

Preservation History Walk Glebe



Preservation History Walk Glebe

In 1789, Governor Arthur Phillip granted 400 acres (162 hectares) to the Anglican Church for the new colony's chaplain, Reverend 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. It became one of the first suburbs in Australia to experience 'gentrification', as its architectural heritage, combined with proximity to the city and University of Sydney, 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.



Allow about 2 hours for this walk.
Start at the **Commemorative fountain and memorial (1)**.



George Hudson Timber Company, Blackwattle Bay, 1908
(Photograph: Max Solling Collection)

1

Commemorative fountain and memorial



Commemorative fountain, corner Broadway and Glebe Point Road, Glebe, c1953-54 (Photograph: City of Sydney Archives)

Originally the University Hotel, the building at the top of Glebe Point Road is now known as University Hall. 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. On it is written: 'Erected by Tom Lamings Gymnasium, also Glebe supporters and admirers who knew him as he was'. Dave Sands was the Empire Middleweight champion and seemed destined for a successful career, but died in a car accident in 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 the **School War Memorial (2)** outside Glebe Public School.

2

School War Memorial



War memorial at Glebe Public School, 1954
(Photograph: City of Sydney Archives)

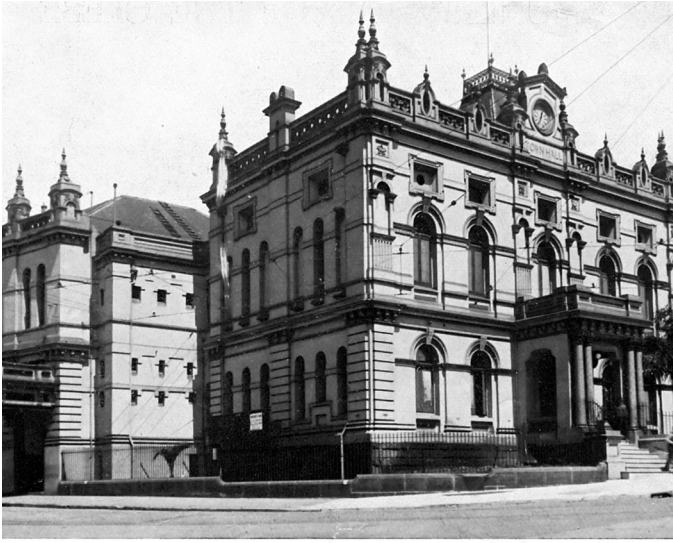
Glebe Public School opened in 1858. The oldest building on the site dates from 1862. This war memorial lists former students who served in World War 1. A bust of a digger rests on top of a column and the dead are listed on the black tablet in front. Today, Glebe Public School hosts markets each weekend.



Cross to the other side of Derwent Street and walk up Catherine Street until Mount Vernon Street. Walk to the end of the street and stop where it meets St Johns Road with **Glebe Town Hall (3)**, on the corner.

3

Glebe Town Hall



Glebe Town Hall, 1930s (Photograph: City of Sydney Archives)

Glebe Town Hall was built in stages from 1880 to 1891. It was designed by Ambrose Thornley Jnr, who was also responsible for **Bellevue (18)**. Glebe was a separate municipality from 1859 until 1949, when the City of Sydney expanded to take over Glebe and 7 other suburban municipalities. In 1968, the City of Sydney lost most of the areas it had acquired, and Glebe became a part of Leichhardt Municipality. Glebe was returned to the City of Sydney in 2003, and the former town hall is now a neighbourhood service centre. Around the corner at 41 Lodge Street is the former town clerk's house.



Walk to the right on St Johns Road and turn left into Westmoreland Street. Continue along Westmoreland Street stopping at **Elsie (4)** at No. 73.

4

Elsie



Six children play in the front yard of the Elsie Women's Refuge, Glebe, 1974 (Photograph: Drusilla Modjeska, National Library of Australia)

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 so the women of the Elsie collective moved in, claiming squatter rights. A visit by social security minister Bill Hayden shortly after it opened led to Elsie receiving commonwealth funding.

