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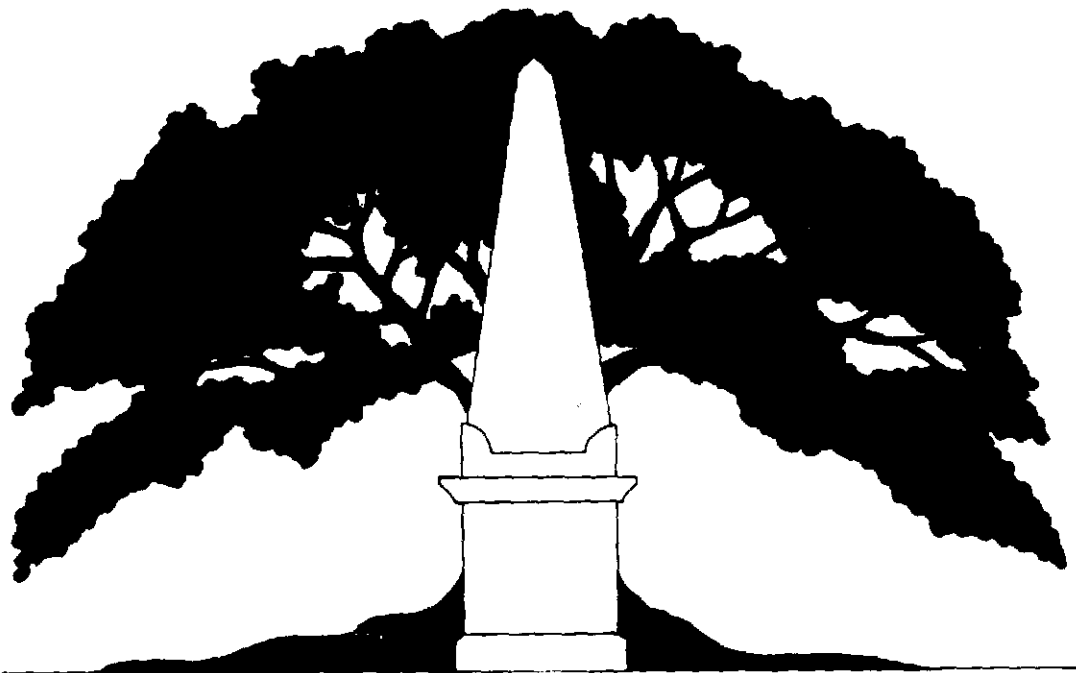
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SYDNEY

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9299

MASTERPLAN AND PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

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M A C Q U A R I E P L A C E

1990

prepared by

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Conservation Planning Landscape Interior Interpretation

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# SECTION I

## INTRODUCTION

Council has for many years realised the value of its parks and the need to identify methods of management to assure that they are conserved and enjoyed to their maximum potential.

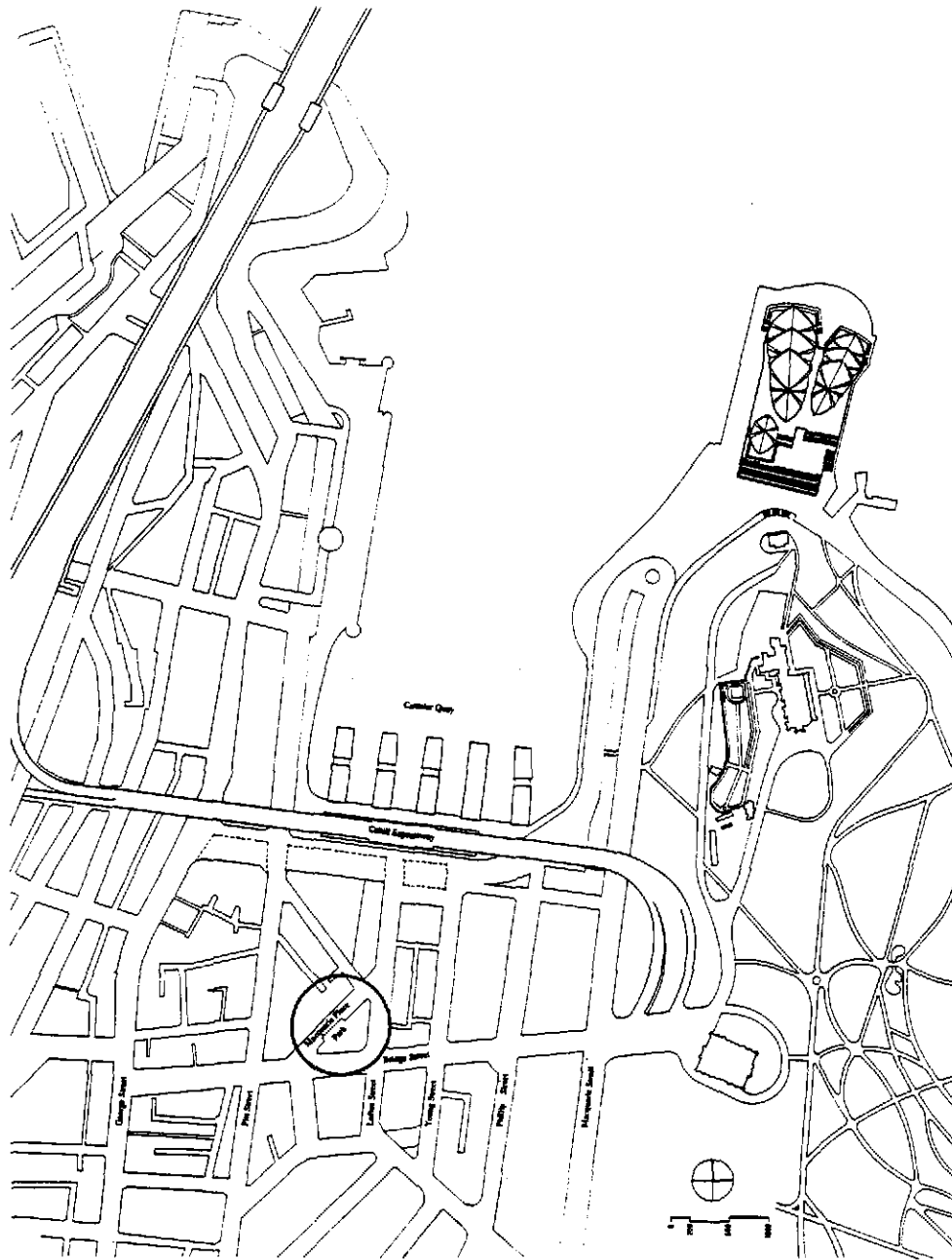
Macquarie Place is greatly valued as an open space in the intensely urbanised northern commercial precinct of the city. The historic monuments in Macquarie Place, such as Macquarie's obelisk and the anchor and cannon from HMS Sirius, pay tribute to its important role as a public space in Sydney over the last 200 years. The historic character of the precinct and its surroundings make it a fascinating place where 19th Century Sydney may still be glimpsed. In 1989 Council, with the assistance of The Council of the City of South Sydney, appointed Lester Tropman and Associates as consultants to prepare a Plan of Management and Masterplan for the conservation of Macquarie Place and the important historic monuments within it.

