Introduction

Arriving by ferry at East Balmain wharf is the best possible introduction to Balmain. From the water, you can see the jumble of architectural styles from every decade since the 1840s. Austere Post-Regency stone buildings stand beside ornate late Victorian stucco terraces, 1960's brick walk-up apartment blocks, and 21st century concrete and glass boxes. Balmain's diverse buildings reflect its diverse population: it is home to bikers and barristers, movie stars and public housing tenants.

The ferry trip is a reminder of the importance of water transport to Balmain, especially in early colonial days when road transport was slow and hazardous. A steam ferry service from Balmain to the city began in 1844.

Why Are Early Balmain Buildings So Plain?

Many of the buildings you will see on this walk reflect the simple styles favoured by the earlier Georgian and Regency architects, who emphasized beauty of proportion, clean lines and an elegant simplicity inspired by ancient Greek and Roman buildings. Apart from its aesthetic appeal, simplicity was also well suited to early colonial life, when decorative materials and skilled artisans would have been relatively scarce.

On this walk, you will see the transition from the plain style of the 1840s to the ornate grandeur of the 1860s, reflecting both changing architectural fashion and the growing prosperity of the colony.

The Importance Of Balmain To Our Heritage

In their seminal work on Sydney architecture, Bernard and Kate Smith identified Balmain, together with Glebe, Hunters Hill and Paddington, as among the historic areas of Sydney which require the safeguards of special State legislation in order to preserve them as an historic heritage for a future and more civilized Australia.

Stop 1: Bell's Store
2 Weston Street, c.1888

As you arrive at East Balmain wharf, this sandstone building with its striking stepped gable will catch your eye. Though much later than the other buildings on this tour, Bell's Store is noteworthy as a reminder of Balmain's maritime past, and as an example of the restoration of a derelict building for community use.

Originally a warehouse, Bell's Store was taken over by Fenwick's tugboat company, which demolished the gable to provide a better view of their boats' operations. The building became derelict in the 1990s, but was restored in 2012 by Leichhardt Council and the Heritage Council of New South Wales. The gable was rebuilt using an old picture as a guide.

The stonework in the façade is elaborate, with rusticated surfaces and a decorative pattern formed by using courses of different widths. This decoration, and the random boulders used in the side walls contrast with the plain, neatly dressed stone blocks you will see at the next stop.

[From Bell's Store, walk up Darling Street. The first building on the left is Stop 2]

Stop 2: Shipwright's Arms
10 Darling Street, 1844

From 1844 to 1966, this was one of Balmain's many pubs, strategically placed to serve travellers to and from the city. Its unadorned simplicity is typical of 1840s colonial style. There is no ornamentation except for the horizontal moulding between the storeys and the decorative quoins at each end of the Darling Street façade. The asymmetrical arrangement of the windows suggests that function was more important to the builder than aesthetics. In verging on the primitive, this building, like several others on the walk, reflects the rigours of early colonial life.

The sandstone blocks were probably quarried nearby, and the corrugated iron seen on the roof was freely available in the colony from the 1850s, sometimes laid over an earlier roof of wooden shingles. Twelve paned windows enabled well-lit interiors at a time before large sheets of glass became available.

[Cross Weston Street to Stop 3: Waterman's cottage 12 Darling Street 1841]

Stop 3: Waterman's cottage 12 Darling Street 1841

Built by Cornish stonemason John Cavill, this cottage was home to McKenzie the waterman, who provided a ferry service. Like its neighbour the Shipwright's Arms, the cottage has a primitive quality.

Built directly onto the street, the cottage makes the most of its corner position by the placing of its entrance and the French window above. The stones jutting from the uphill corner show that it was the beginning of a terrace that was never completed. Of special interest is the wooden shingle roof; though common in the 1840s, most were later replaced with corrugated iron or other more modern substitutes.

The cantilevered balcony with its simple wooden balustrade, and the louvred French windows are typical of the period. It seems likely that the balcony has been rebuilt using an old drawing as a guide: a photo of the building in the 1970's shows a French window above the front door opening onto a much smaller balcony facing the street corner.

