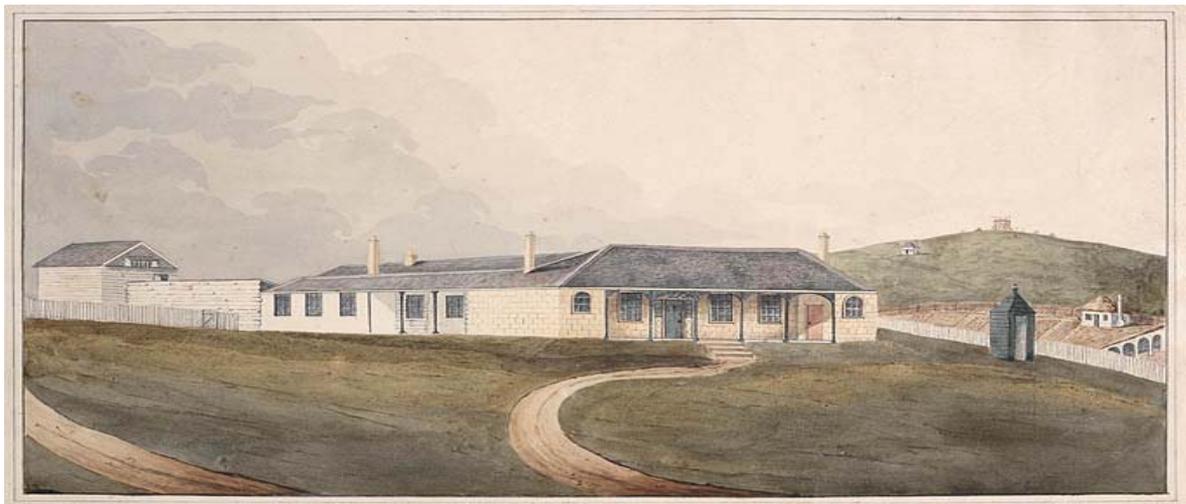


Government House NEWCASTLE

New South Wales



Government House Newcastle 1820 (artist unknown) - Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

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Statement: A dissertation presented as part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Graduate Diploma in Applied Heritage Studies, within the Faculty of the Built Environment, Art & Design. Curtin University of Technology.

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Dissertation Title: Government House, Newcastle, New South Wales: A description of the ‘Government House’ site from an analysis of historical maps and artworks from 1804 to 1885.

This research proposal will examine, on the basis of primary sources, whether or not there was a Government House within the precinct of the James Fletcher Hospital in Newcastle, NSW. The existence of a Government House in Newcastle is undisputable but its location and period of existence is shrouded by conflicting narratives. This study will provide a thorough investigation of documentary sources, both visual and written, in order to assess the veracity of received histories and to develop a deeper knowledge of the history of this building and its significance to the James Fletcher Hospital cultural precinct. It is hoped that the information developed in this analysis will affect future interpretations of the site.

Introduction

Early accounts of Newcastle’s colonial history will be examined to investigate the ‘Government House’ site in Newcastle. Documentary evidence will include primary and secondary literature, artworks and maps related to Newcastle and specifically the James Fletcher Hospital precinct.

Information used in this research will be analysed in a systematic way and the final part of this paper will discuss the findings found from documentary evidence. This research will also attempt to fill in any gaps in the documentary sources about the site between the period of 1824 and 1842, to argue whether Government House continued to exist later than what is currently thought (1824).

It is important to explain that Government House is often used interchangeably with the term ‘Commandant’s Residence’. For the purpose of this paper both the terms ‘Government House’ and ‘Commandant’s Residence’ will be used. Both of these terms are used in documentary evidence related to the site.

Unfortunately there is minimal primary literature regarding ‘Government House’ in Newcastle. One of the main problems in conducting this research is that because ‘Government House’ is reported to have existed so long ago (and assumed to have been destroyed by fire), only minimal research has ever been completed on this building or the site that it occupied. There

is very little evidence from archival material such as the '*Colonial Secretaries Papers*' about the Government House site.



FIGURE 1 Government House Newcastle 1820 (artist unknown) - Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

There are six primary sources found from the 1800's that state that there was a Government House in Newcastle. The following analysis of primary records will discuss these documentary sources.

Lachlan Macquarie on his tour to the northern settlements in 1821 stated in his journal that he stayed at Government House in Newcastle, finding it very comfortable (*Macquarie's Journal* 1973). As well John Slater (1819) a convict in the settlement described the state of the colony in letters to his wife, also referring to a Government House. Slater's and Macquarie's letters unfortunately fail to provide any further detail about what the house may have looked like, or its use.

Other evidence to support that Government House existed in Newcastle is evident in the *Historical Records of Australia* (HRA., I, IX pp.697-8), where there are references made to buildings in 1822. The Historical Records state that the house and offices for the accommodation of the Commandant were "...repaired, enlarged and considerably improved with a good kitchen, garden and a large grazing paddock, both enclosed for the use of the Commandant". This evidence provides specific detail regarding changes that occurred to Government House and this is further supported by the Bonwick Transcripts (Box 12 pp.343-4). The Bonwick Transcripts state that the Commandant's residence was repaired enlarged

and improved, providing also an accurate date as to when these changes occurred (1819). The transcripts also state that a house was built at the riverside for the Commandant in 1818. These last two descriptions of changes that took place to Government House in 1819 are particularly relevant, especially when analysing some of the pictorial images that will be discussed further on in this paper.

Another report of Government House was given by Cunningham, who referred to Newcastle as having two Government Houses. Cunningham was a naval surgeon on convict ships to New South Wales between 1819 and 1828, and he published a series of letters outlining the state of the society in the colony (Cunningham 1828 p.149-50). Cunningham referred to there being a Government House in Newcastle and he also mentioned that the house had been extended.

Particularly interesting is the evidence that Bigge (1822 p.114-118) provides of Newcastle. He states that, "Twenty seven men are employed in the working of the mine, and the mouth of the shaft immediately adjoins offices of the Commandant's House". Bingle (1873 p.11) also reported that, "The Commandant's residence, named Government House, was situated in the line of Watt Street, about 100 yards from the corner... was unfortunately destroyed by fire some time after Major Morisset left..." (Dixon 1949 p.35).

John Bingle was an industrialist who came to Newcastle in 1821 and established the first regular trading service between Sydney and Newcastle in 1822. The firm 'Bingle & co' continued in Newcastle for much of the 1800's. Bingle was a resident of Watt Street, which was the main thoroughfare and a significant street in regard to the merchant shipping trade. Bingle Street in Newcastle is named after the Bingle family and is situated on the hill above the James Fletcher Hospital precinct.

This statement that the house was destroyed sometime after Major Morisset occupied the settlement, suggests that it was after 1823, because Major Morisset was Commandant of Newcastle between 1818 and 1823. It is from this statement that many later historians presume that Government House was burnt down about 1824 and ceased to exist after this time. Bingle's evidence is unclear and does not provide any other detail as to whether or not Government House was rebuilt after a possible fire. It was not uncommon for damaged buildings to be repaired and reused in the 1800's, this being due to the scarcity of resources

in the settlement. If a building constructed from sandstone was to experience fire damage, it would likely survive, with only the wooden fabric of the building needing to be rebuilt.

Bingles (HRA., IX, pp.697-8) comments that Government House had been repaired, enlarged and considerably improved, may have been as a consequence of a fire that had occurred prior to 1819. Perhaps it was not burnt down at all after 1823 as previously thought.

The repairs and enlargement to the house in 1819 occurred during Major Morisset's rule of the settlement. If a fire did destroy Government House prior to 1819 then this would have occurred whilst Major Morisset lived there. Government house is recorded in 1822 to have continued to exist, however there is no documentation as to the exact date of when the house was suppose to have been destroyed by fire. Nor is there any documentation as to the house having been re-built after 1823. Bingle's phrasing is vague, he states that the Commandant's Residence burnt down 'sometime' after Major Morisset left the settlement. 'Sometime' could in fact mean that the residence continued to exist later than 1823, and even possibly as late as the 1830's. The last Commandant in the settlement of Newcastle was Captain Allman, and he was in command from 1823 to 1827 (O'Donnell 1969 p.52). If the Commandant's residence did burn down some time after 1823, then there has been no evidence found to suggest that Captain Allman had to relocate, or build a new Government House.

The analysis of primary literature clearly shows that a 'Government House' did exist in Newcastle. It is likely that the building was for residential and official use, thus its dual purpose. Essential to this analysis and important when interpreting artworks is the evidence from primary literature which states that Government house was 'repaired, enlarged and improved' several times. Improvements and enlargements would have been needed for the numerous Commandants' in Newcastle between 1804 and 1827. Many of the later Commandants brought their wives and children to the settlement, requiring a much larger living area.

Before discussing secondary evidence relevant to Government House it is important to highlight that much of the primary evidence has been repeated in local literature referring to Newcastle history. Local knowledge and literature does support that a Government House did exist, however there are inconsistencies about its exact location. Recent historical

literature about Newcastle's history has under represented the James Fletcher Hospital precinct, and there is minimal literature that adds further knowledge about this site. There is no published literature available specifically relating to the 'Government House' site in Newcastle. The majority of the available literature regarding the history of Newcastle focuses on the discovery and growth of the town, and of the numerous Government officials who served in the settlement. There is minimal information about the purpose and the use of the buildings in the town.

Newcastle was settled in 1804 after a first attempt of settlement failed in 1801 (Turner 1973). This second settlement was prompted because of the prospect of coal as a vital resource for the colony (O'Donnell 1969). Newcastle (originally 'King's Town') was established as a penal settlement, and remained under Colonial administration until 1822, when free settlers were introduced to the settlement. As already mentioned there were many Commandants who ruled the settlement during this time and most notorious of these was Major Morisset who was renowned for his strict rule and severe punishment (Turner 1973 p.30). Those who were sent to the Hunter endured harsh living standards, intense manual labour in the coal mines, and were under constant surveillance from those in authority (Turner 1973). Government House was positioned on the upper slopes of the settlement so that the Commandant could observe the convicts and soldiers.

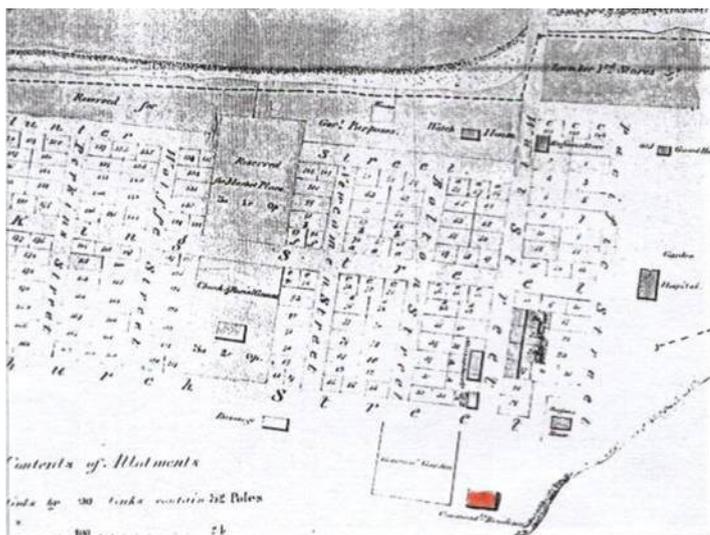


FIGURE 2 From Map- 'Plan of Town of Newcastle Hunters River'. Showing Watt Street and 'Commandant's Residence'.

Branaghan (1972) discusses primary industry in the 1800's, in particularly coal mining and convict labour in the settlement of Newcastle. Many of these early convict coal mines exist on the current James Fletcher Hospital precinct and are known as the 'Asylum Shafts' (Meehan's map). These are the first working coal mine in Australia and perhaps the Southern Hemisphere (Hunter 2001). One of these 'Asylum Shafts' is named the 'Wallis' shaft , and is described in primary sources of literature as being located next the Government House, "...mouth of the shaft immediately adjoins the offices of the Commandant's house" (Bigge 1822).

The most recent document that refers to the hospital precinct is the '*Conservation Management Plan: James Fletcher Hospital 2005*'. This plan recognises that a Government House was previously located nearby the hospital precinct. The Conservation Management Plan refers to documentary evidence of the various phases of the hospital site, including the site being a Government enclosure and garden (1804 to 1838), Military Barracks (1838 to 1853) and Asylum or as it is currently known a Mental Health Facility (1871 to current day). The plan does not, however identify the site as a central location of authority and rule. Instead it focuses on the surviving buildings and recommendations for future conservation. It does acknowledge in some detail the 'Former Military Hospital' which continues to exist on the hospital precinct. The Former Military Hospital is located next to the second 'Asylum Shaft', which is thought to be at the back door of the building (Scanlon 1985). This will be discussed further on in this paper (see Figure 29).



FIGURE 3 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2005. Former Military Hospital circa. 1843.

It is important to highlight at this point that there is often confusion between the past 'Commandant's Residence' or 'Government House' and the existing 'Former Military Hospital' (Figure 3). This building is often referred to as the 'Commandant's Residence', however this is incorrect. The 'Former Military Hospital' was built in 1843 and has no direct relevance to a Commandant. It does however resemble in style and design the former Government House as depicted in some of the artworks that will be discussed further on in this paper. It is particularly interesting that the style of the Former Military Hospital is symmetrical (not dissimilar to Government House) and its use was also a dual purpose. Current literature suggests that there was at least an 18 year interval between when Government House ceased to exist, and when the Former Military Hospital was built. This view will be challenged further on in this paper when an analysis of artworks and maps will be examined in detail.

