

50 YEARS OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOMES

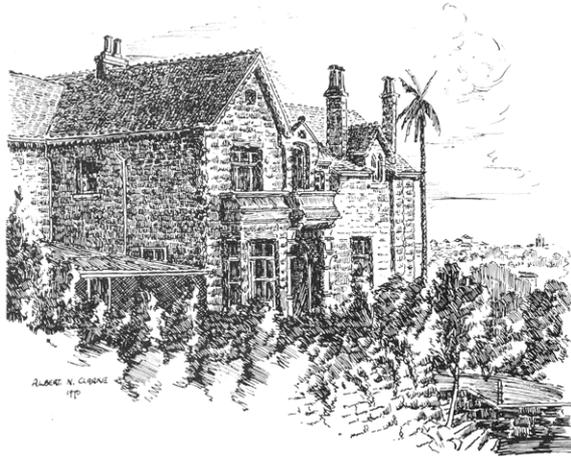
Over the past 50 years of its existence, the Randwick and District Historical Society has occupied many different homes, ranging from grand mansions and military forts all the way down to tiny commercial shops. This is a ramble around some of the Society's principal homes of the past half century.

1957-1963 Nugal Hall, 16-18 Milford Street

It is believed that the construction of the southern portion of Nugal Hall was commenced around 1854 by Judge Thomas Callaghan. The northern portion was completed by Dr Fred Tidswell, the owner of the Coogee Bay Hotel, who occupied the house from about 1883 until 1903. The architect is thought to have been Oswald H Lewis, who carried out work for the Callaghan family in Randwick and who practised as an architect with his father, the former Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis.

In 1918, Nugal Hall became a Red Cross convalescent home for Australian military personnel returning from World War I. The house returned to private ownership in 1921 and was eventually purchased in 1952 by Mr J R Pillars, the owner of a successful engineering firm

In 1957, Nell Pillars founded the Randwick Historical Society while living at Nugal Hall and as such it became the Society's first headquarters.



1963-1976 Bare Island, Botany Bay

The first stage of fortifications on Bare Island was completed in 1885 following recommendations by an 1877 Government inquiry which warned of the possibility of an attack from Russia's Pacific fleet. The barracks were



commenced in 1889. By 1902, however, the fort had become redundant, its guns never having been fired in anger.

From 1912 it served as a war veterans home until 1963 when the Randwick Historical Society commenced a caretaker occupancy that lasted until 1976. In 1967, the island was declared an historic site and placed under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which still manages it today.

1979-1982 200 Alison Road

The old bank building, 200 Alison Road was designed by architects Robertson and Marks. It was erected in 1916 for the Australian Bank of Commerce.

The years following the move from Bare Island were a difficult period for the Society, which relied on the generosity of June and Milton Moore in providing accommodation and storage space. By October 1980 it was reported that the “majority” of the Society’s property had been removed from Bare Island.

1982-1987 194 Avoca Street

The small shop and residence at 194 Avoca Street was built around 1894 by Edward Hearne. The RDHS occupied the shop on the ground floor, which provided a small exhibition space and a tightly-packed research facility.

1987-1992 Sandgate, 128 Belmore Road

Sandgate, at 128 Belmore Road, was built around 1870 by Simeon Pearce as part of a row of investment properties along Belmore Road. The first tenant was Edwin T Penfold, a friend of Pearce. Originally named “Kilkerran”, it was renamed “Felton” in 1901, before being acquired by the Commonwealth Government in 1918. Together with the house next door, it became the “Woodville Red Cross Home”, a facility for World War I veterans.





The property was returned to private ownership in 1928 and the house became a “residential” a short time later. In 1982, it was dedicated to Randwick Council as a condition of development consent for the neighbouring shopping plaza. It was leased to the RDHS, becoming its museum and heritage centre from 1987 until 1992 when Randwick Council commenced leasing it to commercial interests.

1992-2006 Randwick Town Hall, 90 Avoca Street

The central portion of the Town Hall was erected in 1882 to the design of Blackman and Parkes. The impressive Victorian Italianate Avoca Street facade includes additions to the original structure, the most significant being the erection of a domed clock tower above the central portico. Modern additions to the south and west now accommodate the Council Chambers and administrative offices.

The ground floor rooms to the north of the entrance have been home to the RDHS since December 1992, providing an exhibition space, a research facility, office and storage space for the Society’s extensive and expanding collections.

