

Up from the Station

1. Dungog Station (end of Brown St)

The original Dungog Station of 1911 was thought ‘a totally inadequate and unsightly edifice’, while the present post-war station is considered a ‘good and rare example of Functionalist architecture’.

2. James Theatre (6 Brown St)



Known as the James Theatre after tinsmith turned picture showman James Stuart, this picture palace is the oldest still operating purpose-built cinema in Australia. Purchased by Dungog Shire Council in the 1980s, it is now a multi-function venue and cinema. From 2007 til 2012 it was the home of the Dungog Film Festival.

3. Dungog Visitor Information Centre (198 Dowling St)

Originally the site of the first Catholic Presbytery, funded in part by St Patrick’s Day races, it was built next door to the first St Mary’s Church (see No. 41), and remained here until 1956.

Dowling St
between Brown & Hooke Sts

4. Commonwealth Bank (195-197 Dowling St)

This was the location of a cobbler’s shop until the Government Savings Bank erected a bank and residence in 1918, on what was then called ‘Oakley’s Corner’.

5. CWA (199-201 Dowling St)

R A Oakley, who ran a coach service between Dungog and the Clarence Town steamers, had a cottage on this site. The Country Women’s Association bought the building in 1955 when men were required to guarantee the loan for the £8,000 purchase price.

6. Stella Bistro (203-205 Dowling St)

Originally the Centennial Hall, it was a skating rink and venue for Dungog dramatics. Since the 1980s it has been a series of cafes.

7. Dungog Inn (211 Dowling St)

Probably Dungog’s oldest building, here convict James Stephenson established an inn in 1840. Later Samuel Redman ran a boarding house with a post office in the front room. A solicitor’s office in the 1980s, it was most recently a gallery and gift shop.

8. IGA (221-223-229 Dowling St)

Finches and then the Royal Exchange Hotel were here, before Skillen & Walker’s general store in 1882. The present 1896 building has a 1920s facade. The Market Royal of 1929 established what is thought to be the first ‘cash and carry’ store outside Sydney. It is now Dungog’s only supermarket, the local IGA.

9. Medical Centre (243-245 Dowling St)

Built in 1878 as a ‘Protestant Hall’ it was run by trustees who organised events such as a ‘Sports and Highland gathering’ and a ‘bazaar and fancy fair’, to help pay for it. With a new facade in 1926, it became Skillen’s Grocery, later Talla Walla Tours, a Chinese Restaurant, and Barrington Tops Real Estate.

10. Bank & Manager’s Residence (257 Dowling St)

A beautifully maintained Victorian Filigree building designed by J W Pender for the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in 1884 is an indicator of the prosperity of the time. It is now a private home.

11. Timber workings (bottom of Hooke St)

This area has been the site of Walker’s flour and timber mill, Croll’s Timber Mill and is where the wood was milled to create the Concert Hall floor of the Sydney Opera House.

12. The Monument - Obelisk (middle of roundabout)

Erected by the Dungog Tourist League in 1927 to direct tourists to the new Barrington Guest House and Chichester Dam; it remains a figure of some debate.

13. Bank Hotel (270 Dowling St)

Originally the 1878 house of storekeeper and mill owner John Walker, it was converted in 1891 into a 27 room hotel and opened in 1892 as the Bank Hotel. Australia’s first Prime Minster Edmund Barton and member for Hunter (which included Dungog), addressed crowds from the balcony on 15th March 1901.

14. ‘Cheapside’ (262-266 Dowling St)

This Victorian Regency building was built for John Wade in 1879, as a general store and residence. Edward Piper operated here from 1890, when it was known as ‘Cheapside’. In 1901, it was one of the earliest stores to install gas lighting for its outside illumination, utilising the NSW Acetylene Gas Co.

15. Uniting Church (246 Dowling St)

The foundation stone for a ‘neat and commodious brick chapel’ was ‘erected by the Wesleyan community’ here in 1853 and officially opened the following year. The second minister here, the Rev. R W Vanderkiste, became lost in the Allyn Ranges for six days in 1858, after which he wrote a book entitled ‘Lost, but not forever’.

