

## 2.0 Historical Development

### 2.1 'The Poffle' 1837–1856 and Rugby School 1856–1864

The site at 630–726 Princes Highway, Tempe is within the boundary of an estate purchased by Lesslie Duguid in c1836 on which he built his house, 'The Poffle'. The Poffle was built as a country residence for Duguid and his family. Duguid had arrived in Sydney in 1822 from Scotland, and had originally been granted a large parcel of land in the Hunter Valley before beginning work with the newly formed Bank of Australia in 1826. In 1830 he married Ann Scargill, after which they moved to Sydney. In c1834–35 the Duguids moved to Tempe where they lived in a cottage on the estate of Alexander Spark, who later built Tempe House. In 1837 the Duguids moved across the Cooks River the Poffle.<sup>1</sup>

The Poffle was built as a two-storey residence (reputedly the first two-storey dwelling in the St Peters area) surrounded by landscaped gardens on a 15 acre (6ha) site on Cooks River Road (now Princes Highway). A sketch plan, drawn by Duguid in a letter to his mother in Scotland, shows the house, two separate lodges marked as offices, a gatehouse lodge, large garden, formal paths and turning circle and stables to the rear (see Figure 2.1). In 1834 Duguid had been instrumental in the establishment of the Commercial Banking Company and he served as its managing director and cashier for thirteen years. Although Duguid managed to steer the bank through the economic depression of the early 1840s, by 1847 his good work had been largely undone as the bank was found to be over £10,000 in debt, of which £3,500 was attributed directly to Duguid. He was subsequently dismissed from the bank in 1847, and he filed for insolvency in August. As a result The Poffle had to be sold and was subsequently taken over by the Australian Trust Company.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1847 and 1856 the house and land changed hands a number of times before being purchased by Reverend William Savigny in 1856. By the time of the Savigny purchase the house and grounds had been reduced to four acres. Savigny converted the house to a collegiate school which he named Rugby after the famous English school. Due to ill health, Savigny was replaced at the school in 1862 by Reverend William Scott, formerly the colonial astronomer. The school was closed in 1865 and the land around it was offered for subdivision in five sections, which included a number of proposed streets. The subdivision plan, reproduced here as Figure 2.2, shows the house on a large block with a summer house in the yard to the front. To the rear of the house are shown a stable and coach house, a small hut (likely a caretakers hut), a saltwater bathing house with drains and a fresh-water enclosure with pumps. A gate lodge and another unknown structure are also indicated to the north of the main house. It does not appear that the sale of these lots proceeded, as no evidence is shown in later land developments.

### 2.2 Bayview Asylum 1868–1946

In 1868 the site was purchased by Dr George Alfred Tucker, formerly a partner and Superintendent of Cremorne Private Lunatic Asylum in Melbourne. Tucker renamed The Poffle Bayview House and established his own private asylum, under the Lunacy Act of 1867, on the site. He fitted out the house to accommodate 40 patients, but by 1869 had secured only nine and so applied to the government for assistance. The state government duly transferred 25 patients to Bayview House. This number had risen to 100 by 1874.<sup>3</sup> The transfer of patients to privately registered asylums helped reduce overcrowding in state institutions while keeping the private asylums viable.

Bayview House acquired a good reputation during its early years of operation, with favourable reports from ex-patients even appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. A patient wrote in 1871 of the abundant fruit trees and shrubs, comfortable beds, large well-ventilated apartments and hot and cold baths, amongst other features of the establishment.<sup>4</sup> In 1879, a sketch in the *Illustrated Sydney News* showed

a fine Georgian mansion with classical columns and shuttered windows facing a manicured lawn on which patients were playing croquet. To the rear were a number of outbuildings, one of which may have been a chapel, while the grounds were dotted with ornamental trees and shrubs (see Figure 2.3).

