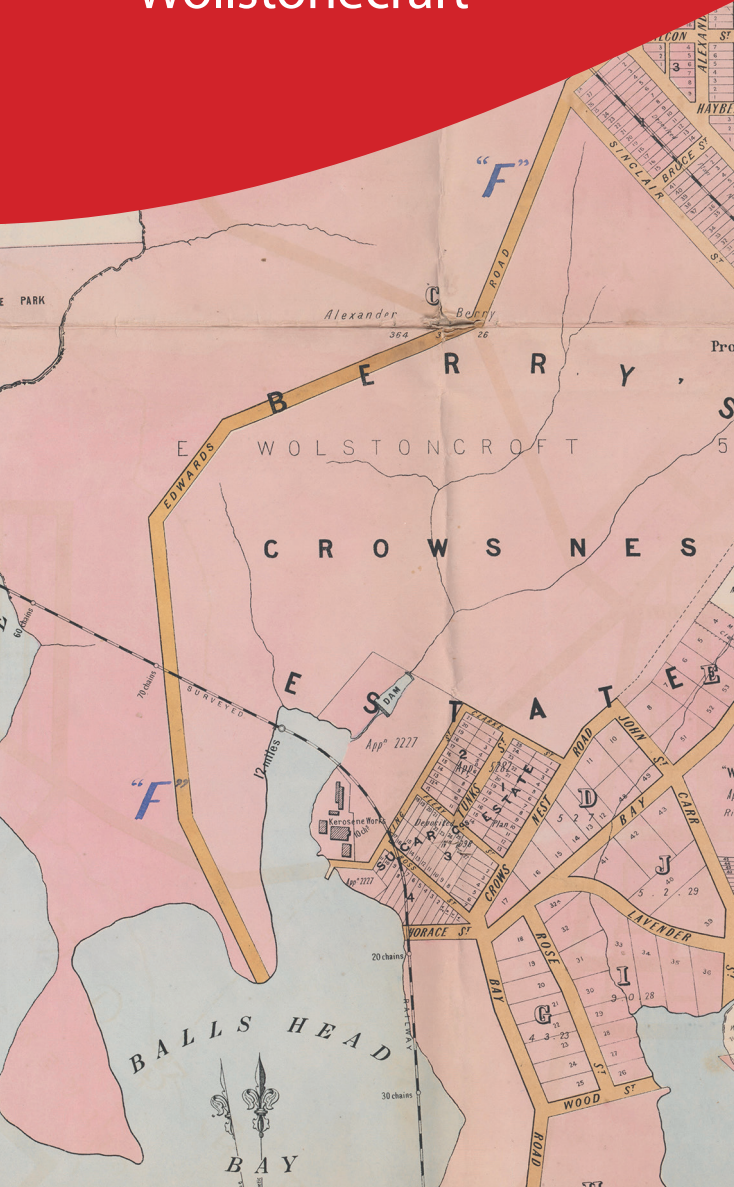


North Sydney History Walks

Wollstonecraft





North Sydney History Walks

North Sydney has a remarkable number of beautiful and interesting historical sites to visit, despite the many changes that affected the area in the 20th century and the ongoing pressure of development in more recent times.

These maps were created with the aim of introducing locals and visitors to the history of North Sydney, and in the belief that walking a landscape is the best way to get to know it. The focus is on architecture, even more than people and events, for buildings provide the most accessible means of interacting directly with the past. They survive where most other examples of 'material culture' from the past – steam trains, corsets and gaslights for example – do not. Looking at the design and detail of a building and understanding it in its environment can provide insights into how people lived, what they thought and how things have changed. Of course, knowing who lived there can also be fascinating.

These are 'circle walks' which will bring the walker back to, or near to, the point of departure. The closest public transport access points, bus, train or ferry, are indicated. Public toilets are also marked. Walkers are of course urged to cross roads at dedicated crossing points or otherwise take due care. Take water, sturdy shoes and sun-protection. An indication of accessibility, degree of difficulty and length is given for each walk. North Sydney's hilly topography means that not all walks are entirely wheel chair or pram accessible. The presence of steps is also indicated.

These walks were researched and plotted by North Sydney Council Historian Dr Ian Hoskins with the assistance of Historical Services Staff. Susan Wade of the North Shore Historical Society provided valuable suggestions. We also would like to acknowledge the work of Bill Orme and Graham Spindler in promoting walking in North Sydney, and thank Sydways for permission to use their maps.