Local knowledge is ambiguous and confusing in the reporting of the Government House site. However a reliable and credible source of information comes from Jonathon Dixon (1949) who researched the James Fletcher Hospital site in the late 1940's. Dixon specifically examined the Government House site. Information about his research was published after his death by the '*Newcastle & Hunter District Historical Society*' (1949). Dixon attempted to describe the accurate location of the 'Commandants Residence' and also the first convict coal shaft nearby, by surveying an early map, '*Draft of the town of Newcastle 1822*'. Subsidence occurred within the hospital grounds in 1943 which revealed a convict mine shaft. This shaft is thought to be the 'Wallis Shaft' and was described as being, "... inside the gates of the hospital" (*Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners' Advocate* July 21, 1943). Dixon (1949 p.35) argues that the subsidence revealed both the position of the old convict mine shaft, as well as the position of the Commandant's House or Government House. Dixon's work is valuable because there is minimal literature since the 1940's that contributes to knowledge about the site. Nor has the exact location of the convict mine and Government House been revealed. There is a plaque at the main entrance to the hospital acknowledging that the shaft and a Government House was known to exist, however it does not indicate the exact location. Dixon's research is significant and it is startling that his work has not been used in contemporary research to argue the whereabouts of Government House and the convict mine shafts.

Dr B W Champion (1949) also supports Dixon's argument about the location of Government House and convict coal mine, by arguing that the first coal shaft sunk was approximately 20 yards inside the Mental Hospital gates.

Dixon's literature is notably the most plausible in relation to examining the exact location of Government House and shaft, mainly because of the timely subsidence of the 'Wallis shaft' in 1943. Evidence of the shaft was later covered up and is not obvious today, although it is reported to be under the roadway of the main road leading into the hospital. As already mentioned the 'Wallis shaft' is one of two 'Asylum shafts' that exists within the grounds of the James Fletcher Hospital (*Archaeological Management Plan 1995*), and is also depicted in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence at Newcastle 1908*.

Bigges' (1822) suggestion that, "...the mouth of the shaft immediately adjoins offices of the Commandant's House", implies that the convict coal shaft opening was right next to Government House. This then raises the question as to which existed first, the convict coal shaft or Government House? The shaft is thought to have been excavated between 1814 and 1817 (Eklund 2004). However there are no records found that provides detail about when Government House was built, although it is likely that the house was established earlier than the shaft. Two of the artworks (Lycett and Preston), will be discussed further on in this paper. Preston's work is particularly significant because it is thought to have been done as early as 1812, and shows Government House.

The statement by Cunningham (1828) that there were two Government Houses in Newcastle could imply that there was another building in the settlement used by the Commandant. This use could have been for either residential or official purposes. The second house may in fact be the house referred to in the Bonwick Transcript (Box 12 pp.343-4), stating that a house was built on the riverbank in 1819. Unfortunately there is minimal evidence from artworks that documents buildings in Newcastle, however there are two artworks that may be relevant to Government House. These are early works thought to be by convict artist Joseph Lycett, and completed in the early 1800's of Newcastle (*Meacham Sydney Morning Herald*). The first of these images depicts a large house (possibly on the Government House site) below the church (Cathedral site). The other image is of a dwelling existing alongside the riverbank which shows a house to the left of the tree, possibly in the position of the end of Darby Street. The 'Hill Precinct' of Newcastle is evident in the background. These particular

images form part of the Strathallan Chest held at the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales (Figures 3 & 4).



FIGURE 4 Strathallan Collector's Chest (images of Newcastle) - Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales



FIGURE 5 Strathallan Collector's Chest (images of Newcastle) - Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

From the analysis of written documentary evidence, it is clear that a Government House (Commandant's residence) did exist in Newcastle, and that Dixon's work is significant in identifying the 'Wallis Shaft', discovered in the grounds of the James Fletcher Hospital precinct in 1943. Primary literature tells us that Government House was near the Wallis Shaft.

Visual representations of the site and its surroundings from 1804 to 1885.

It is important to acknowledge that the following artworks may not be accurate representations of buildings that existed in Newcastle, or of their exact location. However the interpretation of the artworks to be surveyed in this paper will be further substantiated by the analysis of evidence from literature and historical maps. The artworks to be discussed are thought provoking in regard to the use of some of the buildings in Newcastle and of their style and design. The artworks may however be an indication of the surroundings and streetscape of early Newcastle.

The image of Government House completed in 1820 (Figure 1) is the most prominent visual representation of the design and architecture of the house. This painting by an unknown artist shows the side view of the house, as well as outbuildings which appear additions to the main building. The front symmetrical and arched windows are representative of a residential house and suggests the house's superior domestic role (Broadbent 1997). The variations in colour as well as the different materials used on the house are likely to be later additions. The arched windows at the front of the house differ to the rectangular windows along the side, suggesting that the back section of the house was an addition. The fabric used to construct the front section of the house (original house) looks to be of sandstone, whereas the additions and outbuildings appear to be wooden. On closer examination of the watercolour image, wooden palings are noticeable on the addition.

This image provides an interesting display of the surroundings and nearby structures on the site. The green guardhouse standing to the left of Government House is an important feature when analysing Sophia Campbell's artworks further on in this analysis (Figure 7). Also an important landmark on the hill is the flour mill. This handmill was evident prior to the windmill being erected in 1821, and is also the site of the Obelisk erected for navigational purposes in 1850. The site was formally known as 'Mount Royal' (Bingle 1873 p.13). The obelisk site remains an identifiable and well known landmark today in the Newcastle streetscape.

The small valley to the right of the image (Figure 1) is the current James Fletcher Hospital precinct and shows what looks to be an interesting arched structure. This particular area was prone to flooding and therefore, it was initially thought that this structure was a viaduct or

drainage system. This arched structure also appears in one of Sophia Campbell's sketches of the site (Figure 7). Discussion with others has concluded that this feature is more likely to be a roadway with neatly trimmed bushes.

(Revised comments of author July 2006) On closer examination of the original artwork the arch in fact looks to be a distinctive solid structure. It is unclear what this structure means, or whether it really existed on the site. The site was certainly prone to flooding, so perhaps this was a viaduct that did exist, or was planned but never built.

The Government House image (Figure 1) does not show the other side of the building, or evidence of a coal shaft that was thought to have 'adjoined' the Commandant's House. Dixon's research suggests that Government House was towards the roadway (Watt Street), while the 'Wallis shaft' was on the western side of the house, 20 yards within the gateway to the hospital. When this shaft was discovered in 1943 there were no records from maps held at the Mines Department. The estimated depth of this shaft was 80 feet, and a diameter of 9 feet (*Newcastle Herald & Miners' Advocate* July 12 1943). The mine shaft was described as a 'bare shaft' that was not bricked inside. The 1943 discovery of the shaft also noted that a tunnel or adit from the cliff joined the shaft, and that most of the approaches to the shaft were from the cliff opposite the Government House site. Mike Scanlon in 1985 also reported on the site, indicating the possible whereabouts of the 'Wallis Shaft', stating that it was just inside the main gates of the hospital (*Newcastle Herald* 10 July 1985). Perhaps because of the position of Government House in the 1820 image, it hides any evidence of the "Wallis shaft".

Another image of Government House is depicted in a panorama of Newcastle by Sophia Campbell (Figure 6). Campbell completed sketches and watercolour paintings of many settlements in the colony, including Sydney and Wollongong. Her father had merchant shipping vessels which provided transport along the east coast of New South Wales. It is likely that Campbell completed this painting some time after 1821 when the windmill was erected and after a visit to Newcastle on the family vessel. This image by Campbell shows the upper roadway of Watt Street with Government House facing downhill. The panorama (Figure 8) also shows arched structures similar to the previous artwork discussed, in this image there are possibly two viaducts. The original would need to be examined much closer

to reveal exactly what these structures are. It is also worth considering whether or not the Government House image (Figure 1) was in fact painted by Sophia Campbell considering the similar features present in her own work as well as the 'Government House' image by an unknown artist. The Government House image (Figure 1) is a much larger image and appears that the artist has spent some time in creating the work. However many of Campbell's other works are much smaller and completed in her sketch book which she took with her on her journeys.

The panorama (Figure 9) also shows a Guard House further down Watt Street, as well as a Church in the background. This church is likely to be the site of the current Christ Church Cathedral. Evident in Campbell's image of Government House is a sentry box which she has pencilled in very faintly on the opposite page of her sketch book (Figure 7).



FIGURE 6 Sophia Campbell's Panorama of Newcastle 1819- National Library of Australia.



FIGURE 7 Sophia Campbell 'Commandant's Residence' 1819- National Library of Australia.

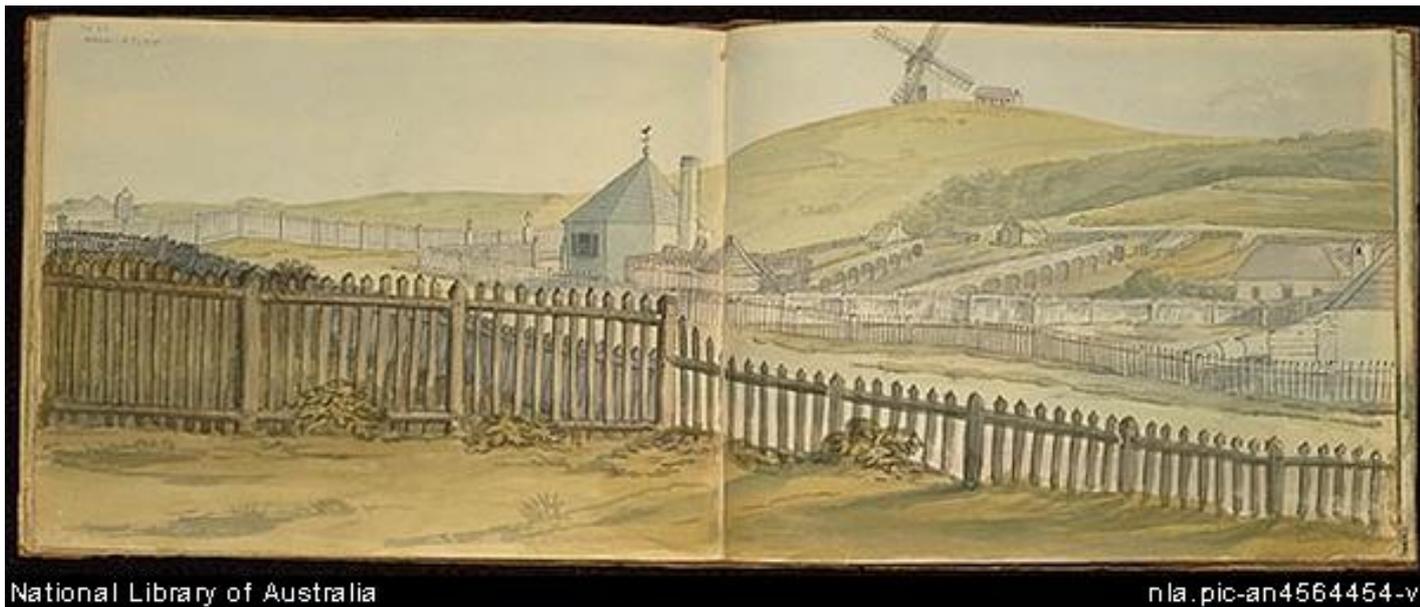


FIGURE 8 Sophia Campbell – trimmed trees in Government Garden 1819- National Library of Australia.

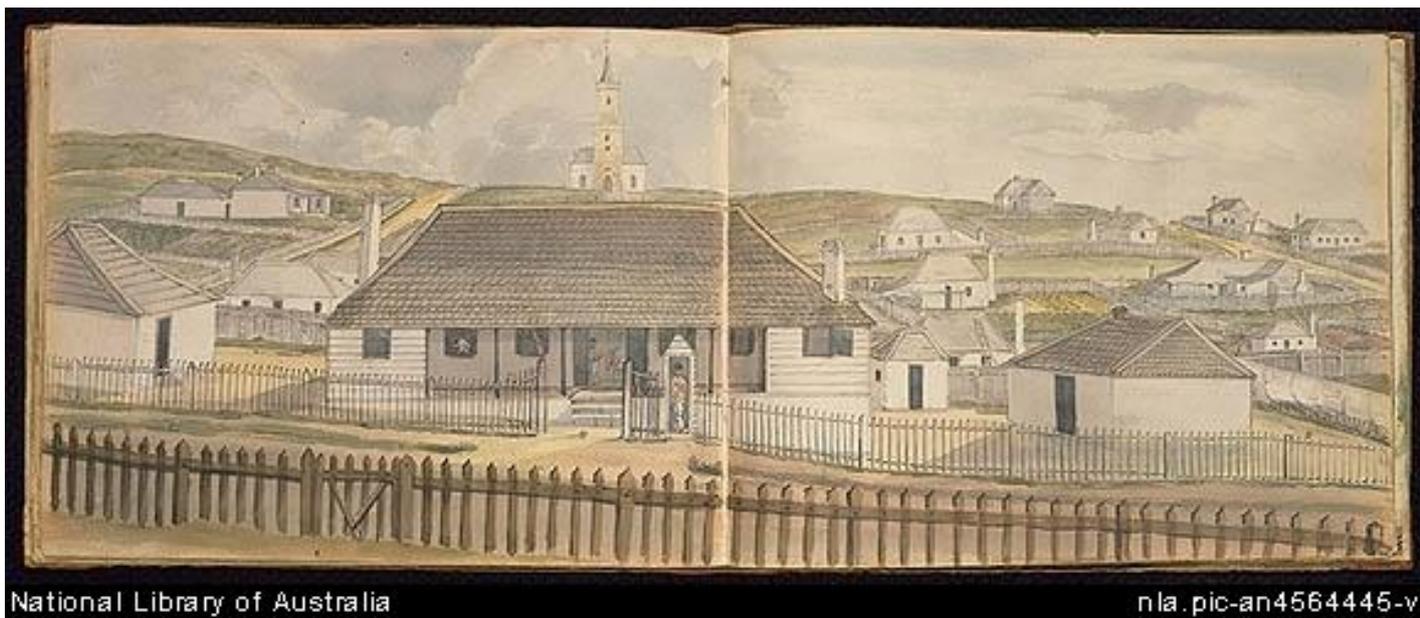


FIGURE 9 Sophia Campbell – ‘Guard House’ 1819- National Library of Australia

Another Sophia Campbell image of Newcastle is a pencil sketch of Government House showing the east side of the building (Figure 10). This image is important because it shows the opposite side of Government House to that already discussed of the 1820 image (Figure 1). The Sophia Campbell sketch (Figure 10) shows the position of the house from the western side (from front of house), or from the side occupied by the Government garden. The sea is evident beyond the house and flagstaff. The

symmetrical front of the structure as well as the sentry box is similar to the previous images discussed (Figures 7 & 1), and the sentry box helps to identify Government House. This sketch is likely to have been completed some time after 1819 when the additions to Government House were reported to have taken place (Bingle 1873). The distinguishing feature in this image is the flagstaff on the eastern side of the house near the cliff, further verifying that it is the Government House site depicted in images of the site. Campbell's sketch shows additions to the back of the house, as well as the inclusion of other outbuildings. Visible in this image is the gable of the later addition, as well as the alcove at the back of the house. On the right side of the house there is a veranda that has been recessed. This is very similar to the east side of the house as shown in the 1820 painting of Government House (Figure 1).

