

Heart of Cremorne Point

A walking tour of Cremorne Point

Distance: 2 Km
Approximate time: 3 hours
Grading: low to medium



Introduction

This walking tour will take you through the built environment of this unique foreshore landscape and includes fine examples of federation and inter-war houses, as well as apartment buildings and former boarding houses. Along the walk you will also experience the natural landscape and gain some insight into the history and development of the Point.

In about 1832/33, 86 acres of Cremorne Point were granted to a Scottish watchmaker, James Robertson. He built a house at the tip of the point today known as Robertson's Point. Prior to European occupation this foreshore land was inhabited by the Cammeraygal People and they called it Wulworra-Jeung (also spelled as Wulwarra-Jeung). In 1853 the land was sold to James Milson and three years later 22 acres were leased to J.R. Clarke and his partner Charles H. Woolcott, a former Town Clerk of the City of Sydney and resident of Ivycliff at Berrys Bay. They turned it into an amusement park called Cremorne Gardens, after a similar pleasure garden in London. The Gardens opened on Easter Monday, 24th March, 1856, with a display of fireworks. Other amusements, including merry-go-rounds, band music, dancing, archery, quoits and refreshments, were offered for 2 shillings admission charge which included the ferry fare from Circular Quay. The Gardens were not a success however, and closed after six years.

As with other foreshore land grants in Sydney, the narrow strip of land fronting the Harbour was set aside for public purposes. However, it had to survive some major threats of land grabs and industrialisation before it was officially gazetted in 1905 as a Reserve. From the 1870s and 1880s a number of land subdivisions were planned and coal mining proposed after two successful bores were sunk confirming a coal



seam. Fortunately none of this development occurred due to community protest and the Point remained relatively unscathed until the first residential subdivision in 1903.

Cremorne is a good example of residential housing and land-use history following the first subdivision of 1903. Most of the buildings in Cremorne Point date from the Federation housing period through to the 1920s and 1930s. There are many fine examples of houses and apartment buildings and, as Cremorne was also a tourist attraction, particularly in the 1920s, a number of large guesthouses were established on the Point.

The main streets included in the walk are Milson Road, Cremorne Road, Kareela Road, Bromley Avenue, Bannerman Street and Prior Avenue. Cremorne Point attracted a number of prominent Sydney architects, such as J. Burcham Clamp (who also lived at the Point at 'The Laurels'), Waterhouse (BJ) and Lake, Rutledge Louat, and Master builders J.A. Hall and J. Verrills. Along the walk you will also come across many interesting natural and historical features, such as: the MacCallum Pool, bush regeneration projects, an Aboriginal shelter, ferry terminus and wharf, Robertson's Point Lighthouse, site of the Cremorne Pleasure Gardens, and the Old Cremorne Wharf.

Tour commences at the northern end of Milson Rd on the western side at the end of Sirius St

Milson Road is named after James Milson, an early land grantee, as is Milsons Point. Most of the following examples of housing styles date to the period 1912-1920s.

No. 90 Milson Rd is a Federation Free style inter-war apartment block of four storeys. Note

the use of sandstone and the shingled bay window.

"[Federation] Free Style [c1890-c1915] architects were not unduly concerned with advanced technology; they sought to design honestly with traditional materials while avoiding being shackled by stylistic dogmas from the past... In Australia, the greatest volume of Federation Free Style work came from the office of the NSW Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon... By definition, a 'free style' is not unduly constrained by rules, and Federation Free Style is no exception. Designers did not hesitate to use asymmetrical planning and massing, Classical elements, if used at all, were frequently distorted, incomplete or placed in an unusual context... Touches of Art Nouveau were often introduced, especially in the lettering applied to the facades of buildings."

A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture by Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds (1994)

No. 86 Milson Rd otherwise known as **Mayfair Court**, is representative of the interwar flat development in Cremorne and a good example of the Federation Free Style using Federation details through to the Reserve elevation and the harbour aspect.

No. 82 Milson Rd is a good example of a conservative Federation Arts and Crafts design utilising traditional double-fronted and hipped and gabled forms, with restrained timber detailing to verandahs.

