



Figure 22 The rear of the house, undated (but probably c1916). Note the corrugated iron roof sheeting of the kitchen wing.
Source: Australian Red Cross NSW Division Archives.



Figure 23 Looking across the Graythwaite site from Holtermann's Tower, undated.
Source: Mitchell Library—Small Picture File—North Sydney.

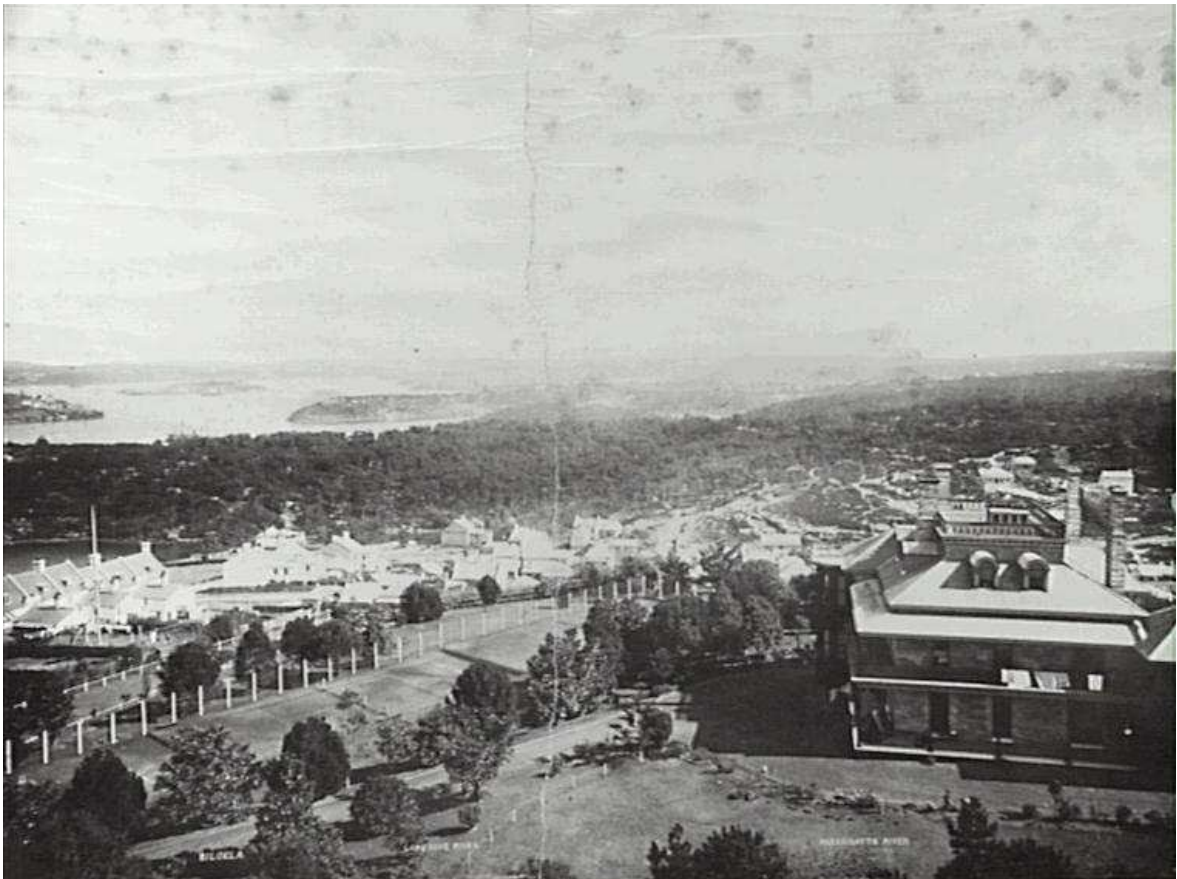


Figure 24 Looking west over the grounds of Graythwaite from Holtermann's Tower, undated.
Source: State Library of NSW—Small Picture File 709—Sydney from North Shore.

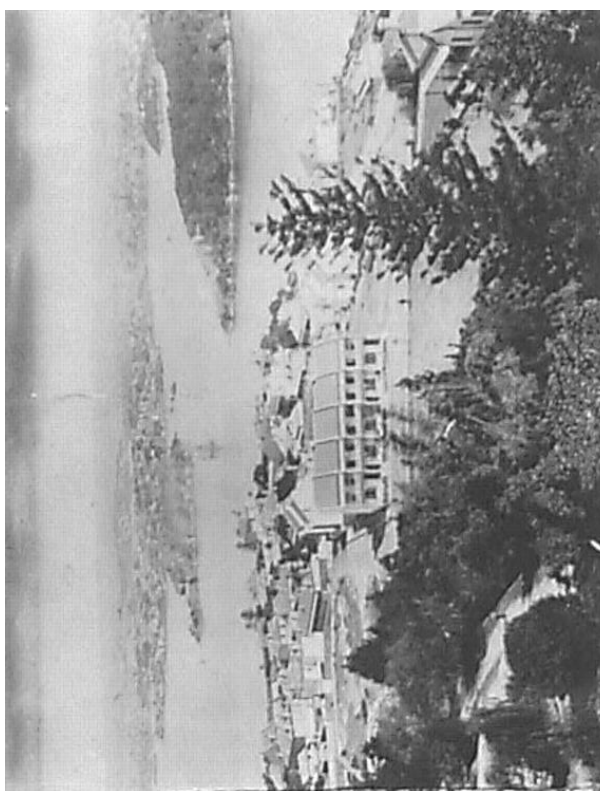


Figure 25 Part of a panorama of North Sydney from the Shore School by Charles Bayliss, undated (but probably c1893).
Source: Stanton Library 74904/5.

