

Beginnings 1

Terra Australis – To build a house – An early setback – Clay is discovered – Brickfield Hill – Hard labour – The first brick carters – New farming settlements – Government House – A singular force – Private enterprise – Bloodworth's later career



First interview with the native women at Port Jackson, 29 January 1788. The pinnace stands offshore while those in the longboat meet the Aboriginal women for the first time. Captain Hunter wrote: 'They laughed immoderately, although trembling at the same time, through an idea of danger.' Watercolour by William Bradley from Bradley's 'A Voyage to New South Wales'. State Library of New South Wales

TERRA AUSTRALIS

Sydney was just ten days old on 6 February 1788 when the female convicts on the First Fleet set foot ashore. Contingents of marines and the 537 male prisoners were already hard at work, with tasks assigned and gangs organised by their convict overseers. There was much to be done in the fledgling colony of New South Wales.

Any relief those 180 women may have had at standing on solid ground after a voyage of 12 months was short-lived, for in the sweltering heat of that summer evening a spectacular thunderstorm erupted. Lightning knocked a sentry to the ground, temporarily blinding him. Valuable livestock were

lost including a pig belonging to the lieutenant governor, two of the colony's lambs, and six sheep, one of which was killed by a falling tree. The storm no doubt provided an unexpected supplement of fresh meat. It may have been that from such beginnings grew a worthy Australian tradition, the barbecue.

Terrified, many of the newly arrived Europeans took refuge in their tents or prayed by their bunks as the storm raged. The historian and writer Tim Flannery offers some interesting and amusing speculative insight. 'With authority blinded or cowering under cover, the lower orders seized the moment. The

1 Beginnings

sailors of the *Lady Penrhyn* obtained a double ration of rum to celebrate the offloading of the women convicts, and fortified with the ardent spirit they soon found amusement ...¹ What followed turned into a free-for-all in which the consumption of liquor, fighting and fornicating seem to have been the general rule.

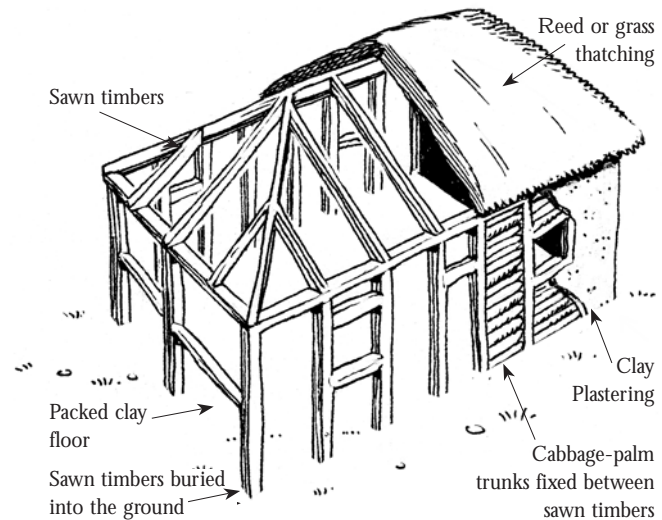
The shenanigans of this drunken bunch of seafarers and their willing accomplices must have vexed Governor Arthur Phillip. Yet as a naval officer familiar with the riotous behaviour of men allowed shore leave after months cooped up on ships, he would have taken such things in his stride.

Just how much of this would have been apparent to the Aboriginal people of the Eora clan is anyone's guess. Phillip was anxious to establish good relations with the native inhabitants and avoid incidents that might affect the 1,500 Eora who lived in the area between Botany Bay and Broken Bay. There were also the inhabitants of Sydney's northern shores to consider, people who called themselves Cadigaleans, Cadi being their name for Sydney harbour, and galean meaning 'the people of'.²

TO BUILD A HOUSE

The task of establishing what was, in reality, a vast open prison was immense. Tents were brought ashore to accommodate convicts, the soldiery, officers, stores, and even latrines. Offering little protection against the heavy downpours, canvas was no substitute for more permanent structures. Timber – abundant and readily available – was the first choice of building material. A sawpit had been commenced some weeks earlier at Botany Bay, the initial landing site some miles further down the coast. This location was soon abandoned in favour of Port Jackson with its plentiful supplies of fresh water. Dismantled and re-erected at Sydney Cove it allowed the carpenters (16 recruited from the ships and 12 from the convicts) to start work on timber

milling. In a short space of time they had built officers' quarters, convict barracks and storehouses for the colony's meagre supplies.



Cabbage palm hut, typical of those built in the early months of 1788. After Morton Herman

Not much to look at, the assortment of shacks dotted around the cove would have to suffice. Within weeks, however, most of the buildings were coming apart at the seams due to the warping, twisting, and rotting of the local wood used to build the crude wattle and daub hovels.³ A pathetic sight they must have been. Remarked David Collins, judge-advocate and secretary to the colony: 'slight and temporary; every shower of rain washed a portion of the clay from between the interstices of the cabbage-tree their covering was never tight; their size was small and inconvenient.'⁴

Governor Phillip, a man of progressive views, envisaged durable buildings of quality, and was anxious that neither time nor labour should be further wasted upon such temporary measures.⁵ Mindful of the tottering condition of so many

1. T. Flannery, *The Birth of Sydney*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1999, pp. 1–2.

2. *Ibid.* p. 8.