Federation Arts and Crafts style (1890-1915) was concerned with the integration of art into everyday life through the medium of craftsmanship. There is a strong flavour of morality, with stress on the truthful use of

materials and the honest expression of function. Arts and Crafts buildings are unpretentious and informal, evoking an atmosphere of comfortable familiarity.

"In Australia, Federation Arts and Crafts architecture exhibits qualities similar to those of the overseas models from which it drew inspiration... Designers aimed for informality in planning, massing, fenestration and landscaping. The roof is the dominant element, featuring gables (with barges or parapets and/or hips of medium to steep pitch and prominent eaves... Interiors frequently display timber panelling and sturdy ceiling beams. Touches of Art Nouveau are common, both externally and internally."

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Go down the Sirius St steps into Cremorne Reserve. Note that Sirius St's name is a reminder that Mosman Bay was known in the 19th Century as Greater Sirius Cove. Walk south through the Reserve

Aboriginal Shelter

Prior to the arrival of Europeans to this area, the Cammeraygal people enjoyed these wonderful foreshore areas with their sweeping panoramic views of Sydney Harbour and an abundance of fish and shellfish. They would have moved about in family groups and used rock shelters such as this one. They called the point Wulworra-Jeung. Note the signage as you walk along the path.

Nos. 48-50 Milson Rd

This was the site of the former **Ritz Hotel** a well-known guesthouse from the 1920s. The original building was an imposing inter-war apartment building designed in the Inter-War

Free Classical style and representative of the development of such buildings at Cremorne Point.



The Ritz was a dominant landmark on Cremorne Point and a popular private hotel for many years, c1950s. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PC 610)

"Throughout the Victorian and Federation periods, Academic Classical and Free Classical styles co-existed, which is to say that some buildings were more correctly classical than others. It is hardly surprising to find that a similar state of affairs prevailed during the Inter-War period. Eight Inter-War styles [including Inter-War Free Classical] have a basis in classical architecture. A negative definition of Inter-War Classical (c1915-c1940) could be 'anything that is derived from some kind of classical architecture but does not fit into any of the other seven categories'... A continuation of Victorian Free Classical and Federation Free Classical, the style suited designers unwilling to comply with the rigours of academic classicism... The style was ebullient and self-confident... The style was widely distributed [throughout Australia], covering the range from large urban buildings to smaller institutional and domestic buildings."

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No. 32 Milson Rd

In spite of the unsympathetic upper verandah addition, this is a fine example of Federation Arts and Crafts (or Federation Filigree). This is one of a number of similarly large and well designed houses along the Point built about 1914.

"The start of the Federation period marked a decline in the use of cast iron for structural and ornamental components of verandahs and a marked growth in the use of wood for these components. The change was triggered off by the developments in the domestic architecture of Britain and, especially, America... Timber posts, balustrades, brackets and valances had a chunkier quality than their counterparts in cast iron, but the 'filigree screen' effect could still be obtained, especially when lattice made of light wooden laths was used together with the more substantial turned or sawn components... It is not by chance that the finest examples of Federation Filigree (c1890 - c1915) domestic architecture are to be found in the hot, humid, coastal areas of Queensland..."

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Cremorne Reserve showing garden plots maintained by residents, c1912. Note the houses in Milson Rd fronting the reserve. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 422)

No. 26 Milson Rd

Galada is a substantial and typical Federation Arts and Crafts style residence designed by Edwin Orchard and built by James Verrills. *Galada* was purchased by Elsie Gale in 1915 who commissioned Edwin Orchard to design a house for her and her new husband. Orchard's work was notable in northern harbour suburbs, especially at Clifton Gardens. Verrills was a well known local builder who lived in Neutral Bay. The estimated cost of the house in 1915 was £1100. Note the sandstone retaining wall - a particular feature of the Point.

Maccallum Pool

From the 1920s, North Sydney Council and residents worked to beautify the pool site which had fallen into neglect. In 1930, the Council took over the bathing pool and renamed it *Maccallum Pool* in recognition of the valuable work carried out there by Mr. Maccallum.



