HUNT FOR HERALDRY

HERALDRY

has been important since the 12th century as a means of visual identification. It was used on shields and banners by medieval knights and embroidered on garments which became known as coats of arms. By the 15th century, the display of armorial bearings had become popular as symbols of identity and decoration for individuals, organizations, corporations, cities, the Church and for guilds.

Many of Sydney's buildings are adorned with coats of arms denoting the authority of the occupant as an administrator in federal, state or local government. In celebration of the centenary of the granting of arms to the City of Sydney, we hope you enjoy 'hunting' for heraldry throughout the city.
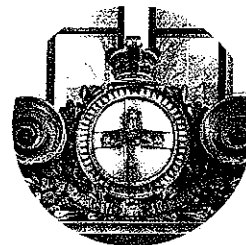
1   CUSTOMS HOUSE

Colonial architect James Barnet's extension to Sydney's Customs House in 1887 included the large carved sandstone Royal arms of the United Kingdom above the main entrance, and the NSW State badge in the triangular pediment below. The portrait head of Queen Victoria on the front façade further reinforces the authority of the colonial government.

2 DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

James Barnet collaborated on the design for a ship's ensign required to identify ships from the port of Sydney. The design would become the NSW State badge, adopted in 1876. Above the Loftus Street entrance, the badge is surmounted by a crown and surrounded by waratahs overlaid with a ribbon inscribed 'Orta Recens Quam Pura Nites' (Newly risen, how brightly you shine') which became the State's motto.
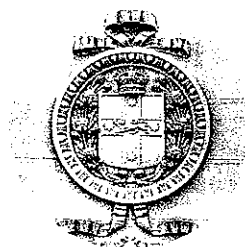
3 CHIEF SECRETARY'S BUILDING

The NSW State badge displayed below the Royal arms on the Public Entrance on Bridge Street is encircled by waratahs. This flower was adopted as the State's floral emblem in 1962. Giovanni Fontana's allegorical statue in the foyer displays the NSW badge on her sleeve. The Royal arms above the Macquarie Street entrance convey the importance of the position of the colonial secretary in colonial NSW.

4 TREASURY BUILDING

Another version of the State badge can be found just around the corner on the Macquarie Street façade of the former Treasury Building. It features the lion passant on a St George's Cross with an eight-pointed star at each extremity of the cross. The carving, completed in 1889, is surmounted by a crown, encircled by waratahs and suspended from a ribbon.

5 PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Following the passing of the State Arms, Symbols and Emblems Act 2004, the NSW Parliament removed the Royal arms from the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council Chambers and replaced them with new cast bronze and painted NSW coats of arms.

Please consult authorities at Parliament House for access to their coats of arms.

6 LAW COURTS, QUEENS SQUARE

The foyer of the Law Courts Building is dominated by a large Royal coat of arms (1974) but in the courtrooms, the Federal Court of Australia uses the Australian coat of arms while the Supreme Court of NSW has recently replaced the Royal arms in its courtrooms with the NSW State coat of arms, as a consequence of the 2004 legislation.

Please consult authorities at the Law Courts in respect of access beyond the foyer.

7 KING STREET COURTS

Across the road at the King Street Courts, a carved sandstone Royal arms adorns the St James Road entrance. Some of the courtrooms have fine examples of coats of arms, including some by colonial woodcarver, James Cunningham.

* *Please consult authorities at the King Street Courts regarding access inside the building.*
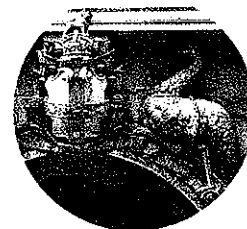
8 COMMONWEALTH BANK

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia at 5-17 Martin Place displays a large bronze Australian coat of arms above its entrance. These arms were granted by King George V in 1912 and feature the kangaroo and emu as supporters and a shield depicting the badges of the six Australian states, symbolizing Federation in 1901.

