



historicalwalkingtours



# PRESERVATION

The Glebe



Cover Photo: David Morgan / City of Sydney



# PRESERVATION

TheGlebe





A 'glebe' (from the Latin *gleeba*, meaning 'a clod of earth') is a piece of land which has been given to the church. In 1789 Governor Arthur Phillip granted 400 acres (162 hectares) to the Anglican Church for the new colony's chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson. The Glebe Point area became fashionable in the 19th century, while the southern part of Glebe became a working class district. Glebe fell into decline in the early 20th century, but by the 1960s there was a renewed appreciation of its charms. Glebe became one of the first suburbs in Australia to experience 'gentrification', as its architectural heritage, combined with proximity to the City and Sydney University, made it fashionable again. This tour will explore a district which has not only a fascinating built environment but a long history of 'bohemian' lifestyle, activism and intellectual pursuits.



# PRESERVATION

The Glebe

-  The Toxteth Estate
-  The Glebe Estate



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## Harold Park

On the western edge of Glebe, Harold Park Paceway is the home of harness racing in NSW. The NSW Trotting Club was incorporated in 1902, with the first meeting being held at the Forest Lodge course (as it was then known) which had been leased from the Metropolitan Rugby Union. It was later known as 'Epping', but due to confusion with the suburb of the same name it was renamed 'Harold Park' in 1929, after the legendary trotter Childe Harold. Night racing began in 1949, attracting huge crowds which continue to this day.



Epping trots race-book vendor.  
Photo: Sydney Mail, 10 November 1920

Please allow one and a half hours to do this tour.  
There are numerous coffee shops and pubs en route.

 Start at the corner of Parramatta Road and Glebe Point Road. On your left is **University Hall** **1**.

### 1 University Hall

This was originally the University Hotel; now University Hall, it is home to students from the nearby University of Sydney. Outside is a fountain commemorating the 50th anniversary of Glebe Municipality in 1909. If you face Parramatta Road from the fountain, on the low wall just above ground level you will see a memorial to the Aboriginal boxer Dave Sands, 'Erected by Tom Lamings Gymnasium, also Glebe supporters and admirers who knew him as he was'. He was the Empire Middleweight champion and seemed destined for a successful career, but died in a car accident 1952. He is one of a handful of Australians in the World Boxing Hall of Fame in Los Angeles. To the right of the Sands Memorial is the stone marking the original western boundary of the City of Sydney, bearing the name of Lt-Gen. Richard Bourke, Governor of NSW 1831-37.

Continue uphill along Parramatta Road, then turn right into Derwent Street. On the right is a **War Memorial** outside Glebe Public School **2**.

### 2 School War Memorial

The School opened in 1858, and the oldest building on the present site dates from 1862. This memorial lists ex-students who served in the First World War, with the dead on the black tablet in front. A bust of a digger rests on top of a column. Today, Glebe Public School hosts Glebe Markets each weekend.



Photo: Paul Green/ City of Sydney Archives

Proceed up Catherine Street and then right into Westmoreland Street. On the right is the first women's refuge, '**Elsie**' **3** Westmoreland Street.

### 3 'Elsie'

There are now more than 300 refuges in Australia for women and children escaping domestic violence. The opening of 'Elsie' in 1974 marked the beginning of the refuge movement. The feminist writer Anne Summers was instrumental in finding the site. She remembers: 'There were a pair of little cottages that appeared to be in perfect condition. One of them had a woman's name, "Elsie", which seemed to be perfect and that, sort of, inadvertently became the first of a tradition amongst women's refuges in Australia, of naming them after women.' The cottages, owned by the Anglican Church, were unoccupied; the women of the 'Elsie' collective moved in, claiming 'squatter's rights'. A visit by Social Security Minister Bill Hayden shortly after it opened led to 'Elsie' receiving funding.

Continue along Westmoreland Street, tree lined with single-story workers' cottages on either side. Then turn left into St Johns Road. On your left at the corner of Mt Vernon Street is **Glebe Town Hall** **4**, 160 St Johns Road.

### 4 Glebe Town Hall

Photo: David Morgan



The Italianate style Town Hall was built in stages from 1880 to 1891. It was designed by Ambrose Thornley Jnr, who was also responsible for Bellevue **18** in this tour.

