

## Background

Many properties in The Hills Shire are considered to be of heritage significance. Approximately 250 are listed in the Hills Shire Council's Local Environmental Plan 2005.

There are a number of developmental phases which are seen as critically important to the historic development and heritage value of the Shire:

- Pre-European settlement,
- Early Roads System,
- Small Farms along the Hawkesbury River,
- Early Settlement of the Cumberland Plain,
- Orchard Development, and
- Country Retreats.

These development phases not only characterise the Shire but are also of importance within the Sydney Region. The majority of buildings and sites that are considered to be of heritage significance provide important physical evidence or reminders of these highly significant themes and therefore allow the community and future generations to interpret or better understand the history of the Shire.



Most European built structures in the Shire that are considered to have heritage value were built from the early to mid 1800s through to the early 1900s.

The history of a street, house or building is a common question for those who live in the vicinity or within a heritage building. Finding out about the history of a particular building can reveal previously unknown facets about the building and is of particular interest to the owners and the wider community.

It is also important to have a thorough understanding of the history of the house such as its age, past associations, inhabitants and the significance of the various components and setting to ensure that any maintenance, conservation works or alterations are historically accurate and are undertaken in a manner which is sympathetic to the building's significance.

While the history of a particular suburb or area is often well documented, the detailed history of a particular building, such as when was it built or added to, by whom, and who lived there is not commonly known.

## Where to start

Where to start will depend on exactly what information you are interested in.

For example if you are interested in defining the age of a building or the historical architectural period to which it belongs, the possible sources of information would include:

- original architectural plans or contracts,
- information held at Council or by the local historical society, or
- careful analysis of the structure itself and its fabric will often reveal the age and the sequence of any additions or alterations made to the house.

The history of the house, its associations, and inhabitants would include:

- land title information,
- original occupants or oral evidence,
- local historical records held by Council or historical societies,
- archival information held by State Government agencies,
- photographs, paintings or drawings, and
- written evidence.

The purpose of this information sheet is to summarise some of the various research techniques and list most of the available information sources, contacts and references that may be of assistance when researching your home's heritage.

## Architectural styles

The building itself can reveal much information particularly if it remains in its original state.

The architectural style of a building is the most obvious method for determining the approximate age of the house. The appearance of a building throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was influenced by many factors including fashion, wealth, climate, technology, and the availability of materials. There exist numerous domestic styles of architecture in the period from the early 1800s through to the 1930s. Almost all these periods are represented within The Hills Shire.

They have been well researched and there exist a number of useful references to assist in the identification of Australian architectural styles (refer attached reference list). They can be summarised as follows:

### The Colonial Period (1788 - 1840)

There exist a number of different styles and influences within this particular period, which is based upon a restrained version of the British Georgian classical style of architecture. It is characterised by simple rectangular and prismatic shapes, symmetrical facades, traditional bearing walls, timber floors and roof construction. Walls were typically constructed of brick or sandstone. The Australian climate often required the addition of a verandah to this particular style.

### The Victorian Period (1840 - 1890)

Victorian architecture reflected the growing prosperity of the Nation and a growing popularity of more elaborate and ornate Gothic and Italian architectural styles. It is often characterised by steeper roof pitch, multiple gabled roofs, decorative barge boards or verandah detailing.

These houses displayed the latest technology in the form of prefabricated decorations, fine hard wall plaster, factory produced joinery, imported cabinet making, wallpapers, ready made paints, decorative glass, gas lighting and efficient plumbing. The Victorian period was brought to an end by the depression in 1893.

### The Edwardian (Federation) Period 1890-1920

A popular style of architecture which developed after the depression of the 1890's is known as Federation. The style focused on the idea of a garden suburb characterised by ample blocks of land in tree lined streets. Architects extolled the virtues of sun control, good ventilation and open planning to take advantage of the Australian climate. It is characterised by single storey residences of tuck-pointed brickwork with terracotta roof tiles, wide tiled verandahs and turned timber decorations including brackets and finials.