[Walk uphill to Stop 4: Cottages with Scottish dormers 26-28 Darling Street, 1840]

Stop 4: Cottages with Scottish dormers 26-28 Darling Street, 1840

Dormer windows, usually perched halfway up the slope of the roof, are common in Balmain as a way of lighting the roof cavity for use as another storey. However, this pair of semi-detached cottages is a rare example of the Scottish style of dormer, with window-sills cut into the façade below the eaves.

Corrugated iron verandahs were popular as a way of adapting British building styles to a warmer, sunnier climate. The simple chamfered wooden verandah posts are typical of the early colonial cottage.

[Continue uphill to Stop 5: Cahermore 50 Darling Street, c. 1846]

Stop 5: Cahermore 50 Darling Street, c. 1846

Yet another former watering hole, Cahermore began life as the Waterford Arms. Like its neighbouring inns, the Unity Hall and Shipwright's Arms, this simple stone building is utterly plain, its severe asymmetrical façade relieved only by projecting sills and a narrow stone band dividing the upper from the lower storey. A single moulding decorates each chimney. The leadlight 'Cahermore' above the door is a later addition. Cahermore is another fine example of an early building rescued from dereliction: it was restored in the 1970s.

[Continue uphill to the junction of Darling, Nicholson and Johnston Streets]

Stop 6: Former Unity Hall Hotel 49 Darling Street, c. 1848.

This building is best viewed from across Nicholson Street.

Strategically occupying its corner, in its simple, asymmetrical style this former hotel resembles the Shipwright's Arms (Stop 2). The Unity Hall is larger and more ambitious, however, with its arched door and window and row of dormers.

Built for innkeeper Thomas Acton, the Unity Hall Hotel had nine rooms with a detached kitchen, stables and a well. The name Unity Hall (and the sign on the Darling Street façade, 'Oddfellows Hall') refer to its role as a meeting place for a Friendly Society, the Balmain Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows.

After ceasing to operate as an inn, the Hall was used for various commercial purposes. A plaque indicates that it was restored in 1989-90.

[Optional detour: Energetic walkers may wish to walk down Johnston St and then into Paul St to view some 1840s sandstone cottages]

[Continue westwards along Darling Street to Stop 7: Corner shop, 90 Darling Street c.1860]

Stop 7: Corner shop, 90 Darling Street c.1860

This former bootmaker's shop, almost twenty years later than the humble Waterman's cottage down the hill, shows far greater refinement and attention to detail, from the dentillated brick chimneys to the rusticated stone quoins and elegant cast-iron balustrading. The façade is perfectly symmetrical, and there is a restrained use of ornamentation, for example in the use of tiny brackets (corbels) to support the generous stone windowsills.

The ground-floor walls are of stone, and the first floor walls are brick. The use of different wall materials is common in Balmain's early colonial buildings, with expensive stone used for an impressive street facade, and cheaper materials (brick or timber) for the less visible side or rear walls.

The relatively plain cast-iron balustrading, and flat openwork iron columns are typical of the 1860s: later in the century the more ornate 'iron lace' replaced this earlier, simple style. The original roof has been replaced with modern tiles.

[Energetic walkers may enjoy a detour down picturesque Datchett Street to see number 12, 'Iver', listed in the Local Environment Plan as 'significant as possibly the earliest surviving timber house (1840-43) in Balmain, and in the Municipality']

[Continue westward along Darling Street to Stop 8: St Mary's Church 85 Darling Street,1843. (Chancel: Edmund Blacket 1843. The rest of the church: Weaver and Kemp 1858)]

Stop 8: St Mary's Church 85 Darling Street,1843

The original, smaller St Mary's Church was designed by Sydney's great exponent of the Gothic Revival style, Edmund Blacket. All that remains of Blacket's design is the chancel, which retains the atmosphere of a mediaeval English village church, with stone-flagged floor, hammer-beam roof and Decorated Gothic tracery.