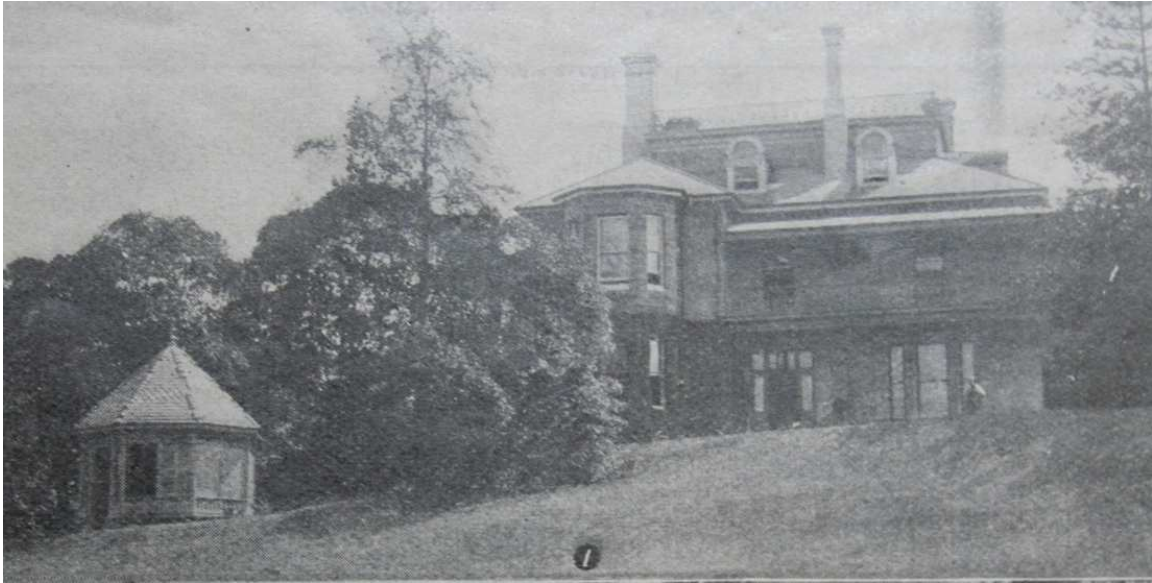


Figure 26 The south elevation of the house and its terraced lawn setting with timber pavilion around the time of its opening as an Anzac Hostel in 1918.
Source: *Repatriation*, Vol.1 No.1, March 1919, Pg 15.

