

House history: 262 Bulwara Road, Ultimo

Question: This old house looks as if it may have once been a shop. How do I find out?

Answer: Sydney has many homes that were built as something else, especially as shops, workshops or factories. Buildings that were once schools or churches are now housing. Old houses have become offices, factories or schools. A home does not always have a house history. But this one does.

The locality

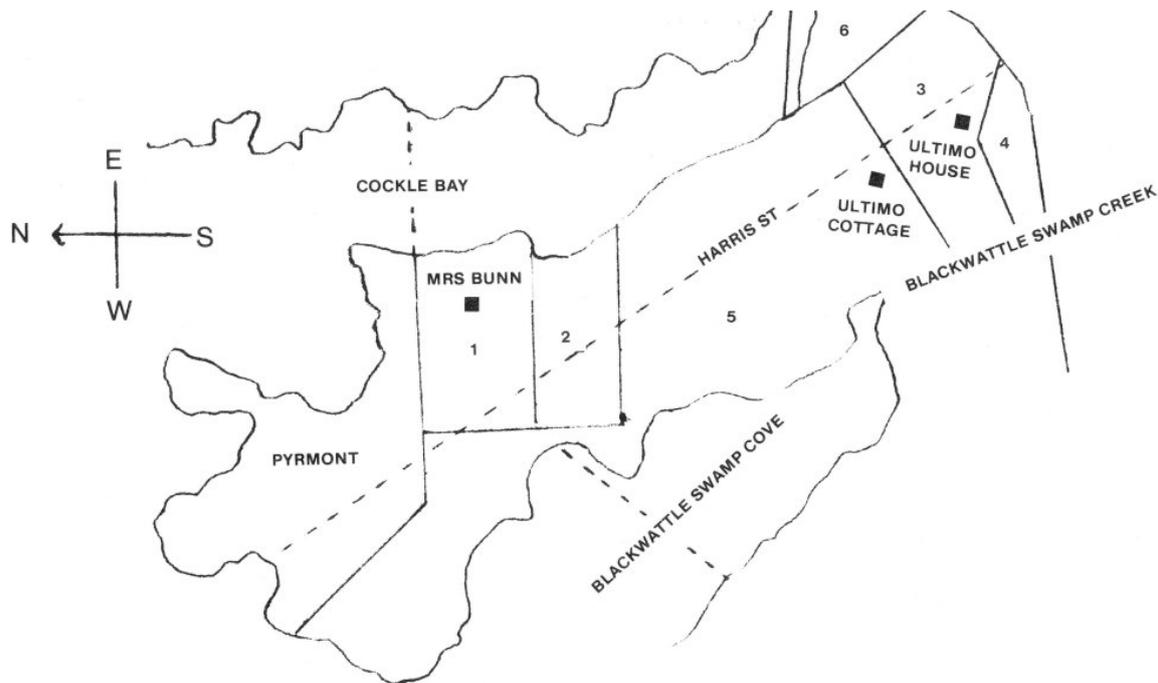
262 Bulwara Road stands on the north-eastern corner of Quarry Street and today forms part of a distinctive corner precinct. The Lord Wolseley Hotel is across Bulwara Road to the west, and an old Presbyterian church (currently the Mustard Seed Uniting Church) is on the opposite corner across Quarry Street.

Quarry Street was so named because it led to one of the early quarries in the area on the western side of the peninsula. Bulwara Road was called Crown Street until 1875 and then Crown Road until 1905. Bulwara is said to be an Aboriginal word meaning 'high' and it therefore carries the same meaning as 'crown', designating the ridge of the Pymont peninsula. 'Bulwara' was also the name of a large house built by John Harris in nearby Jones Street the 1880s. As John Harris presided over many street name changes when he was alderman and Mayor of Sydney, it is probable the name change was done in reference to this house.

Administratively, Ultimo was part of Phillip Ward from 1845–57, Denison Ward 1857–1924, and then back in Phillip Ward until 1988 when ward boundaries ceased to exist.

European invasion

Surgeon John Harris was granted 34 acres of land between Darling Harbour and Blackwattle Bay in 1803. Here he built Ultimo Farm. Over the following years he received additional grants and purchased more land in this area until he owned 233 acres (94 hectares), the greater part of the entire peninsula. This Ultimo Estate adjoined land granted to John Macarthur at its northern boundary which was named Pymont and together these two estates covered the Pymont Peninsula. Today they are the suburbs of Ultimo and Pymont.¹



- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1. | 10th December 1794 to John Malone from Lt. Gov. Grose | 24 acres |
| 2. | 10th December 1794 to William Mitchell from Lt. Gov. Grose | 18 acres |
| 3. | 31st December 1803 to John Harris from Gov. King | 34 acres |
| 4. | 1st January 1806 to John Harris from Gov. King | 9¼ acres |
| 5. | 1st January 1806 to John Harris from Gov. King | 135 acres |
| 6. | 8th May 1818 to John Harris from Gov. Macquarie | 12¾ acres |

The Ultimo Estate of Surgeon John Harris. Map provided by John Harris for Michael Matthews, *Pyrmont and Ultimo: A History*, 1982, p. 11.

The three-storey shop/house at the corner of Bulwara Road and Quarry Street, now known as 262 Bulwara Road, stands on land which was part of 135 acres (54.63 hectares) granted to Harris on 1 January 1806.²

The importance of being John

Harris died in 1838. His will left his Ultimo Estate to his brothers George and William Harris in equal parts for the term of their natural lives. They were not permitted to sell the land. On their deaths the will specified that the land was to go, in equal parts, to John Harris, son of George, and John Harris, son of William, then to their heirs, provided they were also called John Harris, and provided they were 'legally begotten.'³ These Johns were also required not to sell the land, but remain tenants. This was a common way of passing on manorial land in Britain and this is how Surgeon Harris attempted to keep the 'fiefdom' of Ultimo in Harris hands.

However, this process only worked if the descendants wanted it to work and this method of passing on land could be legally broken by 'disentailing' the property. This released the owner from the intention of the will and allowed him to become the freehold owner of the land who was able to sell or bequeath or lease the land as he wanted to. In 1842 William Harris, who was then living in Ireland, provided the necessary disentailing deeds to allow his son John, living at Shanes Park in NSW, to inherit the land as freehold.⁴ Brother George did the same for his John.⁵ But neither son could touch their Ultimo land until both the original beneficiaries were dead. William did not die

until 1856, and by this time brother George and his son John had also passed away. This John's will left his half of the land, still unsubdivided, to his children.⁶

By the 1850s the goldrushes had resulted in explosive population growth in Sydney and the town had spread out and around Ultimo which had become a rural enclave surrounded by suburbia. The Harrises were more interested in selling this farm land for suburban blocks than in holding onto it as a manorial estate, but it took three more years before they agreed on a way to do this. By the time the land came onto the market in 1859 the heat had gone out of the land fever generated by the gold rushes.

In 1859 a Deed of Partition was drawn up for the entire Ultimo Estate.⁷ The land was subdivided into 70 large blocks, with the two halves of the family taking alternating blocks. The subdivision map drawn up at this date shows that 262 Bulwara Road is part of Block 36, belonging to John Harris of Shane's Park.⁸



The 1859 subdivision of the Harris Estate. 262 Bulwara Road, located on the corner of Crown Road and Quarry Street, formed a small part of Block 36. LTI, Indenture, Book 62 No 705.

Although sales of land in Ultimo followed the subdivision, Block 36 did not go onto the market until the late 1870s. Did these streets neatly laid out in the subdivision plan exist at the time, perhaps as ill-formed rutted tracks? Other records provide the answer.

