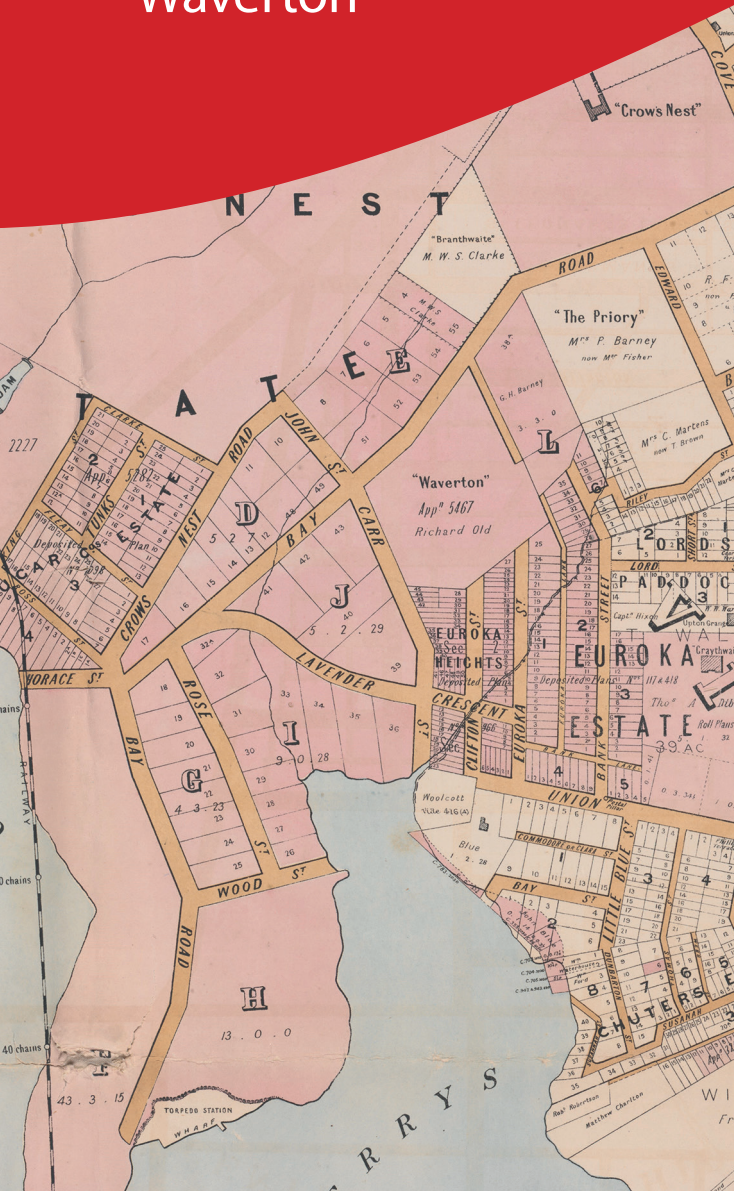


# North Sydney History Walks

## Waverton





## 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](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au) or email [localhistory@northsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localhistory@northsydney.nsw.gov.au)



# Waverton

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**Length:** 3.5 kms

**Difficulty:** Easy with some gradients

## Introduction:

The suburb of Waverton takes its name from a large bungalow, *Waverton House*, which stood from the 1850s to the 1970s in present-day Waverton Avenue. The suburb was so-named by 1930. Before that the area was generally called Bay Road. Most of the suburb was originally part of the vast Wollstonecraft / Berry Estate granted to Edward Wollstonecraft in 1821 and acquired by his brother-in-law and partner Alexander Berry after his death in 1831. Berry built *Crows Nest House* in 1845 and lived there until his death in 1873. This walk will help you explore the history of the Estate which extended into present-day North Sydney, and of the suburb of Waverton which grew out of the Estate land releases from the 1890s.

### 1) 6 Napier Street

Don Bank is the oldest timber house in North Sydney probably built in the 1840s but possibly as early as the 1820s on the far eastern edge of the Wollstonecraft / Berry Estate. The White family owned the house for most of the 20th century, selling it to North Sydney Council in 1979 to save it from demolition. It opened as a museum in 1981.