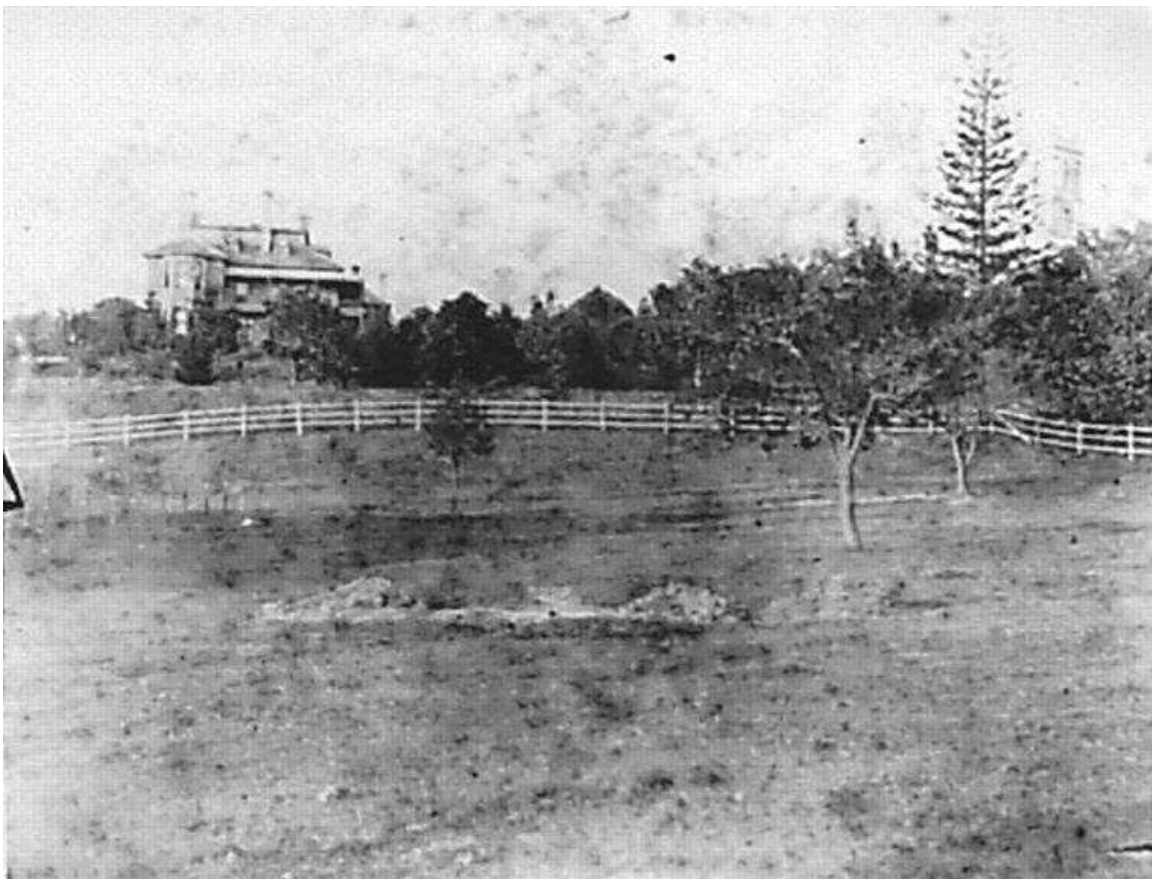


Figure 27 The southern garden setting for the house as seen from Union Street during Thomas Dibbs' occupancy, undated (but probably c1900).
Source: Stanton Library image 1772.

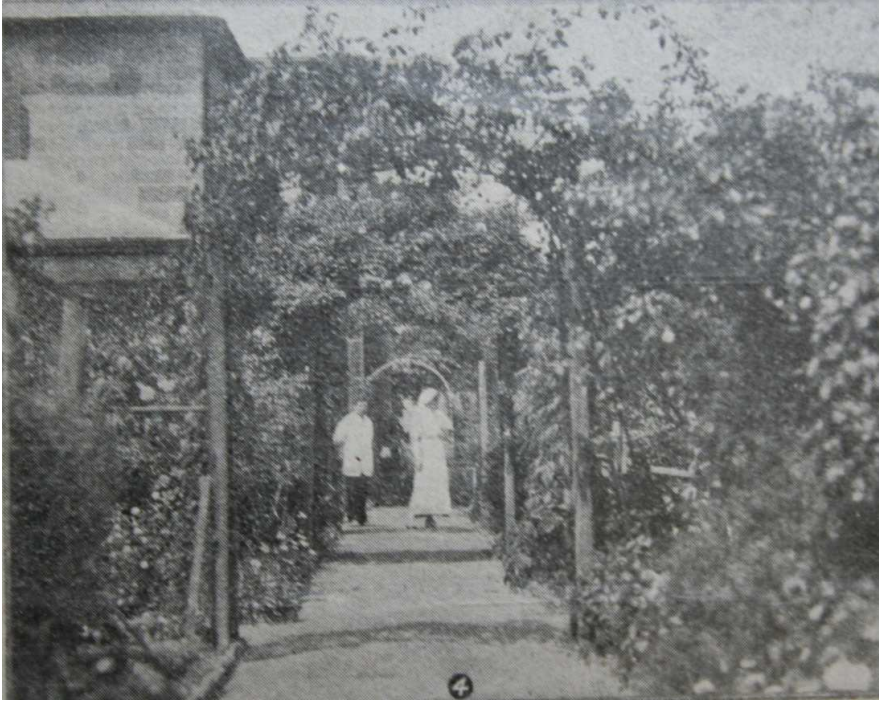


Figure 28 The arbour on the west side of the house in 1919. The published caption states that it was the 'approach to the leather workers' huts and billiard room' of the Anzac Hostel. This network of paths was retained well into the 1940s as it is also shown on a 1943 survey.
Source: *Repatriation*, Vol.1 No.1, March 1919, Pg 15.



Figure 29 The northern end of the original drive and entry to Edward Street during TA Dibbs' occupancy, undated (but probably c1900). The tennis court is to the left of the image and the boundary fence is to the right.
Source: Stanton Library Image 1774.



Figure 30 The furnishings and fittings at the southern end of the drawing room of the house during Thomas Dibbs' occupancy, undated (probably c1900). This photograph and the one below could have been taken to record the redecoration of the room inclusive of the fireplace surrounds. Source: Stanton Library Image 1776.



Figure 31 The furnishings and fittings at the northern end of the drawing room of the house during Thomas Dibbs' occupancy, undated (probably c1900). Source: Stanton Library Image 1776.



Figure 32 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home". The interior depicted is probably indicative of the Thomas Dibbs' occupancy aside from the furniture. The decorative wall brackets have been removed but are retained in the house. Source: Stanton Library Image 3154.



Figure 33 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home". The interior depicted is probably indicative of the Thomas Dibbs' occupancy aside from the furniture. Source: Stanton Library Image 3155.