For more information on North Sydney's history visit the Heritage Centre, Level 1, Stanton Library, 234 Miller Street North Sydney, visit the website www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au or email localhistory@northsydney.nsw.gov.au



Wollstonecraft

Length: 3.2 kms

Difficulty: Medium. The walk includes bush track, steep inclines and steps

Introduction:

Wollstonecraft sits on the western boundary of the North Sydney Local Government Area. The territorial boundary of the Cammeraygal people, who lived here for many thousands of years before Europeans arrived, is further west on the Lane Cove River. Carvings on Berry Island are evidence of their presence. The suburb takes its name from Edward Wollstonecraft who was granted 524 acres (212 hectares) here in 1821, an estate which passed to his partner Alexander Berry after his death in 1832. As the land was only subdivided from the late 19th century, its original architectural character reflected the middle and upper class taste at the time which was predominately for English Revival styles. The large lots attracted developers in the 1960s who took advantage of new 'Flat Codes' to build medium and high density apartment blocks. Much of Shirley Road and all of Belmont Avenue were totally remade. Wollstonecraft has one of the earliest Meriton developments in Sydney - No. 98 Shirley Road, built in 1970. The company became one of Australia's largest developers.

This walk will help you explore the Aboriginal and natural history of the area, while tracing the transformation of the suburb from a showcase of salubrious houses and gardens to a place of apartments and units in little more than 50 years.

1) 46 Shirley Road

Ben Ledi was the first dwelling built on this section of Shirley Road. It was completed in 1896, when this thoroughfare was called both Coolangatta Road, after Alexander Berry's south coast estate, or Edwards Road after Edward Wollstonecraft. At the time, there were no houses between here and Berry Island. *Ben Ledi* anticipated much of the development that followed over the next 30 years in style and size. As was common for houses of this scale there were servants' quarters. Ben Ledi is a Scottish Mountain. There were once views to the Blue Mountains from here.

2) 25 Shirley Road

The *Carpenter House* is named after Edith Carpenter who owned and lived in the property from 1917 through the

1920s. Then it was called *Coomoeraki*. The house was built around 1911. The Royal Society for the Welfare of Babies and Mothers (Tresillian), established in New South Wales in 1918, bought the property and opened it as a residential facility in 1940.

3) **42 Shirley Road**

Cranley was built in 1916 for Mary Gowing, a member of the well-known department store family. The Gowings built several properties in Shirley Road at this time. *Cranley* is a good example of Arts and Crafts design with its dramatic and varied roof planes and the half-timbered frontage. Despite its individual design it appears to be the work of builder, James Leckie, rather than an architect.

4) **40 Shirley Road**

Much-altered, this house was built in 1914 for shipping agent Gustav Augenson and his wife Elizabeth and called *St Olaf*. The name is probably a reference to the 11th century Norwegian King who was later canonised.

5) **36 Shirley Road**

This is another house in the Arts and Crafts style. It was built in 1914 for public servant Arthur Wood and originally called *Coila*. That is also the name of a lake on the far south coast of New South Wales.

6) **32 Shirley Road**

Originally called *Ganton*, this house was built by, or for, bricklayer Henry Gould in 1914. The stone elements are a good example of the ongoing appreciation of Sydney sandstone in the age of brick.

7) **24 Shirley Road**

San Marco is one of the most interesting houses on Shirley Road. It was built for the Gowing family. It is another example of Arts and Crafts architecture and was also probably built by James Leckie with a design strongly influenced by contemporary English garden suburb housing. Curiously, the name is decidedly un-English. The house was originally painted white.

8) **22 Shirley Road**

This house was built in 1916 for Cecil Waine, the year he married Florence Christmas of Neutral Bay. The Waine family were frequently mentioned in the social pages. Cecil was the son of Major John Waine, a wealthy builder

from Kirribilli. The house was designed in the Arts and Crafts style by architects Halligan and Wilton. Its original name was *Millefleur*, a French word referring to the massing of floral imagery in medieval paintings. The name was changed to *Firenze* after grazier Andrew Forrester bought the house in 1922.

9) 9 Shirley Road

This house was completed in 1925, although with its combination of brick and stone, and its cross-hatched leaded windows, it appears to have been inspired by *Ganton* at No. 32 built a decade earlier.

10) 7 Shirley Road

Solicitor John Williams Maund and Georgina Maund had this excellent example of a Californian bungalow built in 1918. The striking horizontal forms immediately set the house apart from others in the street even though the style of architecture owed something to the English Revival that influenced others in Shirley Road. For instance, the traditional half-timbered triangular gable of English Revival houses is suggested here by free-floating timber beams. Although older than No. 9 it is far more modern in appearance.

