbour by the Imperial Japanese Navy in December 1941 abruptly brought the United States into World War II, and by early 1942 there were 250,000 American servicemen (GIs) stationed in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. At this time, very few Australians travelled overseas, and their knowledge of Americans was largely gained from Hollywood movies. For young Australians, these Americans represented wealth, glamour and modernity. They were very polite (addressing everyone as "Ma'am" or "Sir"), wore better-looking uniforms than the baggy Australian outfits. They were also paid twice as much as the Australians, and were ready to spend their money on a good time[138].

A major area of the impact of GIs in Australia was the presence of African American troops. American troops were segregated by colour, and Australia was predominantly Anglo-Saxon. The African Americans usually had labouring, engineering, construction and transport jobs. Many were sent to outback areas, and where they were in large cities, segregated facilities were usually provided, including recreation centres.

The American Civil War of 1861 to 1865 was fought over the issue of slavery - not its abolition, but its expansion to the western territories. But the end of the war marked the end of enslavement for millions of African Americans, and in the post-war reconstruction, the Jim Crow Laws of 1878 declared a legal segregation of blacks and whites in a wide range of public facilities. The intention was for black and white facilities to be separate but equal, but in reality, facilities for African Americans were almost always inferior to those for whites. For example, most black schools received less public funding per student than nearby white schools. Inter-racial marriage was also prohibited by laws in the South and many parts of the North since the Colonial era.

Figure 19 Segregated cinema entrance, 1939

Services affected by segregation were housing, medical care, education, employment, transportation, hotels, bars, hospitals, toilets, parks, even telephone booths, and separate sections in libraries, cinemas and restaurants. Cinemas often had separate ticket windows and entrances. In the US Armed Forces before the 1950s, African American units were typically separated from white units, but led by white officers.

Jim Crow doesn't live here

Both African American and white American servicemen were surprised when their acceptance of racial segregation was challenged in Australia. An Australian living in St Kilda reported that when the white US troops first arrived, they started ordering African American GIs out of restaurants and other places. Australians objected to this and stepped in to complain, making it the first time the African American GIs had been accepted as equals (Investigating the impact of the American 'invasion' of Australia 1942-5, Anzac Day). In Sydney, Joan Clarke witnessed a similar scene on a tram in 1944. She was sitting down with an African American soldier she had befriended when two white GIs got on and ordered him to stand up. He started to get up, but the other passengers and the conductor told him not to give up his seat, as they don't do that in this country. When the white GIs got off, the conductor gave them a parting lecture about not getting back on the trams until they had learned better manners[139]. For indigenous Australians, the sight of African American GIs with money in their hands, who were confident and stood up straight and looked you in the eye and were mechanics, bulldozer operators and truck drivers boosted their sense of self. For Pacific Islanders in Queensland, contact with African Americans was a revelation, as these men treated them as equals for the first time, despite their own relegation in Australian society to poverty and menial jobs. One African American GI reported that his race wasn't as big a problem as he expected in Australia. They didn't resent them, and the women didn't resent them. It wasn't the problem it would have been in America[140].

Figure 20 Booker T. Washington

The Booker T. Washington Club at Durham Hall

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was an African American educator, author, orator and adviser to American Presidents. Between 1890 and 1915, he was the dominant leader in the African American

community of the Unites States. He was from the last generation born into slavery and became the leading voice of former slaves and their descendents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His approach was for progress through education and economic self-help. He thought the time had not arrived to challenge the Jim Crow segregation laws – this did not happen until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

The US Military authorities began to operate a recreation club for their African American servicemen at Durham Hall at the beginning of 1943. The club's first mention in the press was in a lost dog ad in February: "Lost: Fox Terrier, answers to the name of Palooka…Booker T. Washington Servicemen's Centre, 207 Albion Street, Sydney"[141]. Two months later, a group of soldiers from the Club organised an Easter egg hunt across the road at St Michael's Church. Fifty children successfully hunted down 200 hard-boiled eggs[142].

Another incident in the early days of the Booker T. Washington Club involved an encounter between a GI staying at the club and one of the city's robbers in Little Oxford Street, a small laneway a few blocks from Durham Hall. The villain brandished a revolver and demanded the serviceman's money. The GI had less than £2 in his pocket, but he told the man if he came with him the Booker T., he could give him a lot more. The bandit wasn't bright enough to realise that he lost control of the situation by agreeing to this, and as the two walked along, the battle-hardened GI picked his moment and wrenched the gun away from him. The disarmed bandit immediately ran off, perhaps a bit wiser for the experience[143].

The servicemen's club operating in Durham Hall must have been a wild place in the early months, because the police Vice Squad arranged with the US Military to close it down in October 1943, mainly due to white girls consorting with the African American servicemen in and around the premises[144]. Then in October, there was a serious disturbance at the club after 6pm closing time on a Saturday when about 300 men gathered outside and threw bricks and bottles through the windows. A few of them broke into the building and smashed some of the contents.

American Red Cross takes over the Booker T.

In December 1943, the Booker T. Washington Club was reopened as an activity of the American Red Cross. This transformed the place, both in appearance and in the style of recreation offered. The War Correspondent Patricia Knox wrote in 1943 that wherever there were American troops, the American Red Cross would set up a service club for them.

These clubs were scattered all over Australia, even in the most unlikely small towns, if there was a US base nearby. One she visited was an old hotel in a tiny town, and the Red Cross had worked wonders on it – coats of paint, a few murals painted on the walls, and curtains and cushions scattered here and there. An American soldier had even helped by painting the murals. One of his efforts included a kangaroo, which the artist had painted without ever having seen one - he didn't realise that kangaroos had short front legs![145].