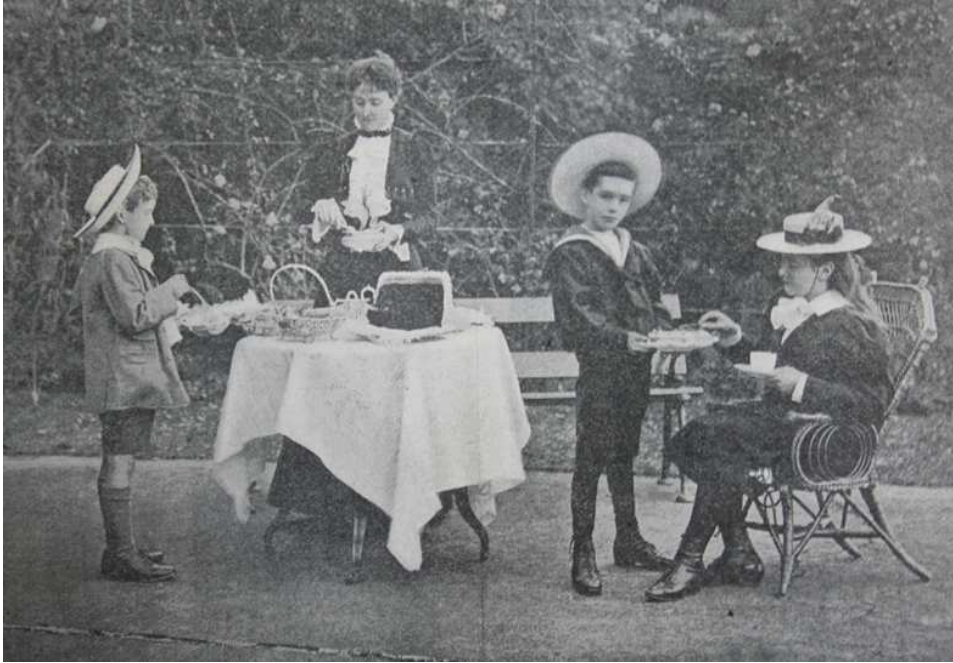


Figure 34 A Dibbs family portrait in the east garden of Graythwaite in 1897. The picture caption reads, from left to right, Master Hugh Massie, Junior, grandson; Miss Ethel Dibbs, daughter; Master George Dibbs, grandson; Miss Dorothy Dibbs, daughter.
Source: *The Sydney Mail*, 14 August 1897, Pg 832.



Figure 35 A family portrait in the east garden of Graythwaite in 1897. The picture caption reads from left to right, Master J Massie, grandson; Miss Nellie Dibbs, daughter; Miss Dorothy Dibbs; Master H Massie, Junior, grandson; Mr Thomas Dibbs; Mrs Thomas Dibbs; Master George Dibbs, grandson; Mrs Ethel Dibbs, daughter. In the background is the fernery.
Source: *The Sydney Mail*, 14 August 1897, Pg 832.



Figure 36 A gardener arranging a fern display on the verandah at Graythwaite, undated (probably c1900).
Source: Stanton Library Image 1778.

1.3.5 Graythwaite and the Australian Red Cross Society (1916-1980)

On 14 June 1915 Premier WA Holman announced publicly that the NSW Government had accepted the offer made by Thomas Dibbs to gift Graythwaite to the State as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers. Dibbs' offer was stated in the following letter to the Premier:

Dear Mr Holman – My wife and I have decided to give the Government the fee simple of our home known as Graythwaite, North Sydney as a convalescent home, to be used in the first place for our wounded soldiers returning to Sydney. We do so in admiration of and sincere sympathy for those brave men who have so unselfishly given their services and their lives fight for the Empire in the cause of justice and liberty. The land has an area of six acres 2 roods and 23 perches, is a freehold, and the title *Real Property Act*. On hearing from you I shall instruct my solicitors, Messrs Dibbs, Parker, and Parker, to complete the transaction. Possession I propose to give on September 1, or earlier if you wish it.

The area of the land gifted to the State was 7 acres 0 roods and 26½ perches as it included a right of way to Bishopsgate that TA Dibbs had established in his subdivision of Holtermann's land in 1886.⁸⁶ The timing of this gift came seven weeks after the ANZAC's landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and first met enemy action. News of the battle and casualties were published in the Australian newspapers in early May⁸⁷ together with accounts of evacuating the seriously wounded to the British Navy hospital on Malta. From this time offers by civilians to open their homes to the wounded, or financial support, began to be published in the Sydney papers.⁸⁸ Dibbs' offer was one of the first and was unusual as it offered freehold title whereas others had been on a temporary basis.

Aside from the newspaper accounts, Dibbs was possibly also aware of the catastrophe unfolding on the Gallipoli beachhead from his grandson, Robert John Allwright Massie, who was at Gallipoli on the day of the landing. RJA Massie (1890-1966) was the son of Hugh Hamon Massie and Dibbs' daughter Tryphena Agnes; Hugh Hamon being a famous cricketer and fellow employee of the Commercial Banking Company (he succeeded Dibbs as general manager in 1915).⁸⁹ RJA Massie was educated at Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) in 1900-10 had enlisted shortly after war was declared in August 1914 and had embarked in October 1914 with the 4th Infantry Battalion. Declared temporarily unfit for active duty, he was granted leave in January 1916 and returned to Sydney for rest. He returned to the fight in France in mid 1916.⁹⁰

RJA Massie survived the war, unlike his cousins Owen Burton Dibbs and Thomas Graythwaite Burton Dibbs, the sons of Thomas Dibbs' only son, Tom Burton Dibbs. Thomas Graythwaite Burton was born at Graythwaite in 1892.⁹¹ He enlisted in the British Army (York and Lancashire Pioneers) and was killed in France on 27th August 1915. His older brother, Owen Burton, enlisted in March 1916 a captain in the 45th Battalion of the AIF and arrived in France in June 1916 destined for the Western Front. Owen was recommended for a Military Cross in the battle near Passchendaele in October 1917. He was killed on 1st April 1918 during the last great German offensive of the war when they attempted to break through the British front around Dernancourt.⁹² The Sydney Stock Exchange installed a medal to honour his memory.⁹³

⁸⁶ LD Property CT Vol. 2633 Fol. 151

⁸⁷ *SMH* 8&9/5/1915

⁸⁸ *SMH* 29/5/1914, p.1

⁸⁹ *SMH* 14/10/1938, p.13

⁹⁰ Finn, Rosslyn, 'Massie, Robert John Allwright (Jack) (1890 - 1966)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986, pp 431-432 (Finn 1986)

⁹¹ *SMH* 11/4/1892, p.1.

