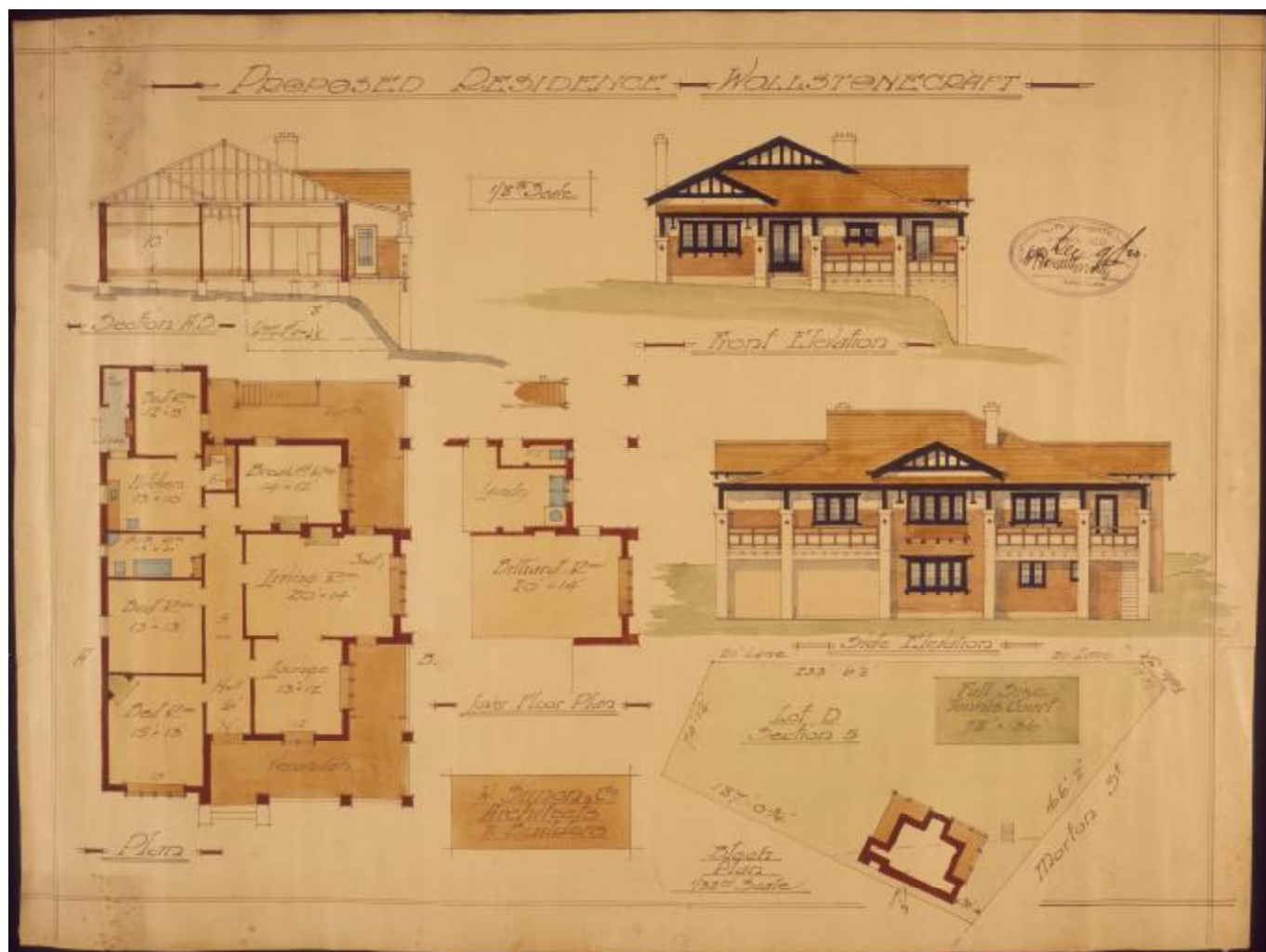# GETTING STARTED:
Finding out about your North Sydney house

North Sydney Heritage Centre

1st Floor
Stanton Library
234 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060

Phone: 02 9936 8400
Fax: 02 9936 8440

Email: infodesk@northsydney.nsw.gov.au
Webpage: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

1 Introduction

The North Sydney Council area contains a rich and diverse cultural heritage made up of historic buildings, structures and places, aboriginal and industrial sites, lookouts, streetscapes, urban patterns, parks and reserves.

These elements contribute to community cultural life, sense of place and identity. They form important tangible links to North Sydney's past that need to be conserved for future generations. Much of this valuable heritage is privately owned. *(Living with Heritage, fact sheet 2)*

This booklet has been prepared to help you trace the history of your North Sydney house, whether you are a homeowner, tenant, student, real estate agent, family historian or architect. Following the steps in this fact sheet should reveal when the house was built, in which architectural style, and for whom, as well as successive changes relating to the house, owners and occupants over time and whether the house ever had a name.

The guide has been arranged sequentially step by step to flesh out your house's past. Some steps may need to be used together or sequentially to be effective. The amount of information available on each house in the North Sydney area will vary from house to house.

Most of the research steps outlined in this fact sheet can be carried out at Stanton Library using the extensive resources of the David Earle Local Studies Collection and North Sydney Council Archives located within the North Sydney Heritage Centre. The guide also outlines additional avenues for research outside the Stanton Library and North Sydney Council, depending upon the level and type of information required and for what purpose.

