

# EARLY SYDNEY AND THE MINT



The 3 wings of Sydney's General Hospital on Macquarie Street adorn the ridge over the town of Sydney in this watercolour 'Sydney in all its glory', from the sketchbook of Edward Charles Close entitled *Sea Voyage, Sydney, Illawarra, Newcastle, Morpeth*, c1817-1840. State Library of NSW PXA 1187



*A view of Sydney Cove, New South Wales*,  
Edward Dayes after Thomas Watling, artists;  
Francis Jukes, engraver, 1804. Beat Knoblauch  
Collection

## Early Sydney

By the mid-1810s, the colonial population of New South Wales was almost 13,000, made up of convicts, ex-convicts and their families, together with soldiers, government and military officials, and a few free settlers. Sydney Town was nestled between two ridges, one crowned with a military barracks and parade grounds, while on the opposite ridge was the new general hospital, still being built. Windmills ground grain from government farms and private crops, and trading, transport and whaling vessels navigated the harbour, passing Aboriginal women fishing in nawi (canoes). The town's paved streets lined with shops, taverns, cottages, villas and warehouses often looked familiar to newly arrived convicts, like something out of an English village. Red-coated soldiers manned the town's fortifications, guarding against local unrest and possible attack by Britain's enemies.



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*A view of Sydney Cove, New South Wales,*  
Edward Dayes after Thomas Watling, artists;  
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*Convict Barrack Sydney N.S. Wales,* attributed to  
G W Evans, c1820. State Library of New South  
Wales: PX\*D 41





PRISONERS' BARRACKS, Hyde Park.

*Printed, Published and Sold by J.G. Austin, 13, Hunter St.*

*Prisoners' Barracks, Hyde Park, Robert Russell, 1836. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia*



OLD HYDE PARK BARRACKS.

SYDNEY.

N.S.W.

588.

### Hyde Park Barracks

The primary significance of Hyde Park Barracks is its unique evidence of the convict period of Australian history, particularly in its demonstration of the accommodation and living conditions of male convicts in NSW 1819-1848. They also provide evidence of the conditions experienced by immigrant groups between 1848 and 1887. The site is important for its significant archaeological record, both excavated and unexcavated, relating to the convict and immigrant periods of occupation.

The barracks is one of the finest surviving works by Francis Greenway, the essence of his design persisting through various adaptations. They provide major evidence of Governor Macquarie's vision for Sydney and the relationship with the Domain, the Mint, St James' Church and Hyde Park demonstrate patterns of early 19th century planning in NSW (Historic Houses Trust 1990:5).