⁹² Australian War Museum (AWM) Service Records On-line.

⁹³ *SMH* 13/4/1918.

Aside from this personal experience of war, Dibbs and his family had a tradition of philanthropy. He was active in diocesan affairs of the Anglican Church, and had been on the council of Sydney Church of England Grammar School North Shore since its inauguration in 1887. His philanthropic interests included the Sydney Naval Home and the Queen Victoria Home for Consumptives.⁹⁴ At the time of the diamond jubilee of his service with the bank in 1907 he gifted £5,000 to support fellow bank officers experiencing illness or misfortune.⁹⁵ Dibbs was knighted in 1917.⁹⁶ Philanthropy extended to the family, for example his unwed daughters staged a concert at the North Sydney School of Arts to aid the poor.⁹⁷

Dibbs retired from the bank on 20th July 1915⁹⁸ and set about vacating Graythwaite inclusive of selling some items of furniture.⁹⁹ Dibbs and his family left Graythwaite in October 1915;¹⁰⁰ with the property having been formally transferred to His Most Gracious Majesty King George V on behalf of the Government of the State of New South Wales on 1st October 1915 (although a ceremonial handing over of the deed was undertaken at the time of the official opening in March 1916).¹⁰¹ The memorandum of transfer includes the statements:

in consideration of my admiration of and sincere sympathy for those brave men who have so unselfishly given their services and their lives fighting for the Empire in the cause of justice and liberty for a Convalescent Home for our Sick and Wounded Soldiers and Sailors and when not required for that purpose as a Convalescent Home in perpetuity for distressed subjects of the British Empire regardless of Sect or Creed.¹⁰²

The house was first opened to public inspection on 6th November 1915, it then being described as lacking furniture and undergoing alterations. The visiting public “thoroughly” examined the house.¹⁰³

Dibbs and members of his family returned to their old home in its new use over the following decades to lend support to the cause.¹⁰⁴ As late as 1953, Dibbs’ eldest daughter, Ellen, who was around ninety at the time, attended the luncheon at Graythwaite organised to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.¹⁰⁵

At the time of Dibbs’ offer of Graythwaite no wounded Australian soldier from Gallipoli had returned to Sydney although preparations to receive them were well in hand. The first to return were aboard the *Kyarra*, which berthed in Sydney on 18th July 1915.¹⁰⁶ While this shipment included a number of soldiers repatriated for reasons entirely unconnected with military action in having been classified unfit for active service, it marked the beginning of a process of regular transshipments to Australia of war veterans lasting until late 1919.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁴ Abbott 1972

⁹⁵ *SMH* 20/7/1915, p.10.

⁹⁶ *SMH* 13/2/1917, p.7.

⁹⁷ *SMH* 8/6/1894, p.6.

⁹⁸ *SMH* 20/7/1915, p.10.

⁹⁹ *SMH* 23/9/1915, p.2.

¹⁰⁰ *SMH* 22/9/1915, p.11.

¹⁰¹ *SMH* 3/2/1916, p.8.

¹⁰² LD Property Dealing A206747.

¹⁰³ *SMH* 8/11/1915, p.9.

¹⁰⁴ *SMH* 13/4/1920, p.10

SMH 30/11/1935, p.11

¹⁰⁵ *SMH* 3/6/1953, p6

¹⁰⁶ *SMH* 19/7/1915, p.12.

¹⁰⁷ Lloyd, Clem and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling: a History of Repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, 1994 (Lloyd and Rees 1994), p.136.



Figure 37 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home". Thomas Dibbs is seen handing over the deed of Graythwaite to Premier Holman.
Source: Stanton Library Image 3149.



Figure 38 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home".
Source: Stanton Library Image 3150.

Within a week of the NSW Government accepting Graythwaite, the city's social and philanthropic network began to raise funds to equip the house to receive patients. The call for funds was initiated by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, which held a garden fete in its grounds on 17th July to raise money for the local, North Sydney, branch of the Red Cross Society. The Squadron invited Thomas Dibbs to hold the position of president of its fund raising committee.¹⁰⁸ (Dibbs was a keen yachtsman and was a commodore of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron.)

Graythwaite Soldiers' Convalescent Hospital, as it was known, was officially opened on 1st March 1916. The ceremony was widely reported in the local and interstate newspapers, and was attended by a number of dignitaries representing the Government and Red Cross. The cadets of Shore provided the guard of honour. On accepting the deeds of the property, Premier Holman stated:

I can only assure the generous givers (that) in the name of this and all Governments that shall succeed us, that the trust shall be administered in a manner worthy of the great and generous spirit in which it has been made.¹⁰⁹

At the time of the official opening, the NSW government formally authorised the Red Cross Society to administer Graythwaite for the returned sick and wounded for the duration of the war and for one year afterwards.¹¹⁰ Under the terms of the agreement, the military authorities nominated the convalescent soldiers for admission and paid three shillings per day subsidy for their maintenance. The Red Cross were required to appoint a matron, keep the grounds in good order, and allow periodic inspection.¹¹¹ However, it was incumbent on the NSW Government as owner to attend to the maintenance, repair and painting of buildings, fences, etc and also pay water and sewerage rates, Municipal rates, etc.¹¹²

The Australian Red Cross Society was founded on 13 August 1914 as a branch of the British Red Cross nine days after the outbreak of WW1 by Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General. The work of the Society was and is twofold: in conflict, it provides impartial humane service in accordance with the established principles of the Red Cross. In peace, its services encompass a broader spectrum of community services including health, social welfare and disaster relief.