When the Sands Directories commenced in 1857 there were no entries for this area. The first entries for 'Ultimo', with no specific streets identified, were in 1863 when 17 residents are listed. In 1865 there were 21 individuals listed as living in 'Ultimo'. Again no specific address was given for any of them except for Nancy Ann Harris, living in Ultimo House. By occupation these Ultimo people with unspecified addresses were engaged in semi-rural pursuits – dairymen and gardeners, along with a few tradesmen, carpenters, bricklayers, and a stonemason. There were also a number of occupations that were linked to the waterfront including a shipwright and several ropemakers and in 1865 the name of Mrs Thorpe, a midwife, appeared. These entries indicate the beginnings of a small community.

Sands Directory	
Year	Sands listing Crown Street [Sands listing Quarry St]
1869	Crown St east side Ultimo Estate William Walker, builder [Quarry St. Not listed]
1870	Crown St east side Ultimo Estate William Walker, builder [Quarry St. Not listed]
1871	Crown St east side Vacant Land, Here Quarry St, Vacant Land [Quarry St. Not listed]
1873	Thomas Shying, butcher, before Quarry St (no nos; no East or West)[Quarry St, Crown to Harris: "vacant land"]
1875	Crown St Pymont (listed but no occupation detail)[Quarry St, Pymont "Darling Harbour to Darling St"]
1876	Crown Road Pymont (no detail NB now Crown Road) [Quarry St, Pymont "Darling Harbour to Darling St"]
1877	Vacant land [Quarry St, Crown Road to Harris St: "vacant land"]
1879	Vacant land, Quarry St, vacant Land [Quarry St, Crown to Harris: "vacant land"]
Assessment Book	
Year	#Street Number Name of Person Rated Name of Owner House, Warehouse or Shop Brick, Stone Wood or Iron Slated, Shingled or otherwise No of Floors No of rooms Gross Annual Value Remarks
1858	Crown St not listed
1861	One entry for Crown St: Crown St Pymont William Walker House Wood Shingled 1 2 £16 Supplementary Assessment. Here Barker Street
1863	Crown St not listed. However William Walker in Harris St (no number) William Walker George Harris House Wood Shingled 1 2 £20 Sheds in rear
1871	Crown St not listed. However, off Harris St Ultimo Mrs Walker William Walker House Wood Shingled 1 3 £20
1877	Crown St listed without numbers "off Crown Road Ultimo" before William Henry St at William St (?) William Walker has a house Brick and Stone 1 4 AND one door away a Brick and wood one room workshop.

This table details relevant entries in both Sands Directories and Assessment Books for years 1869 to 1879.

The first entry for Crown Street, Ultimo Estate, was in 1869 listing only one occupant, William Walker, who was a builder. Later entries indicate that he lived further south along the street from 'our' site which was on the corner of Quarry Street. As late as 1877 most of the land on the eastern side of Crown Road from Fig Street to Mary Ann Street remained vacant. By 1879 the street started to be occupied, but not in the immediate vicinity of the site. The corner block was either not recorded or recorded as 'vacant' from 1870 until 1882, with one exception. In 1873 there was a

possible listing for John Shying, a butcher, but the entries for Quarry Street make it clear that he was not on the corner block.

The City of Sydney Assessment books tell the same story. Assessments carried out in the 1840s had listed some 'huts' on the Harris property, built of mud or timber with bark roofs, with the notation that these were 'tenants at will' who paid a small annual fee to the estate for the right to garden or run cows.⁹ Ultimo Estate was rated, but not these customary occupancies, and so the City assessors would have decided there was no point in recording them. No relevant assessments were carried out during the 1860s until 1877, with the exception of a supplementary listing for William Walker, recorded as living in Crown Street in a two-roomed wooden house with a shingled roof in 1861. This entry, as well as his entry in the 1869 Sands Directory only served to emphasise how sparsely settled this area was.

The pictorial records indicate the same lack of development in Ultimo in the 1870s.



Birds-eye view showing Ultimo being used for grazing sheep- *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers*, 25 March 1874, p. 9.

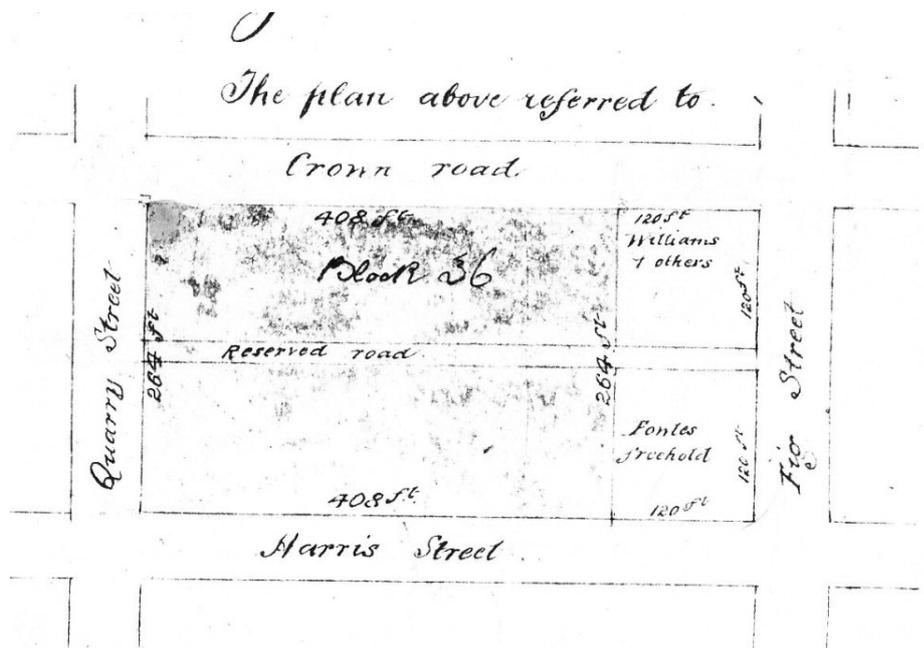


This view was painted in the early 1870s. What looks like a low lying bridge is an embankment across the head of the Blackwattle Swamp, not yet filled in to make Wentworth Park. Today it is the line of Bridge Road. Ultimo is shown as a rural foreground to the city. Saunders quarries are shown just south of the embankment and there are several large houses and some smaller ones north of the line of Bridge Road. The picture almost certainly idealises the rural nature of Ultimo, if only because there would have been tracks down to the quarry, including a proto-Quarry Street. The probable locality of this street has been ringed in red.¹⁰ Source: F H Boyer, 1870/73, Sydney from Glebe Point. ML SSVI/Bri/Gle1/1; digital order no. a1528098

When the Sands Directory first listed Quarry Street in 1875 it recorded no buildings. By 1877 it listed six houses on the northern side between Blackwattle Bay and Crown Street, with nothing built between Crown Road and Harris Street, the block our house/shop is in. But all this was to change in 1877.

Ownership of the land changes hands

In 1877 most of Block 36 was leased for 99 years from John Harris to Edward Thomas Newell.¹¹



This 1877 sketch plan of Newell's lease is attached to the indenture of lease, LTI, Book 175, No 577.

Freehold sale of land was then and remains the most common method of obtaining land in Sydney, but there are also many instances of leasing arrangements. Ninety-nine years is the longest time possible for a lease. While freehold is usually paid for up front, often with a bank mortgage, a lessee pays rent for the duration of the lease.

The arrangements of the lease required the lessee, Newell, to pay an annual rent of £100 in four quarterly instalments in the first year, and thereafter an annual rent of £200, also in quarterly instalments, for the 99 year duration of the lease. He also undertook to build in 'a good substantial and workman like manner' of the 'best materials' dwelling houses or commercial properties 'to the value of one thousand pounds at the least.'¹² He was not permitted to build anything of timber within 50 feet of the street lines of Harris, Quarry and Crown (Bulwara) without first getting Harris's permission, and he had to allow Harris, his heirs or anyone they chose to appoint, entry to all properties to inspect them, 'as often as they saw fit' and at 'all reasonable hours'. Any repairs demanded had to be carried out within a specified timeframe and according to the indenture, failure to pay rents on time would have dire consequences. At the end of all this and more, the document finished with a flourish by declaring that if all of these things were carried out the lessee and presumably any tenants he had installed in any houses he had built would be left 'without any interruption or disturbance.'