5 to 7

Retrace your steps back to St Johns Road and walk toward Glebe Point Road. Along the way you will see on your left the Federation style **Fire Station (5)**, 75 St Johns Road. On your right is the **St John's Parish Hall (6)**, corner of 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)**.

7

St John's Bishopthorpe



St John's Bishopthorpe (Photograph: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

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.



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

8

Foley Park



Wireless House in Foley Park, 2010 (Photograph: Paul Patterson, City of Sydney)

The Rest Park Wireless House was opened in 1934 to allow locals to listen to the radio. It has recently been restored and today it is an internet wireless hotspot. 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

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 US, Reuss came to Australia during the 1851 gold rush, eventually setting up an architecture practice in Sydney. He built houses on land he bought on either side of Pyrmont Bridge Road and rented out most of them. He lived in The Hermitage at 154 Bridge Road from 1866 until his death in 1896. Reussdale (No. 160) is perhaps the earliest example of High Victorian domestic design in Glebe. No. 177 is also attributed to Reuss. The Abbey at (No. 158) was a Presbyterian church built to a design by the American-born architect Thomas Rowe on Broadway in the 1870s, then moved stone by stone to its present site in the 1920s. It was a restaurant for 25 years and has since been developed for commercial purposes.



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



Lyndhurst Hall, Glebe, c1880
(Photograph: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

This Regency villa was built for Dr James Bowman, principal surgeon of Sydney Hospital 1819–36 and the son-in-law of the politician and pastoralist, James Macarthur. John Verge, who also designed **Toxteth Park (16)**, 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.



Continue north towards the harbour along Darghan Street and turn right into Cardigan Street. Walk to Bellevue Street and view **Wentworth Park (11)**.

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 1820s to the 1860s. In 1876, the swamp was filled in to eliminate noxious smells. Beginning in 1881, Wentworth Park was built on the land that had been reclaimed. Across the northern edge of the park runs the Glebe Railway Viaduct, which now carries the Dulwich Hill light rail line. 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 grandstand was completed in 1987.



Walk to the left on Bellevue Street, under the light rail tunnel to Bridge Road. Cross over at the lights and enter the foreshore walkway just past Sydney Secondary College. The College is on the site of the former timber yards. Continue along the foreshore to **Burley Griffin Incinerator (12)**.

12

Burley Griffin Incinerator



Architectural drawing showing the Burley Griffin Incinerator at Glebe, 1930s
(Image: National Library of Australia)

Built in 1933, this was the smallest of 13 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. Before building the incinerator, Glebe Council would load garbage onto barges at its depot in Forsyth Street, tow it 10km 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. The incinerator building has been preserved for community uses and forms a striking architectural feature along the Glebe foreshore walk. Look out for the interpretive signs.



Continue walking along the foreshore walk to **Bellevue (13)**.

13

Bellevue



Bellevue House, 1899
(Photograph: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

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 wharves in Rozelle and Blackwattle bays. By 1945 there were 158 factories in Glebe, and they employed 4,496 workers. Bellevue has now been restored for community use and houses the Blackwattle Cafe.



Continue walking along the foreshore to Jubilee Park and Bicentennial Park. Head to Alexandra Road, turn left onto Victoria Road and then left again onto Edward Street. On the left is **Sze Yup Chinese Temple (14)**.

14

Sze Yup Chinese Temple



Sze Yup Temple in Edward Street, 1904
(Photograph: *The Sydney Mail*, 3 February 1904, p287, State Library of NSW)

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 4 temples of this type in Australia, and the Sze Yup temple is the most renowned. The central temple 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 central temple was flanked by 2 chapels, the Chapel of Departed Friends and the Chapel of Good Fortune.



Retrace your steps to Victoria Road, turn right and then left onto Avenue Road to reach the **Former Toxteth Park (15)**, now Saint Scholastica's College, 4 Avenue Road.