There is an urgent need to address the many conservation and management issues affecting Macquarie Place today, such as the deterioration of the historic monuments, the effects of changed micro-climatic conditions due to overshadowing, and the need to sympathetically incorporate new development in the area surrounding the Park. The Plan of Management and Masterplan offer solutions to the various problems facing Macquarie Place. Drawing together the information contained in numerous conservation reports relating to the Park that have been prepared over the last ten years, it will allow Council to conserve and upgrade Macquarie Place according to its heritage significance so that it may continue to function well as an important public place and green space within the city.

This study serves as a plan for the preservation, conservation, reconstruction and adaption of Macquarie Place and the important historic monuments within it.

## 1.1 LOCATION OF STUDY

Macquarie Place is located in the northern commercial precinct of the city, close to Circular Quay. It is a triangular portion of land bounded to the south by Bridge Street and to the east by Loftus Street with the Macquarie Place streetscape completing the triangle. The land has a westerly aspect and forms part of the eastern bank of the former Tank Stream valley. The map below shows the location of the study area.



MAP 1

Location of the study area.

## 1.2 DEFINITIONS

The following terms used throughout the report, are defined in The Burra Charter which is the Australian adaption of the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. (Venice 1966).

### CONSERVATION

- 'Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstances include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaption and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these'.

### MAINTENANCE

- 'Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly'.

### PRESERVATION

- 'Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration'.

### RESTORATION

- 'Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material'.

### RECONSTRUCTION

- 'Reconstruction means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new and old) into the fabric'.

### ADAPTION

- 'Adaption means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.'

### COMPATIBLE USE

- In addition 'Compatible use means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact'.

## SECTION II

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Macquarie Place occupies the land that was once the eastern bank of the Tank Stream near where it flowed into Sydney Cove. Artists' sketches from as early as 1793 show the land that was to become Macquarie Place as a triangular area adjoining the garden of the First Government House (see plate 2.1). The triangle of Macquarie Place and the alignment of Bridge Street are also visible on plans of Sydney dated from as early as 1800. Bridge Street, so named because it was the location of the bridge across the Tank Stream, formed the western approach to the First Government House.



PLATE 2.1

A Sketch of Sydney by Ferdinand Brambila in 1793, only five years after the formation of the colony, showing the large triangular space which Macquarie Place originally occupied, with a view up Bridge Street.

The alignment of Macquarie Place began as a contour path that followed the original topography of the Tank Stream valley. The early 19th Century street frontages of Macquarie Place marked the boundary between the Government House grounds and the surrounding private residential allotments.

The properties surrounding the reserve were owned by the elite of the early colony. To the west of Macquarie Place were allotments leased to Simeon Lord, Thos Randall, William Chapman, and Thos and Mary Reiby. To the south were the allotments set aside for the houses and offices of the Colonial Secretary and the Judge Advocate, the chief civic officials of the colony after the governor (see map 4).

The reserve was the dividing space between Government House and the "common land" of the Rocks area, therefore it represented, in effect, the centre of the colony. The locational importance of the reserve was increased by Governor Macquarie in 1818 when he located the famous obelisk in the centre of the triangular space. This obelisk designed by Francis Greenway was to mark the geographic centre of the colony, from which all distances were to be measured, and was inscribed with the mileages to other colonial centres (see plate 2.2).

In the following year, Macquarie commissioned Francis Greenway to design the doric fountain which was located at the western corner of the Park. Both these monuments were considered landmarks of the colony and are marked on most maps of the period, as well as being favourite subjects for artists (see plates 2.3 and 2.4).

Governor Macquarie planned the Park formally to create an appropriate approach to Government House. A path system was developed to encircle the Park and lead to the central obelisk, as seen in Harper's Plan of Sydney, 1823. An engraving from 1829 shows the Park surrounded by a low sandstone wall and palisade fence (see plate 2.5).