Undaunted, Edward Thomas Newell or his agents built on their part of Block 36, including a stone three-storey shop and residence on the corner of Crown (Bulwara) and Quarry streets. Newell lived further along Crown Road, near the corner of William Henry Street so he probably kept a close eye on his houses being built on Block 36.¹³ Houses went up on both Crown Road and Quarry Street before the corner two-storey building as erected on the corner.

Because 262 Bulwara Road (formerly Crown Road) is also on the corner of Quarry Street both streets needed to be checked in the sources. The 1880 Sands Directory double entered the site of the building, both times as 'vacant land'. In this 1880 edition, Crown Road listed the Glasgow Arms Hotel (now the Lord Wolseley) at 196 on the north-west corner of Quarry Street, while on the eastern side of the street there is an entry for Daniel McCarthy south of Ada Lane, then 'vacant land to Quarry Street' with the Presbyterian church 'unfinished' across the road on the south-eastern corner. The entry for Quarry Street again listed the hotel on the north-west corner with a listing for the north-east side of Crown Road (now Bulwara Road) to Harris Street as 'vacant land and houses.'

In the 1882 Sands [196 Crown] and the assessment books [100 Quarry] confirm each other's claims for a building on the site of what is now 262 Bulwara Road. So it was built after 1880 and before 1882.

When houses began to be built the authorities belatedly began to provide services to the area. In 1877 the local residents petitioned the Council to form Crown Street. Complaints followed from the construction of a water main which generated many drainage and subsidence problems on the corner of Quarry and Crown. In 1878 the City Surveyor wrote a report for the City Council detailing the costs for forming and ballasting Quarry Street from Harris up to Crown Road, but three years later the Council received a petition, signed by many of the people whose names appear in Sands, complaining at the unfinished and dangerous condition of Quarry and Crown Streets.¹⁴ By the 1890s there continued to be correspondence and reports concerning the ongoing need to reform and shore up Quarry Street.¹⁵

the eastern side.
 Crown Road from Quarry St to Fig St.
 to be kerbed and guttered on
 the eastern side.
 As the ground about here is nearly all
 built on fully and houses and business
 places occupied we consider that the
 time has arrived when these streets should
 be completed and no longer left in the
 neglected condition they are in at present.
 James Corcoran. 114 Quarry St -
 Daniel McCarthy 192 Crown Road
 James Vaux
 Fred. Ashford 102 Quarry St

The City had already received several earlier petitions like this one dated 2 October 1881, asking for Quarry St, Ada St and Crown Road to be formed. Early signatories were Daniel McCarthy and James Vaux, the butcher. The City Surveyor noted that all these works were underway, or would be when funds permitted. Detail of petition NSCA CRS 26/180/2.

The first European occupants

The information in the Sands Directories and Assessment books is not straightforward. Numbering was absent or unstable in early years and entries for Crown Street often omitted to enter where Quarry Street intersected with it. For this out of the way place, the work of the collectors of the information was often sloppy, and they often double entered information, giving the same name of two addresses, one in Crown Street and one in Quarry Street. Sometimes these double entries were helpful in pinning down which entries referred to the corner building but often the information was confusing. The following table provides enough information to allow a good approximation of who lived there.

Sands Directory	
Year	Sands listing Crown Street [Sands listing Quarry St]
1880	Ada Lane, Daniel McCarthy, vacant land to Quarry St (Edward Newell at #226) Quarry St, Crown to Harris: "vacant land and houses"
1882	#196 Daniel McCarthy quarryman & James Vaux, butcher (Crown lane #1 #2 then #196 Quarry St then Church) 100 Quarry: James Vaux, butcher
1883	No 196 #194 Charles Graham, sawyer & Robert O'Hara & Nicholas Carney 100 Quarry: Daniel McCarthy, butcher
1884	No 196 #194 Butler W Ormonde, policeman & Geo. Bunton, engineer & ? Murray, & Thos. Guy 100 Quarry: John Drinan, butcher
1885	No 196 #194 Henry Smith, painter & #194½ Patrick McCarthy (No Quarry St cross St.) 100 Quarry: John Blaine
1886	#196 Mrs Doyle #194 Frederick Kahl, cooper & #194½ Daniel McCarthy (No Quarry St cross St.) 100 Quarry: James Cuthill, butcher
1887	#196 Michael Ryan #194 Mark Collins, plasterer & #194½ Michael Foley (No Quarry St cross St.) 100 Quarry: James Cuthill, butcher
1888	#196 Michael Ryan (comes after Crown lane; No Quarry St cross St.) 100 Quarry: Joseph Cassidy, butcher
1889	#196 James Maher (comes before Crown L.; after Crown L. 218 Hugh Craig then 224 No Quarry St cross St.) 100 Quarry: Harry Lovett
1890	#260 Michael Ryan (Crown Lane then 258 Alfred Samuels then Quarry) 100 Quarry: John Kinlyside, butcher
1891	#260 Michael Ryan (Crown Lane then 258 Thomas O'Hallan 260, 262 then Quarry) 100 Quarry: Mrs J Kinlyside, butcher
1892	#262 Mrs J Kinlyside, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan 260, 262 then Quarry) 100 Quarry: Mrs J Kinlyside, butcher
1893	#262 Patrick Minogue, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 J MCarthy, 260, Michael Ryan, 262 then Quarry) 100 Quarry: Patrick Minogue, butcher
1894	#262 Patrick Minogue, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 John MCarthy, 260, Michael Ryan, 262 then Quarry) Crown Rd then 98 Quarry Thomas A Stubbs, stevedore 102 Henry Palmer
1895	#262 G. Munro, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 John MCarthy, 260 Michael Ryan, 262 then Quarry) Crown Rd then 98 Quarry James Curtin 102 Henry Palmer
1896	#262 G. Munro, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 William English, 262 then Quarry) Crown Rd then 98 Quarry Martin Thompson 102 John F McCarty
1897	#262 W Reylin, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 William English, 262 then Quarry) Crown Rd then 102 Quarry Phillip Robertson 104 Mrs C Stanwell

Sands Directory	
1898	#262 W Reylin, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 William English, 262 then Quarry) Crown Rd then 102 Quarry Phillip Robertson 104 Mrs C Stanwell
1899	#262 Charles Hewitt, butcher (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 William English, 262 then Quarry) 100 Quarry BEFORE CROWN RD: C H Hewitt, butcher
Assessment Book	
Year	#Street Number Name of Person Rated Name of Owner House, Warehouse or Shop Brick, Stone Wood or Iron Slated, Shingled or otherwise No of Floors No of rooms Gross Annual Value Remarks
1880	#192 Crown Rd Danl McCarthy Danl McCarthy House Brick Shingled 2 floor 6 rooms £41
1882	#100 Quarry St James Vant (Vaux?) Daniel McCarthy Shop Stone Iron 3 6 £91
1891	#262 Crown Rd M Kinlyside H McNamara Shop Stone Iron 2 floor 6 room £52

This table details relevant entries in both Sands Directories and Assessment Books for years 1880 to 1899

In 1882 the directory listed a butcher named James Vaux at both 196 Crown Street and 100 Quarry Street. This pinpoints our building. The Crown Street listing also included Daniel McCarthy, a quarryman. These were the first occupants.

Daniel McCarthy had been living in Crown Street, in a house behind the vacant corner block as early as 1879 and in 1882 it was McCarthy who was paying the rates on the corner building and two more behind in Crown Road.¹⁶ It is tempting to imagine that he built the stone cottages on Newell's lease, including the corner building.



Did Daniel McCarthy build this group of buildings? Source City of Sydney ArchivePix, 056-056-948, 2009.