9 GENERAL POST OFFICE

James Barnet's grand extension to the Post Office has, like his other major buildings on this walking tour, the Royal arms prominently displayed above the main entrance. Around the corner on the George Street façade is an interesting carving which combines elements of the Royal arms, the official badge of NSW and the unofficial 'Advance Australia' arms.
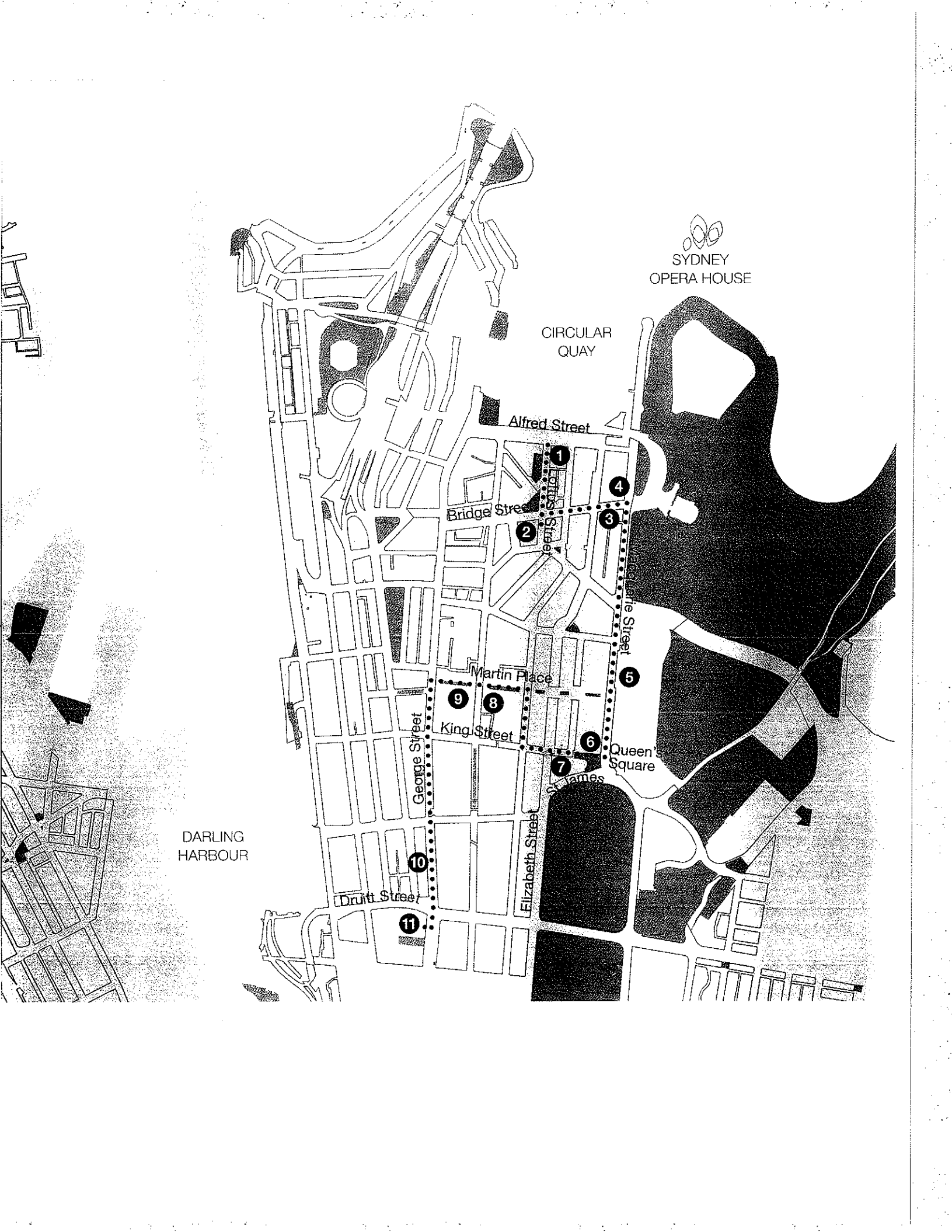
10 QUEEN VICTORIA BUILDING

Built by the Municipal Council of Sydney as the Queen Victoria Markets to honour the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, this building incorporates the 'Advance Australia' arms (widely used before the granting of Australia's first official arms in 1908) in a stained glass window on the York Street façade and an interpretation of Council's arms opposite, installed in 1898.

11 SYDNEY TOWN HALL

The carved coat of arms of the City of Sydney above the entrance on the main façade dates from the mid 1870s. Those above the side entrances were carved a decade later, but both follow the design attributed to council draughtsman, Monsieur de St Remy. Elements of his design were incorporated into the final version which was endorsed by the College of Arms in London in 1908.

SYDNEY
OPERA HOUSE

CIRCULAR
QUAY

Alfred Street

Lofts Street

Bridge Street

Macquarie Street

Martin Place

King Street

George Street

Elizabeth Street

St James

Queen's
Square

DARLING
HARBOUR

Druitt Street

1 CUSTOMS HOUSE
31 Alfred Street, Circular Quay

2 DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
Cnr Bridge and Loftus Streets, Sydney

3 CHIEF SECRETARY'S BUILDING
Cnr Bridge and Macquarie Streets, Sydney

4 TREASURY BUILDING
117–119 Macquarie Street, Sydney

5 PARLIAMENT HOUSE
Macquarie Street, Sydney

6 LAW COURTS
Queen's Square, Sydney

7 KINGS COURT
Cnr of King Street and St James Road

8 COMMONWEALTH BANK
5–17 Martin Place, Sydney

9 GENERAL POST OFFICE
No 1 Martin Place, Sydney

10 QUEEN VICTORIA BUILDING
455 George Street, Sydney

11 SYDNEY TOWN HALL
483 George Street, Sydney

CUSTOMS
HOUSE

CITY OF SYDNEY
city of villages

Further information may be found at the following links:
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/history
http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au
http://www.heraldryaustralia.org

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