North Sydney Heritage Centre

1st Floor
Stanton Library
234 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060

Phone: 02 9936 8400
Fax: 02 9936 8440

Email: infodesk@northsydney.nsw.gov.au

Specialist staff available to assist with information enquiries during the following hours:
                Mondays-Saturdays 1-5 pm

2 Preliminary Research

Preliminary research you can do before coming in to the North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library:

- make a list of what you already know about the house, including the suburb, street number (be aware that some streets have been renumbered), house name (house names were used for identification before numbering began, also new owners sometimes changed the name), deposited plan (DP)/lot number (a property may have more than one DP over time), estate name/section/lot number (some estates may be named after the original house, landmark or pioneer whilst others have grand names chosen by developers to attract buyers) and names of previous owners.

   TIP: *Some details such as DP number can be found on your rates notices from North Sydney Council or Sydney Water. Other lot and subdivision information may be on the land title you obtained when buying your house.*

- have a look at home in your own personal papers for sources of information such as certificates of title, sewer diagrams, zoning certificates and photographs of the house taken by you or by previous owners, building applications for the original house or any additions undertaken by you.

- take a close look at your house. Your house has been built in a style popular at a particular time and using materials and building technology available at that time. Note all features, details, materials and surroundings including the fence and garden. The appearance and style of your house will help you to broadly date it, i.e. 1910s rather than 1930s. Identify which architectural style best fits your place. Suggested reading: Apperley, R, et.al./**A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture** (Stanton Library, LH REF 720.9944/APP)*.*

- talk to your neighbours, previous owners or long standing residents of your neighbourhood. Who knows, they may know who built the house, for whom, and who lived there. They may also have photographs of your house!

- understand the history and development of the North Sydney area, especially local government. Very briefly, East. St. Leonards and St. Leonards Councils commenced operation in 1867 and Victoria in 1871. The three Boroughs amalgamated in 1890 to form the North Sydney Municipal Council (minus the Mosman area from 1893). See *Heritage Leaflet Series 2 "Local Government Comes to the North Shore".*

- understand laws governing building regulation. North Sydney Council gained powers under the 1906 Local Government Act to regulate the erection of buildings in the Council area from May 1909. Under Ordinance 42, 70 and 72 owners were required to lodge an application with Council to build including the application form, a block plan showing the approximate position of the proposed building or building works and the building plan(s). The Building Ordinances also required Council to keep a copy of the application and block plan, but did not require them to keep on file the architectural/building plans as these were returned to the applicant.

3 Webcat (library catalogue)

Stanton Library's catalogue can be accessed via the internet on the North Sydney Council web page at *www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au*

- Type in the name of your *street*, choose BROWSE and then select SUBJECT. If there is specific information on your house there will be a subject heading in the browse list for the street, suburb, State and house number, e.g. Bayview Street (McMahons Point, N.S.W.), no. 8
  The headings file alphabetically and then numerically. The catalogue lists books, maps, photographs, vertical files and oral histories. Take down information from the WEBCAT including title and call number. You may find references to the Buildings and Site File (LH REF ADD), Vertical File (LH REF VF), Picture File (LH REF PF), Colour Picture File (LH REF CPF), Postcards (LH REF PC), Map File (LH REF MF), Books/Reports (LH REF), Oral History (LH REF OH) and Subdivision Plans (LH REF SP).

Ask staff at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information Desk to get the material out for you. Remember you will need your Shorelink Library Card or other security to use this material outside rostered hours. Please note that LH REF items (books and reports) are available on the open shelves and you do not need to ask the staff for access.

4 Card Index

A lot of information can be sourced using the old card index.

- **search by street name then by house number in the drawers marked *Address Index*.** The drawers are arranged alphabetically by street name and within each street numerically by odd and even numbered addresses.

  The card index mainly has references to articles in newspapers (1983-2003). The newspapers are held on microfilm and are on open access located in the cabinet near the microfilm reader/printer.

- **search by street name in the *main alphabetical card index drawers*.** Make a note of details in the *Location, File/Vol etc* and *Item* columns. Ask staff at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information Desk for access to listed items

5 Subdivision Plans

What is a subdivision plan?

Subdivision plans were produced to advertise upcoming land sales and usually contain the name of the estate, size of lots, number of lots, lot numbers, date of auction, land title details, location plan and name of auctioneer, solicitor and surveyor for estate. They may also show any houses already built upon the land and the name of that house and sometimes the owner's name. The plans may help you to find the date of auction of the land upon which your house was later built.

- **Check the library's WEBCAT for *Subdivision Plans.*** Type in your street name *[street name] and maps* then select the *WORDS OR PHRASE* search

  View *details* to obtain the title of the plan and the call number - **LH REF SP /no.** Ask at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information Desk to access plan(s). Remember you will need your Shorelink Library Card or other security to use the material outside rostered hours

TIP
- we do not hold every subdivision plan produced
- we may not have a subdivision plan for that section or side of your street or even for that street
- ask Historical Services staff to search subdivision plans and subdivision files held at North Sydney Council

Left: *Subdivision plan advertising the sale by auction of part of the extensive grounds of Crows Nest House in 1933.*

6 Block Plans/Detail Sheets

What is a Block Plan?

Block plans/detail sheets were produced to show a range of information, usually for/by government departments.

The 1891 detail sheet series produced by the Lands Department is especially detailed. These show building outlines including steps, verandahs and bay windows, outbuildings including toilets, fences, tanks and wells, also house names (very occasionally). They also show creeks and other waterways, high water marks, rocks, bridges, sewers, tramways and foreshore reclamation lines.

The 1930s block plan set is particularly useful as it shows estate and subdivision information. It contains the names of Estates with section and lot numbers noted plus frontage and depth dimensions for each lot.

- Check the **Block Plan Series** stored on the shelves under the Local Studies Card Index. We hold series for the 1890s, 1930s, 1977, 1987 and 1995.