3. This building practice, widespread throughout England since medieval times, involved the application of an external skin of clay over a wooden frame.

4. D. Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales [Volume 1]: With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners etc of the Native Inhabitants of that Country. To Which are Added, Some Particulars of New Zealand: Compiled by Permission, From the Mss. of Lieutenant-Governor King, (T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies 1798) vol. 1, pp. 19, 71.*

5. O.S. Pavlou, *The History of Bricks and Brick Making in New South Wales, 1788–1975*, Thesis, Faculty of Architecture, UNSW, Sydney, Ch. 2, p. 57.



Above: Cockle Bay circa 1819, the location of the present Darling Harbour. Watercolour by J. Taylor. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

temporary buildings, he never put aside the belief that in time the place would become a civilised town built in brick.

AN EARLY SETBACK

Phillip had anticipated the adoption of brick as a construction material in the planning of the first settlement. Records show that the cargo of the transport, *Scarborough*, included 5,000 bricks, relatively few in number, but presumably enough to construct solid foundations for a select number of government buildings.⁶ Wooden boxes needed to hand mould wet clay to make bricks had also been stowed along with 5,448 squares of crown glass. Surprisingly, every form of building tool was lacking. Phillip's first request to London for stores listed house-axes, carpenter's axes, pitsaws, set-saws and crosscut saws, files, augers, nails, paint, lead and more besides. Indeed the expedition had been so badly equipped that spades were used for frying pans in those first few years of scarcity.⁷

There were more disappointments. Despite having familiarised himself with the trade and occupation

of each of the fleet's 700 convicts, Phillip could find only one man skilled in the craft of making bricks. This was James Bloodworth, a London bricklayer and builder whose career had come to an abrupt end almost three years earlier, following his conviction in October 1785 on a charge of forgery. Sentenced to a seven-year term Bloodworth left England aboard the *Charlotte*, one of five convict transports contracted by the British Admiralty. Fortunately, several other men were identified as having a brick-related trade, including labourers Anthony Rope, Thomas Eccles and Walter Ruse, a farmer.

CLAY IS DISCOVERED

Still to be unearthed were deposits of workable clay necessary for the manufacture of bricks. A chance discovery was made when Phillip, anxious to supplement the colony's dwindling rations, set convicts to work clearing land for cultivation. One such group reported the presence of plentiful deposits of fine white clay about two kilometres from the settlement. Bloodworth himself may have been present at the time of the discovery. With evident satisfaction, George Worgan, 30-year-old surgeon of the *Sirius*, recorded in his diary on 28 February:

6. W. Gemmell, *And So We Graft From Six to Six – The Brick Makers of NSW*, Angus and Robertson, 1986, pp. 1–4.

7. Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol.1, p. 308.

1 Beginnings



Obverse of Sydney Cove medallion, 1789 (original issue) Josiah Wedgwood. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

*Our other acquisition is the lighting on a soil which is seemingly fitted for making bricks, and eight or ten convicts of the trade are now employed in the business.*⁸

Fortunately the clay field was located between two fresh water streams making the brickmakers' task a great deal easier. The two streams ran into a small inlet given the name Cockle Bay, which is now marked by Hay, Pier and Harbour Streets. Cockle Bay lay

at the head of Long Cove, or Farm Cove, as it was first known. Set amid hilly country the 'Brickfields' was the focus of brickmaking until 1841. Thus, the month of March 1788, witnessed the establishment of brickmaking and mining in Australia, the earliest recorded industries in the colony.

BRICKFIELD HILL

Pressed into the service of the Crown, James Bloodworth was quick to grasp the significance of the finds along Cockle Creek. An intelligent man, his fortunes were about to change dramatically. Excavation of the clay and production of hand moulded bricks started immediately under Bloodworth's supervision. David Collins noted:

*A gang of convicts was employed, under the direction of a person who understood the business, in making bricks at a spot about a mile from the settlement, at the head of Long Cove; at which place also two acres of ground were marked out for such officers as were willing to cultivate them and raise a little grain for their stock.*⁹

Soon the more easily won clay deposits gave out, forcing Bloodworth and his band of brickmakers to move further up the slope. Their path always followed the streams, one of which flowed across the present day George Street, just below Goulburn Street, then on into the bay. Before long an entire village – Brickfield Hill – had sprung up around the site, the area eventually comprising the upper part of what used to be known as Paddy's Market bounded by George, Campbell, Elizabeth and Goulburn Streets. Brickfield Hill remained a Sydney postal address until the introduction of postcodes in 1967.