16. Hardware Store (224-232 Dowling St)

Designed in a Late Victorian style, this two-storey shop with four bedroom residence with ‘steel ceilings and asbestos walls’ and intact kerb side balcony, was built in 1913 by Amos Moore and designed by J Warren Scobie of Maitland for Grierson’s Drapery.

17. Brighton Terrace (210-222 Dowling St)

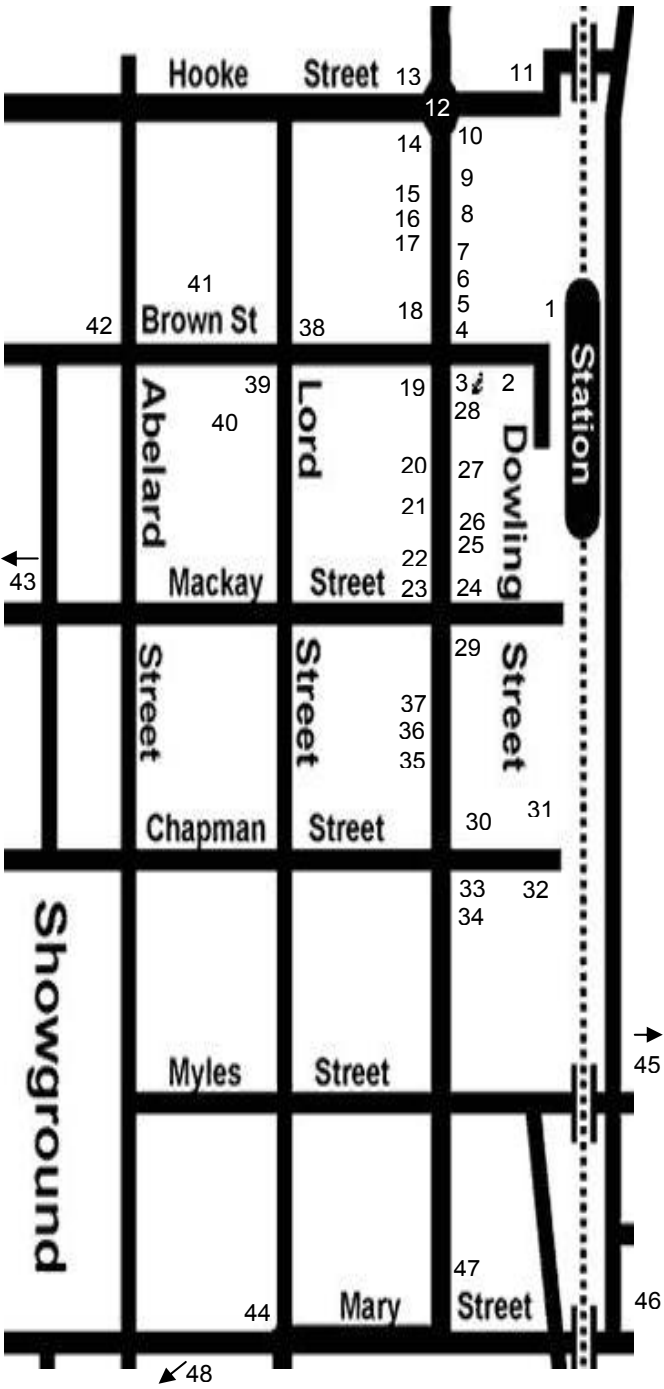
The Skillen & Walker Terrace in 1895, it was designed by C H Button (also Town Clerk). From 1898 until 2000 one business here was always a chemist. Mary Josephine O’Reilly, daughter of one of these pharmacists, was the first Catholic female pharmacist in NSW.

