

12. Court House c.1878

The Court House was built in 1878. The structure of the building is of interest with the iron stone foundation, brick construction in colonial bond, the granite windowsills and cedar woodwork and furniture. The interior walls are approximately twenty feet high and the walls have narrow ornamental niches.

13. National Australia Bank c.1909

The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd first set up in Walcha in 1873, in a rented cottage in Fitzroy Street where McHattan Park is now located. The bank then constructed new premises (see 3). Contrary to the bank's expectations the business centre of Walcha developed much nearer to the Apsley River, which caused the bank to relocate again to their present position. The original portion of this building was constructed in 1909 and is now classified by the National Trust of Australia. The institution became the National Australia Bank in 1981 following a merger with the Victorian based National Australia Bank of Australasia.

14 Walcha Library c.1901

The building that now houses the Walcha Library was built in 1901 as the offices of the Walcha Municipal Council, which had been established in 1889. The town library was established in 1952 replacing the earlier libraries that were part of the town's School of Arts and Literary Institute. Initially the library occupied one corner of the present building. It was not until after the merger of the Walcha Municipal Council and Apsley Shire Council in 1955 that the library occupied the whole of the original building.

15. Fenwicke House c.1880s

This terrace style building was constructed by John Hamilton using bricks made locally. It has housed various enterprises; the Hamilton sisters taught music here in early 1900's, a tailor named Howe had the large ground floor window installed so he could see the passing parade while he sewed and mended, upstairs was once a private hospital for ladies in waiting, it was Walcha's first art gallery – the Parmenter Gallery, a B&B establishment, an insurance agency and for several years the Walcha Visitor Information Centre.

16. New England Hotel

An advertisement in the Armidale Express in September 1881 reads, "Mr. Charles H Moore, formerly of Armidale, desires to inform the public that he has purchased the premises in Walcha know as Livingston's Stores and has, at considerable expense, thoroughly renovated and otherwise improved the property to make the New England Hotel, second to none in all the New England district." Charles Moore was the licensee from 1882 until his death in 1895, upon which Sarah Ann Moore became the licensee.

17. Royal Café & Accommodation c.1889 & c.1938 – 9

This is the site of the old Royal Hotel, c.1889, Robert Hamilton licensee and owner. It was gutted by fire on 28 August 1938. The current building was then erected and named the New Royal Hotel. It is now a café and B&B.