Glebe was a separate municipality from 1859 until 1949, when the City of Sydney expanded to take over The Glebe and seven other suburban municipalities. In 1968 the City lost most of the areas it had acquired, and The Glebe became a part of Leichhardt Municipality. Glebe was returned to the City in 2003, and the former Town Hall is now a City Council Neighbourhood Service Centre. Around the corner at 41 Lodge Street is the former Town Clerk's House.

Retrace your steps along St Johns Road to Glebe Point Road. Along the way you will see on your left the Federation style **Fire Station** **5**, 73 St Johns Road. On your right is the **St John's Parish Hall** **6**, cnr Derwent Street, designed by Edward Halloran and built in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

Note the decorative use of coloured bricks, and the terracotta plaque bearing the Queen's portrait: the words 'Record Reign' on the plaque have led to the hall being called 'Record Reign Hall'. At the corner of Glebe Point Road, on your left is **St John's, Bishopthorpe** **7**, 132 St Johns Road.

### 7 St John's, Bishopthorpe

The local Anglican parish was created in 1856, with The Rev. William Macquarie Cowper (1810-1902), the first Australian-born Anglican clergyman and a godson of Governor Macquarie, as the incumbent. Of Romanesque design in Pyrmont sandstone, St John's Bishopthorpe opened on the north-west corner in 1870. It was designed by Edmund Blacket (1817-83), one of the leading architects in NSW, assisted by John Horbury Hunt (1838-1904). Blacket also designed the church furniture and pulpit. His son Cyril Blacket added the choir, vestry and porch in 1909 and a bell tower in 1911.



Photo: Gary Deirmendjian collection City of Sydney Archives

Turn left into Glebe Point Road and walk to the corner of Bridge Road. On your left is **Foley Park** **8**.

### 8 Foley Park

The 'Rest Park Wireless House' was opened in 1934 to allow locals to listen to the radio, as they would later gather round electrical store windows to watch television. Also note the impressive War Memorial facing Glebe Point Road, flanked by the busts of a soldier and sailor.

Continue down Bridge Road to the **Reuss Houses and The Abbey** 9, 154-160 Bridge Road.

### 9 Reuss Houses and The Abbey



Photos: David Morgan, City of Sydney



Ferdinand Reuss trained as a civil engineer in the British firm of Robert Stevenson, the great lighthouse engineer and grandfather of Robert Louis Stevenson. After some time in the USA, Reuss came to Australia during the 1851 gold rush, eventually setting up an architecture practice in Sydney. On land he had purchased on either side of Pyrmont Bridge Road, he built houses, most of which he rented out to others. He lived in The Hermitage at 154 Bridge Road from 1866 until his death in 1896. Sadly, several of his other houses are now derelict. They include: Hamilton (156), and Reussdale (160), perhaps the earliest example of High Victorian domestic design in Glebe. Number 177 is also attributed to him. The Abbey at 158 was a Presbyterian church built by the American-born architect Thomas Rowe on Broadway in the 1870s, then moved stone by stone to its present site in 1920; it has most recently been a restaurant.

Retrace your steps along Bridge Road, cross over Glebe Point Road, and continue along Bridge Road into Lyndhurst Street. Turn left into Darghan Street. On your right is **Lyndhurst** 10, 61 Darghan Street.

### 10 Lyndhurst



Photo: Historic Houses Trust of NSW

This Regency villa was built for Dr James Bowman, Principal Surgeon of Sydney Hospital and the son-in-law of James Macarthur. John Verge, who also designed Toxteth Park (number 16 in this tour), completed Lyndhurst in 1837. It later became the Catholic St Mary's College, while the grounds, which had covered 36 acres (14.6 hectares), were subdivided in 1878 and 1885. It was threatened with demolition in 1972, when an expressway through Glebe was proposed. After a long public campaign, including a Builders' Labourers Federation 'green ban', the proposal was abandoned. The best view is from the rear in Darghan Lane.