18. Coolalie (206 Dowling St)

Built in 1895 for prominent Dungog storekeeper Henry Charles Dark, by local architect/builder J A Hall, it was described as ‘the largest, best finished and most imposing’ residence in the district and ‘a credit to the town’. The gardens were extensive and included a fernery and tennis court. In 1995, a 100th birthday party of Coolalie was held to which over 50 descendants of the Dark family came.



Map of Dungog



As you walk the streets of Dungog you will also notice the blue plaques on many of the historic building researched & mounted by the Dungog Historical Society.

If you wish to learn more about the beautiful buildings and history of Dungog, purchase a copy of -

Ah, Dungog

A brief survey of its charming houses & historic buildings

This book is available at the Dungog Visitors’ Information Centre and also at the Dungog Museum (103 Dowling St, open Wednesdays & Saturdays and by appointment).

Dowling St
between Brown & Mackay Sts

19. Darks General Store (184-190 Dowling St)

Henry Charles Dark established a store here in 1877, later known as the ‘Hall of Commerce’. The first section of the present building, designed by C H Button, was erected in 1897. The business was continued by Henry’s widow, Mary Ann (Wade) Dark, their sons, George and Eric, and descendants until the 1970s.

20. Davey & Olsen (162-168 Dowling St)

Originally a blacksmith’s shop, it was one of the first to be converted to the servicing of the new motorcars. In business since 1919, Davey & Olsen is one of the oldest such businesses in NSW and the second oldest Ford dealership in Australia.

21. Angus & Coote - now J A Rose (146-148 Dowling St)

Built in 1911 for Angus & Coote, Jewellers and Assay Agents, at a time gold mines operated at nearby Wangat. The building has three shops, and had a residence of four bedrooms, bathroom, sitting room, dining room and kitchen.



22. Funeral Directors (116-120 Dowling St)

Initially the site of Peter and Thomas McWilliam’s store and tobacco factory of the 1850s, it was later occupied by W H Green. Around 1922, two stores were incorporated into an extension of McWilliam’s original store, when Fry Bros established a furniture store and undertakers. This was taken over in 1969 by John and Elaine Hawley.

23. Dungog Chronicle (114 Dowling St)

In 1909, John Bellos opened an oyster saloon here, selling fresh fish, confectionery, fruit and soft drinks. Later it became the Busy Bee Cafe, then a cake shop, and then a show room for Fry Bros furniture. In 1982, it became the office of the *Dungog Chronicle*.

24. Bank of NSW – now Solicitors (115 Dowling St)

The present Georgian Revival Style structure was erected in 1936 on the site of a much older two storied building which Mrs Eliza Dark rented first to the Commercial Bank of Sydney then to the Bank of NSW. Eliza became that bank’s first Dungog customer in 1884.

25. Post Office (129 Dowling St)

The first post office in Dungog began in 1835, receiving letters by steamer and horse back. Clerks of the Bench, then local storekeepers, were postmasters until the present Post Office was occupied in July 1880. The new post office was immediately a major landmark within Dungog, with numerous businesses advertising themselves in the days before street numbers as ‘opposite the Post Office’.

26. Shop and residence, with colonnade (137 Dowling St)

Built in 1909 by local builder Amos Moore, it was occupied by various businesses, but most continuously by chemists. When newly opened it was described as ‘the principal building of the town’. Its kerbside colonnade is one of few remaining in Dungog.

27. Shop (143 Dowling St)

A timber cottage was erected here in 1880, with a brick facade added perhaps 10 years later. This was George Kelly’s Photographic Studio, and also Emily Jane Kelly’s boarding house. Mrs Kelly also operated a general shop here, selling toys, stationery, sweets and fruit.

28. Tall Timbers Motel (163 Dowling St)

Tall Timbers was the site of the first St Mary’s Church, replaced in 1933 with a second St Mary’s in Brown St. Tall Timbers remains Dungog’s only motel.

Dowling St between Mackay & Chapman Sts

29. School of Arts (105 Dowling St)

The School of Arts was on this site from the 1870s to the 1960s and housed a subscription library, and provided a venue for such organisations as the Agricultural Society and the Debating Society. It is now the Dungog History Museum.