### 2) 120 Pacific Highway

This is the site of James and Thomas White's saddlery shop. James established the business on the Lane Cove Road (now the Pacific Highway) in 1869. It served the area's busy horse-drawn vehicle trade. Lane Cove Road existed to the west of here by the early 1830s. Within a decade it had been extended through the township of St Leonards (North Sydney), established in 1838. Early maps show the road heading north-west along the Berry Estate boundary.

### 3) 168-170 Pacific Highway

The west side of Lane Cove Road was more residential than the east. This pair of semi-detached townhouses are excellent examples of the decorative 'Queen Anne style', one of a number of English Revival styles that dominated North Sydney architecture from the 1890s to the 1920s – the so-called Federation period. Note the overhanging oriel upper windows, a conscious reference to English houses of the Tudor period.

#### 4) **172 Pacific Highway**

This is the oldest surviving building on the Pacific Highway in North Sydney. *Woodstock* was built in 1870 for timber merchant John Brown, on a subdivision of the Berry estate bought in the early 1850s. Though Victorian in period, the house was designed in a restrained Georgian style that reflected earlier tastes. Houses became more ornate from the 1870s. In 1898, *Woodstock* served temporarily as a hospital for 'foundlings' or abandoned infants. By the 1930s, it had been converted into flats. *Woodstock* was saved from demolition in the early 1980s by the use of floor space transfer which allowed the owner to sell the unused 'floor space' above the preserved building to developers elsewhere in the area.

#### 5) **Pacific Highway, Crows Nest House Gates**

These gates and iron palisade fence are all that survive of *Crows Nest House* and grounds. Note the nest of crows cast into the ironwork. The grounds once extended almost to Crows Nest Road and down to Priory Road. This was home to Alexander Berry from 1845 until his death in 1873. The original gates and drive were opposite West Street. These gates were installed by Sir John Hay who inherited the entire Estate in 1889. He and Lady Hay soon began subdividing their property. The major residential releases were in the early 1900s. The grounds of *Crows Nest House* were themselves subdivided in 1921, 1932 and 1933. The Department of Education bought some land and opened an infants' school, the origins of the present Demonstration School, in 1931. Lady Hay resided in *Crows Nest House* until her death in 1930.

#### 6) **16 McHatton Street**

Allotments on Lady Hay's Estate sold slowly in 1932, the worst year of the Great Depression. No. 16, built in 1937, is a fine but very late example of an Inter-War Californian Bungalow style influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and the work of American architects such as Greene and Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright. Note the small balcony set into the gable. This is very near the site of Crows Nest House which was demolished in 1932.

#### 7) **5 McHatton Street**

*Middleton* was built on the 1921 subdivision of the Lady Hay Estate. It is designed in the Inter-War Old English style which, though not as common as Arts and Crafts and other English



Revival architectural styles, is indicative of attachment to the aesthetic of what many regarded as the 'mother country'. Its size also demonstrates the affluent home owners who bought into the Berry Estate subdivisions.

## **8) 1 McHatton Street**

This house is designed in the Inter-War Mediterranean style. This type of architecture was promoted by the Professor of architecture at Sydney University, Leslie Wilkinson, as ideal for Sydney's climate. It represented a departure from the very English styles so prevalent earlier.

## **9) 1a and 1b Hazelbank Road**

The architectural character of the former Berry Estate was altered dramatically from the 1960s as the original dwellings were demolished to make way for medium and high density flats. These townhouses were designed in 1975 by architect Michael Dysart, who helped define the Sydney Regional School of Modernism. They can be seen as a modern iteration of the Victorian-era terrace house, a building type that was not permitted on the Berry Estate releases where detached houses were stipulated.