Some idea of these early clay workings can be gained from George Worgan who, on the morning of 13 May 1788,

*walked out today as far as the brick-grounds. It is a pleasant road through the wood about a mile or two from the village, for from the number of little huts and cots that appear now, just above ground, it has a villatick [village] appearance. I see they have made between 20 and 30,000 bricks and they were employed in digging out a kiln for the burning of them.*¹⁰

Bricks produced at Brickfield Hill were made from clays that formed part of a geological band referred to as Ashfield Shale, which gave them a distinctive reddish-brown colour.¹¹ There is no doubt that Phillip respected the judgement of Bloodworth in the matter of determining which clays were suitable for brickmaking, but he took the precaution of obtaining a second opinion from the greatest expert in the field of clay chemistry, Josiah Wedgwood. On 28 September 1788 samples of the clay were despatched to Sir Joseph Banks aboard one of the ships returning to England. Banks sent them on to Wedgwood's Staffordshire pottery at Etruria, where they were tested and pronounced excellent in quality by craftsmen who produced two medallions depicting two female figures, which symbolised labour and science.

8. George Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon*, cited in Jack Egan, *Buried Alive, Sydney 1788-92: Eyewitness accounts of the making of a nation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, p. 37.

9. Collins, *op.cit* p. 55.

10. Worgan, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

11. J. Woodforde, *Bricks to Build a House*, Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 10.

An inscription was added, *Sic fortis etrusia crevit* (thus mighty Etruria grew) – as a design for Sydney.¹² Wedgwood, or his craftsman, may have had in mind the ancient land of Etruria and the Etruscans who gave succour to the emerging Greek and Roman civilisations.¹³ Three years later further consignments of clay were despatched to Banks, including samples drawn from Sydney, a box of Norfolk Island clay and samples of white clays that had been discovered. Wedgwood's tests were doubly valuable for they confirmed the suitability of Sydney's clay for pottery, an equally important clay industry. In fact, pottery and brickworks, both of which were wood fired, were often combined in one enterprise at Brickfield Hill with the result that by 1804 several brickworks, combined with potteries – private and government-run – were operating in the area. The manufacture of clay pipes was also well established by this time.

HARD LABOUR

Worgan's mention of the pleasant road leading to Brickfield Hill with its village-like appearance must have been a comforting reminder of home. Yet within 15 months of its establishment, the area harboured many of the colony's most intractable and hardened convicts, sent there as a punishment for various misdemeanours: a prison within a prison. On short rations, and unused to hard manual labour, these men nevertheless provided the building materials for the establishment and growth of the colony.¹⁴ The basic wage of just one shilling a year did little to discourage criminal activity.

*The convicts who were employed in making bricks, living in huts by themselves on the spot where their work was performed, were suspected of being the perpetrators of most of the offences committed at Sydney; an order had been given, forbidding, under pain of punishment, their being seen in town after sunset.*¹⁵

In fact, burglary and assault in Sydney Cove grew to such an extent that night watchmen were recruited.

On the night of Saturday 8 August 1789, the first 'police' reported for duty: ironically convicts who had property and were intent on its defence. The circumstances surrounding many of these burglaries were almost comic. According to one early colonist, mud mortar in walls 'was so soft that burglars will pick a hole through one of such in a very few minutes, no part of the house being safe, back, front and gable being equally inviting.'¹⁶ With food in short supply and the plundering of the government stores, theft became a hanging matter.

Compounding the nuisance of petty crime was the escalation in the number of clashes with the native people due to the encroachment of white settlement on Aboriginal hunting lands. Labourers at Brickfield Hill were some of the first to be caught up in the violence.

*A convict belonging to the brickmaker's gang had strayed into the woods for the purpose of collecting sweet tea [a herb] ... It was supposed that the convict in his search after this article had fallen in with a party of natives, who had killed him. A few days after this accident, a party of the convicts, sixteen in number, chiefly belonging to the brick-maker's gang, quitted the place of their employment, and providing themselves with stakes, set off toward Botany Bay, with a determination to revenge, upon whatever natives they should meet, the treatment which one of their brethren had received at the close of the last month. Near Botany Bay they fell in with the natives, but in a larger body than they expected or desired. According to their report, they were fifty in numbers ... it was certain, however that they were driven in by the natives, who killed one man and wounded six others.*¹⁷

THE FIRST BRICK CARTERS

Despite clashes with Aboriginal people the business of brickmaking continued to expand and was barely able to keep up with demand. On 4 June 1789 Collins reported:

12. *The Clay Products Journal of Australia*, October 1933, p. 9.

13. This motto can be seen inscribed on a coat of arms affixed to the exterior of Westpac bank on George Street, Sydney, facing directly opposite Martin Place.

14. Gemmell, *op.cit.*, pp. 1–4.

15. Collins, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

16. P. Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, Henry Colburn, London, 1827, Vol.1, pp. 61–2.

17. *Ibid.* p. 82.



