

Sands Directories

The Sands Sydney Directory was published between 1858-1932. Each issue of the Directory listed householders, businesses, public institutions and officials of the entire Sydney area, in a format which varied during the 74 years of publication.

Woollahra Library's Local History Centre holds a fiche copy of all available issues. Original bound copies are available in other collections.

The two major components of the Directory were the 'Alphabetical' and the 'Suburban' sections. The first consisted of a single alphabetical sequence of the names of householders, business houses and major organisations, with the address of the associated premises attached. The suburban section provided similar information arranged variously by suburb, locality or Local Government Area as the Directory developed.

The 'Suburban Directory', during the early years of publication consisted, like the 'Alphabetical' section, of a single alphabetical sequence of names for each given area. From 1879, in the case of the Municipality of Paddington, and by 1880 in the case of the Municipality of Woollahra, the format of the 'Suburban' section of the Directory was changed, with entries arranged by street and according to the position within each street of the premises occupied..

This street-by-street listing of householders in *Sands* is useful for undertaking research on the history of properties. The type of information usually included is:

- Householder's name and title ;
- Street number and house name - where established;
- Householder's occupation or type of business.

By working backward from the most recent available issue of the Directory (1932), and noting down the details of an individual property for each year that it is listed in *Sands*, you can build up a chronological profile of the occupants of a property, and possibly determine its uses.

The first year in which a property appears in *Sands* may be considered an indication of when a piece of land was first developed. Caution should be exercised - sometimes what appears to be the first listing for a property may in fact be the first listing after a period, sometimes lengthy, of omission from the Directory. This can occur if the property is vacant for some years.

Steps to take:

The microfiche copy of the *Sands Directory* is arranged by year. The page parameters appear on the 'band' at the head of each sheet of fiche, and a thorough index appears on the first fiche for each year. The L H Centre has a separate index on card to the Suburban section, which is useful for those searching Paddington, Vaucluse or Woollahra.

1. Determine the address of the property you are looking for. The more information you have before you start, the easier it will be to search through *Sands*. Examples of useful details:

Street Name;

Street number or house name if known;

The physical location of the property in a street (eg north or south side of the street and the intersections between which it is located);

The Municipality in which the property was located during the relevant period (mindful of shifts in Local Government Boundaries and the fact that boundaries may bisect streets);

The names of any previous owners or occupants of the property;

2. Find the relevant Municipality in the Suburban section. (See Index on first fiche for each year);

When searching properties now included in Woollahra you, need to keep in mind that Paddington (which included Edgecliff south of New South Head Road) was a separate Municipality from 1860 to 1968 and Vaucluse was a separate Municipality from 1895 to 1948.

3. Find the relevant Street from those listed for the suburb (Order is alphabetical);
4. Compare house numbering or location within that street. (Intersecting streets appear in italics);

Some problems which you may encounter:

- Street names may change eg Point Piper Road became Jersey Road;
- Street numbering was often absent in the earliest years of the Directory;
- Street numbering may change;
- The listings generally only include head householders - not owners or boarders.
- Street names or house names may not always be present;
- House names could change regularly;
- The listing may not give an indication of change of use of a property, or a redevelopment;
- Because the Directory was concerned with occupied premises, the existence of unimproved property frequently was unrecorded;
- Re-subdivisions of property are often difficult to identify using the *Sands Directory*;
- *Sands* is not a legal document - the information was collected by Sands' agents who called door to door - and is therefore open to error.
- In some instances, *Sands* agents may not have been able to collect information about a building e.g. it may have been vacant for some years;
- *Sands* ceased publication in 1932.

Other Sources of Information on Property in the Local History Collection:

- Assessment, Valuation and Rate Books for Woollahra Municipality (1860 to 1950) and Vaucluse Municipality (1895 - 1948);
- Valuation Lists for Woollahra and Vaucluse: 1928 to 1962.
- Local History Index: a card index of issues relating to Woollahra. This index may lead you to items about a property included in local newspapers from 1972, as well as to photographs, maps, clippings, and some published sources;
- Woollahra Library's catalogue. Check for the property under the subject listing searching by street address or house name. This catalogue may lead you to items in local newspapers published since October 1995 and to Local History Enquiry Sheets, which are files of research already undertaken on a property;
- Small Items Index: an alphabetical file of small clippings, photographs and other material;
- Various Heritage studies and surveys commissioned for the Woollahra Local Government Area;
- Paddington Photographic Study of 1971.
- Sydney Telephone Books on Microfiche from 1888 to 1988. These list telephone subscribers, only, in alphabetical order but can be useful for checking the continuing occupation of a property by a person beyond 1932.
- If you discover someone of note occupying or owning a property, biographical works can then be checked to determine more about the person. Possible biographical sources include the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, *A Biographical Register 1788 -1939*, *Australian*

Encyclopaedia and microfiche sets of previous editions of *Who's Who in Australia*. Other biographical works can be located on the Library catalogue.

- Information on less notable persons may be compiled through reference to *Sands*, BDM Indexes and newspapers (eg obituary notices)

Sources beyond the Library:

- Deeds and other ownership documents of the property which may be available to you or perhaps held with a Bank or solicitor;
- Land Titles Office;
- Woollahra Council Customer Service Centre : owners or authorised agents may be able to gain access to Building and Development Application Files. Note: fees may apply;
- Sydney City Archives for Rates and Assessment books for Paddington Municipality (again fees might apply);
- Other library or archives institutions (eg Mitchell Library, Water Board Archives, State Records Office).
- For heritage property - National Trust of Australia (NSW) or Heritage Commission.