



# How to Trace Your House through Willoughby Council Rate and Valuation Books

---

Willoughby Library has microfilm copies of Council Rate and Valuation Books from 1872 to 1981 available on microfilm for you to search. Through them you can find, among other things: When was my house built? Did it have a name? Who owned the property?

## ***Using the Rate & Valuation Books on Microfilm***

The best way to trace the history of your house through the Rate and Valuation Books is to follow the entries back through time from the most recent year available. The information available in the books varies from period to period and from year to year. The books were issued at periods varying from each year (in the case of early books) to a gap of six years (between 1960 and 1966). The microfilmed rate and valuation books are kept in file cabinets in the Local Studies section and are available for public use during opening hours. Local Studies staff can give you a "house trace form" that will help you to keep the information you retrieve in order.

## **Rate Books from 1872 to 1928 and the Valuation Lists from 1928 to 1966**

These books are divided into Wards, then years and finally alphabetically by streets. Therefore it is necessary to decide which Ward the house and street you are researching is in. From about 1900 there was **East, West, Naremburn, and Middle Harbour Wards** and in 1941 **Northbridge Ward** was added. The streets, besides being listed alphabetically, are listed into "sides" e.g. Victoria Ave. south side and Victoria Ave. north side are listed separately, these generally coincide with the "even" and "odd" house numbers. The Rate Books from 1872 to 1928 and Valuation Lists from 1928 to 1966 have different formats. The Rate Books have a very large format and many houses on one page and the Valuation Lists have a separate sheet for each house. Because of this there are two "runs" of microfilms, 1872 to 1928 and 1928 to 1966.

## **General Valuation Journals 1970 to 1981**

These are divided by year and then alphabetical by street. The whole of the City of Willoughby is in one run in these books, not divided into Wards as the earlier books are. The information is more limited than the earlier books: house number, owner's name, Lot number, DP No. (deposited plan number), area and valuation.

## ***To Start Your House Search***

Check with the Local Studies staff to see if a house trace for the property has already been done. If one has been done you may obtain a copy of the existing house trace.

You can start your search sometime in the period 1971 to 1981 if you wish. In that case it is a simple matter of looking up the street name and number. If you wish to start your search from an earlier date you must:

- 1. Decide which Ward your street is in***

There is a booklet near the microfilm cabinet called "Street Index to Rate Books" listing the streets and wards from 1888 to 1924. In the front of the booklet there is a list of those streets that transferred to Northbridge Ward in 1941, most other streets were in the same wards up to 1978. Some other Ward boundaries have changed a little over time and as a result some streets have moved to different wards. You may also check the Ward maps that are located in the Local Studies Room. Try a nearby ward if your street seems to have disappeared or ask Local Studies staff for help.

2. *Select the appropriate box of microfilm for your Ward.*

The Ward names and years are noted on the microfilm boxes. Instructions for the microfilm reader are located near the reader. Load the microfilm in the reader, wind through to the street and house number you are looking for (remembering that each side of the street is listed separately). Access to the microfilm & Scanpro reader is available during Library opening hours. Records can be saved on a USB or printed at standard printing charge.

An entry in the **1928-1966 Valuation books** will look something like this:

valuation district of WILLOUGHBY ward or riding CHATSWOOD EAST valuation no. 1234									
owners name and address BLOGGS, JOE 345 Ashley St., Chatswood									
county va 4457 fo. 168 D.P. 14023 nature of improvements Ctge. Grge town or village Chatswood street Ashley side N locality or estate Homelands House No. or Name "Emoruo" 345									
valuation date			VALUES			assessed annual			remarks
9.8.60		6	17	100'x30'	£1950	£6500	£398		

The most important information to write down on your house trace form is **Estate Name**, and **Section & Lot Number** as these tend to remain constant through time. You will need this information to trace your house back through the books pre 1920s when houses did not have numbers. Other information that can be useful in your search includes - house name, DP No. (deposited plan number), owner's name, dimensions of land (in case it has been subdivided at some time). The UCV (unimproved capital value) and ICV (improved capital value) are a great indicator of how house values have risen and fallen over the years. You may be lucky enough to find a sale price written in. In addition to the information available in the earlier books, the Valuation books have the current and previous year assessment numbers which will help you to look up the previous year's entry quickly. Nearby landmarks such as the nearest cross street, the names of the owners on either side can be helpful in getting your bearings in pre-street number era. The occupier is also often given. Often the date the house was built is an approximation. Look for when the description/nature of property changes from "cottage" or "b.c." to "vacant", "vac" or sometimes "fenced."

