

**APPENDIX B HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

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## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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### 1.1 Introduction

The following historical overview builds upon the history prepared for the Conservation Plan for the Graythwaite site prepared by Graham Edds & Associates in 2000.

### 1.2 Nineteenth Century Development of North Sydney

#### 1.2.1 Land Grants

Graythwaite is located within the 39 acre land grant made to Thomas Walker in 1832. Walker's grant was one of a number made in the early decades of the nineteenth century that form the backbone of non-indigenous development in North Sydney. The first grants were located on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour and the present day topographical features of this shoreline are named after the grantees. These early grants were to William (Billy) Blue in 1817, Edward Wollstonecraft in 1820, and James Milson in the mid-1820s.

Blue's 80 acres is located on the peninsula now known as Blues Point. Blue was a Jamaican Negro who had arrived in Sydney in 1801 to serve his sentence of seventeen years' transportation. By 1807 Blue was providing a ferry service between Sydney and the north shore of the harbour and in later years was appointed the waterside watchman. He died in 1834, and his son continued the ferry service. Over the 1830s parts of the grant were sold off, with the remains of the estate sold in 1844. The northern boundary of Blue's grant defined the southern boundary of Walker's grant.

The western and northern boundaries of Walker's grant were defined by Edward Wollstonecraft's land. Wollstonecraft (1783-1832) had arrived in Sydney in 1819 in the company of his long-time business associate Alexander Berry (1781-1873), both were Scots and merchants. The grant of 524 acres was made around 1820 but not officially registered until 1825. This expansive land holding was sited to the north and west of Berry's Bay and within it were the residences known as Crows Nest Farm Cottage (c1820, demolished 1905), and Crows Nest House (1850, demolished 1929). On Wollstonecraft's death in 1832, the estate passed to his widow and then in 1845 to Alexander Berry. Most of the estate was subdivided for housing around 1930.

James Milson's land holding of 170 acres (68 hectares) was acquired in the mid-1820s and included 120 acres originally granted to Robert Ryan. Milson (1783-1872) was a farmer who had come to Sydney as a free migrant in 1806. Milson was an industrious man who ran cattle and sold produce on his land, and quarried the bedrock for ship's ballast.

#### 1.2.2 The North Sydney Town Reserve

Sited between Milson's grant and the eastern boundary of Walker's grant was the government town reserve of St Leonards (present day North Sydney). The town reserve was planned in the mid-1830s and officially proclaimed in 1838. The town reserve provided a multitude of small allotments suited to residential and commercial development as well as setting aside reserves for future civic purposes such as police, parks, etc. At the time of the proclamation there were very few residents in the area; two of the closest were Walker and his neighbour and fellow commissary Miller. Both names, incidentally, were incorporated into the town plan. The southern boundary of the town reserve is Lavender Street and the western boundary is William Street.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> State Records of NSW (SRNSW) Map 5608 (Lands Department S.105a), A plan of St Leonards Town submitted for approval but apparently used as office map until cancelled by S.1015c by Lewis, 1854

The government surveyor, Perry, set out the town plan as an orthodox grid of intersecting streets bearing north/south and east/west, with the only deviation being the north-west corner with its diagonal alignment (present day Pacific Highway) following the boundary of Wollstonecraft's land. The regularity of the plan and its disregard of the hilly topography presented a marked contrast to the then prevailing network of roads demonstrated today by Blues Point Road. Some of these early roads were extinguished by later private subdivisions including a track leading from Blues Point Road near present day French Street to the Walker and Miller houses and across Blue's land.<sup>2</sup> The connection with Blues Point Road was important as it led to the ferry service to the city. It seems possible the Walker and Miller houses were also accessed from the north by a track branching from a track within Wollstonecraft's land that originated from the north. These tracks have also been extinguished and the northerly route was supplanted by the present day Pacific Highway (formerly Lane Cove Road).

One of the earliest public developments within the town centre was the building of St Thomas's Church in 1843. Located in the south-west corner of the town plan, the subscribers to the building of the new church included Walker and Miller. A small community emerged at North Sydney over the 1850s and 1860s (as demonstrated by Sayers' occupancy of Euroka) and with it the need to address civic matters such as roads, sewage disposal, wild dogs and wandering cattle. This was answered by the staged establishment of municipal governance. The first area to be incorporated, East St Leonards in 1860, did not actually include the town plan; the town plan and Graythwaite are located within the former Municipality of St Leonards, which was incorporated in 1867.

### **1.2.3 Subdivision and Housing**

Subdivision of large estates around North Sydney commenced in the 1850s, but began in earnest in the 1870s and continued through the boom decade of the 1880s. The earlier subdivisions were near the town plan—such as on Edward Street, or on the high ground fronting the harbour—such as the south side of Union Street, subdivided by William Chuter around 1859 from the Blue grant.

Subdivision for housing in the latter phase is representative of what took place everywhere in Sydney accessible by public transport at the time. In North Sydney the connection with the city was improved by the launching of the North Shore Ferry Company in 1878. Travel along the spine of the peninsula was greatly improved by the cable tram service that opened in 1886. The prospect of extending the railway from Hornsby to the harbour was raised in the early 1880s and was actually completed by 1893. In that year the tramway was converted to electric operation and that network was expanded greatly. Another proposal of this era (1882) was a bridge crossing from Sydney.

The range of housing erected in this period represented a mixture of grand statements and modest houses. Thomas Dibbs acquired Sayers' Euroka estate in 1873 and set about subdividing the estate for housing along Bank Street and Union Street. The balance of the estate, west of Bank Street, was subdivided with smaller allotments and put up for sale in 1882 with the sale notice pointing to the completed survey of the proposed railway to North Sydney and proposed bridge.<sup>3</sup> Of the larger homes of this era Graythwaite is an example (substantially enlarged around 1875), as is the adjacent Upton Grange in Edward Street, built for Francis William Hixson in 1870, and Bernard Holtermann's The Tower (now Shore School) was built around 1875 incorporating Miller's earlier Upton. Also along and near Union Street are Kailoa (1885), Ellesmere (c1886-1887), and Bishopsgate (c1886-1887), which are other substantial villas sitting within allotments created from the Graythwaite and Holtermann estates respectively. These properties are further discussed in section 1.4 below.

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<sup>2</sup> SRNSW Map 5608

<sup>3</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) 16/9/1882, p26.

### 1.3 Thomas Walker's Euroka Cottage (1833-1853)

Graythwaite is located within the 39 acres (15.8ha) granted by purchase to Thomas Walker on 6 October 1832. The grant was purchased for £60 9sh under the provisions of Crown land reforms introduced in February 1831 that abolished free grants and introduced sales at public auctions. The land had been applied for by John Betts in May 1832 and following on from this Assistant Surveyor William Lewis surveyed the selection in August. Lewis' survey records a roughly triangular shaped parcel of land bounded on the north by land held by Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft, on the west by a creek leading into Berrys Bay, on the south by William (Billy) Blue's land and on the east by Crown land reserved for Mrs Craig, but subsequently retained by the government for the St Leonards town reserve. Lewis' letter accompanying the survey indicates nothing untoward about the land aside from an encroachment of a fence erected by Berry and Wollstonecraft.<sup>4</sup> Betts in his application noted the land was vacant and this is supported by Lewis's survey that shows no capital improvements aside from a track traversing the land in a north/south orientation in a line approximate to a continuation of present day Chuter Street with Edward Street.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Walker was Assistant Commissary General in the Commissariat Department in NSW. He had arrived in Sydney in January 1818 and was appointed to the Commissariat Department in October of that year.<sup>6</sup> The Commissariat had been established in 1788 and was initially responsible for the provision and organization of the supply of stores, etc. for the colony. The Commissariat's functions rapidly expanded as the settlement grew in size and complexity and in 1813 it was restructured to become a branch of the office of the Commissary General in London, which itself was a sub-department of the British Treasury. As such, the officers of the Commissariat were drawn from the English Commissariat staff with the Deputy Commissary General being appointed as head of the Colonial Branch, which was subject to instructions issued by the British Commissariat. To cope with the needs of the rapidly expanding colony, an Accounts Branch of the Commissariat was established in NSW in 1824, and in 1825 the Commissary of Stores was created as a branch of the Commissariat. In 1826 the superintendence of Military Stores and Civil Stores was combined under the Deputy Assistant Commissary General. In the early 1830s convict and military buildings (subsequently removed in 1836) were placed under control of the Deputy Commissary General. In 1836 the responsibilities of the Commissariat were reduced, leaving it only an administrative/financial branch of the British Treasury. The Commissariat continued to be responsible for entering into the necessary contracts for performance of works or purchases of stores and materials.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1833 Walker sold 13 acres of his grant, being the northern half of his grant and a strip of land to the east, to William Miller, who was also an assistant commissary general in the Commissariat Department, for £20 13sh.<sup>8</sup> The third sale was completed in 1841 to William Lithgow, another assistant commissary general and auditor-general at the time of the purchase. This sale comprised 13 acres located on the eastern boundary of the grant with frontage to William Street within which he erected St Leonard's Lodge as his place of residence. The sale price was a modest £20 8sh.<sup>9</sup> This partition of the land holding into equal thirds and consistent land value over time suggests all three men were party to the original purchase of the land.

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<sup>4</sup> SRNSW 2/1553.1 (Reel 3075)

<sup>5</sup> SRNSW 2/7801 (Reel 1093) Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re Land – John Betts file; Lands Department Plan C.61.690

<sup>6</sup> Mitchell Library Card Catalogue Index

<sup>7</sup> SRNSW Archives Investigator.

<sup>8</sup> Lands Department (LD) Property Deed Book H No. 594.

<sup>9</sup> LD Property Deed Book Y No. 641

Allan Horton, 'Lithgow, William (1784 - 1864)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp 119-120.