View of Brickfield Hill or High Road to Parramatta on 11 August 1796. A team of bullocks attached to a primitive dray, struggling up the Brickfield Hill Road (now George Street), between Liverpool and Bathurst Streets, which was the only surveyed road south of the Burial Ground. Watercolour by Edward Dayes. National Library of Australia

The gang under the direction of the overseer employed at the brick fields had hitherto only made ten thousand bricks in a month. A kiln was now constructed in which thirty thousand might be burnt off in the same time, which number the overseer engaged to deliver.¹⁸

Trees were felled and a road was made to transport the bricks from the flats (presumably the area adjacent to Cockle Creek) to Sydney.¹⁹ In the absence of horses or bullocks, gangs of convicts were given the job of dragging heavy brick carts over the sharp rise to the main settlement more than a kilometre away towards Farm Cove. Each cart, laden with 750 kilograms of bricks, was hauled by a 12-man team which made nine trips a day. Carting was considered the most extreme punishment and highly dangerous on account of the primitive roads of the early colony. In 1796 bullocks, and later

horses, replaced the convict chain gangs working the brick carts, but the deeply rutted tracks still posed a serious danger to vehicles and pedestrians alike. Eventually, during Macquarie's administration in the 1810s, the various brickyards employed 180 convicts who used 90 horses and several bullock teams to cart bricks and tiles to building sites in Sydney town.²⁰ An edict of 1806 instructed all empty public and private vehicles passing Brickfield Hill to load up with brickbats – broken bricks – and deposit them at various points along the road to Parramatta.²¹ This early attempt to encourage road building seemed to have worked. During a visit to Sydney in 1803 by French explorer, Nicolas Baudin, the official artist, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, observed that the road from Brickfield Hill to Botany Bay was paved for a distance of three miles.²²

18. Ibid. p. 93.

19. From about the middle of the nineteenth century the area extending from Alexandria to Tempe was also referred to as 'The Flat'. Brian Binskin, an employee of Austral Bricks at the Eastwood yard, recalls this expression being used during his boyhood years in the early 1950s. According to Binskin the comment would have gone something like: 'I knew if I couldn't get a start anywhere else, I could always go back to The Flat and find work' (Interview: 8 August 2005). This may have been a general expression used to describe brick workings, which by their nature, required level ground, and may not have referred in this instance to the area of Brickfield Hill.

20. Malcolm J. Kennedy, *Hauling the Loads: A History of Australia's Working Horses and Bullocks*, Melbourne University Press, 1992, p. 53.

21. Gemmell, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

22. Charles-Alexandre Lesueur joined an expedition led by Captain Nicolas Baudin which left Le Havre in October 1800 for New Holland or Terra Australis as it was also known. Lesueur took over as expedition artist when the official artists jumped ship in Mauritius. The two expedition ships, *Le Naturaliste* and *Le Géographe*, reached the west coast of Australia in 1801 and arrived in Sydney in May 1802. Baudin and his men were hospitably received in the British colony by Governor King and remained there for five months. They sailed in November 1802.

NEW FARMING SETTLEMENTS

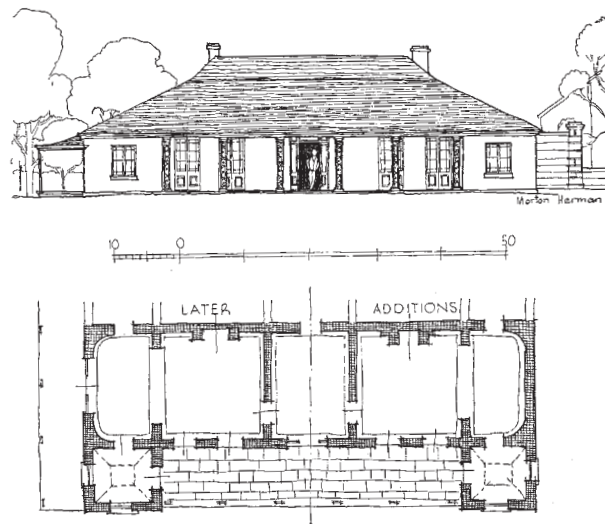
Bloodworth continued to train brickmakers and bricklayers who figured prominently in Collins' diary which also referred to the establishment of a new farming settlement further up the Parramatta River at Rose Hill in September 1789.

*The Governor is purposing to erect a capacious storehouse and a range of barracks at Rose Hill, a convict who understood the business of brick-making was sent up for the purpose of manufacturing a quantity sufficient for those buildings, a vein of clay having been found which it was supposed would burn into good bricks.*²³

Unfortunately the bricks produced at Rose Hill, later renamed Parramatta, were not as good as those made at Sydney. Their colour was an attractive deep red when burned but they were not durable, which may have been due to the inexperience of Bloodworth's protégés. Meanwhile, exploration along the Hawkesbury River continued to push the boundaries of settlement. In 1791 a third convict farm was established at Toongabbie, several miles beyond Rose Hill. Not only did these farms help to alleviate critical food shortages in Sydney Town, they became major centres of population in themselves. Further afield, Van Diemen's Land – modern Tasmania – was settled relatively late, in 1803. Here, brick buildings were common by the 1820s due largely to a plentiful lime supply for mortar.