  Check each series beginning with the most recent set and comparing them with the earlier block plans. The level of information in each set will vary, but they may show the footprint of the building at that time, street numbers, strata numbers, DP number, estate name, lot numbers, section numbers, lot dimensions and topographical details.

- Use the plans to narrow down the date range of possible construction of your house. For instance if the building is outlined on the 1890s detail sheet then the house is obviously before 1891, whereas if there is no sheet covering your neighbourhood then your house was built after 1891 (no buildings were located in that area and consequently not surveyed for the plan series).
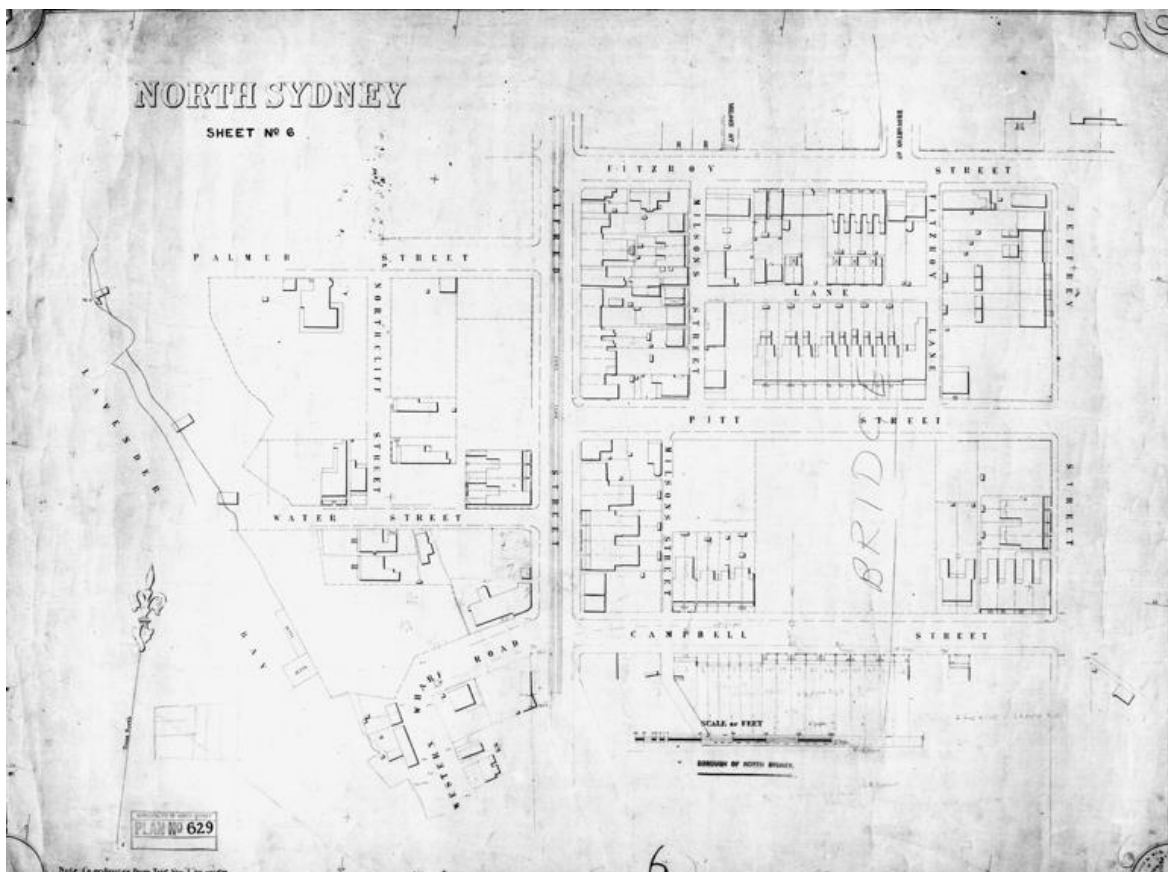
What are Rate and Valuation Books?

Rate Books were compiled by officers of the Council and are the official record of the annual payment of rates to Council by property owners to help defray the costs of essential local government services. *Valuation Books* are the records of the valuation of properties in a Municipality as a basis for the calculation of rates payable on properties. Originally valuers were employed directly by Councils but since 1908 (at least in North Sydney) valuations have been the responsibility of the N.S.W. Department of the Valuer General.

North Sydney has Rate *and/or* Valuation Books from 1867 to 1948. This date range includes the records of the three councils, East. St. Leonards, St. Leonards and Victoria that existed prior to 1890 when they amalgamated to form the Borough of North Sydney. We have *either* the rate or valuation book in each year for the period 1867-1907 in the North Sydney Heritage Centre and *only* the Triennial Valuation Books starting at 1908-1910 to 1925-1927. We also hold the Valuation Books 1927-1948 on microfilm. The Rate Books 1928-1939 are held in Archives but are rarely used for house research.

We do not have a complete set of books for every ward for every year. For instance we are missing the Triennial Valuation Books for Belmore Ward (1914-1916) and Kirribilli Ward (1911-1913). However the Rate and Valuation Books that we do hold are arranged on the shelves chronologically by year and alphabetically by ward name.

- **Determine what *ward your street lies in now and in the past by checking the ward and borough maps* on the shelf below the** Local Studies Card Index. For instance, if the house was built before 1890 you will need to know whether the street was in the Borough of East. St. Leonards, St. Leonards or Victoria (also the former two Councils were also divided into wards). Please note that ward boundaries have changed over time, and so too their name.