15

Former Toxteth Park



Allen family residence, Toxteth Park, 1890
(Photograph: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

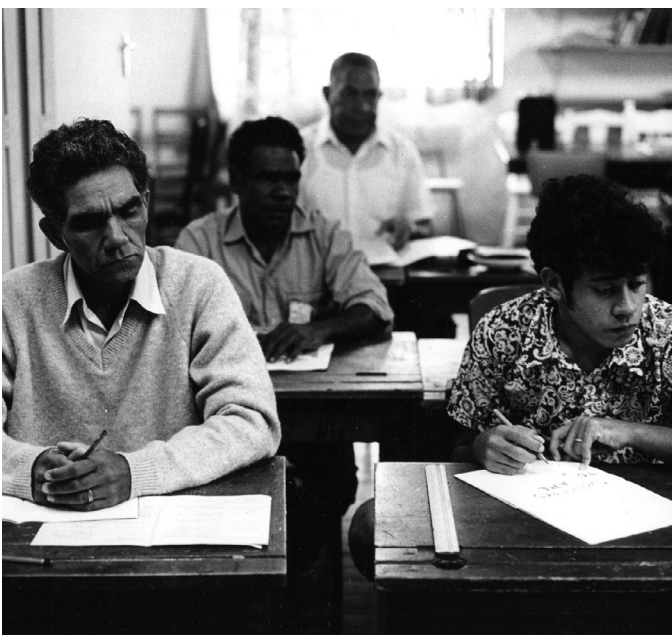
George Allen (1800–1877) was the first solicitor to be trained in Australia. By 1831 he had acquired 96 acres (38.8 hectares) of Glebe land, which became the Toxteth Estate, and commissioned John Verge to build Toxteth Park. His son, George Wigram Allen (1824–1885) added a third storey, tower and ballroom. In 1901, it was sold to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, a Benedictine Order, which founded today's St Scholastica's College, a Catholic school for girls. It has 700 students in years 7–12, including 80 boarders.



Continue along Avenue Road onto Mansfield Street to reach **Tranby (16)** on the corner of Boyce and Mansfield streets.

16

Tranby



Students at Tranby, 1973
(Photograph: City of Sydney Archives)

Tranby cottage was built in 1858 before 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 Aboriginal Australians. Courses include applied Aboriginal studies, community development, national Indigenous legal advocacy, and business studies. The cooperative has also developed affiliate organisations such as Blackbooks, the Aboriginal Development Unit and the Aboriginal Homeless Persons Hostel.



Turn left onto Boyce Street and walk to Glebe Point Road, turn left and the next site of interest is on the left, **Bidura (17)** at 357 Glebe Point Road.

17

Bidura



Bidura, the Blacket family residence, 1865
(Image: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

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. Bidura House has a long association with the community services department and from 1920 until the mid-1960s was used as a residence for state wards, including many Aboriginal children separated from their families. Bidura Children's Court is situated directly behind Bidura House.



Walk south down Glebe Point Road to Benledi House, formerly the **Homeopathic Hospital (18)** at 186 Glebe Point Road.

18

Homeopathic Hospital



Nurses at a stall during a fete at the Homeopathic Hospital, 1930s
(Photograph: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

Benledi House was built in the late 19th century and occupied by the Moore family. The Sydney Homoeopathic Hospital 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 Sydney Homoeopathic Hospital later took over this building, which was demolished in 1968. The Sydney Homoeopathic Hospital was abruptly closed in 1989. Benledi House is now part of the Glebe Library.



Continue along Glebe Point Road until you reach Hereford Street, on the corner is the **Former Valhalla Cinema (19)**, 166D Glebe Point Road.

