

THE DUNEDIN OF

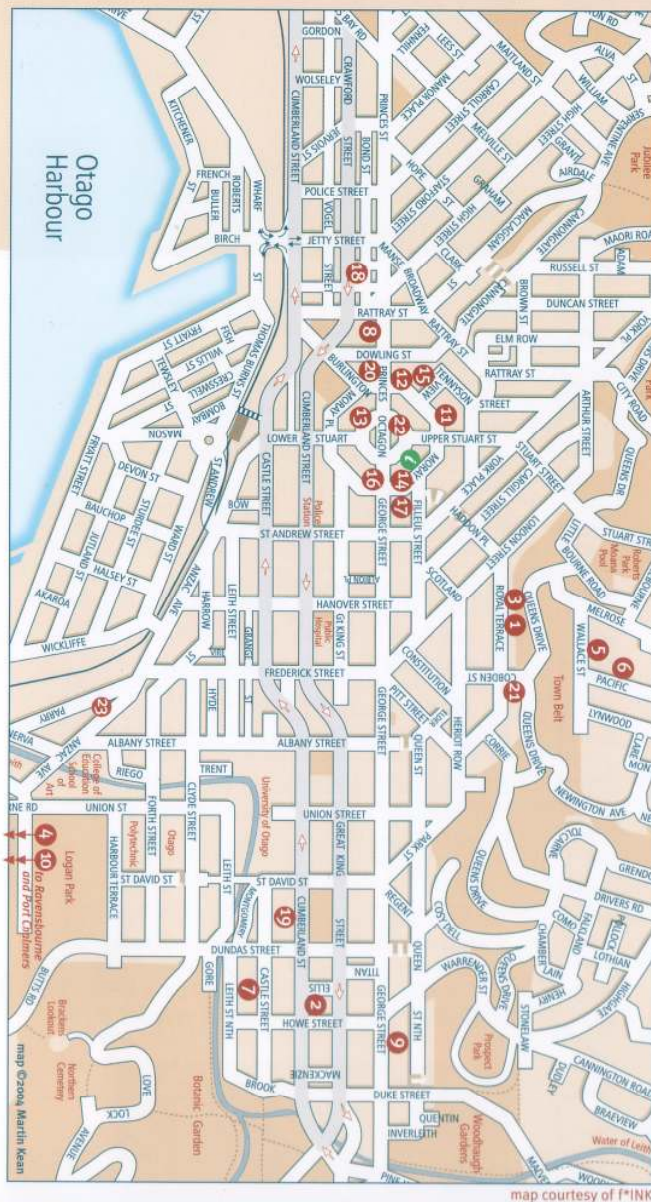
Frances Hodgkins

Summer c.1912 (detail)
watercolour
Dunedin Public Art
Gallery Collection



Dunedin was the birthplace and—for 32 years—the home of the artist Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947). It was here that she went to school and to art school, moved in the company of artists and art lovers in a milieu which her father, William Mathew Hodgkins, had done so much to create, and discovered an aptitude and a vocation. The determination which saw her studying to pass examinations to qualify as an art teacher, and the single-mindedness which saw her saving enough to travel to Europe for the first time in 1901, were qualities fundamental to her later success as a British modernist painter in the 1930s and '40s.

Only three buildings associated with her years here now survive, but the city is home to three public collections—the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, The Hocken Library and Olveston—which, collectively, provide a wide-ranging, representative survey of her work as an artist.



map courtesy of PINK

THE DUNEDIN OF *Frances* HODGKINS



above: Frances with her father, William Mathew Hodgkins, in the garden at Waira, Ravensbourne, November 1888.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

cover image: Frances at Cranmore Lodge, Melrose, February 1892
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

MAP OF DUNEDIN CITY CENTRE
showing the location of various sites particular
to Frances Hodgkins' life in Dunedin

Dunedin was the birthplace and the home for 32 years of the internationally renowned artist Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947).
Follow in the footsteps of Frances...

follow in the footsteps of Frances...

HOMES

Frances Hodgkins was born on 28 April 1869 at **32 Royal Terrace**¹, an elegant address adjacent to the Town Belt.

However, within the year, the Hodgkins family moved to a house named **Northcote**² in a less desirable neighbourhood, in Cumberland Street, at or near the corner of Howe Street, on a site now occupied by the BP service station. They remained there from 1869 to 1875.

The family's fortunes picked up again and they returned to Royal Terrace in 1878, to **Claverton House**³ at number 30. This is the only Hodgkins home still standing. In 1881 William Mathew Hodgkins and his wife Rachel went on holiday to Melbourne to visit relations. The twelve-year-old Frances wrote from Claverton House to her mother in Australia to tell her of a misadventure: "On Monday morning we were all playing in the garden, when Mr. Royse came out and went into the conservatory to water the plants, then we went in too, Mr Royse began to water us instead of the plants...and I bolted [out] of the door, but just as I was going through my foot skipped and I fell on my face and knocked half of my tooth out, and cut my lip a little." (Letters, c.12 April 1881.)

Claverton House was sold and in 1884 the family moved yet again, this time to the semi-rural **Waira**⁴ at Ravensbourne just beyond Logan Point on the road towards Port Chalmers. The house was humble but was surrounded by an orchard in addition to extensive lawns and garden.