Having worked your way back through the Valuation Lists to 1928, you will find the **Rate Books from 1928** back take a different form which looks something like this (although they vary more from year to year in form and information supplied that the earlier books):

assessment		owner			occupier		situation		area or dimensions of land				unimproved	improved
		name	occupation	postal address	name	nature of building (if any)	house no or name	locality or estate	number of		dimensions		capital value	capital value
									por	sec	lot	frontage		
1920	1919			HERCULES STREET				WEST SIDE						
		from Victoria Ave.												
668		Walsh, Miss Mary A	D D	Hercules St.	o/o	BC	Allerton	Willoughby	7	15	50	200	212	975
659		Jackson, John Est. late	engineer	"Ton" Cooma	Rev. G. Neorge	villa, grge.	Rosecot	Willoughby Heights	7	16/pt17	65	200	250	1050
				here Johnson Street										

Some Rate Books give a lot of information, some very little. For this reason it is not always possible to tell exactly when a house was built. If there is a considerable difference in the ICV and the UCV it is likely there has been some building on the property. Earlier books are not in

alphabetical order, but have a street index at the beginning or end. The rate books for different years record different information.

For example, one year may have a column for a house name and another year may not. A blank in that column for any particular year on the house trace form does not necessarily mean that the house did not have a name, rather that no name was recorded in the rate book for that year. However, if no name appears on the house trace form in any year, you can be pretty certain the house never had a name, or it was never recorded. The same applies to the information in other columns. Many of the rate books cover more than one year. For this reason it is not always possible to know from the rate books exactly when a house changed hands, or even the exact date it was built. The very early rate books are often not specific enough to identify particular houses.

Abbreviations used in the rate books include:

<b>ICV or IV</b>	Improved capital value (value of land and any improvements, usually a house)
<b>UVC or UV</b>	Unimproved capital value (land value only)
<b>CTGE</b>	Cottage
<b>GAR or GRGE</b>	Garage
<b>O/O</b>	Owner/occupier
<b>DP</b>	Deposited plan
<b>BC</b>	Brick cottage
<b>d.d.</b>	domestic duties
<b>H.D.</b>	Home Duties
<b>Pt.</b>	part
<b>COR</b>	corner
<b>SD BC</b>	semi-detached brick cottage
<b>ROW</b>	Right of Way
<b>Irr</b>	Irregular
<b>N/S</b>	Notice of Sale
<b>Dwg.</b>	Dwelling
<b>W<sup>d</sup> C</b>	Weatherboard Cottage
<b>RBF</b>	Rating Base Factor

**Owner codes for 1974 Valuation books:**

A. =Owner, B. = Part Owner, C. = Lessor, D. = Lessee, E. = Lessee other than Crown, F. = Mortgagee in possession, G. = Life Tenant, H. = Estate-in-remainder, X. = Owner unknown.

**House Trace prior to 1888**

These earlier books are not on microfilm and are listed only by the owners' names. Try looking up the name of the owner listed in the last definite finding of your house. Even then the description given may not be sufficient to identify the exact situation of the house. There is a street index to Rate Books 1872-1885. Ask Local Studies staff for help.

***Other possible sources of information in the library***

Sand's Directories - 1858-1933 (microfilm): city-wide address book of the day in use in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria.

Census of 1928 (name index in card catalogue)

Census of 1891 (street and name index in card catalogue)

Electoral Rolls for Willoughby 1932-to date (microfiche and archives)

NSW Electoral Rolls (various)

Estate Auction Plans (see Local Studies staff)

Sydney Telephone Directories 1889-1992 (microfiche)

**TRACING YOUR HOUSE THROUGH THE RATE & VALUATION BOOKS IS FOR HISTORICAL INTEREST ONLY AND CANNOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE**