## **10) Brennan Park**

The area that is now Brennan Park was originally subdivided into fifteen Berry Estate allotments for auction in 1902. Unsold, possibly because of the creek that once ran through here to Oyster Cove, they were re-auctioned in 1913. However, 400 local residents and property owners petitioned North Sydney Council to help acquire the land as a public reserve for, while there had been an emphasis on the quality of the houses on the Berry Estate through building covenants, little heed was given to the provision of parks. On 7 November 1913, Brennan Park was opened and dedicated in recognition of Richard Brennan who led the movement. The park was landscaped and planted in the 1930s. It survives as an example of community and local government action and co-operation.

## **11) King Street sandstone**

Although brick had superseded stone and timber as the main building material around North Sydney by 1900, sandstone remained a feature of the built environment. It was used extensively for house foundations, retaining walls and street kerbing. Much of the stone used on the Berry Estate was quarried locally. The stone along this part of King Street probably came from the nearby foreshore.

## 12) **View of Oyster Cove, the old gasworks site and *Wondakiah***

Oyster Cove on Balls Head Bay was one of the oldest working waterfronts on the north shore. From the 1850s it accommodated a sugar refinery and spirit distillery, then a kerosene works so that the cove was also known as Kerosene Bay. From 1913 the North Shore Gas Company works made lighting gas from coal here much to the displeasure of residents of the Berry Estate. By the 1980s heavy industry was being dismantled around Sydney Harbour. In 1988 the Australian Gas Light Company (AGL) proposed 345 residential units, a 60 berth marina, recreational facilities and commercial space on the Oyster Cove gasworks site. The Council and some local residents opposed the project on the basis of scale and traffic congestion. An appeal in the NSW Land and Environment Court allowed the \$250 million development of 297 residential units covering 6.8 hectares in 1991. Like 'Balmain Shores', on the site of the old Balmain Power Station, *Wondakiah* is an example of the western Harbour's transition to post-industrial waterway.

## 13) **Cnr Whatmore and Tunks Street**

Variations in design, however small, were a feature of the architectural styles that characterised North Sydney in the early 1900s. This house was built in 1908. Its rotunda is unique. Although originally part of the Berry Estate the land was acquired for a sugar works in the 1850s and subsequently subdivided for residential development as the Sugar Company Estate in 1903.

## 14) **Lloyd Rees and Ross Street**

Artist Lloyd Rees moved to Ross Street for a short time around 1920 at the urging of his friend and mentor, artist Roland Wakelin, who lived in Carr Street. Wakelin introduced Rees to the artistic potential of the local working waterfronts. They were among the first artists to take an interest in the working harbour. Rees returned to Waverton in the early 1930s to complete exquisite drawings of waterfront sites. Of Ross Street he recalled: 'It led down to the big gasworks and down there was the smell of the gasometer [storage tank]... The little cottage had a front room in which I used to sleep, with glass windows overlooking the harbour – and so I got a new sense of ecstasy concerning Sydney Harbour'.

## 15) **87-93 Bay Road**

This pair of semi-detached houses is typical of the style that characterised this area in the early 1900s. Nos 87-89 were

built in 1908 and Nos 91-93 in 1904. All were constructed by George Reed who was prolific in this area. Note the tall chimneys which helped to define the skyline in this and other early 20th century suburbs.

## **16) Bay Road / Waverton Station**

This part of Bay Road, connecting with Balls Head Road down to Berrys Bay and Crows Nest Road to the north, is one of the original Berry Estate thoroughfares dating to the 1830s. The railway from St Leonards to Milsons Point was completed in 1893, thereby linking Hornsby to the ferry services at Milsons Point. Bay Road Station, as Waverton Station was first called, was one of the original stops. It made the subdivision of the Berry Estate more attractive.

## **17) Wakelin Reserve**

This stretch of land was resumed by the colonial government to build the Milsons Point – St Leonards rail line in the early 1890s. The thoroughfare along here was subsequently called Railway Parade. It is still owned by rail authorities. In 1988 it was named after the artist Roland Wakelin whose 1916 painting 'Down the Hills to Berry's Bay' is one of the most famous post-impressionist images of Sydney Harbour. Lloyd Rees walked this way when visiting Wakelin around 1920.