Figure 1 Plan of Parish Portion 228 granted to Thomas Walker in October 1832 and surveyed by Surveyor Lewis in August 1832. The annotations are later notes made by officers of the Lands Department. A track from Blue's land traversed the grant but there were no buildings or other improvements. Source: Lands Department Crown Plan C.61.690.

Between the issue of the grant and a survey of the general area in 1837 both Walker and Miller erected dwellings on their properties<sup>10</sup> known as Euroka Cottage and Upton Cottage respectively. Walker's cottage was erected in 1833, the development being noted by the *Sydney Gazette* as:<sup>11</sup>

On the opposite side of Darling Harbour, just above Billy Blue's, there has lately been erected by Mr Commissary Walker a very handsome little cottage, in front of which there is a tolerably large enclosure, containing a garden &c. Immediately adjoining there are two large plots railed in, which we presume, is preparatory to other buildings being erected there. This is another convincing proof of the increasing wealth and enterprise of this flourishing colony. These buildings, when finished, will greatly increase the beauty of the surrounding scenery.<sup>12</sup>

The neighbouring development is likely to have been Miller's house. Miller advertised in July 1833 (prior to registering the conveyance) to employ two labourers at the North Shore.<sup>13</sup> Both Walker and Miller are recognised in the later government town reserve of St Leonards (North Sydney) by the naming of Miller and Walker streets. Miller evidently resided at Upton,<sup>14</sup> while Walker was probably resident at Euroka in the 1830s<sup>15</sup> and first half of the 1840s, although his duties took him away from Sydney periodically (he was in Port Macquarie in 1837 for example). The 1841 census return records Walker resident at a stone cottage on the North Shore in the company of a domestic staff of two males and three females.<sup>16</sup> Walker married Julia Bourke Ramsay in 1845, the eldest daughter of Deputy Commissary General Thomas Wharton Ramsay, at Holy Trinity (Garrison) Church, Millers Point,<sup>17</sup> and from this time until Walker's death in 1850 the couple lived at Victoria Terrace, Millers Point.<sup>18</sup> Euroka was let from around 1846, initially to the auctioneer Alexander Campbell Brown.<sup>19</sup>

Following Walker's death in 1850 his private property, household effects, carriage, etc., were sold immediately,<sup>20</sup> and his real property consisting of Euroka and 16 acres was bequeathed to trustees Alexander Berry and Thomas Wharton Ramsay for the benefit of his widow, Julia Bourke.<sup>21</sup> The property Mrs Walker inherited is described in a lease notice of 1847 as being:

Within a few minutes' walk of the Ferry at Blue's Point...(and)...having every convenience for a small family, with a well of excellent water, a large garden stocked with the finest fruit trees, in full bearing, and thirteen acres of land.<sup>22</sup>

This and subsequent descriptions of the extent of the land holding until 1873 state it as being 13 acres (5.3ha) and not the 16 acres stated in Walker's will.

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<sup>10</sup> Plan of the Government Reserve at the North Shore (LD S.1015) by Surveyor G. Ogilvie (SRNSW Map 5607).

<sup>11</sup> *Sydney Gazette* (SG), 24/8/1833, p 2

<sup>12</sup> *Sydney Gazette* (SG), 24/8/1833, p 2

<sup>13</sup> SG 11/7/1833, p.1

<sup>14</sup> SMH 11/1/1848, p.4

<sup>15</sup> SRNSW Map 5607, 5608 and 5609

<sup>16</sup> SRNSW X950 (Reel 2223) Return No. 43 (p.145)

<sup>17</sup> SMH 10/1/1845, p.3

<sup>18</sup> SMH 11/6/1850, p.3

<sup>19</sup> SMH 21/1/1847, p.4

<sup>20</sup> SMH 19/6/1850, p.3

<sup>21</sup> NSW Wills Series 1 No. 3034

<sup>22</sup> SMH 21/1/1847, p.4

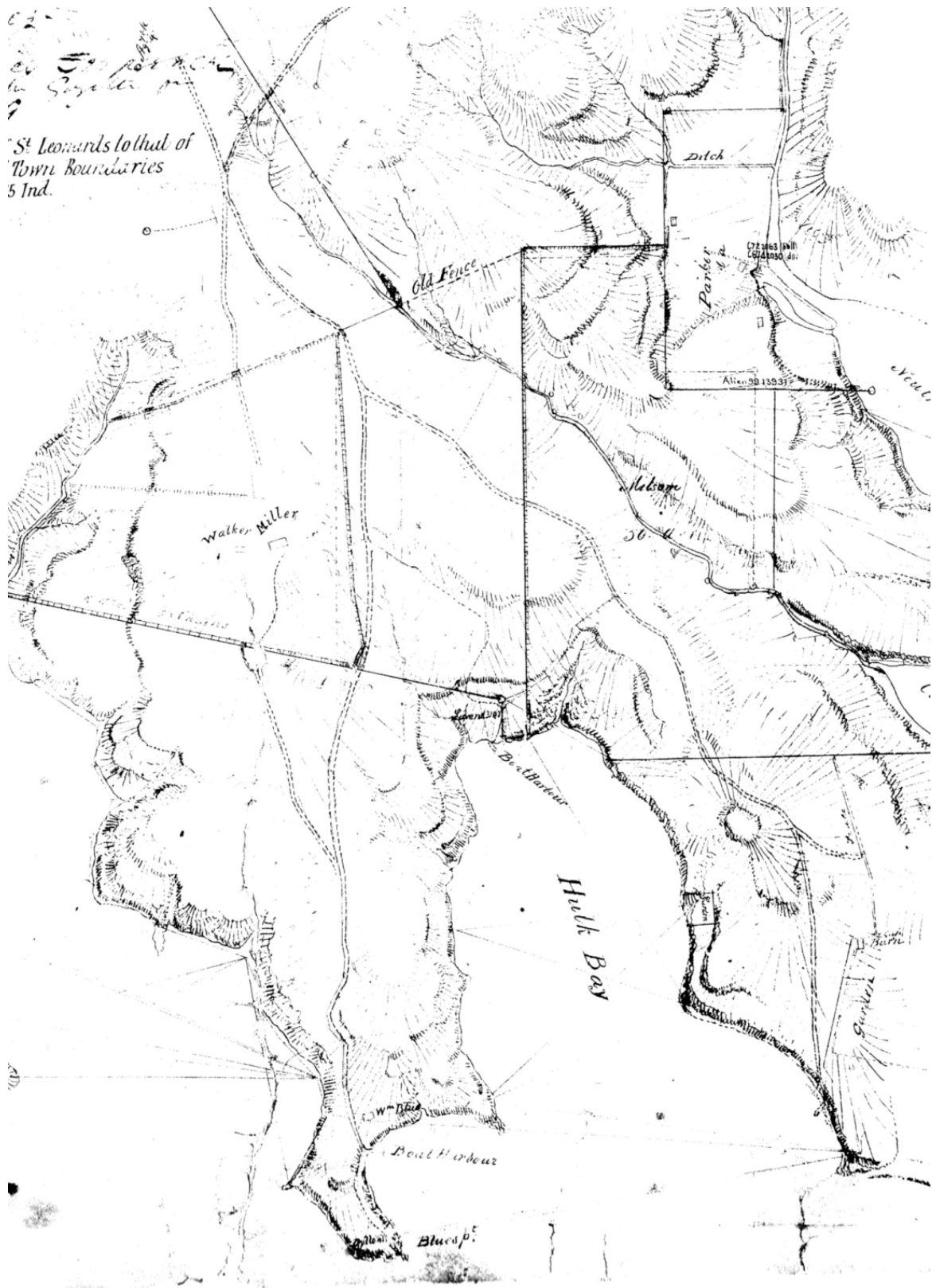


Figure 2 Plan of the Government Reserve at the North Shore surveyed by G Ogilvie in 1837. The survey shows both Walker and Millers' cottages and the track leading from the Blue family's ferry service to Sydney. The survey shows Miller's house directly east of Walker's in the location of the present day Shore School. This part of Sydney was very sparsely settled at this time. Source: Lands Department Plan S.1015 (SRNSW Map 5607).