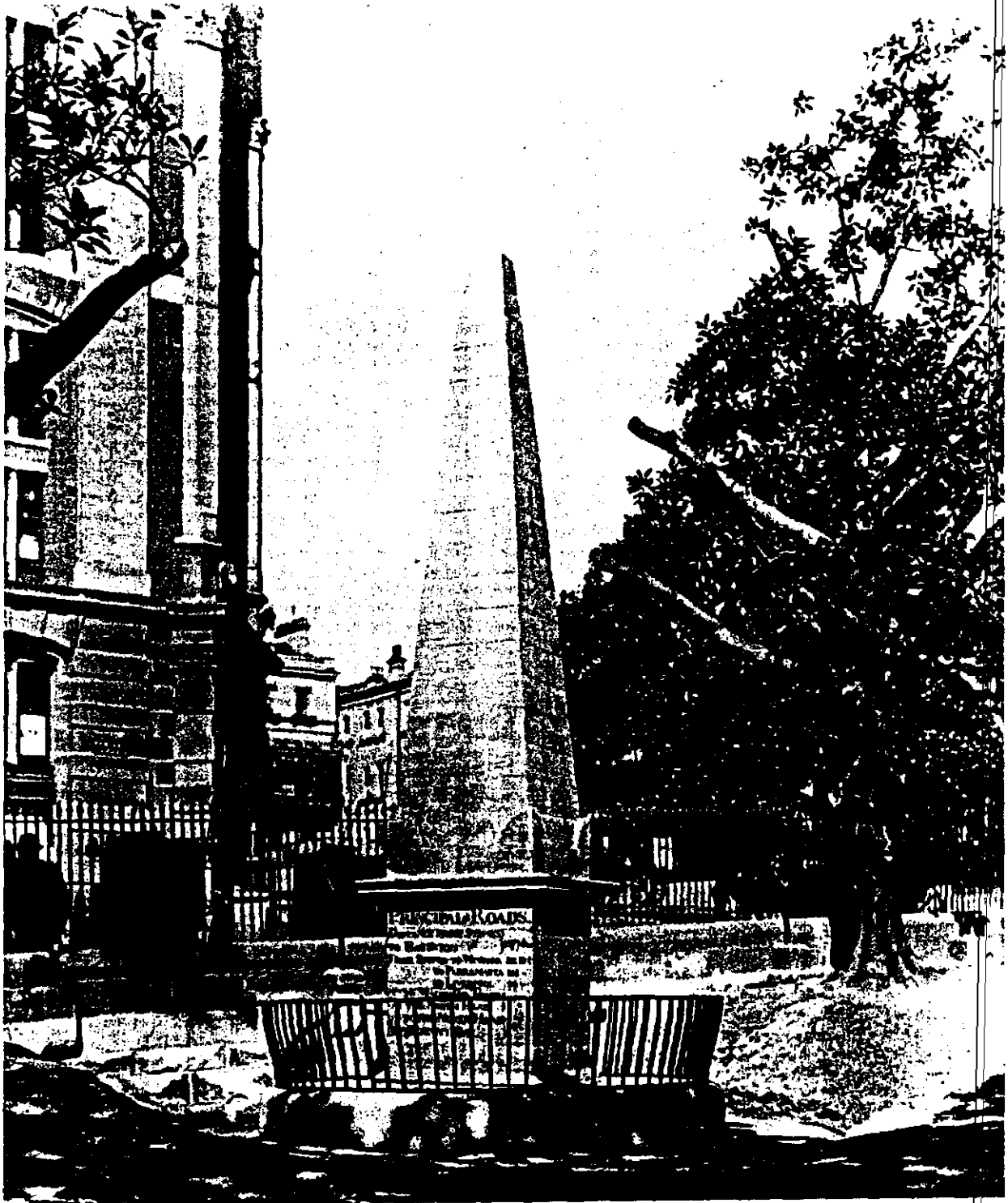


PLATE 2.2

The obelisk inscribed with the mileages to other colonial centres (c1890's)

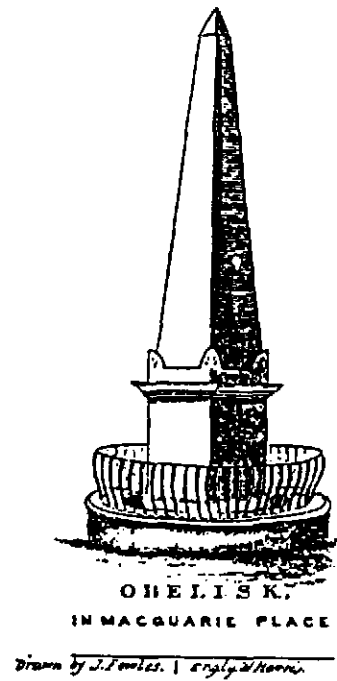
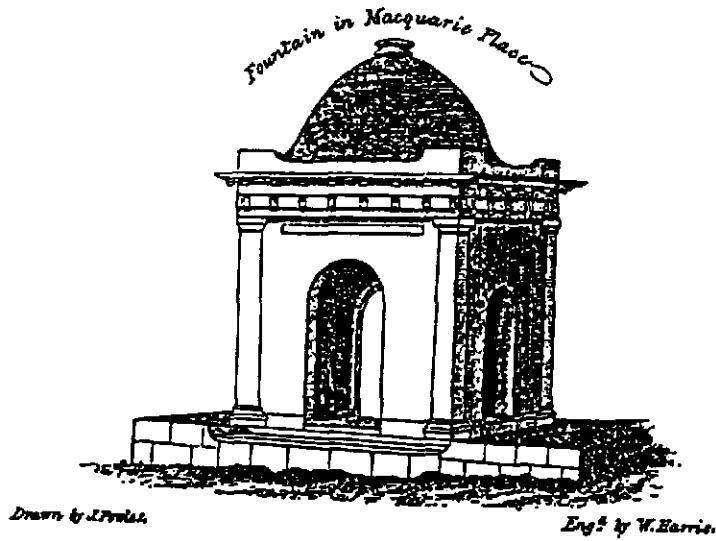


PLATE 2.3

Sketches showing the doric fountain and obelisk from Joseph Fowles' publication Sydney in 1848.



PLATE 2.4  
MACQUARIE PLACE, c1870, looking N-E

The Park was surrounded by a palisade fence, and Francis Greenway's drinking fountain was located where the T. S. Mort statue stands today.

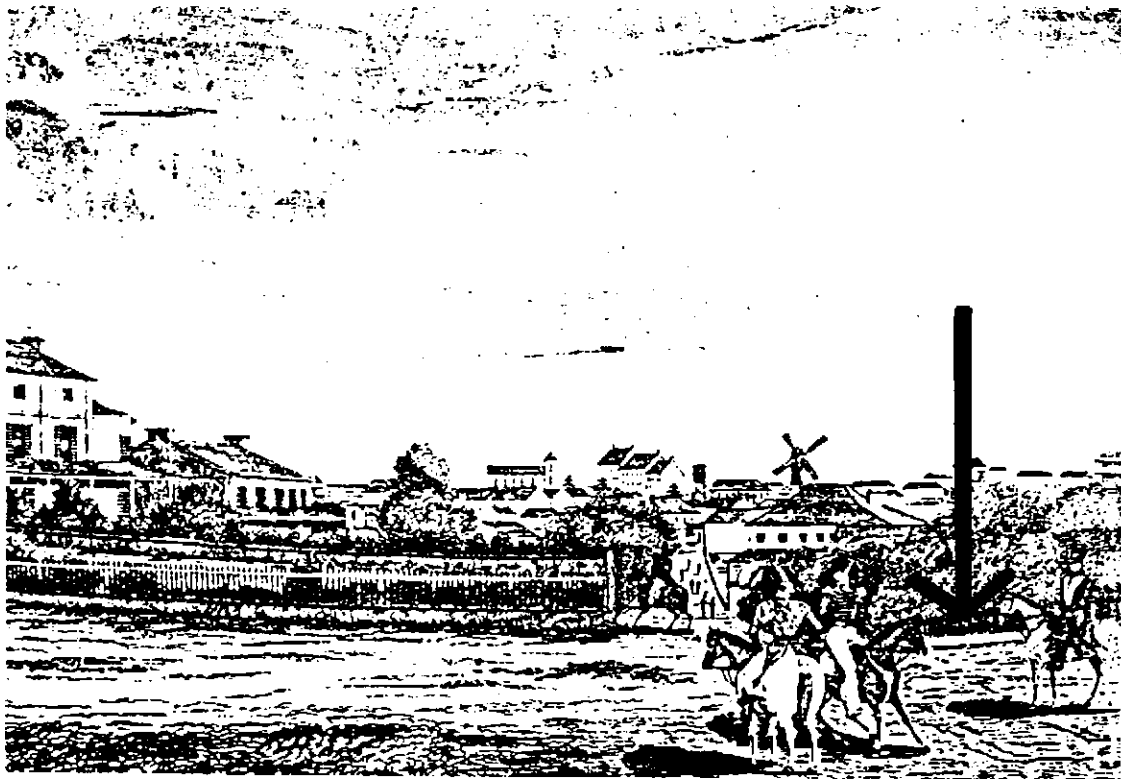


PLATE 2.5  
SYDNEY FROM THE DOMAIN NEAR GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
From SELECT VIEWS OF SYDNEY, 1829.

This is the first sketch to show the palisade fence surrounding the Park. This fence was probably replaced when Loftus Street was extended through the Park.