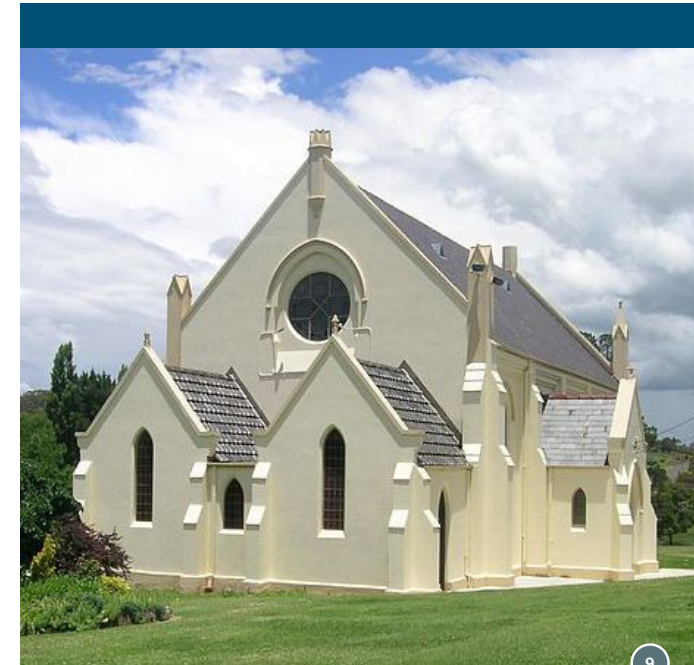


Walcha Visitor Information Centre

29w Fitzroy Street, Walcha NSW 2354. Phone 02 6774 2460

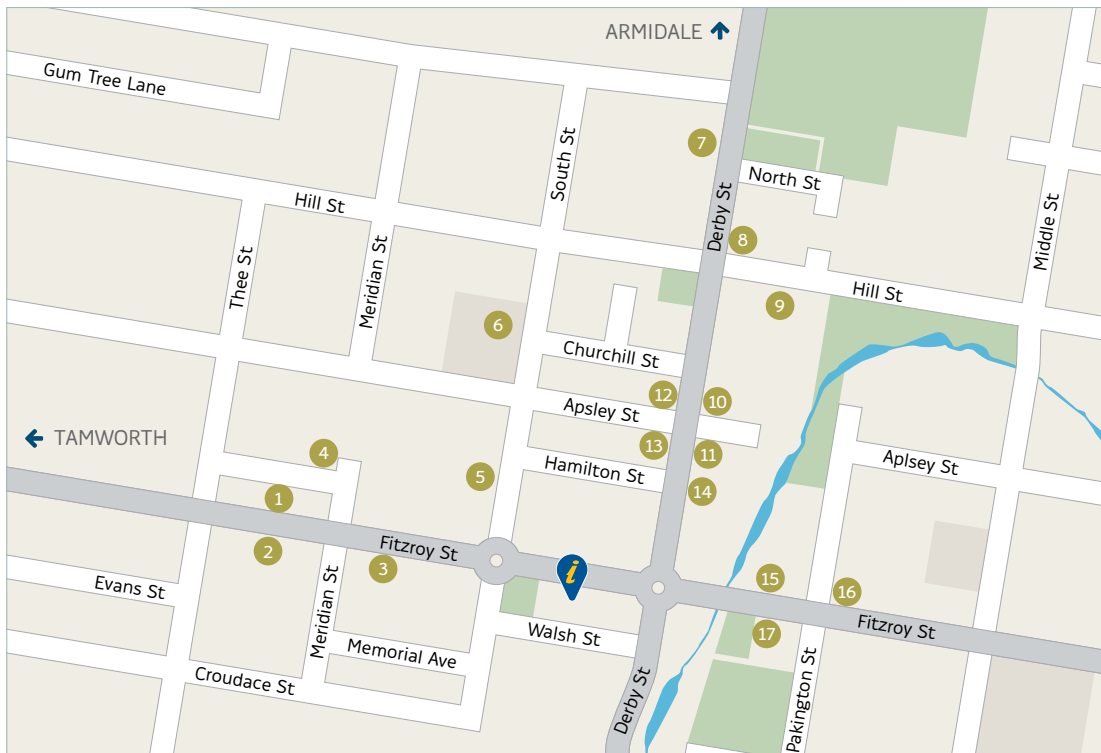
walchansw.com.au

Walking tour of Walcha's historical buildings



Walking time approximately one hour

Stroll around our picturesque little town and take a step back in time as you discover our beautiful historical buildings.



new
england
high
country

General history

Aboriginal People – 6,000 years

The Dughutti/Dunggadi Tribe are believed to have lived in the region for around 6000 years prior to European settlement. The tablelands served as a place for ceremonies, (evident by traces of Bora grounds near Walcha), and a place to trade goods. In the cooler months they retreated to the eastern gorge country where it was warmer and fish and animals were plentiful.

European Discover – 1818

Explorer, John Oxley was the first 'official' European to the district. In search of new lands beyond the then European settlement boundary of the Hunter Valley, he climbed the steep, rugged ranges, then traversed, from west to east, over the southern end of the tablelands now known as the New England. On 8 September 1818, Oxley and his expedition camped by a good waterhole on the Apsley River, which he named after the then Secretary of the State for the Colonies, Lord Apsley, approximately 1½ km south of the current township of Walcha.

Oxley wrote of this new found country in his journal as being, 'the finest open country, or rather park, imaginable'. A country of 'running waters; on every hill a spring and in every valley a rivulet'. He also reported this to his friend Hamilton Collins Sempill of 'Belltrees' in the Hunter Valley

European Settlement – 1832

The first settler, Hamilton Collins Sempill, based his headquarters near the campsite used by Oxley back in 1818. He established a 25,000ha run which he named 'Walcha', building slab huts not far from where 'Langford Homestead' now stands (1km south of township).

The name Walcha (Wol-ka) could have been derived from Aboriginal origins. But the spelling of two early pastoral properties, the Walcha Run and the Bergen-op-Zoom Run, suggest that the possible origins came from an association with the Netherlands where the town of Bergen-op-Zoom stands on the Walcheren River. These places were well known to the early settlers because of a major campaign of 1809 called the Walcheren Expedition, fought during the British wars with Napoleon.

The Town and other Settlers

Other settlers arrived in the 1830's – 40's, runs were taken up and a town began to appear. In the 1850's – 1860's some of the early squatters were able to purchase their runs.

