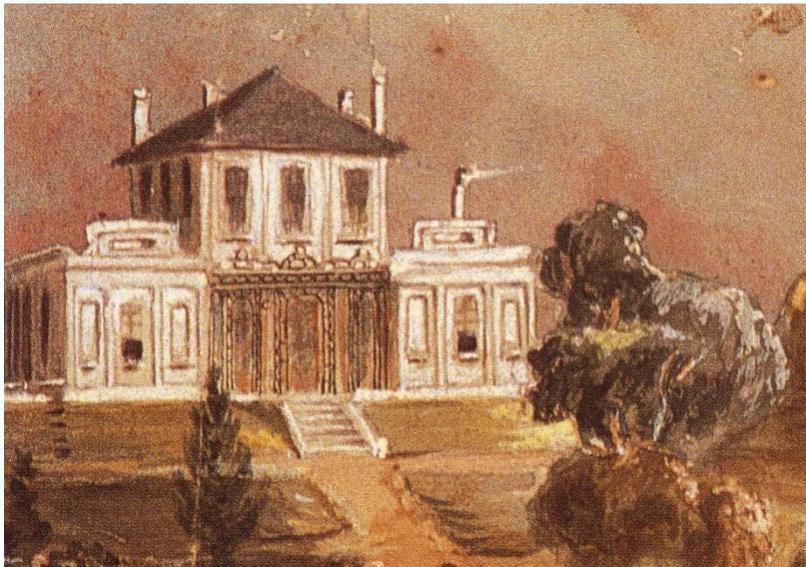


MONA, DARLING POINT

Mona at Darling Point in Sydney was one of the grandest of Sydney's estates. The earliest section of the house was built in 1841 for merchant Thomas Ware Smart to a design by architect John Bibb, who had worked earlier in conjunction with John Verge, architect of many notable colonial houses such as Elizabeth Bay House and Camden Park House. Mona covered more than 16 acres of the western side of Darling Point facing Rushcutter's Bay and the house was later expanded by Thomas Ware Smart and by tenant, architect Thomas Rowe. The estate remained intact until the early 1900s when it was acquired by the Himmelhoch family. It was soon subdivided intensively and by the 1930s the house was considerably compromised by nearby buildings.

Mona was noted for its private art gallery which was built in the early 1860s to house a fantastic collection acquired by Thomas Ware Smart from the famous sale of the 2nd Baron Northwick in London in 1859. Smart's extensive collection of old European masters was regularly open to the public before the Art Gallery of New South Wales came into being, as was the collection at neighbouring Greenoaks of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, with whom there was great rivalry. The collection was dispersed in the 1880s after the death of Thomas Ware Smart and the art gallery was demolished in the early 1900s when Mona Road was created. Mona House, much altered but with much of its joinery intact, still exists at 38 Mona Road, although long divided into flats. Few would now guess that it was once one of the show places of Sydney.



Mona in its original form (State Library of NSW)



Mona in the late 1800s/early 1900s, when occupied by the Rowe family (State Library of NSW)



The front door on the northern facade (John Broadley)