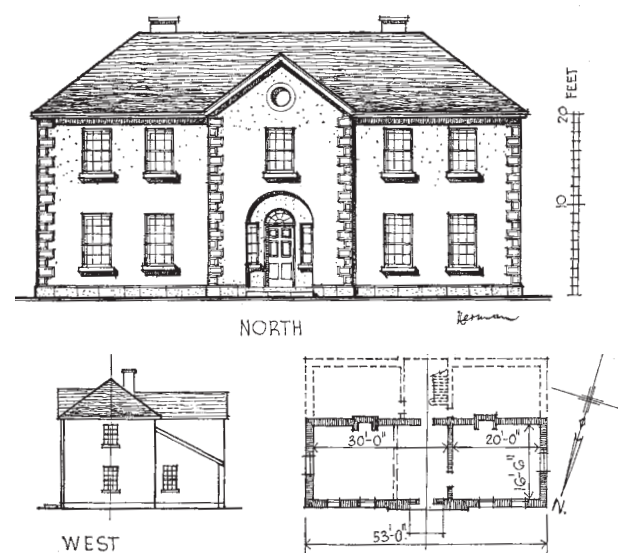
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

More than just a brickmaker and bricklayer, Bloodworth quickly established a reputation as a builder. Several months after having arrived in the colony he was asked to construct an official residence for Governor Phillip, whose original dwelling was a framed oilcloth house which he had purchased for £125 from Smith & Baber, the London manufacturer. It seems likely that Bloodworth had a hand in the design of the building, although it was attributed to Lieutenant Dawes.



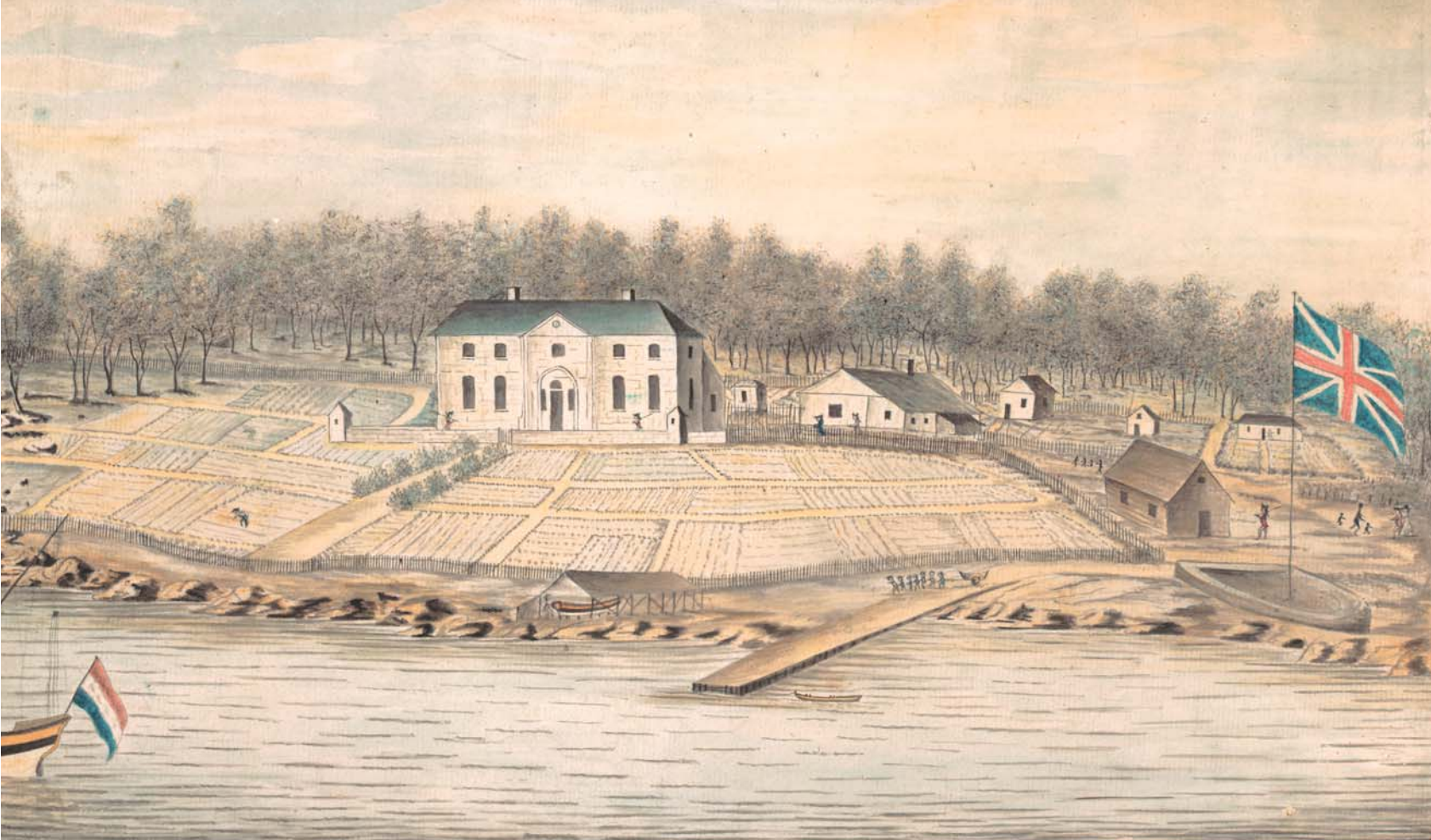
Elizabeth Farm, near Parramatta. Morton Herman

Phillip set Lieutenant Dawes to work locating a suitable site and within a short time he selected a hill on the west side of Farm Cove where Grosvenor Street now crosses George Street. Major Ross, the lieutenant governor, who had already started work on his own residence and parade grounds, thwarted Dawes in his plans. To avoid unnecessary friction with his second-in-charge and commander of marines, Phillip asked Dawes to find another piece of land on what is now the southwest corner of Phillip and Bridge Streets, currently occupied by the Museum of Sydney.