### Interwar Period (1920 - 1940)

Derived from the English and American arts and crafts movement, the most well known style of this period was known as the Californian Bungalow. It is characterised by free standing single storey houses on suburban blocks with informal gardens, low pitched gabled roofs with wide overhanging eaves and bargeboards, heavy masonry verandah piers, painted timber joinery, with window frames often mounted on outside wall face with skirts of shingles.

It is recognised that in many cases the exterior has been altered where the house has been added to overtime, altered to respond to fashions or for reasons of maintenance. These alterations often result in the removal of original elements thereby making it more difficult to identify the particular historical period of the building.

## Materials and Construction

The method and materials used in the construction of a building can often reveal the age of the house. Conservation architects in particular can often determine the specific age and historical architectural period of a building by examining the existing fabric.

For example corrugated iron roofing became widespread from the 1870s onwards. Other detail such as timber joinery, window styles, fencing, brick styles and bonding, garden features and landscaping, interior details such as fireplaces and lighting can all provide important evidence in identifying the age of the house and the location and extent of modifications over time.

The garden of the house can also reveal the age through evidence of earlier garden layouts such as pathways, garden beds, fencing, or specific tree plantings, which can often be dated.

One of the more useful references is the Royal Australian Historical Society Technical Information Service Bulletin No.17 entitled 'How old is my house' which details common materials and construction techniques for the various architectural periods from the Colonial period through to the post war period.

### **Information Sources - The Hills Shire Library Service (local studies collection)**

All of the local libraries within the Shire contain historical reference books, publications, and other references, which detail the history of the Shire, its suburbs, development, and important persons and families. Baulkham Hills Branch has the most comprehensive collection with smaller holdings at Castle Hill, Carlingford and Dural.

Local Studies resources include books, reports, local newspapers, serials, manuscripts, pamphlet files, graphic material (including photographs, maps, prints, drawings), sound and video recordings, ephemera and realia. Many of these items are unique, often fragile, often out of print and therefore irreplaceable. As a result they can only be used in the Library.

Each branch holds copies of the main items relevant to its area but the main collection is held at the Baulkham Hills branch. Some duplicate copies may be found in the Loan Collection.



Holdings of The Hills District Historical Society Inc. are included in the catalogue. Please consult the on-line catalogue or ask staff for assistance. For in-depth enquiries please contact the Development Officer - Local Studies - telephone 9761 4525, Monday - Friday or email [council-library@thehills.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council-library@thehills.nsw.gov.au)

Further resources on The Hills Shire and surrounding areas may be viewed at: [www.westernsydneylibraries.nsw.gov.au](http://www.westernsydneylibraries.nsw.gov.au)

Other public libraries bordering the Shire such as Parramatta, Blacktown, Hawkesbury, or Hornsby may also contain historical reference material related to the development of those areas at the interface between The Hills Shire and adjoining Council areas.

### **Publications**

The history of the Shire and its suburbs is well documented particularly by the historical societies and their members. A number of references are listed at the rear of this brochure and can be viewed or borrowed at local libraries within the Shire.

Council has also undertaken a comprehensive study of the Shire's heritage, which included a detailed thematic history of the Shire.

These references may provide useful information such as: when and why a particular area was settled, subdivided, prominent pioneers or active families or persons within the community and particular houses in an area.

The online The Hills Shire Library catalogue at [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) is a convenient way of searching for a particular reference. It can be used to search for books, magazines, reference material, CDs, audio tapes and DVDs by author, date, subject or keyword. You can access your borrowing records and reserve an item online to be collected at the library of your choice. There is also an online help option to assist you with your searches.

### **Photographs, paintings and drawings**

Other useful records helpful when undertaking conservation works to a heritage house include old photographs, paintings or drawings. These can reveal: original elements which have been removed, colour schemes (in shades of grey), garden design, fencing details and so on. Previous owners or occupants are the best source of this material. Alternatively the local historical societies referred to in this brochure often keep photographic collections or may have already published such photos.

Aerial photographs are also available for many areas from the 1930s onwards. These can be enlarged and reveal information about the original property extent, buildings, driveways, land use and so on. Contact the State Government Land and Property Information Centre on 9228 6444 or [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au)

## Historical Societies

There exist a number of active historical societies that operate within the Shire, the main function of which is to research and record the local history of an area.