The listing of two men living in the building in 1882 is reinforced in the following years with multiple entries listed in Crown Street for what is possibly the corner building listed as 194 - a sawyer, policeman, engineer, plasterer - suggesting that the place was perhaps being used as a boarding house. Even if No. 194 is eliminated as a possible corner number, there remain other entries suggesting multiple occupants. In 1887, for instance, when Michael Ryan first appeared at 196 he is given no occupation, while the butcher was James Cuthill at 100 Quarry Street. The numbering of 'our' house fluctuated from 194 (possibly), 196, 218, 260, 262 – with some crossover of names.

While the front corner room operated as a butcher's shop, entered from the corner doorway and listed as being in Quarry Street, it is possible the side entrance in Crown Street provided access to others who boarded in the rear or upstairs sections of the building. There are only a few assessment books covering this period, but they list a six-roomed house and shop with a higher value than surrounding houses, which could have provided room for a boarder or two. The possibility of the building being used for this purpose is also suggested by an advertisement placed in the *Evening News* in 1883 for a 'respectable woman' interested in doing housework during the day to apply at the butchers shop.¹⁷ Perhaps this was the role of Mrs Doyle, who was listed as the occupant in 1886.

Number 100 Quarry Street was consistently listed as a butcher's shop up until 1893, with the years 1892 and 1893 listing the butchers in both streets (Mrs Kinlyside and Patrick Minogue). Mrs Kinlyside took over the shop after her husband, previously listed at 100 Quarry Street, died in 1889.¹⁸ From 1884, 100 Quarry Street was dropped from the listing, with the butcher Patrick Minogue continuing to be listed in Crown Street. He was followed by several other butchers until 1899 – Munroe, Reylin and Hewitt.

In 1890 and 1900 the owner of the property was listed as H McNamara. This was not correct, as we already know that the land was owned by the Buckland Estate and held on a 99-year lease by Edward Newell, later the Newell Estate. However across the other side of Crown Road, behind the corner Lord Wolseley Hotel, were Henry and John McNamara who were wholesaling butchers from the late 1870s, and it is possible that the corner butcher's shop operated as a retail outlet for their meat. It is possible Newell or his estate sub-leased it to McNamara, which could explain why he was listed as the owner. It could also explain why Mrs Kinlyside was able to take over the business of her butcher husband, if the products being sold had already been butchered at MacNamara's. And it would also explain advertisements like the one that appeared in the *Evening News* in 1887, offering bulk meat at bargain prices – 2½ bodies [beef?] 25 sheep, pig, 2 lambs, sundries, 'must be sold by Monday next, £15'.¹⁹

The land is finally sold

Refocussing on the question of ownership of the property takes us to the year 1891, the year that 89-year-old John Harris of Shanes Park was run over by a train and died intestate (i.e. he had no will).²⁰ At the time of his death he still retained much of his half share of the Ultimo Estate and in 1892 all this land were passed on to the Perpetual Trustee to administer.²¹ This body decided to auction off all of John Harris's Ultimo property in 1894. Number 262 Bulwara Road formed part of Section 5 of Block 36 on the auction plan.

s7-95/1

SALE N^o 8.
HARRIS ESTATE.
CITY FREEHOLDS
 REALISING RENTALS under LEASES secured by IMPROVEMENTS.
 AUCTION SALE at the Rooms MONDAY DEC^r 17th 1894 at 11.30 a.m.
 BY ORDER OF THE PERPETUAL TRUSTEE CO^y LIMITED.
The Administrators of the Estate of the late John Harris Esq^r.

HARRIS STREET.

FIG STREET. **QUARRY STREET.**

ADA LANE.

CROWN ROAD.

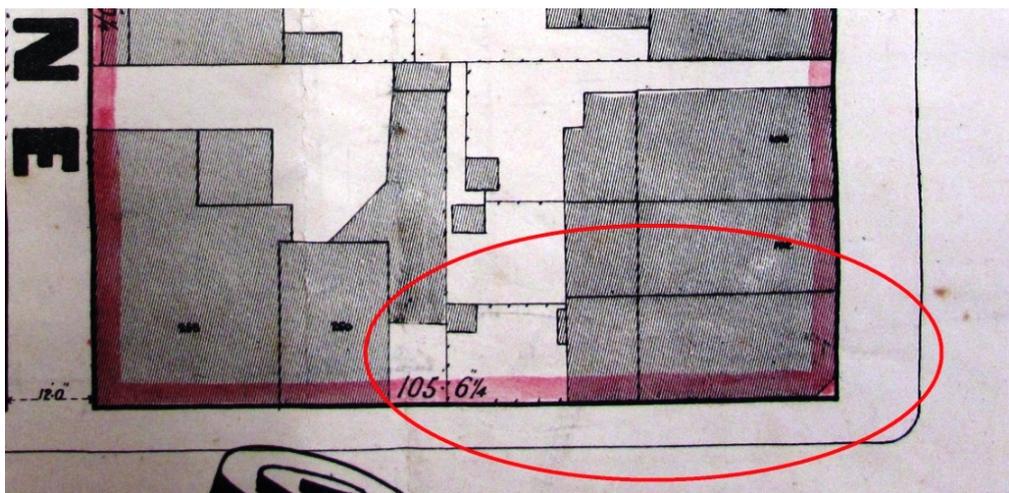
LOT 3
 10% cash deposit + 10% on completion - balance in 5 years at 6% per annum - payable quarterly

TERMS.
 For freehold subject to existing leases 25% cash deposit - balance in 7 1/2 years at 5% per annum payable quarterly with right to pay off at any time.

J. STINSON SOLICITOR 30 Castlereagh St

RICHARDSON & WRENCH AUCTIONEERS.

LOXTON BULLOCK Licensed Surveyors. under R.P. Mining Act. 128 Pitt St.



This land sale plan shows the original 1859 Block 36, intended to be auctioned in large parcels, with 262 Bulwara forming part of Section 5. The detail shows the house with open land and an outhouse at the rear. Source: LPI, FP 976 174, litho 1130. Copy also held in Mitchell Library.