### 11 Wentworth Park

Originally a tidal flat known as Black Wattle Cove or Swamp, its foreshores were used for abattoirs and boiling down works from the 1830s to the 1860s. In 1876 the swamp was infilled, with the aim of eliminating noxious smells. Beginning in 1882, Wentworth Park was built on the land that had been reclaimed.



Glebe, 1973. Photo: City of Sydney Archives

Across the northern edge of the park runs the Glebe Railway Viaduct, which now carries the Sydney Light Rail: built in 1916, this is the longest section of brick arch viaduct on the NSW system, a major engineering work with the brickwork sitting on timber piles. Greyhound racing began at Wentworth Park in 1932, with Saturday night 'Wenty Dogs' soon becoming a part of Sydney life. The current grandstand was completed in 1987.

Continue along Lyndhurst Street to Bellevue Street. The stairs on the corner of Bellevue Street lead to **Wentworth Park** 11. A bird's eye view of Wentworth Park is afforded along Bellevue Street.

Retrace your steps back to Glebe Point Road and turn right. On your left at the corner of Hereford Street is the **Valhalla Cinema** 12, 166D Glebe Point Road.

### 12 Valhalla Cinema

The Art Deco cinema's original name (the Astor) can be seen on the Hereford Street elevation. In the 1970s, as the New Arts Cinema, it hosted live shows, including the first Australian production of The Rocky Horror Show.

It later became a cinema again, specialising in independent films and revival showings of classics. In the 80s and 90s its 6-month program calendar seemed to be on every Sydney student share house wall!



Photo: David Morgan, City of Sydney

Continue along Glebe Point Road. On your left at 186 Glebe Point Road is Benledi House, formerly the **Homoeopathic Hospital** 13.

### 13 Homoeopathic Hospital

Benledi House was built in the late 19th century and occupied by the Moore family. The Sydney Homoeopathic Hospital (SHH) was founded in Redfern in 1902 to dispense homoeopathic treatment. This was a popular form of medicine in the 19th century, but its popularity declined with the introduction of antibiotics and improved surgical skills. The hospital moved to Glebe in 1915, where it was increasingly used as a general community hospital; despite its name, it is believed that homoeopathy had effectively ended there by 1945. The park on the corner of Wigram Road was previously the site of the Sydney Hospital for Sick Children, founded in 1880. It was renamed the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in 1904, and moved to Camperdown in 1907. The SHH later took over this building, which was demolished in 1968. The SHH was abruptly closed in 1989. Benledi is now part of the Glebe Library.

Continue along Glebe Point Road. On your right is **Bidura** 14, 357 Glebe Point Road.

14

## Bidura

Bidura was built about 1860. Blacket is believed to have lived here while he was designing the Great Hall of the University of Sydney. Bidura served for many years as a residence for the merchant Fred Perks, and has a fine ballroom.



Photo: David Morgan, City of Sydney

House has a long association with the Community Services Department and until the mid-1970s was used as a residence for state wards, including many Indigenous children separated from their families. Bidura Children's Court is situated directly behind Bidura House.

Turn left into Boyce Street, then walk to the corner of Mansfield St to reach **Tranby** 15, 13 Mansfield Street.

15

## Tranby

Tranby cottage was built about 1840 prior to the subdivision of the Toxteth Estate. Since 1958 it has been the home of the Tranby Aboriginal Cooperative College, the oldest independent adult Aboriginal education centre in Australia. With an average of 150 students, it seeks to provide self-determination for Indigenous Australians. Courses include Australian



Aboriginal cultures and history, development studies, and indigenous legal advocacy. The Co-operative has also developed affiliate organisations such as Blackbooks, the Aboriginal Development Unit and the Aboriginal Homeless Persons Hostel.

Tranby 1973. Photo: City of Sydney Archives

Continue up Mansfield Street into Avenue Road to reach the site of **Toxteth Park**, now St Scholastica's College 16, 4 Avenue Road.

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## Toxteth Park

George Allen (1800-1877) was the first solicitor to be trained in Australia. By 1831 he had acquired 96 acres (38.8 hectares) of Glebe land, which became the Toxteth Estate, and commissioned John Verge to build Toxteth Park. His son, George Wigram Allen (1824-1885) added a third storey, tower and ballroom.