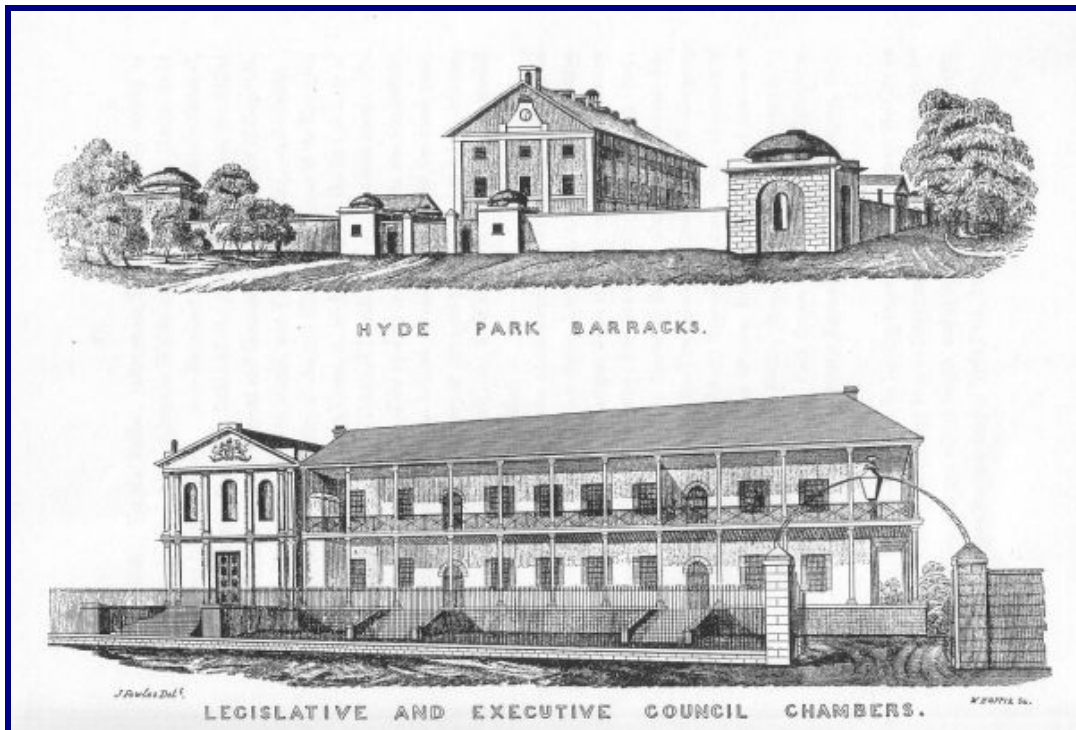
### The Mint

The Mint is of State significance as evidence of two important phases in New South Wales history - the development of the Colony under Governor Macquarie and its progress towards independence. The Rum Hospital, built between 1811 and 1816, is evidence of early colonial architecture and building techniques, much of the original fabric and form of the building has been retained. The buildings demonstrate the evolution and adaptation of architectural forms to Australia, including colonial army buildings. The Coining Factory is an early surviving example of a pre-fabricated cast-iron structure in New South Wales.

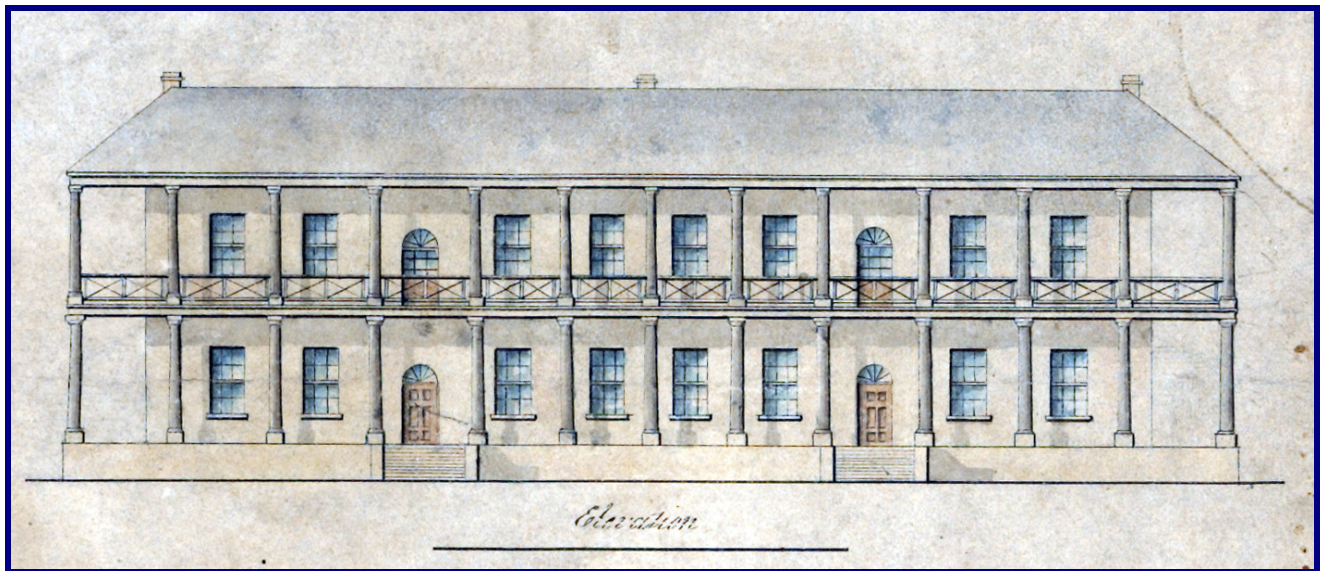
The site became the Royal Mint, Sydney Branch and began coining in 1855 as the first mint to be established in a British colony. The place is important as one of the three Australian mints at which the Commonwealth government minted the first Australian coins following the federation of the Australian colonies. The minting of Australian coins at the Sydney Mint commenced in 1916 and continued until the closure of the building as a mint in 1927. The Mint is uncommon evidence for manufacturing during the mid 19th century in central Sydney.