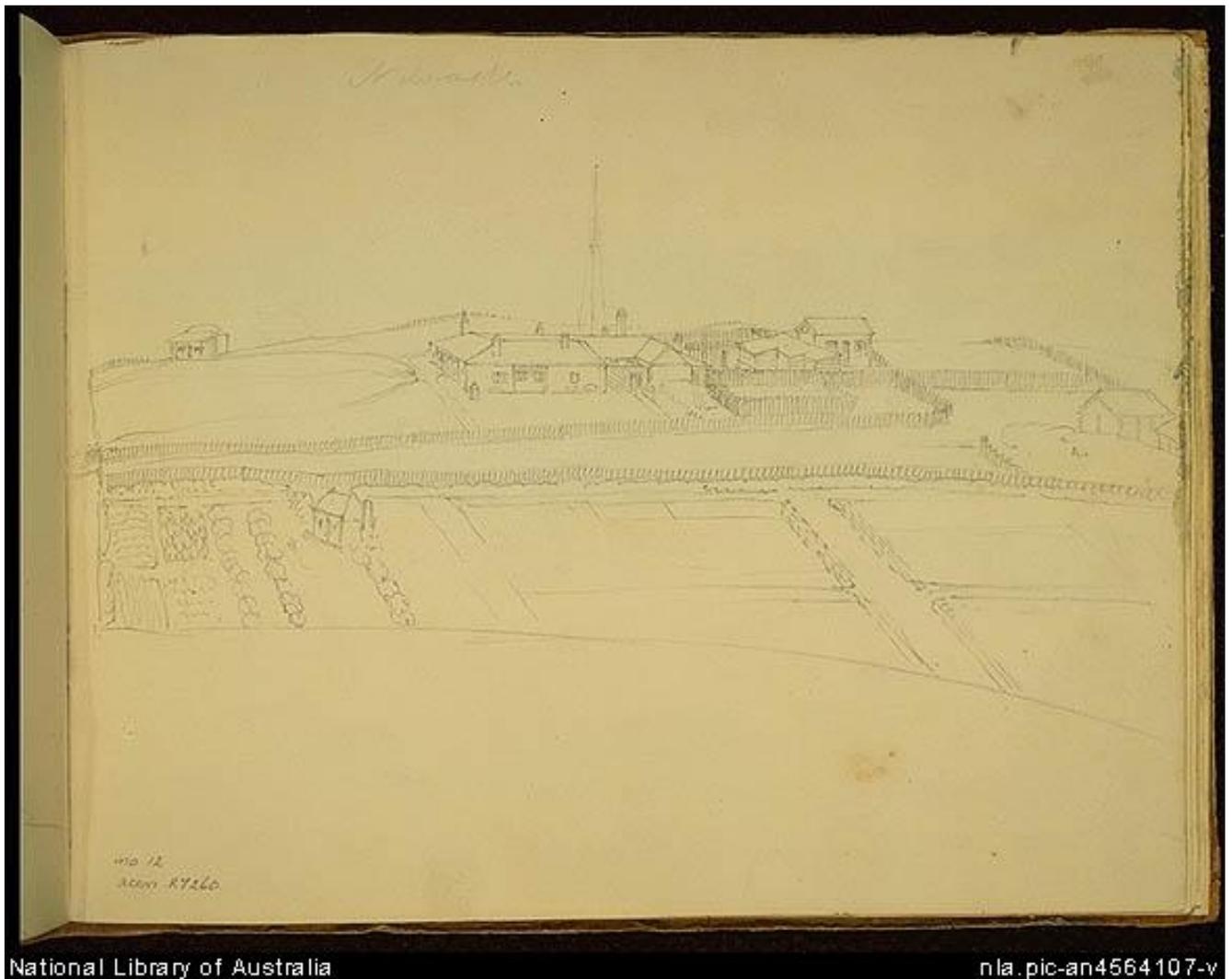


FIGURE 10

Sophia Campbell Newcastle- National Library of Australia

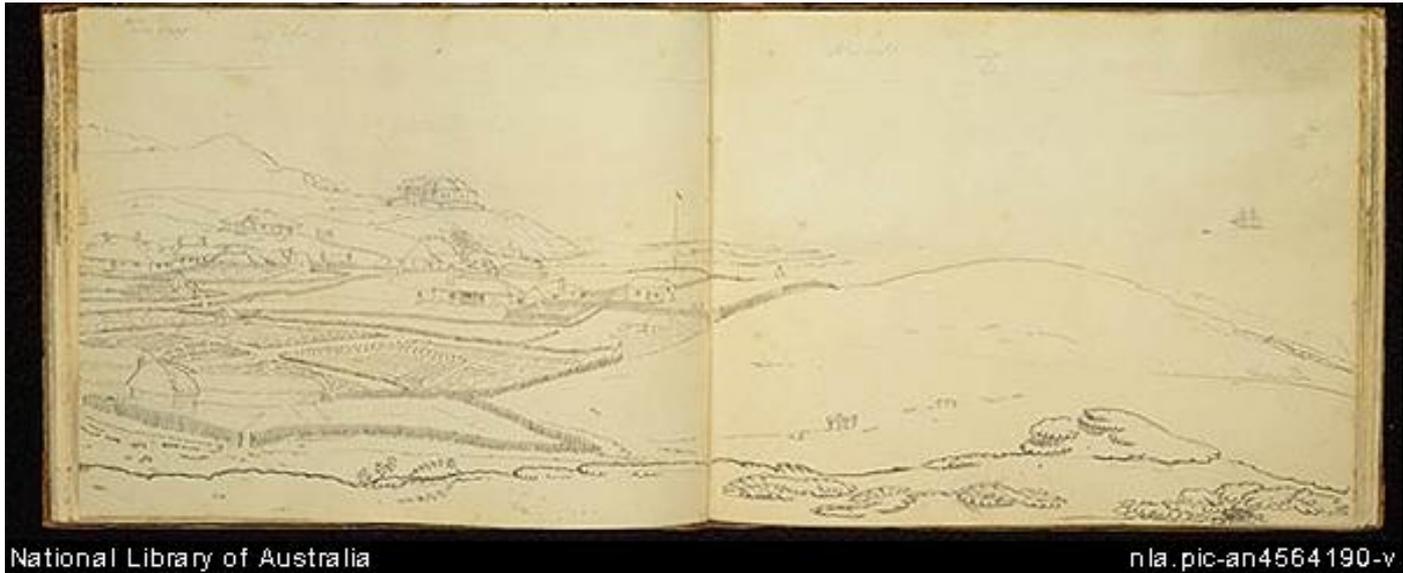


FIGURE 11 Sophia Campbell Newcastle- National Library of Australia.

Interestingly the flagstaff is not featured in the 1820 image of Government House (Figure 1), or in Campbell's panorama of Newcastle (Figure 6). However another image by Campbell does show precisely where the flagstaff is positioned in relation to Government House (Figure 13). This image is likely to have been produced after 1821 when the blades were erected on the nearby windmill (current Obelisk site). The flagstaff appears to be quite close to the cliff edge, and there is some distance shown between Government House and where the flagstaff is positioned on the cliff. When analysing the entire panoramic image (Figure 12) it is likely that Government House was in line with Watt Street, or possibly even slightly west of what was to be the extension of Watt Street.



FIGURE 12 Sophia Campbell's Panorama of Newcastle- Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

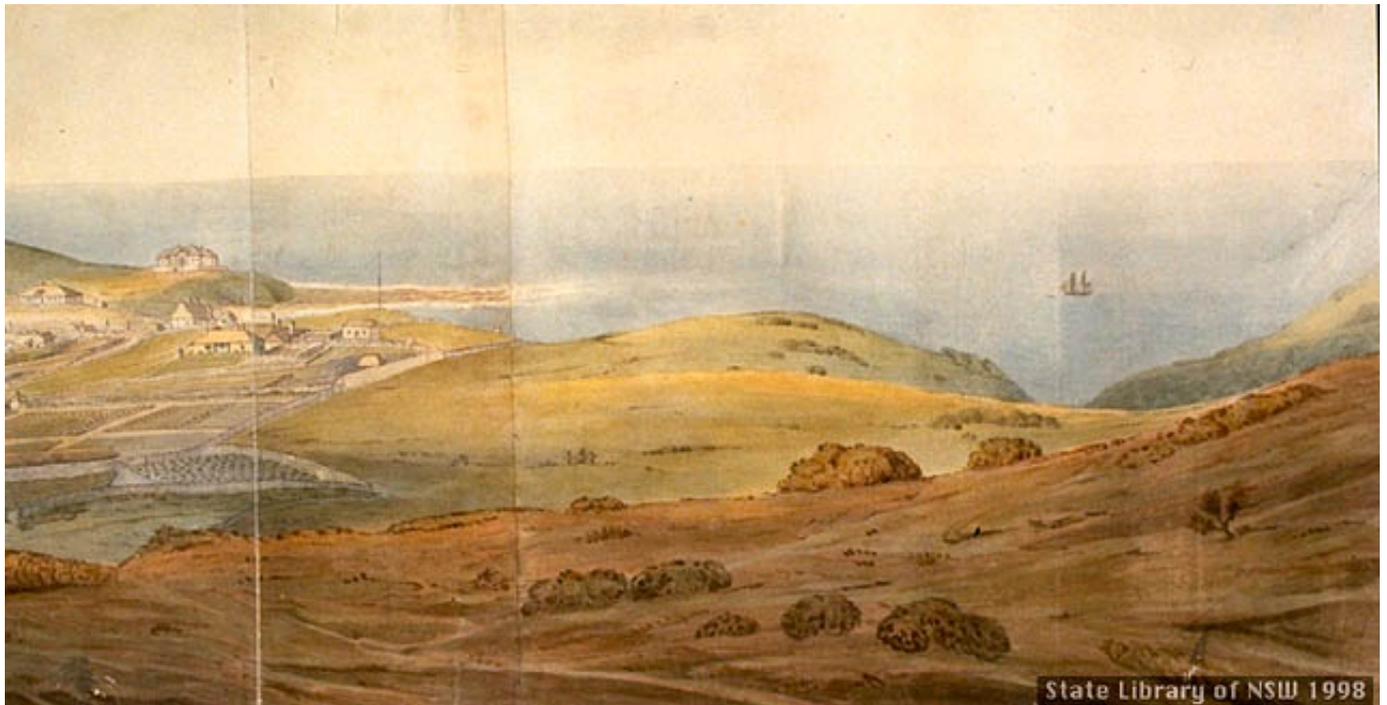


FIGURE 13 Sophia Campbell's Panorama of Newcastle- Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

The following images to be discussed were completed prior to 1819. This time period is prior to when any repairs and additions to Government House were reported to have taken place. Lycett's painting (Figure 14) of Newcastle in 1818 shows quite vividly the numerous buildings in the settlement, including Government House which has commanding views of the settlement (near the flagstaff). The Government gardens are identifiable next to Government House. Interestingly in this image there is another smaller house shown beyond Government House, and is nearer to the cliff (east of Government House).

This smaller house has not been identified in any of the later images discussed so far.



FIGURE 14 Joseph Lycett 'Settlement of Newcastle 1818'- Newcastle Region Art Gallery Collection Newcastle Region Art. Gallery, Purchased 1961 with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund, London.

The most obvious variation in this image is the architectural design of Government House and how it is quite different from other images of the house after 1818, which have been previously discussed. In this earlier artwork by Lycett the front of the house has a deeper and more open style veranda. The general design is also quite different to the period after repairs and alterations are reported to have taken place. This suggests that a major part of the structure (including the frontage) was rebuilt, possibly after it had been destroyed by fire. It is unlikely that this open style of verandah had been closed in to alter the look of house, and for it to appear as it does in the 1820 image. The structure of the house as shown in 1820 looks to be an original structure, mainly because to its solid façade. The sandstone back portion of the house in Lycett's painting looks similar to the front section of the house as it is shown after 1819.

If Government House had been destroyed by fire prior to 1818, then it would not be unusual for the remaining fabric of the building to be rebuilt. Any solid structures were

likely to have been reused or even incorporated into another building. There is also no sentry box visible in Lycett's earlier image. It is interesting to think that perhaps there was no need for a sentry box to guard Government House prior to 1819, as it becomes evident only during Morisset's rule. Was there perhaps an increased need of protection for Major Morisset?

The copper engraving by Walter Preston (and drawn by Brown) in 1812 also clearly shows Government House (Figure 15). A smaller dwelling beyond Government House as depicted in Lycett's painting is also shown. The flagstaff is visible in Prestons engraving, and this adds further confirmation that it is the Government House site. Preston's image is important because it verifies that Government House existed in 1812, and possibly even earlier depending on when the sketch for the engraving was produced.



FIGURE 15 Preston, W. Newcastle in New South Wales with a distant view of Port Stephens, taken from Prospect Hill [picture] National Library of Australia.

It is interesting to reconsider Cunningham's report that Newcastle contained two Government Houses. After analysing both Preston and Lycett's early images of Newcastle, which show two houses nearby the flagstaff, it is interesting to consider whether Government House may have co-existed with an earlier Government House. Further analysis needs to be done to examine whether this smaller house was in fact

the first Government House in 'King's Town' (possibly built about 1804), and existing until around 1818. As previously mentioned there would have been a need for a much larger house to accommodate the Commandant's and their families, as the settlement grew during the first decade.

