



Milton Terrace

text by Isabel Silva and John Dunn

Milton Terrace is composed of ten four-storey residences richly detailed in the Greek Revival style. Nine are six metres wide and one is nine metres wide, providing the first clue to the origins of what was described at one time as the finest terrace in the Colony.

Within two of the terraces and largely intact is the 1827 house built for William Walker in the style of a marine villa. Next to Walker's villa at the time it was constructed was Durham Cottage, built a year

earlier for Captain John Nicholson. Both were built on the slopes below the ridge line where there was a path that would soon become Fort Street.

Below Walker's villa the land fell away steeply to what was known at the time as Darling Harbour. Close to the shore the water reached a depth of sixty to eighty feet. This was an ideal location for Walker and Co.'s wharf which had been built as a longshore wharf a little earlier.



By the 1840s, Walker's villa was home to Miss Jane Walker, daughter of William and Elizabeth. In 1845, Jane married Donald Larnach who acquired Walker's villa and Nicholson's Durham Cottage, which he demolished after 1875 to build Milton Terrace.

Larnach was a successful merchant who became a financier and was elected a director of the Bank of New South Wales in 1846 and magistrate for Sydney in 1847.

In 1879–80 Larnach added another storey to Walker's villa and divided it into two residences. Another five residences were added on the southern side and three to the north to complete Milton Terrace.

It is thought that Milton Terrace was built to coincide with the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879, and there was a direct view

of the Garden Palace across Sydney Cove from the front of Milton Terrace.

Early residents of Milton Terrace included musicians, arts administrators and bankers, and the residences were individually occupied, but by the late 1880s a few had been turned into boarding houses. This was a trend that continued through the 1890s, and by the turn of the century most of the larger houses of Dawes Point had become boarding houses for maritime workers, and the merchants and bankers had left.

In the early 20th century plans were developed for new wharf facilities in Walsh Bay, and a new road along the shoreline so that goods could be transported easily to and from the wharves. The Sydney Harbour Bridge was part of the same plan.



The entire area of The Rocks, Dawes Point, and Millers Point was to be redeveloped and all privately owned property was resumed under the Darling Harbour and The Rocks Resumption Areas.

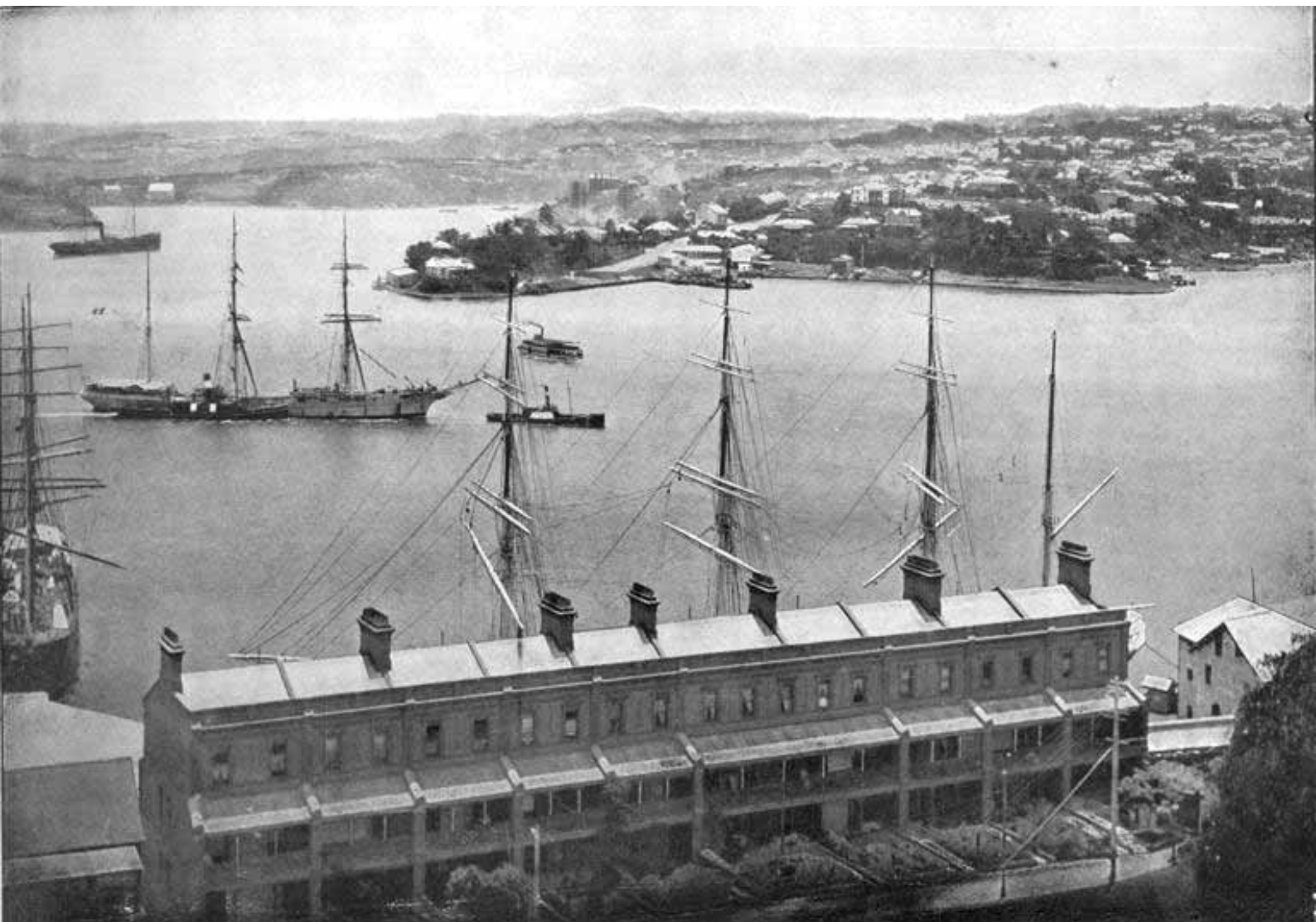
Many historic houses were demolished in the early years of the 20th century. Millers Point and Dawes Point changed dramatically. Large warehouses and workers flats were built and dominated the neighbourhood. The land at the rear of Milton Terrace was excavated for Hickson Road and the new wharves of Walsh Bay.