Blacket's church soon proved too small for the growing congregation, so in 1858 most of it was demolished and enlarged, using (so the story goes) cheap, inferior sandstone, with the unfortunate results that you see today. The stone has weathered badly, the decorative pinnacles have been lost, and the spire was demolished in the 1940s for fear that it might otherwise collapse. Metal caps have been fitted on the walls and some of the buttresses to protect the stone from further damage.

Architecturally the building lacks unity: although Weaver and Kemp retained Gothic elements in their design of the rebuilt church, the large, later nave, with its simple lancet windows, is out of proportion to the small, finely crafted chancel, and from inside the church the join between the old and new buildings is clearly visible in the stonework of the north wall.

The church is usually closed except for Sunday services (see the church website for details). The font, chancel chair and reading desk are by Blacket.

[Continue west along Darling Street to Jubilee Place. Turn left into Jubilee Place, and cross Ewenton Park]

Stop 9: Ewenton, 1854; 1860, 1872 additions

The economy of the colony boomed in the 1850s, following the Gold Rush, and Ewenton House reflects this burgeoning prosperity. The handsome mansion is something of an architectural mélange, which is not surprising since it was built in stages.

In 1854-5, 'Blake Vale', a simple, single-storeyed house with basement was built for Robert Blake, a quartermaster turned civilian sheriff and developer.

In 1856, Major Ewen Wallace Cameron, a successful businessman bought the house and renamed it Ewenton. Cameron engaged the architect James MacDonald to add an elaborate entrance portico and a stone upper storey with bay and pedimented windows and a slate roof. As well as enjoying the fine views from the site, Cameron benefited from easy access to the city from his own wharf.

As Cameron's family grew, more space was needed so in 1872 a three-storey wing was added. The finished result is a massive building of high quality stone-work with unusual detailing that defies classification into any single architectural style. Facing the building, the left (southern) side is predominantly Italianate, with Italianate classical elements (the windows, roof and pediment. The ground–floor arches and the oriel window suggest a Moorish influence. The central oriel window is rare in Sydney buildings, as are the triple round-headed windows on the left of the façade, surrounded by stone architraves and surmounted by a boss. The right hand (northern) side remains basically Georgian with the exception of the oriel window.

From 1892 the building became a boarding house, and was then used for industrial purposes. It fell into disrepair in the 1950s and was damaged by fire in 1980. Under an agreement relating to the development of the surrounding land, the Lend Lease Corporation and the specialist heritage architect, Clive Lucas, restored the exterior in the 1980s. The interior was restored by the present occupier.

[Follow Grafton St to the West, via Stop10: Hampton Villa 12b Grafton St, 1847-1849]

Stop 10: Hampton Villa
12b Grafton St, 1847-1849

Modestly elegant, Hampton Villa contrasts sharply with its larger, later and more ornate neighbour, Ewenton. The villa exemplifies the Post- Regency style described by Bernard and Kate Smith as "possessing clean lines and classical proportions in the treatment of windows and doors, a dominating rectangularity and broad eaves line."

Typical of this style are the bare stone walls, stone-flagged verandah and louvred French windows. The Tuscan columns and classical pediment at the front entrance are also typical of the 1840s: however, a photo c. 1890 shows the verandah with striped awning and flat, not cylindrical, columns. In this photo, the villa's roof appears to be of slate or wood shingles.

Built by the Hon. Edward Hunt MLC, the villa was leased in the 1880s by Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of NSW and "Father of Federation".

[Turn right into Ewenton St.Stop 11: 3 Ewenton St c.1852, best seen from Wallace St]

Stop 11: 3 Ewenton St c.1852

The original stone building, with its typical verandah and louvred French windows, appears to have a later, two-storey addition at the Ewenton Street end. The dormers with their scalloped bargeboards hint at the Victorian mediaeval revival.