## **18) 21 Carr street**

The west side of Carr Street was subdivided as part of the Berry Estate in 1909. The east side was part of Euroka Heights Estate subdivided in 1882 but not immediately developed. Roland Wakelin rented 21 Carr Street, built in 1917, and called it *Cezanne*. Lloyd Rees recalled: '...in Wakelin's tiny little living room we used to have open to us the realm of the great classics in music. And as I sat there in a very soft light I was aware of two lovely oils such as I hadn't seen before in my life... [one was] Down the Hills to Berry's Bay.'

## **19) 29 Bay Road**

*Cartref* was built in 1896 for Rev. David Davies and his wife Blanche. She was the daughter of Rev. Clarke, the first rector of St Thomas' Church and a renowned geologist and man of science. He lived next door in the Gothic-style stone house *Branthwaite*. The five acres of land here was given to Clarke by Alexander Berry, a great benefactor of Clarke's church and a personal friend, shortly before the clergyman retired in 1870. The estate was completely subdivided by the 1930s.

## 20) 48 or 50 Bay Road

*Ascot Flats* were built by local builder John Anderson, who lived in Edward Street, in 1915. They are among the first developments on 'Toongarah Estate' subdivided around the house *Toongarah* in 1913. That land was an early excision from the Berry Estate and did not have the same 'covenant' precluding flats and semi-detached houses. *Ascot*, therefore, was one of the first apartment blocks built in this area. The building is unusually plain with a very English feel.

## 21) 26 Toongarah Road

The elaborate *San Carlos* flats are a contrast to *Ascot*. They were designed and built in 1929 in the Spanish Mission style, popular at the time. There is no architect recorded so possibly owner/builder Thomas Truman used professional journals or existing buildings to guide his design. This was also a subdivision of the 'Toongarah Estate'. In 1929 three-room flats here were offered for rent for between £2 and £3 a week, about a third of the salary of an office worker.

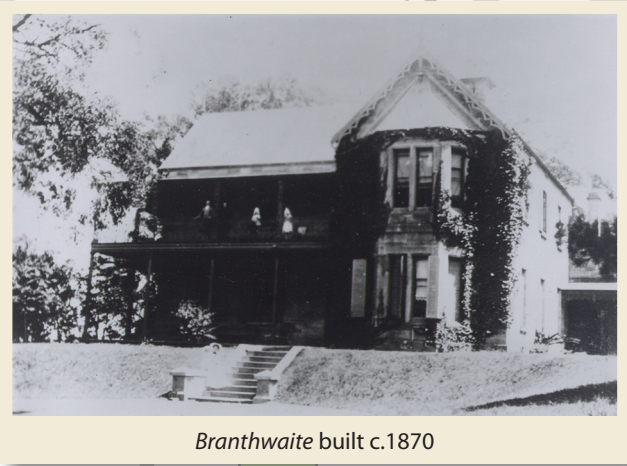
## 22) 5 Toongarah Road

*The Priory*, and the large garden that once surrounded it, was another early excision on the Berry Estate. The land was bought in the 1830s by Lieutenant Colonel George Barney, the designer of the Victoria Barracks in Paddington. He built *The Priory* and leased the property back to Alexander and Elizabeth Berry while they were waiting for *Crows Nest House* to be completed. Elizabeth died here in 1845. Originally a single storey sandstone house, a second floor was put on in 1914. The garden was subdivided into 40 lots between 1915 and 1929. Many of the cottages built then survive. *The Priory* was converted to flats. In the 1970s local historian and heritage campaigner David Earle lived here and formed the Priory Conservation Co-operative Society which promoted a unique combination of urban and heritage planning through co-operative housing.

## 23) Edward, Berry and Oak Streets

Edward and Berry Streets were named after Edward Wollstonecraft and Alexander Berry by the 1870s. Oak Street may have formed part of a track near the original boundary of the Wollstonecraft Estate. The name appears in directories around 1878. Its origin is unclear but may refer to a landmark tree.