It was during the 1830's that the alignment of the Sydney streets began to change to a grid system with a north/south orientation, leading to Circular Quay. The relocation of Government House to the Domain, and the levelling of the topography (including the covering of the Tank Stream), made it possible to extend Castlereagh Street to the harbour, resulting in the reduction of Macquarie Place to the size that it is today. The proposed extension of Castlereagh Street (today known as Loftus Street) was recorded as early as 1832 (see map 2), and later in 1840 (see map 3).

During the late 19th Century, the Park began attracting various memorials. In 1869 the stone gate posts marking the Bridge Street entrance were installed and engraved by Walter Renny, the mayor at that time. Then in 1883 the ornate doric drinking fountain at the south-west corner of the site was replaced by a statue of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, recognising Mort's important role in establishing Australia's export trade. The anchor and cannon recovered from the ship-wrecked Sirius were placed in the Park in 1907 (see plate 2.6) and in 1908 the domed lavatory was placed on the north-east corner of the Park. Gas lamps were also present in the Park at this time (see plate 2.7).

Between 1905 and 1910, Sydney was undergoing a "beautifying scheme" where dramatic changes were made to all the major parks of Sydney, not least of which was Macquarie Reserve. The following quotes are from the Sydney Times in 1910, and describe some of the changes made to the Park.

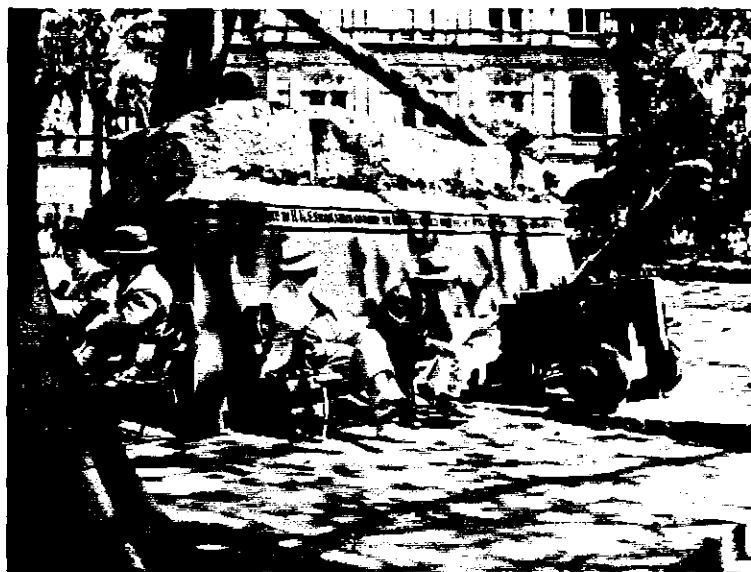


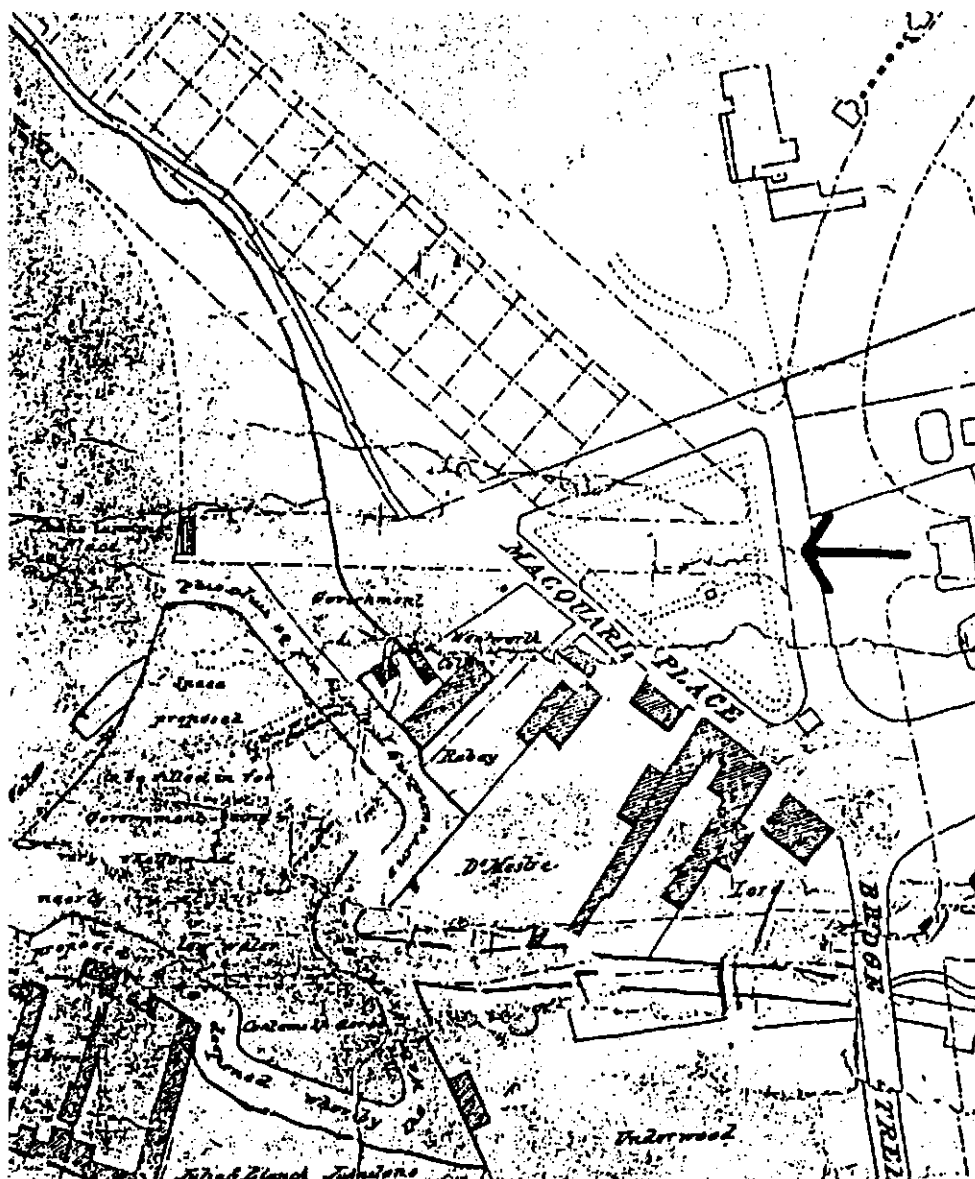
PLATE 2.6

The anchor and cannon salvaged from the ship-wrecked Sirius were placed in the Park in 1907



PLATE 2.7

Gas lamps, similar to the replicas shown above, were installed in the Park in 1908