For example, The Hills District Historical Society keeps a large collection of items and photographs donated by many local families. The Society has also published many books related to the history of the Hills District and the surrounding areas. Historical Societies are a great source of information and may be of assistance in researching the history of an area or particular building.

A full list of those Societies who operate within The Hills Shire is attached to this fact sheet.

In addition the Royal Australian Historical Society library contains an extensive catalogue of its collections, which may be searched by local government area. Contact on 9247 8001 or [www.rahs.org.au](http://www.rahs.org.au)

## The Hills Shire Council

In the preparation of a Shire-wide Heritage Study in 1994, inventory sheets were prepared for those buildings and sites within the Shire that were considered to be of heritage significance. The inventory sheets contain basic but useful information such as a brief history of the building or subject land, listings, a brief physical description of the item and a statement of significance.

The inventory sheets are normally only provided to the current owner of the heritage property. Enquiries should be directed to Council's Forward Planning section on 9843 0555.

## Previous owners and neighbours

Previous owners, whilst hard to find, may have researched the history of the house or may be related to family members who have lived in the building since its construction or early life. Neighbours and other local residents may also be of assistance in recalling information or stories about the house and its earlier inhabitants.

## Historians

Professional historians can be employed to research a particular area or house. For general enquiries regarding historians contact the History Council of NSW on 9252 8715 or [history@primus.com.au](mailto:history@primus.com.au) may be of assistance, or the Professional Historians Association (NSW) on 9252 9437 or at [www.phansw.org.au/register.html](http://www.phansw.org.au/register.html)

The Society of Australian Genealogists maintains various family records and guides. Contact on 9247 3953, or [www.sag.org.au](http://www.sag.org.au)

## State Government Agencies

The NSW Heritage Office has compiled a list of those State agencies which may provide useful historical records. It is suggested that phone or internet enquiries are made to firstly ascertain whether these agencies will hold information relevant to your search. They are summarised as follows: -

State Records (formerly the NSW Archives Office)

Is the principal repository for records created by State agencies, and has search rooms in the Rocks and Kingswood. Archival and collection guides can be accessed via the internet at [www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au). The types of records conserved by State Records include:

### Department of Local Government

- County Council Annual Reports (1928-1965)
- Schedules of land held under crown leases in each shire, 1920's, includes lease details, rentals, maps and diagrams

### Soil Conservation Service

- Survey Branch Records Field Books (1940-1979), includes measurements and rough sketches of individual land holdings

### Department of Agriculture

- Local and District War Agriculture Committees (1942-1946), established to provide fair distribution of manpower and resources to farms.

## Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The indexes to baptisms, marriages, burials and deaths between 1788 and 1918 can be viewed on the internet. These records help confirm whether a person was alive at a particular time, help distinguish between persons of the same name and period as well as other basic details concerning personal association with a place. More information available at [www.bdm.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au)

## Mitchell Library / State Library

A digitised collection of sources containing a collection of images and manuscripts is readily available via the internet. A series of Water Board detail plans are available for the late 19th century mainly covering the CBD and inner city areas. There is an extensive collection of subdivision posters covering much of the state, mostly from the early 20th century. The online catalogue lists published items catalogued since 1980, such as books, periodicals, newspapers and videos.

More information available at [www.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)

## Sydney Water

Metropolitan Detail Plans compiled by the Water Board from the 1880s to the 1940s show sewerage and water connections to individual properties. Initial enquiries should be directed to the historical officer at Australian Water Technologies on 9334 0238.

## Land Titles Office

For tracing the ownership of properties in NSW, since the first land grant to James Ruse.



The Land Titles Office has a website at [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au) that allows a certain amount of searching. However, visiting the Land Titles Office can be very productive as publicly available indexes and documents include Torrens Title Purchases Index from 1863, a Crown Lands Information Database, an Index to Old Registers 1802-1825 and Bound Volumes 1000 to 8379 of Torrens Titles.

Researchers should note that parcels of land are often described as being in a parish and county. New South

Wales is divided into 141 counties and these counties are further subdivided into over 7000 parishes.