- **Now commence search in the *Rate and Valuation Books*,** working backwards from most recent book, eg, 1925-1927. For each year note on the attached form the following information-year, valuation/ assessment number, previous year assessment/rate number (if given), owner, occupant, lessee, description of property, estate and subdivision details and annual value (or UCV, ICV and annual value only shown in Triennial Valuation Books)

    Continue searching backwards year by year until you locate the rate or valuation book in which your property is described as *land* or *unfinished house* (*unf house or unf*).

What information can be found in the Rate and Valuation Books?

The rate and valuation books may contain the following information: -

a Assessment/rate number: a number given to each property. A property often did not receive the same number in successive assessments.

b Previous year's assessment/rate number: the assessment number of that property in the rate book for the previous year.

c Street name: written horizontally or vertically on the left-hand side of the page or in later books on the right hand side page (on the left).

d Street number: some of the early books do not record street numbers. Street numbers are recorded for one side of the street at a time. All of the odd numbers will be together, and all of the even numbers will be together. See TIPS below for a discussion on the problems associated with street number changes.

e House name: although this information was not recorded in any systematic way, it seems to have depended very much on the assessor/valuer. House names are more likely to be noted in the later triennial valuation books.

f Name of ratepayer: until 1879 rates were usually paid by whoever was responsible for paying the rent on a property. After 1879, the ratepayer could be the owner or the tenant. Surnames are sometimes spelt differently in different assessments.

g Name of owner: when the names of owners or ratepayers change the original entry is often crossed out and the new details written in.

h Description of property: this is usually limited to "house", "cottage", "hotel", "shop", or "land", etc. The limitations of these descriptions can be frustrating, especially if one suspects that a property may have had a use that is not recorded, for example as a lodging-house.

Sometimes **building materials** are noted, ie. *St* stone*, sl* slate*, w* wood*, sh* shingles *and l* iron*.

This column may also have number of storeys and number of rooms: this can change from one assessment book to the next and is expressed as a fraction, eg. 2/5 or 1/4 indicates a building of 2 floors and 5 rooms or 1 floor and 4 rooms. For example, in successive years the same property can be described as having 2 floors, then 3 floors, then 2 floors again. It is possible that some assessors counted basements and attics as floors and rooms, while others did not. In some cases the changes will reflect actual construction work, and this could be reflected in a significant increase in the value of the property.

i Estate/section/lot number: name of estate, section number and lot number if known.

j Annual value: expressed in pounds. The assessed value of the property, used by Council to set the rates payable by the owner. Later Valuation Books have a column each for the UCV (unimproved capital value ie. value of the piece of land), ICV (improved capital value ie. value of work carried out on the property) and Annual Value (calculation based upon both UCV and ICV). A sudden increase in value may indicate improvements.

k Remarks: this column has been used to note varying information, including the name of the person who paid the rates, the date rates were paid and the following or previous years assessment number. Also used by staff to note a subdivision of the property with date approved, certificate number, plan book and folio number. Also may note building works such as new house/cottage/residence/flats or garage, alterations (alts), additions (adds or addtns), verandah (ver), laundry or bathroom. The notation always includes the value of building work in pounds (£).

7 Rate and Valuation Books

RESEARCH TIPS

What happens if you cannot find your house listed in the 1925-27 Triennial Valuation Book?

- check if you are looking in the correct **ward**

- make sure that the **street name** has not changed (check *Naming North Sydney or library webcat*), and if it has consult the index at the front or back of the valuation book under the previous street name

- if your house is located on an intersection, it may have previously been listed under the cross street name

- if your property has or previously had two street frontages, it may be listed under the other street name

- if you still cannot find a listing it may mean that your house was built after 1927 (*Proceed to Step 8*)

What can I do if I am having trouble locating my house in the rate books before a certain date?

- During your search keep a note of the owners and occupants of houses on either side of the property in question, especially before 1890 when the arrangement of listings is unclear or changes. Compare entries using names, description of property, values and position of entries in sequence within the street and in the book

- You may have skipped a year going backwards and overlooked a change of ownership/ occupancy. **Do not skip years when searching**

- Your house may not have been built at the beginning of that year (rate books commence in February) and therefore not listed until the following year's book

- If you cannot find either a house or land owned by the person who you last identified, then look for a large block of land in the name of a different owner in that street or area

- The **street name may be different** or it may be grouped under a location such as Shell Cove or Neutral Bay, and in that instance look for through the rate book using the owners name

- Check adjoining wards as the **boundaries may have changed,** use the annotated ward maps in Local Studies

- Check **Naming North Sydney** for street name changes

- Check entries in nearby streets if you cannot find your street name

- Owners and occupants of each property are listed in sequence by **side of street**, with later books giving the intersecting streets named from end to end (if side of street not named on page, compare sequence of names with last year consulted)

- Do not rely on the **street numbers** listed as they may have changed. Street numbers are not used at all in the earlier book

- Look for the **street index** in North Sydney rate and valuation books from 1892. In some of the triennial valuation books the index is at the back of the book. **(folio number = page number)**

- **Pre-1891 rate books for the Boroughs of St. Leonards and Victoria** do not have a street index at the front of the book but **entries are arranged within streets** (sometimes the side of street is indicated)

- *East St. Leonards* rate books *1869-1882* are *arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the owners name* i.e. all "M" names in sequence before "N" names. Also be aware that the name in the occupants column is usually the owner/occupant of that property.

- *East St. Leonards* rate books *1887-1890* have a street index at front of each book, no index pages before that date.

If you are still having trouble please visit the North Sydney Heritage Centre Mondays-Saturdays 1-5 pm when specialist staff are available to help you with your research.

Extract from Valuation Book, Victoria Ward 1920-22. This view does not show all of the columns as entries run across a large double page to the right.

8 Council Archives

Stanton Library looks after North Sydney Council's archival records, which individually and more importantly as a whole, document the life and development of the North Sydney community and the role of Council.