[Continue along Ewenton Street to Charles Street. Turn left into Charles Street]

Stop 12: 6 Charles Street, 1839

This is of interest as the oldest brick building still standing in Balmain. Designed by John Gibb and built by Robert Blake, this simple, symmetrical, beautifully proportioned bungalow calls to mind Bernard and Kate Smith's description of the Colonial Georgian cottage style with its "agreeable simplicity and sure sense of proportion". Note the plain openwork iron verandah columns typical of the early colonial period. The simple geometric forms contrast sharply with the ornate iron "lace" and fluted columns that became popular in the second half of the nineteenth century.

[From Charles Street, turn left down Wallace Lane to Wallace Street. To your right, across Wallace Street, stands Clontarf Cottage]

Stop 13: 4 Wallace St: Clontarf Cottage 1844

This low-set cottage embodies the essence of early colonial simplicity. Almost completely lacking in ornamentation, the building's appeal relies on symmetry, proportion and the contrasting textures of stone, wood and iron. Its only adornments are the striped awning and the austere chimney mouldings.

Typical of the style are the low stone flagged verandah and the symmetrically placed chimneys at either end of the hipped roof. Built by Blake, the cottage was bought by Leichhardt Council in 1974, and as a result of public protests it was restored for community use in 1988.

At the western end of Wallace Street, turn right into Adolphus Street and continue to the corner with Darling Street. Look downhill across Darling Street at the shops on the opposite side.

Stop 14: Shops 153-157 Darling Street, 1850s

153 Darling Street, c. 1850, a severely plain and utilitarian building, was once Gourlay's grocery shop.

The similarly plain 155 Darling Street (c.1858) sports a raised moulding dividing the upper and lower storeys, and 157 Darling Street (c.1858) is the most ambitious of the three, with arched windows, projecting voussoirs (wedge-shaped stones forming the arch) and hints of classical style in the mouldings around the door and lower window. A faded sign on the side wall testifies to its days as a bakery.

[Walk uphill along Darling Street past Stop 15: 177 Darling Street, 1843]

Stop 15: 177 Darling Street, 1843

This tiny sandstone cottage reminds us of the period's obsession with classical architecture: a miniature pediment, resting on brackets, surmounts the doorway. Like many in Balmain, this cottage seems impossibly small to modern Australians accustomed to living in some of the world's largest houses. Its size is a reminder that personal space is a relatively recent luxury. In the nineteenth century even wealthy children shared their nursery bedroom, while in poorer families two or more children shared a bed.

### Stop 16: The Watch House 179 Darling Street, 1854, 1881 additions.

Opening hours:
The Watch House is usually open on Saturday and Sunday, 10am - 5pm for art exhibitions except for April, September and January when it is open on Saturdays from 11:30am to 4pm. See the Balmain Association's website for information about the exhibition programme.

Begun by Edmund Blacket in 1852, the original single-storey Watch House was completed by Kemp in 1854, with four rooms: a guard room, a constable's room, and male and female cells. In 1881, an upper storey was added, and two cells at the rear, each with its own privy and exercise area.

Watch houses were necessary in the colony for short prison terms, because of the long distances between gaols. The building was used as a lock-up until the 1920, when it became home to the local policeman, his wife and their twelve children. The old cells were used as bedrooms.

In the 1960's, derelict and no longer needed by the police, the building was scheduled for demolition. The Balmain Association, formed in 1965 to maintain the historical value of the area, joined forces with the National Trust in a fight to preserve the building. As a result of public pressure the NSW Government transferred the building to the National Trust, which leases it to the Balmain Association as its headquarters. The Association maintains the building and manages it as an exhibition space.
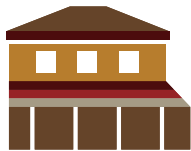
The building exemplifies the simplicity of early colonial buildings, with the later upper storey designed in keeping with the early Victorian lower storey. The only decorations are the minimal chimney mouldings, the raised course between upper and lower storeys and the bas-relief stone frames around the windows. However, the building's austerity is relieved by the colours and markings of the bare stone walls, and the ghostly stripes visible on the awning.

With its slate and iron roofs, copper guttering, wooden verandah posts and twelve-paned windows, the Watch House provides a sampler of early colonial style and materials.