Figure 21 American Red Cross staff at the Booker T., 1944

Joan Clarke (1920-2004) was a Sydney woman who worked as a voluntary typist and secretary at the Booker T. in 1944 and 1945. In 1994 she published her autobiography: *All on One Good Dancing Leg*. The title refers to the polio she contracted as a three year-old, and which affected her throughout her life. In the book, she describes from first-hand experience the life of the Club during this time. In the large reception room were lounge chairs and tables where GIs sat around reading or talking or playing cards. Now and then one would come to reception to ask the way to Luna Park or Bondi. The tantalising smell of Southern fried chicken wafted in from the dining room down the corridor. There was a dance hall with a stage at one end, with a microphone and a piano.

Dances were held Wednesday and Saturday nights, and the big hall was packed with GIs and their dance partners, jitterbugging to the music of an Australian band. The girls invited to the Club were mostly Aboriginal or Pacific Islanders, because of the colour bar in operation. The dancers were usually well-behaved, and any problems were quickly brought under control by the staff, often with the help of other soldiers. Women were only allowed in the Club if approved by the Red Cross staff, and if a soldier arrived with a white woman on his arm, she was refused entrance. The men were on R&R leave for a week or two, and Joan found that most were friendly and courteous with a wonderful sense of humour.

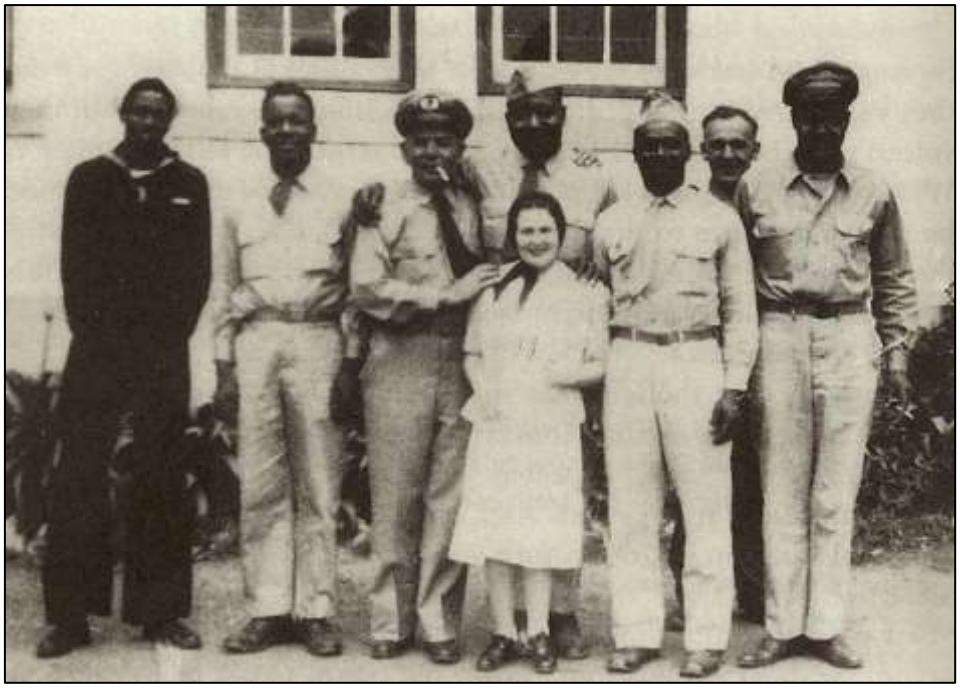


Figure 22 Joan Clarke and GIs, Panorama Hotel, Bulli

Joan Clarke worked there two nights a week until 10:30, and when she stepped outside to catch the tram to Circular Quay, two soldiers would stand up and announce that they were her bodyguards for that night. They walked her to the tram stop in Flinders Street, waited for the tram, and made sure she was safely on board before waving good night.

There were some objections from Joan's family that she was associating with African American men at the Club - not from her parents, but some of her aunts disapproved. She sometimes joined the Aboriginal girls selected to accompany GIs on bus trips to the South Coast or Blue Mountains. She found that the Red Cross had to work out in advance where they could go by finding cafes or hotels that would serve them lunch or drinks. As in Sydney, there were very few willing to serve coloured people, either Australian or American[146].

Jazz livens up Durham Hall

On dance nights at the Booker T., Durham Hall would shake to the rhythms of jazz and swing music. Good dance bands, singers and musicians had become harder for the Club's director to find, partly because so many had been enlisted into the army's Entertainment Unit, but also because they made better money playing at the nightclubs and dance halls frequented by white servicemen.

Despite this, some of Sydney's top jazz musicians played in the Club Band, such as saxophone players Merv Acheson (1922-1987) and Rolph Pommer (1914-1980), guitarist Ray Price (1921-1990) and pianist Jim Somerville (1922-)[147]. A very young Don Burrows (1928-) played one of his first gigs there. Graham Bell (1914-2012) never played at the Booker T., but he passed through on his way to entertain American troops in Queensland.

Jim Somerville was one of the original members of the Port Jackson Jazz Band, and he liked the freedom to play faster than fast or slower than slow at the Booker T. A big hit of the time was Glenn Miller's *Jersey Bounce*, but play lists were often thrown out the window. Somerville recalled that "we

played what we could get away with. Songs weren't important - it was how you played them". He recalls playing fast blues improvisations for 45 minutes while the servicemen jitterbugged with their partners. Many girls would get tired and have to sit down, so the men would just grab another partner.

In the early 1940s, a new style of jazz called bebop came out of America as a counter to the popularity of swing – jazz musicians wanted a style of fast and exciting non-dancing music that demanded attention. The main exponents of bebop were the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993), the saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker (1920-1955) and the pianist Thelonius Monk (1917-1982). Many Australian jazz musicians at the Booker T. gave their services for free, just to play for the Club's appreciative audiences, or for the chance to play with GIs who were jazz musicians before the war.