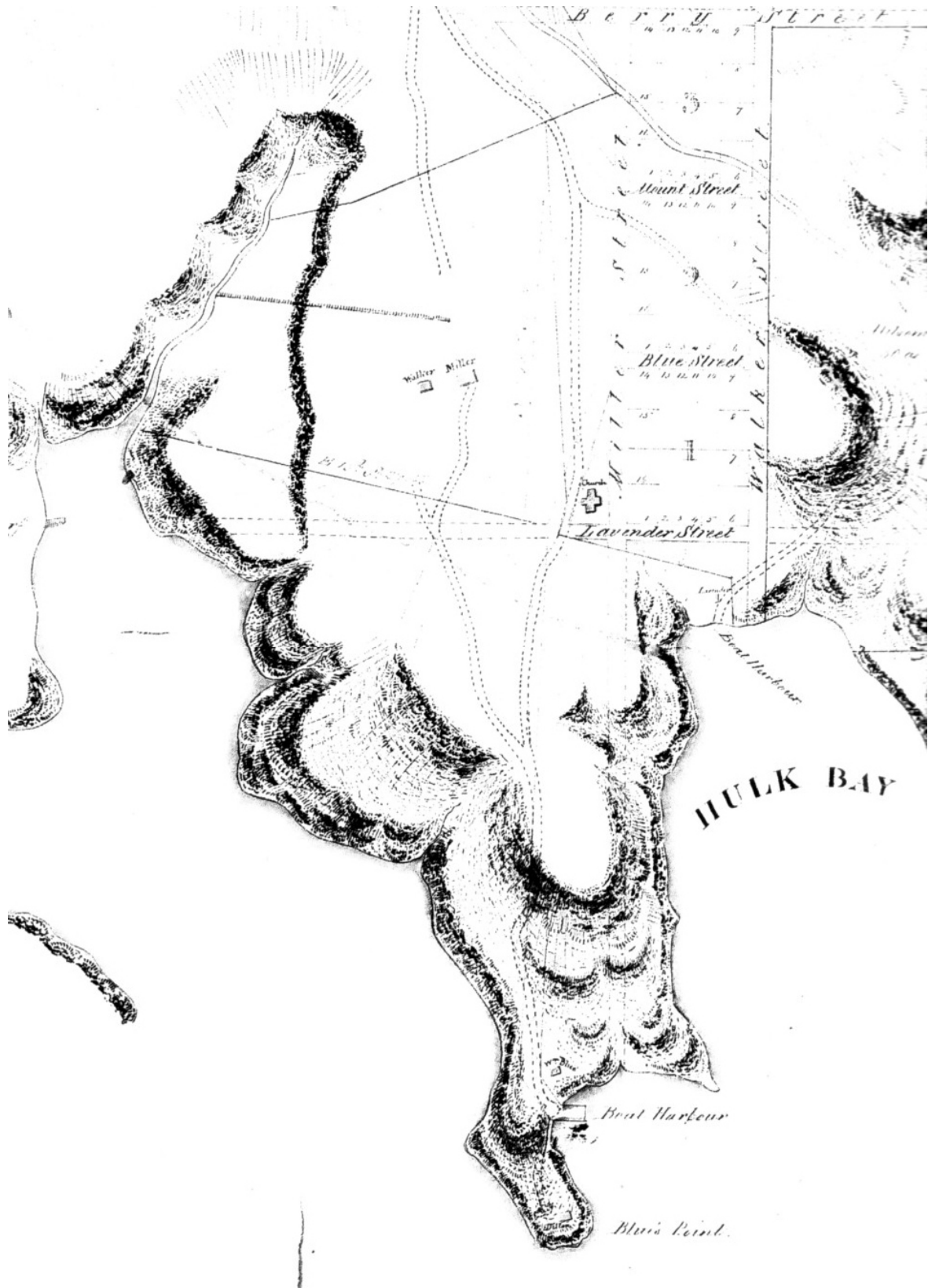


Figure 3 A plan of St Leonards (now north Sydney) Town Reserve by Deputy Surveyor General Perry, dated 29 November 1838, showing the houses of Walker and Miller and naming of streets after them. Source: Lands Department Plan S.1015b (SRNSW Map 5609).

It is not known if Mrs Walker resided at Euroka for by early 1852 the property was once again being advertised for lease. The lease notice described Euroka Cottage as being:

Within ten minutes' walk of the Steam Ferry, Blues' Point, containing entrance hall, six rooms, pantry and cellar, a detached kitchen, laundry, and store-room; also a stable, coach and cow houses, a large yard, with constant supply of the purest water; a front verandah, (not given) feet long, extensive pleasure grounds, a kitchen garden and orchard, a small vineyard and paddock.<sup>23</sup>

In addition there was a 'wooden hut' at 'back of the cottage'. While the cottage is known to have been sketched by Conrad Martens, it does not appear to have survived,<sup>24</sup> but a 1860s photograph of the cottage shows a stone building with a low hipped roof and skillion roof verandah (Figure 4). The principal elevation faced south to the harbour and the growing city of Sydney.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3.1 Edwin Mawney Sayers (1853-1873)

Euroka Cottage was sold to the Sydney mercer George Collison Tuting in January 1853 for £1,500. The property in this conveyance comprised 13 acres.<sup>26</sup> Tuting only held the property for several months for it was sold in late November 1853 to Edwin Mawney Sayers for £3,900.<sup>27</sup> Tuting had attempted to sell the cottage with seven acres of land, with the balance of the estate being cut into 14 allotments fronting Blue Street (now Union Street).<sup>28</sup> The brevity of ownership and proposed subdivision suggests Tuting's interest was for speculative development at a time when property values were rapidly rising following the discovery of gold. The property is described in the sale notice as:

Euroka Villa is a substantial stone-built cottage, the walls of which are two feet thick, and were originally erected with the intention of having an upper storey. It has a verandah on three sides, and contains six rooms, with extensive cellarage and out offices. The Garden contains an acre of highly cultivated land, well stocked with choice fruit trees, and a portion laid out as a vineyard in terraces. The whole property is enclosed with a paling fence. The supply of water is good, and never known to fail.<sup>29</sup>

The auctioneer noted the property was well known as the residence of the late Commissary General Walker. In this advertisement the building's status had been raised by the auctioneer from cottage to villa although evidently there had been no material improvements. This single storey, verandahed, stone dwelling and its garden are shown in a photograph of the 1860s when in Sayers' occupation.<sup>30</sup>

Sayers (1818-1909) was born in England and arrived in Tasmania in 1834. He later moved to Melbourne where he represented the Bank of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). He was declared insolvent in 1842 and by 1845 he had relocated to Sydney where he became a successful owner of coastal trading vessels.<sup>31</sup> He was the first to run a shipping line between Sydney and Melbourne trading as the Port Phillip Packet Company.

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<sup>23</sup> SMH 12/1/1852, p.3

<sup>24</sup> Russell, Eric, *The Opposite Shore: North Sydney and its people*, North Shore Historical Society and the Council of the Municipality of North Sydney, 1990, p.84

<sup>25</sup> Stanton Library Image 2796

<sup>26</sup> LD Property Deed Bk. 186 No. 25

<sup>27</sup> LD Property Deed Bk. 841 No. 29

<sup>28</sup> SMH 2/9/53, p.7

<sup>29</sup> SMH 2/9/53, p.7

<sup>30</sup> Stanton Library Image 2796

<sup>31</sup> SMH 28/10/1845, p2

Sayers represented St Leonards in the Legislative Assembly between June 1859 and 1860 and was a founder of the North Sydney School of Arts and warden of St Thomas' Anglican Church.<sup>32</sup> He married his second wife, Mary Ann Hayman, in 1844 and the couple had four daughters and three sons, a daughter and a son being born at Euroka.<sup>33</sup>

As noted in the 2000 CMP, Sayers occupied Euroka after his purchase and remained there until 1868. As a merchant seeking to use all of his available capital and with the problems of unexpected calls being made upon his capital resources, from unexpected financial crises or due to the vagaries of shipping weather, Sayers needed to use his real property as security for loans. In July 1855, as security for advances from the drapers David Jones and Samuel Symonds, and Thomas Thompson, gentleman, Sayers passed them the deeds to Euroka.<sup>34</sup> These same deeds were deposited in March 1860 with the Union Bank as security for another loan, and his financial affairs became increasingly precarious over that year. In April 1860 Sayers conveyed the title to all his real and personal property to Clark Irving and others as trustees for the benefit of Sayers' creditors. Sayers regained the title to Euroka in September 1862 by the repayment of £5,000.<sup>35</sup> However, the property was re-mortgaged again in August 1863 to David Painter McEwan and Christopher Newtown for £4,137.<sup>36</sup>

Sayers' financial affairs deteriorated during the 1860s for in February 1867 his estate was sequestrated with debts amounting to £10,792 16s and assets put at £8,754 10s the official assignee being Robert Sempill. From Sempill's tally of Sayers' assets it is apparent Euroka and its 13 acres was Sayers' primary asset with its value put at value at £8,500 notwithstanding a mortgage of £6137 on the property. His other assets comprised furniture (£180), clothing (£30), a pair of watches (£17), a horse (£7), two cows (£12), saddles and bridle (£7) and poultry.<sup>37</sup>

The insolvency proceedings wound up in October 1867 with Sayers losing ownership of Euroka, and while he and his family continued to live there until early 1868, by March 1868 the furniture had been sold<sup>38</sup> and the house was up for lease and in the hands of a mortgagee<sup>39</sup> until its sale in 1873. After Sayers' departure, the house was leased between 1869 and 1871 by Alexander James Ralston, secretary of the Australian Mutual Provident Society and father of a number of prominent lawyers.<sup>40</sup>

The bankruptcy proceedings provide valuable insight into the layout of the house, its furnishings, and the grounds. In June 1867 the property was surveyed by FH Reuss with the intention of subdividing the estate into eight lots. This survey provides the first record of the footprint of the house and its outbuildings, as well as the location of the drive, garden and orchard.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)

<sup>33</sup> SMH; 28/5/1855 and 5/4/1858

<sup>34</sup> *LD Property Bk.* 82 No. 374 cited in Graham Edds & Associates, 'Graythwaite, 20 Edward Street, North Sydney, Conservation Plan Review', February 2000, (Edds 2000) p.3-7

<sup>35</sup> *LD Property Deed Bk.* 82 No. 374 cited in Edds 2000, p.3-7

<sup>36</sup> *LD Property Deed Bk.* 84 No. 696 cited in Edds 2000, p.3-7

<sup>37</sup> NSW Insolvency File No. 8173 at SRNSW

<sup>38</sup> SMH 13/3/1868, p.7

<sup>39</sup> SMH 21/3/1868 and SMH 21/4/1868

<sup>40</sup> North Sydney Municipal Council (NSMC) Rate Valuations cited in Edds 2000, p.3-11 and ABR

<sup>41</sup> Mitchell Library – Sydney Subdivision Plans – North Sydney (N11/122)

In July 1867 the property was offered at auction in twelve lots, Lot 1 being the house with grounds described as:

EUROKA HOUSE This well-known, beautifully sited villa residence is most substantially built of stone, and contains a magnificent drawing-room 24 feet square, a spacious dining-room, breakfast room, library, 5 bedrooms, bath, and dressing-rooms, cellars, and the following out-offices: kitchen, servant's room, store room, laundry, coach-house, stable, and loft, fowl-house, cow shed, &c. The whole of the premises are remarkably well finished, drained, and fitted with every family convenience.