The Red Cross had an active interest in Graythwaite from the outset as several members of its committee inspected the house in early July 1915.¹¹³ By mid January 1916 the Chief Secretary had settled on the terms for handing over Graythwaite to the Society and the Department of Public Health had confirmed Graythwaite was to be handed over to the Society for the term of the war and one year after. The task of managing the hospital was assigned to the Northern Suburbs Association and the Association subsequently set about raising money to alter and equip Graythwaite with some £3,000 raised by the time of the official opening in March 1916.¹¹⁴ The major contributors to the cost of the alterations were the Royal Sydney Yacht Club, and North Sydney Public School.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ *SMH* 23/6/1915, p.12
SMH 29/6/1915, p.10.

¹⁰⁹ *SMH*, 2/3/1916, p.6

¹¹⁰ *SMH* 3/2/1916, p.8

¹¹¹ *SMH* 17/2/1916

¹¹² Australian Red Cross NSW Division Archives (Red Cross)– Letter from the Chief Secretary dated 4th February 1916

¹¹³ *SMH* 14/7/1915, p.5

¹¹⁴ Red Cross Minutes of Finance Meeting 19/1/1916, Minutes of Executive Meeting, 20/1/1916

¹¹⁵ *SMH* 1/3/1916, p.3

The donations included endowments for the following wards with smaller donations for beds:¹¹⁶

Donor	Room	Value	Comment
North Sydney Superior Public School	G6	£800	Dining and recreation room
Royal Sydney Yacht Club	G1		
Neutral Bay Ward	F3		
Northern Suburbs Ward	F4		
Cullen Ward	F5		
Thurgood Ward	F6		
Kirribilli Ward	F7		
Golden Button Ward	F8	£200	Money collected by raffling a gold nugget donated by the mining districts. The ward comprised four beds named in memory of fallen soldiers.
Helpers Club	F2	£150	

The Red Cross undertook periodic fund raising events in support of Graythwaite throughout the duration of the war. These sometimes took the form of “grocery gift” fetes that also provided the public with the opportunity to inspect the house and grounds.¹¹⁷ The events were attended by Dibbs and his family and members of the local Red Cross branches.¹¹⁸

Within the organisational structure of the NSW Branch of the Red Cross Society, Graythwaite was managed by a House Committee initially made up of Lady Cullen (Patroness), Dugald Thomson (President), Mrs Mackay, Miss Ethel Dibbs, Miss Chandler, Lady Hay, Mr Cecil Hordern, Mr J Randel Carey and Mr GHS King (Vice-presidents), Mr Simpson and Mr Barnett (Honorary treasurers); Mr Timothy Honnor, Mr and Mrs Cecil Hordern (Honorary-secretaries), Mrs Kethel, Mrs Timothy Honnor, Mrs Studdy, Mrs Mackinnon and Mrs Laidley (Members).¹¹⁹ On this committee, the Dibbs family was represented by Miss Ethel Dibbs and Mrs Timothy Honnor (Jessie L Dibbs). A prominent member of the committee over the years was Mrs Cecil (Eva) Hordern. She was the honorary secretary of Squadron’s fund raising committee and then served for many years the honorary secretary undertaking work for Graythwaite and its patients.¹²⁰ Mrs Hordern had also been personally affected by the war, her son, CA Hordern, was wounded in action at Gallipoli in June 1915.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ SMH 27/10/1925, p14

¹¹⁷ SMH 28/4/1917, p.7

¹¹⁸ SMH 9/5/1917, p.5

¹¹⁹ SMH 5/2/1916, p.17

¹²⁰ SMH 8/4/1927, p5

¹²¹ Peterson, Robert, *Facing the Foe: War Service of Shore Old Boys During the First 50 Years*, Shore, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, 2006, p.406 (Peterson 2006)

At the time of the official opening in 1916, Graythwaite could accommodate 40 beds within the 12 rooms available as wards.¹²² As a Red Cross convalescent home, Graythwaite cared for repatriated soldiers discharged as medically unfit for active service.¹²³ In this role a total of 829 men passed through Graythwaite.¹²⁴ This number included Shore Old Boy Archibald Alex Maclean who was wounded in action at Gallipoli and was repatriated to Sydney in December. After a period of convalescing at Graythwaite in early 1916 he was discharged from the army in August 1916.¹²⁵

The system of medical repatriation was developed and overseen by the Defence Department. It was largely developed following the experiences at Gallipoli and involved in the first instance medical attention and resting in either England or Egypt. A period of resting or 'boarding' of six months after which the soldier could be assessed as being unlikely to return to military duty and was returned to Australia for medical treatment, discharge, pensioning, rehabilitation and vocational training.¹²⁶