Figure 23 Dizzie Gillespie, 1947

The writer Clem Gorman interviewed musicians who played in the Booker T., and they said there was extensive learning by the Australian players during the nightly dance sessions. Influential musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie, saxophonist Coleman Hawkins and pianist Teddy Wilson were involved in skill-sharing jam sessions with locals during the 1940s and 1950s in various Sydney nightclubs and jazz clubs[148].

African American cultural influences

The Australian youth subculture called "bodgies" was strongly influenced by interactions between African American GIs and young Sydneysiders. Local teenagers adopted aspects of African American culture such as fashion, music, dance, speech and body language in the 1940s and 1950s.

Bodgie clothing was almost a uniform: a long wide-backed draped jacket with padded shoulders, trousers tight at the cuffs but loose in the legs. They were the “zoot suits” worn in the African American, Italian and Chicano sub-cultures of the US in the 1940s, and were purchased from visiting American sailors by young Sydneysiders at the Woolloomooloo docks[149].

Young locals also bought the V-discs offered by the servicemen. These records were a morale-boosting initiative by the US government and record companies to produce a series of recordings for GIs to take overseas in World War II. A wide variety of music was recorded especially for the project by the top bands of the day: big band hits, swing, rhythm and blues and jazz. The music was more exciting and better for dancing than records available in Sydney shops. African Americans brought with them a loose, highly rhythmic style of dancing, emphasising fluidity and a joyful laughing attitude. This was in stark contrast with the prevailing styles, such as the Pride of Erin and the foxtrot[150].

Figure 24 Zoot suiters, 1940s

The Booker T. Washington Club in Durham Hall was one of the places where African Americans and young Sydneysiders met and where American slang and body language was heard and copied. Young people were looking for new ideas after the dull conformity of the Depression and War years and the repressive British cultures they had grown up with. The bodgies were probably the first generation in Australia to reject the inherited culture of their Anglo-Saxon or Irish Catholic parents, and the visiting African American GIs gave a major impetus to this change. The term “teenager” was coming into use for the first time to recognise a period of transition and challenge to the attitudes and beliefs of the past in order to seek new beliefs to take into the future.

British Navy takes over the Club

By 1944, there were complaints from some church leaders[151] and politicians[152] about the Booker T., and requests to move it to some other unspecified location, although the Minister for the Army pointed out that no complaints had been made to authorities about the Club. This issue generated debate for and against among the city's worthies, and the Reverend Alan Walker, speaking from the pulpit of the Waverley Methodist Church, attacked the prejudice shown by Australians to African American servicemen, citing several examples. He concluded that Australia should not become another Georgia, and urged his flock to talk to African Americans in the streets and to ignore any insults or intimidation[153].

In early 1945, it was announced that American Red Cross activities were gradually being curtailed in Australia[154]. This was in line with the American forces pushing further north towards Japan and moving their administration to the Philippines. Citations were presented to voluntary helpers with more than three months' service at the clubs in Sydney, including the Booker T. Washington Club[155]. From April 1945, the clubs were converted to Navy Branches of the British Centre[156]. The British Centre was set up in September 1944 as a self-governing branch of the Australian Comfort Funds to cater for British naval servicemen who were part of the British Pacific Fleet based in Sydney[157].

The American Red Cross handed over Durham Hall to the British Navy in July 1945. This is the date on the wall plaque inside the building, and is the month that the Red Cross staff from the Booker T. visited Joan Clarke at the publishing company where she worked to say goodbye[158]. This ended the liveliest and most colourful period in Durham Hall's history. It was sure to be a much quieter place after this.