Bauer's image of King's Town in 1804 depicts simple dwellings not dissimilar to the smaller house that is shown in Preston's engraving (Figure 15). This image also symbolises the authoritative significance of the site and its position near the flagstaff.

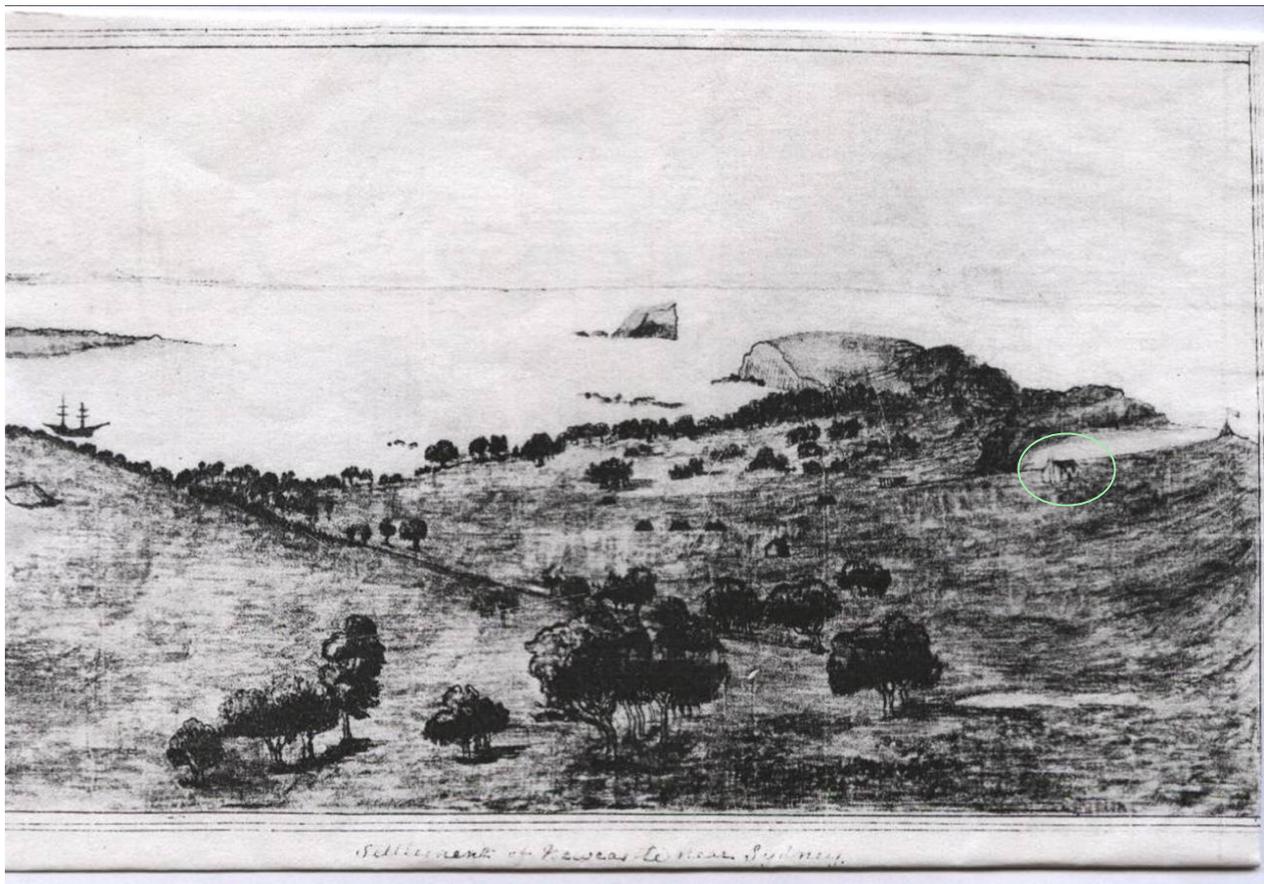


FIGURE 16 Ferdinand Bauer 'Settlement of Newcastle 1804'- Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales

It is relevant at this point to distinguish between the two differing architectural styles of Government House as depicted in the periods prior to and after 1819. The previous analysis and discussion of artworks has identified that there was a substantial change to the main building of Government House. This is particularly evident in the changes to the front section of the house.

There is a considerable lack of visual representations of the Government House site and its surroundings after 1821, and this has contributed to the assumption that Government House no longer existed after 1824.

The next image to be discussed is a watercolour painting by John Rae and shows the Government House site from a position in Newcomen Street (Figure 17 &19). This image is a particularly important historical sketch documenting Newcastle's streetscape in 1849. The image shows the Wesleyan Church which once stood in Newcomen Street, as well as the elevated military barracks and Former Military Hospital (right side of image). These military buildings still exist today on the 'James Fletcher Hospital' precinct.



FIGURE 17 John Rae (watercolour painting 1849) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

John Rae's watercolour panorama of Newcastle was exhibited at the Calcutta International Exhibition in 1883, with some of Rae's other sketches of the Colony. The exhibition also showed photographic and watercolour paintings (panoramas), demonstrating the contrast between the two mediums, as well as showing the strides that the Colony had made in the intervening years (1849 to 1880). This well known watercolour from Newcomen Street was placed side by side in exhibitions, with Rae's photographic panorama of Newcastle, which is thought to have been taken between 1875 and 1880 (Figure 18). The contrast shows the change in the streetscape from 1849 to the 1870's, and of the development that had occurred during this period. Rae was able to capture the rapid growth of Newcastle in the mid 1800's by using his talent for sketching as well as his later passion for photography.



FIGURE 18 John Rae's Panorama of Newcastle- Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales.

These images also illustrate the structures that existed on the former Government House site (figure 19 & 20).

John Rae came to Australia from Scotland in 1839, and in 1843 was appointed Sydney's first town Clerk. In the 1850's Rae became interested in photography, and in a lecture that he gave at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in 1855 on the techniques of photography, he advised, "I am anxious to make some of you amateurs like myself" (Kerr 1992). The watercolour that he completed of Newcastle in 1849 was developed with the aid of a camera obscura, also known as a sketching camera that he constructed himself. This technique meant that it is likely that many of Rae's watercolour paintings are accurate, and therefore reliable when interpreting for historical research. Rae was ingeniously able to combine his artistic talents with the technical skill of photography. He not only produced something that was aesthetically pleasing, but was also able to record reliably the colonial times of Newcastle.



The watercolour panorama done by Rae in 1849 shows the vicinity of the former Government House, and although there appears a building on the site, it looks quite different to previous dwellings shown in earlier artworks (Figure 19).

The building in Rae's watercolour is much smaller, and is not of Government House. Interestingly however, the area of land downhill from the house in Rae's image appears to have had some disturbance to the earth. Perhaps evidence of a previous dwelling. The gable at the back of the house is the only possible identifiable feature that may suggest it to be remnants of the former Government House. There are no other dwellings located in Rae's watercolour painting suggesting any links to past buildings.

During research at the Mitchell Library in Sydney in late 2005, Rae's panoramic photograph of Newcastle was uncovered (Figure 18). This photograph had accompanied Rae's watercolour painting of Newcastle in exhibitions, as previously mentioned. The Newcastle photograph appeared in exhibitions in the late 1800's and was described in *Mr Rae's Sketches of Colonial Scenes in the olden time* (1888). When this photograph was found in the archives at the Mitchell library, it had not been identified as being that of Newcastle, nor had its significance been documented by the library staff regarding its association with the earlier watercolour painting of Newcastle.

It is likely that Rae's photograph of Newcastle was taken between 1875 and 1880, because the Police Barracks show a single storey (corner of Watt and Church Streets), and this building was not constructed until 1875 (Figure 20). Also according to the *James Fletcher Hospital Conservation Management Plan 2005*, the stables in the south east corner of the hospital site were not built until 1880. Instead, the photograph depicts a gravel quarry in the south east corner, and this is also shown on James Barnett's 1880 plan of the hospital. Rae's photograph is likely to be one of the earliest photographs of the former Government House site and James Fletcher Hospital precinct.



FIGURE 20 John Rae's Panorama of Newcastle 1875-1880- Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales

The article *Mr Rae's Sketches of Colonial Scenes in the olden time* (1888) found inside the album containing Rae's Newcastle photograph, also verifies it's association with his watercolour painting of 1849 (Figure 17).

The Newcastle photograph is not taken from the same aspect as Rae's earlier sketch of Newcastle from Newcomen Street in 1849. Instead it is likely to have been taken from a higher position, such as from the Obelisk. Rae often took photographs of other towns from the highest possible vantage point (*Mr Rae's Sketches of Colonial Scenes in the olden time* 1888). This aspect provides a bird's eye view, particularly over the southern end of Watt Street and the 'Newcastle Hospital for the Insane'.

The far right side of the photograph shows a back view of the Former Military Hospital (circa 1843). This building as mentioned earlier is often referred to as the

'Commandant's Residence', however it is a mystery as to why this name is used. The symmetrical design of the 'Former Military Hospital' is very similar to the design of the Government House as shown in some of the artworks discussed. Numerous articles have incorrectly named the 'Former Military Hospital' as the Commandant's residence and there seems to have been much confusion as to why the term is used. Even the local street directory refers to it as the 'Commandant's Residence' (*Yellow Pages Directory 2006*).



FIGURE 21 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2006. Courtyard of 'Former Military Hospital'.

Rae's photograph of the Former Military Hospital shows a well shaft at the back of the building (Figure 20). The location of the well shaft is consistent to where one of the Asylum shafts is thought to be situated, this was depicted in a newspaper article showing mine subsidence in the area (Scanlon 1985). This subsidence occurred in

1987 when there was a collapse of a shaft in the backyard of the Former Military Hospital. This was witnessed by resident at the time Ms Elizabeth Thwaites who lived there with her husband who was Superintendent of the hospital at the time. The photograph accompanying the article shows the precise location of this convict shaft (next to the kitchen), and the area today is a courtyard for Monet's café (Figure 21). The location of the 'well' as it appears in Rae's photograph, is in the same position as the 1987 subsidence of the "convict mine shaft". It is interesting to consider whether the construction of a well on the site, was an effective way of reusing what already existed there, a hole in the ground, a mine shaft. It has been well documented that there was often flooding of mine shafts on the site, and reports of the 'Wallis shaft' having in it swirling water, and the adit visible on the nearby cliff used for drainage of the shafts (*Newcastle Morning Herald & Miner's Advocate*, 21 July 1943). Much of the site frequently experienced water drainage problems, and as mentioned earlier there may have been either viaducts on, or planned for the site (as depicted in Figures 1 & 8).



FIGURE 22 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2006. Adit in cliff opposite hospital site- Nctle South Beach.

Rae's photograph (Figure 20) is very important because it shows exactly what was happening on the site in the late 1870's, particularly in the vicinity of the former Government House. The photograph shows a rectangular shaped dwelling, with a frontage facing down the hill, just inside the main gates and within the grounds of the hospital. There has been another storey added to this building, as well as outbuildings and a backyard. This original building was known as 'Gate House', however current

literature refers to it as 'Fletcher House' (Figure 23). Gate House is known to have existed in 1842 and details about its construction are vague, there is a need for further research to be conducted on this building. The original building has survived the numerous additions.



FIGURE 23 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2006. Fletcher House, also known as 'Gate House

Rae's photograph does not yet show the construction of the roadway in Ordinance Street, however there is a well used dirt track around this south east area of the site. The *Newcastle Chronicles* in 1864 reported that work had been promptly commenced on the upper portion of Watt Street to install guttering and kerbing. The article also says that, "The importance of this street is very great, it being the one in general use by those visiting the post office and the Hill." (*Newcastle Chronicle's* 9 January 1864 p3). From the photograph it is difficult to see whether this work had taken place in Watt Street. As mentioned previously there are minimal visual representations of the upper section of Watt Street in the 1800's.

Rae's photograph does however show quite a change in the area of Watt Street compared with his earlier watercolour painting of the site in 1849. The building circled in

Rae's 1849 water colour painting (Figure 19), shows 'Gate House' which as already mentioned is in use today and a significant building on the James Fletcher Hospital precinct (Figure 23).

Similar to Rae's photograph is an engraving of Newcastle in 1886 (in Appendix) which shows 'Gate House' at the main entrance of the hospital. However, this image shows the building to be much different to how it is depicted in Rae's painting, as it has a double storey addition as well as outbuildings. From 1907 onwards Gate House has continued to exist, however the building has had quite a number of additions, at present it is in reasonable condition and used by mental health services. There are plans for the decommissioning of the hospital in 2009, and it is unknown as to what the future use of 'Fletcher House' will be. The original 'Gate House' remains part of the significant fabric of 'Fletcher House', and it is an integral part of the history of the site.

From the analysis of artworks discussed there is not enough evidence to say that Government House continued to exist between 1824 and 1849. The lack of visual representation and documentary evidence of Government House makes it difficult to accurately say whether it was destroyed by fire, and therefore ceased to exist after 1824. Rae's watercolour panorama of Newcastle (1849) is the only image found that documents a dwelling nearby the Government House site after 1823.

Unfortunately there are no other early artworks of the vicinity that have been identified. Instead many of the early artworks of Newcastle depict the harbour area and Nobby's headland.

The following analysis of maps and plans of Newcastle is necessary to further understand the Government House site. However before this analysis, one final artwork will be discussed.



FIGURE 24

John Rae watercolour painting. Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales.

