

## WOOLLAHRA HOUSE POINT PIPER



*Wyuna Court, the old stable building, 1992*

In 1883 there rose on Woollahra Point one of the greatest mansions Sydney has ever seen. Built on the site of Captain John Piper's *Henrietta Villa*, *Woollahra House* was a two storied stone structure surmounted by a mansard tower. Wide balconies decorated with cast iron encircled the building on three sides. The accommodation comprised a vestibule, hall, dining room, library and drawing room on the ground floor and nine bedrooms and three bathrooms on the upper floor. In later years a large separate ballroom was added. The whole effect of the building was described as *early Victorian Colonial with a few touches of the French renaissance*.

*Woollahra House* was built for William Cooper who had purchased the land, Captain Piper's original 190 acre grant, from his father, Sir Daniel Cooper, in 1882 for £10000.

William Cooper and his family lived at *Woollahra House* until their return to England in 1888. It was during this period that the first subdivision of the Woollahra Point Estate took place with a release of seventy building lots, however *Woollahra House* and grounds still retained an area of 16 acres.

Between the period 1888 and 1898 the house was occupied by Lady Martin after whom, it has been said, the nearby beach is named.

In 1898 the Cooper family decided to remain permanently in England, offering *Woollahra House* for use as a Federal Government house. This offer was rejected and in 1899 the house and grounds were again subdivided and put up for sale.

This second subdivision, as well as reducing the acreage of the house to two, created Wunulla and Wyuna Roads. Wunulla Road followed the route of the original carriageway. The house, however, retained its frontage to Port Jackson.

Late in 1899 *Woollahra House* was sold to Thomas Longworth, a part owner of the *Cobar Cooper Mines*, for £9000. Longworth lived there until his death in 1927 and in 1929 the last chapter in the history of *Woollahra House* was written when the house was demolished to make way for the final subdivision of the site.

Not all evidence of *Woollahra House* was erased; still to be seen today are the original gatekeeper's lodge, now Rose Bay Police Station, and the stable building which has been converted into the prestigious block of home units, *Wyuna Court*, by the architect Sidney Gilchrist.

Perhaps better than any other example the history of *Woollahra House* demonstrates the process whereby the great estates of the Woollahra area gradually succumbed to mounting pressure for land to be made available for more and more housing in this prestigious area.



*Woollahra Point Estate,*  
1899

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