By 1880 Tucker had increased the grounds to 23 acres, larger than the original Poffle estate of Duguid. In 1885, he sold the asylum and grounds to Dr Arthur Vause who had run the asylum while Tucker travelled overseas on an inspection tour in 1882. However in 1894, following complaints in regards to the treatment of patients, the Bayview Asylum was the subject of a royal commission. The commission focused on Vause's running of the asylum and found that he was heavily in debt and likely to be practicing certain economies in order to save money. Despite some damning evidence, Vause survived the commission, although it was recommended that all state patients be transferred (which they duly were). As part of the royal commission a site plan was produced which showed the old house now extended to include two wings surrounding an enclosed courtyard on the Cooks River Road frontage. The formal carriageway of the original house, the stables, and bath-houses remained in place, with a new, more direct driveway to the house from Cooks River Road. A paling fence enclosed a yard to the northeast of the house, with trees—some formally planted along the roads and some scattered (maybe natural remnants) across the site (see Figure 2.4). A second plan produced showed the proposed extensions to the site, which at that time included a new wing of dormitories, single rooms and amenities immediately adjacent to the original house site to the northeast (see Figure 2.5). Despite the loss of state patients, the planned extension went ahead.

In 1914 Vause left the asylum, selling the establishment to Grace Wilson who continued to operate it until 1946. During this time a major expansion was carried out. A 1943 aerial photograph show three large buildings (including the original house and 1894 extensions), a number of domestic-style buildings (possibly for doctors on site) and an assortment of other buildings and structures. The stables from The Poffle era were still standing and a number of other features, such as original paths and roads, were still visible (see Figure 2.6).

## 2.3 Caxton House, Demolition and Penfolds 1946–Present

With the closure of the asylum in 1946 the site was purchased by WD&HO Wills. The house was renamed Caxton House (probably to distance it from the memory of the asylum) and run as a hostel for young women moving to the city, administered for the company by the YMCA (see Figure 2.7). The hostel did not operate for very long, and the site was purchased and subdivided by Drug Houses of Australia and Penfolds Wines in c1953. Penfolds intended to develop its site as a warehouse and distribution centre, and began demolition of most of the buildings soon after purchase, leaving one two-storey building from the asylum for use as its administration offices. In place of the demolished stages, Penfolds constructed a new, modern industrial centre complete with prominent clock tower to the design of architects Ross A Lightfoot & Stanton of Sydney. Opened in 1959, the new building cost £1,000,000 and featured in the November issue of the journal *Building, Lighting, Engineering*.<sup>5</sup> A new warehouse was built on the adjacent allotment formerly occupied by the demolished Bayview House for Westpac, known as Westpac Stores (not part of the subject site).<sup>6</sup>

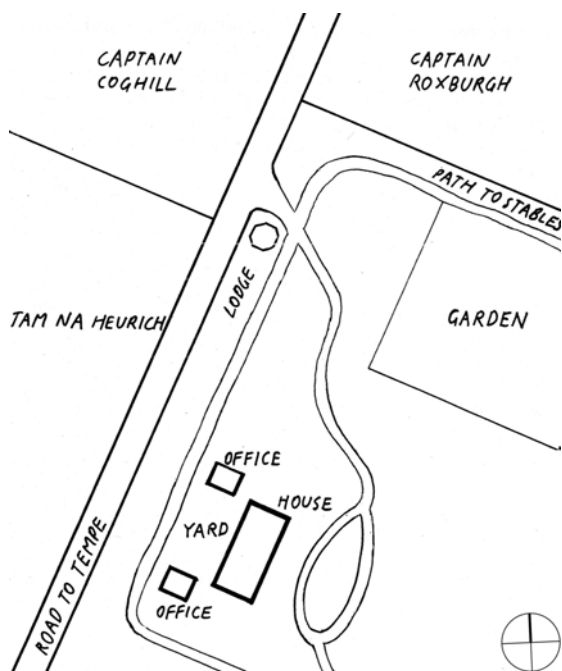
## 2.4 St Peters/Tempe Brickworks Site

Adjacent to the asylum site, to the northeast, a large brickworks was established in the late-nineteenth century. Little historical information on the brickworks site has been sourced for this study, however it is likely to have operated throughout the early twentieth century as a brickworks and was one of at least eight in the area. Brick-making had been a major industry in the St Peters, Tempe and Marrickville areas since the 1860s as large deposits of clay were exploited to fill the need for bricks in domestic