This artwork is another of John Rae's watercolour paintings and is held at the State library of New South Wales (Figure 24). The location of the image is unknown and it is also undated, but depicts a residential house. The image was found in the same album as Rae's photographic panorama of Newcastle, and for this reason seemed worthy of further investigation. There are problems with interpretation of this artwork mainly because of its faintness, in particularly of the landmarks and background features. The image shows the house to be located not far from the sea, which is not dissimilar to where Government House was once situated. Rae depicts human figures in this painting, and these are also very faint. These human forms may have been included as an after thought, or may be a true representation of the people who lived or worked at the house. Also the features in this image are ambiguous as there are two quite nondescript images in the background. There are also buildings and a lighthouse evident and these are located to the left of the house. Directly to the left of the lighthouse appears a mound of earth, which could be possibly interpreted as being that of Nobby's headland Further to the left side of the image is a tall structure, perhaps a light tower which is similar to what existed in Newcastle '*key to the view of Newcastle 1879*'. As mentioned earlier there is no accurate detail that confirms the identity of the paintings location.

Rae uses a freestyle approach in creating this image, and this differs to the technique he used in his sketched watercolour panoramas. Although this artwork is ambiguous and perhaps unlikely to be that of Newcastle, it is worthy of discussion because it demonstrates the changes in design and fabric of buildings in the 1800's.

As mentioned earlier it was not uncommon for building structures to have later additions included.

Rae's 'unidentified House' shows that the fabric of the building is quite different on one side of the house (possibly sandstone) to the other side (made of wood). Perhaps the wooden section of the house was part of an addition to the main sandstone or rendered part of the building. The particular landmarks and the surrounding features, although very faint, are interesting and demonstrate the ambiguity when interpreting many of these early artworks.

This differing fabric in Rae's sketch of 'unidentified House' is also very similar to the image discussed earlier of Government House (Figure 1). And it was this feature that drew initial attention regarding there being some possible link between Rae's house and the earlier image.

Interpretation of Maps & Plans of Early Newcastle from 1822 to 1908

The second penal settlement of Newcastle was established in 1804, and there are very few maps of this early period prior to the growth of the township. In later years government surveyors were employed to produce maps of the settlement. The interpretation of maps, like artworks can be misleading as there are often irregularities and human error made in their creation. As well there can be inaccurate measurement and scale. This part of the paper will discuss and interpret maps of Newcastle from 1823 to 1908. Further on in this paper there will be a discussion regarding all of the documentary evidence, including literature, artworks and maps. Maps can be found in Appendix at the end of this paper.

Firstly, there are three early maps of the township of Newcastle that identifies the Commandant's Residence. These maps are by surveyors Goulburn, Dangar, and the third creator is unacknowledged. All of these maps are dated 1823 and show the Commandant's Residence as a rectangular building facing downhill towards Watt Street. The Commandant's residence appears to be in line with Watt Street as suggested in literature by Bingle (1873). The distance between the residence and

the top end of Watt Street is shown on all of the maps to be three and a half chains in distance. This is equivalent to

Approximately 73 metres. The shape of the building as shown on these maps is consistent with the 1820 image of Government House (Figure 1). However these maps do not show additions or outbuildings to be present at the southern end of the site, as shown in artworks previously discussed. Many of the shaded areas shown in these early maps are of allotments that were given to free settlers, mostly of whom were formerly convicts of the settlement.

A later map of the 'Town of Newcastle on Hunter's River' dated 1826 depicts the Commandant's residence as shown on the three earlier maps discussed. In fact the shape and aspect of the building is identical to previous maps. Similarly, Darcy's map dated 1830 also shows the Commandant's Residence continuing to exist, naming it 'Commandant's Residence'. It is interesting to acknowledge at this point that none of the early convict coal mines are shown on any of these maps of Newcastle. The only exception to this is the 'coal pit' which is shown on Darcy's map, and is on the upper slopes of Watt Street. This 'coal pit' was later named the 'Bowling Green' shaft (Meehan map). There is no evidence of the 'Asylum shafts' of 1814 on these early maps.



FIGURE 25 John Armstrong, 1830 Plan of the Town of Newcastle, Courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library, The National Library of New Zealand

Armstrong produced a particularly interesting map in 1830 (Figure 25), which differs from other maps in this analysis. Armstrong provides further detail to individual structures in the settlement, for example he includes the name of buildings and gives particular detail regarding their shape and design. This map provides much more information and detail about the Commandant's Residence, showing an outline of the veranda, as well as an indentation to the left side of the house. The design corresponds with what is shown in Campbell's image of Government House (Figure 10) of 1819. Also shown in Armstrong's map is an enclosed fenced area and dwelling to the south east corner of the Commandant's Residence. This plan of the Commandant's Residence is similar also to what is illustrated in the 1820 painting of Government House (Figure 1), as well as many other Sophia Campbell sketches and artworks previously discussed (Figures 1,6,7,10 & 13). The back section of the house is particularly detailed and provides the evidence needed to compare with other artworks. Armstrong's unique style of labelling buildings on his map provides valuable information about the use of these buildings in the 1830's. On his map he shows the former Government House as '*Formerly the Commandant's Residence*', indicating that the Government House not only still existed well after what was previously thought (1824) but also verifies its past use. This map also provides detail about section lines in relation to Government pits in the area, for example stating that, "coal to the east of the section line had been worked".

The map by G B White of the '*Township of Newcastle in 1833*', also shows the building '*Commandant's Residence*'. The map depicts the Government gardens continuing to exist next to the Commandant's Residence. It is interesting to consider who may have occupied the residence at this time, as there were no longer Commandants in charge of the settlement (O'Donnell 1969). Commandants had ceased in Newcastle in 1827, although it is likely that they were still in command of soldiers in the nearby barracks. The barracks were situated on the west side of upper Watt Street, and identifiable on allotment thirty six of White's map. It can only be surmised whether or not a Commandant continued to live in the residence, as there is no documentary evidence stating the continued use of the dwelling. It is likely that the term '*Commandant's Residence*' remained into this period mainly because of the prominent past use of the house, and the people who had lived there.

Captain J Allan produced a navigational chart of *'The Entrance to the Harbour of Newcastle'*, and although there is no date located on the map it was most likely drawn about 1850. Visible is a lighthouse on signal Hill, or as it is currently known Fort Scratchley. Also shown is Macquarie Pier which is fully completed. Allan's map shows the numerous buildings on the former Government House and Gardens site, including the Barracks buildings and military hospital. The site was used by the military from 1838 to 1853 (*James Fletcher Hospital Conservation Management Plan 2005*). Captain Allen's navigational map shows a building in line with Watt Street and appears not dissimilar to the other maps discussed. However, it differs from earlier maps in that the building in the vicinity of the former Government House site looks to be halfway between Church and Ordnance Streets, which is higher up the hill from where Government House was thought to have been situated. The earlier maps infer that the 'Commandant's Residence' was nearer to Church Street.

It could be argued whether or not this building in Allan's map is the same building that is referred to in earlier maps. The analysis is made even more difficult because of the lack of documentary evidence about the site between the period 1833 and 1849. This map not only shows a rectangular structure facing downhill, but it also shows an enclosed area at the back of the building, possibly outbuildings and additions similar to that shown in some of the artworks. However it is likely not to be of Government House, but instead 'Gate House' which is thought to exist on the site in 1842 (figure 23).

This building has been previously discussed. This map is important when re-examining both Rae's watercolour painting and photographic panoramas of Newcastle, because both of these images depict outbuildings to the main building on the upper Watt Street.

According to the *James Fletcher Hospital Conservation Management Plan 2005*, a site plan in 1842 shows that the only building that existed between Church Street and Ordnance Street (on the east side) was the "Guard House" (previously known as 'Gate House'). An octagonal structure and outbuilding behind the main building are shown and Guard House is situated just inside the main gates of the current

hospital (Figure 23). This is not dissimilar to what is shown in Allan's map of the late 1850's. The house appears to be situated towards the upper slopes, near where the Commandant's Residence had once been. Today 'Guard House', or as known 'Fletcher House', is used by the Hunter New England Mental Health Service (Figure 26). Fletcher House was constructed as an addition to 'Guard House' in 1928 by Government architect Wells (*James Fletcher Hospital Conservation Management Plan 2005*).



FIGURE 26 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2006. Fletcher House, also known as 'Gate House'. Side view taken from Former Parade Ground.

Nearby on the site the Former Military Hospital also exists and was completed in 1843. There may be some significance regarding plans for new buildings on the site and when Government House ceased to exist. This idea will be discussed further.

It is likely that some changes took place on the 'Government House' site during the period between 1833 and 1842. However because of the lack of evidence about the site there are no exact dates as to when these changes occurred. At some point Government House ceased to exist and the Guard House was erected on or nearby

the Government House site. 'Guard House' was built to service the military who occupied the site from 1838 to 1851.

The Military Hospital is a symmetrical shaped residence (not dissimilar to Government House) and was built approximately 180 metres from the former Government House site in 1843 (Figure 3). The Military Hospital was later used as a home to personnel of the military and later the superintendent's of the hospital. As previously mentioned the 'Former Military Hospital' is often referred to as the 'Commandant's Residence', and this interchangeable use of the term creates perhaps a curiosity about the name's origin and its misuse. It is interesting to consider why the term 'Commandant's Residence' is used when it is an inaccurate term for the building (Former Military Hospital). Perhaps this term has been passed down through oral history.

It is also interesting to consider whether the building, 'Former Military Hospital' was built to replace the 'Commandant's Residence'. If in fact White's map of 1833 is correct in showing the Commandant's Residence as continuing to exist, then this would provide the evidence needed to show a lesser period of time between when the 'Commandant's Residence' ceased to exist, and the establishment of the 'Former Military Hospital'. This is an idea that has not previously been considered. Planning begun for the Military barracks in 1835, however there were many delays in construction and the military Hospital was not completed until 1843. The need for a residential style cottage (Military Hospital) may have been intentionally planned as a replacement or even as a reminder of Government House, when eventually it would cease to exist. From the evidence provided by White showing Government House existing in 1833, there may be a much closer association between these two buildings. From evidence provided in this paper it is thought that there is a two year period between when Government House was last known to exist, and when decisions were made regarding a changed use of the Government gardens site.

Government House may have been destroyed by fire as popularly thought, or it could have been demolished because its design was not going to serve the new purpose for the site. The need for a Guard House instead of a residential house at the main gates of the site may have induced the necessary changes to the

Government House building. Clearly Government House was not going to serve this new purpose.

The 1857 '*Plan of Newcastle*' continues to show the Commandant's Residence and the old barracks, however what is new in this map is the existence of the 'Great Northern Railway' line which finishes at the harbour wall. This map appears misleading because although it shows the Railway (established in 1857), it fails to show the extension of Macquarie Pier to Nobby's Island, which was completed in the late 1840's.

As mentioned earlier, none of the maps discussed so far have shown the convict mine shafts which were mentioned in primary literature sources. However a report on the *Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence at Newcastle*, published in 1908 does depict the two convict coal shafts named, the 'Asylum Shafts'. One of these shafts is shown in the report as being half way up the hill of Watt Street, and just within the main gates of the hospital. This shaft 'Wallis shaft', mentioned earlier by Bigge, was thought to adjoin Government House. The other asylum shaft shown in the report *Royal Commission...* is in the vicinity of the 'Former Military Hospital', and in the position of the old well as shown in Rae's 1870's photograph. In the south west corner of the hospital precinct

The *Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence* report is important because it provides the link between primary literature, and the present, giving further evidence about the convict mine shafts that are not widely documented on maps during the 1800's. The report also provides a link to the later newspaper reports about the subsidence in the hospital grounds during the 1930's and the 1980's.

Association between Military Hospital and Government House

During writing up the final part of this research paper, a search of the *New South Wales calendar and General Post Office Directory* (p.219) found that Government House continued to exist in 1835, however later publications do not mention it. From this evidence found in the *Post Office Directory* and

from the analysis of the entire documentary sources both visual and written, it is evident that 'Government House' continued to exist during the first half of the 1830's. There were no documentary sources identified during this research that states exactly when Government House was likely to have ceased to exist, or reasons for its demise.

The change in the use of the Government site during the 1830's also indicates the possibility of the changing use of buildings that continued to exist on the site, such as Government House. Plans for the Military Barracks, Guard House and Military Hospital were delayed during the late 1830's, and it is likely that this military development would need to take into consideration the Government House building. The design of Government House, as well as its significance in the settlement, may in fact have been a considered when planning for new buildings on the site.

Although Newcastle had become a free settlement in 1823, and was no longer primarily a penal settlement, there was still a predominant convict labour force well into the 1830's. After Commandant Allman (last Commandant of Newcastle) left the settlement in 1827, his predecessor was Captain Samuel Wright, of the third regiment (Goold 1948 p.7). Captain Wright's role was not all that different from Captain Allman when considering the colonial context of the settlement at the time. It is interesting to consider whether or not he too resided at the Commandant's residence, after Commandant Allman departed the settlement.

According to the *Conservation Management Plan for the James Fletcher Hospital site 2005*, the Guard House was to be built initially on the north side of the Government Gardens, however there was a later change to have it located on the east side. The northern boundary was found to be unsuitable for the main entrance because the ground would need to be raised and would therefore be too steep to access from Church Street (*Conservation Management Plan for the James Fletcher Hospital site 2005*). By having the main entrance to the east side (Watt Street) would mean a reassessment of the ordinance boundary of the site to ensure reliable and easy access to the site. This change of plan may have explained the delay in the progress of the Military Barracks and other buildings, including the Military Hospital. When this

change to the main entrance was decided, it is worth considering whether or not Government House continued to exist during this time.

The establishment of the Guard House and main entrance on the east side location may have meant a significant change to Government House (if it continued to exist). Therefore if Government House did in fact exist whilst this planning was underway, then undoubtedly it would have needed to have been demolished, because as shown on maps it was situated on the roadway of Watt Street. The east side location of the main entrance would have meant that Watt Street would also need to be extended.

Considering this new evidence that government House existed in 1835, it is possible that it played a role in the design of the Military Hospital. Even though its purpose differs to that of Government House, their designs are not dissimilar. The style of the Military Hospital may have been designed to signify or even replicate the special meanings that the Government House had to the people of Newcastle. Not forgetting the misleading terms that are used today for the 'Former Military Hospital'. The history of the Military Hospital has been masked by many mixed stories about the building, thus creating differing histories. This research attempts to clarify some of the ambiguities that exist, by telling the history of the site according to primary documentary sources.