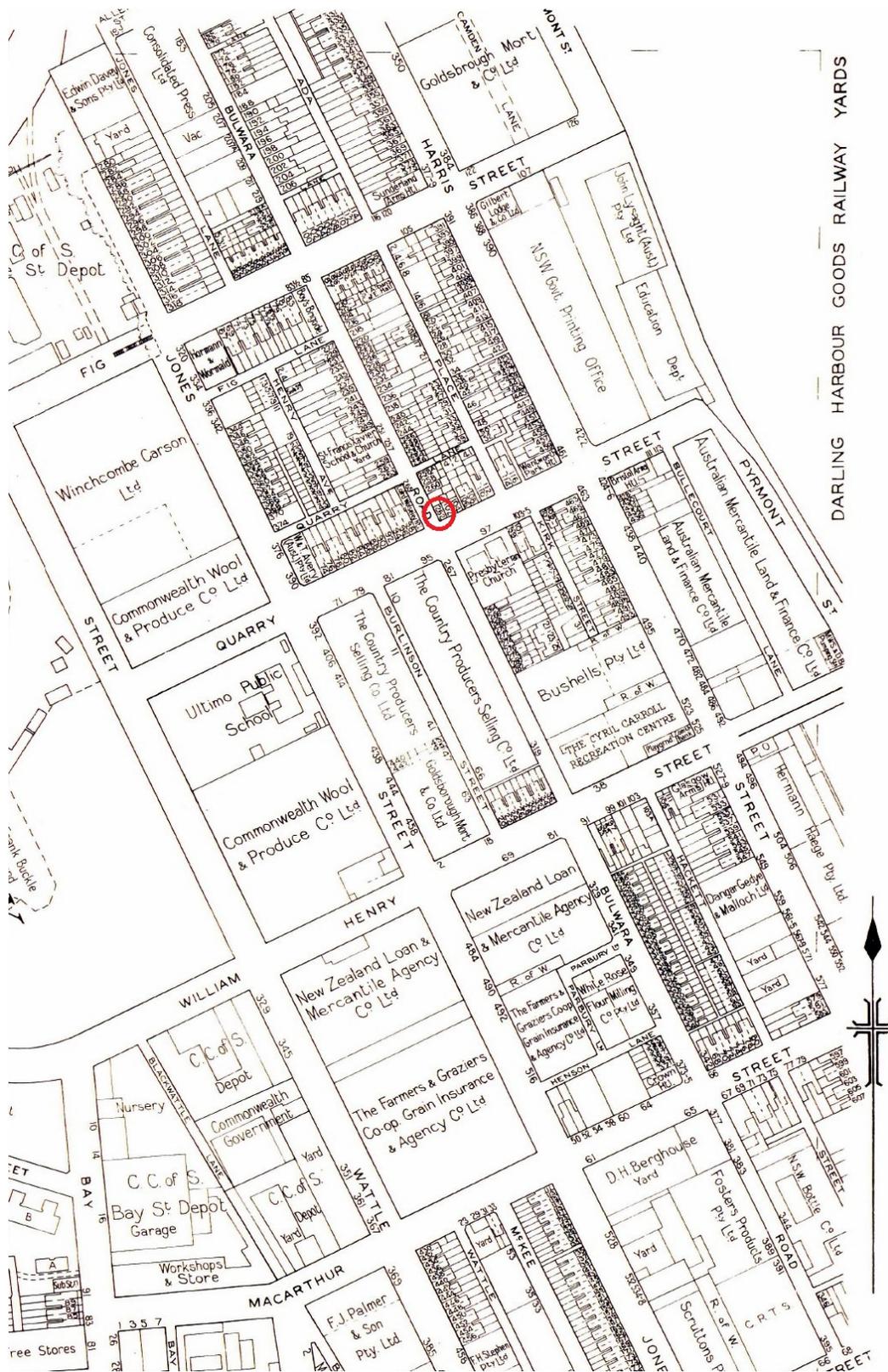
The freehold of all John Harris's land in Ultimo was sold to Thomas Buckland, and it became known as the Buckland Estate. Buckland, a wealthy business man and philanthropist, purchased the land for a mere £8,615 – a rock bottom price during the worst depression Sydney had ever experienced.²² His freehold remained subject to the various leases over the land, including the lease to Edward Newell of the area of land that contained 262 Bulwara Road. The lease still had many decades to run and for occupants nothing changed as they continued to rent from Newell.²³

Twentieth century developments

Much of the land in Ultimo had been built over by woolstores and factories by the end of the 19th century and the population was already in retreat. The mid-20th century maps for the area shows 'our' building a part of a small oasis of houses surrounded by large industrial buildings.



Caption: this aerial photo taken in 1949 shows a treeless corner in a treeless area. Source: Aerial Survey of the City of Sydney, 1949, Main Survey - A0048



DARLING HARBOUR GOODS RAILWAY YARDS

Number 262 Bulwara Road is ringed in red. It was one of the most residential precincts in Ultimo dominated by industrial buildings. Source: Historical Atlas of Sydney, City of Sydney Archives.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Sands Directory failed to list occupations for a number of years for both Crown Rd and Quarry Street, but in 1906 the assessment book still thought

that McNamara was the owner, so it is probable that it continued as a butcher's shop for a number of years.

Sands Directory	
Year	Sands listing for Crown Rd, Bulwara Rd (Bulwara Rd)
1900	#262 David Duncan (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 William English, 262 then Quarry) NB: 102 Quarry: Samuel Lock, Butcher
1901	#260 Mrs Margaret McCarthy (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 then Quarry)
1902	#260 Mrs Margaret McCarthy (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 then Quarry)
1903	#260 James Stewart (Crown Lane then 258 Michael Ryan, 260 then Quarry)
1904	#260 George Rowley (Crown Lane then 258 John Hughes, 260 then Quarry)
1905	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1906	#260 Crown Rd John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1907	#260 Bulwara Rd John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1908	#260 Bulwara Rd John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1909	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258a Mrs Mary Watson 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1910	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258a Mrs Mary Watson 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1911	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1912	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1913	#260 John Hughes (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Margaret McCarthy, 260 then Quarry)
1914	#260 John Avery (Crown Lane then 258 Wm John Glanville, 260 then Quarry)
1915	#262 Paul Stibbe (Crown Lane then 258 Alfred Jones, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1916	#262 Paul Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258 Herbert P Tarlington, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1917	#262 Paul Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258 Herbert P Tarlington, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1918	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Esic, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)

Sands Directory	
1919	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258 Mrs Elsie King, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1920	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a Joseph Spittlehouse, 258 Mrs Annie Fraser, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1921	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a Joseph Spittlehouse, 258 Mrs Rose Darker, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1922	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a Joseph Spittlehouse, 258 David Hishlon, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1923	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a Joseph Spittlehouse, 258 David Hishlon, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1924	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 Joseph Symes, 260 Henry Mercer, 262 then Quarry)
1925	#262 Bulwara Rd James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 John Kady, 260 Norman W Paul, 262 then Quarry)
1926	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 Arthur Burling, 260 Leo George, 262 then Quarry)
1927	#262 James Rabinovich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 Arthur Hurling, confectioner 260 Leo George, 262 then Quarry)
1928	#262 James Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 Arthur Hurling, confectioner 260 William Hughes, 262 then Quarry)
1929	#262 James Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (Crown Lane then 258a John Turner, 258 Arthur Burling, confectioner 260 Mrs MEU Guyatt, 262 then Quarry)
1930	#262 James Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (258a Alfred illegible, 258 N. Stop., confectioner., Frank C
1931	#262 James Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (258 Wm Lee, confectioner, 262 then Quarry)
1932 - 33	#262 James Rabinowich, Pawnbroker (258 Wm Lee, confectioner, 260 John McDermont, 262 then Quarry)
Assessment Book	
Year	#Street Number Name of Person Rated Name of Owner House, Warehouse or Shop Brick, Stone Wood or Iron Slated, Shingled or otherwise No of Floors No of rooms Gross Annual Value Remarks
1901	#262 George Munroe H McNamara House no details £94 Crown Rd & House Quarry St = no shop
1907	Margaret Griffin Estate Henry McNamara House & Shop Stone Iron 2 floor 7 room £26
1911	Kate Slattery Thomas Buckland. William Arnott sublessee House & Shop, Stone, Iron, 2 floor 7 room £26 Here Quarry St. Here Presbyterian Church
1914	James Rabinowich Sir Charles MacKellar & P J Allen as trustees House, Stone, Iron, 3 floor 5 room £39
1918	James Rabinowich Sir Charles MacKellar & P J Allen Newell Estate (Lessees) Annie Rabinowich (sub-lessee) Shop & House, Stone, Iron, 2 floor 6 room £44
1921	James Rabinowich Sir Charles MacKellar & P J Allen. Lessee Annie Rabinowich Shop & House Stone, Iron, 3 floor, 4 rooms. £44

Sands Directory	
1924	James Rabinowich Sir Charles MacKellar & P J Allen. Lessee Annie Rabinowich Shop& House Stone, Iron, 3 floor, 6 rooms, £78
1931	#262 James Rabinowich Trustee: Buckland Marriage Settlement - Lessee Newell Estate Sub Lessee Annie Rabinovick Shop& House Stone, Iron, 2 floor, 6 rooms £84
1939	#262 James Rabinowich Trustee: Buckland Marriage Settlement - Lessee Newell Estate Shop& Dwelling Stone, Iron, 2 floor, 3 rooms £39
1945	#262 Alfred Beadle Trustee: Buckland Marriage Settlement - Lessee Newell Estate Shop & Dwelling Stone, Iron, 2 floor, 6 rooms £58
1948	#262 Alfred Beadle Trustee: Buckland Marriage Settlement - Lessee Newell Estate Shop& Dwelling Stone, Iron, 2 floor, 6 rooms £58

This table details relevant entries in Sands Directories 1900-1933 and Assessment Books 1901 to 1948

Then by 1914 the ratepayer is listed as James Rabinowich and by 1916 the Sands Directory listed him as being in the shop as a pawnbroker.²⁴

James Rabinowich born in Kiev, Russia, arrived in Sydney at the age of 24 in 1883, and in 1889 he became a naturalised citizen.²⁵ In 1901 he married Annie Joseph at Paddington and in 1909 he was listed in the Sands Directory as running a Mont de Piete (pawnbrokers shopfront) in John Street, Pyrmont.²⁶ By 1913 the Rabinowichs were located to 262 Bulwara Road, where James appeared as the person rated, and Annie as the lessee. It was known as the Wentworth Park Mont De Piete. Whether the Rabinowiches moved into 262 Bulwara Road or just used it as a shop is unclear but the Sands Directory listed them as the occupants of *Flamsted* in Pile Road, Gladesville, from 1921 where they would have lived a finer life than Ultimo could have provided.²⁷

The assessment books list them as lessees of a number of properties in the Ultimo area, and in other places such as Surry Hills and Bondi. In 1930 Rabinowich, described as an 'elderly man' and 'rent collector of Ultimo' was attacked at Waterloo and robbed of £8.²⁸ So the pawnbrokers were also slum landlords to whom some of the locals would have paid their rent as well as pawned their meagre belongings in times of need.

