



Hawkesbury City Council

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Information on the Government
Domain and Andrew Thompson's
Lease

date of meeting: 30 June 2020
location: audio-visual link
time: 6:30 p.m.

The landscaping of the river banks around the Windsor Wharf and the Old Government House site pre-1794 to 1854: Historical facts to consider.

Information supplied by Jan Barkley-Jack

The Hawkesbury River southern bank pre-European settlement

There is much recorded evidence for Aboriginal occupation in the area of the river bank around the area of today's Thompson Square and the old Government House.¹

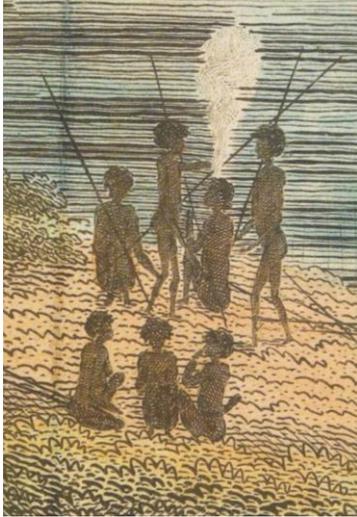


Figure 1: Detail of Wallis, showing Indigenous people camped near the early government precinct high river bank near the site of the Hawkesbury Government House. 'A View of Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains', Captain Wallis, etched c.1820, Courtesy of St Andrew's College, Sydney, in J. Barkley-Jack, *Hawkesbury Settlement Revealed*, 2009, p. 21.

A Government Precinct was reserved

On the high lands between the 1794 grants of 'Wilcox Farm' and that of the 1795 grant of 'Whitehouse Farm' at central Mulgrave Place, Acting Governor Paterson reserved an area of around 46 riverfront acres [18.3 hectares] for a Government Precinct.²



Figure 2: Part of a map of the grants given (both promised and registered land grants) at Mulgrave Place in 1794, showing some grants immediately downstream of the land that was to become the civic square in the government precinct the following year (marked with a blue triangle). Map compiled by Jan Barkley-Jack, drawn by Andrew Wilson, USACL in Barkley-Jack, 2009, pp. 56-57.

¹ W. Thorp, 'Hawkesbury Museum, Site of Proposed Extensions, Baker Street, Windsor: Archaeological Assessment', Cultural Resources Management Plan for Hawkesbury City Council, 2002; E. Higginbotham, 'Report on the Archaeological Excavation of the Site of the Extensions to the Hawkesbury Museum, 7 Thompson Square, Windsor, N.S.W. 1992', report to Hawkesbury City Council, 1993; Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd (2011) *Windsor Museum, NSW: Aboriginal archaeological and cultural salvage excavation. AHIP #2119*. Report to Hawkesbury City Council; KNC (2012) Windsor Bridge Replacement Project - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage - Cultural Heritage Assessment Report. Unpublished Report to NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

² Land Grant Register 1 and 1A, NSW Land Registry Services, 1794, 1795, pp. 1/104 to 1A/145 (1).

Today this Government Precinct land falls between Arndell and Baker Streets and the Hawkesbury River and South Creek, Windsor.

A civic square

Gradually from 1795 a civic square developed in the north-western corner of the Government Precinct as part of the area where the first wharf, provisions store, military barrack, granary and lock-up were established. In the north-eastern section the Commandant's barrack became a Government House from 1800. In the south-eastern sector a lease was given to ex-convict John Harris and in the south-western corner the district's first burial ground was established, all in the eighteenth century.³

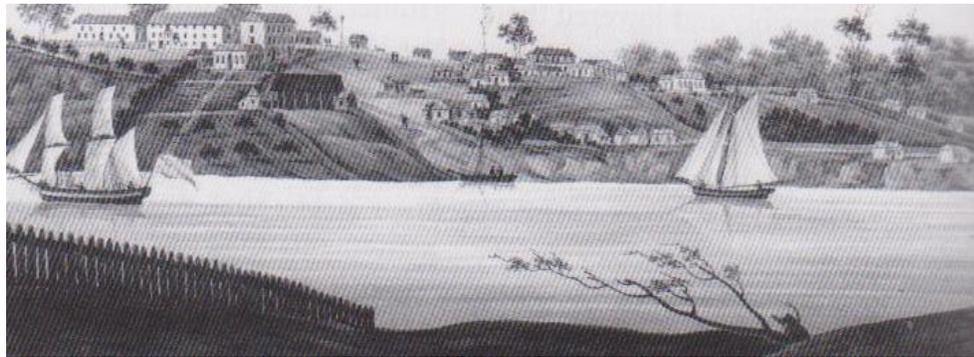


Figure 3: 1809, civic square in north-western part of the Government Precinct in the village of the Green Hills showing the numerous small dwellings and offices that had given the square the appearance of being a part of the village of Green Hills. Evans, ML, NSW, PXD 388, 3, fol. 7.



Figure 4: c.1809 view of the eastern edge of the civic square and the southern bank of the Hawkesbury River, showing (r. to l. in foreground) one of the civic square's early log granaries and Andrew Thompson's lease beside the granary, his boundary clearly fenced with paling between the two. Thompson's small whitewashed cottage and his orchard sit north of his three storey retail store and dwelling. In the background are the three-storey Government provision store, the Schoolhouse and on the left, the Government House. The boundary of Thompson's lease is differentiated by a row of trees from the curtilage of the Government House. The government riverbank entry is a corduroy path of logs devoid of landscaping except for the row of trees lining the path along the ridge. G.W. Evans, ML, NSW, PXD 388, 3, fol. 7.