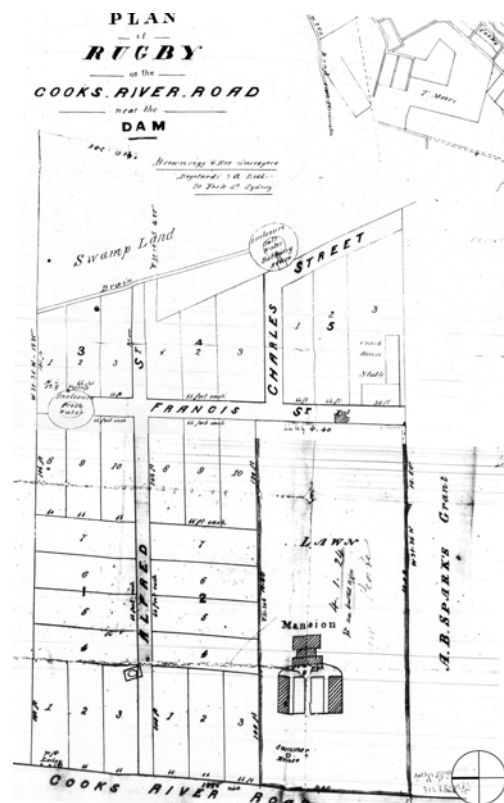
construction. By the early 1920s most had closed except for those facing the Princes Highway and Euston Road at St Peters and at Tempe—the latter of which is within the subject site. The 1943 aerial photograph reproduced as Figure 2.6 shows the brickworks with its kilns, chimneys and associated buildings on the highway and the deep excavation to the rear. The operation possibly closed in 1942, after which time the then St Peters Council is reported to have utilised the quarry as a rubbish tip, dumping household rubbish, trade waste and some industrial waste (mainly ash from coal mills) into the vast hole. Following the amalgamation of a number of inner-city councils in 1949, Marrickville Council continued to utilise the site as a rubbish depot. The area utilised for rubbish disposal extended southwest into the rear section of the former Bayview Asylum site.

By 1961 aerial photographs show the quarry as having been filled (see Figures 2.8 and 2.9). From 1981 until 1986 the site was sealed and levelled. The excavated area extended back to Swamp Road and to the southwest behind the Penfolds site.<sup>7</sup> Since 1986 the entire area has been leased as container storage.

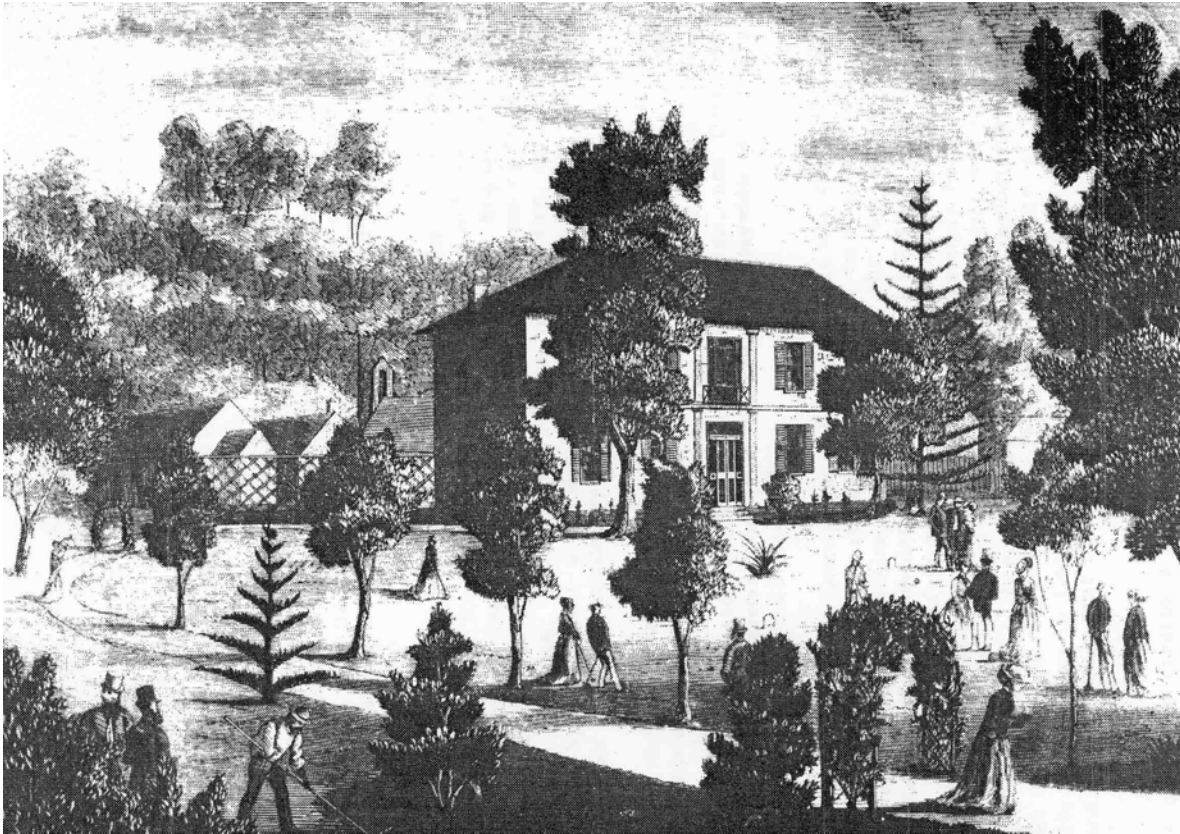
It should be noted that a council letter reports the site being used as a rubbish depot until the 1980s. This letter sets out the history of the St Peter's Garbage Depot as having operated between 1942 and 1986. The aerial photograph as presented in Figures 2.8 and 2.9, however, show the quarry as having been filled by 1961. It may be that the Council report refers to another quarry site nearby, as a number of brickworks and associated quarries which were used as rubbish and waste tips during this period were in operation along the Princes Highway at St Peters and Tempe.