19

Former Valhalla Cinema

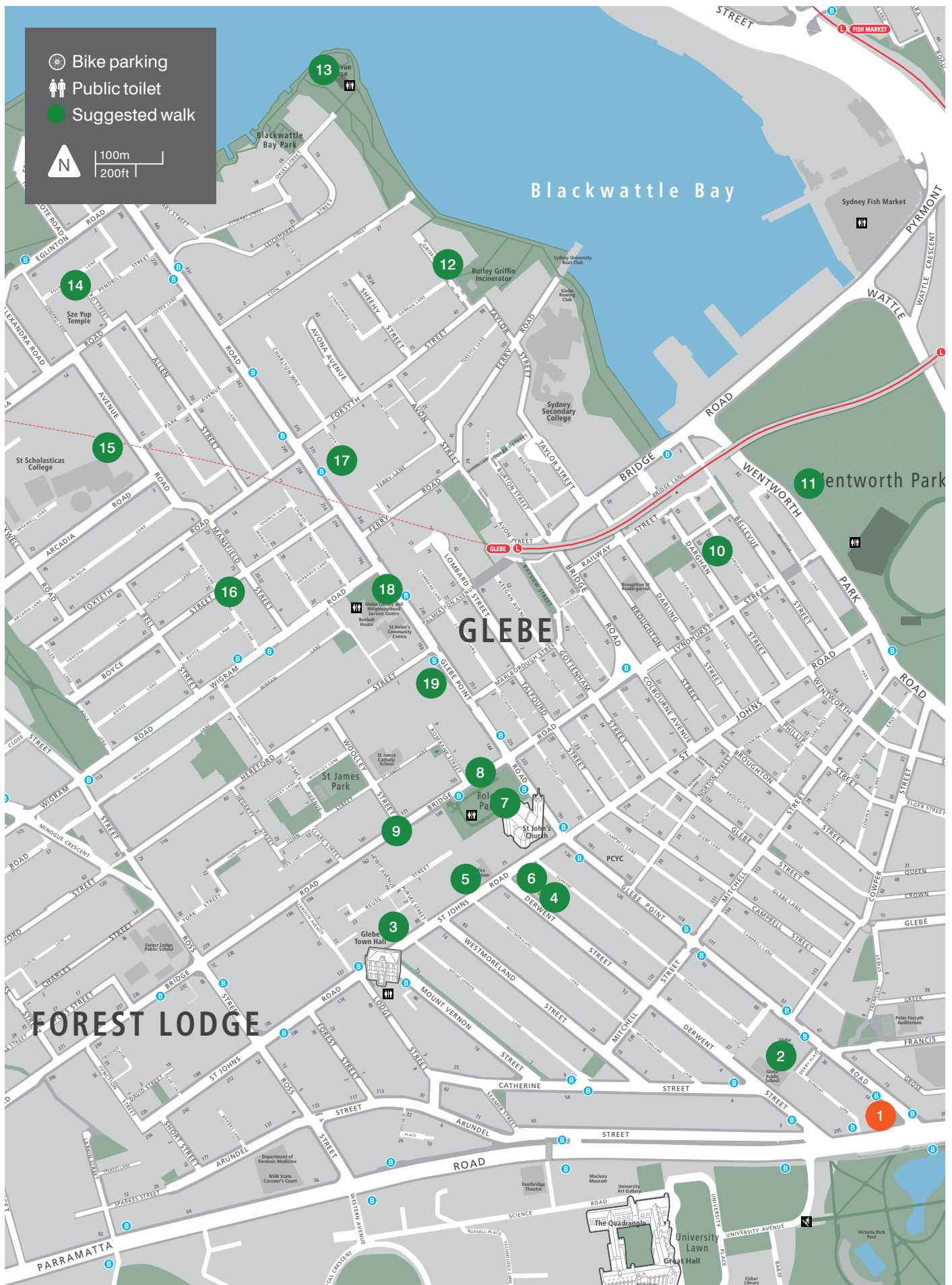


Valhalla, formerly The Astor, 1952
(Photograph: Leon Manny, Tramway Museum, Inner West Council Library Services)

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 known as the Valhalla, 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. In 2008 the cinema was converted into offices.



Your tour ends here.



Download the free Sydney Culture Walks app.

Enjoy more walks and historical points of interest direct to your mobile.

sydneyculturewalksapp.com



Please reuse or recycle this guide.
10th edition, August 2024