In 1911 Annie Rabinowich was up before the Central Police Court on a charge of accepting goods from a 10-year-old boy who was acting for his mother who was known to be a person who bought and sold stolen goods. They were caught in the act by the local constabulary and Annie was given the options of £8 with costs or two months in prison, with the magistrate observing that it was 'a very serious offense.'²⁹ In 1913 James was up on a similar charge of accepting jewellery from an under-aged child, a girl of 11. He alleged he thought she was older as she had a note from her mother claiming she was 14. Rabinowich was fined £5, with 23/- costs or one month hard labour³⁰.

The role of pawnbrokers in disposing of stolen goods is well known. Goods were accepted with a cut-off date for redeeming them. The pawnbroker made a living by charging heavy interest on these goods, or if they were not redeemed, through auctioning them off. Auctions of goods from the Wentworth Park Mont De Piete were regularly advertised, and if goods were deposited with no intention of redeeming them, they would then be auctioned, with the money returning to Ultimo

under whatever arrangements the various parties had made. When J P Lister advertised an auction of goods from Rabinowich's Ultimo shop in 1927, it listed coats, trousers, dresses, underwear, bed and table linen, boots and shoes tools, sewing machines, and also field glasses, pictures, cutlery, plateware, musical instruments, gold and silver watches, gold alberts (watch chains), gold links and wedding rings.³¹

When Rabinowich died in 1940 at his residence in Gladesville he was described as 'an old identity of Ultimo and Pymont.'³² The following year his widow was still operating the shop as an advertisement she placed to let one of her properties in Surry Hills asked prospective renters to apply to 262 Bulwara Road.³³ By the summer of 1942-43 the shop and residence was advertised to let. It boasted seven rooms, conveniences including gas and electricity, and was by now vacant as the key was to be collected from No 248.³⁴ A 1943 photograph of the Lord Wolseley Hotel across Bulwara Road captured the edge of the building wearing a worn out sign for the *Wentworth Park Mont de Piete*.



This 1943 photo shows signage painted on 262 Bulwara Rd. Presumably the complete sign reads *Wentworth Park Mont de Piete*. Source: Noel Butlin Archives N60_Y Cards Neg 6948.

Alfred Beadle, a wharf labourer and Eva Beadle were on the electoral roll at this address in 1949 and 1954, with only Alfred listed in 1958. By now the area was very run-down and although the City of Sydney Archives did not turn up any records for 262 Bulwara Road, there are files for surrounding properties that indicate many have been altered to accommodate small workshops or were being used for storage rather than residential purposes.

A slum to be eradicated.

By now the dominant view was that Ultimo was a slum. Some old housing was being knocked down and some public housing was built in the area in the 1950s and 1960s, but the original building stock, including 262 Bulwara Road was in a parlous state.

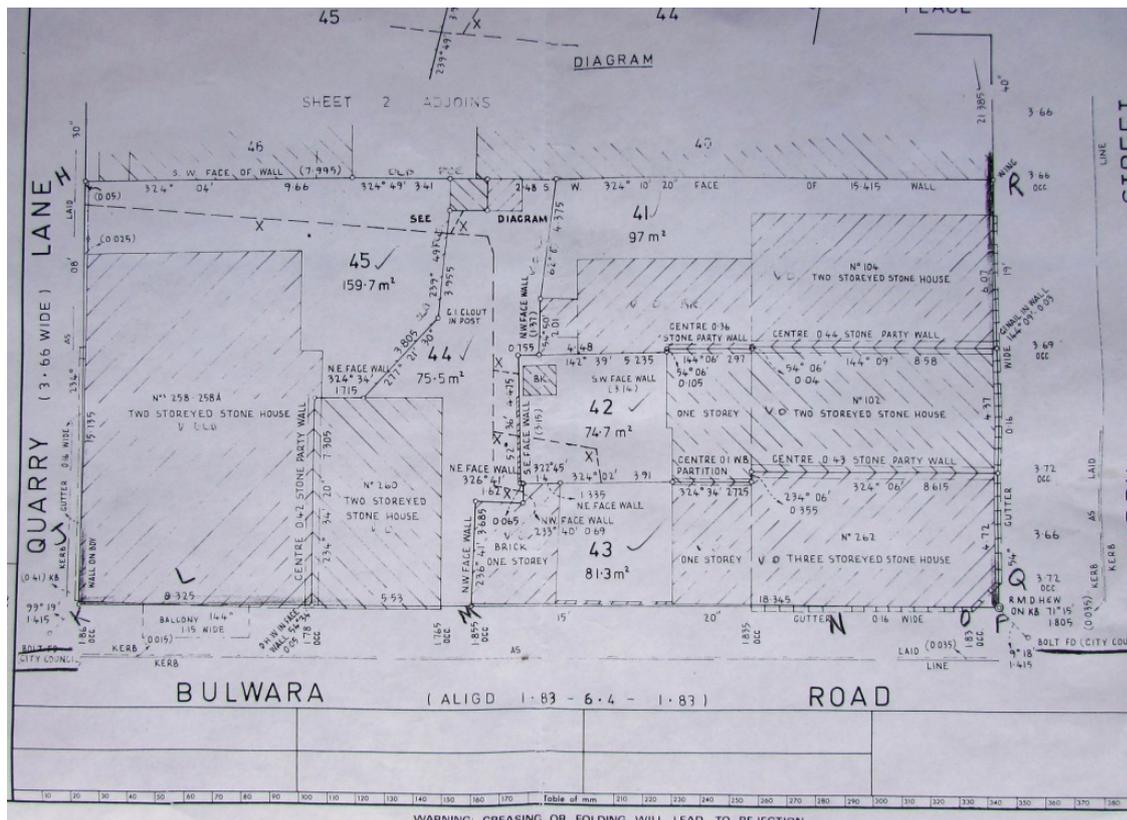
Through the years of the 20th century the house remained within the Buckland Estate. In 1913 Thomas Buckland appointed Sir Charles MacKellar, who was married to his cousin, as trustee and in 1920 the Permanent Trustee Company was included on the deeds of what was now known as the Buckland Marriage Settlement. This settlement had been drawn up in England in 1890 at the time of Sir Thomas Buckland's second marriage to Mary Kirkpatrick, between the couple and their various children.³⁵ With extensive properties and great wealth, there is no evidence that the Buckland empire ever took an interest in its Ultimo holdings.

By the start of the 1970s local and state authorities were beginning a long planning process for the renewal of Ultimo and Pyrmont where the withdrawal of industry and years of residential neglect had created an area ripe for reinvention. The 99-year leases on the houses in the Buckland Estate would soon come to an end and the state was exercised over the deplorable state of this housing and the lack of clear title in the various parcels of land contained in the estate. In the 1890s when Buckland had acquired the land, the boundaries of Newell's lease was described in terms of 'about' and 'approximately', ending up with the description returning to the commencing point, 'more or less.'³⁶ Despite all those demands in the original leasing arrangements from Harris to Newell in 1877 many houses on the estate had been neglected almost from the time they were built, and by now were run-down and occupied by some of Sydney's poorest residents.