While during 1916 Graythwaite took in recruits from the local training camps recovering from illnesses contracted in the camp or surgical operations, its primary role prior to 1918 was for convalescing repatriated veterans needing extreme care and massage.¹²⁷ It was one of two such homes in the city operated by the Red Cross, the other being Rose Hall. The system of convalescent homes also included military general hospitals, which were opened in each state and staffed by recruited medical personal. These hospitals were established in July 1915 and were functioning by early 1916; the hospital in Sydney being No 4 General Hospital at Randwick.¹²⁸

Graythwaite was altered to suit its hospital use. The extent of alterations and additions are broadly known but not fully documented. The Red Cross raised £3,000 over 1915/1916 to equip Graythwaite but details were not published. From historic photographs and other sources it seems by the opening in March 1916 a new lavatory block was to the rear of the house, and a free standing laundry/billiard room erected to the west. The available documentary evidence suggests this work was designed by architect Timothy Honnor and possibly paid for by TA Dibbs himself for the Building Application was lodged by Dibbs (on 20th October 1915) for alterations and additions valued at £1,300.¹²⁹ Honnor was Dibbs' son-in-law having married Jessie Dibbs in 1899. The work probably also included altering another building located to the west of the house into a workshop (it was demolished in 1982). Little has been written of Honnor; evidently he was English and perhaps spent most of his life in England.

The work undertaken after the opening in March 1916 is better documented. The Red Cross lodged in December 1916 a building application to erect an addition at the rear of the house to accommodate a massage room and doctor's surgery. This building was designed by Halligan and Wilton in October 1916.¹³⁰ Halligan was described as the honorary architect for these works, but it is not known if this was a general position or specific to Graythwaite for while he is known to have designed a hut for the use of the Red Cross at the No. 4 Military Hospital (Randwick) in mid 1916,¹³¹ G Sydney Jones was the honorary architect for the Society's Bodington Hospital.¹³²

¹²² SMH 2/3/1916, p.6

¹²³ SMH 25/1/1916, p12

¹²⁴ British Red Cross Society – Australian Branch – NSW Division, Report and Financial Statement, 1916-17, p.18 in Edds 2000

¹²⁵ Peterson 2006, p.199 and p.423

¹²⁶ Lloyd and Rees 1994, p.137-139

¹²⁷ Red Cross Record, 1/3/1917, p27-29

¹²⁸ Lloyd and Rees 1994, p.137-141

¹²⁹ NSC – Building Application Register entry for 20/10/1915

¹³⁰ Red Cross Minutes Finance Minutes, 9th May 1918

¹³¹ SMH 1916/7/19p12

¹³² SMH 1917/1/30p4

In addition, the NSW Public Works Department undertook some of the work for there is documentary evidence for contributions by the Public Works Department as it advertised in March 1918 for contractors to repair the ceilings at Graythwaite.¹³³ However, Graythwaite is not mentioned in departmental annual reports and is not listed in departmental drawing catalogues for this period.

Maurice Bernard Halligan is the best known of the private architects for at the time of his death in 1926 was considered one of the more prominent architects in Sydney. Halligan was born in Bowral, New South Wales. He studied architecture in Sydney under Gustave A. Morell, the architect of Robert Lucas Tooth's Swifts at Darling Point and the former Paling's warehouse in Ash Street, Street (now façade only). Halligan started his own practice in 1888 but nothing has been reported of his work in the 1890s. He married the daughter of the well-connected grazier and politician William Henry Suttor junior in 1896 and most of his known commissions date from 1900. Halligan, for example, was well known for the clubhouse he designed for the Royal Sydney Golf Club at Rose Bay in 1904 (destroyed by fire in 1920 and rebuilt to a design by Halligan and Wilton). Halligan in sole practice also worked for Toth's for the additions to the malthouse at Mittagong. Most of his professional work was domestic architecture with many of his residences being built in Bellevue Hill. Halligan went into partnership with Frederick H. B. Wilton in 1907 and as Halligan and Wilton did quite a bit of work for Tooth and Co. on their hotels, and curiously the British-Australasian Tobacco Co.'s works at Kensington, this being a company where one of TA Dibbs' grandsons (Massie) was a director. Halligan and Wilton designed the apartment block Kingsclere in Greenough Avenue, Potts Point in 1912.¹³⁴

¹³³ *SMH* 2/3/1918, p.10

¹³⁴ *The Cyclopaedia of N.S.W.*, Sydney, McCarron, Stewart & Co., 1907
'Architect's Death: Mr M.B. Halligan, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18/2/1926, p.12



Figure 39 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home". Source: Stanton Library Image 3151.