The site retained its importance as District Courts and Government offices, before becoming a museum. The site is also significant for the archaeological potential to reveal further information about the Rum Hospital and the minting process during the 19th and early 20th century.

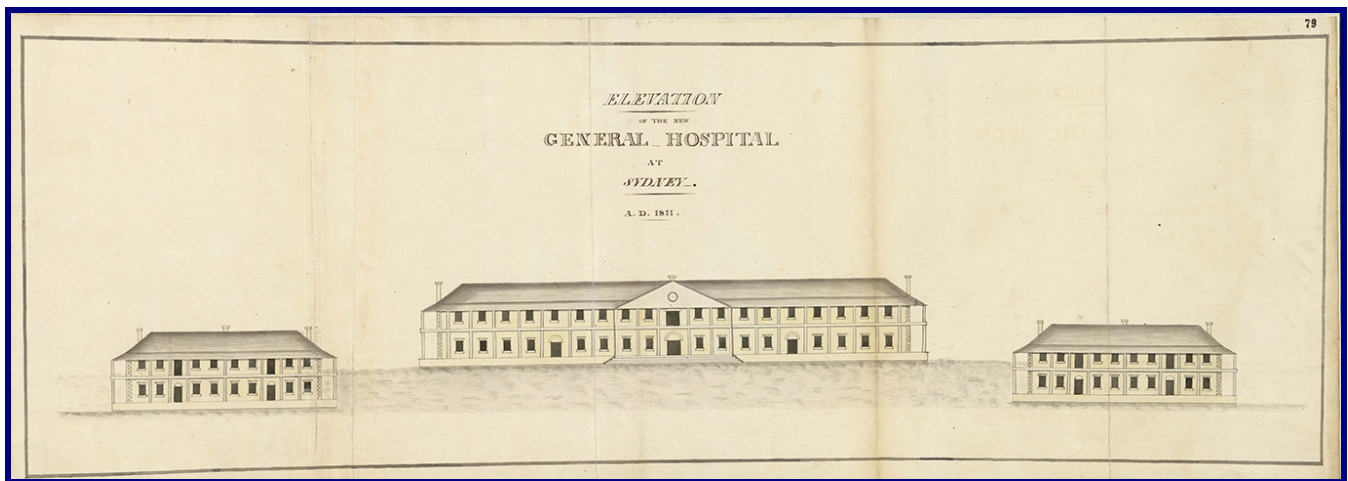
**Date significance updated:** 12 Jan 07



