

WAVERLEY COUNCIL

42 MILES OF STREETS: WAVERLEY IN 1887

A Waverley Library Local History Fact Sheet



Images from top:

Grocery store, corner of Birrell and Blenheim Streets, Bondi Junction, c1900.

Bondi Junction, Oxford Street. Intersection of Bronte Road and Grosvenor Street, 1884.

What did Waverley look like in 1887? An evocative description of Waverley was written almost 30 years after the Council was incorporated, and just on the verge of the centenary of NSW. Published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 December, 1887 it reads:

The sanitary conditions of the borough is [are] very good, the ocean breezes sweeping over it doubtless contributing in no small degree to its healthiness and purity. The death rate is unusually low; the percentage last month was only 0.03 of the population.

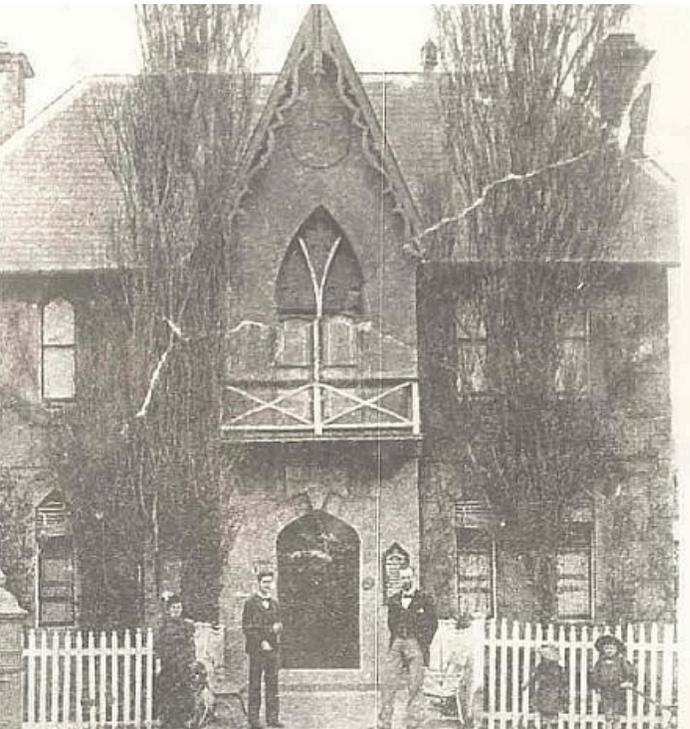
"The municipality, which has an area of 2,111 acres, is divided into four wards, viz., Bondi Ward, Waverley Award, Nelson Ward and Lawson Ward. At the present there is no system of sewerage or drainage in the borough, excepting merely the surface drainage; but as soon as the main Bondi sewer is completed the drains will be connected with it. All the inhabited portions of the district are being reticulated with pipes for the supply of Nepean water.

The total length of the streets is only 42 miles. All the main thoroughfares are metalled, as well as many of the smaller ones. The footpaths in the more populated parts are kerbed and guttered, and a very large amount of asphaltting has been done. The streets are nearly all aligned and proclaimed, but the alignment shows that many encroachments exist. There is an exceedingly large proportion of land unoccupied, and much work in the way of road-making etc. remains to be done in the future.



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Images from top:

Bondi Beach, 1887.

Waverley's first Council
Chambers, build 1861.

The council find employment for 50 men in the work of general repairs to the roads and road-making. The rates of payment are: - Ordinary labourers 7/6 per day; carters, providing horses and carts, 12/6 per day, for the usual 48 hours per week. There are 186 public gaslights in the borough, the cost of each lamp being £5/15/- per annum.

The accommodation provided by the council chambers is totally insufficient; but this is not a matter for surprise when it is remembered that they building is the oldest municipal building in the colony. It is prettily situated on the road leading to Bondi, and has a somewhat quaint appearance. The business of the municipality has, however, entirely outgrown the capacity of the building, and plans have been prepared for one more suitable, containing, in addition to the usual offices and council chamber, a large hall for public meetings etc. The site proposed for the building is in Carrington Road, near Charing Cross, which will

certainly be a more convenient place for the majority of ratepayers.

The most important work undertaken by the Council has been chiefly in the formation of many good roads, but they have also laid out the Waverley Cemetery, and constructed two sea baths. The arrangements for extinguishing fire are ample, a staff at the location station being always in readiness in cases of emergency. Water plugs are placed at intervals in various streets throughout the borough.

Waverley is exceedingly well off in regard to public reserves. Waverley Park consists of 27 acres; Bondi Park, 25 acres; Bronte Park, 14 acres; Varna Park, 3 acres, Dickson Park, 2 acres; Macpherson Park, 2 roods 30¼ perches; and Simpson Park, 1 rood 33¼ perches. The water frontage is also extensive, consisting of the coastline from the Lighthouse reserve to Little Coogee. The total number of houses in the borough is 1,510 and the number of ratepayers is 1,758.