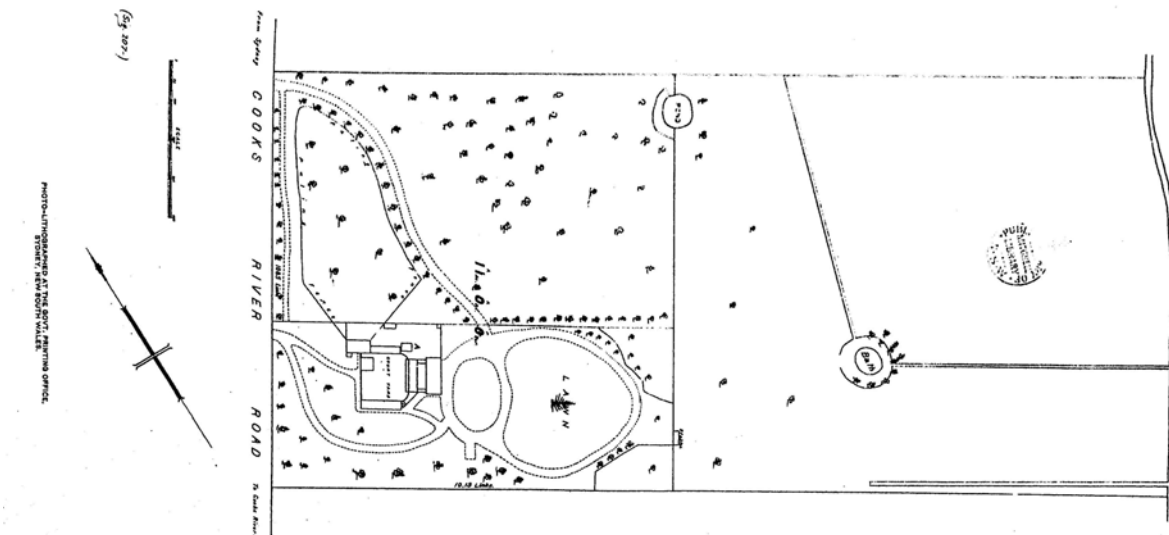
**Figure 2.1** Sketch plan of The Poffle c1840 showing the house, two office wings, the gate lodge, the paths and the turning circle. The property across the road Tam Na Heurich, meaning 'the knoll of yew wood', was also owned by Duguid. (Source: Cameron: JMHS 1989)



**Figure 2.2** c1865 subdivision sale plan of Rugby House and grounds. Notice the house on its own parcel, with associated outbuildings such as stables, coach house and gate lodge now on separate allotments. Of interest are the two water features, particularly the saltwater bathing house with the drains running from it. (Source: Marrickville Local Studies Collection)