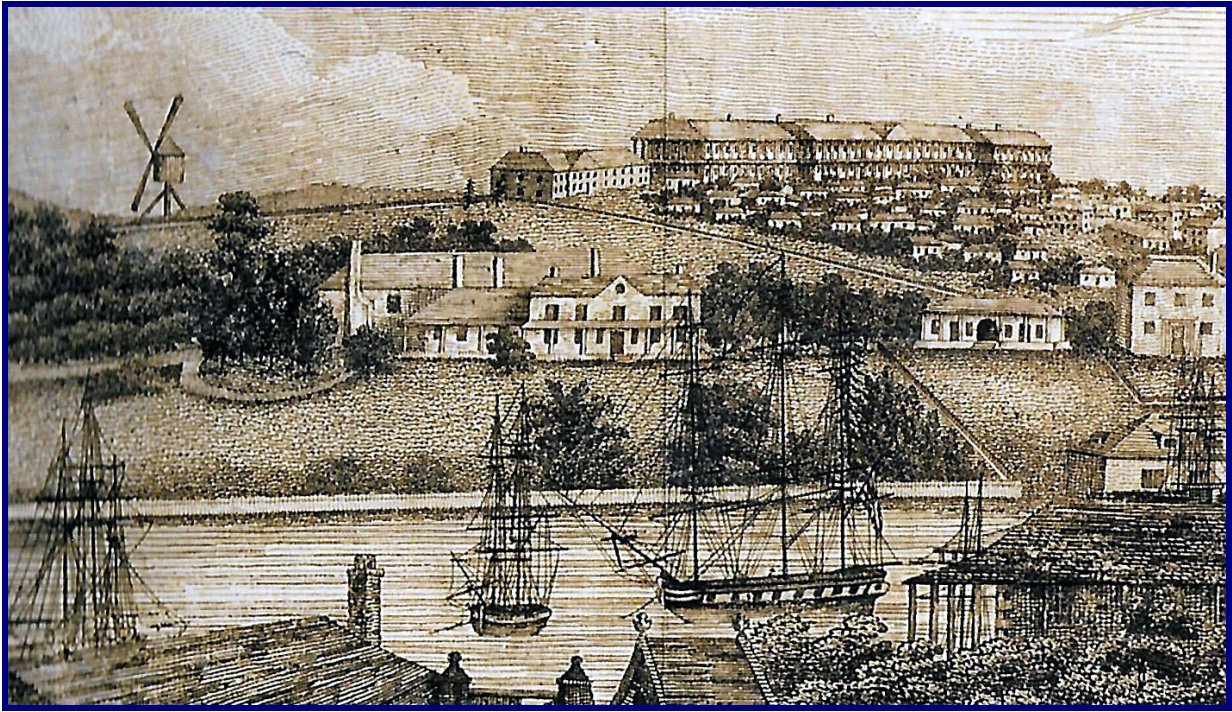




**Above:** The south wing of the General 'Rum' Hospital, illustrated in 1854, before conversion to the Royal Mint. Although the building was criticised for its lack of classical proportions, the double-storey columns and wide verandahs gave the building a grace and dignity of design that is still very much admired today. It is also Australia's best example of a type of military building that was once common throughout the British colonies. State Records NSW, plan 2342 (detail).