Amongst the 100 or so accessions comprising the Archives are a number of key record series dealing with Council regulation of building activity and planning. These include:

- **Building Applications 1909-1921, 1924-1929**
- **Building Application Plans 1930-1949**
- **Building Registers 1912-1994**
- **Building Application Indexes 1920-1994**
- **Development Application Indexes 1981-1994**
- **Subdivision Applications 1914-1921, 1923-1926, 1940-1949**
- **Minute Books 1867 to date**
- **Correspondence in numbered folders 1903-1900**
- **Correspondence alphabetically arranged by send, 1909-1915, 1925-1955**

9 Building Application Files

What is a Building Application?

These are applications requiring Council permission to carry out building work under the Local Government Act - Ordinances 40, 70 or 71. They are accompanied by the Building Surveyors Reports. The 1909-1920 applications also have block plans attached. North Sydney is extremely fortunate to have surviving *Building Application Files for 1909-1921 and 1923-1929* plus an incomplete collection of approximately 3500 surviving *Building Application Plans 1930-1949*.

The applications lodged 1909-1929 are arranged by date and alphabetically by owner's name. The folders are labelled with the accession number, alphabet letter for the owner's surname and the year(s). Building applications are arranged within the folders chronologically/letter register number (1909-1921) or by Building Application number (1923-1929). The folders are stored in 27 type 1 archives boxes according to date and alphabetical order. No other application files have survived until the 1990s.

Building Applications 1909-1913 have been indexed by property address (street name plus lot numbers, if identified). *Building Applications 1914-1921 and 1923-1929* are also stored in the North Sydney Heritage Centre but are not indexed in the same manner.

- **Check the *Building Applications 1909-1913 Index*.** The card index is arranged alphabetically by street and within streets by lot or street numbers, if named. Each card has the accession number, folder number, box number, folder letter, folder year(s), name of owner, date received and letter register number.

  Please note all of these details down. Access to these files is only available by asking at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information Desk or by leaving your request with staff at the Information Desk on the ground floor. Your Shorelink Library Card or other security will be required to view these files.

EMMETT STREET		LOT 30 SEC 2
Location	File/Vol. etc.	Item
N.S.M.CA FOLDER 'D'		MISS DEVEREAUX
Acc 91/5.v 1912 – 1913		20.6.1913 13/2840
BOX 2		

10 Building Application Index

What are the Building Application indexes?

A series of volumes compiled by officers in the Planning Department of North Sydney Council as a finding aid to the Building Registers (see next step). These indexes are the principal method of locating a Building Application number. The indexes cover the date range 1920-1994. The books are microfilmed and are available to search in the North Sydney Heritage Centre.

What information does the Building Application Index contain?

The Building Application Indexes usually contain the following information -

- **owner**
- **builder,** sometimes the name listed is that of the architect
- **number in building register**, expressed as a pair of numbers divided by a slash, for instance *25/201 or 47/144 or 36/29*. The number before the slash is the year, for instance *25 (1925), 47 (1947) or 36 (1936).* The number after the slash is the application number in that year, for instance 25/201 is the 201st application received by Council in 1925, 47/144 is the 144th application lodged in 1947 and 36/29 is the 29th application received in 1936
- **plan file number,** number allocated to each plan though never used in research process
- **remarks**, usually the lot or street number and occasionally the building or organisation name

- **Check the *Building Application Indexes 1920-1994 (microfilm)*** using the street name and the lot or street number. Select the microfilm reel comprising the desired date range and scroll through looking for your street name, then look through list for your street number or lot number. Note down the information from each of the columns, especially the *'number in building register'*

- continue searching through *Building Application Indexes* looking for listings for your house *Now proceed to Step 11.*

TIPS

- there may be two volumes per date range
- the microfilm may have multiple date ranges, so check the spine of the microfilm box to check what date ranges are held on that reel
- there is an alphabetical sequence by owners name at the beginning of book 1 of the 1929/40, 1940/54 and 1955/1960 indexes so scroll through the reel past the A-Z owners index to locate the street name index

11 Building Registers

+What is a Building Register?

The North Sydney Council Registers of Building date from 1912-1994 and are a chronological record of all Building Applications lodged with North Sydney Council under the Local Government Act - Ordinances 40, 70 and 71. The Building Register records the decision of Council for every application lodged, i.e. approved, withdrawn for amendment, not approved.

What information does the Building Register hold?

Building Registers may hold the following information -

a date received plans, etc., month and day

b building application number, each application received is given a sequential number from 1 onwards each year

c fees paid, expressed in pounds or dollars

d applicant, owner and builder's name, sometimes the builder's name is an architect

e estimated value, value of building work expressed in pounds or dollars

f description of building, very brief and basic description of proposed work

g street or road, name of street

h section/lot/frontage/depth/estate, may be used to note name of estate, section and lot number but rarely, if ever, used to note frontage and depth measurements

i date presented to Council, usually date of Council meeting

j visited (trenches/D.P.C./Floors/Final), dates of visits to site of development, if required

k decision of Council, whether approved, withdrawn for amendment or not approved

l date plans etc. returned, date applicant collected one of the two sets of plans lodged with Council after decision has been made

m signature of person receiving plans and copy of building notices under ord'n., signature of the person collecting one of the two sets of plans lodged with Council

There are 24 bound volumes comprising the **Building Registers** 23 May 1912 - December 1994 sequence. We also hold the **Development Registers** January 1988 - December 1994 in two bound volumes. These contain the application number, date received, address of property, description of building, owner, applicant and decision of council.

- **Now commence your search of the *Building Registers*** on microfilm in the North Sydney Heritage Centre using the **number(s) in the Building Register** obtained from the Building Application Indexes (previous step 10).