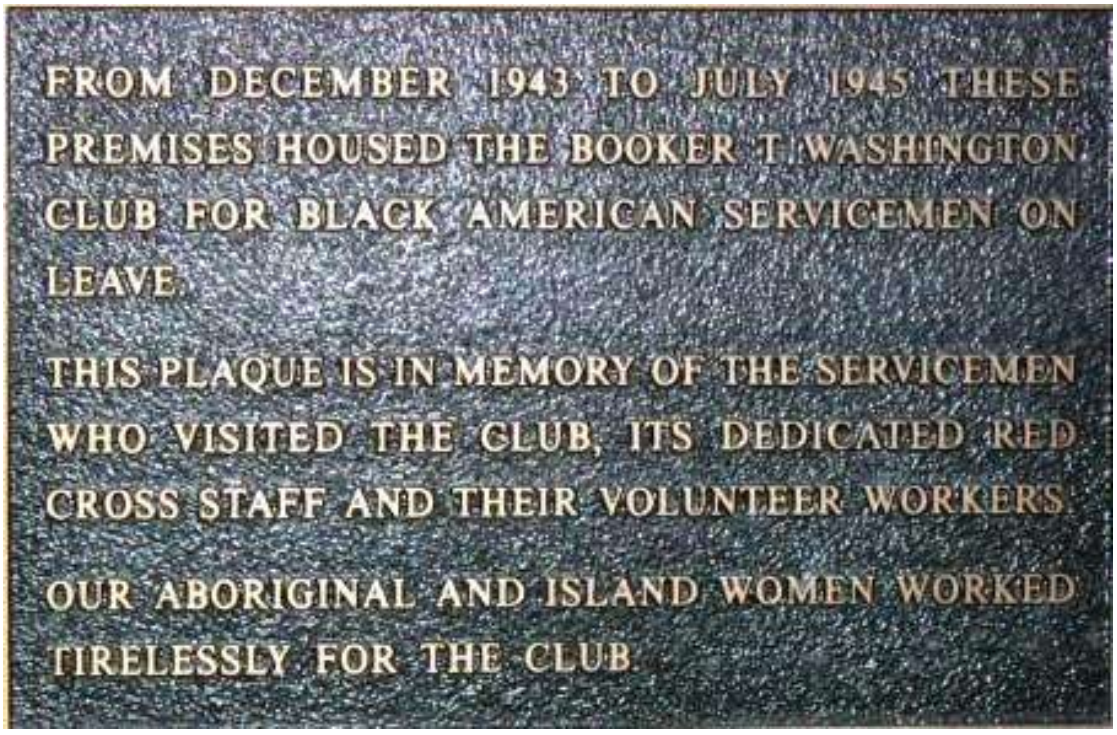


Figure 25 Booker T. Washington Club commemorative plaque

The Commonwealth Bank – 1946-1979

While the Concordia Club had not been active in Durham Hall since closing in September 1939, the club was still the owner of the building. In 1945, the trustees were notified that the Commonwealth Government intended to completely take over the property as it had done with other buildings in Sydney. After much negotiation, an agreement was reached on a price of £11,750. Payment for the furniture was received in 1946, but it was not until 1954, following a long legal battle, that a payment of £8,000 was made. The balance of £3,000 not received until two years after this[159].

Commonwealth Employment Service

The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) was established in 1946 as part of the post-war *Re-Establishment and Employment Act, 1945*. A Paddington District Office of the CES was opened at 117 Flinders Street, which backs on to Durham Hall across Hutchinson Street. The primary purpose of the CES was to assist ex-servicemen and women to find work after the War. The CES was new in Australia, and was modeled on the successful British and US Employment Services[160].

By 1948, the Commonwealth of Australia was the owner of Durham Hall, and the CES was the occupier[161]. The CES was eventually split up in 1998: its employment services became part of Employment National, and its welfare services were transferred to Centrelink. In 2004, Employment National closed its 165 offices around the country, and was replaced by the privatised Job Network[162].

The Commonwealth Bank is created

Figure 26 Commonwealth Bank money box

During the nineteenth century in Australia there were bank collapses in almost every decade, but the climax came in 1893 after a wholesale run on savings saw twelve banks close their doors in six weeks. The resultant Depression increased pressure for the creation of a central bank, one that

would issue notes that were guaranteed by the resources of the nation[163]. After Federation in 1901, the Labor government of Prime Minister Andrew Fisher decided to establish a government bank for the newly formed nation, to conduct both savings and general banking business and to print money. It would be the first bank in the country to be involved in all areas of banking, and the first with a Federal Government guarantee. It was founded in 1911 under the *Commonwealth Bank Act* and commenced operations in 1912 from a branch in Collins Street, Melbourne.

In 1916, the Bank's headquarters moved to Sydney, to the corner of Pitt Street and Martin Place, a building that was the design of the famous money boxes for many years. The Bank was heavily involved in both World Wars when it organised finance for federal wartime activities and provided banking services for thousands of servicemen at home and abroad. After World War II, home loans were offered from 1946, and hundreds of new branches and agencies were opened to cater for the immense increase and spread of population.

In 1991, the Commonwealth Government started privatising the Bank by converting it from a statutory authority to a public company and issuing shares to raise capital. By 1996, the Bank was fully privatised. It is one of the few public companies without the word Limited at the end of its official name. Today, the Bank is the leading mortgage provider in Australia, and employs 52,000 across all its businesses[164].

A storehouse for the bank

In 1949, ownership of Durham Hall was transferred to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, which converted part of the building for its use as a warehouse and garage used by its Stores Department at 99-115 Flinders Street[165]. The Department of Labour and National Service continued to operate a CES office above the garage, but leased it from the Bank from this time.

In 1966, the Commonwealth Bank submitted a Development Application (DA) to the Sydney Council requesting approval to demolish the entire site and erect a new building. The DA was on behalf of Smith's Potato Crisps, who were still operating in part of the site. The Bank's proposal was to pull down the entire 40,000 square feet site that included Smith's Crisps at 5-13 Hutchinson Street, Durham Hall at 207 Albion Street, and the former Feltex factory at 6-10 Nichols Street.

After demolition, the Bank wanted to put up a two-storey building with two basement levels at a cost of $1,000,000. The two upper floors and first basement level would be for the storage of furniture, machinery and stationery. The lower basement level would be for the servicing and parking of 45 motor cars. This was in conjunction with the Bank's business, presumably with Smith's Potato Crisps operating in part of the site.

The Council rejected the proposal and continued to do so until 1971, because it conflicted with the Residential zoning under the *Local Government Act 1919*, despite being acceptable under the broader Cumberland County Council zoning scheme[166]. This attempt by the Commonwealth Bank to pull down a piece of Sydney's early colonial history, only prevented by a technicality over its zoning, shows how close many historic buildings must have come to being lost to later generations in the years before heritage preservation orders were placed on them.

The Bank must have moved all of its storage facilities out of Surry Hills after 1971, as its Stores Department building at 99-115 Flinders Street was leased to several other companies until at least

1990, such as Sperry Rand Australia in 1971, Du'Kiss Smart Fabrics in 1974 and 1975, and an Advanced Education company in 1984, although the Bank retained ownership of the building[167].

Marval Industries storehouse

In 1976, the plastics manufacturer Marval Industries applied to Sydney Council to use a 1,500 square feet section on the Albion and Hutchinson Street corner of the Durham Hall grounds as a warehouse for the storage and distribution of cardboard containers. The building, which has two stories with a single storey section containing three garages, had been vacant since the Bank's failed attempt to develop the site in 1971, although the Bank still owned it. The application noted that the building had been recommended for the National Trust Register, and perhaps with that in mind, the proposal did not involve a change of use or building work. Approval was granted[168].

