

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Pottery Green and Phoenix Street

While many may be familiar with Pottery Green, located just behind the Lane Cove Aquatic Centre and Council Chambers, not everyone will know the history and origins of its name and that of nearby Phoenix Street. Both Pottery Green and Phoenix Street take their name from the potteries which operated nearby from about 1883 to 1923.

Before the invention of plastic containers, pottery items were the most cost-effective method of storing liquids and preventing vermin contamination in foods. The clay found in the Lane Cove area was found to be suitable for the manufacture of useful pottery. Clay, up to about 2 metres deep was removed from the nearby gully at the headwaters of Gore Creek, between Dorritt Street and Pottery Green.

The Phoenix Pottery Company was established in 1883 fronting the street now known as Phoenix Street. It was the first built by Samper & Lacey in 1883. William Holford, who had an earlier association with Lithgow Pottery and had trained in Staffordshire, was the original potter. Holford established his own pottery, Standard Pottery nearby on the north-east corner of Little Street and Longueville Road in 1884.

Ownership of both potteries changed several times over the next decade but well-known potters, the Lieper brothers operated both sites for a while. The original Holford "Standard Pottery" was bought by W. J. Munro and operated jointly with the Phoenix Pottery Company as the Sydney Pottery Company (1890-1898). It was later operated by Munro and Leiper as Sydney Pottery Co. It was also known as the Longueville Pottery Company, Munro & Leiper (1900-1904), and the Australian Pottery Company (1905-1909).

The pottery supplied much of the everyday pottery for Sydney as well as other products including traditional 'Toby Jugs' (jugs or mugs illustrated with faces, either well-known, or not so well-known), glazed teapots of classic shape and design, colourful money boxes, vases and glazed sanitary ware.

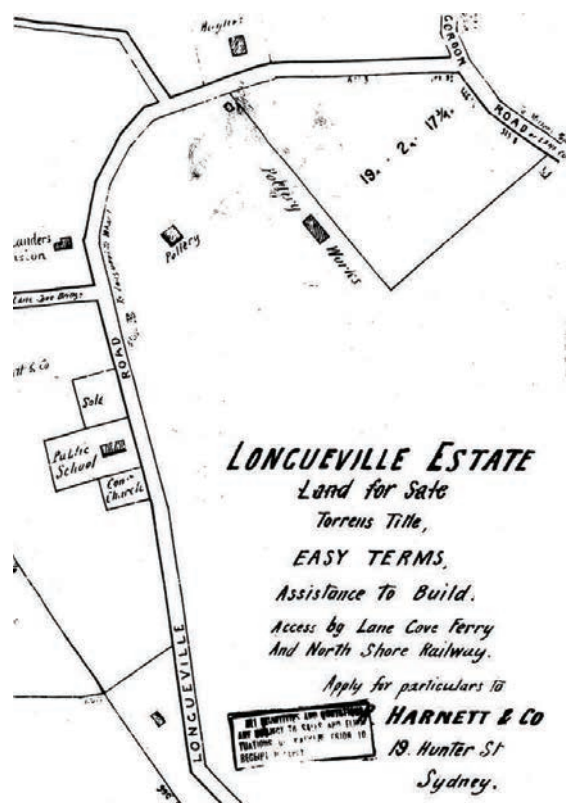
The pottery failed when the Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage changed a design in the middle of a very large order - the business was unable to recover. The business side of the potteries was taken over by Robert Fowler of Camperdown in



'Pottery in Phoenix Street, called Sydney Pottery Company among other names, circa 1938
(From *A History of the Municipality of Lane Cove 1895-1938*)

about 1916. Lieper continued to produce his fine pottery while working for Robert Fowler. The kiln of the original Phoenix Pottery had disappeared by 1920 and the pottery closed in 1923. During the 1920s, Gore Hill brickmaker, E. D. Lanceley took over the premises of the larger pottery in Phoenix Street which he used for offices.

Phoenix Street first appeared in the subdivision map of the Rothwell Estate in 1884 and was first listed in Lane Cove rate books from 1888 and the Sands Directory from 1898.



Detail of a subdivision plan for the Longueville Estate showing the location of the potteries, 1898
(Courtesy of Lane Cove Library/State Library NSW)