Maccallum Pool was a popular destination for Cremorne Point locals, 1929. (North Sydney Heritage Centre (PF 60)

"Maccallum Pool... was started by a first Olympic swimmer. his name was F.C.V. Lane, known as Fred Lane, and he lived at number 17 Milson Road... He stated the rock pool rocks [came from] round about. It sort of enlarged over the years. Then Mr. Lane sold his house and went

over to Cremorne Road and Mr. Maccallum took over the pool and he was a delightful old gentleman... He enlarged the pool and did a lot of work around [it]. I used to make badges for him which we sold for, I think it was five shillings for a year and it was only ever local people who swam in the pool... C.B.P. - Cremorne Bathing Pool - it was a navy blue cloth [badge] in the shape of a shield with C.B.P. across it in red." (Oral History interview with Josephine Holm)

No. 18 Milson Rd

Woolooware is an unusual and imposing Federation Arts and Crafts style house with rusticated sandstone and terracotta tiled gable roof.

No. 16 Milson Rd is a two-storey Federation Queen Anne style building with high sandstone undercroft area featuring a series of arches with a hipped roof. Verandah enclosures detract from original appearance.

"In the 1870s, Richard Norman Shaw, Britain's most influential architect of the late Victorian era, popularised a style of urban architecture which revived some features of English architecture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, including the fourteen-year period when Queen Anne reigned... The influences of English and Am distinctively Australian features, may be seen in the Federation Queen Anne style (c1890 - c1915) [which] was the dominant style in Australian domestic architecture during the decades immediately before and after 1900... Federation Queen Anne houses often have simple plan shapes with corridor running from the front door past living rooms and bedrooms to the kitchen, bathroom and laundry at the rear. Usually one room at the front projects forward towards the street and a verandah extends across the remainder of the frontage. Simplicity is deliberately avoided,

however, in three dimensions: roofs are generally complex, with prominently featured subsidiary gables, tall chimneys, and picturesque towers with conical or pyramidal roofs... Gable ends, too, were elaborated with timber and stucco ornaments. Leadlight windows displayed coloured glass in flowing patterns which echoed the free curves found in nature... [Federation Queen Anne was] generally a domestic style: picturesque, asymmetrical form... typically sited in picturesque gardens, often with a variety of exotic plants... Other qualities include: elaborate terracotta ridge and gable end accessories [and a] growing use of Australian flora and fauna as decorative motifs."

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No. 14 Milson Rd, a mix of Federation Bungalow and Federation Queen Anne.

"The Federation Bungalow style (c1890- c1915) can be regarded as a transition between the Federation Queen Anne and the Inter-War California Bungalow styles: it cast off the picturesque complexities of the former and did not display its structural carpentry as much as the latter. Chronologically, the style appears late in the Federation period and flows on into the Inter-War period... while Federation bungalows in this country often vary quite widely from one another in appearance, the definitive examples of the style share the qualities of homely simplicity and robust honesty..." Broad characteristics: ground-hugging, generally single-storey, but sometimes with rooms in roof-space. Unpretentious, homely quality and use of natural materials honestly expressed."

A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture by Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds

Continue to the end of rd

Note the original Tram Shed and Cremorne Wharf. **Cremorne Wharf tramline** opened on 18 December 1911 from Cremorne Junction with services through to the Spit, or connecting with other services along Military Road. The line was notable for hosting the first use of 'R' class corridor trams on the north shore in September 1934. The line was closed and service replaced by buses from April 1956. The roadway, extending from the intersection of Cremorne and Milson Roads, sloping downwards and terminating at the entrance to the Ferry Wharf was formed from a vertical cutting of the sandstone along the north side and widen considerably towards the lower end.

Take steps to Reserve



Cremorne Point Reserve, 1937. Photograph by Robin Cale. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 401)

Cremorne Point Reserve once housed the Cremorne Pleasure Gardens. Take time to read the interpretive sign along the pathway above the ferry wharf.

Walk to the end of the Point to view the Robertson's Point Lighthouse

Return and follow path along eastern section of the Reserve

No. 8 Wulworra Ave. Montana Flats is an interesting Federation Freestyle flat building with a central tower and parapet, a prominent feature of the Point. Inter-War Free Classical style. Note the contrasting style of the adjacent house with which it is now interconnected.