Take your Rates notice with you if researching your own property. There is a fee for copies of documents.

It is advisable to make an appointment with the historical officer on 13000LANDS prior to conducting these types of searches.

## Land and Property Information Centre

For copies of maps and aerial photographs of areas in NSW (some historical photos exist) Contact on 13000LANDS or [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au).

## Geographical Names Board

Place names can assist in understanding the changing generational and cultural patterns of land use within an area, similarly patterns of street names in urban areas can point to varying periods and influences in the formation of subdivisions.

House names have been more popular in some periods than others. In urban areas house names were important before street numbering began and there is often widespread use of particular names at certain times. In country areas farm station names tend to be less generic and more site based.

## NSW Government Gazette

The NSW Government Gazette has been published continually since March 1832. From 1803-1832 notices were placed in the Sydney Gazette. The Gazettes include official notices, including references to land grants, leases, licenses to carry out public functions, appointments of public officials and calling for and notifying acceptance of tenders. The Mitchell Library has a complete up to date set of the Gazette.

## Commonwealth Agencies

### National Archives / Australian Archives

The National Archives has offices in each capital city. It has an extensive photographic collection dating from the 1850s. A series of fact sheets can be consulted about various subject searches. The most useful subject headings for research on the history of an area would be Building, Design and Construction, Public Health, Science and the Environment, Trade, Industry and the Economy, Transport and Communications and Defence, Armed Services and War. Contact [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)

## National Library of Australia

The National Library holds some useful collections for place research. It has a complete set of Commonwealth of Australia Gazettes from 1901. The Gazettes contain official notices such as land acquisitions, disposals, transfers, leaseings and various company references. The National Library can be accessed via the internet on [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au)

A recent addition has been the digitisation of periodicals for the period 1840-1845. Many newspapers such as the Cumberland Times, New South Wales Examiner, Parramatta Chronicle, and General Trade List contain place information. The Shipping Gazette contains lists of materials imported from overseas and coastal ports, giving some indication of the availability of certain building materials at certain times.

## List of Contacts

### The Hills Shire Council Libraries

#### *Baulkham Hills Library*

Railway Street, Baulkham Hills

Phone (loans): 9639 4874

Fax: 9686 7629

Hours:

Mon: 10.00am - 8.00pm

Tue - Fri: 10.00am - 5.20pm

Sat: 10.00am - 1.00pm

#### *Castle Hill Library*

Cnr Castle & Pennant St, Castle Hill

Phone: 9761 4510

Fax: 9761 4592

Hours:

Mon - Fri: 10.00am – 8.00pm

Sat : 10.00am - 5.00pm Sun: 1.00pm - 5.00pm

#### *Carlingford Branch Library*

Lloyds Avenue, Carlingford

Phone: 9871 5922

Fax: 9873 4075

Hours:

Mon 10.00am - 7.00pm

Tues - Fri 10.00am - 5.20pm

Sat 10.00am - 1:00pm

#### *Dural Branch Library*

Pellitt Lane, Dural

Phone: 9651 2627

Fax: 9651 4069

Hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri : 10.00am - 5.20pm

Wed : 10.00am - 7.00pm

Sat: 10.00am-1.00pm

#### *Vinegar Hill Memorial Library*

29 Main Street, Rouse Hill Town Centre

Phone: 8889 5200

Fax: 8889 5276

Hours:

Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri: 10am – 6pm

Thurs: 10am – 9pm

Sat: 10am – 5pm

Sun: 1pm – 5pm

### Parramatta Heritage Centre

364a Church Street (opposite Parramatta Riverside Theatre) Parramatta NSW 2150

[www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/library](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/library)

Phone: 9683 6922

Hours:

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri: 10am-5pm

Thurs 10am - 8pm Sat, Sun 10am - 4pm

### Local Historical Societies

#### *The Hills District Historical Society*

PO Box 48 Castle Hill NSW 2154

[www.thehillsdistricthistoricalsociety.com](http://www.thehillsdistricthistoricalsociety.com)

Phone: 9634 2670

Hours: Museum at Powerhouse Discovery Centre  
Castle Hill 2nd Saturday of the month 10am – 4pm