The GROUNDS contain an area of 5 acres 3 roods and 9 perches, with private carriage entrance from Union-street, and are tastefully laid out. The portion at the rear paddock is a paddock extending down to a creek.<sup>42</sup>

Another sale notice of the time notes the grounds were laid out as lawn and garden.<sup>43</sup>

A photographic record of the exterior of the house shows a one-storey verandahed house and two-storey wing with balconies, both of stone but dissimilar in their detail (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The single-storey house matches the description of the 1853 sale notice and was erected by Walker in the 1830s. The two-storey house was an addition erected for Sayers sometime between 1853 and 1867. This house faces south to the harbour and took in the view by a bay window and balconies. As Sayers is known to have engaged the architect and surveyor James Hume in 1863 to undertake a survey and valuation of his property<sup>44</sup> it is feasible Hume designed the addition to Euroka given that Hume advertised in July 1857 for builders to submit a tender to erect additions to a house at St Leonards, North Sydney,<sup>45</sup> although descendants of Sayers state the construction date was 1859.

### 1.3.2 Banker Thomas Allwright Dibbs and the Subdivision of Euroka (1873)

In 1873 Euroka comprising an area of 16a 1r 6p (about 6.6ha) was purchased from Sawyers' mortgagees, McEwen and Newton, by Thomas Allwright Dibbs for £4,500. The contract was signed in May and the title issued in December, although Dibbs' brother, George Richard Dibbs, was in occupation by July for the reasons below.<sup>46</sup> The delay in completing the sale was due to the requirement placed on Thomas Dibbs by the mortgagees to bring the property under the provisions of the *Real Property Act*. This necessitated a survey of the property prior to the issue of a Torrens Title and in the process the discrepancy in the land area stated in the conveyance of 1853 (13 acres) and Walker's will (16 acres) was investigated, resolved and settled on 16 acres 1 rood 6 perches.<sup>47</sup>

More than one Torrens Title was issued in December 1873 and this suggests Thomas Dibbs acquired Euroka with the intention of subdividing the expansive land holding just as Tutting and Sayers had contemplated in the 1850s and 1860s. This subdivision reduced the land area associated with Euroka to 5a 1r 32p (2.4 ha), which is less than the existing site area (2.7ha).<sup>48</sup> This reduced area comprised the main residence and all known outbuildings, the drive to Union Street, and secondary access to Edward Street.<sup>49</sup> The frontage to Union Street was enlarged in 1874, bringing the site area to 6a 2r 23¾p (2.7ha),<sup>50</sup> which was the area gifted to the Crown (NSW Government) in 1915.

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<sup>42</sup> SMH 6/7/1867, p.11

<sup>43</sup> SMH 4/2/1867

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Edds 2000, p.3-7

<sup>45</sup> SMH 17/7/1857

<sup>46</sup> LD Property Certificate of Title (CT) Vol. 172 Fols. 35-38 and Primary Application 3435

<sup>47</sup> Recounted in Edds 2000, p.3-11

<sup>48</sup> LD Property CT Vol. 172 Fol. 38.

<sup>49</sup> LD Deposited Plan 53435.

<sup>50</sup> LD Property CT Vol. 881 Fol. 79.



Figure 4 Euroka Cottage constructed by Thomas Walker in 1833 and in the occupation of the Sayers family at the time of this undated, but probably 1860s, photograph.  
Source: Stanton Library Image 2796.



Figure 5 The western elevation of the two-storey addition to Euroka Villa completed by Sayers in the 1850s. Note the flagstaff at right—Sayers had business interests in shipping.  
Source: Stanton Library Image 2795.



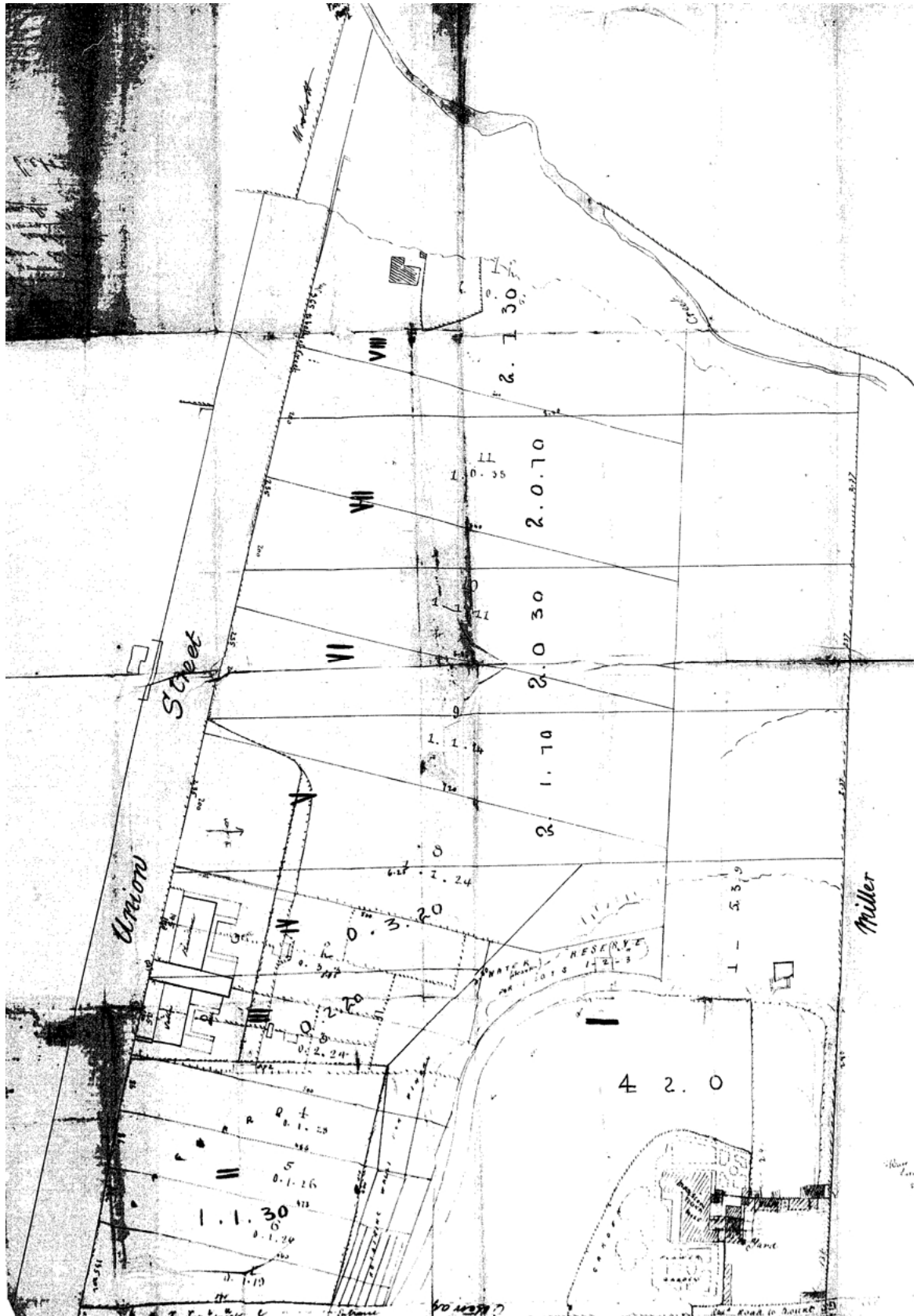


Figure 6 A plan of the Euroka estate prepared in 1867 for a proposed subdivision. The survey shows that Sayers had erected a pair of stone semi-detached dwellings on Union Street.  
Source: Mitchell Library—Sydney Suburban Subdivision Plans—North Sydney—N11/122.