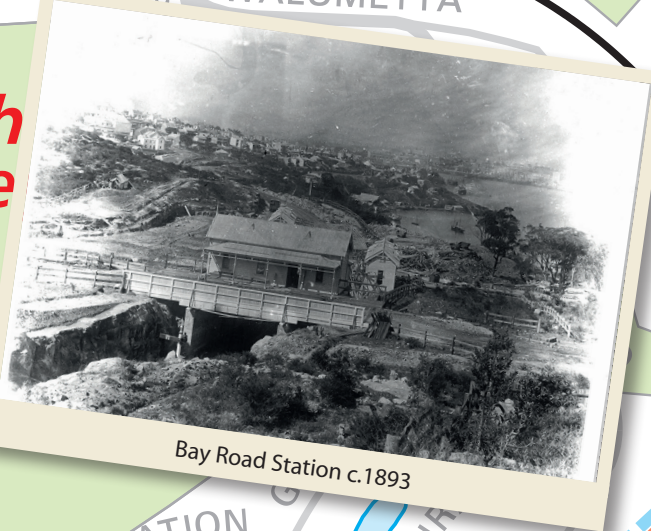
Branthwaite built c.1870



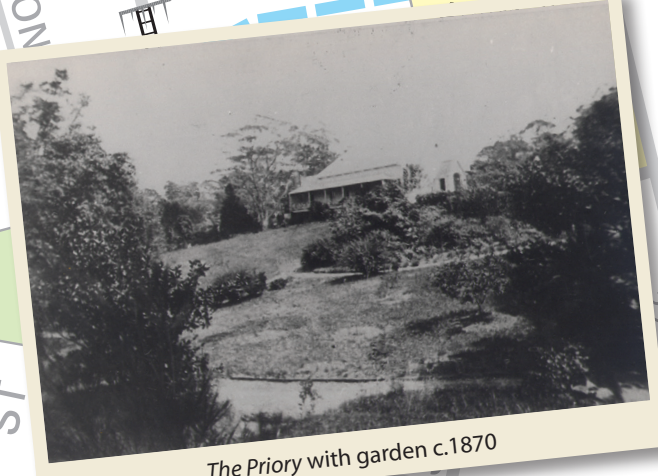
Alexander Berry c.1870



Crows Nest House and gardens c.1910



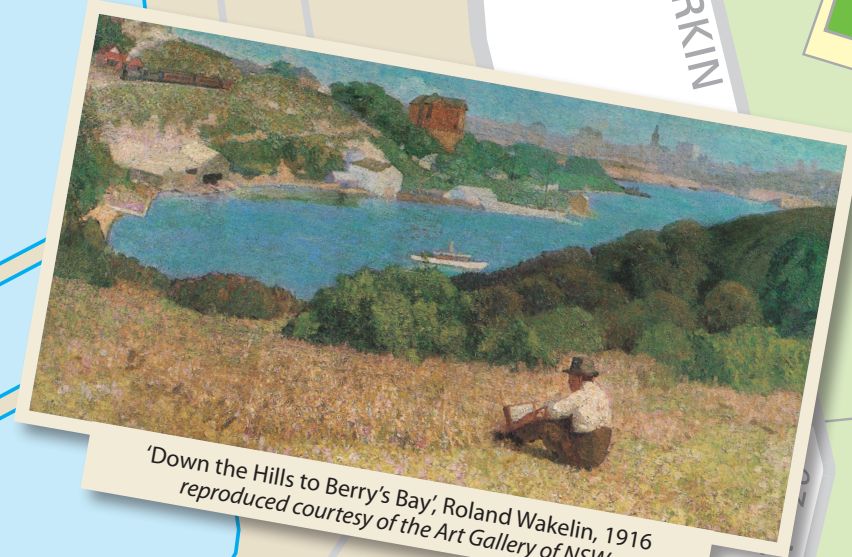
Bay Road Station c.1893



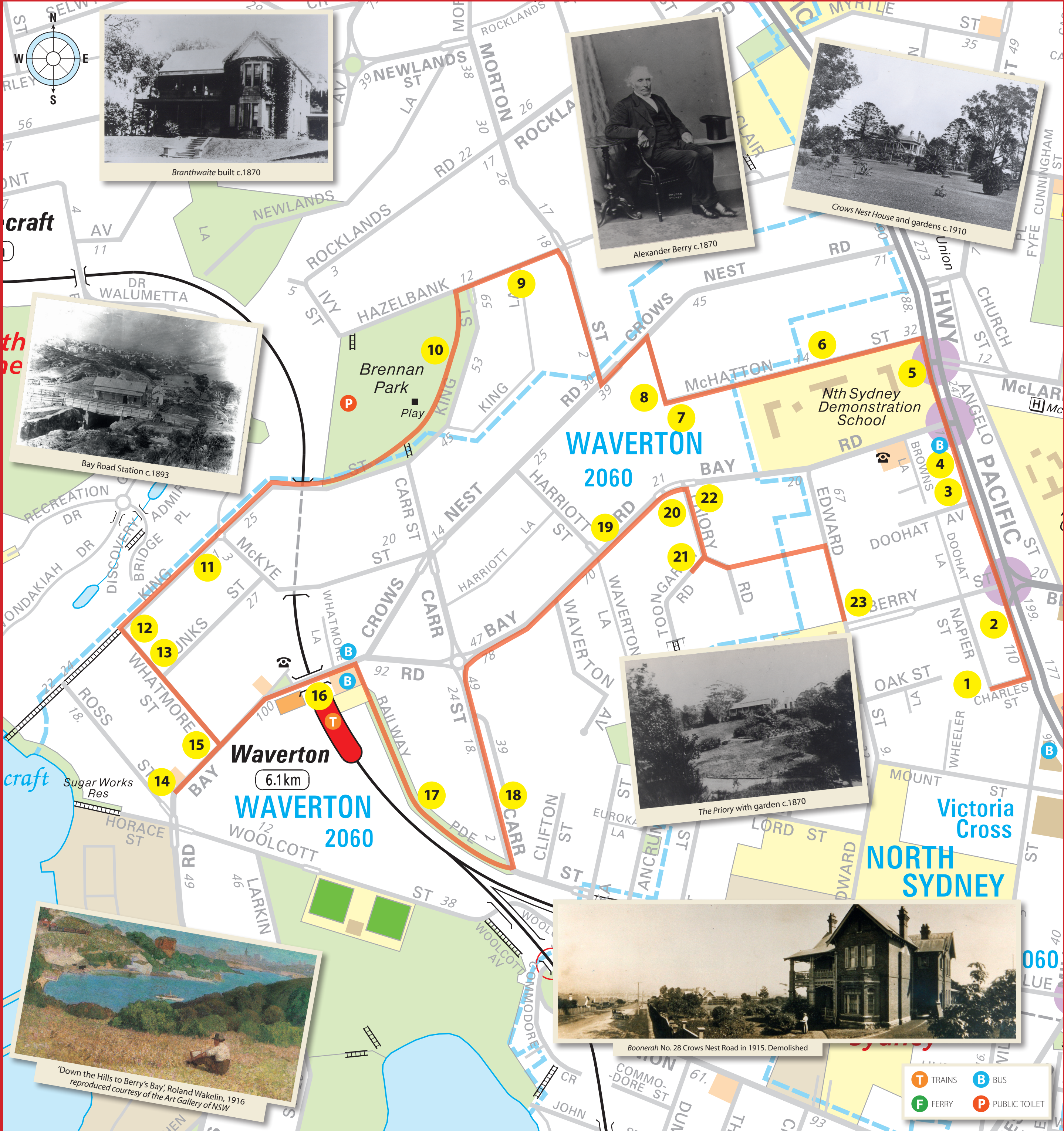
The Priory with garden c.1870



Boonerah No. 28 Crows Nest Road in 1915. Demolished



'Down the Hills to Berry's Bay', Roland Wakelin, 1916 reproduced courtesy of the Art Gallery of NSW



# WAVERTON 2060

## Waverton 6.1km WAVERTON 2060

### Victoria Cross NORTH SYDNEY

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