#### *Dural & District Historical Society*

History Cottage, Galston Park

412 Galston Road Galston NSW 2159

Phone: 9653 3053

Hours: Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Wednesdays 10am - 4 pm

#### *Riverstone & District Historical Society*

81 Garfield Road (next to swimming pool)

Riverstone NSW 2765

Phone: 9627 4478

Hours: 1st Sunday of the month 11 am – 3 pm

For Box Hill, Nelson, Rouse Hill area

#### *Dharug & Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society*

PO Box Wisemans Ferry NSW 2255

Phone: 4566 4465

## Useful references in The Hills Shire Library

The Hills Shire Council reports & studies

[www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au)

Local Environment Plan 2005

Development Control Plans No.10 - Heritage

Heritage The Hills Heritage Study 1993 –1995 LS 994.41 GRA Heritage Register LS 363.69099441 HER

### Suburb Histories

General Beginnings of the Hills District LS 994.41 BEG

Heritage Tour of the Hills District LS 994.41 HER

Annangrove A History of Kenthurst and Annangrove LS 994.41 CHA

Baulkham Hills Baulkham Hills: a district second to none LS 994.41 TRI

Settlement of Baulkham Hills and Castle Hill townships LS 994.41 CAR

Carlingford Carlingford-Epping: partners in history LS 994.41 MAC

Carlingford Connexions LS 994.41 MAC

Castle Hill Settlement of Baulkham Hills and Castle Hill townships LS 994.41 CAR

Glenhaven Glimpses of Glenhaven LS 994.41 NIX

Glenorie Glenorie Public School Centenary and District History LS 372.994 GLE

Kellyville Kellyville: the pleasant village LS 994.41 ARD

Kenthurst A history of Kenthurst and Annangrove  
LS 994.41 CHA  
Maroota River to Ridge LS 372.994 MAR  
North Rocks Carlingford Connexions LS 994.41  
MAC  
North Rocks: A brief history and guided tour LS  
994.41 WIL  
Oatlands Carlingford Connexions LS 994.41 MAC  
Rouse Hill Rouse Hill Public School 1875-2000 LS  
372.994 ROU  
W Pennant Hills Settlers of West Pennant Hills  
Valley 1799 Onwards LS 994.41 MIL  
Other Suburbs See Individual Suburb Pamphlet  
Files e.g. Dural LS PAM DUR

Phone: 9843 0555  
Duty Town Planner: 9843 0469  
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

### **Architecture and Conservation**

Apperly, R., Irving, R., and Reynolds, P. A Pictorial  
Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture LS  
720.994 APP  
Evans, Ian Caring for Old Houses LS 720.994 EVA  
Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses LS  
720.994 EVA  
Dept of Planning Getting the Details Right:  
Restoring Australian Houses 1890s –1920s LS  
720.994 GET  
Royal Australian Historical Society Technical  
Information Service - Researching Old Buildings LS  
720.994 ROY

### **OTHER REFERENCES**

#### **Gardens**

Australian Garden History Society, Historic Gardens  
in Australia, Guidelines for the preparation of  
Conservation Plan, Australian Garden History  
Society, 1986  
Sagazio, C., (ed), The National trust Research  
Manual: Investigating Buildings Gardens and  
Cultural Landscapes, Allen and Unwin, Sydney,  
1992

#### **Research**

NSW Heritage Office, Regional Histories, NSW  
Heritage Office, Sydney, 1996  
NSW Heritage Office, Historical Research for  
Heritage, NSW Heritage Office, Sydney, 2000  
Royal Australian Historical Society, Technical  
Information Service Bulletins: -  
No.4 - Researching Old Buildings  
No.10 - Using Directories in Local History Research  
No.15 - Using Maps in Local History  
No.17 - How Old is My House  
No.26 - Land Use and Ownership

Further Information

A variety of heritage information is provided on  
Council's website [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Further Information**

A variety of heritage information is provided on  
Council's website at [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au)

Or contact Council's Customer Service Centre:  
Address: 129 Showground Road, Castle Hill NSW  
2154