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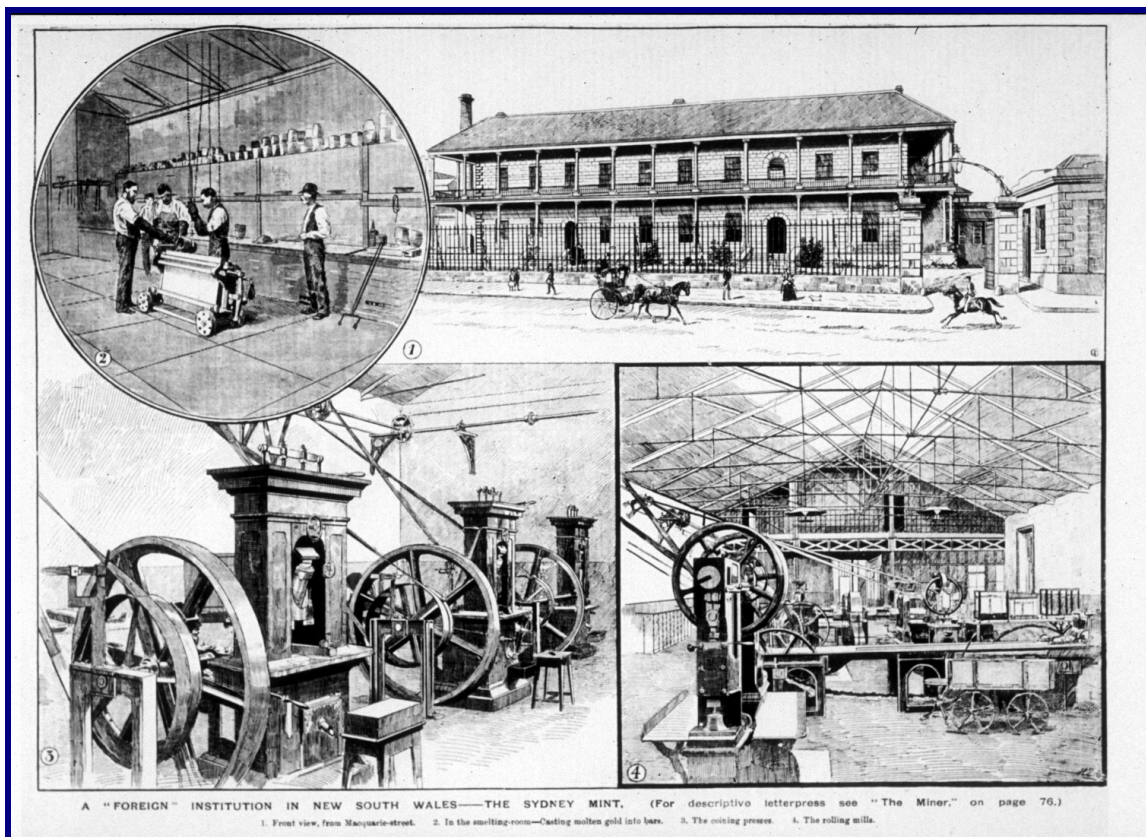
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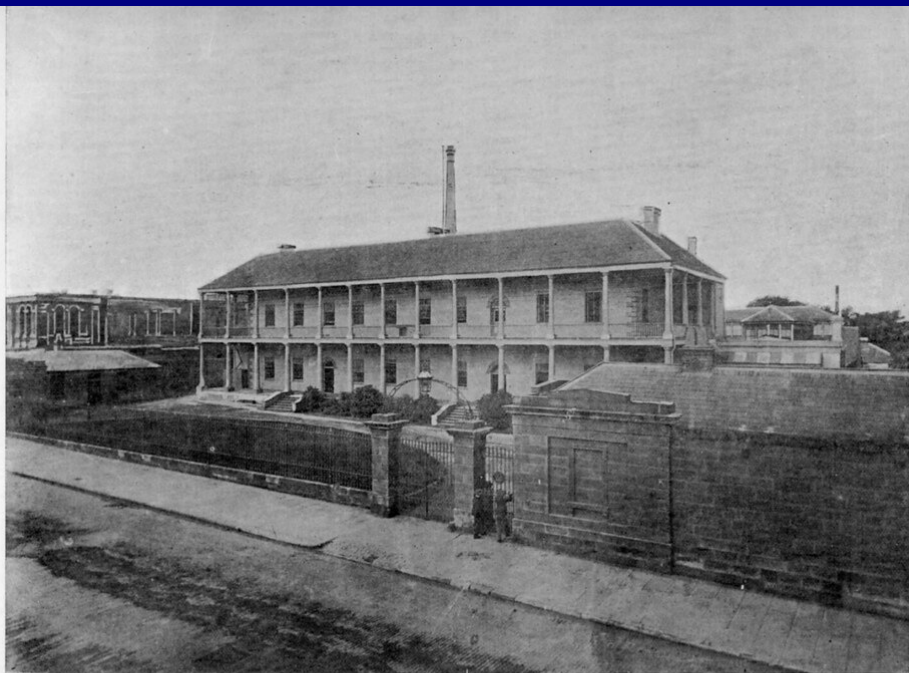
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*By favour of the New South Wales Government*