Government House. Formerly in Bridge Street, Sydney. Morton Herman

23. Collins, op.cit., pp. 140,144.



View of the Governor's house at Sydney in Port Jackson, New South Wales, January 1791. William Bradley. National Library of Australia

Work commenced towards the end of April 1788 and progressed steadily so that Governor Phillip was able to lay the foundation stone one month later. Soon after, Bloodworth's plans for a three-roomed house were amended, the footings now deemed sufficiently robust to support a two-storey building. Archaeological excavations during the 1980s revealed that they were built using mortar composed of mud and clay.²⁴ Brick and stone were used from the foundation to floor level, then solid brick walling with stone quoins to roof level. The internal walls were of single brick construction, the thickness of the external walls being one and a half bricks, which were rendered with pipe clay to protect against wind and rain. The only plasterer in the colony, James Thady, was quickly assigned to Bloodworth's gang. Thady, incidentally, is recorded as having been involved in a dispute between Ross and Phillip.²⁵

The house was a typical example of Georgian architecture. A wooden staircase gave access to the first floor, which comprised bedrooms for Phillip and his party. The Aborigines were fascinated with the staircase, which allowed men to walk around above the heads of people standing on the ground floor. Arabanoo, an Aborigine captured at Manly and brought to Sydney, marvelled at the Governors' House with its staircase. He could not conceal his surprise at a *gunyah* – dwelling – in which some men could be inside and at the same time be walking over other men's heads.²⁶ In fact, the staircase was to be the only one in the colony for a long time to come. Tiles made at the brickyards covered the hipped roof, and wooden pegs made by the convict women secured them.

So it was that on 4 June 1789, just 16 months after the first landing at Sydney Cove, the denizens of Sydney gathered to celebrate the birthday of King George III and the opening of Government House.

24. H. Proudfoot, *The First Government House, Sydney*: March 1983, Report for the Department of Environment and Planning.

25. G. Mackaness, *Admiral Arthur Phillip, Founder of New South Wales, 1738–1814*, Angus and Robertson, 1937, p. 220.

26. Historical Records of New South Wales (HRNSW), 2, p. 794; Watkin Tench, pp. 9–11.

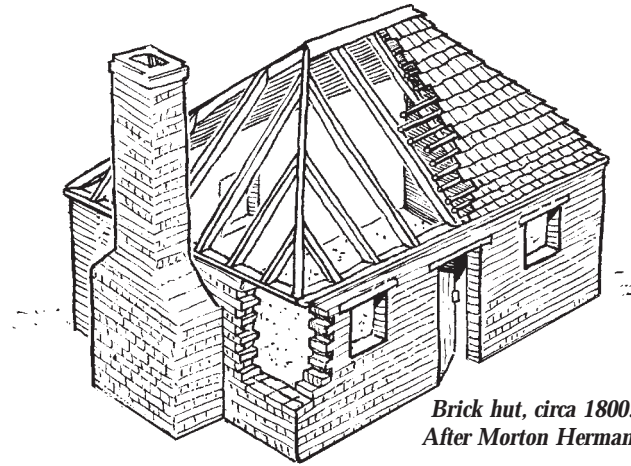
It was a 'bring your own bread' affair due to the severe food shortage in the colony.

Despite recurrent problems with dampness and rotting timbers, Government House remained the official residence in Sydney and the most imposing structure until 1845. Demolished two years later, its foundations disappeared beneath the pavement. The Mitchell Library holds some of the original bricks in addition to a copper plate commemorating the landing of the First Fleet. The latter was a chance find made in March 1899 by a Sydney workman, Robert McCann, in the course of excavation work on a telephone tunnel. McCann's pick unearthed the foundations of the old Government House about a metre below the footpath.²⁷

A SINGULAR FORCE

Bloodworth continued his work, designing and building with brick and stone, mostly for the government and important officials. In November 1789, a brick house was commenced for Judge-Advocate Collins who was well pleased 'to occupy a brick house put together with mortar formed of the clay of the country, and covered with tiles ... of comparative comfort and convenience.'²⁸ Collins' house was the envy of his friends. Within a matter of months the Reverend Richard Johnson, Surveyor-General Augustus Alt and Surgeon White were housed in brick homes. Eager to secure the goodwill of the Aboriginal people, Phillip ordered a small brick building 12 feet square to be erected for his friend, Bennelong, on the eastern point adjoining the cove where the Sydney Opera House now stands.