The Military Hospital and Government House are similar in that they are symmetrical, have four posted verandas, and both have doors leading off the veranda into side rooms. Both houses have decorative architectural detail suggesting their superior, domestic role. The colonial domestic features and architecture indicate a residential building, and although the Former Military Hospital is of a Georgian design, it still remains similar in appearance to Government House, as it is depicted in the 1820's artwork (Figure 1). The purpose of the Military Hospital was predominantly as a hospital for the barracks which accommodated twelve patients. A kitchen was built as a separate structure at the back of the house.

Ideally, further information from the Ordnance Office in England may assist in a better understanding of the changes that occurred on the site during the later part of the

1830's. This would assist to confirm any possible associations between Government House and the Former Military Hospital.

Conclusion

In summarising, the evidence that has been found regarding the Government House site in Newcastle, it has established that two different styles of house have been identified. A predominant brick house is evident in artworks prior to 1819, whereas solid sandstone, whitewashed house, as shown in (Figure 1) is evident after 1819. The earlier Government House is evident in Lycett's image (Figure 14) of 1818 and Preston's engraving of 1812 (Figure 15). Furthermore, if Goold's comments are correct when he says that Doctor Throsby took up residence at Government House, then this may verify that Government House existed in 1808 (Goold 1948).



FIGURE 27

Joseph Lycett. Enlargement of Government House, 1818.

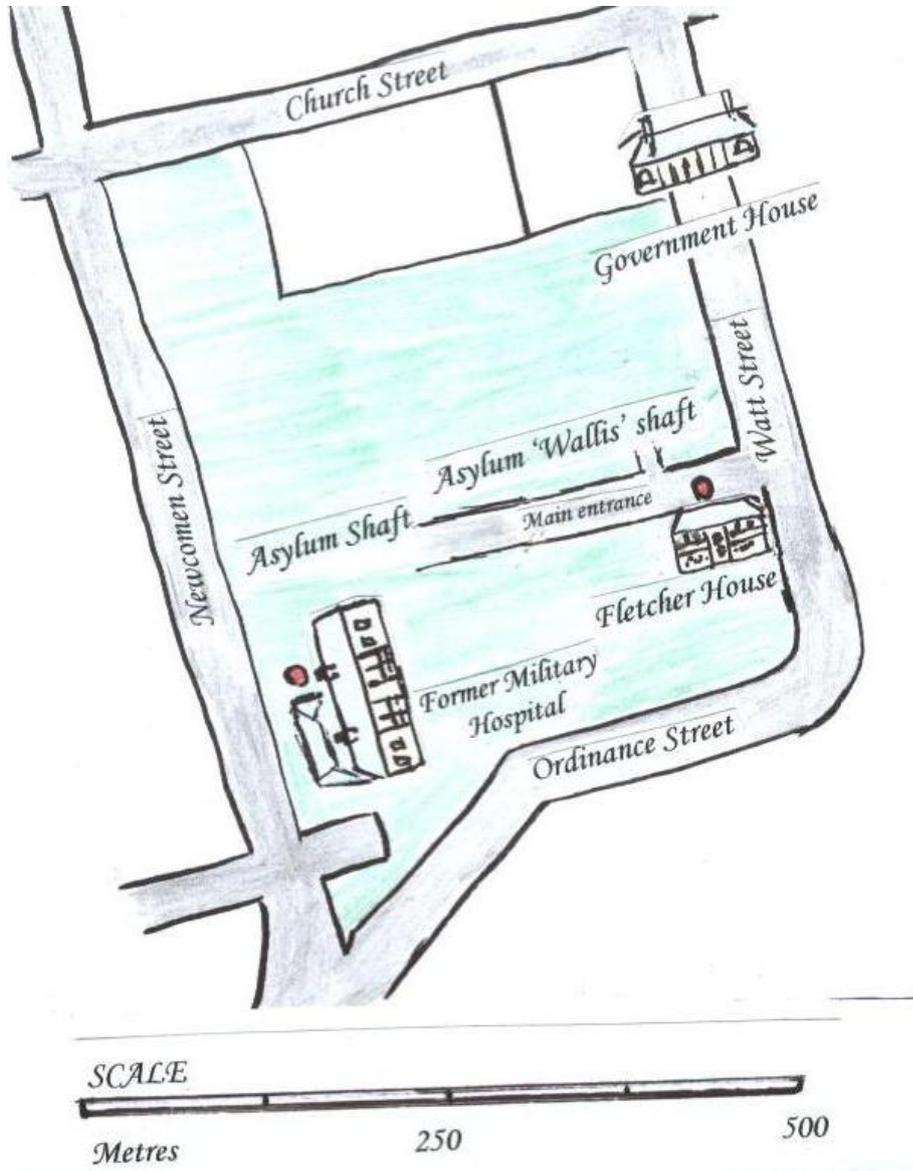
The location of Government House has been identified from Goulburn, Darcy and White's maps as being 'three chains', or sixty metres from the top of Watt Street, which ceased at Church Street. The 'Wallis Shaft', according to Dixons research, is located west of the Government House site. However it has been identified in this research to be located south west of where Government House was thought to have been situated (almost directly at the front of 'Gate House'). 'Gate House' or 'Fletcher House' can be seen in Figure 28 in the top left hand corner of the image, and the position of the car on the roadway shows where 'Government House' was situated in relation to Fletcher House.



FIGURE 28 Photograph: Ann Hardy 2006. Position of car on roadway shows where 'Government House' was situated in relation to Fletcher House, also known as 'Gate House', which is visible uphill.

The 1943 mine shaft subsidence (thought to be that of the 'Wallis Shaft') was 'twenty yards' or ten metres inside the main entrance of the hospital, and this location along

with the suggested location of Government House are shown as followed (Hardy Plan 2006).



- *Asylum Shafts*
- *James Fletcher Hospital Precinct*

Note: Government House is shown on plan where it is thought to have existed.

James Fletcher Hospital Precinct Plan (Hardy map 2006).

Further research is required to find primary documentary evidence which provides knowledge of the James Fletcher Hospital site between 1835 and 1842.

Finally, given the significance of the findings (that Government House existed for much longer than previously thought), it is hopeful that this paper will be used for future management and interpretation of the 'James Fletcher Hospital' site.



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N-1-652

A MAP
of the
TOWN
of
NEWCASTLE

HUNTER'S RIVER
1830
Darcy

A2

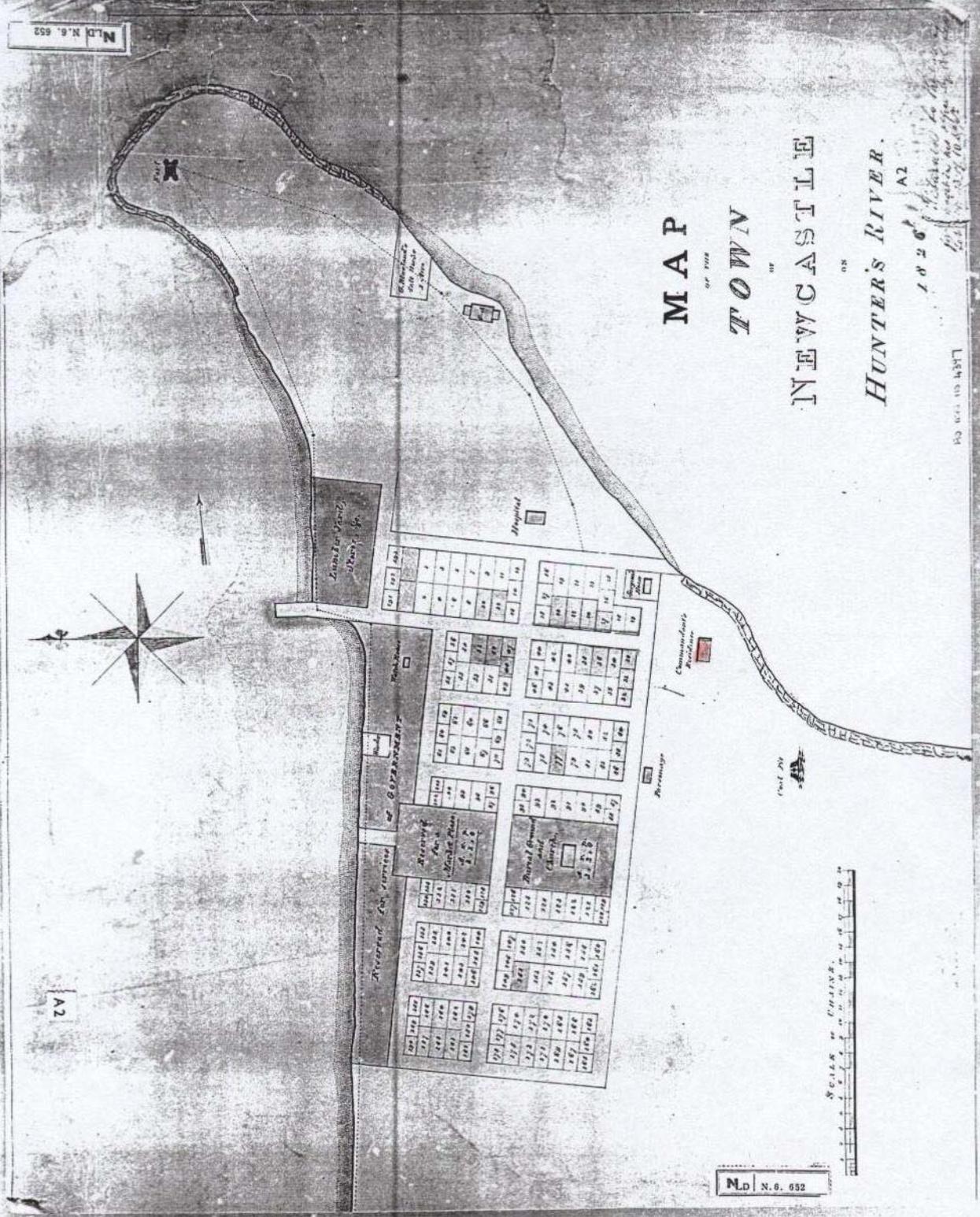
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 3. Mr. Robert Brown
 4. Mr. Thomas Green
 5. Mr. William White
 6. Mr. Charles Black
 7. Mr. George Grey
 8. Mr. Henry Gold
 9. Mr. Edward King
 10. Mr. Richard Lee
 11. Mr. John Hall
 12. Mr. James Young
 13. Mr. William King
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 98. Mr. William Lee
 99. Mr. Robert King
 100. Mr. Thomas Lee

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 OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Darcy A Map of the Town of Newcastle on Hunter's River 1830

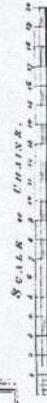
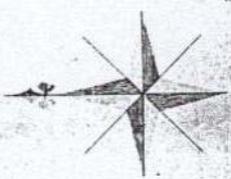


N.D. N. 6. 652

MAP
OF THE
TOWN
OF
NEWCASTLE
ON
HUNTER'S RIVER.

1826

PLAN BY J. H. COLEMAN



N.D. N. 6. 652

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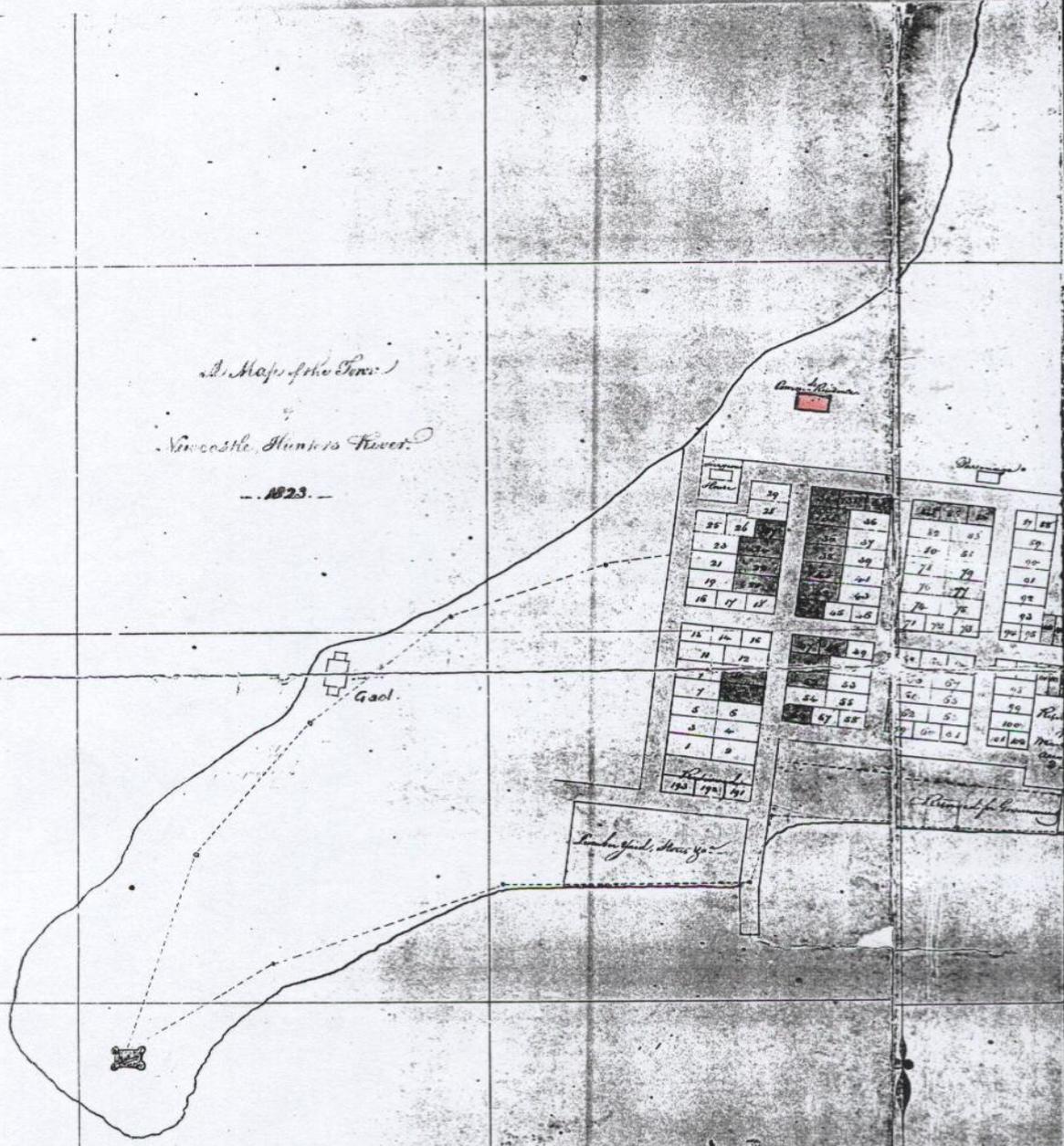
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A Map of the Town of Newcastle on Hunter's River 1826

A2 Plate 1.000

A Map of the Town of
Newcastle, Hunter's River.
— 1823 —



A Map of the Town of Newcastle, Hunter's River 1823.

