



Local History Guide

# Maps & aerial images collection

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## Maps & aerial images collection

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Woollahra Libraries Local History collection contains maps and images that depict the development of the Woollahra municipality. The collection dates from 1860, when Woollahra became a local council to the present. Woollahra Council in the 21<sup>st</sup> century encompasses three historic councils: Woollahra, Vacluse, and parts of Paddington. In 1895, Vacluse and Watson Bay broke away from Woollahra to form Vacluse Municipality. They reunited in 1948, and most of the maps from this period remain in our collection. The northern half of the suburb of Paddington joined Woollahra in 1968 and some of the historic maps related to that area are in this collection, while others are held with the City of Sydney. Woollahra municipality was divided into wards. These wards reflect the wider municipal history mentioned here and changed over time.

The Woollahra Local History map collection includes cadastral maps showing land ownership and subdivision or block plans, topographic maps showing the rise and fall of the landscape, and general maps of the area's streets and development.

### Getting Started

The history of the municipality is directly reflected in our map collection. Depending on the location of interest, places like Paddington or Vacluse may have maps in other collections besides Woollahra Libraries. The most widely used resources in the oversized collection are available during open hours of the Woollahra Libraries at Double Bay. Other parts of our map and aerial collection are located offsite and require staff assistance and a retrieval fee to access. Resources also exist outside of Woollahra Libraries. Woollahra Council and the state of NSW maintain online mapping systems that include aerial photographs and the State Library of NSW has an extensive map collection as well as references to additional online resources.

### Map Types and Uses

There is a variety of map types and uses. Each map, like every record, was made for a specific purpose with information from a particular source at a moment in time. Maps are valuable to inform local and family history, individual properties, and modern development and buildings. Woollahra Libraries' map collection covers the municipality's geography. The collection also contains a series of photographs, maps, plans and drawings captured during the nineteenth and twentieth century's subdivision and development. The following is a list of map types within our collection and a brief description of their value and potential use.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Block Plans | Illustrations of boundaries of allotments that date to the late 20 <sup>th</sup> century as well as an incomplete set from the 1930s. Very useful to correlate documentary evidence on individual properties to a visual depiction of that location. |
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| Topographic       | Maps that illustrate the change in height over the surface of the earth and other physical features of an area. These types of maps help us to picture what the three dimensional land looks like in two dimensions.  |
| Survey Plans      | Conducted by a surveyor to relate what was found on the ground to paper at a moment in time. Often at a large scale with significant detail of buildings, property boundaries, topography, natural features, and place names. Very useful for broad understanding of municipal development and individual properties over time.   |
| Deposited Plans   | Drawings related to a development application were historically deposited with the NSW land title office. These plans have different scales from a single property, to a former estate, or even a significant subdivision that today is an entire suburb. They contribute to our understanding of current fabric.   |
| Subdivision Plans | Drawings that cover multiple properties when they are being subdivided. Often printed when larger portions of land were carved into current property lots and offered for sale. Very useful for understanding developments of neighbourhoods and relationships between individual houses. They may have handwritten information about purchaser, price, and site dimensions. Re-subdivision plans also exist for larger plots from an initial subdivision that underwent further subdivision at a later date. |
| Municipal Maps    | These maps depict the entire municipality at one moment in time, most often with significant details of individual properties to collect appropriate taxes. These are very important as they are not contained in other collections. They contain multiple pages. These predate the current online mapping system discussed below. These maps are very useful for dating structures, seeing neighbourhood development, and changes in buildings over time.  |
| Large Scale Maps  | Such maps often lack individual property or building details but contain information on roads, utilities, or larger landscape and topography. They are useful for understanding broader history of the area.  |

### Resources available in the library

The Local History collection at Woollahra Libraries at Double Bay includes five cabinets of map drawers and a group of reproduced aperture cards or microfiche of maps from other collections. The collection is divided by suburb into type of map, aerial image, oversized drawing or plan with drawers appropriately labelled. Within each drawer there is an array of maps available to *carefully remove* and then *return to the drawer*.

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One cabinet contains material that stretches across the entire municipality but often in significant detail. Those drawers are labelled as the following:

- General Municipal maps
- Aerial photographs – (1930 series of practically whole municipality)
- Aerial photographs – (miscellaneous)
- Architectural drawings – (council owned properties & mix of buildings)
- Prints and drawings
- Survey plans
- Woollahra Municipality Deposited Plans – (estates and subdivisions by suburb)
- Woollahra Municipality Deposited Plans – (individual properties by suburb and street)

Four map cabinets are organized by location and within each location, there are different types of maps in separate drawers. General maps include substantial areas of the suburb, maps that focus on roads and their dimensions, or those that do not fall into plans. Subdivision Plans were created to describe and promote land releases in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These maps general show allotments in a particular subdivision. Due to municipal history, Paddington also has a drawer of deposited plans and Vaucluse has a drawer of municipal maps. The collection is divided into the following suburbs:

|               |               |            |           |
|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Bellevue Hill | Darling Point | Double Bay | Edgecliff |
| Paddington    | Point Piper   | Rose Bay   | Vaucluse  |
| Watsons Bay   | Woollahra     |            |           |

In addition to these large maps, there is an indexed set of Aperture Cards that are microfiche reproductions of Subdivision Plans held at the State Library of New South Wales. The fiche are stored in the bottom microfilm drawer labelled “Rate Books” on the third floor of the Woollahra Library at Double Bay. Computers with *Scanpro* readers allow researchers to view, print, email or digitally save these plans on fiche.

### Locating additional offsite resources

Approximately 200 oversized items of our collection including miscellaneous, oversized maps and aerial images are stored offsite at Government Records. The Library has a list of these items and can assist you in searching for additional resources once you have exhausted online and onsite resources. These



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can be retrieved for a fee, depending on quantity of maps required and their locations. Fees can be viewed on our 'fees and charges' page. Please contact Library staff for further information if you are unable to locate a map within the other parts of our collection.

### Mapping resources online

Woollahra Council has a contemporary mapping system that is available online on Council's website. It includes aerial images from 1943, 2002, 2005, 2011, and 2014. There are conditions of use for this resource. Further details online at the Council's website.

The NSW Government has an online mapping system known as Six Maps. This includes the same 1943 aerial image but extends across the state. Users can display or turn off road names, suburbs, lots, topographic features, and points of interest to view and interact with maps of the whole state. Note that information is constantly being uploaded into this mapping system. There are conditions of use for this resource. Further details online at the Six Maps website.

The State Archives and Records also contain a significant collection of maps related to different areas of the state. Of particular interest to the Woollahra area are the Water Board maps from 1840s that illustrate each building at a date earlier than anything within our collection, which begins when the municipality formed in 1860.

The State Library of New South Wales has links to additional online resources including the Historical Land Records Viewer managed by NSW Land Registry Services. This website has 2.5 million images of maps, plans, titles and indexes related primarily to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are also historic map resources available through the Dictionary of Sydney, the Atlas of the Suburbs of Sydney, Historical Atlas of Sydney, other atlas collections such as Arrowsmith's, Geosciences Australia, and Trove. Trove is a powerful search engine that explores the collections from nearly all libraries, museums, archives, and other collecting organisations across Australia. See the "External Resources" page on Woollahra Libraries' Local History webpages.

### How we can help

Other research guides produced by Library staff can be useful for finding more information on a specific topic. Library staff are also available to provide advice on how to conduct your research and access library resources. Alternatively, staff are able to undertake research on your behalf for a fee. Fees can be viewed on our 'fees and charges' page.