In 1790 Bloodworth completed a large dry store on the east side of Sydney Cove. Unusually tall for a building of the day, the store possessed several striking features, including a hipped roof, an attic and the first dormer windows in Australia. In the same year Bloodworth was granted a pardon by Governor Phillip for good conduct, and won



*Brick hut, circa 1800.
After Morton Herman*

further recognition in 1791 when he was appointed supervisor of all brickmakers and bricklayers in the settlement. In 1792 his debt to society was cancelled in full.

James Bloodworth ... received the most distinguishing mark of approbation which the governor had in his power to give him being declared free, and at liberty to return to England whenever he should choose to quit the colony. Bloodworth had approved himself a most useful member of the settlement, in which there was not a house or building that did not owe something to him; and as his loss would be severely felt should he quit it while in its infancy, he bound himself by an agreement with the governor to work for two years longer in the colony, stipulating only to be fed and clothed during that time.²⁹

Captain Watkin Tench of the marines wrote an amusing account of early settlement in which he mentions Bloodworth with great affection. Despite being offered repatriation to England he chose to stay in Australia. Under Bloodworth's guidance building work continued at a rapid pace in the settlements at Sydney Cove, Parramatta and Toongabbie. In the course of 1793, one year after Phillip's departure as Lieutenant Governor, 160 houses were built in Sydney, each allowed 1,400 bricks for a chimney and a floor. Most of these were located along High Street and Pitt's Row (renamed George Street and Pitt Street by Governor Macquarie after 1810) and extended in a continuous line to the brickfields.³⁰

27. O.S. Pavlou, *The History of Bricks and Brick Making in New South Wales, 1788-1975*, Thesis, Faculty of Architecture, UNSW, Sydney, 1975, p. 85.

28. Collins, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 104.

29. Collins, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 142.

30. Collins, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 275.

1 Beginnings

Five years later Bloodworth's skills were put to use in the building of a 45-metre clock tower on Church Hill, near the present Anglican church of St Philip. For some years it remained the tallest structure in the colony, but was destroyed during a violent storm in June 1806. Government House at Parramatta (1799) is also attributed to Bloodworth and was constructed on the site of the first house, the foundations of which can still be seen.

Within 20 years or so of the construction of Government House at Sydney, the skyline came to be dominated by impressive houses commissioned by successful emancipists including Simeon Lord and William Kent.³¹ Both of these men had risen to become highly successful merchants and entrepreneurs. While others (including officers of the New South Wales Corps) had made fortunes from trading, these merchants were the first to 'demonstrate their success materially in the size and appearance of their establishments'.³²

Gentlemen, merchants and traders representing Sydney's expanding industrial base were eager to establish their credentials. For them a brick residence not only provided social cachet, but was also the ideal business premises from which they could maintain strict control over their affairs. Military men, on the other hand, appear to have had little interest in bricks and mortar, housed as they were in the town barracks – their accommodation ensured by military rank.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

One keen observer of the activities of Bloodworth and his protégés would have been John Palmer, purser of the *Sirius*. Appointed Commissary General to the First Fleet, Palmer completed his term in office in 1793 and received a land grant in Woolloomooloo, in recognition of his services.

Some time after, he opened a brick business and boat yard situated between what is now Palmer Street and Bourke Street. The brickyard serviced builders in the immediate area, making and supplying bricks to Sydney Town, although the yard was small by comparison to those at Brickfield Hill.

The arrival of further convict transports as well as free settlers had an immediate impact on the developing brick industry. Demand for brick housing rose, as did the quantity of bricks being turned out by the yards, both public and private. Skilled labour, especially hand moulders, was in short supply, and enterprising convicts were quick to take advantage of Governor Phillip's system of task work, which allowed work on private contracts after the day's official finishing time of three o'clock. Business was booming for convict brickmakers and freemen alike.

Tench wrote in 1790 of the work assigned to Samuel Wheeler, who was transported at the same time as Bloodworth:

*Wheeler, with two tile stools, and one brick stool, was tasked to make and burn ready for use thirty thousand tiles and bricks per month; he had twenty-one hands to assist him.*³³

It may be that under Bloodworth's supervision men such as Wheeler entered the craft of brickmaking. The reference to Wheeler indicates this was one of the biggest gangs on the field, although smaller gangs were producing proportional amounts. One belonged to John King, also on the First Fleet, about whom Tench observed: 'last year, with the assistance of sixteen men and two boys King made eleven thousand bricks weekly with two stools.'³⁴ He was assigned another four men on account of the increased distance needed to carry wood to fire the kilns. Indeed, the scarcity of bricks prompted King to claim that in England his bricks would have fetched one guinea per thousand at prices then being charged. Another brickmaker by the name of Becket is known to have been working at Rose Hill.

31. Simeon Lord was transported in 1791 and by 1798 was recorded as acting as agent for some of the captains visiting Sydney. His commercial activities encompassed shipbuilding, ship owning, pearling, and the export of cedar, iron smelting and cloth manufacturing. Lord died at Botany in 1840.

32. J. Broadbent, *The Australian Colonial House: Architecture and Society in New South Wales, 1788–1842*, Hordern House, Sydney, 1997, p. 14.