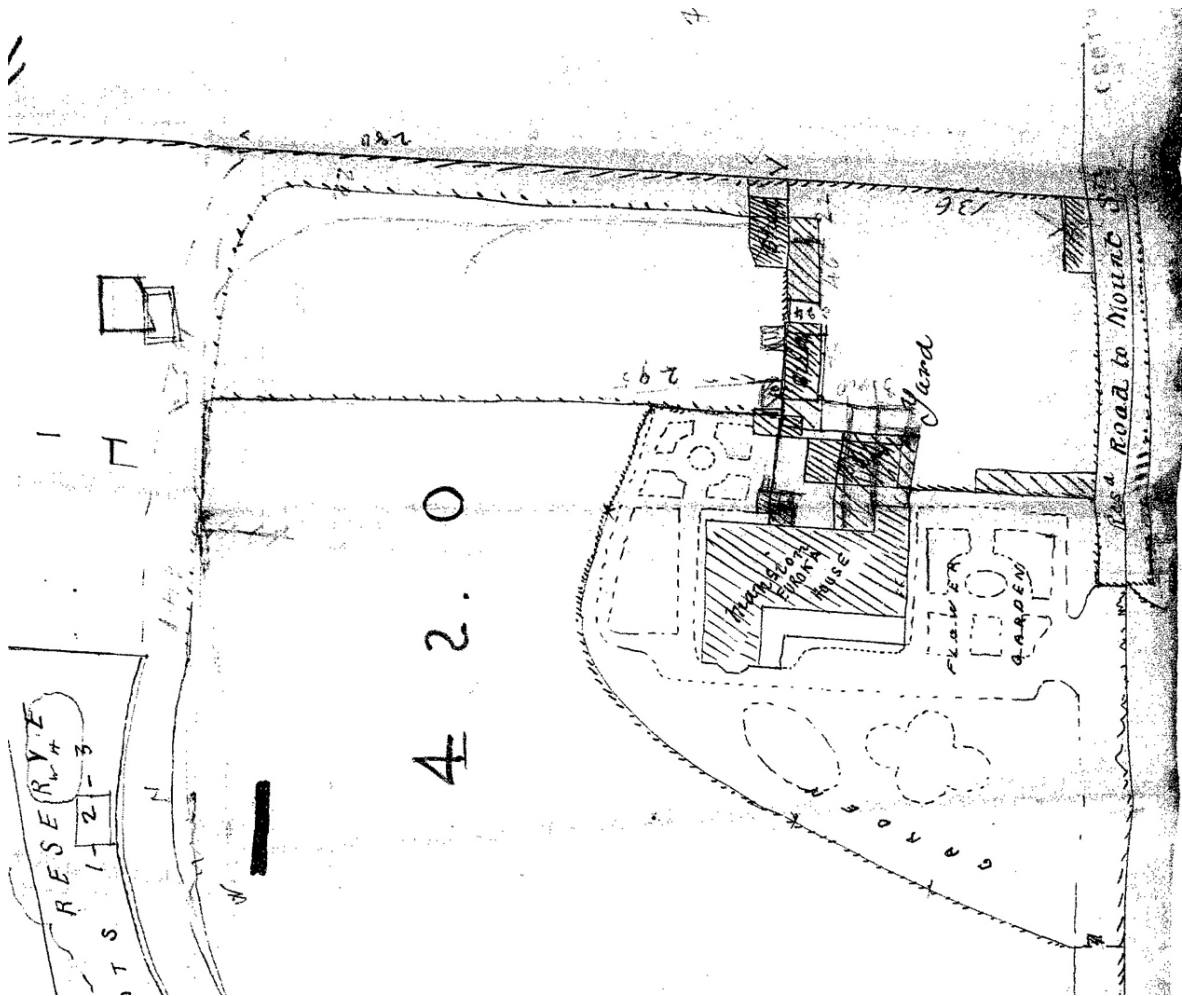


Figure 7 The footprint of Euroka in 1867 showing the two-storey addition with a bow window erected by the Sayers family, probably in the 1850s, and the earlier single-storey stone cottage erected by Thomas Walker in 1833. this survey shows the collection of outbuildings to the north of the house and orientated to the east. Descriptions of Euroka over the 1830s, 1850s and 1860s mention the immediate garden setting of the house and this is shown on the survey. A photographic record of the eastern (flower) garden is shown in Figure 4.  
Source: Mitchell Library—Sydney Suburban Subdivision Plans—North Sydney—N11/122.

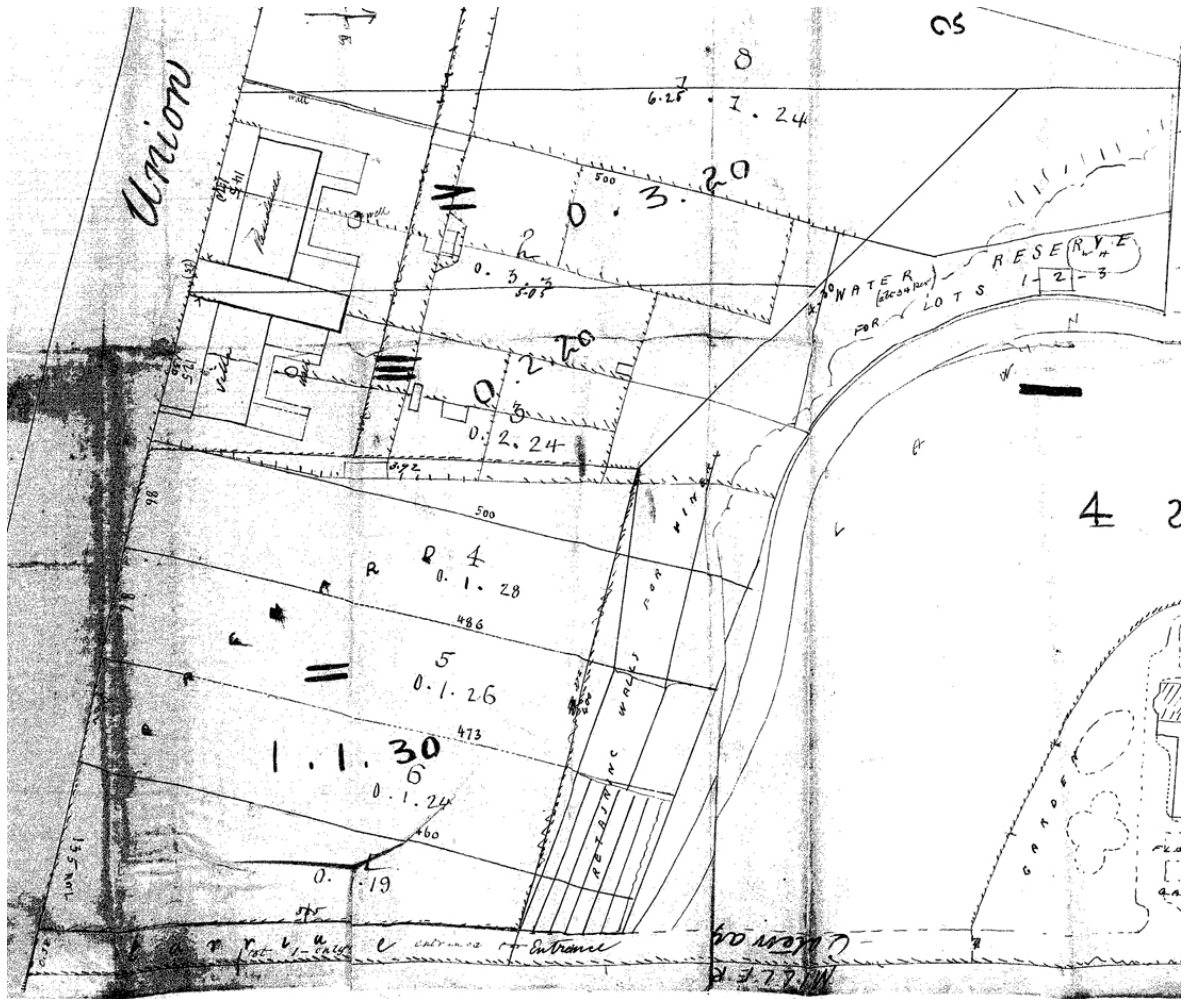


Figure 8 The lower garden of Euroka in 1867 showing the location of the orchard (approximately 1 acre is size) adjacent to Union Street and retaining walls and vineyard to the north and above the orchard. It also shows an upper lawn and water reserve within a band of rock outcrops. The description of Euroka in 1853 noted *an acre of highly cultivated land, well stocked with choice fruit trees, and a portion of land laid out as a vineyard in terraces* and these are all shown on the survey. Source: Mitchell Library—Sydney Suburban Subdivision Plans—North Sydney—N11/122.



The balance of land was subdivided for cottage allotments offered for sale during the late 1870s and early 1880s. The first, Euroka Estate, offered for sale from December 1873, fronted Union and Bank Streets.<sup>51</sup> Some of the allotments fronting Union Street (34-40 Union Street) contained stone semi-detached dwellings that had been erected for Sayers in the 1860s.<sup>52</sup> These buildings, built for letting, were put up for sale in 1876 as the Euroka Villas.<sup>53</sup> The allotments fronting Bank Street were put up for sale in 1874 on favourable terms and marketed as 'freehold homes for every man'.<sup>54</sup> The last subdivision was the Euroka Heights Estate, offered for sale in 1882, which comprised 56 allotments along Euroka Street, Lavender Street, Clifton Street, Carr Street and Union Street.<sup>55</sup>

Although Euroka was held in the name of Thomas Dibbs, it was in effect owned by his brother George Dibbs. George Dibbs' claim to the property was not registered officially by way of mortgage, but by a written understanding or memorandum showing that Euroka was George Dibbs' subject to repayment of a debt owed to his brother covering the expense of the purchase of the property. This arrangement was revealed in legal action taken by John Shepherd in 1880 for the compulsory sequestration of George Dibbs' estate for a debt of £100, Sandeman being the official assignee.<sup>56</sup> During the proceedings in the Insolvency Court George Dibbs was languishing in Darlinghurst Gaol, imprisoned for slander related to the divorce proceedings of his brother John whose wife had committed adultery with her solicitor, the aforementioned John Shepherd.<sup>57</sup>

In evidence presented to the Court, George Dibbs' debt to his brother was about £24,000, most of this owing on George Dibbs' wharf development at present day Walsh Bay.<sup>58</sup> In respect of Euroka an agreement had been made in December 1873 for Thomas Dibbs to sell to George Dibbs the house and about five acres of the grounds for £2,700 with £1,700 being paid at the time and the balance being drawn from Mrs George Dibbs' trust fund. A further portion of the estate, about 1½ acre, was sold to George Dibbs for £794 a short time later by another unregistered dealing.<sup>59</sup>

### 1.3.3 Merchant and politician George Richard Dibbs' Euroka (1873-1882)

The configuration of the house, as seen today, largely dates from George Dibbs' occupancy. The documentary evidence for this is the auction sale in June 1880 arising from the aforementioned insolvency proceedings. This notice described Euroka as:

A commodious family residence built of stone, and containing the following large accommodation-On the basement floor, large, lofty and dry cellars

On the ground floor, wide hall, immense dining-room with folding doors, drawing room and sitting room

On the first floor, large landing, six good bedrooms, bath and W.C. On the second floor, seven bedrooms

On the roof, a large observatory

The outbuildings comprise – kitchen and two servants' rooms above, pantry, laundry, &c., besides stables and other out-conveniences. The grounds are tastefully laid out, and have been highly improved at considerable expense.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>51</sup> SMH 17/12/1873

<sup>52</sup> Sands Directory.

<sup>53</sup> SMH 16/3/1876, p.11.

<sup>54</sup> SMH 11/4/1874, p.5.

<sup>55</sup> SMH 18/11/1882, p.22.

<sup>56</sup> SMH 6/8/80, p.3; SMH 20/8/80, p.3. The file recording the insolvency is not available at State Records of NSW.