30. St Andrews (cnr Chapman & Dowling St)

This Presbyterian Church was built in 1904, replacing an earlier 1856 church. In a Victorian Free Gothic style, it was designed by J W Scobie. Originally two rival Presbyterian churches established themselves in Dungog, with both foundation stones laid in 1855.

31. Public School (Chapman St)

Among the first Public schools established in NSW, the school survived false starts, including a time in a building described as having a roof ‘giving as much protection as a sieve’. A new school building was opened in February 1865 with a ‘tea and dancing party’.

32. Oddfellows Hall - now Music Room (Chapman St)

Built in 1893 as the Hall of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows or the G.U.O.O.F. The Oddfellows was a self-help organisation based on contributory insurance. The Dungog Oddfellows was called the ‘Star of the Williams Lodge’.

33. Christ Church (cnr Chapman & Dowling St)



First proposed in 1849 but delayed until 1861 due to the gold rushes, this is ‘a beautiful Church, drawn by Mr Blackett’. Originally the site of Dungog’s first school, the church replaced a timber slab building erected in 1842. In 1916, local landowner Theo Hooke donated £1,000 to this Church, including £500 to purchase an organ.

34. Masonic Hall (53 Dowling St)

The Masonic Lodge Hiram No. 213 of the United Grand Lodge of NSW was first formed in 1894. The foundation stone of a new temple was laid in 1908, and the following year the ceremonial room and a small outer room were erected. It is now the Anglican Hall.

35. Coimbra (72 Dowling St)

Site of the first Presbyterian Manse, the present house was built by auctioneer Tom Carlton in 1917. Coimbra, not an Aboriginal word but a Portuguese University town, is built in a Federation Arts & Crafts style.

36. Royal Hotel (80-86 Dowling St)

The fourth on this site to hold this name, the first was built about 1850 and was originally The Durham Hotel, then briefly The Globe Hotel and finally the Royal Hotel. This was replaced by a Georgian style building, and then in 1913, by a two-storey Federation hotel demolished in 1939 when the current Royal was erected.

37. Ralph’s Music Store (92-94 Dowling St)

Built around 1926 by ‘W J Ralph, LAB of RAM and RCM, late solo violinist to Haymarket Theatres, Sydney’. The music store sold pianos and Ralph gave violin tuition at 10/6. An agent for Palings, the advertisement can still just be seen on the building’s north side.

Near cnr Brown St & Lord Sts

38. Settlers Arms (45 Brown St)

This hotel has been trading in Dungog since the 1850s. A visitor in 1888 described the Settler’s Arms as ‘a quaint but cosy inn’ that ‘reminds one much of the country hostleries in England’. Soon after, in 1892, a new owner renamed it the Court House Hotel and made extensive additions.

39. Memorial RSL (129 Lord St)

When the Dungog Municipal Council agreed to share its offices with the new Soldier’s Club it was suggested that – ‘After a number of years the soldiers rooms would not be used and would revert to the public’. Instead, due to new members after another war, it was the council that gave up the rooms. Doug Walters bar has his memorabilia.

40. Courthouse (Lord St)

Dungog Courthouse was the oldest operating NSW courthouse outside Sydney. The site was originally a barracks for the mounted police, stationed in Dungog in 1838. By 1849, the mounted police had left and the barracks converted into the new courthouse.

41. St Mary’s Church & St Joseph’s Convent (Brown St)

The Sisters of St Joseph established a school and convent in Dungog in 1888. The Convent of St Joseph was built here in 1891 by local builder J A Hall and it has been the admin offices of the Catholic School since 2002.



The first St Mary’s Church in Dowling Street was replaced in 1933 with the present St Mary’s here. Unremarkable from the outside, St Mary’s Church has a beautifully curved wood panelled ceiling that gives the interior a basilica-like atmosphere.