In 1979, Durham Hall was classified by the National Trust with an interim preservation order, and in 1982 a Permanent Conservation Order was placed on the property under the *New South Wales Heritage Act (1977).* This was converted to a State Heritage Register listing in April 1999 following amendments to the *NSW Heritage Act*[169].

Durham Hall returns to its former glory – 1981-1983

The Heritage Council is formed

The Heritage Council of New South Wales was established under the *New South Wales Heritage Act (1977)* as an advisory body appointed by the Minister responsible for heritage in New South Wales. Its members reflect a cross-section of community, government and conservation expertise. The genesis of the Act was the Whitlam Government's inquiry into the National estate in 1974 led by Justice Robert Hope, and which resulted in greater emphasis on heritage at all levels of government[170].

The Heritage Council makes decisions about the care and protection of heritage places and items that have been identified as significant to the people of New South Wales. It also gives advice on heritage matters to the Minister responsible for heritage[171].

Hugh Fraser helps to save Durham Hall

Hugh Malcolm Fraser graduated in architecture in 1969. In 1978, he was appointed as a specialist heritage architect to the Heritage Council of New South Wales. At a time when development was king, Fraser fought to have Sydney's architectural heritage recognised and protected. He worked hard to help officials and the general public to see beyond the wear and grime of age to appreciate the built heritage around them.

Figure 27 Hugh Fraser

He was not just an academic specialist but had the pragmatic ability to negotiate with developers and others to find workable solutions to difficult conservation problems. He always thought that attention must be paid to preserving heritage buildings while giving them an economic use in a modern context. He threw his support behind the preservation of Cremorne's Hayden Orpheum, the Queen Victoria Building, and Durham Hall.

By 1980, Durham Hall had been severely modified and was almost unrecognisable from the outside. The new owners earmarked it for demolition and redevelopment as high-rise apartments, but Fraser's detective work found that, within the mess, original fabric remained with sufficient architectural evidence for its restoration. After arduous negotiations and some massaging of the development controls, he steered the developer into an alternative scheme that gave sufficient low-rise apartments at the back, on the condition that they restore Durham Hall[172].

Durham Hall is restored and Durham Village is built

In 1979, Durham Hall and the factory buildings at 5-13 Hutchinson Street and 6-10 Nichols Street were sold to the developers Wanroo Pty Ltd[173].

Then in November 1980, Wanroo Pty Ltd submitted a Development Application to the Sydney City Council for the restoration of Durham Hall, and the construction of 75 residential units in the area behind the house that was known as 5-13 Hutchinson Street and 6-10 Nichols Street[174]. The house and the area behind were subdivided under Strata Plan No. 20659. By January 1981, work was underway on the restoration.

Soon after removal of the twentieth century additions in January 1981, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the old house looked "desolate and forlorn without its French doors and graceful columned verandah", but that progress was well under way towards a full restoration. However, there was a problem because nobody knew exactly what the front of the house used to look like, and the architects Brewster, Murray and Partners were hoping someone would have an old photograph or painting to guide them in their work.

Figure 28 Durham Hall after restoration, 1984-5

Few original fittings remained inside the house, although some of the cedar windows were still there, and part of the black and white marble tiled floor in the entrance hall had been uncovered. There were still extensive stone cellars, but the detached kitchen block and stables no longer existed. A spokesman for the Heritage Council, which has placed an interim preservation order on the house, said that the buildings (including 199-205 Albion Street) represented the only intact group of Georgian houses left in Sydney[175].

By 1983, Durham Hall had been fully restored, and the 75 apartments, named Durham Village, were completed. Durham Hall was auctioned in December 1983 to the restaurateurs Martin Poss and Lein Schuman who submitted an application to the Sydney Council to convert the building to a restaurant[176]. But after several months of effort, they were unable to obtain permission from the City Council and Heritage Council for their restaurant, mainly due to a lack of parking facilities[177].

Figure 29 Durham Village apartments

The seating capacity of 130 required 22 on-site car spaces (according to the Council's formula of one car space for every six customers), and this was not possible in the area available. Only four car spaces were available, and the Council mentioned that "a contribution should be made for 18 cars at the rate per car space fixed by the Council". This means that the restaurateurs had to pay some amount in lieu of providing car spaces (and nowadays it can amount to a few thousand dollars per car space). Presumably, the owners were not willing or able to pay this, so they lost their deposit and the sale fell through. The house was auctioned again in May 1984[178], and this time was purchased by the current owners, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA).

Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia – 1984-present

Pathology and the RCPA

Pathology involves the study of the causes of diseases, and is a major field of medical practice and diagnosis. General pathology includes a number of distinct but inter-related medical specialities which diagnose disease through the analysis of tissue, cell and body fluid samples.

A common type of pathology service is the testing of blood samples to detect and report on the levels of sugars, fats and other indicators of a person's health. Another type is forensic pathology, which focuses on determining the cause of death by post-mortem examination. Forensic pathologists examine tissue specimens to determine the presence of diseases, study toxicology results to determine the chemical causes of overdoses or poisonings, and examine physical trauma.

The RCPA is the leading organisation representing pathologists and senior scientists in Australasia. Its mission is to train and support pathologists and to improve the use of pathology testing to achieve better healthcare. The College was first established in 1956, and has been responsible for the training and professional development of pathologists since that time, and more recently of senior scientists. It is a non-profit organisation whose members come from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia[179].