<sup>57</sup> Mansfield, Bruce E., 'Dibbs, Sir George Richard (1834 - 1904)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp 65-69 (Mansfield 1972)

<sup>58</sup> SMH 30/11/80, p.7

SMH 13/12/81, p.7.

<sup>59</sup> SMH 9/12/80, p.3.

<sup>60</sup> SMH 21/6/1880, p.7.

The actual date of the alterations is not known, however, it is likely to have occurred in the mid-1870s based on the local council rate assessments that recorded an increase of improved capital value from £130 in 1875 to £200 per annum in 1876,<sup>61</sup> and a series of c1875 photographs showing the southern garden setting and drive under construction.<sup>62</sup> The house is orientated to the harbour and once looked to Dibbs' wharfage at Millers Point. The architect is not known and no plan exists of the floor layout. The redevelopment of the property was undertaken in the context of the suburban housing blocks along Union Street and Bank Street that were formed by Thomas Dibbs' subdivision.

George Richard Dibbs (1834-1904) was born in Sydney, the youngest surviving son of merchant sea captain, John, and Sophia Elizabeth (nee Allwright). Around 1854 he entered into business in his eldest brother's commission agency trading as J.C. Dibbs and Co. In 1857 he married Annie Maria, the daughter of Ralph M Robey, and for a brief period joined his father-in-law's business which ranged from shipping interests to sugar-refining and distilling. In 1865 he voyaged to Valparaíso, Chile to set up a branch office trading in wheat and coal. The failure of the local Agra Bank brought the end of both the agency and the Sydney office in 1866. The brothers' creditors were repaid over the following decade and both were released from bankruptcy in 1875.

In December 1874 Dibbs was elected to the Legislative Assembly representing the seat of West Sydney as a supporter of local business and city interests. The timing of Dibbs' electoral success coincides with the likely date of the additions undertaken to Euroka as revealed by the change in the local council's rating of the value of the property. Dibbs lost his seat in the elections of 1877, but was returned to the Legislative Assembly in the election of December 1882 representing the seat of St Leonards, but by this time Dibbs had vacated Euroka. He retired from politics in 1895 serving as premier on three occasions. He was awarded a knighthood in 1892 and died in 1904.

The 1880 sale description reveals the number of bedrooms, eleven in total, something of the large size of GR Dibbs' family, which consisted of nine daughters and two sons; being Walter Robey (1859), Sophia C T (1860), Annie L (1861), Laura A B (1863), Mary (1866), Maude (1868), Kate (1869), Leslie G (1870), John A (1871), Mabel (1873), Eleanor (c.1875) and Ida Gordon (1875).<sup>63</sup>

#### **1.3.4 Banker Thomas Allwright Dibbs and Graythwaite (1882-1915)**

The insolvency proceedings instigated against George Dibbs in 1880 came to involve his brother Thomas Allwright Dibbs over 1881. To bring matters to a close, the two brothers resolved in February 1882 to enter into an agreement that resulted in Thomas Dibbs paying George Dibbs' official assignee, Alfred Sandeman to release his brother from sequestration. Thomas Dibbs in return gained ownership of Euroka and Dibbs' Wharf. The agreement included the proviso that Thomas Dibbs would place Euroka and a half share in Dibbs' Wharf under offer to George Dibbs. In the event, Thomas Dibbs allegedly reneged on the agreement and 'sold' Euroka in March 1882 for £10,800. The sale of Euroka is not recorded in any public document and was in fact mortgaged in February 1882 for £8,000. The mortgage was to a North Shore widow, Jean Old.

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<sup>61</sup> NSMC Rate Book, Borough of Victoria, 1875, entry 245; 1876, entry 245; 1877, entry 253 cited in Edds 2000, p.3-20.

<sup>62</sup> Mitchell Library - *Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company, Home and Away* 40257-40261.

<sup>63</sup> NSW BDM Indexes On-Line  
Dibbs biography, 1971

Thomas Allwright Dibbs (1832-1923) was a banker who spent his entire professional life with the now defunct Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. He was the second son of John and Sophia Elizabeth Dibbs. He was born in Sydney and like his brother, George, attended the Australian College. He began work at the Commercial Banking Company at 14, became its accountant in 1857, inspector in 1860, manager in March 1867, and general manager in 1882 around the time he moved into Graythwaite. Dibbs had a reputation for skilful management, clear judgment, quick perception, decisive action and genuine concern for the welfare of the bank's employees.<sup>64</sup>

On acquiring outright ownership of Euroka in 1882, Thomas Dibbs renamed the estate Graythwaite and took up residence.<sup>65</sup> The origin of the name appears to have been derived from Graythwaite Hall in the Lakes District of Cumbria, a place favoured by the poet William Wordsworth. Graythwaite Hall was the home of the Burton family, which had a familial association with the Dibbs and Gadens.<sup>66</sup> Dibbs' wife, Tryphena, was the daughter of William Hart Gaden and Eliza Burton Gaden. The couple had married in 1829, the published marriage notice stated:

Wm. HART GADEN, Esq., merchant, St. John's, Newfoundland, to MISS ELIZA BURTON, of Graythwaite-hall, Windermere, Westmorland.

It is likely that some alterations were undertaken around this time to suit the needs of the new family and it is known that a Raleigh Patent hot water service was installed in 1883.<sup>67</sup> An 1891 survey of the grounds shows the outbuildings included an additional coach house. This coach house is constructed with a cream colour brick that is also present in the chimney of the 1830s stables and also the Dibbs' property Kailoa on Union Street, which is known to have been erected around 1884.<sup>68</sup>

Dibbs married Tryphena, the daughter of the late William Hart Gaden, in 1857 at St John the Baptist, Ashfield.<sup>69</sup> Gaden arrived in Sydney c1845 as the first Consul for Belgium appointed to NSW. The couple had six daughters and a son: Tom Burton (1858), Isabella Cecilia (Lily), Ellen Mary (1863-1956), Tryphena Agnes (1865), Jessie Lessingham (1871-1958), Winifred Hatton (1876), and Dorothy C (1883).<sup>70</sup> Some of these children were brought up at Graythwaite, and this, such as the birth of Dorothy in 1883, necessitated the engagement of a wet nurse.<sup>71</sup> In addition, Thomas Dibbs' mother, Sophia Elizabeth, also lived with the family at Graythwaite as she died there in 1891.<sup>72</sup>

Thomas Dibbs provided houses for some of his children and grand children on their marriage. The only son, Tom Burton (1882-1921) married Annie Dalrymple-Hay in 1884. Kailoa at 44 Union Street was built for the couple around this time.<sup>73</sup> Initially located within the greater Graythwaite Estate, its existing allotment was established in 1888.<sup>74</sup> When Dibbs acquired the neighbouring Holtermann estate in 1886 he established a right of way from Union Street to a pair of allotments that were developed for the residences Elsemere and Bishopsgate.<sup>75</sup> Elsemere was erected soon after for the solicitor Charles William Gaden and his wife Isabella Cecilia, Thomas Dibbs' daughter.<sup>76</sup> Marilbah was erected in early 1888 for Hugh Hamon Massie and his wife Tryphena Agnes.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>64</sup> (Mansfield 1972)

<sup>65</sup> *Sands Directory*, 1883.

<sup>66</sup> Wikipedia and Dibbs biography.

<sup>67</sup> *SMH* 2/8/84, p.5.

<sup>68</sup> *Sands Directory*

<sup>69</sup> *SMH* 9/4/1857, p.10

<sup>70</sup> NSW BD&M Indexes On-line.

<sup>71</sup> *SMH* 3/9/1883 p.10.

<sup>72</sup> *SMH* 22/10/1891, p.1.

<sup>73</sup> *Sands Directory*

<sup>74</sup> LD Property CT Vol. 881 Fol. 88

<sup>75</sup> LD Property CT Vol. 802 Fol. 193

<sup>76</sup> *Sands Directory*, Dibbs family bio

<sup>77</sup> LD Property CT Vol. 880 Fol. 43



Figure 9 The panorama of Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company taken from the Holtermann residence, in the mid 1870s.

Source: State Library of NSW—Home and Away—40257-40259.



Figure 10 The panorama of Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company taken from the Holtermann residence, in the mid 1870s. This image shows the gate (at right) to the Euroka entry driveway on Union Street.  
Source: State Library of NSW—Home and Away—40259.



Figure 11 Detail of the panorama of Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company taken from the Holtermann residence, in the mid 1870s. This image shows the rear of the houses

fronting Union Street erected by Edwin Sayers in the 1860s. It also shows a new fence on the boundaries of allotments set out by Thomas Dibbs in 1873 and young trees lining the entry drive. Source: State Library of NSW—Home and Away—40258.



Figure 12 Detail of the panorama of Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company taken from the Holtermann residence, in the mid 1870s. This image shows the formation of the drive and recently planted trees. Note the flagstaff—Dibbs owned a wharf on the opposite shore. Source: State Library of NSW—Home and Away—40257.