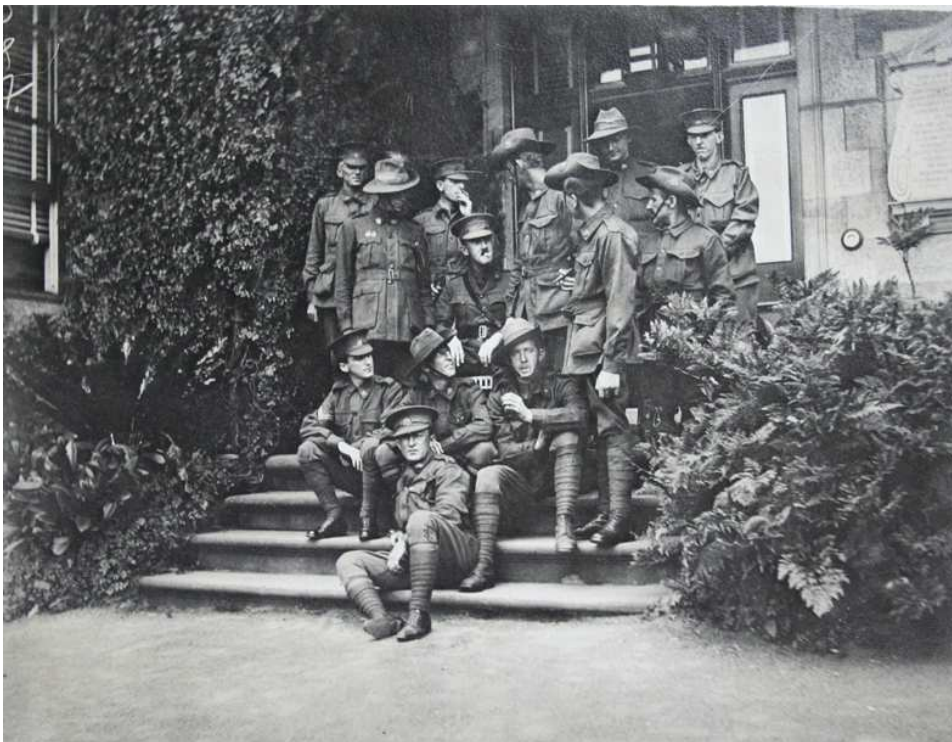


Figure 40 A group of soldiers of mixed ranks pose at the front door of Graythwaite, undated (probably c1916). Note the Venetian blinds, the lantern in the door highlight, electric bell push and garden bed of ferns. Source: Australian Red Cross NSW Division Archives.



Figure 41 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home'. The crowd has gathered on the tennis court that was later removed in 1918.
Source: Stanton Library Image 3156.



Figure 42 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home'.
Source: Stanton Library Image 3153.



Figure 43 One of a series of seven photographs appearing in the *Town & Country Journal*, dated 8 March 1916, Pg 23, under the heading "Handing Over Graythwaite Convalescent Home". Seen here are the Red Cross Voluntary Aids.
Source: Stanton Library Image 3152.



Figure 44 The interior of the billiard room in 1919 when it was in use as an Anzac Hostel for permanently incapacitated veterans. It appears that this building was constructed over the summer of 1915-1916.
Source: *Repatriation*, Vol.1 No.1, March 1919, Pg15.

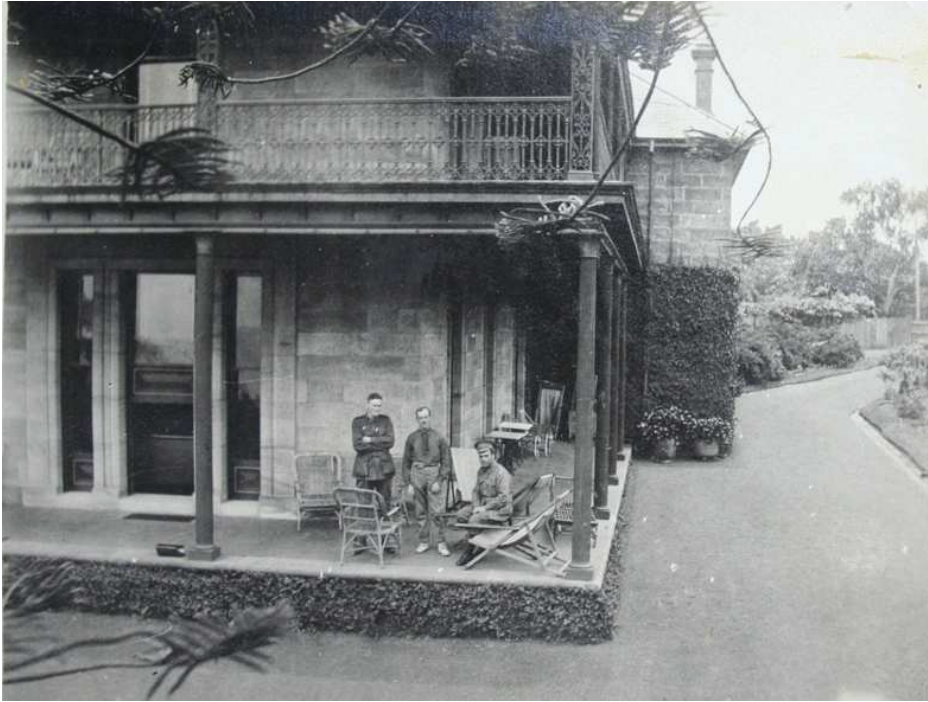


Figure 45 The south-east corner of Graythwaite, undated (probably c1916). Note the sliding sash window is in the open position and the recreational use of the verandah. Some details of the eastern side garden are also shown.
Source: Australian Red Cross NSW Division Archives.



Figure 46 A party on the tennis court on the central terrace of Graythwaite, undated (probably c1916). This is probably indicative of the Red Cross funding ventures undertaken with the Voluntary Aids at the stalls selling refreshments and attending to the soldiers in uniform.
Source: Australian Red Cross NSW Division Archives.