  Select the microfilm reel containing the desired year(s), scroll through until you find the application number located on far left of left facing page You can make copies from the microfilm. For assistance with the reader/printer please ask at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information desk or you can take notes from the microfilm.

11 Building Registers

TIPS

- although *Building Registers* begin in 1912, they are not allocated a sequential Building Application number until 1920 when they commence the *Index to Building Applications*

- look for the year written at the top of the page

- multiple volumes of the building registers are microfilmed chronologically and so microfilms may contain more than volume per roll - check the box for date ranges on that reel

- the registers are handwritten and some details may be difficult to read

Extract from Register of Building 1912. Prior to 1920 the Building Applications were not numbered consecutively as they were received in Council.

12 Building Application Plans

What are Building Applications Plans?

This series contains architectural plans submitted to Council for the purpose of approval of building activity. Since the introduction of building laws for local government, Ordinance 40, 70 and 72, owners of property have been required to lodge an application with Council if they wished to do building work on their property - e.g. erect a new building, carry out alterations and additions, build a garage, construct a swimming pool, etc.

Building Application Plans 1930 - 1949

We hold an Incomplete collection of plans (approximately 3500) lodged during this period and which have survived in hardcopy form. Amongst the 3500 plans are hand coloured architects drawings, blueprints and crude hand drawn plans by owner/builders. The collection represents building applications for all types of building work covered by Ordinances 40, 70 and 72 - new and existing houses, flats, commercial buildings, churches, schools, hotels, garages, service stations, alterations and additions, etc.

The collection is microfilmed *and* digitised and is available to search in digital form via the North Sydney Council webpage at http://www.photosau.com/StantonBuildingPlans/

- Search *Building North Sydney* using the street name and result in a list of BA numbers. Show items as *half size* to view the record and choose *full size* to show the high resolution image of the plan

Each plan record contains the following fields -
- **B.A. number** pair of numbers as in Building Register, e.g. 30/277 or 42/40
- **street name**
- **street number** or lot number
- **suburb**
- **proposed work**
- **number of drawings comprising application** especially if part of a set
- **property name** name of house/flats/business
- **owner**
- **architect**
- **builder**
- **date received**
- **estimated value of work** expressed in pounds
- **decision of Council** approved, withdrawn for amendment, not approved
- **roll number** reels 2-5
- **drawing** sequential number allocated in order on microfilm reel

13 Minute Books

What information does the Council Minutes hold?

Minutes are the summary of municipal business conducted at meetings of the Councillors and are collated in bound volumes.

Council Minutes generally include notes of -

- which aldermen/councillors were present
- election of the mayor
- correspondence received and sent (from individuals and other organisations such as progress associations)
- reports submitted by Council officers about what they have been doing
- discussion about local issues of concern to the Council
- decisions reached about particular matters including regarding street naming, building applications, subdivisions, road works and local infrastructure

What Minute Books do we hold?

North Sydney Council holds a complete set of Minutes from 1890 to date (including the minutes of committees) plus the minutes of the earlier Councils, East. St. Leonards, St. Leonards and Victoria. The minutes are not very detailed and do not record every word spoken during discussion amongst the Councillors. The minute books record meetings in chronological order, and prior to 1922 are not indexed.

Minute Books 1869 to 1922 have been indexed by subject and correspondence, see next page.

The Minute Books are stored in the Archives Rooms, 3rd floor, 1 James Place. Access only by appointment with the Historical Services staff or leave the details on the enquiry form at the Local Studies Desk

TIPS

- Minutes are a very brief record, mostly a summary of subject and the decision of the Council
- Look out for letter register numbers (and date registered) of Council Officers' reports and Correspondence as these letters and reports may have survived and are located elsewhere in North Sydney Council's Archives, which see also
- not every individual or organisation wrote to Council
- all Building Applications decisions are recorded in the minutes, but most listed in monthly list of approvals. Some B.A.'s discussed separately and in more detail

Historical Services staff have compiled a card index to the Minute Books of East. St. Leonards, St. Leonards and Victoria Boroughs from their inception dates to 1890. The Minutes of North Sydney Council are also indexed from 1890 to 1922, including the minutes of the Works and General Purposes Committees in the same period.

After 1922 the Minute Books have an internal index created by staff of the Council.

The *Minute Book card index* is located in the North Sydney Heritage Centre and is arranged alphabetically by the names of persons, places, organisations and subjects. It is designed as a Location File and so gives the date range of the bound volume, page number (s) and occasionally a brief description of the minute.

- **Now commence your search in the *Minute Book Index*** by using the name of the owner, name of the builder, name of the architect (if known) and/or the street name. Note down the details from the card including Location, File/Vol. Etc. and Item

  Please make an appointment with Historical Services Staff to view original correspondence files or leave your details on the enquiry form at the Information Desk in the North Sydney Heritage Centre

NICHOLSON STREET

Location	File/Vol. etc.	Item
M.B.	N.S.1897-1900	p.67,
M.B.	N.S. 1903-1907	p.15, 62, 149, 335-336
M.B.	N.S. 1907-1910	p.198, 199, 352
M.B.	N.S. 1910-1913	p.451
M.B.	N.S. 1913-1915	p.130, 446, 460

Sample Minute Book index card showing page references and volume dates commencing in 1897.

14 Correspondence Files

What are correspondence files?
Includes sent and received correspondence, internal memos, Council Officers' reports, Council Committee's reports, pre-1924 Building Applications, internal memos, some Government Gazettes and subdivision applications.

Correspondence files are a possible source of information on your house as the owner or a agent may have corresponded with Council on issues relevant to the house and neighbourhood.