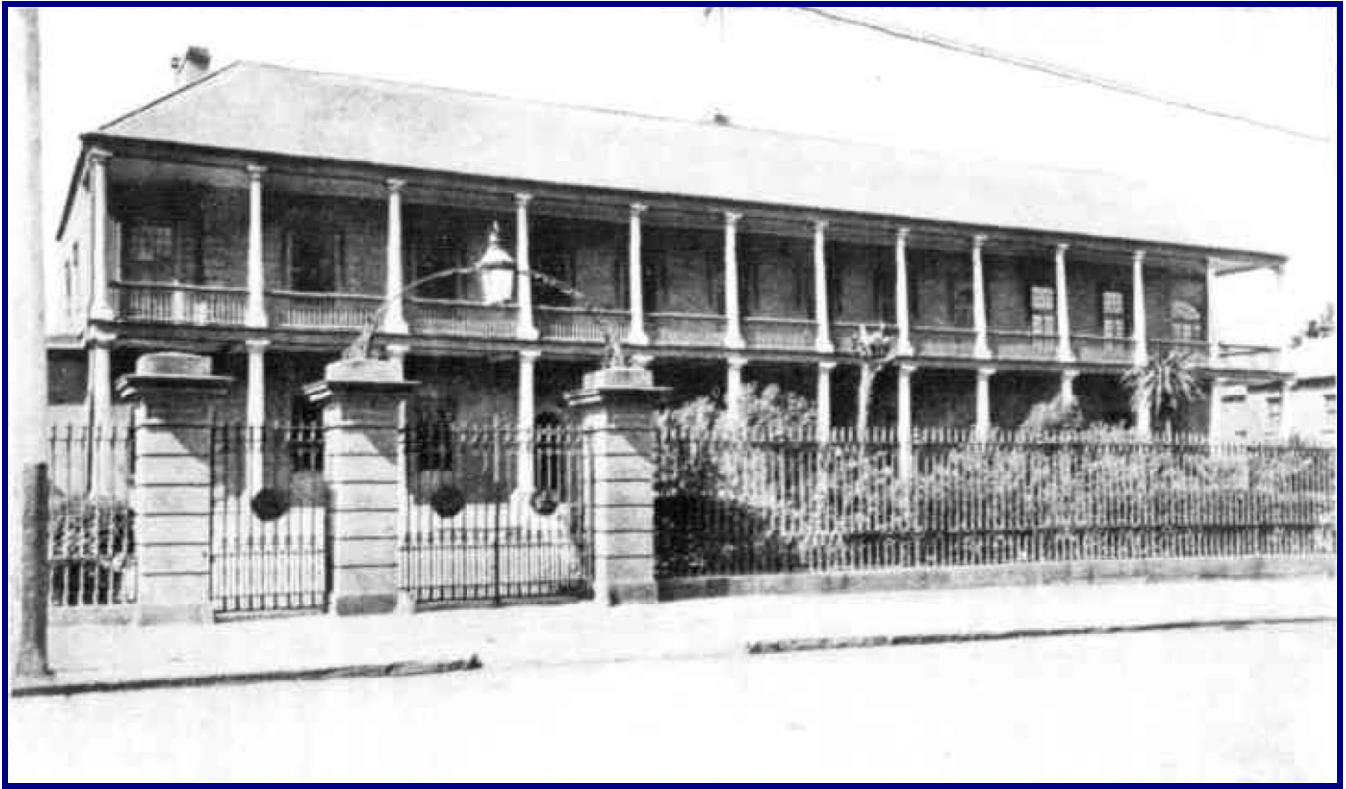
**THE MINT, Sydney.**—Macquarie Street is a great official and residential street of Sydney. Here are the Treasury buildings, the Colonial Secretary's office with its sumptuous furnishing—relic of the days of Sir Henry Parkes—a number of private residences and residences of medical men, the Australian and Warrigal Clubs, etc. On the other side is the Government House and a long stretch of the Botanical Gardens, and then come the series of Government Buildings which comprise the Public Lending Library, the Parliament Houses, the great structure of the Sydney