Walk through public walkway after Montana Flats to Cremorne Rd

Cremorne Road is named after the Cremorne Pleasure Gardens which was located at the Point

No. 1 Cremorne Rd,

Lang Warren Flats is a three-storey roughcast rendered brick flat building with hipped gable roof of slate tiles. Designed in the Federation Free Classical Style/Federation Arts and Crafts Style. This is a fine and attractive early 20th century example of the combination of these two styles resulting in a dignified and homely apartment building.

"The category of Federation Free Classical (c1890-c1915) includes – as any 'free' style must – a considerable variety of architectural expressions and consequently a range of attitudes and aims on the part of the designers of buildings in this style."

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No. 9 Cremorne Rd.

A particularly fine Arts and Crafts style residence. Such buildings provided important and influential benchmarks for other buildings at this period in Sydney residential architecture. Note the tall chimneys and the asymmetrical low swept roof form.

No. 27 Cremorne Rd

A large two-storey Federation Arts and Crafts style house with a slate roof. Note that the semicircular arches and rusticated sandstone base reflects an American Romanesque influence.

Turn down the public walkway to the Reserve between Nos. 31 and 33

Cremorne Rd

Lex and Ruby Graham Gardens

Take time out in the magnificent garden created lovingly over many years by Lex and Ruby Graham, local residents.

"Each morning Lex jogged around the Reserve, and summer and winter swam in the rock pool in the bay. One particular morning he found an elephant ear bulb floating past as he swam. He plucked it out of the water and planted it between the roots of a large coral tree growing alongside the edge of the path leading down to the water. After some weeks, what a surprise it was to see the bulb had started to show shoots coming from it. Some time later, after a storm, a large limb of the coral tree had fallen across the bulb. However, we cleared it away and put soil between the roots of the tree and started to put other bits and pieces of cuttings in and that is how the garden took off in 1959."

from: "A bush garden: the story of the garden on Cremorne Point Reserve" by Ruby Graham

Nos. 45-55 Cremorne Rd

Good examples of substantial Federation houses of the Arts and Crafts style.

Green Street may have been named after Henry Green, a former Mayor of North Sydney and builder; Green Park is named in his honour

No. 5 Green St

The Laurels

The original southern house is a two-storeyed asymmetrical design, incorporating a projecting curved verandah, oriel window and attic. The summerhouse is of timber-framed construction with lattice infill with a terracotta-shingled roof crowned by an elaborately moulded terracotta finial. The building's sandstone base forms an integral part of the boundary retaining wall. This building is designed in Federation Arts and Crafts style.

The Laurels was the home of architect J. Burcham Clamp and is named after the laurel trees planted in the grounds. J Burcham Clamp's daughter, Vera, first went to school at Arden College in Bannerman Street. Note to the right, the Old Cremorne Wharf as remembered by Vera, J. Burcham Clamp's daughter:

"Alongside the wharf was a boatshed and sweet shop owned by a Portuguese and his Italian wife where we children spent our pocket money on lollies. It was unbelievable what we could buy for a sixpence."

Kareela Road

According to Aboriginal Place Names 'Kareela' refers to the south wind.

No. 7 Kareela Rd

A large Federation Queen Anne Style residence prominently sited on the ridge above the Reserve. It features two-level verandahs and an octagonal corner tower.

No. 15 Kareela Rd

Lilienfels is a distinctive Federation style house showing Queen Anne influences. This building is designed in the Federation Filigree/Federation Queen Anne style.

No. 47 Kareela Rd

An interesting Inter-war Functionalist style which is a competent example of its type providing good contrasts with the surrounding earlier houses (c1938). Residences of this style are rare in this area.

Inter-War Functionalist style (c1915-c1940). Historians of the European brand of modern architecture which during the 1930s acquired the label 'International style' have often created the impression that this style was an extraordinarily monolithic phenomenon practised by modern architects who all had precisely the same goal in sight... even an expert would be hard pressed to look at a photograph of a 'white box on stilts' of the 1920s and 1930s and identify the country in which the building was erected... The best Australian essays in the Inter-War Functionalist style were by young architects who in the depression years of the early 1930s had made pilgrimages to Europe, the fountainhead of modernism. Back home, they were able to design reasonably convincing buildings in the new style. Broad characteristics: radical, progressive image, appealing to dynamic commercial organisations and nonconformist individuals. Simple geometric shapes, light colours, large glass areas. Fenestration often in horizontal bands, giving 'streamlined' effect." (Sydney commercial example: Australian Glass Manufacturers at Waterloo and King George V Hospital at Camperdown)

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No. 49 Kareela Rd

A Federation Arts and Crafts style house.