NLD N. 581

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113. Alexander Watson
114. J. H. Williams
115. Alexander James
116. Henry Dunlop

E R

Lumber & Stores Co.

Government Wharves

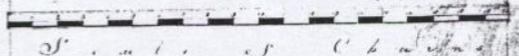
Wald House

G. Blount's
Wharf
1811



A MAP
of the
TOWN
of
NEWCASTLE
on
HUNTER'S RIVER.

1823? see R. H. ...
N 395 disc...



F. Goulburn A2

SZ 300

F. Goulburn 1823? A Map of the Town of Newcastle on Hunter's River

MAP 7

MAP 8

A3

Count House

Number of 20 rods 150

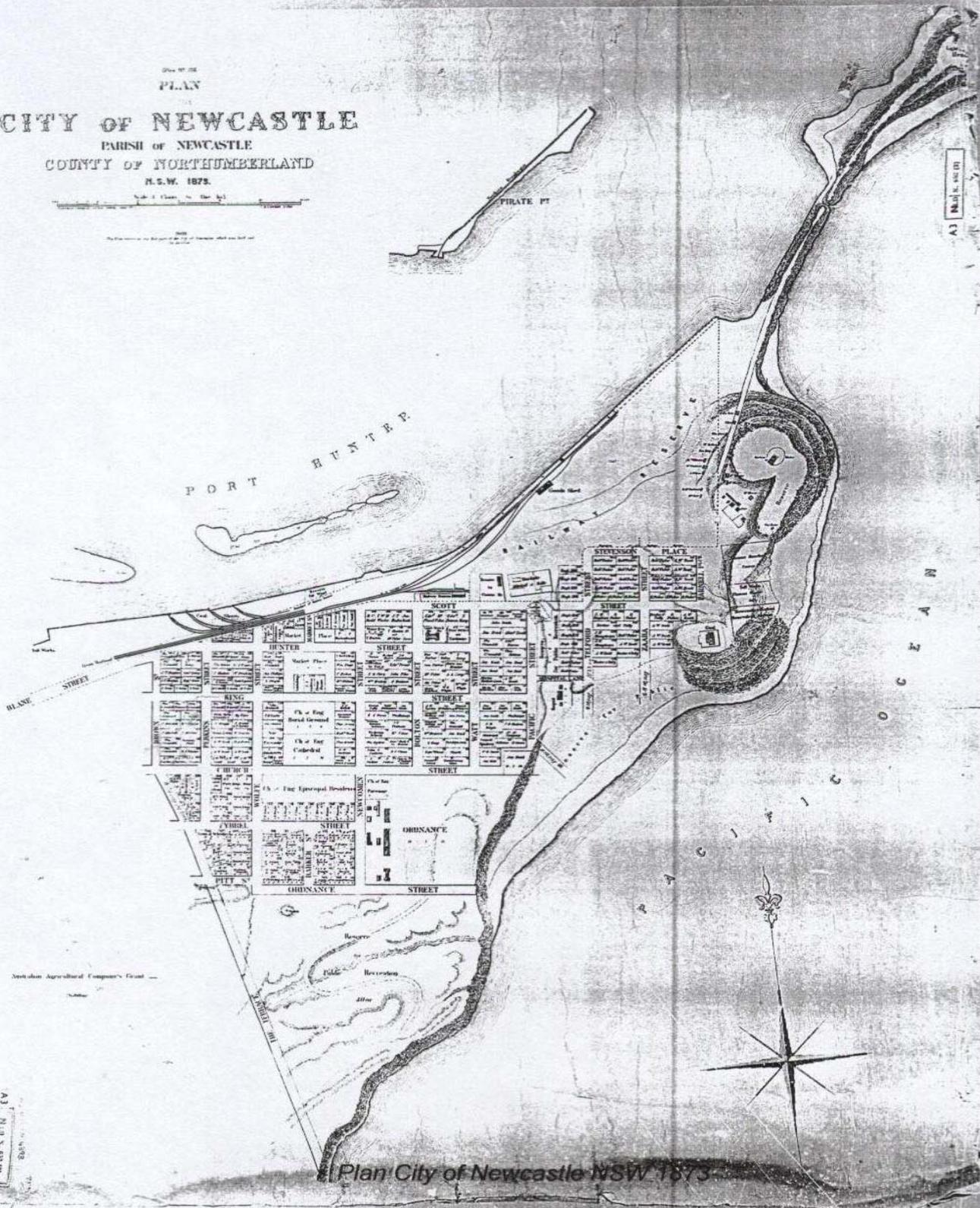
Dangar. Sec N 235

Scale of Chains

Dangar Newcastle 1823

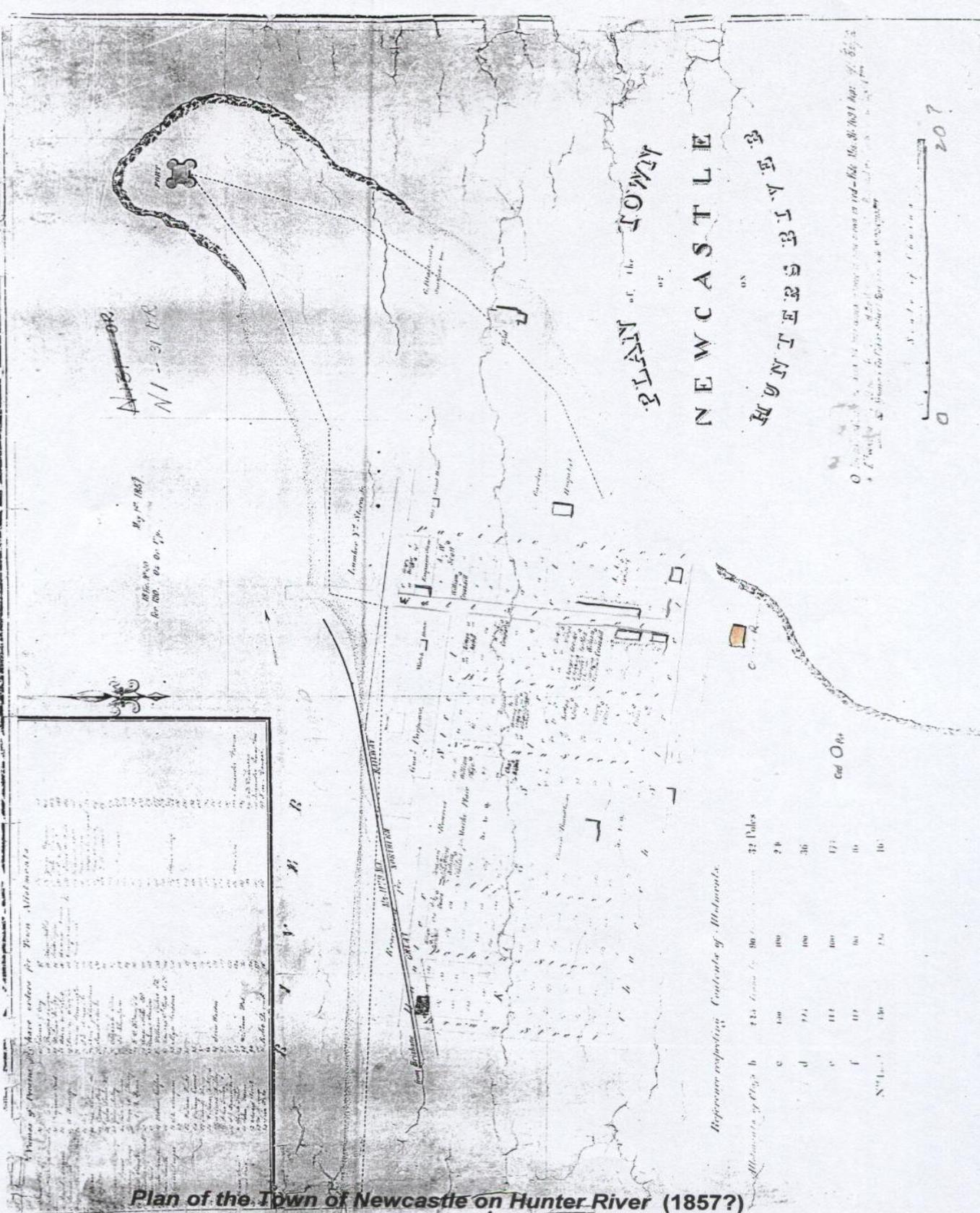


PLAN
CITY OF NEWCASTLE
PARISH OF NEWCASTLE
COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND
N.S.W. 1873.



Plan City of Newcastle NSW 1873

MAP 12



Plan of the Town of Newcastle on Hunter River (1857?)