Claverton House, 30 Royal Tce, 2003
Photograph Derek Smith



left: Frances in the drawing room at Cranmore Lodge, Melrose in 1890
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

right: Fern Lea, Port Chalmers Peninsula (eastern view) 1877
pen and wash on paper
Hocken Library Collection

In 1889 they re-established themselves in grand style in the fashionable suburbs on the flanks of the hill overlooking the city, at **Cranmore Lodge**⁵, in what was then called Waverley Street—this part was subsequently renamed Wallace Street—in the suburb of Melrose. Fanny wrote to her sister Isabel, now married and living in Wellington: "We are going to part with the cow this week. We haven't so much ground as formerly, so it is just as well to part with her. Two ugly little tin roofed houses are springing up, one at the back and the other just below the tennis lawn so our privacy is invaded at last." (Letters, c.15 April 1894.) After this house was demolished in the early 1960s, it was replaced by the Pacific Park Motels.

The Hodgkins family remained at Cranmore Lodge until 1897 when they moved around the corner into **Pacific Street**⁶ in the suburb then known as Nevada. Once again, events conspired against a stable life, and when William Mathew Hodgkins died in 1898 and was discovered to have no financial assets, another move became inevitable.

The remaining members of the family had to move to a house in **Castle Street**⁷, between Dundas and Howe streets, on the right side going north, and Frances and her mother lived there until 1900.

Frances then joined her brother who lived at **97 Princes Street**⁸, above the Bank of New South Wales where he was employed. This was her last Dunedin address before leaving for Europe in February 1901.

Pacific Street c.1898 Muir and Moodie, Hocken Library



SCHOOLING & TRAINING



Frances Hodgkins probably attended, first, the Ladies' School in **George Street**⁹, within walking distance of Northcote, then boarded with Mrs Elizabeth Hooper at **Fern Lea**¹⁰ at the corner of Meridian Street and South Terrace in Port Chalmers, and finally completed her schooling at an exclusive school for girls founded by Miss Jessie W. Dick in 1887 at **10 Moray Place**¹¹ between View and Stuart Streets (later named Braemar House).

In the 1890s, when Hodgkins began her career as an exhibiting artist, the Otago Art Society held its annual exhibitions in the **Choral Hall**¹² in Moray Place, then after 1907 in the new purpose built art gallery in the Otago Settlers Museum, which still stands in Queens Gardens.

In 1893 she received lessons from the Italian painter G. P. Nerli, who had a studio in the **lower Octagon**¹³, approximately on the site of the Regent Theatre.

The **Dunedin Art School**¹⁴, which Hodgkins attended in 1895–96, was at that time situated in the north-east quadrant of Moray Place on the site now occupied in part by the Dunedin Public Library and its carpark.



Artroom, Dunedin School of Art, 1891
James Kilgour, oil on canvas, Hocken Library Collection

South British Insurance building, corner Liverpool and Bond Streets, 2003
Photograph Derek Smith



STUDIOS

The first studio Frances Hodgkins is known to have rented, in August 1896, was in **View Street¹⁵** in the city centre...

... but by April 1899 she had taken space at **36 George Street¹⁶** above the shop of a Mr Dunne, an artists' colourman. This was however sub-let to her illegally and she was evicted in June 1899.

Nevertheless, she remained faithful to George Street and by September was advertising lessons to be held at **73 George Street¹⁷** above Lilly Bros', jewellers, on the right side of the street going north, just north of St Andrew Street.

For a time, Hodgkins then worked from the Castle Street address but by February 1900 she was established in the **South British Insurance building¹⁸** on the corner of Liverpool and Bond Streets, a short distance south of the Exchange. This is the only surviving building in which she worked in Dunedin.

William Mathew Hodgkins is listed on the Parish Roll of **All Saints Church¹⁹**, Cumberland Street, from 1865 to 1879. In the 1890s, his office was in **Princes Street²⁰**, between Moray Place and Dowling Street.



Frances Hodgkins
November 1912
Alexander Turnbull
Library, Wellington

COLLECTIONS



Olveston, Royal Terrace, 2004

The Theomin Family, whose grand house in Royal Terrace, '**Olveston²¹**', built in 1904, bought one watercolour from Frances Hodgkins during her visit to Morocco, in 1902-3. The collection contains three of her works. Tours of the house are held daily at 9.30am, 10.45am, 12.00pm, 1.30pm, 2.45pm and 4.00pm. For bookings phone: (03) 477 3320. www.olveston.co.nz.

The **Dunedin Public Art Gallery²²**, in the upper Octagon, has one of the largest public collections of the artist's work in New Zealand, and has developed a designated gallery space on the ground floor in which changing selections from the fifty works in the collection are displayed. Phone: (03) 477 4000. www.dunedin.art.museum. Open 10am-5pm daily (except Easter Friday and Christmas Day)

The **Hocken Library²³**, at the corner of Anzac Avenue and Parry Street, owns a smaller but nevertheless wide-ranging collection of watercolours, drawings and oil paintings by Hodgkins. These are available for viewing in Pictorial Collections 9.30am-5pm weekdays. Phone: (03) 479 8871.



George Street, 1898
Frances Hodgkins,
watercolour
Dunedin Public Art
Gallery Collection



Boys fishing,
Pelichet Bay, 1901
Frances Hodgkins,
watercolour, Hocken
Library Collection

Brochure content developed by Dr Roger Collins and Ann Barsby in association with the Hocken Library. This is a Hocken Library and Dunedin Public Art Gallery partnership project.