11) 1 Shirley Road

This large Californian Bungalow was built in 1925-26. It is noteworthy as it survives in its original garden setting and thereby still exemplifies the spaciousness of the lots on Shirley Road, many of which to the north have been subdivided. The house was called *Dunaird* in the 1920s possibly after *Dunaird House*, a large Victorian-era manor in Scotland near the town of Birnam made famous by William Shakespeare in *Macbeth*.

12) 8 Shirley Road

This house was first listed in Council's records in 1900, making it the second dwelling built along Shirley Road. *Te Waari* is a Maori name. The early history of the house is associated with the Muston and Ward families. It was carefully restored by the heritage architectural firm Clive Lucas Stapleton in 2008-09.

13) Berry Island

Once one of the 14 islands of Sydney Harbour, Berry Island was joined permanently to the mainland by a narrow causeway after it was dedicated for public recreation in 1926. The large lawn area was created in the early 1970s. As part of the Berry Estate it was included in the extraordinary land swap in 1906 that saw this foreshore returned to public ownership in exchange for the construction of a hospital at the south coast town of Berry. Though criss-crossed with tracks by the 1940s, when a wartime searchlight was installed in the centre, the island was never cleared and remains a significant area of remnant harbour forest, dominated by Sydney Red Gum or *Angophora costata*. Signage along the Gadyan Track tells the story of Aboriginal occupation of the island.

14) Badangi Reserve

This land was also part of the Berry Estate. While a road was planned from Tryon Avenue to the foreshore and an area on the ridge was cleared, possibly during World War Two, it has been even less disturbed than Berry Island. There is evidence of some commercial activity on the eastern side. The area was acquired by the State Planning Authority in 1969 and subsequently given to North Sydney Council to manage. A Council Bushcare group began remediation work in 1999. The area was named Badangi Reserve in 2002. *Badangi* is an Aboriginal word for oyster. Interestingly, Oyster Cove was an early European name for the foreshore. The reserve is a significant area for its Sydney Red Gums, Peppermints and Red Bloodwoods. Coachwood trees and Lillypillys run along the creek line.

15) Former industrial sites and Wondakiah

Originally this was a tidal flat with a stream. It was probably used by Aboriginal people to gather shellfish. This small indentation in Balls Head Bay was called Oyster Bay and Wollstonecraft Bay. There was a small sugar refinery here in the 1850s which was replaced by a kerosene works. The name Kerosene Bay consequently appeared on some maps. The creek was dammed for one or other of these enterprises. The North Shore Gas Company opened a coal gas works here in 1917 and filled in some of the Bay. The Company was taken over by AGL in 1980 and the works closed in 1983. The large development *Wondakiah* replaced most of the gas works buildings.

16) 1-11 Bridge End

Bridge End is so-named because of the Bridge across the railway. This cul-de-sac was subdivided with large lots in 1911. Many of the residences built here were subsequently occupied by North Shore Gas Company employees. Most or all were demolished with the closure of the gasworks in 1983. These townhouses are part of the Villiers complex completed between 1986 and 1996. It is described as a 'gated community' because of its controlled access and a 'resort-style development' with shared facilities such as tennis courts and gym. Like *Wondakiah*, it is typical of the dwellings created during the first wave of de-industrialisation around Sydney Harbour in the 1980s and 1990s which made available large sites for redevelopment. The postmodern design makes reference to classical or Georgian architecture with triangular pediments.

17) Belmont Avenue

The south side of Belmont Avenue was subdivided in 1913. Existing Shirley Road properties backed on to the north side of the avenue. By the 1930s this was a landscape of large homes and gardens much as existed on Shirley Road. A stone and brick bungalow with tennis court called *Kamilaroi*, after the Aboriginal group from northern New South Wales, once stood where No. 9 and No. 9a are today. Within 50 years *Kamilaroi* and every other house fronting and backing Belmont Avenue had been demolished and replaced by apartment buildings.

18) 19 Belmont Avenue

The house that once existed here was a 12-room Georgian Revival dwelling designed by architect CFB Howard. Designed in 1930, it had flagstone paths at the front and several balconies to enjoy the bushland and harbour views. There were five bedrooms including the maid's quarters located downstairs between the dining room and the kitchen. The double garage was unusual even in this affluent area.

19) 27 Belmont Avenue

Elouera, which once stood here, was a two-storey cottage built in 1914 in the Arts and Crafts style. It had a sandstone base with an upper rear balcony overlooking the bushland behind.

