

## COLEBROOK

### 177 NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD, DOUBLE BAY

*Colebrook*, situated above Double Bay shopping centre, was built by William Augustine Duncan in the early 1860s.

Duncan migrated to Australia in 1837 as a Catholic school teacher, however he soon moved on to a career in publishing, being the founding editor of the *Australasian Chronicle*, a Catholic newspaper of the time. Through this newspaper he pushed for the expansion of representative institutions in the colony over the entrenched class interests of the major land owners and squatters. After his support of governor Gipps in the land crisis of 1844 Duncan was rewarded with a customs position at Morton Bay. He remained in the customs service for the remainder of his career reaching the position of NSW Collector General of Customs in 1859, a position he held until his retirement in 1881.

The focal point of Duncan's home was its impressive ballroom. Much use was made of cast iron decorative work imported from the Colebrookdale foundry in England. The interior was enriched with moulded plaster orders painted in pastel colours and surmounted with capitals and mouldings picked out with gilt. Ornamental roof lights in etched glass added extra light to the rooms.

Duncan lived at *Colebrook* until his retirement in 1881. *Colebrook* was next occupied by the pastoralist and politician Sir Patrick Jennings.

Jennings was born in Ireland in 1831 and after arriving in Victoria in 1852 took part in the 1855 gold rush as a merchant. He gained much wealth from this venture and began investing in pastoral properties, eventually owning land in Deniliquin, Gunnedah, Coonabarabran and the Darling Downs.

Jennings entered parliament as an MLC in 1867 and in 1870 he transferred to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Murray, remaining there until 1872. He re-entered parliament as the member for Bogan in 1880 and was Premier of NSW between 1886 and 1887. Jennings was the first practising, non-Labor Catholic premier in NSW history.

Upon his retirement he remained active in public affairs and during his time as Commissioner of the Royal Agricultural Society he was instrumental in procuring the society land at Moore Park.

In 1892 Jennings left *Colebrook* and yet another prominent man took up residence, Edward Eddy.

Eddy was born in England in 1851 and after a successful career with the London North West Railway was appointed Chief Commissioner of the NSW railways in 1888. During this time as Commissioner Eddy was responsible for the establishment of the Railway Institute and, despite the depression of the 1890s, he managed to extend both the NSW Railway and Tramway systems. After his death in 1897 his wife continued to live at *Colebrook* until c1902 when Mr J. J. Smith, JP purchased the property.

In 1923 the house and grounds, originally extending back to Fairfax Road, were subdivided into 9 blocks, and it was at this time that the shops on the corner of New South Head and Bellevue Roads were built. The house itself appears to have been converted into flats.

In 1960 it was announced that the *historic Colebrook mansion* was to be demolished and a seventeen storey unit block built in its place. It is this building which now bears the name *Colebrook*. A small memento of the original house may be seen today at Lyne Park, Rose Bay where the gates from *Colebrook* now form the entrance to the Rose Bay War Memorial.



Colebrook  
Subdivision  
1923

From Maps and Mansions by David Stanley  
Local History Centre  
Woollahra Library  
Sherbrooke Hall  
Double Bay NSW 2028