Hospital, the old-fashioned looking buildings of the Mint, and some Government Charitable Institutions. The exterior view of the Mint is not in any way striking, and within the coinage is confined to gold, the Imperial Mint carefully keeping the right to mint silver, on which there is a large profit, but the inside of the Mint nevertheless, with its delicate scales and chemical and metallurgical apparatus, is always a source of interest to visitors, who readily obtain orders to view it. The Mint is one of the regular "lions" of the city.

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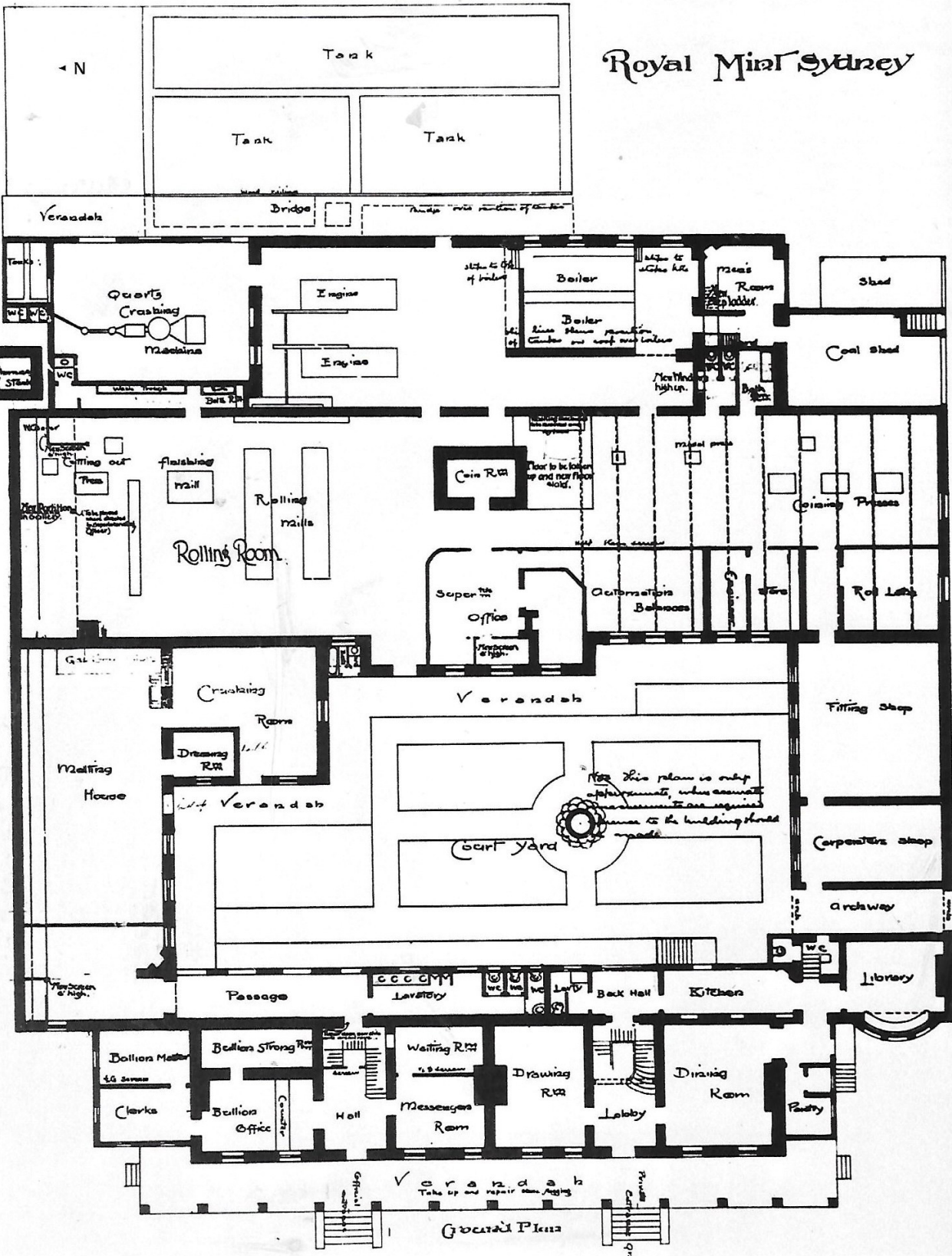