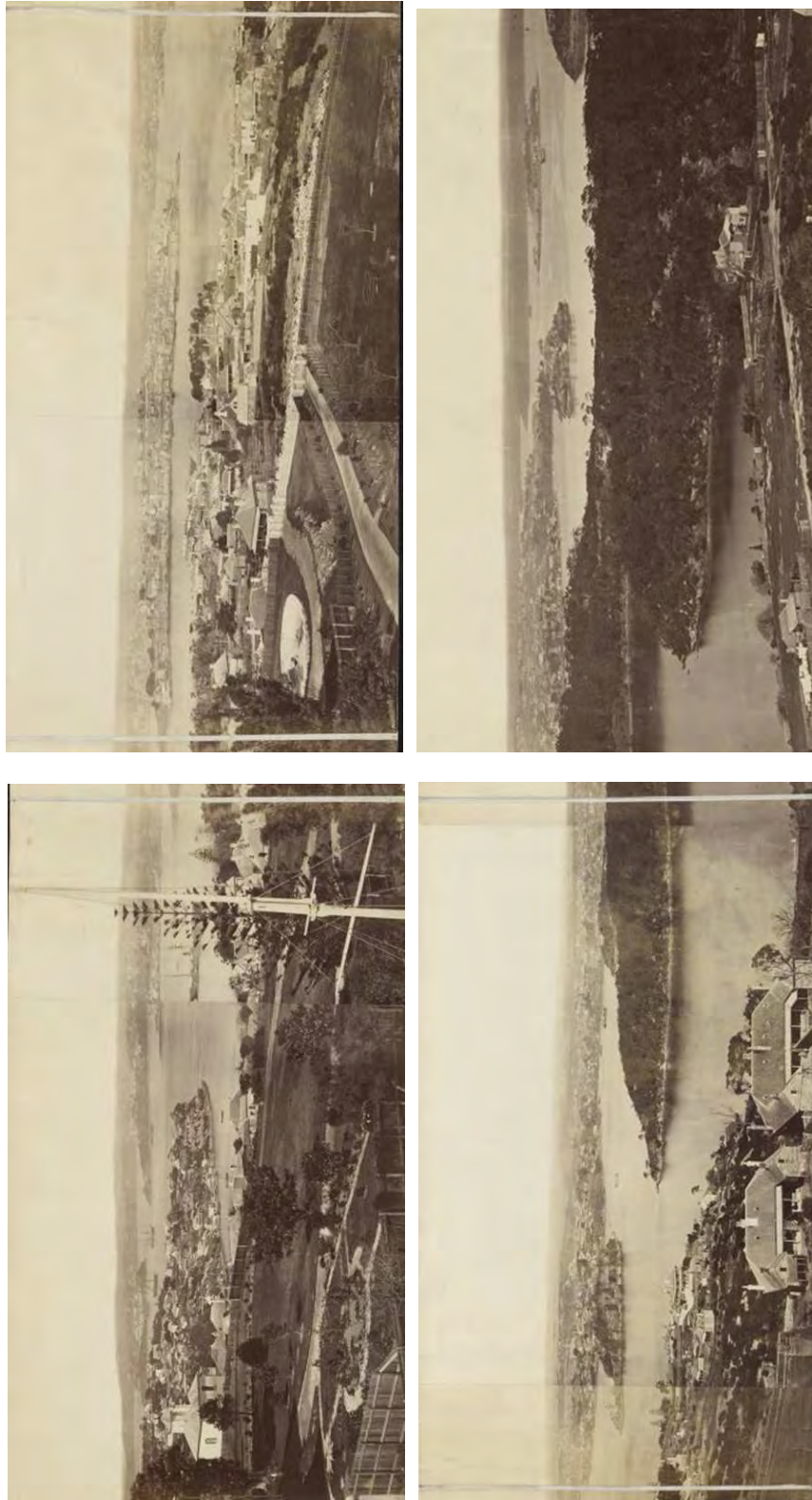


Figure 13 The panorama of Sydney Harbour by Charles Bayliss taken from the roof of Euroka/Graythwaite in the mid-1870s.  
Source: National Library of Australia—pic-vn4266082-a2.





Figure 14 Detail of the panorama of Sydney Harbour by Charles Bayliss taken from the roof of Euroka/Graythwaite in the mid-1870s. This image shows the entry gate on Union Street and lower part of the entry drive.

Source: National Library of Australia—pic-vn4266082-a2.



Figure 15 Possibly part of the panorama of Sydney Harbour by the American & Australasian Photographic Company taken from the Holtermann residence, in the mid 1870s. This image shows the main yard of Euroka and the recently completed Upton Grange beyond. Note the trees lining the entry to Edward Street—they are more advanced than those planted in the south part of the site. Note also the single-storey (now two-storey) kitchen wing (with missing chimney) at left, stone stables at centre and another timber-framed outbuilding. The yard has a relatively large amount of debris suggesting that the photograph was taken at the time of the additions to the house c1875-1876. Source: State Library of NSW—Home and Away—42273.





Figure 16 Euroka, probably after the alterations and additions were undertaken by George Dibbs. A Bernard Goode photograph, undated but probably mid-1870s.  
Source: National Library.

Graythwaite was completed at a time when servants were mandatory in any household of social status and a mansion required a cook, kitchen and housemaids, while the management of the grounds and stables required gardeners, coachmen, and grooms. There is little information for the number of servants employed, aside from Mrs Thomas Dibbs' advertisements for a young woman for duties as cook and laundress,<sup>78</sup> a coachman,<sup>79</sup> a parlour maid<sup>80</sup> and a boy to milk the cow or cows.<sup>81</sup> Today, the rooms in which they waited, served and slept remain. The cost of running such large houses and large gardens eventually became too expensive for the middle classes, necessitating their sale and sometimes demolition around 1900-1910, Graythwaite being a rare survivor.

Dibbs was a man of influence in the City and a doyen in the Australian banking community. His opinions on banking and finance were much respected and his advice was sought often by the New South Wales government.<sup>82</sup> He was part of a small, cosy business world dominated by families such as the Fairfaxes, Horderns, Knoxes, etc.<sup>83</sup> As such, Graythwaite was both a family home and a place to stage entertainments on a large scale. The following account of a ball given in the spring of 1895 provides some insight into the late Victorian social world Thomas Dibbs mixed in:

Mrs TA Dibbs on Tuesday evening last gave a dance at Graythwaite to about 160 guests, the majority of whom were young people, who entered into the entertainment with all the zest of youth. .. The broad verandahs were closed-in, lighted, carpeted, and furnished with cosy seats, the hall and drawing-room were decorated with handsome foliage plants, whilst clusters of yellow and white lilies, and the deep purple iris, with a number of pure white blossoms in large roses met the eye on all sides. Mr and Mrs and Miss Dibbs welcomed their friends, and very quickly the ballroom – the music room – with its polished parquet floor and Mr Alma Hardy at the piano - was filled with gay dancers.. From the upper balcony and the roof from time to time the lovely night view of the harbour was admired. ... Throughout the evening refreshments were served in a morning room and at 11 o'clock Mr Dibbs led the way to the supper room (dining-room), where a charming florally-decorated table was laden with sumptuous supper .. White gowns predominated ... (and) there were several pretty yellow frocks .. The return trip across the harbour, to the Sydney visitors, was quite refreshing after the dance, which all declared highly enjoyable.<sup>84</sup>

This account indicates the drawing room at Graythwaite was periodically used to stage dances and other entertainments. The accounts of the marriages of the daughters provide further examples; in the instance of Winifred Hatton Dibbs marriage to Walter Edward Mitchell in 1904 the account noted:

The reception-rooms (being) decorated with a profusion of flowers, pot plants, and ferns. Refreshments were served in the dining-room, and a band played during the afternoon. Owing to the uncertain conditions of the weather, the verandahs were enclosed, and the visitors entertained indoors.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> SMH 15/2/1888, p.18.

<sup>79</sup> SMH 11/4/1887, p10.

<sup>80</sup> SMH 27/6/1893, p8.

<sup>81</sup> SMH 16/6/1891 p.12.

<sup>82</sup> Abbott, G. J., 'Dibbs, Sir Thomas Allwright (1832 - 1923)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp 69-70 (Abbott 1972)

<sup>83</sup> Salisbury S., and K. Sweeney, *The Bull, the Bear & the Kangaroo: the History of the Sydney Stock Exchange*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p.251.

<sup>84</sup> SMH 14/9/1895, p.7.

<sup>85</sup> SMH 30/4/1904, p7

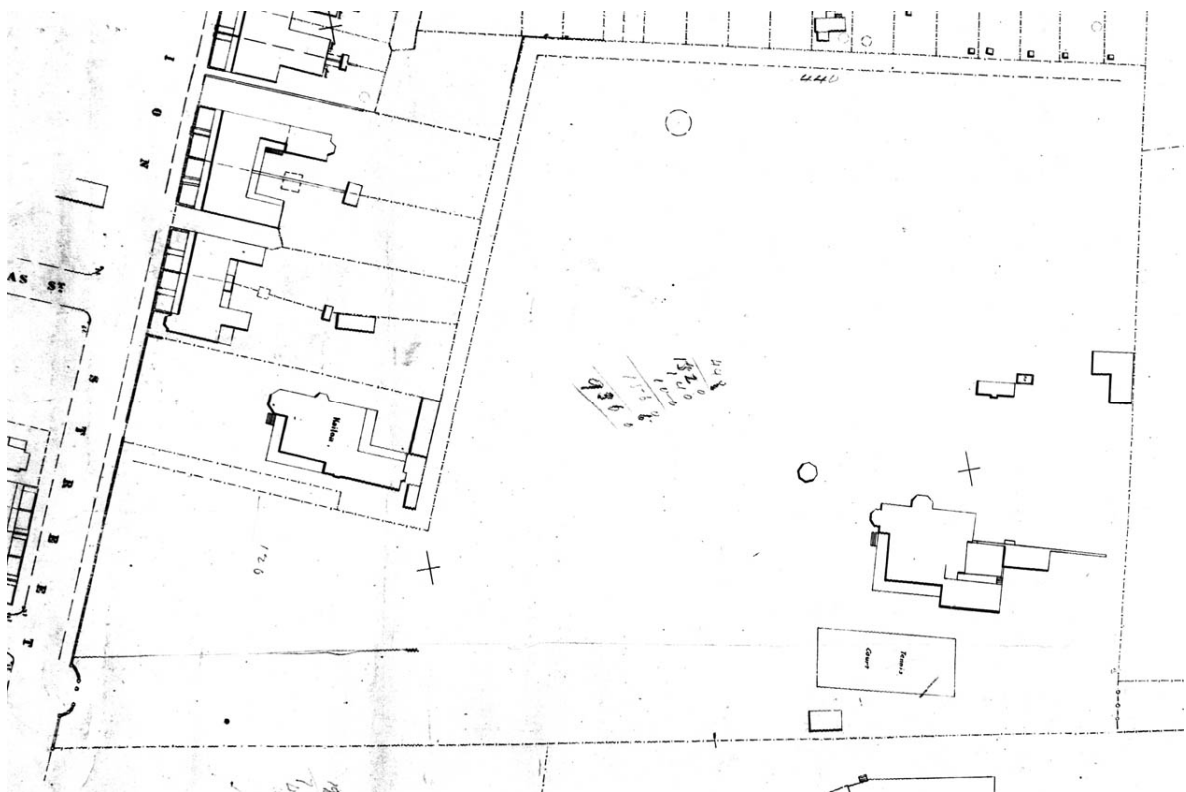


Figure 17 An 1891 survey of the grounds of Graythwaite with revisions completed in April of the same year. The survey shows the footprint of the house as altered by George Dibbs in the mid-1870s together with improvements made by Thomas Dibbs inclusive of the range of outbuildings to the west. Note the tennis court and fern house to the east of the house and a pair of octagonal pavilions to the southwest. The entry gates to the drive are shown on Union Street. Source: Sydney Water—PWD 859.1544 (North Sydney Sheet No.24).