All of the land was still under one title, conveyed from Harris to Buckland in 1894. In 1977 the Permanent Trustee Company applied to place all the properties on Lots 1-48 and 50-81 under individual Torrens Title, including the land of 262 Bulwara Road.³⁷ The City Council was concerned that the properties were inadequately described in the old documentation of 1894 and foresaw problems down the track as the land was sold or redeveloped.

At the same time Ron Mulock, the Minister for Housing and members of the Housing Commission paid a visit to Ultimo to look at this housing with the view to the state possibly purchasing the properties. Tenants who were worried about the imminent sell off of the housing had established a housing co-operative which operated from the Harris Centre across the road from 262, and this body was anxious for the government to facilitate restoration of the housing for ongoing affordable rental. Eventually in early 1978 the government announced that this would not happen as the houses were not worth saving and even if restored would not come up to acceptable standards.³⁸ In the meantime the Minister moved to halt the process of issuing certificates of title until the land was properly surveyed.³⁹ It was apparent that properties had been built there well before the last sale in 1894 and the place was a mess of 'miscloses' and inadequately described boundaries.

This survey work was undertaken in 1978, with the Registrar General's Department requiring new measurements and amended descriptions, clarification of encroachments onto public land and a report on 'the approximate ages of all main buildings and of the occupations.' This later requirement was in reference to the alteration of residential buildings to factory uses, many of which would have occurred without legal development approval. The RG commented that some internal boundaries did not coincide with fenced lines and observed that after the survey work had been done the question of whether the Council should approve or reject the subdivision may be subject to qualification from the Examiner of Titles.⁴⁰



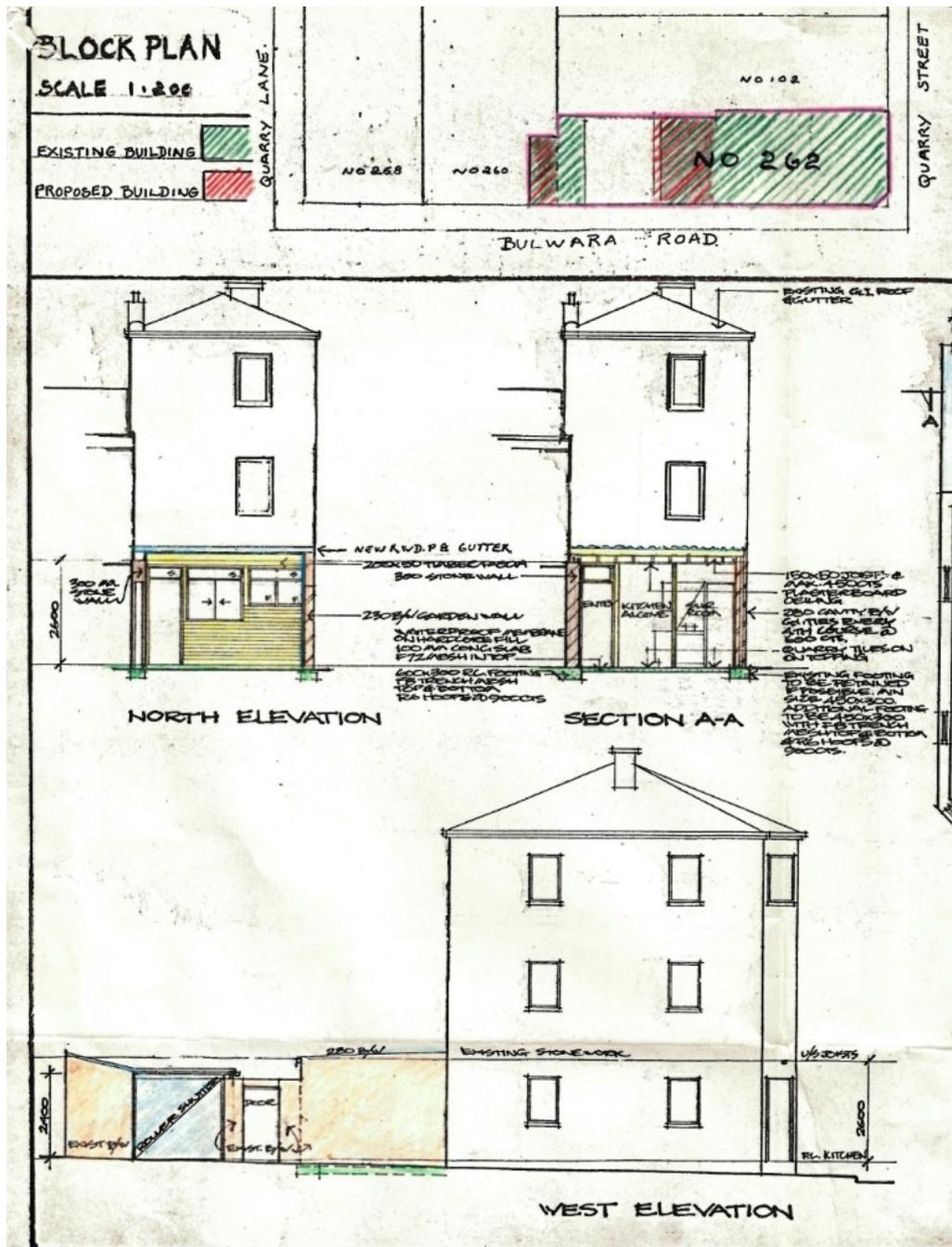
Section of resurvey required before the land could be put under Torrens Title in 1978. Note that 262 Bulwara Road is marked VO meaning 'very old'. LTI, DP255552, filed with PA 52390.

In July 1978 sign off was given for the subdivision and the Buckland family exercised their freehold right to sell the estate, subject to various tenancy rights that had developed. Most of the sitting tenants were not in the property market however, and of 80 tenants, less than 20 took up the offer to buy.⁴¹

At the time the sale the tenants were listed, with some as protected tenants under the Landlord and Tenant Act, but the sitting tenant in 262 was Norma Varley who was recorded as being a licensee under an 'oral License Agreement'.⁴² This probably meant that she had no rights at all.

After some adjustments to allow for the fact that the party wall at the rear of the house was probably not quite where it should have been – nothing unusual for these old properties - John Russell McInerney, described as an education officer, purchased 262 Bulwara Road in 1978 for \$21,000.⁴³ In April 1981 a building application was submitted to 'replace original collapsed kitchen',

demolish old outbuildings and construct a new extension to the rear of the house with a kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. Work progressed slowly, with the owner claiming shortage of funds and the Council giving frequent extensions of time and listing 'no show' inspections in its records. The house was clearly not occupied during this time, and possibly not until the work was finally completed in mid-1986 with final sign off of in March 1988.⁴⁴



Detail of plan for extensions and upgrade, 1981. NSCA CRS 45 81 0535.

In 2000 the present owners purchased the property and extensive remediation and alterations were undertaken, including renewing the damp course, replacing joists and bearers, laying new floors, replacing windows and panes, adding an upstairs bathroom and substantially rebuilding the 1980s single-storey stone extension which contains the kitchen.⁴⁵

Is 262 Bulwara Road older than this story suggests?

It is often thought that this building is older than it is. Even the NSW State Heritage listing calls it 'mid Victorian' and suggests a date of about 1860.⁴⁶ Based on appearances this assumption is understandable.

The building is constructed of undressed sandstone, unlike many other buildings that date from the 1880s which either used regular planed and dressed stones, as in the construction of the church across Quarry Street, or plastered and painted the exterior walls, such as the Lord Wolseley Hotel built at a similar date across Bulwara Road. This form of stonework was common in earlier decades. However there are many buildings in Sydney that date back to the 1840s that use regular dressed stones, so this is not really a good guide to the age of buildings.