In 1906, the Sydney Harbour Trust renovated Milton Terrace as a series of boarding houses

that were in the most part run by women who were from the maritime community of Millers Point. In this way, widows and single women maintained homes for single men and couples who worked on the wharves of Walsh Bay and Cockle Bay.

Ownership of Milton Terrace was transferred to the Maritime Services Board around 1937, and following the moving of port activities from Sydney Harbour to Port Botany, the MSB transferred ownership of its residential properties to NSW Housing.

NSW Housing had little interest in maintaining the historic properties of Dawes Point, and between 2014 and 2018, after more than a



century of inadequate maintenance, the residents of government-owned housing in Dawes Point were displaced and the properties sold.

The Milton Terrace properties were amongst the last to be sold by the government, and new owners have spent the past few years restoring and renovating the properties to an extraordinarily high standard.

The entire terrace has been scaffolded, roofs repaired, verandahs reinstated, and the exterior repaired and repainted in a consistent heritage colour scheme.

Inside the properties have been restored and renovated with great attention paid to the heritage significance of each property, but the homes that have emerged are as individual as their residents.

Milton Terrace c.1900. [City of Sydney Archives and State Library of Victoria]





Milton Terrace restoration by François Crespel, Photos by Michael Anderson sourced from www.platredeco.com.au





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Details of Walker's 1827 villa that was incorporated into Milton Terrace.

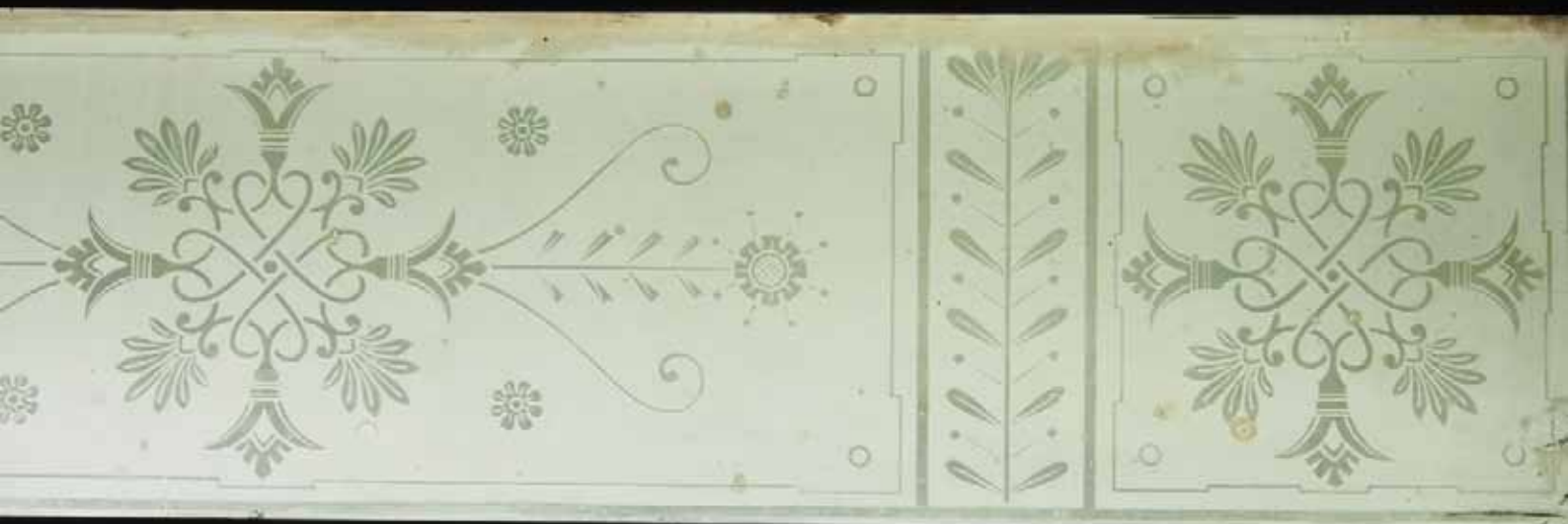


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