

Hunters Hill Open Gardens 2025

Bayfield - 3 Woolwich Rd Hunters Hill 2110

An early map from approximately 1834 dates Bayfield being built on part of 32 acres purchased in 1834 at a public auction sale of Crown Lands for £24.16.0 by William Morgan, who was a Sydney merchant, known locally as Billy the Bull.

In 1836 Morgan sold the property to Quaker John Tawell, an apothecary of Pitt Street. Tawell was transported to Australia in 1814 convicted of being in possession of forged notes.

On Tawell's arrival in Australia he was employed in the convict hospital as he had some knowledge of chemistry, and on gaining his ticket 'of leave', he started business in Hunter Street and later moved to larger premises - owned by Ambrose Foss in Pitt Street.

It was a prosperous business, Besides buying land in Hunter's Hill, business speculations and gifts to charities, Tawell built a meeting house for the Society of Friends in Macquarie Street. This building, according to the Secretary of the Society of Friends, was on the site where Burdekin House was built and where St. Stephens Church now stands. Tawell sold this land to Ambrose Foss, (the owner of his business premises) a foundation member of the Congregational Church in NSW, and after whom Foss and Ambrose Streets are named.

Thomas Cook, Merchant, who was the builder of the main part of the present Bayfield, bought the land from Ambrose Foss of Sydney, chemist, in 1861. His widow sold it to George Hibbert Deffell of Sydney, Chief Commissioner of Insolvent Estates, in 1866.

Judge Deffell lived there until 1888.

In 1889, according to the Sands Directory, the occupier was Mrs. J. Hoare, who resided there until 1892 when George Hankins, a surgeon, is shown as the occupier.

In 1893 to 1895 E. H. Crossman, a solicitor, was noted as the tenant.

By 1900 W. Sewell was in occupation, and lived here until 1904 when a Mr. F.N.Christoe occupied Bayfield until 1908.

There is no Bayfield entry for 1909 but in 1910 A. P. Stewart's address was 'Bayfield' and he rented the house until the executor of Judge Deffell's estate sold the property to the late Mr. J. Bowie-Wilson in 1911 of Sydney, mining engineer. In 1948 when John Bowie Wilson died the house was passed onto William Bowie Wilson of Woollahra, chartered accountant, and Allen Camfield Windeyer of Hunters Hill, solicitor, as joint tenants.

Bayfield, in 1911, was a single-storey building with attic rooms. Mr. Bowie-Wilson had the roof removed and the walls of the attic rooms raised. While this renovation was being done the Bowie-Wilson family lived at Waiwera.

Mr. Bowie-Wilson also added the gables and the Gothic style barge boards which were fashionable at the time. White ants and borers have taken their toll on this old house over the years and it has taken much effort to restore to its original state. The original Bayfield doors were badly damaged over the years and were replaced by the doors from 'Croissy'

when it was demolished. Croissy was one of four timber houses imported from the Paris Industrial Exhibition of 1854.

Bayfield was sold to Mr. Ian Wallace Davie in 1965 with a subdivision and it changed hands again in 1967 when the Deane-Johns family bought Bayfield and the three-quarters of an acre of ground on which it is built and Mr Munro Trevor Gabriel of Bellevue Hill, company director, and Permanent Trustee Company of New South Wales Limited, as joint tenants.

Mr Munro Trevor Gabriel died in 1969 and the property was transferred to Kay Elizabeth Deane-Johns (daughter of Munro Trevor & Merle Gabriel) who then sold it in 1974.

It is possible to see where the walls have been raised, where the stone finishes and the rough cast begins. Mr. Orwell Phillips, the architect handling restoration in the 1970's, recorded that these would have been some of the first cavity brick walls constructed in Sydney.

There are, as one would expect, cellars under Bayfield, and in addition a beautifully constructed well. As original householders in Hunter's Hill had to provide their own water supply, many of the old wells are still to be seen. It was not until 1892 that Hunter's Hill had a properly reticulated water supply.

The new owners bought the property in 1984. They have continued with further restoration and care of the property and its spacious grounds.

Please take care on the old pathways and enjoy the ambience of this wonderful heritage property.