[Walk uphill to the corner of Colgate Avenue and Darling Street, where a memorial marks the former site of St Andrew's Church]

At the rear of the Watch House, note the stone privy (known locally as a dunny). Dunnies provided sanitation in Balmain until 1913, by which time nearly all properties were connected to the Bondi Ocean Outfall Sewer. A few examples survive in the inner suburbs of Sydney, but most are of brick and corrugated iron, rather than stone and slate.

[Walk down Colgate Avenue, and turn left at Caroline Street. Turn right at Waterview Street for Stop 17: 49 Waterview Street, c.1855]

Stop 17: 49 Waterview Street, c.1855

Built by Captain W. H. Sawyer, whose wharves occupied the waterfront, this cottage appears originally to have been a typical early colonial bungalow, symmetrically designed with a window on either side of the front door, and a chimney at each end of the roof. The façade of the apparent extension (on the uphill end) has been built of sandstone to blend seamlessly with the original building. This approach differs from the current vogue for adding extensions to old buildings in a contrasting modern style. The ornate cast iron "lace" is typical of the later Victorian love of elaborate ornamentation, when the aesthetic pendulum swung away from early colonial simplicity.

[Walk uphill to Stop 18: Balmoral House 46 Waterview Street, c.1855, balcony above the portico added 1969]

Stop 18: Balmoral House 46 Waterview Street, c.1855

Built for Balmain's first doctor, Frederick Harpur, Balmoral House is a fine example of a Victorian Georgian villa. Its basic structure follows the conventions of the times: two storeys, five upstairs windows, two downstairs windows either side of a central front door, chimneys at either end of a hipped roof. The architect Edmund Blacket's home, Bidura House is on a similar scale and follows an almost identical pattern.

Harpur, however, had grander aspirations than Blacket. Unlike the humbler brick of Bidura, Balmoral House proudly displays its expensive stone walls, and its conventional twelve-paned windows are given a touch of grandeur with ornamental lintels supported by stone brackets above each window, and decorative stonework panels below the sills.

In spite of its restrained ornamentation, Balmoral House, like Bidura, relies mainly on harmonious proportions for its beauty. In this, as well in its ornamentation, it harks back to the buildings of ancient Greece which inspired so many colonial architects.

[Walk uphill to the junction of Waterview Street and Queen's Place]

Stop 19: The Old Post Office
1 Queens Place, c. 1850

This began as a grocer's shop which incorporated a Post Office. It provided postal services until 1887 when the present, far grander Post Office opened at the corner of Darling and Montague Streets. Although it is a simple, utilitarian commercial building like those at the beginning of this walk, it is designed with careful attention to proportion and symmetry. The blind window (unusual in Balmain) above the corner door appears to have been added purely for aesthetic effect. A low parapet adds height to the façade.

[Walk along Queens Place past 5-9 Queens Place (c.1850)]

These cottages are noteworthy because of their use of stone and timber: evidently the builder intended to build a terrace of stone houses (hence the "saw toothed" masonry edge) but abandoned this plan. The project was finished with a pair of tiny timber cottages.

Stop 20: The Presbyterian Church
Campbell Street,1868.

The largest of the three churches on this walk, the Campbell Street church was designed by the Balmain architect James McDonald in the Early English Gothic Revival style. In spite of the plainness of the Early English style, with its simple lancet windows, minimal buttresses and unadorned pinnacles, the church has a relatively complex structure, in contrast to the barnlike simplicity of St Mary's (Stop 8). From the street you can observe the complex roofline, clearly defining the nave and two side aisles. The octagonal spire springs from a rectangular base above the main entrance, which is buttressed by two porches entered by smaller doors.

The size of the church and the adjacent church hall and manse (number 11 Campbell Street) suggest the importance of colonial Balmain to the Presbyterian Church. Inside, the organ takes pride of place at the East end, its charmingly decorated pipes displayed in a fine cedar case.

Stop 21: St Andrews Church corner of
Curtis Road and Darling Street, 1855.
Organ: J. W. Walker, 1867.