- *NSMCA 91/1 - Correspondence in numbered folders parts A and B, 1903-1909*
  The earliest surviving sequence of correspondence, North Sydney Municipal Council Archives, Accession 91/1 consists of correspondence in numbered folders 1903-1909 arranged in consecutively numbered folders in type 1 archive boxes. Within folders the correspondence is chronological and contents number. The correspondence (including the reports) is stamped with Council's received stamp recording folder number, contents number and date received. Folders 1-500 Acc. 91/1 Part A and Folders 1-500 in Acc. 91/1 Part B have been indexed by subject and correspondent

  To view these files please make an appointment with Historical Services staff or visit the staff in the North Sydney Heritage Centre.

Historical Services staff have compiled an index to this correspondence. The card index is arranged alphabetically by subject and correspondent. Each card records the accession number box number, folder number, brief summary of subject of correspondence and the date received.

- **Now commence your search in the *Correspondence Index*** by using the name of the correspondent (owner, builder, architect , estate agent, solicitor, organisation), estate name, street name or subject. Note down the details from the card including Location, File/Vol. Etc. and Item.

- *Correspondence alphabetically arranged by sender, 1909-1915 and 1925-1955*
  North Sydney Municipal Council Archives, Accession 91/2 consists of received letters with Council's outgoing reply arranged alphabetically in 205 type 1 archive boxes. It includes sent and received correspondence, council officers' reports are attached in some instances and a very small number of attached folded plans. Correspondence received has been stamped with Councils' received stamp recording Letter Register number and date received. Generally the correspondence has been filed in a logical and obvious manner.

  To view these files please make an appointment with staff at the North Sydney Heritage Centre Information Desk.

- *Correspondence files, 1955 to date*
  For access to correspondence files after 1955 please make an appointment with Document Management Services at North Sydney Council or make an application for a file perusal by using the application form either on the Council webpage or available at the Customer Services Counter

There are a range of other printed resources which can be used to further identify your house, add to its history or place it in the context of architecture/building activity at the time it was built. Some of the best sources include:

- *Sydney Telephone Directory* is similar to *Sands' Sydney and N.S.W. Directory* in that it is a list of the heads of households possessing a home telephone. Arranged alphabetically by surname then initials (not full first name), address and telephone number

  - be aware that not every household had a telephone, hence it is an incomplete listing
  - search the telephone directory only if you know the name of the owner or occupant of your house
  - street numbers may have changed
  - does not give flat numbers at street address

- *Electoral rolls* are used to find when person(s) who owned or occupied your house are listed and for how long, as well as their occupation. Electoral Rolls covering the North Sydney Council area are available either in microfiche or hardcopy from 1903 to present. The electoral rolls are arranged alphabetically by subdivision/ward name and then alphabetically by names of persons. We hold electoral rolls as follows -

  - Commonwealth electoral rolls, 1903–28 (microfiche) *LH REF MFC 324.944/AUS*
  - Joint Commonwealth and State electoral rolls 1930 + (microfiche) *LH REF MFC 324.944 AUS*
  - State Electoral Rolls (hardcopy) *LH REF 324.944/NEW*
  - Commonwealth electoral rolls, 1974-1982 (hardcopy) *LH REF 324.94/AUS (1996* LH REF 324.944/AUS)
  - Municipal electoral rolls, 1977 to date (hardcopy) *LH REF 324.944/NOR*

- *Newspapers*

  - Scan *newspapers* for information such as building tenders, sales, rentals and building reports. Stanton Library holds the **Sydney Morning Herald 1823-1900** on microfilm in the North Sydney Heritage Centre. A complete set of SMH is held at the State Library of NSW. Please note in the 20th century there was a Building column published each Tuesday, but this is most likely to list architect designed buildings only

  - Local newspapers such as the Mosman Daily and North Shore Times are indexed in the card index.

16 Sands' Directory

Sands' is a directory of residents produced by a commercial firm, like a telephone book, with residents name and address, but without phone numbers. It is organised by years. For house history use the following Directory sections -

- **Suburban Directory** is a list of head of households within each local government area and then arranged alphabetically by street name and then householders in street order. The Suburban Directory includes street name, side of street (e.g. east or west, north or south), cross streets, occupiers name (sometimes lists their occupation/trade), and street number or house name
- **Alphabetical Directory** is an alphabetical list of all head of households in Sydney and suburbs

- **Trades Directory** is similar to our current Yellow Pages and is arranged alphabetically by name of trade and then alphabetical by business name

  The Directory is available on microfiche in the North Sydney Heritage Centre. Two microfiche/film reader/printers are also located there.

- use the Sands' Directory in conjunction with other resources already discussed, as they are generally more reliable. **First consult the *Streets Index, Index to Suburbs or Trades Index* (where available)**

  These indexes are usually located on the first fiche of each volume following the Table of Contents pages. *The indexes will give you the page number for a particular street, suburb or trade*. Page numbers for particular volumes appear in the Title Heading on each fiche

- it is best to look at your house and several houses on either side of it. A good idea is to draw up a table to record the information, starting with the latest edition (1932-33) and work progressively backwards. If your house is in the Directory in 1906 and not there in 1905, then it is presumed to have been built in 1905.