Photo: David Morgan, City of Sydney

In 1901, it was sold to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, a Benedictine Order, who founded today's St. Scholastica's College, a Catholic school for girls. It has 700 students in years 7-12, including 80 boarders.

You may wish to explore nearby Arcadia Road, which contains some of the most attractive houses in the area. Alternatively, proceed downhill along Avenue Road, right into Victoria Road then left into Edward Street.

On your left is the **Sze Yup Chinese Temple** 17.

17

## Sze Yup Chinese Temple

The Sze Yup Temple was built by immigrants from the area known as Sze Yup in the province of Guangdong, China. It is dedicated to Kwun Ti, a warrior and patriot in the era of the Three Kingdoms 220 – 265 AD, who was famous for his loyalty, physical prowess and masculinity. In Australia, immigrant Chinese worshipped him as a wise judge, a guide and a protector. There are only four temples of this type in Australia, and the Sze Yup temple is the most renowned. The central temple in the Sze Yup complex was built in 1898.



Principles of Feng Shui are seen in its location on land that sloped from the temple to the waters of Rozelle Bay. In 1904 the temple was flanked by two chapels, the Chapel of Departed Friends and the Chapel of Good Fortune.

Photo: David Morgan, City of Sydney

Retrace your steps along Edward Street and Victoria Road, then turn right into Alexandra Road to reach **Jubilee Park** and **Bicentennial Park**. You can then take the foreshore walk to **Bellevue** 18, 55-57 Leichhardt Street.

18

## Bellevue



Photo: David Morgan, City of Sydney

Built in 1883, the house was designed by Ambrose Thornley Jnr., who was responsible for many houses and shops around Glebe. Overlooking Blackwattle Bay, it was one of many mansions around Glebe Point. They gradually disappeared as industry took over the area in the 20th century. The growth of industry in Glebe, especially along the foreshores, had been encouraged by the development of wharfage in Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays. By 1945 there were 158 factories in Glebe, and they employed 4,496 workers. Bellevue is now derelict. The City of Sydney's 2004 Glebe Foreshore Plan provides for its restoration.

Currently the foreshore walk is closed by construction just south of Cook Street. Detour: walk up Cook Street, then proceed through 'Blackwattle Mews' (23-25 Cook Street) on left, to reach Sheehy Street, then turn left into Forsyth Street. Opposite the intersection with Taylor Street is the **Burley Griffin Incinerator** 19.

19

### Burley Griffin Incinerator

Built in 1933, this was the smallest of thirteen incinerators in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia designed by Walter Burley Griffin, designer of Canberra, and his partner Eric Nicholls. Others included those at Pyrmont (now demolished) and Willoughby. Prior to building the incinerator, Glebe Council used to load garbage onto barges at the Council depot in Forsyth Street, tow it 10 kilometres out to sea and dump it: this resulted in beaches being polluted by refuse carried in by the currents. Griffin and Nicholls promoted their incinerators as hygienic, efficient and aesthetically pleasing. Now only the shell of the incinerator remains, incorporated into the redevelopment of foreshore industrial land for housing. The City of Sydney's 2004 Glebe Foreshore Plan also provides for its restoration.

Walk along Taylor Street, past Glebe High School to Pyrmont Bridge Rd. You can turn right to reach Glebe Light Rail Station and end your tour, or you can make your way back to the tour starting point through what was once the **Glebe Estate**, owned by the Anglican Church (some streets are named after Anglican bishops) until it was sold to the Commonwealth

Government in 1974; it eventually passed to the NSW Housing Commission to be used for public housing. Alternatively, turn left and walk to the **Fish Market** 20.

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### Fish Market



Photo: City of Sydney Archives

In 1966 the Sydney Fish Market was relocated from Haymarket to this site. There was major reconstruction and expansion in the 1980s, with the former John Fairfax Ltd. bulk paper store becoming the location of a computerized auction room. The Fish Market today is open to the public, and incorporates a working fishing port, wholesale fish market, fresh food retail market, food and beverage outlets and a seafood cooking school.

Your tour ends here. Across Bank Street is Fish Market Light Rail Station. You can also connect here with **PORT**, the City of Sydney's walking tour of Pyrmont and Ultimo. ■



### historicalwalkingtours

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