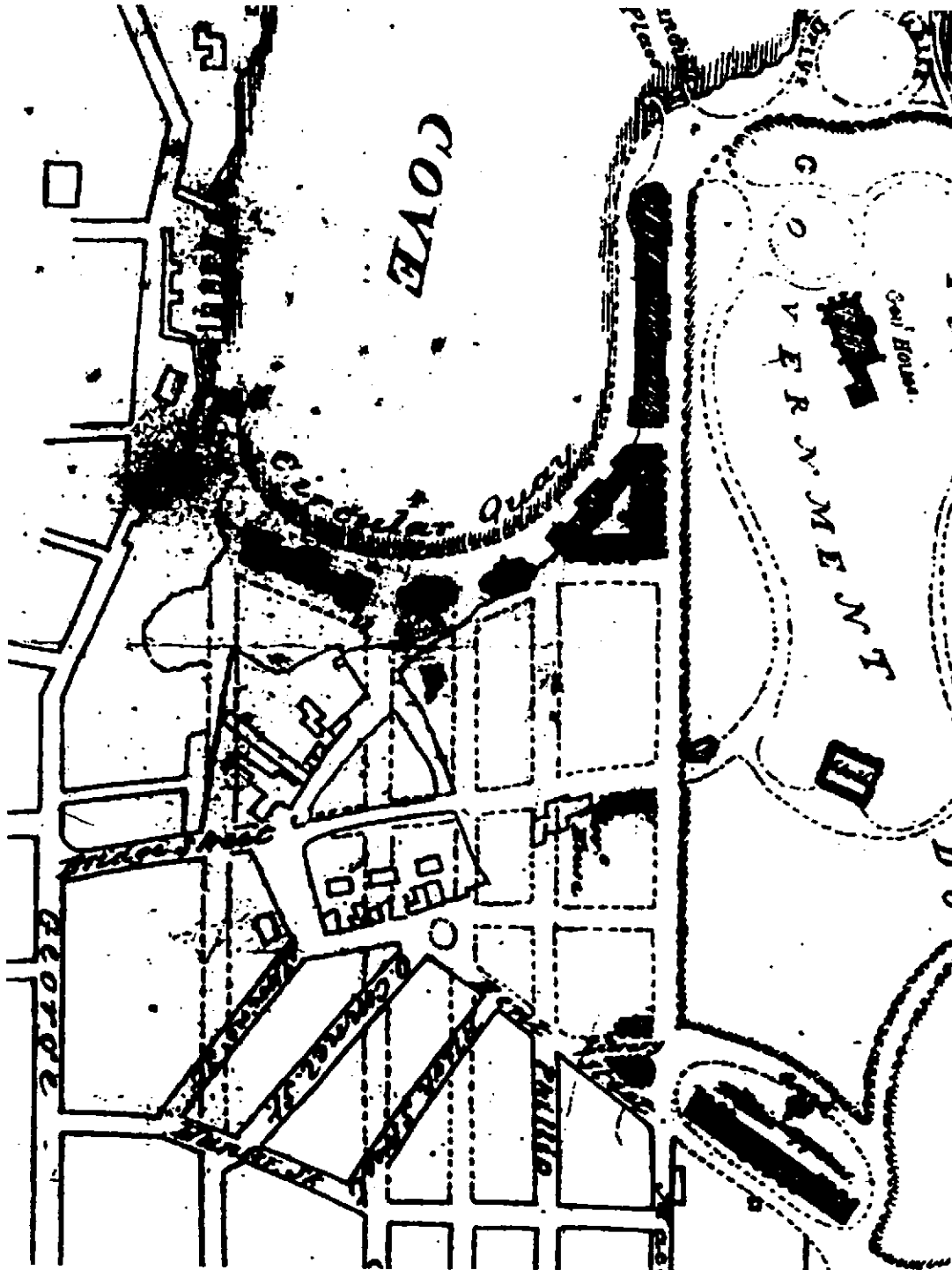


MAP 2

IMPROVEMENTS TO SYDNEY COVE, 1832.

Plan and sketch with Colonial Secretary letter No. 32/789, 28 December 1832 Map (AO 5646).

The broken line through Macquarie Place Park shows the proposed extension of Castlereagh Street (today known as Loftus Street).



MAP 3

Detail of 1840 PLAN SHOWING THE SITE FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT HOUSE PUBLIC OFFICES, THE LIBRARY, CIRCULAR QUAY, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF STREETS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

This plan clearly shows the intention to re-align the streets of Sydney to the north-south grid pattern which exists today.

*"At Macquarie reserve near the Quay a big change is noticeable. Here it was just grass and Moreton Bay fig trees. Now we find two sides of the three bordered with gardens plots, and on the third (the western side) seats beneath the three remaining trees. Thus shelter is given alike to man and plant from the glare of the afternoon sun. The garden plots are higher than the bed of the Park; they are built up level with the footpaths. And over the walls that keep them up are to be trained plants to cover, as in Boomerang Street and Hyde Park, the bare appearance of the stonework. Already a great deal has been done in trimming the trees left, and remaking the lawns and footways, but a lot more has yet to be done before its improvement is complete."*

It was during this time that the wrought iron palisade fence surrounding the Park was removed, and the fig trees (which were planted in the 1860's under the encouragement of Charles Moore, Director of the Botanic Gardens) were reduced in number from fifteen to four. The Sydney Times article of 1910 explains,

*"Areas that were caged in high iron railings and congested into a dark mass of varying green have been freed of their bondage and, unrestrained, throw out myriads of beautiful tints to catch and please the eye of passers-by. It took a long time to convince a lot of people that the removal of the railings would benefit these areas - and themselves. In fact, it was not until the irons came down that many guessed what might be possible. There is not a critic today; even the most hypercritical opponent of that first step of progress has become converted into an admirer of what is. It is well; for the commendation of the people means a city made more and more beautiful. Following the railings went lots of useless trees, and the lopping of others that had got all awry. They would have spoilt the perspective had they been allowed to retain their ungainly growth."*



Not only were the iron railings removed, but the entire stone wall along Macquarie Place was replaced with two broad steps which extended the length of the Park, and the grass along that side was replaced with gravel (see plates 2.8 and 2.9). The bollards and chains which had surrounded the statue of T. S. Mort (see plate 2.10) were also removed, (see plate 2.11) allowing the public to finally enter all areas of the reserve.



PLATE 2.8

This photo, taken in 1919, shows the extent of the paved area to the north of the anchor.