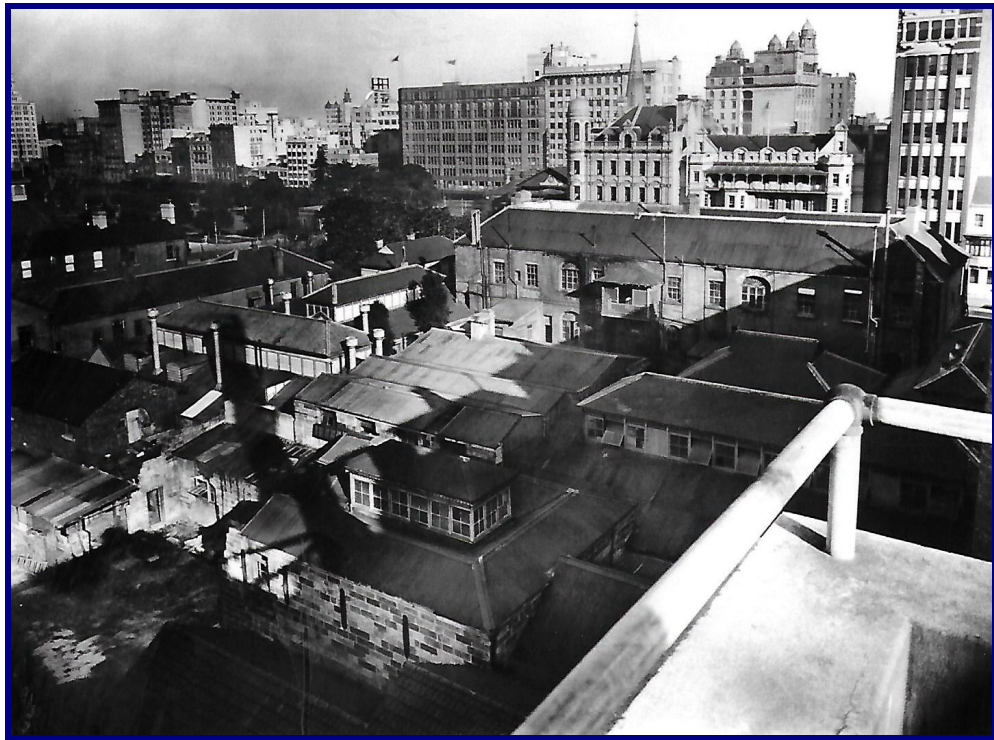






# Royal Mint Sydney









The Royal Australian Mint acknowledges the support of Dr A.W. Martin, Senior Fellow in History, Australian National University, Canberra, in providing reference material on Sir Henry Parkes.

Specifications (nominal measurements only)						
Alloy	Cupro-Nickel				Aluminium Bronze	
Denomination	5c	10c	20c	50c	\$1	\$2
Mass (g)	2.83	5.65	11.30	15.55	9.00	6.60
Diameter (mm)	19.53	23.72	28.65	31.65	25.12	20.62