TIPS

- The North Sydney Council area is listed in the **Suburban Directory** under a variety of local government names in the period 1858-1933 -
  - 1858-1870 use **North Shore** (residents listed alphabetically)
  - 1871 and 1873 use **City Street Directory** (alphabetical by street)
  - 1875-1891 use either **East. St. Leonards, St. Leonards** or **Victoria** (alphabetical by street)
  - 1892-1933 use **North Sydney** (alphabetical by street)

- Sands' was published in *January* of each year from information collected in the previous October. Thus information may be up to **15 months out of date**

- Sands' does not include additional details such as Certificate of Title information. Therefore, if there are no street numbers you are dependent upon the street pattern to confirm which house is yours

- **street numbers** are not always available, and when available may not match present street numbers
- Sands' was **not issued** 1860, 1862, 1872, 1878 and 1881

Death and Tax Records

Supreme Court of NSW Probate Index

- The Supreme Court of NSW Probate Division has published an *index to probates* granted in NSW between 1800 and 1985. The probate index shows Probate packet number, series number, name of deceased, residence, date of death and legal instrument. This index is available on microfiche in the North Sydney Heritage Centre.

  Note down the details from the fiche. You can now visit the Supreme Court of NSW and apply via an application form on level 5 for a copy of the will itself.

Probate Packet 1817-1941

Alternatively you can apply to view the *Probate Packet (1817-1941)* at State Records, Kingswood or City. The information in a probate packet can vary considerably. Examples of documents that may be in a packet include:

- the last will and testament, and any codicils (additions or revocations to the will). The will in the probate packet is considered by the Court to be the only legal document.
- accompanying documents may also include:
    - inventory of assets of the estate
    - affidavits of death and copy of the death certificate
    - oath of office of the executor
    - affidavits sworn by the executor
    - executor's petition for probate
    - affidavits of attesting witnesses
    - notices of motion for administration
    - any application or lodgement documents including notice of motion for probate and address for service
    - orders relating to the filing of accounts, or renunciation of probate by executor.

For more information see State Records information leaflet, *Archives in Brief 84, Probate Packets*.

Deceased Estate Files

- *Deceased Estate Files* are held at State Records, Kingswood. The contents of files may vary considerably, some may include the house contents down to the furniture in each room. Consult the State Records information leaflet , *Archives in Brief 29 Deceased Estate Files 1880-1958* for further information about these files.

Intestate Estate Files

- *Intestate Estate Files 1821-1913* are also held at State Records, Kingswood. For further information see the State Records Information leaflet *Archives in Brief 53 Curator of Intestate Estates Case papers*.

Insolvency Files 1842-1887/Bankruptcy Records 1888-1929

- If the owner of your house went bankrupt, a similar list of their property may have been prepared and held at State Records. After 1929 these records become a Commonwealth function and files are accordingly held by Australian Archives. For further information about these records please see the State Records information leaflet ***Archives in Brief 58 Bankruptcy and insolvency records.***

Architecture and Building Magazines

- **Search through architecture and building magazines at Stanton Library and State Library of NSW** for articles on specific houses, tips for building, and overview of work by selected architects, tender information or features articles on architect designed homes. Useful journal titles to consult are -

  - ***Architecture Australia/Architecture in Australia,*** *1940 to date*
  - ***Building/ Building and Engineering,*** *1907-1952*
  - ***Australasian Builder and Contractor's News***, *1887-1895,*
  - ***Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand***, *1885-1905,*
  - ***Construction*** began as a weekly supplement to *Building* and contains lists of tenders (accepted and open) with place, description, architect and builder named. In later years the tender notices name the street as well as suburb.
  - ***Decoration and Glass***, *1935-1949* is an excellent, well illustrated journal featuring the best of art deco and inter-war design throughout Australia. Features houses, hotels, shops, factories, churches, schools, etc. Check the Contents pages of each issue as it is not indexed
  - ***NSW Contract Reporter and Prices Current List***, *1899-1984* similar to *Construction* with tenders called for building and engineering construction and supplies column arranged by place name, description of works, date and name of architect calling for tenders

- **Check** *AAPI (1910-1983)*, LH REF 720.16/AUS or online database **ARCH (1984 to date)** to locate references to Australian architecture and building magazines

  - *AAPI* is an alphabetical by subject index. For houses use the subject heading A*rchitecture, Domestic, New South Wales, Sydney* or search by *architects name* (if known)
  - *ARCH* is a keyword searchable index on the AUSTROM cd-rom. Search by *architects name, house name or suburb name*

18 Contacts

Here are some of the main public and private bodies to contact about sources on the history of houses, people and places. It is best to check for current address, collections and fees and access conditions before visiting them.

Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (Library and Research Collections)
The Mint
Macquarie Street Sydney 2000
Phone: 96928366
Visit: www.hht.org.au

National Archives of Australia
120 Miller Road
Chester Hill NSW 2162
Phone: 96450110
Visit: www.naa.org.au

National Trust of Australia (NSW)
Observatory Hill, Watson Road
The Rocks Sydney 2000
Phone:92580123
Visit: www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
35 Regent Street
Chippendale
NSW 2001
Phone: 1300 655 236
Visit: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au

North Shore Historical Society
PO Box 325
Cammeray NSW 2062
Phone: 99551921 (President)

Royal Australian Historical Society
History House
133 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 92478001
Visit: www.rahs.org.au

RAIA (NSW Chapter)
Tusculum
3 Manning Street
Potts Point NSW 2011
Phone: 93562955
Visit: www.raia.com.au

State Library of New South Wales (including Mitchell Library)
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 92731414
Visit: www.sl.nsw.gov.au

State Records
143 O'Connell Street
Kingswood NSW 2747
Phone: 96731788
Visit: www.records.nsw.gov.au

Supreme Court of New South Wales
184 Phillip Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 92308111

COUNCIL CONTACTS

Stanton Library

For heritage information including listed places, architectural/building books and magazines, Council history and records, and North Sydney history, buildings, people and suburbs

234 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Phone: 99368400

North Sydney Council

For file and plan perusals, purchasing copies of Council plans, maps and aerial photographs, meet with the Conservation Planner or planning staff, etc.

200 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Phone: 99368000