Perhaps 262 was intended to be stuccoed, but never was. Nevertheless, within its own corner precinct the house appears to be of an older form and construction. Rooms are small, and ceilings low. Interior walls have been constructed of uneven sized pieces of stone ranging from very small to large, patched together in a jigsaw arrangement that follows no regular pattern. These were not intended to be exposed and would have been originally plastered over, but when this plaster was stripped in recent decades the exposed mortar was clearly flecked with shell and debris suggesting a construction material that was more common in the earlier part of the 19th century than the 1880s. The exposed internal chimney walls contain infill of bricks that are similarly more usually associated with earlier decades. By the 1880s machine-made Hoffman kiln bricks were becoming common and cheap.



The exposed internal chimney walls contain infill of bricks that are more usually associated with the earlier decades of the nineteenth century.

These features, along with the general appearance of the house/shop suggest an age that is possibly older than the written record implies. However the written record is firm in its assertion that there was nothing on this land until after 1880.

This is an example of what is called vernacular building. Daniel McCarthy has already been suggested as a possible builder. He was listed as a quarryman living on the block before the house/shop was built and as residing in it in its first years. Was the house built from cast-off stone scavenged or purchased from the quarries at the end of the street? It could be suggested that an older 'hut'

standing somewhere nearby, but untraceable in the records, yielded up obsolete materials that were used to create a building that already looked old when it was built, utilising rough stone, refashioning timbers for window frames and lintels. This scenario might be incorrect, but there is nothing in the record to specify exactly where all those 'grace and favour' huts were located, and so it is possible. There are other houses in the Pymont/Ultimo area that similarly appear to be older than they are, perhaps an inevitable result of a community of quarry workers and stone masons who built their suburb as their meagre means allowed.

How was this history found?

There are several local histories which provided an overview of the early history of land holding in the area. Of direct relevance are:

Shirley Fitzgerald & Hilary Golder, *Pymont & Ultimo: Under Siege*, 2nd edn. Halstead Press, Sydney, 2007,

Michael Matthews, *Pymont & Ultimo: A History*, published by Pymont Ultimo History Project, 1982.

The present owners were generous in giving access to the house and in providing information, including copies of all the LPI documents required to piece together the story of land ownership. State Records located on Ancestry.com.au filled in a few gaps in the early part of the story.

City records located in [Archives Investigator](#) helped to paint a picture of the undeveloped and unloved quality of this down-at-heel area while a [Trove](#) newspaper search provided some details of occupants.

Establishing clear information from the [Sands Directories](#) and the [Assessment books](#) proved to be very difficult for this site, and so a generous amount of information was recorded as there was potential to err in interpreting it. Multiple occupancies are consistently under counted in the directories and this house, like many others in the area, would at times have housed more people than the records show.

¹ The early history of the Harris landholdings in Ultimo is explained in Michael R Matthews, *Pymont & Ultimo: A History*, self-published, 1984 and Shirley Fitzgerald & Hilary Golder, *Pymont & Ultimo: Under Siege*, 2nd edition, Halstead Press, 2009. These books also provide information about other landholdings on the Pymont Peninsular, many of which eventually ended up in the hands of John Harris.

² Primary Application No. 53290, 1st January, 1806. The present owners of 262 Bulwara Road generously provided access to original documents obtained from the LPI.

³ John Harris's will was recited in various documents obtained for this house history, including in Conveyance, Book 62, No. 617, 1842. It is also available online. He owned other land in NSW which was left to other relations, with the same caveat that inheritance was to be through various male lines of future persons called John.

⁴ Conveyance, LPI Book 62 No 617, 1842.

⁵ Conveyance, LPI Book Nos 500, 501.

⁶ Michael R Matthews, *Pymont & Ultimo: A History*, p. 13.

⁷ LPI Book 62, No.705, 1859. A potted history of the inheritance and how it was carved up between the two sides of the Harris family is explained in Michael Matthews, *Pymont & Ultimo: A History*, pp. 13-15.

-
- ⁸ LPI Book 62 No 705, 1859.
- ⁹ City Assessment Books 1845, 1848. In 1845 all the land was owned by Harris, no streets were recorded, and of the 53 dwellings only seven were graced with the label 'house.' Most of the huts were probably closer to Parramatta Street than to our study area.
- ¹⁰ Assistance in interpreting the elements of this image was found in John A Broadbent, *Transformations: Ecology of Pyrmont*, City of Sydney, 2010. This contains many images of the area and is available online as a pdf and in hard copy at various libraries including the Ultimo branch of the City of Sydney Library.
- ¹¹ Indenture of Lease, 1 December 1877, Book 175, No. 577.
- ¹² Indenture of Lease, 1 December 1877, Book 175, No. 577.
- ¹³ Edward Newell is listed at 226 Crown Road in Sands Directory, 1880, p. 58.
- ¹⁴ Memo, City Surveyor, NSCA CRS 26/149/055: 26/180/2004.
- ¹⁵ There are many City files on these issues eg. NSCA CRS 26/165/876;26/147/0972;22/20/71.
- ¹⁶ City Assessment, Denison Ward, 1882.
- ¹⁷ *Evening News*, 25 June 1883.
- ¹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 December 1889.
- ¹⁹ *Evening News*, 30 November 1887.
- ²⁰ Death Notice, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1891.
- ²¹ Conveyance, Perpetual Trustee to Buckland 1894, LPI, Book 549, No. 792.
- ²² R F Holder, Buckland, Sir Thomas, (1848-1947) *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ANU, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/buckland-sir-thomas-5414/text9177>, accessed November 2013.
- ²³ The conveyance from Harris to Buckland contains clear listings of each parcel of land, the names of lessees and dates of leases.
- ²⁴ The name is most often spelt Rabinowich, but references were also found to Rabinovich and Rabinowick.
- ²⁵ New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Naturalisation, 1849-1903, available on Ancestry.com.au
- ²⁶ Australia, Marriage Index, 1788- 1950, available on Ancestry.com.au. *Sands Directory* 1909.
- ²⁷ Their daughter made the society pages occasionally. The previous occupant of Flamstead was a Percy N Nicholson, possibly the thief and forger of this name who was in the news in the 1920s.
- ²⁸ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 2 September 1930.
- ²⁹ *Evening News*, 3 November 1911.
- ³⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1913.
- ³¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1927.
- ³² *Hebrew Standard of Australia*, 19 December 1940.
- ³³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 June 1941. Incidentally, this house was later listed in the Government Gazette as a disorderly house associated with the notorious madam, Kate Leigh. *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 September 1946)
- ³⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 December 1941, 6 January 1943.
- ³⁵ Marriage Settlement drawn up on 14 October 1890 and listed as a document 'to be lodged by perpetual Trustee Company Ltd' on Primary Application 53290, 1977. This predated the purchase of the land in 1894 but presumably specified ownership of future Buckland property.
- ³⁶ Conveyance Perpetual Trustee to Buckland, Bk 549, No 792, 3rd schedule, 6th part.
- ³⁷ Primary Application 53290
- ³⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1978.
- ³⁹ Untitled memo '1972 M 15' providing the minister's concerns, filed with PA 53290.
- ⁴⁰ B R Davies, Registrar General, to Bennet & O'Donnell, Engineering Surveyors, 14 February 1978, filed with PA 53290.
- ⁴¹ Michael Matthews, *Pyrmont & Ultimo: A History*, p. 37.
- ⁴² list filed with PA 53290.
- ⁴³ Lot 43 in DP 255552, CT, Vol 13663, Fol 60. 1978; NSCA CRS 44/81/0274.
- ⁴⁴ NSCA CRS 45/81/0535. Sign off on the extensions was not finalised until March 1988.
- ⁴⁵ information provided by the present owners.
- ⁴⁶ 'Terrace Group Including Interiors', Office of Environment and Heritage, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2424472>