The Hospitals

42. Keba (116 Abelard St)

Built by Harold Eustace Woodman, a decorated veteran of Gallipoli and France, from 1930 to the 1950s Keba was a private hospital. Hidden from the casual observer is the fact that the main fabric of this house is pre-cast concrete slabs, with tongue & groove edges. The slabs appear to have been hoisted up using an A-frame and an old mangle as a winch. A full photographic record of its construction has also been preserved in a parcel of photos hidden in the cellar of Keba and discovered in the 1960s by curious children.

43. Cottage Hospital (Hospital Hill Rd)

The cottage hospital was built in 1892 for £849 with community funds at a time when the population of the town was 836 people. Community support provided the hospital with linen and food, and local doctors the medical requirements. Patients who could afford it were charged £1 a week and doctors received £1.11.6. In 1916, the doctors agreed to receive a reduction to £1 a week. At one point only married women were allowed to use the hospital for ‘lying in’. From a peak of 35 beds the hospital has been reduced to 15 beds.

44. Oomabah (63 Mary St)

This Victorian Rustic Gothic home was constructed in 1893. By 1906 it housed Durham College, a private boarding school that in 1909 was reported to be the only college in NSW that had its own horse troop. From around 1923 it became a private maternity hospital until 1957, after which Dungog Hospital’s maternity wing was the place to be born. Many Dungogites, including Doug Walters were born here.

Scenic spots around town

Surrounded by hills, Dungog has numerous fine viewing spots. Naturally many have built their homes to take advantage of these views. For visitors the view from Hospital Hill is the most accessible.

45. Anglican Rectory (cnr Myles & Verge St)

Built in 1912 on what is locally reputed to be the site of an Aboriginal burial ground, this rectory replaced one located to the north across Myall Creek that often left the Anglican minister flood bound.

46. Violet Hill (11 Verge St)

Possibly the oldest two-story house in Dungog, a ‘Violet Hill’ is mentioned as early as 1850. The existing house has been renovated and extended so that the earliest parts of the house are now enclosed. The house still overlooks large paddocks that were part of Thomas Abbott’s original estate along the Williams River opposite Abbott’s Ford, a major crossing point before bridges.

47. Presbyterian Manse (23 Dowling St)

Originally built by storekeeper Peter McWilliam around 1870, this house for many years would have been both one of the largest in Dungog and the only one at the southern end of Dowling St. It became the Presbyterian Manse in 1889 when the Church brought it for £1000. It enjoys splendid views of Cooreei Hill from its rear.

48. Redroofs (Clarence Town Rd)



This eclectic style house was built in the early 1920s by Eric Dark, of the prosperous Dark family. Situated well back on a sloping property, this wide house is set on an east-west axis. Running across the front and around each side of the house is a 14 columned verandah with a rounded portico positioned to the right of centre.

A very brief history of Dungog

The valley of the Williams River was home to scores of generations of the Gringai people before grantees employing convict labour began to establish farms for sheep, cattle and crops such as wheat and corn in the 1830s.

Dungog’s streets, Dowling, Mackay, Hooke, Brown, Lord, Myles, etc., were named after landowners at the time surveyor Rusden drew up his generous 1838 plan of Dungog. The new settlement, a day’s journey from the head of navigation, soon developed as a service centre for its surrounding agricultural settlements.

As the 19th century progressed Dungog prospered along with the growth especially of the timber and dairying industries, further boosted by the arrival of the railway in 1911. With its own hospital, cinema, and railway, tourism also began to develop as a feature of the local economy as early as the 1920s, with the Barrington Guest House providing a focus that is still remembered today.

The gradual decline of both the dairying and timber industries has made Dungog ever more dependent upon those attracted to its natural and historical beauties as both tourists and those seeking a more permanent escape from urban stresses flock to this charming town.

Dungog

Take a walk along Dowling Street
and view the many
historic and beautiful buildings.



For all your information needs
on Dungog please contact the
Visitors Information Centre

Ph: 4992 2212

Fax: 4992 2214

or

Website: www.visitdungog.com.au

Email: info@visitdungog.com.au