In 1971, it was granted a 20-year lease by the Sydney Council to use 82 Windmill Street in the Rocks. But by the early 1980s, its premises in the Rocks had become too small and it was forced to find a larger building for its operations. The RCPA was fortunate to be able to purchase Durham Hall in 1984 after the earlier sale had fallen through. The College financed this by imposing a levy on its members and running a special appeal for funds.

Figure 30 Edgar Thompson Library, Durham Hall

One treasure moved from Windmill Street to Durham Hall was a Maori carving presented to the College by the Fellows in New Zealand to mark the official incorporation of New Zealand in the title

(when “Australia” became “Australasia”), and unveiled at the Silver Jubilee of the College in October 1980. It is a feature of the room where the Council of the College meets. The carving is by Tuto Honutapu of Rotorua, and tells the story of the migration of the Arawa people from Hawaiki, the nebulous homeland of the Maori, to the land of Aotearoa, now called New Zealand[180].

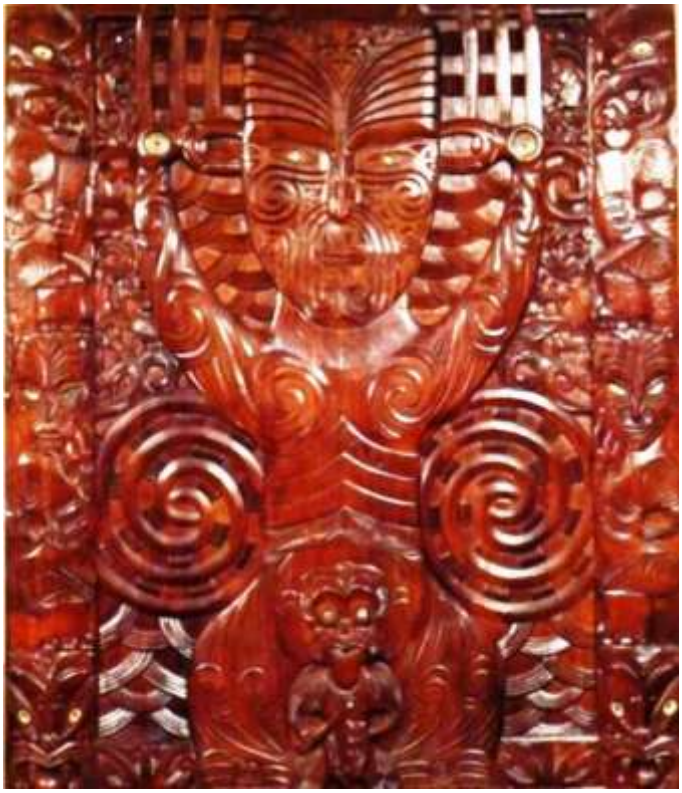


Figure 31 Maori carving, Durham Hall

Figure 32 Albion Street with Durham Hall on right, 1916

Garden restoration

In 1987, a garden restoration was undertaken by Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Architects Pty Ltd. This was guided by a garden plan devised by heritage landscape specialists James Broadbent and Michael Lehany, using early 20th century photographs of the house and garden[181].

The 1916 photo of the front of Durham Hall and its garden[182] shows a Victorian-style palisade fence. After restoration of the house in 1981-1983, the 1984 photo[183] shows a boundary fence with a c1983 sandstone retaining wall with a simple iron fence. There were no sandstone pillars on the corners or at the gate. This fence was sympathetic to the house and its garden, but was not original, and does not have heritage significance. The garden restoration resulted in a fence similar to the 1916 fence, and was apparently based on photos of that time.

Figure 33 Restored gardens in Durham Hall

197-201 Albion Street Houses

George Hill built this group of three houses and the two adjacent cottages at 203-205 Albion Street as investment properties. They were advertised for sale with Durham Hall in 1899, but only Durham Hall was sold. All five houses remained in the Hill family until 1907 when the family trustees sold them to David Henry Smart for £870[184]. He died in 1912, leaving an estate valued at £53,917[185].

A corner fruit shop

In 1918, the executors of David Smart's estate sold the three houses at 197-201 Albion Street to Giovanni and Caterina Natoli, who started operating a fruit shop in number 197, on the Bourke Street corner. The Natolis were married in Sydney in 1901[186] and had operated fruit shops in Regent Street and Cleveland Street Redfern[187] before moving to Albion Street.

Giovanni Natoli was born on the island of Panarea, near Sicily in 1871, and arrived in Australia via America in 1899. He applied for naturalisation in 1929. Caterina was born in Salma, Italy, in c1887. During World War I, Giovanni registered as an enemy alien with Darlinghurst Police Station[188], which was normal for German and Italian residents of military age during the War. The Natoli family operated the fruit shop until after Giovanni died in 1945, as Caterina was the owner at the time of the last *Rate Assessment Book* in 1948.

Caterina died in 1965 in Sydney, and the houses were sold in February 1970 to Casabressan Pty Ltd, 268 Oxford St, Paddington. This company also operated as Reliance Holdings Pty Ltd, of the same address. From 1971, Barry and Sandra Berner rented 197 Albion Street as a florist shop and for the sale of copper and brassware[189].

The houses narrowly avoid demolition

By May 1975, the houses must have been badly run down, because Reliance Holdings Pty Ltd decided to submit a drastic proposal to Sydney Council to demolish the entire building and the adjacent Victorian terrace house at 376 Bourke Street, which they also owned. From the rubble would arise a seven-storey building, 24 metres tall. The ground floor would contain shops and a tavern, the first floor would be professional chambers, and the upper five floors would be a private hotel with 43 bedrooms, all at a cost of $600,000. There would be two levels of basement parking for 46 cars[190].