Dseigned by Goold and Field (although the church hall,1871, is by James McDonald). Less ambitious in scale and complexity than the Campbell Street church, this building is in Decorated Gothic style, with mullioned windows and trefoil tracery. As in the Campbell Street church, the spire is octagonal above a rectangular entrance porch: however, St Andrews' spire is smaller and plainer, and the porch has a single door rather than the triple doors seen at the later church.

The church is open during the Saturday market, giving visitors a chance to admire the fine cedar joinery and beautifully decorated organ.

Public transport

To leave Balmain from St Andrews Church, either cross Darling Street to the bus stop beside Gladstone Park for buses to the city, or walk down Curtis Road and turn right into Mort Street, which leads downhill to the Thames Street Wharf for ferries to the city, Cockatoo Island and Woolwich.

Alternatively, take a bus from the stop outside the church back to East Balmain wharf for ferries to Darling Harbour and Circular Quay.

(Note that ferries may be infrequent, especially at weekends).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFO

STONE

Sandstone was readily available to early colonial builders and was often quarried on-site in Balmain, where rocky outcrops are still visible to this day. It could be carved decoratively (as in Ewenton - Stop 9 - and the façade of Bell's Store), worked into plain dressed blocks (as in the Shipwright's Arms- Stop 2) or used to build a rubble wall (as in the side walls of Bell's Store). Burnt oyster shells from the harbour shores provided mortar.

Sydney sandstone varies considerably according to its location, with some types liable to weather badly. St Mary's Church Balmain (Stop 8) is an example of a stone building which has suffered in this way. For more information about types of Sydney sandstone, see The Rocks of Glebe Point

Good-quality sandstone soon became expensive. To satisfy the demand for the prestige of stone at a lower cost, builders used brick walls coated in stucco grooved to create the illusion of stone blocks. Later brick buildings often rise from an exposed stone base course. The stone functioned as a damp-proof course for about 80 years, after which the damp would rise into the walls.

WINDOWS AND GLASS

Plate glass was first produced by the French, in the late seventeenth century, although the Romans had pioneered a primitive version in ancient times. By the 1840s plate glass sheets two feet (70 cm.) long were becoming available, but many of the buildings on this walk retain the Georgian style twelve-paned rectangular windows, which let in plenty of light without the need for expensive large plate glass sheets. Partially glazed French doors with louvred shutters were also popular in this period.

ROOFS

From the 1790s, wood shingle and clay tiles were used for roofing, but the wood rotted, and the clay tiles were heavy.

In 1829, the British invention, corrugated iron, was patented. It became popular in Australia from the 1830s and was sometimes laid directly on top of the shingles. Corrugated iron was relatively cheap, durable, light, quick to install, and could be bent into a variety of shapes- bull-nosed, convex, ogee, eyelash, and barrel vault shapes, for example, can all be seen in Balmain. Verandah roofs were often painted with stripes to mimic a canvas awning- as in Clontarf Cottage, Stop 13.

Slate was imported to the colony from 1837, and was a more expensive and labour intensive roofing material, thus suited to buildings with aspirations to grandeur, such as Ewenton (Stop 9).

ALTERATIONS AND MODERNISATION

Many, possibly most of Balmain's old buildings have been altered- to make them larger (additional wings, storeys, attic conversions), better lit (larger windows, skylights) or more modern (ceramic tiled roofs instead of slate, new doors, aluminium-framed windows, modern balustrading and fencing, indoor lavatories instead of outhouses at the bottom of the garden). Some of the additions/alterations are designed to blend in with the existing building, by using the same materials and shapes as in the original (for example, the Watch House, Stop 16): others are designed to contrast completely with the original. Sometimes these contrasting additions are discreetly tucked away at the rear of the house, but sometimes they strike a jarring note in the streetscape because of their size or incongruity. In fact Balmain has long been characterized by a diversity of size, quality and style of housing, unlike (for example) Paddington and Glebe where there are more uniform streetscapes of terraced houses.

There has been a long-standing tension between demolitionists and conservationists: sometimes the conservationists win (as in Ewenton and the Balmain Watch House) and sometimes the demolitionists succeed (Balmain's first house, Birchgrove House, built in 1810, was demolished in 1967 to make way for a block of flats at 67 Louisa Road).