33. Watkin Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1961, p. 162.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

Private individuals in the market for bricks took what they could, usually the poorer, underfired bricks. The better quality fired bricks were requisitioned for official buildings. Needless to say, a thriving black market existed for those who could afford to pay. Whether used for official or private purposes, overall quality was extremely poor due to inadequate firing, which left bricks highly porous. Water could often be seen trickling down the inside walls of houses during heavy rain. Indeed, porous bricks and damp penetration remained a serious problem until the general introduction of dry press bricks and cavity walls in the nineteenth century.

BLOODWORTH'S LATER CAREER

Acceptance back into civil society must have given Bloodworth particular cause for satisfaction. In 1802 he was made a sergeant in Sydney's Loyal Association, a volunteer militia numbering about 200 men. Its counterpart in England was formed to act as a home guard in the event of an invasion by Napoleon's armies. For the authorities in Sydney the association's main purpose seems to have been to counter outbreaks of rebellion by disgruntled convicts and men who had gained their freedom through a ticket-of-leave.³⁵ The New South Wales Corps and the Loyal Association shared the same uniform, the only distinguishing feature being the cropped hair of the volunteers. It was also about this time that Bloodworth was farming a grant of 50 acres (20 hectares) at Petersham, which he later increased to 245 acres (99 hectares).

David Collins remained a champion of Bloodworth, writing in 1803 to Governor King on the eve of the establishment of a settlement at Port Phillip Bay:

I need not point out, how extremely useful he may be to me, so conversant as he is, not only in Constructing but in Planning the several Buildings that I must very shortly have in hand. I have not any one that I could place with so much satisfaction, to myself in all

*directions of my Carpenters, Sawyers, Bricklayers & as this Person.*³⁶

Shortly before his death from pneumonia on 21 March 1804 Bloodworth was appointed Superintendent of Building on a yearly salary of £100. This may have gone some way towards mitigating his reduced financial circumstances. Despite having the asset of his farm and a government salary, Bloodworth was insolvent when he died at his house, which was located in what was later called O'Connell Street, Sydney. He was survived by five of seven children from his marriage to Sarah Bellamy, who was herself a convict, having arrived on board the *Lady Penrhyn*.

Governor King ordered Bloodworth's passing to be marked by the equivalent of a state funeral, an honour never before given to a former convict. Bloodworth's death was of sufficient importance for the *Sydney Gazette* to carry this announcement on 25 March 1804:

On Wednesday last died, generally lamented, Mr. James Bloodworth for many years Superintendent of Buildings in the employ of the Government.

He came to the Colony among its first inhabitants in the year 1788, and obtained the Appointment shortly after his arrival for his exemplary conduct. The first house in this part of the Southern Hemisphere was by him erected, as most of the public buildings since have been under his direction.

To lament his loss he has left a Widow and five children, the youngest an infant now only one week old, and the complaint that terminated in his dissolution was supposed to proceed from a severe cold contracted about two months since. The attention and concern which prevailed at the interment of the deceased were sufficient testimonies of the respect with which he filled, and the integrity with which he uninterruptedly discharged the duties of a Public Trust

35. The ticket-of-leave was a document issued to a convict enabling him or her to work for wages and choose a master. In 1790 Governor Phillip was given power to shorten the sentence of convicts, resulting in the development of this system.

36. Collins to King, 5 November 1803, 'Governor King's Letterbook', ML A2015, p. 345. 1797-1806.

Plan
DE LA VILLE DE SYDNEY

(CAPITALE DES COLONIES ANGLAISES AUX TERRES AUSTRALES.)

Levé

par M. Lesueur l'assujetté avec le concours de M. Boullanger.

(Novembre 1802.)



Lesueur was a gifted illustrator who commenced as assistant gunner aboard *Le Géographe*. He was appointed artist to the expedition following the death of zoologist René Maugé in February 1802 and confirmed as official artist when the leader of the expedition, Captain Nicholas Baudin, died in February 1803. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

during so long a period. His Excellency was pleased to order that a Funeral should be provided for at the Public Expense, and to show other marks of attention, to so old a servant of the Crown.³⁷

The article went on to describe the atmosphere of the funeral, mentioning the mourners in order of importance. Finally:

*When near the Burial ground the Association were obliged to file off, for the accommodation of the friends of the deceased, and the populace, who were become very numerous, and when the remains were deposited approached the grave and performed Military Honours.*³⁸

This last sign of respect was performed by his companions in the Loyal Association at what is now the site of the Sydney Town Hall. Thus ended the first chapter in the beginnings of brickmaking in Australia. By this time, the industry was established, and as the number of bricks and clay roofing tiles made at Brickfield Hill and Woolloomooloo increased, so did the number of brick buildings. With good quality building timbers being supplied from the Hawkesbury and the Hunter Valley, and glass being imported from England, the architecture of Sydney began to take shape.³⁹

37. Sydney Gazette, 25 March 1804.

38. Ibid., 25 March 1804.

39. J. M. Freeland, *Architecture in Australia: A History*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 34–36.