Walking tour

1. The West End Store c.late 1880's

This was originally Walcha's Temperance Hall built in the late 1880's. It became the Oddfellows Hall by the 1930's and was for many years Walcha's most popular venue for meetings and dances. It was also the town's first theatre with biograph pictures being shown there as early as 1900. It was sold in 1966 and converted into a store.

2. Mitchell's Residence and Stores c.1870

Walcha's second flourmill was built in about 1869 at what is now 107w – 109w Fitzroy Street. Alexander Mitchell acquired the mill soon after it's construction and then erected his residence and stores adjacent to the mill at 111w – 113w Fitzroy Street. Mitchell came to NSW from Scotland in 1854. He moved from Uralla to Walcha in about 1870 and continued his contracting for the erection of public and private buildings.

3. Ex-Services Memorial Club c.1876 – 77

The older portion of this building was constructed by Alexander Mitchell purposely for the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney (now the NAB). It later became the home of the Ewing Family and was acquired by the Walcha sub branch of the RSL in the latter half of 1947.

4. Commercial Hotel c.1865

The older portion of this hotel was built by Benjamin Hardaker while he was the licensee of Walcha's old Victory Inn, which was on the south-eastern corner of Fitzroy and Pakington Streets. The Commercial Hotel opened for business with much fanfare in May 1865. At that time it included an area of about 4ha with stables and paddocks for the guests' horses.

5. The Old Stone Anglican Church c.1862

This church was built by Alexander Mitchell with construction being completed by August 1862. The black basalt was quarried on the present day property Linden Hill, which was earlier part of Oak Hill and earlier still, part of the old Walcha Run. It was originally named St Pauls Church but was later renamed St Andrews'. The present Anglican Church was built in 1963 while the Anglican Parish Hall was built in 1954.

6. St Patrick's Catholic Church c.1881

This church was built in 1881 to replace the town's first Catholic Church, which was a timber structure on the corner of Derby and Churchill Streets dating from 1859. The adjacent hall was built in about 1911 as the town's first Catholic School. Walcha was part of the Armidale Parish until 1894 when the Parish

of Walcha was established with Fr. Joseph Ahern the first Parish Priest. Churchill Street was originally Church Street, being the street between the two Catholic Churches. It was renamed Churchill Street after the Second World War to honour the British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill.

7. Pioneer Cottage and Museum c.1862

The Pioneer Cottage was built in 1862 for Walcha's first policeman, Constable James Buckland. The cottage was used as a private dwelling until 1961 and was acquired by the newly formed Walcha District Historical Society in 1962. It is now set up as a dwelling from the late 1800's. The museum building also dates from 1862; it was built by James Thomas Smith at 117e Fitzroy Street. The building was dismantled and re-erected on the Societies grounds. It opened in May 1970 and is used as a museum along with the other buildings on the site. Both buildings were originally constructed of Stringybark slabs and roofed with wooden shingles.

8. Anglea House c.1880s

The portion of this building facing Hill Street was built by Dr. C.U.D Schrader in 1882 and named Anglea House. By 1900 it was the home of W.M. Borthwick and later again it was Dr Sam Stephens' home and surgery until the 1930's. His son, Dr Hugh Stephens used it as his residence and surgery until the late 1930's; during this time it was know as Trefusis. The name has now changed back to Anglea House.

9. St Paul's Presbyterian Church c.1887

The first church building in Walcha was a Presbyterian Church on the southern side of Hill Street several hundred metres east of the present church. The first service in the old church was held on 27 December 1857. It was destroyed by fire in August 1883. The foundation stone for the present church was laid in December 1887 and the official opening was held on 15 May 1888. It was originally named St Mary's and re-named St Paul's in 1915. The Manse was built in 1904 and the Fletcher Hall in the late 1920s.

10. Erratt's Store and Residence c.1880s

George Hope Erratt came to Walcha in 1864 after arriving in Australia in about 1853. He purchased one of Walcha's early stores and later built the store on the corner of Derby and Aspley Streets and the adjacent family residence. The Store, now named Antique Junque, offers a wide range of memorabilia and goods.

11. Post Office c.1884

The Walcha Post Office was built in 1884 on land donated by a member of the Hamilton family. The town's first Post Office however was opened in 1850 as part of Walcha's first store, which was located on the north-east corner of Fitzroy and South Streets.