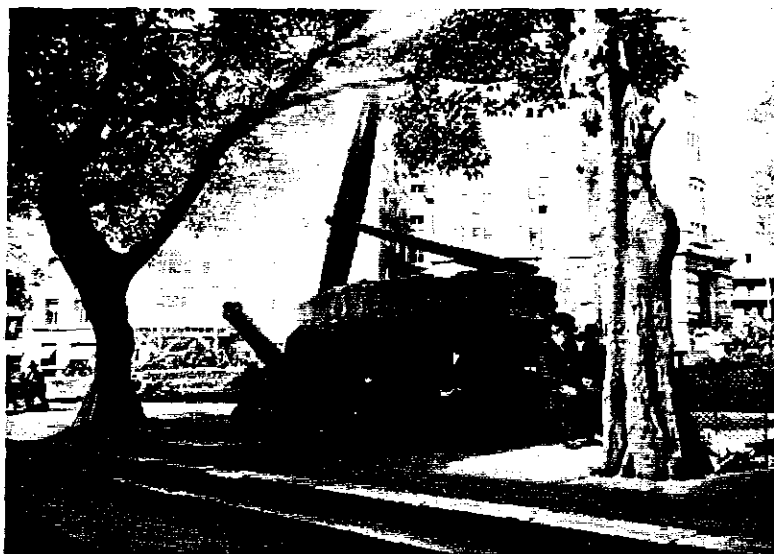


PLATE 2.9

This view of the Park from Macquarie Place streetscape shows the two steps which extended along this side of the Park.

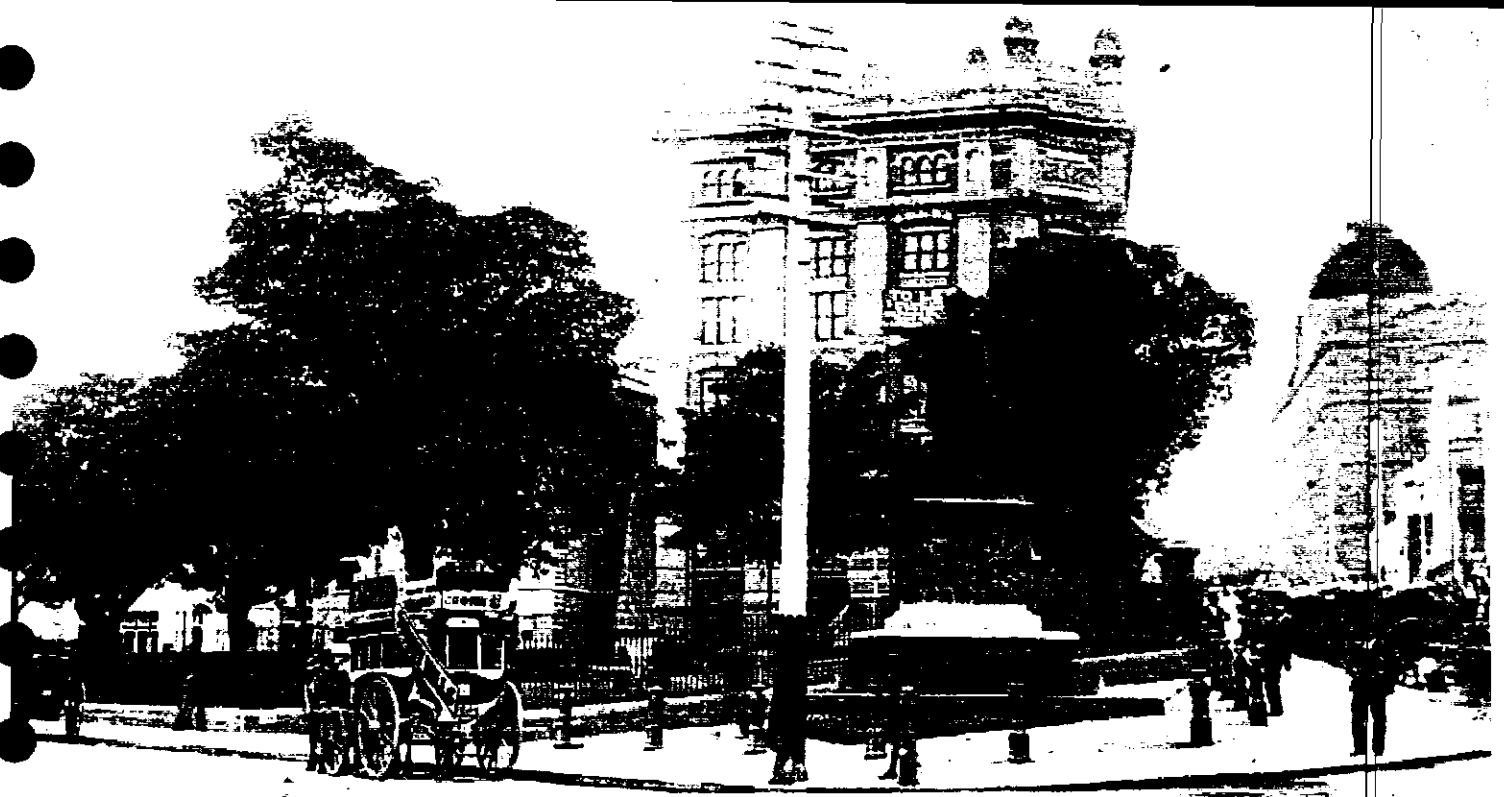


PLATE 2.10

View of the Park from the western corner showing the bollards which surrounded the T. S. Mort statue in the late 19th Century.

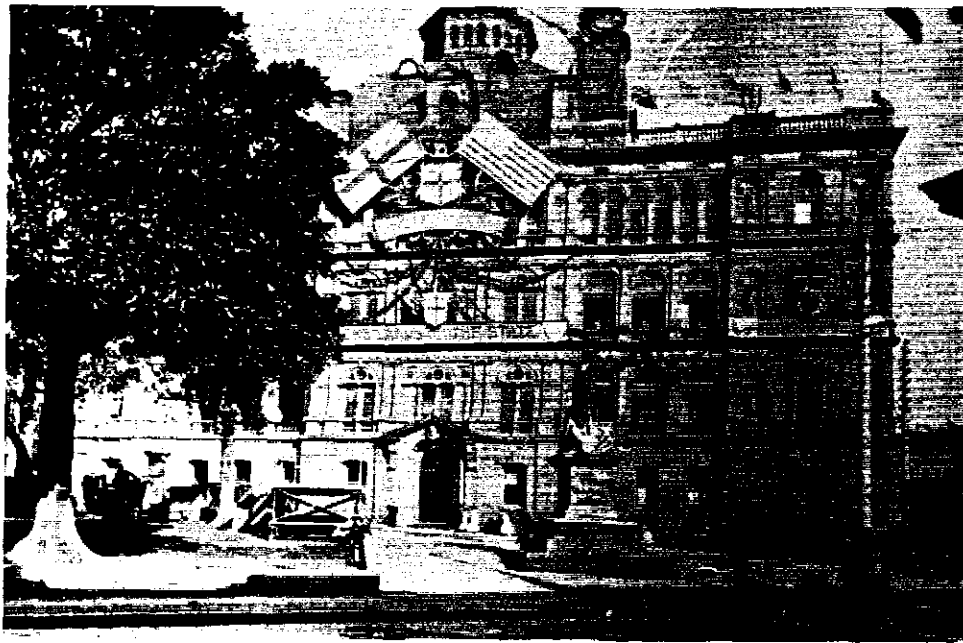


PLATE 2.11

This 1908 photograph was taken soon after the removal of the palisade fence which surrounded the Park, and the bollards which surrounded the T. S. Mort statue prior to the Sydney beautification scheme, 1905-1910.