20) 35 Belmont Avenue

The house that once stood here was a two-storey English Revival house in the Tudor style. The architectural plan shows a half-timbered upper storey with cross-hatched leaded windows. It was built in 1928.

21) 67 Shirley Road

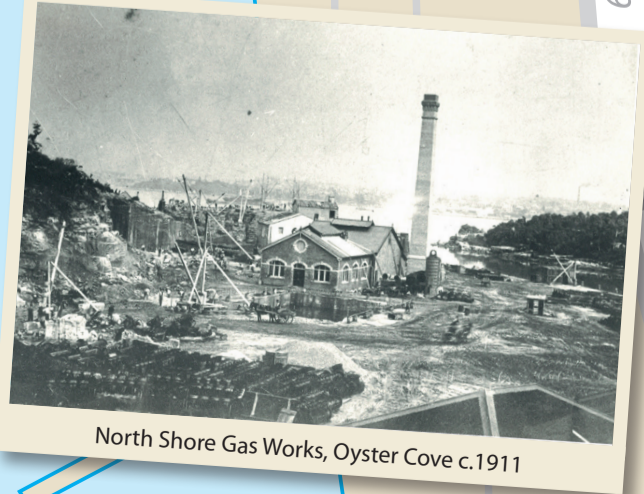
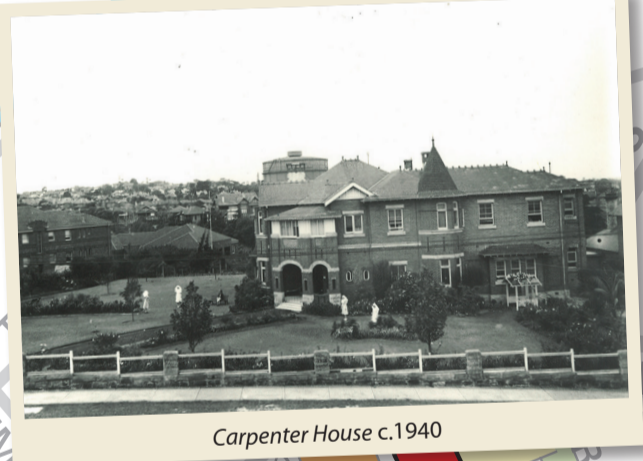
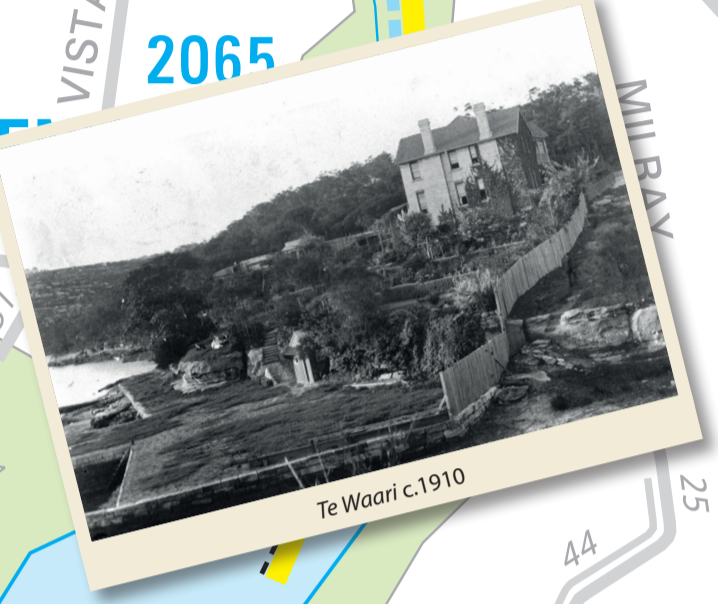
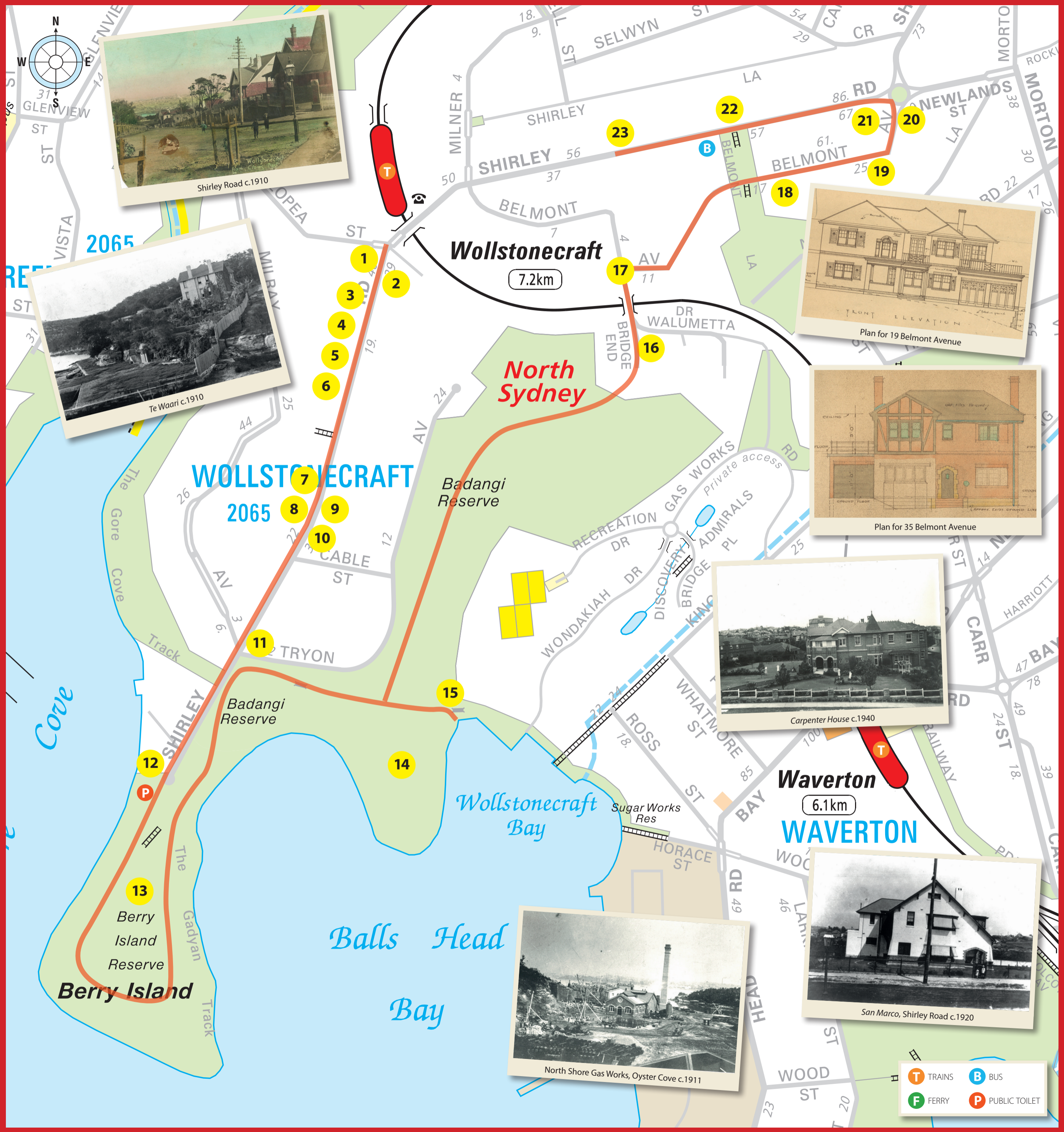
This was the site of *Ilkley*, a 10-room house built for Eleanor and John Cole in 1907. John was a wool broker. The name of the house may have had a connection to the large sheep station *Ilkley* near Cloncurry in Queensland. Ilkley is also a place in Yorkshire, England. The house was as large as the *Carpenter House* and probably similar in appearance. It was surrounded by a tennis court and extensive gardens backing on to Belmont Avenue.

22) 74 and 80 Shirley Road

This side of Shirley Road was designated high-rise up to eight storeys in Council's 1965 Residential Flat Building Code. The height was deemed permissible because tall buildings on high ground did not block the view of others. These two eight-storey blocks were designed in 1968 by north shore-based architect JF Poiner for Skilton P/L. They are among the largest developments in the area. The X-shaped footprint maximised the number of units and the views from each. Originally identical, the two blocks have been differently refurbished in subsequent years.

23) 62 Shirley Road

Built in 1906 this house was owned by Alfred Roy Hordern, a member of the well-known retailing Hordern family, from 1921 to 1926. The house may have been used as a dental surgery and residence after it was purchased by Ernest Wallace, dentist, in 1926. It is one of the last early 20th century homes left on this part of Shirley Road.



- T TRAINS
- B BUS
- F FERRY
- P PUBLIC TOILET