The Police Traffic Branch was asked for comment and responded that the proposal was an overdevelopment and they were not in favour of it. The City Planner also recommended that Council refuse the proposal as a number of objections meant that it would not be in the public interest. The owners appealed to the Local Government Appeals Tribunal, a body that existed from 1972 to 1980 and was succeeded by the current Land and Environment Court. The Tribunal approved the proposal with conditions in November 1975.

However, in April 1976 Reliance Holdings put the building up for auction, mentioning that it was DA-approved for shops, offices, restaurant and 39 apartments[191], but the property failed to sell. A few months later, the Council must have discovered that number 197 was being used for the illegal manufacture of clothing, as a Development Application was submitted by Messrs. J & S Goveros in November 1976 requesting approval for their operation, which had started at the time of the

auction in April. This was approved, subject to conditions such as adding a fireproof ceiling and parking places, but the operation ceased in 1977[192].

Figure 34 197-201 Albion Street before restoration, 1978

Despite the approval to demolish and rebuild, the project had not commenced by September 1977 when Mr. R. Bressan, the Managing Director of Reliance Holdings Pty Ltd, wrote to the Council requesting a twelve month extension of the two-year approval period (which would have expired in November 1977). He explained that the economic climate of the time was against the viability of the project and that the company would have great difficulty financing it. Mr. Bressan also acknowledged that the National Trust had classified the property, and said that he had requested the Minister for Planning and Environment to either de-classify the property or to permit the demolition and development of the site despite the classification. The Council decided to refuse the extension request, partly because its original objections still applied, and also because of the National Trust's classification for preservation.

A proposal by the heritage architect David Sheedy to list the houses in the NSW Heritage Register in 1976 describes their condition at the time[193]:

> "A two storey terrace of three houses built between 1845 and 1847 with unsympathetic timber and brick additions to the street alignment. Original walls are painted sandstock brick and roof is corrugated galvanised iron".

The houses were placed on the Register of the National Estate in March 1978[194].

Reliance Holdings still wanted to redevelop the site, and in March 1978 a fresh proposal was submitted to the Council. This now involved the restoration of 197-201 Albion Street into two-storey

retail and professional suites, but still proposed the demolition of 376 Bourke Street and erection of a four-storey block of flats behind the restored Albion Street houses[195].

This proposal outraged the neighbours, and the Council received a petition from 47 residents and several letters strongly objecting to the development. Among the objectors were Anne Taylor and Ian McCulloch, who were busy restoring the adjacent cottages at 203-205 Albion Street before opening a restaurant on the site. The Council again refused the proposal as an overdevelopment, and the owner once more appealed to the Local council Appeals Tribunal. The architects who drew up the development (Michael Davies and Andrew Metcalf) argued that the proposal was the minimum development that would make the restoration of 197-201 Albion Street financially viable. The Tribunal's decision is not in the Council records, but it must have been adverse, as the development did not proceed.

In December 1978, Reliance Holdings submitted a third Development Application to Council in a final attempt to find a viable use for the houses that was satisfactory to the Council, the National Trust, and the local residents. This proposal was much less ambitious, and was simply to restore the building to its original form, for use as six shops on the ground floor, and ten commercial and professional suites on the upper floor[196]. 376 Bourke Street would be left intact, and survives to this day. In September 1979, the Council approved the application, on the condition that seven car parking spaces and one loading space were provided.

As Reliance Holdings claimed in the previous DA that it had to build an apartment block to make restoration of the old building viable, it probably received financial assistance from the NSW Heritage Council for the restoration-only project, as did their neighbours at 203-205 Albion Street when restoring this building at the same time[197]. So 197-201 Albion Street was finally restored, and a later description by David Sheedy in 1984 reflects this[198]:

> "The property has been fully restored, including replacement of former brick and timber verandah with a single storey corrugated iron verandah on turned posts".

The building received a Permanent Conservation Order in July 1981[199]. In the end, the three houses built by George Hill in the 1840s only escaped the wrecking ball by the narrowest of margins. If it were not for the poor economic climate of the late 1970s and the introduction of heritage listings, residents of Surry Hills would today be walking through the long shadow of a high-rise apartment block when they pass the corner of Albion and Bourke Streets.

Number 201 was sold to J and G Griffith in 1979, and they used the ground floor for the sale of antiques and colonial furniture[200]. In 1982, the management company Marcomotivation Pty Ltd leased number 199 from Reliance Holdings Pty Ltd as offices. Number 197 was sold to the importer Jane Bevan Hill of Woollahra in June 1981[201].

Phillip Luker publishing

Philip Sydney Morris Luker was born in England in 1932, and arrived in Australia in 1960 with his wife Monica and baby daughter Patricia. He had been a journalist for the *Daily Mail* in London from c1952, and worked for newspapers such as the *Financial Review* in Sydney[202] until 1966 when he started publishing the private management newsletters *Foodweek* and *Inside Retailing*[203] from an office in Kings Cross. *Foodweek* became *Foodweek and liquor week* in 1975[204].

In 1980, he started renting 197 Albion Street from Reliance Holdings Pty Ltd for his publishing company Philip Luker and Staff Pty Ltd. Then in 1985 he expanded the newsletter business by purchasing 201 Albion Street. He produced these newsletters in 1987 until he sold them to the Melbourne businessman Michael Wilkinson[205]. In 1988, he wrote and published the book *Inside the Food Industry*, based on more than twenty years of research as the editor of *Foodweek*.