During WWI major restructuring of the area around the obelisk was in progress, with the addition of steps either side of the obelisk leading up to street level, and a restructuring of the length of stone wall behind the obelisk (see plates 2.12 and 2.13). The area around the obelisk was paved in gravel and five years later, a metal fence was added to close the area off from the rest of the Park, so that the major access to the obelisk was from Loftus Street (see plate 2.14).

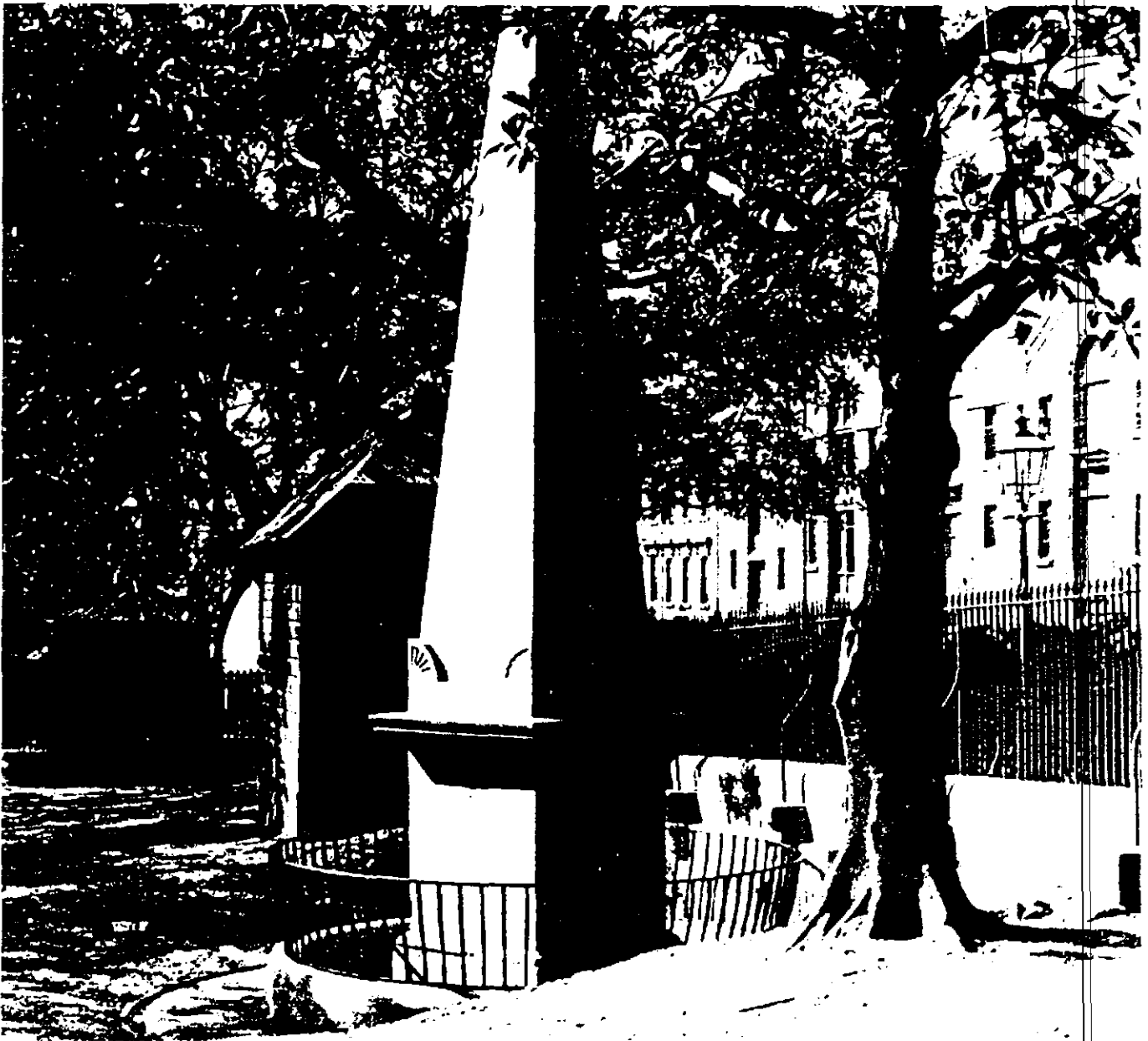


PLATE 2.12

This photo shows the obelisk surrounds, in 1898. The fence along Loftus Street was continuous prior to WWI, and there was no path leading to the obelisk.

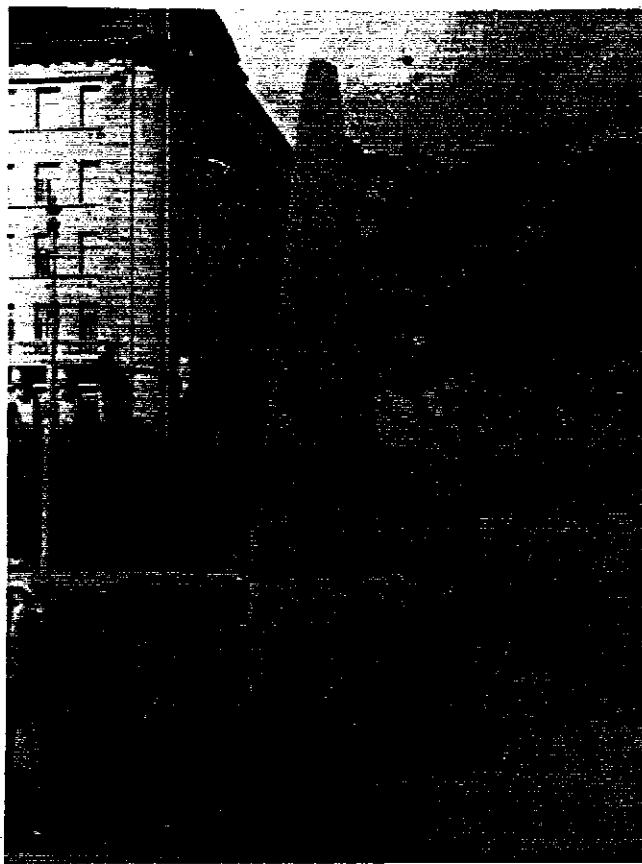


PLATE 2.13

The obelisk in 1917 was accessible from Loftus street via the stairs either side of the obelisk, as seen in this photo. The pavement around the base of the obelisk has also been extended, using sandstone pavers.