**Figure 2.3** *Illustrated Sydney News*, 23 December 1879, showing Bayview House with its associated outbuildings and grounds. This is likely to be a close resemblance of the site since the construction of The Poffle in 1837. (Source: Thompson, op cit)



**Figure 2.4** The asylum site plan as reproduced in the 1894 royal commission papers. The plan shows the asylum retaining many of the features of The Poffle and Rugby phases including the stables, pathways and bath-houses. (Source: Royal Commission into the Conduct and Management of the Licensed House for the Insane at Cooks River, near Sydney known as Bayview House)

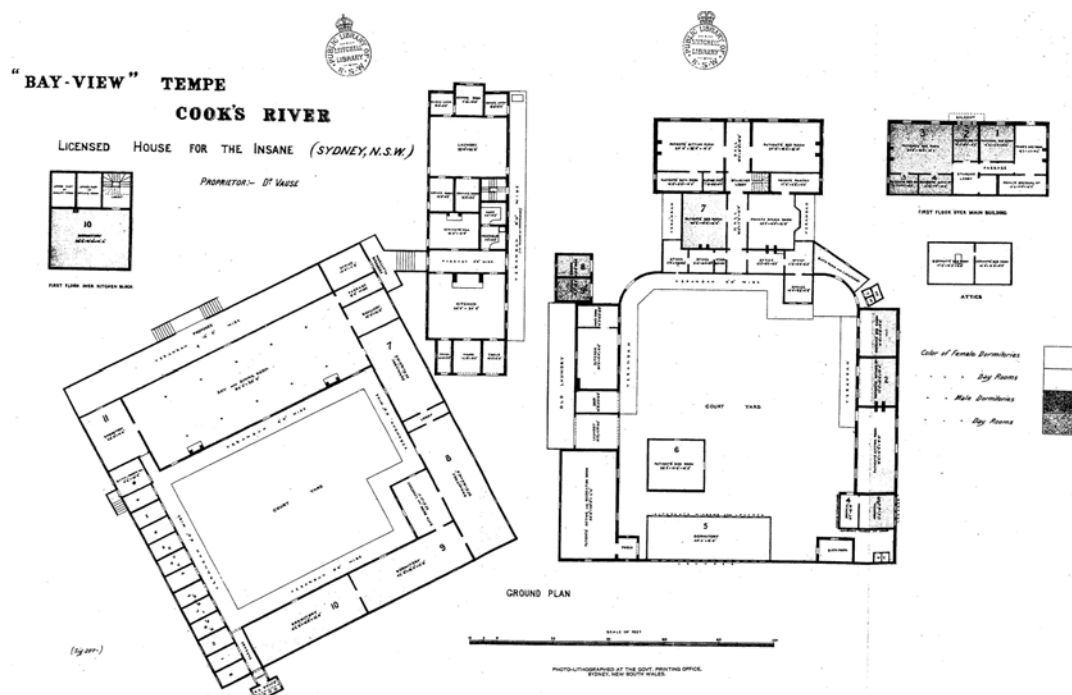


Figure 2.5 1894 plan showing the proposed extension and new building to be built at the Bayview Asylum. The new building was roughly the same size as the existing portion and included new dormitories, rooms and amenities with a two-storey kitchen block attached. (Source: Royal commission papers)



Figure 2.6 1943 aerial photograph showing the asylum grounds with buildings and landscaping. At least 12 buildings are evident within the asylum precinct. To the rear the old stables can be seen, as can the outline of the former saltwater bath-house. Adjacent to the site is the brickworks, with deep excavation and the brickworks complex facing Princes Highway. (Source: RTA)





**Figure 2.7** c1950s photograph showing the former asylum site. Some buildings are already in the process of demolition or have been demolished, including the stables to the rear and Bayview House itself. The arrow indicates the building that was retained by Penfolds as their administration building. (Source: Marrickville Local Studies)



**Figure 2.8** 1961 aerial photograph showing the site soon after completion of the Penfolds warehouse and Westpac Stores building (note the Penfolds sign on the sawtoothed roof of the new factory). The remaining asylum building can be clearly seen between the two factories (note the fig tree in front of the building). Also note the former brickworks quarry site which has been filled. The outline of the extent of the former rubbish depot can be discerned extending behind the Penfolds warehouse. Compare this to Figure 2.9 and 2.10 for later developments. (Source: Department of Lands)