TOWN-SHIP
NEWCASTLE
by GB White
Sept 6 1833

N.L.D. N. 3. 652

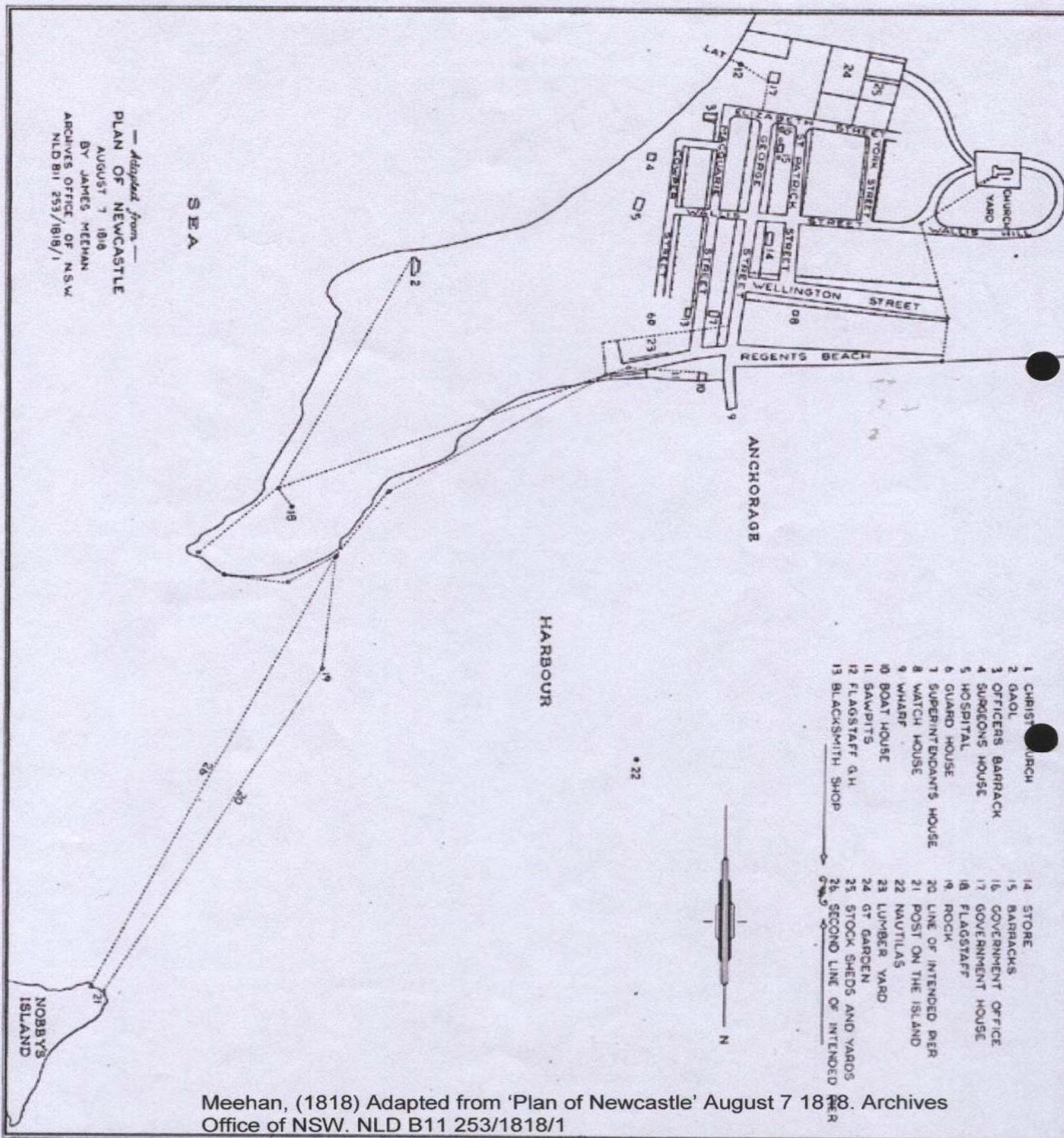


GB White Township of Newcastle Sept 6 1833

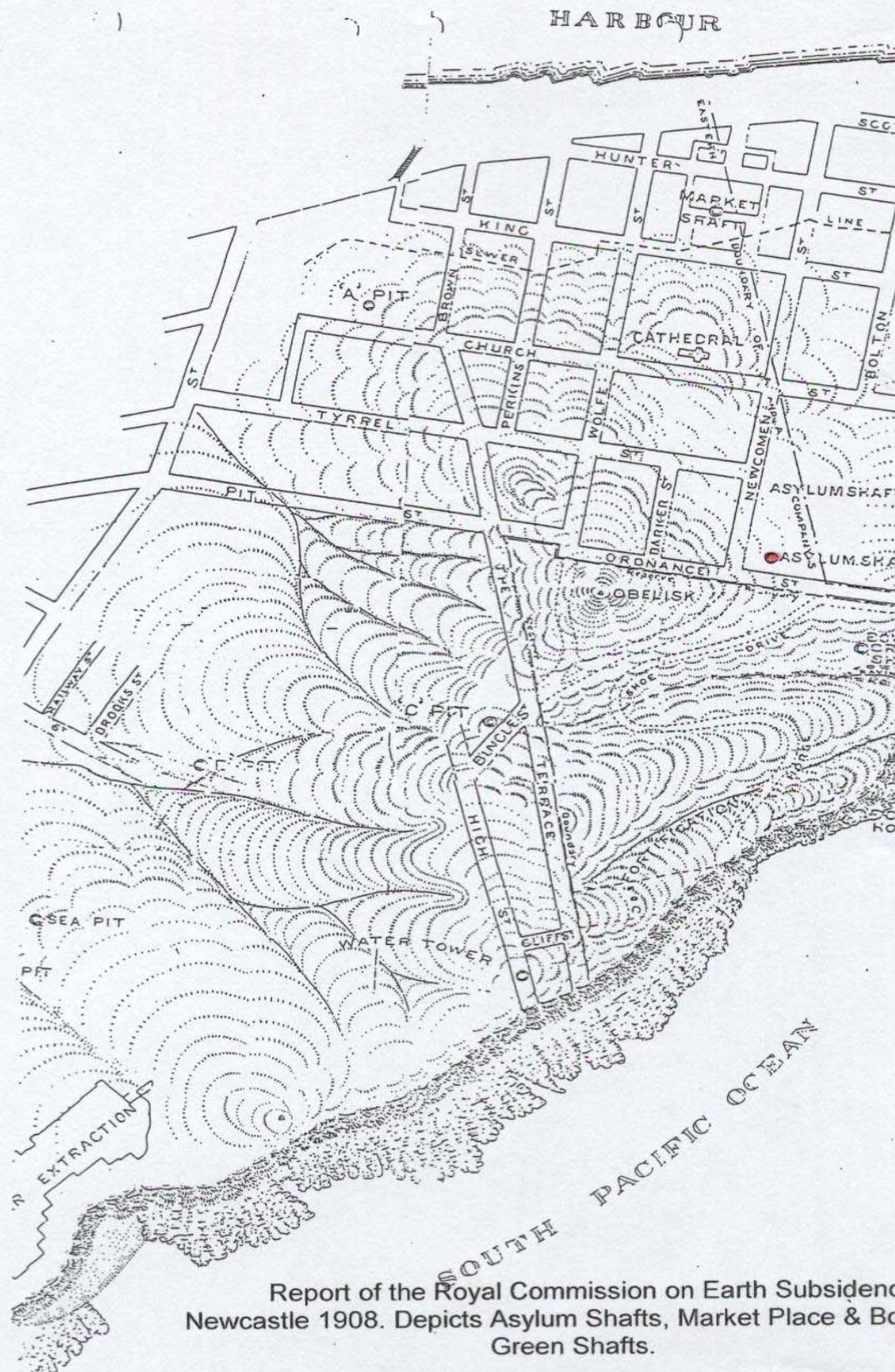
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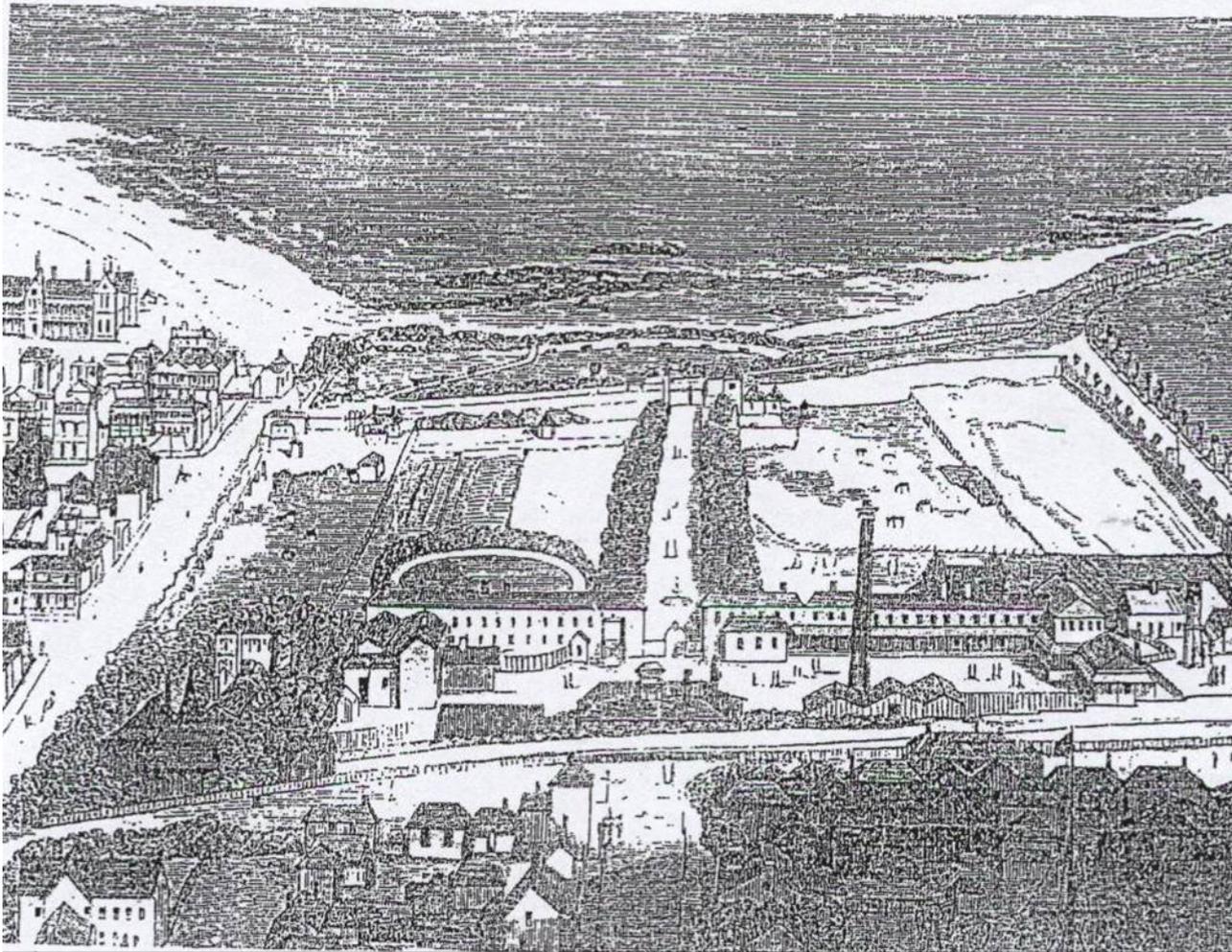
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MAY 7 1



Meehan, (1818) Adapted from 'Plan of Newcastle' August 7 1818. Archives Office of NSW. NLD B11 253/1818/1



Report of the Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence
 Newcastle 1908. Depicts Asylum Shafts, Market Place & B
 Green Shafts.



Post, City ed. 10.7.1955

Mines, drain link



● MRS Thwaites stands by the old shaft site at the rear of the cottage.

Children swam over deep shaft

A CHILDREN'S swimming pool had been erected on top of a deep but unknown convict coal shaft opened recently in the grounds of the Hunter Hospital near Newcomen and Ordnance Sts, Newcastle.

It is believed to be part of the infamous mine system immortalised in the Australian literary classic *Ralph Rashleigh*, written in 1845.

Workmen broke into the 39.6m (130ft) vertical hole in their search for clues behind the recent Obelisk gas explosion.

And these historic first Newcastle coal shafts are now likely to be filled in following the incident.

It was speculated that

● By
MIKE
SCANLON



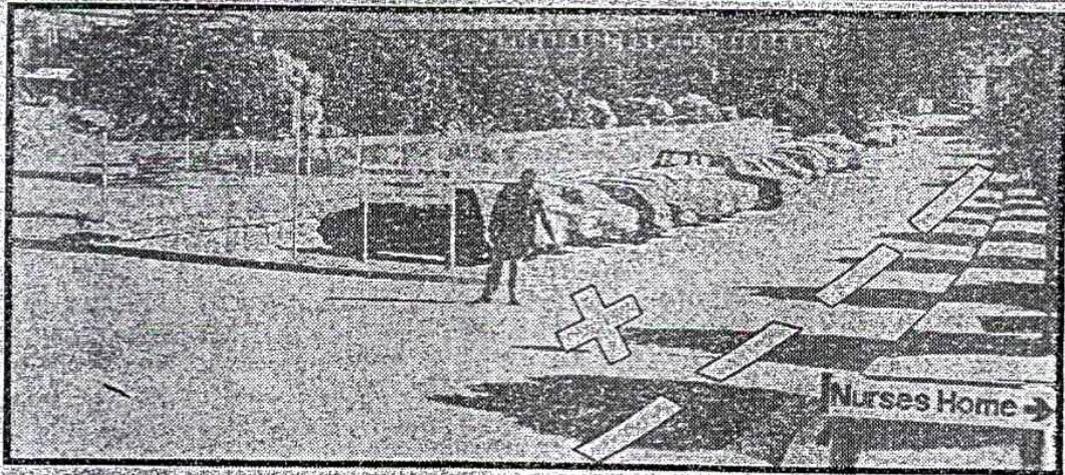
methane gas leaking from the old coalmine workings may have contributed to the blast, as it has now been proved that the mine is still linked to the old drains.

NSW Mines Minister Mr Hills is expected to make an announcement this week into the results of the gas blast inquiry.

The unknown shaft is almost outside the back door of the old Commandant's cottage (built 1848 and possibly the oldest building in Newcastle).

But Mrs Liz Thwaites, wife of the medical superintendent who occupies the house, said they weren't worried about the shaft, which they always believed to have been the cap of an old well.

'Chimney sucking up air'



● X marks the spot just inside the Watt St driveway where the fall-ins have occurred. The dotted-line (right) marks the connecting old brick drain.

● Continued from page 1.

Besides the pool, we've had tables and chairs on it in summer," she said.

"I now understand someone is going to fill the shafts in six months or a year's time. But we are still not worried," she said.

(Workmen after drilling through 304mm (12 inch) concrete cap found flimsy wood and vegetation.)

"We have been here for ten years and there has never been any subsidence."

But *The Post* has heard of another deep shaft behind the nearby grass tennis court and of minor fall-ins in other parts of the hospital grounds as recently as three months ago.

As well on the other side of the hospital grounds in the middle of the driveway just inside the Watt St entrance, the 'Ralph Rashleigh' main shaft dating from 1814 is now known to have fallen in twice in 25 years.

Hunter Hospital plumber Mr. George Oldham said the roadway fell in about 1968, but he didn't know if this was common knowledge.

The perpendicular shaft, 33.8m (111 ft) deep, first fell in July 1943.

"It was like the black hole of Calcutta. You could have driven a small car into it," Mr. Oldham said.

"It was a Saturday

stepped back smartly.

The Public Works Department tried to fill the hole in but gave up after dropping six truck loads of slag into it. It was just too deep. Hopeless job really.

Mr. Oldham said a steel plate was placed over the hole, a concrete slab laid then tarred over, but it didn't seem satisfactory.

He said the second shaft behind the medical superintendent's house may have been an air shaft to ventilate the mine.

High cost to fill deep hole

Mr. Oldham said the delay over the years in filling the Watt St shaft in revolved around who would pay for it.

"I'm told you'd need great big boulders for a start then the Watt St driveway would be out so you're need a detour another driveway around it. You're talking big bikkies."

(Convict James Tucker in his novel *Ralph Rashleigh* described convicts lowered down the shaft by skip (bucket) and remaining underground for the whole week working in seven low passages off the foot of the shaft.)

Tucker wrote that the convict coal miners worked naked in an inferno as large coal fires

20 years after the events from old lags in Newcastle taprooms.)

Regarding the Obelisk explosion, Mr. Oldham said opening the old pit revealed no methane traces, but that smells came and went.

He also believed a gas reading of 15% was still present near the Obelisk very recently.

And Mr. Oldham said the hospital's old drainage system still linked up with the Watt St shaft even though it was thought to have been blocked off.

"We get all the complaints in the world now from people inside the hospital asking whether it's safe wherever there is a gas smell."

"We're under a lot of pressure and the people investigating the gas explosion are pretty cagey about the whole thing."

Another hospital workman later described the Obelisk drains link to *The Post* as 'like a chimney sucking up air to the top'.

And strong gas smells, after wet weather, have been reported at hospital drain outlets outside Boronia House, Acacia Lodge and at the Watt St driveway. The source was never pinpointed and the smells are no longer there.

The old brick-lined drainage tunnel, probably from 1888, is about 2.5m beneath under the main roadway from the Watt St entrance, runs a few

feet back to the Obelisk reservoir.

The drain only appears as an addition on a 1932 location map of the hospital used by plumbers there.

Old passage was blocked

About half-way along the driveway, the drain branches off into newer drains to carry Hill stormwater into the harbour.

(It previously connected with the Watt St shaft and then ran out of a tunnel in the cliff face above Newcastle South beach.)

This small section was thought to have been blocked off permanently by concrete, but a recent search revealed it is actually partially open and a potential source of gas build up from the nearby shaft.

And the hospital grounds still puzzle. Back in March 1969 a mysterious giant brick cavern measuring 55ft long, 30ft wide and 18ft deep was unearthed while the new administration block was being built.

The underground tank, built in the late 1840s, still held 50,000 gallons of water. Re-drainage tunnel, probably from 1888, is about 2.5m beneath under the main roadway from the Watt St entrance, runs a few

feet from when the grounds were used as soldiers' barracks.

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