The cost of maintaining old buildings and the incentive to profit by redeveloping historic sites mean that without government intervention, Sydney's early buildings will gradually disappear. For information on Leichhardt Council's conservation policy, see the Leichhardt Council Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2000. Most, if not all the buildings on this walk are listed in the LEP's Schedule 2 of Heritage Buildings.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

These originated in England (hence the name Balmain Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, which refers to the English city) and were brought to Australia by the colonists. They provided an early form of insurance; members would make weekly contributions to a fund, which could be drawn on in case of illness, unemployment or other hardship.

The Australian Unity organization still operates today, providing its members with healthcare, retirement and financial services.

CAST IRON

Cast iron balustrading was popular in British Georgian houses, and was imported to the colony until 1843, when the Russell Foundry opened in Sydney. As the 1800s progressed, the style changed from simple geometric railings to increasingly ornate 'lace' panels as seen on late Victorian Italianate terraced houses in many parts of Sydney.

WALLS

As well as stone (discussed elsewhere), bricks were made in the colony from 1788. Until 1870, stock bricks were handmade, in moulds. These small, soft, bricks in beautiful colours were sometimes left bare (as in Hyde Park Barracks, Macquarie Street, in the city) and sometimes covered in render and limewash. The render protected the soft bricks from the elements, and in 1970s was often removed by enthusiastic renovators, resulting in the decay of the sought-after sandstock bricks.

Timber weatherboard (clapboard) was another commonly—used material throughout the 1800s. Though relatively cheap, available and easy to use, it is liable to rot or termite attack if it is not maintained diligently. An early surviving example (c.1850) is visible on this walk in 5-9 Queens Place.

CLASSICAL INFLUENCE

British architecture in the early years of the 19th century was heavily influenced by principles, styles and shapes originating in ancient Greek and Roman buildings. This influence is widely visible in many of Sydney's nineteenth century buildings, both in their proportions and in features such as Doric, Ionian and Corinthian columns and pilasters, and triangular pediments above doors and windows. The early colonial architecture was characterised by a restrained use of classical features – for example, plain Doric columns rather than the fluted Corinthian style with intricately carved capitals.

CHIMNEYS

Coal was first mentioned in the colony in 1797, and is widely available in the Sydney basin, including Balmain. Together with wood, coal was an important source of heat- hence the chimneys on colonial buildings. Chimneys of the 1840s were very plain, usually adorned by nothing more than a single narrow horizontal band (as in the Waterman's Cottage, Stop 3, and Cahermore, Stop 5): however, as the century progressed, they became more and more ornate (for example, Ewenton, Stop 9).

EDMUND BLACKET 1817-1883

Born in England, as a young man Blacket spent a year sketching and recording details of English mediaeval church architecture, before emigrating to New South Wales in 1842. He served as Colonial Architect from 1849-1854, when he resigned to work on buildings for the new University of Sydney. Later his son Cyril joined him to form Blacket and Son.

Not surprisingly, given his background, Blacket favoured the Gothic styles he had studied in his youth. Sydney abounds in his work: notable examples are the neogothic Quadrangle at Sydney University, St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, and the Colonial Regency style Bidura, 357 Glebe Point Road, Blacket's home.

For more detail on Blacket and a critical assessment of his work, see the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

VERANDAHS

Verandahs offered a simple and effective way to adapt English building styles to hotter, sunnier conditions. They could be set low on the ground, and paved with stone flags (as at Clontarf Cottage, Stop 13) or elevated to form an imposing podium for a grander building (Balmoral House, Stop 18). The corrugated iron roof kept the rooms cool and provided a sheltered outdoor space.

The verandah posts in early colonial buildings ranged from simple stop-chamfered timber, (Clontarf Cottage, Stop13) to stone or wooden Doric columns- easily produced with a lathe- as at Balmoral House, Stop 18. Flat cast iron posts were also used (6 Charles St, Stop 12).

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