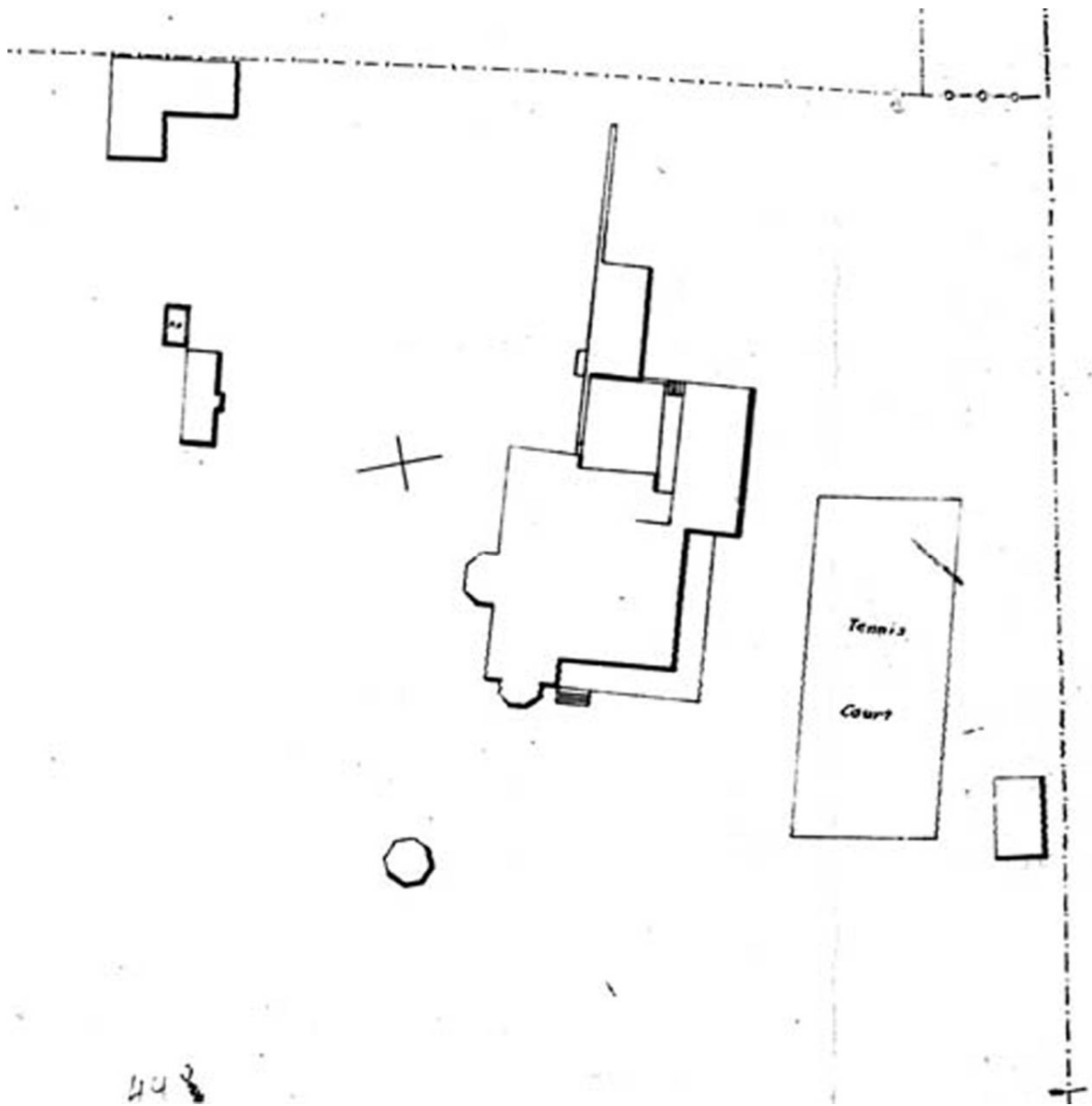


Figure 18 A detail of the 1891 Sydney Water survey showing the areas in and around the house.  
Source: Sydney Water—PWD 859.1544 (North Sydney Sheet No.24).

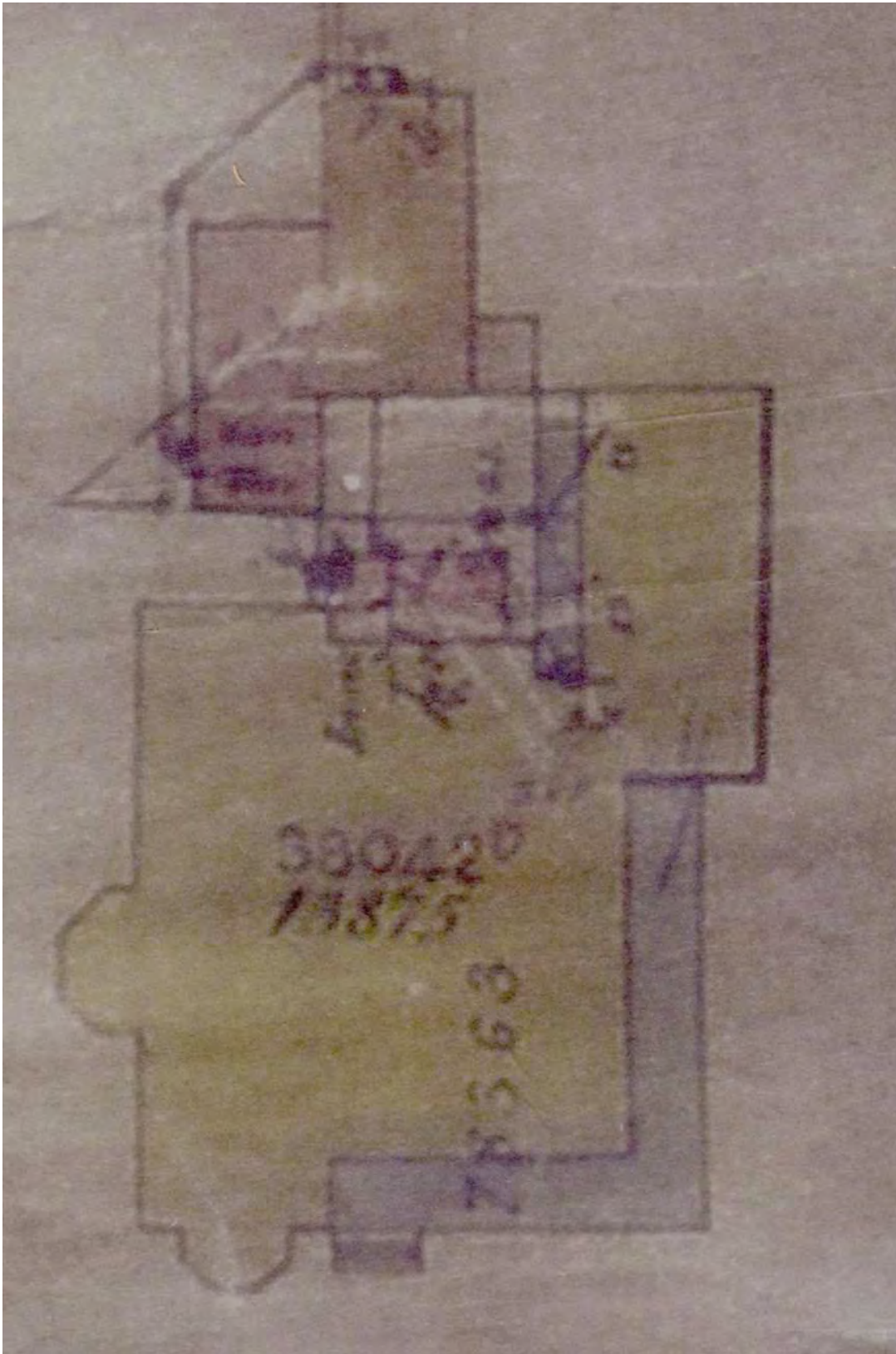


Figure 19 An undated coloured Sydney Water survey of the house—it is probably from the inter-war period as it includes rooms known to have been erected in 1917. It shows the varied construction materials—yellow for stone, red for brick and grey for iron.  
Source: Sydney Water—PWD 859.1544.





Figure 20 The south elevation of the house and its brick-edged approach drive in 1897.  
Source: *The Sydney Mail*, 14 August 1897, pg 831.



Figure 21 The east elevation of the house and the continuation of the brick-edged approach drive to the main yard to the rear in 1897. There appears to be a two-storey verandah on the west face of the kitchen wing. Note that the chimneys are of sandstone.  
Source: *The Sydney Mail*, 14 August 1897, pg 831.