No. 53 Kareela Rd

An interesting version of a Federation Arts and Crafts style house. Note the semi-circular bay below a projecting gable, central verandah with timber posts and balustrade plus a diagonally projecting gabled bay with single central semi-circular arched window. The building sits on a rusticated sandstone ashlar foundation course.

No. 63 Kareela Road

Coomera is a two-storey brick house with hipped and gabled slate roof with decorative terracotta ridge capping. An exceptionally well presented Federation Queen Anne Style.

Bromley Avenue

Nos 2, 4, 6 & 5 Bromley Avenue are good examples of Federation Arts and Crafts style.

No. 4 is called **Roslyn** and No. 5 is

Bangowlan. *Roslyn* is an early example of this style built in about 1905 (one of the first after the 1903 subdivision). The roof is of Marseille patterned tile with ornate ridge capping.

Bangowlan was designed by architect Rutledge Louat and built by master builder A. Hall in about 1913. A fine example of a picturesque Federation Arts and Crafts gentleman's residence with an excellent relationship to the harbour, as most of the buildings well designed on the Point are. It was built for Norman R. Smith. The grounds originally included a tennis court, gardens and a large flagpole. The house was photographed for the December 1914 issue of the journal *Building*.

Return up steps to Hodgson Ave. Continue along Hodgson Ave past the site of one of the Cremorne coal bores. Cross Milson Rd and go north along Murdoch St. Enter the public walkway

Hodgson Avenue is mostly likely named for T.W. Hodgson, Alderman of the first amalgamated North Sydney Council of 1890 and Mayor 1901-1903.

View **Nos. 7-27 Bannerman St** which were all built to provide views to the south and back onto Bannerman Street. No 15 Bannerman Street was known as **Arden Cottage** and was associated with the *Arden School* at No 17 Bogota Avenue which J. Burcham Clamp's daughter, Vera, attended.

Note the street names of famous cricketers: Charles **Bannerman**, test team member between 1878 & 1888; William L **Murdoch**, test team member between 1878 & 1890. His first class cricketing career spanned the years 1875 to 1904. Harry **Boyle**, a test member of Australia's cricket team between 1878 & 1890. Francis Adams **Iredale** was a noted cricketer of the North Sydney District Cricket Club. He toured England for Australia in 1896 and 1899; his first class cricket career spanned the years 1888 to 1901.

Go south across the pocket park at the end of Prior Ave and view the group of heritage-listed bungalows on the west side of Prior Ave

Nos. 2-6 Prior Ave

These are good examples of single storey Inter-War California Bungalow style with terracotta tiled gable roof. Broad characteristics of this style include a homely, earthy character, often embracing natural materials and finishes.

As the twentieth century progressed, Australia was increasingly influenced by the many aspects of American life and popular culture which were promoted by the movies, radio, gramophone records and magazines...in Australia, by the early 1920s, speculative builders had embraced

the Inter-War California Bungalow (c1915 - c1940) idiom, and it reigned supreme in the suburbs until the Great Crash of 1929. During the 1920s the virtually standardised Australian version of the style was usually built in brick rather than in timber, and it featured a range of chunky carpentry details applied to houses which in other respects were not greatly different from those of the preceding decade."

[A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture](#) by Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds (1994)

No. 136 Milson Rd

An excellent example of the Arts and Crafts house style. This house is part of a collection of well-designed houses that characterise the Point and showcase their styles.

No. 138 Milson Rd

Another example of Arts and Crafts style. With these houses, notice the features of the gable roof, timber shingles, the typical bay windows and attic rooms.

Our Heart of Cremorne Point walking tour ends here after 138 Milson Rd.

These walking tour notes were compiled by the Council Historian and Conservation Planner. For further information contact the North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library. Ph: 99368400