PLATE 2.14

This photo of the obelisk, taken in 1922, shows the addition of a metal fence surrounding the obelisk area. From here, three steps led into the grassed Park.

In 1960, a small bronze fountain by sculptor, Gerald Lewers, was added to the Park in remembrance of an Australian sculptor who was killed during service in France, 1917. This fountain was originally located in the southern corner of the Park near the corner of Loftus and Bridge Streets but was moved soon after to its present position behind the Mort Statue. During this time the Edwardian steps and wall surrounding the obelisk were destroyed by a car and replaced with the current wall and steps.

An aerial photo taken in 1923 reveals a circular garden bed (possibly a rose garden) located in the grass lawn in the centre of the Park (see plate 2.15). As this is not seen in other photos or maps, it is not certain how long the garden bed was in existence.



PLATE 2.15

A birds eye view of Macquarie Place Park from the west. This photo, taken in 1923, reveals a large circular garden bed in the centre of the Park and also shows the extent of the steps along the Macquarie Place edge of the Park.

In 1954 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planted the two London plane trees to mark the beginning of the Remembrance Driveway to Canberra. These trees are now reaching maturity.

Little change occurred in the Park from 1960 until 1976 when several major alterations were made (compare map 8 with map 9):

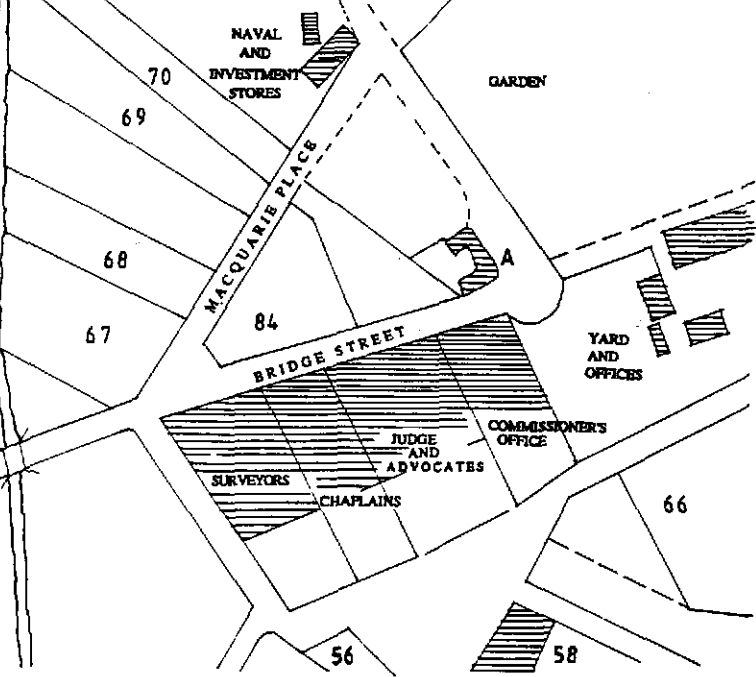
- The western corner of the Park was extended to meet the T. S. Mort statue.
- The pathways were altered.
- Macquarie Place Street was closed to vehicular traffic and the kerbs re-aligned.
- A planting bed along the outside of the wall and a podium were added along the Macquarie Place edge of the Park.
- The ornamental drinking fountain was located next to the podium.
- The asphalt footpaths around the Park were replaced with grey monier interlocking pavers.
- Garden beds were created around the base of the Moreton Bay fig trees along the Macquarie Place edge of the Park.
- Gas lamp replicas were installed.

These recent changes have weakened the previous strongly defined triangular shape of the Park, by trying to "key in" the Park with the Macquarie Place streetscape.

The following maps represent the changes to and evolution of Macquarie Place over the last 200 years.

CIRCULAR QUAY

SCALE  
0 25 50M

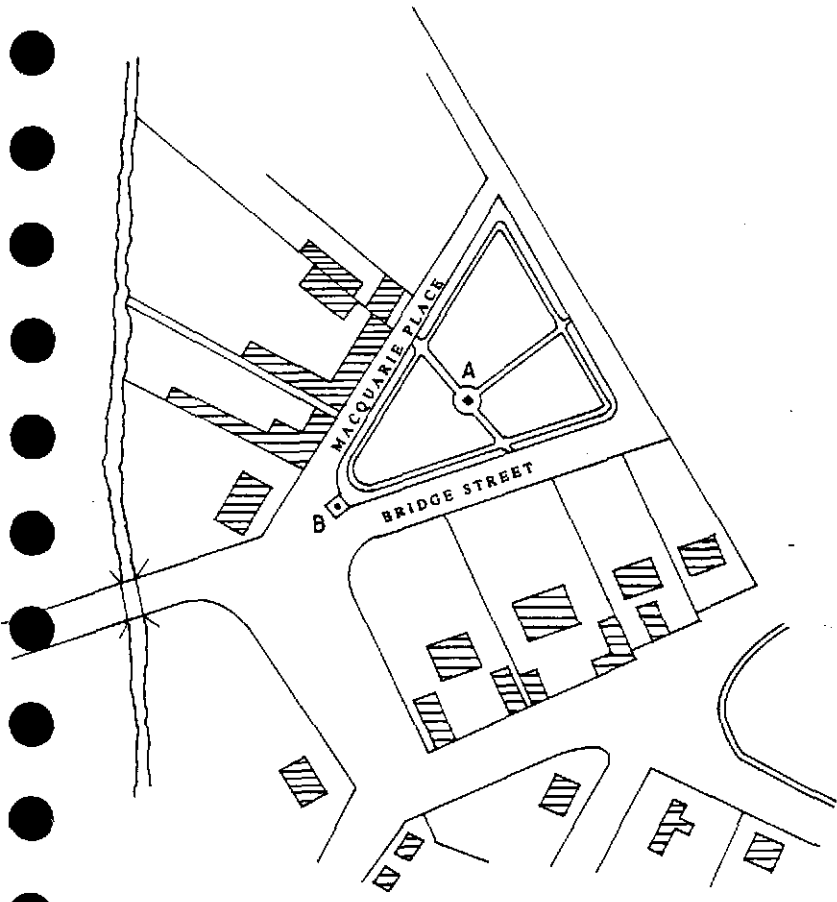


MAP 4  
MACQUARIE PLACE, 1807

This map shows the guard house (A) the allotment to Shad Shaw (No. 84) and the Park's division into three sections.

Source: PLAN OF THE TOWN OF SYDNEY IN NSW, by James Meehan, 1807.

SCALE  
0 25 50M



MAP 5  
MACQUARIE PLACE, 1823.

The location of the obelisk (A), doric fountain (B) and path systems.

Source: PLAN OF SYDNEY, by Harper, 1823.  
(AO Map S2434, four of four)