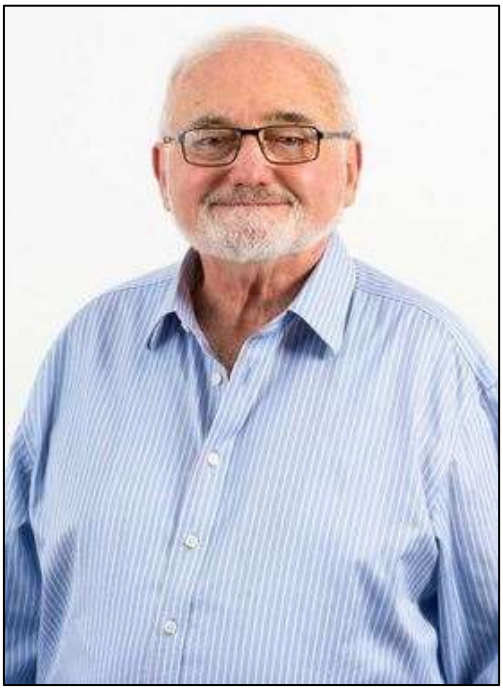


Figure 35 Philip Luker

In 1989, he launched the newsletter *Greenweek – Business and the Environment*, giving managers the latest news on how the greening of the world affected their business[206]. Then from 1990, he edited and published the newsletter *Mediaweek*, a trade journal for the media covering newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, outdoor advertising and entertainment media. James Manning took over *Mediaweek* as editor and publisher in 1999. *Foodweek and liquor week* was sold to the publisher Ian Huntley Pty Ltd in 1991[207].

In 1991, the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW purchased 197 Albion Street. The group operated a counselling service (including the telephone service Lesbian & Gayline) until 2003 when it moved to Bedford Street, Newtown[208]. In 2014, the Badger & Fox Gallery opened in 201 Albion Street. This gallery aimed to present art from every genre, including photography, indigenous art, prints, drawings, period, modern, emerging and contemporary. It was established by the art collectors Peter Maddison and Peter Wright.

203-5 Albion Street Cottages

In 1918, the executors of David Henry Smart's estate sold 203 and 205 Albion Street to Edwin Ernest Alan Oatley. He was a Justice of the Peace who lived in Randwick[209]. He died in 1920, aged 68[210]. The Sydney Council *Rate Assessment Books* show that his estate continued to own the houses until at least 1948[211].

In 1971, Woolloomooloo Rentals Pty Ltd purchased both cottages, and in 1973 the company applied to Sydney Council to change the usage from residential to offices. The owner proposed to fully and faithfully restore the building to its original condition, as by then it was classified by the National Trust. The Council recommended the application be approved, subject to several conditions, related to the provision of three off-street parking spaces and one off-street loading space. However, the restoration did not proceed, and the Council's consent lapsed in May 1976[212].

Figure 36 203-205 Albion Street before restoration, 1974

The cottages are restored

In 1977, the very dilapidated cottages were purchased by the restaurateurs Anne Taylor and Ian McCulloch, who applied to the Sydney Council soon afterwards to restore the building to include a restaurant and living quarters[213].

With funding assistance from the New South Wales Heritage Council[214], Taylor and McCulloch did much of the complex and arduous restoration work themselves, and tried to incorporate the multitude of Council regulations for on-site parking, health regulations and other requirements with their desire to retain as many original features of the building as possible. In a letter to Council in March 1981, they described the experience:

"The premises were totally derelict (and partially collapsed), vandalised, exposed to weather decay and unfit for habitation. Since 1978, the work of rebuilding and total restoration has been accomplished with our own labour, plus some skilled assistance, involving considerable physical and financial demands….Given the cost of the lengthy delays involved, we are anxious to commence operation of our business within the quarter."

Fine Italian dining comes to Surry Hills

Figure 37 Anne Taylor, 1985

Anne Taylor and Ian McCulloch finally opened Taylor's Restaurant in April 1982, and it was reviewed soon afterwards by the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s food writer Valerie Lawson. She said that the restaurant was in a perfectly proportioned space, and had good quality glassware, cutlery and crockery. It was divided into three main rooms, and seated about 50 people. The restaurant specialised in North Italian cooking because Anne Taylor liked that kind of food.

The floors and large windows with shutters had been restored to the original Georgian style. Overhead and wall lights complemented the style, with etched glass globes supported by brass brackets. The reviewer observed that one group of diners must have been settling in for a big night, as they brought two eskies full of Tooth's KB, a martini shaker apparently containing a pina colada mix, and dozens of wine and champagne bottles[215].

In an interview in 1986, Anne Taylor (born c1947) mentioned that she was a Commonwealth film censor and Ian McCulloch (born c1940) an industrial chemist when they met at a dinner party in

c1971. A friendship sparked by a love of good food and cooking led to the decision to start up their own restaurant. The two said that Australian diners were so lucky with inexpensive food compared to the rest of the world. A meal at a good restaurant in the United States would cost $100 and a so-so meal in Italy would cost $90, while a meal at Taylor's Restaurant was about $35.

However, the produce in Sydney could be better. Decent tomatoes and capsicums weren't always available, and the oil didn't taste the same and was very sweet. It wouldn't improve until the good produce currently grown in home gardens found its way into the markets. At the time, Berowra Waters Inn was considered Australia's best restaurant[216].

Figure 38 203-205 Albion St rear garden

In 1984, a glasshouse or conservatory was added to the back of the restaurant to capture the winter sun[217], while four open fireplaces added an extra touch of cosiness. A Permanent Conservation Order was applied to the property in 1986[218]. In 1992, they had a set price dinner menu at $38 for two courses, with desserts for $9[219].

Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia

Anne Taylor and Ian McCulloch operated the restaurant until 1996 when the building was sold to the Royal College of Pathologists, which had outgrown Durham Hall, and was converted for office use.

In 2005, wooden panels were installed between the existing columns of the front verandah to provide extra security. The most recent modification was a proposal in 2012 to remove the glasshouse and replace it with a new modern flat-roofed building[220].

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