³ Collins 1, pp. 340, 341, 394; Collins 2, pp. 143-144, 148; *HRNSW* 3, pp. 75-80; Barkley-Jack, 2009, pp. 66, 292, 293- 294; *HRNSW* 4, pp. 190, 213, 152, 155.

Ex-convict Andrew Thompson took up his position as the youngest of the Hawkesbury constabulary in the district around 1796. As the other constables all had properties of their own on which to live, it is likely that Thompson took up residence in a tiny dwelling in the square itself. A small cottage in the government area close to the watch-house and easily accessible to all would be expected, and it is known that on 1 October 1799, when Hunter formalised the lease, that Thompson was already living there:

I do hereby acknowledge that the ACRE of ground now in occupation of Andrew Thompson...District of Mulgrave Place and bounded on the north by the Hawkesbury River and surrounded on every other quarter by ground reserved for the use of the Crown are to be considered as demised and let for the purpose of building on to the said Andrew Thompson for the term of 14 years...⁴

This cottage is later shown within the boundaries of Thompson's lease in illustrations done by Surveyor Evans between 1806 and 1811. The first map was made in 1812 by James Meehan and is signed by Macquarie.

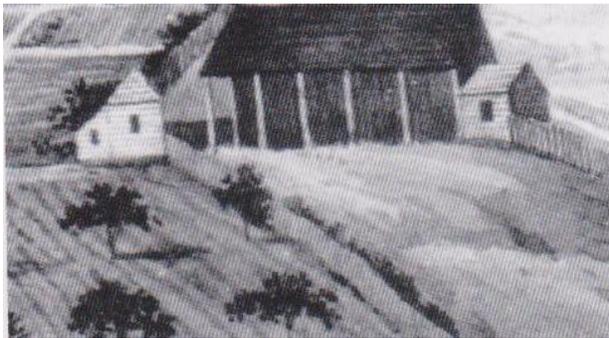


Figure 5: c.1809, white-washed cottage (left of photo) on Andrew Thompson's lease of October 1799. The cottage is shown to be adjoining the paling fence of the remaining granary, as it was sketched by G.W. Evans on the eastern side of Hawkesbury's civic square, and in a similar Evans' painting of 1806. Thompson had probably resided in the cottage since c.1796, although a lease was not formalised until 1799. G.W. Evans, ML, NSW, PXD 388, 3, fol. 7.

The civic square (from 1811 named Thompson Square by Governor Macquarie), within the Government Precinct was from 1795 bounded by Baker Street on the western side of the Square and stretched across to the eastern side of Andrew Thompson's lease issued in 1799, which lease met the land around the Commandant's Cottage/ Government House's western curtilage as the eastern boundary of the square. The square's northern boundary was the river, but the extent of the square to the south was not defined until 'town' grants were made in 1811.

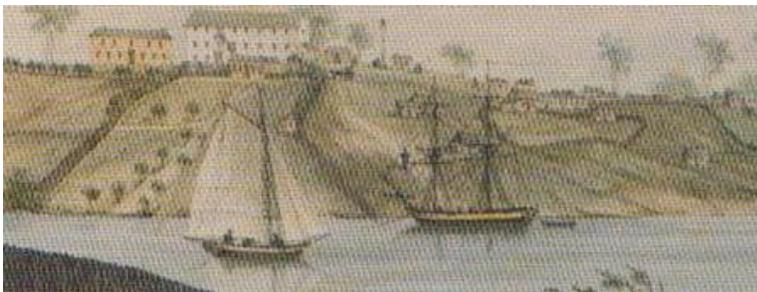


Figure 6: Thompson Square, c. 1811. Thompson's retail store and dwelling is on his lease on the eastern side of the square. Possibly G.W. Evans, ML, NSW call no. SV1B/Wind/6.

⁴ Land Grants Register, Book 2, NSW Land Registry Services, p. 320.

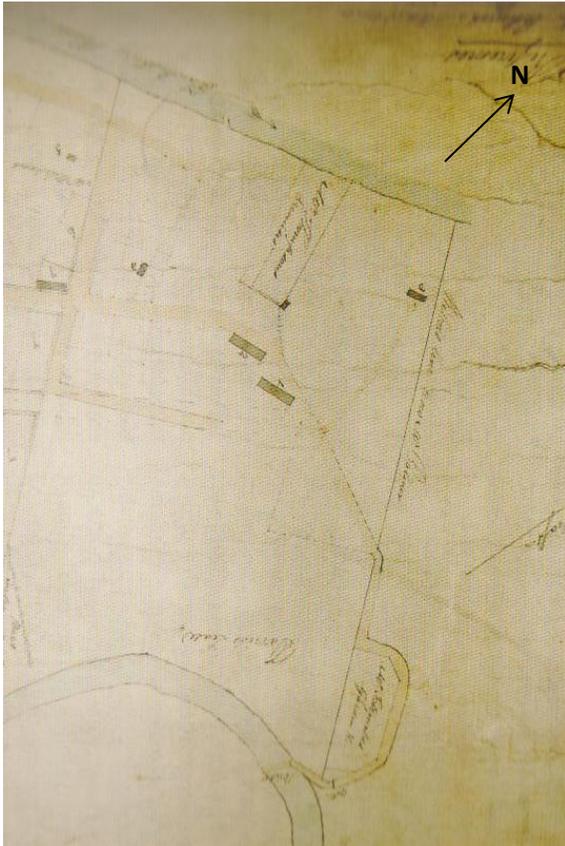


Figure 7: Map, 1812, signed by Macquarie, showing the entire Government Precinct including the civic square bounded to the east by the eastern side of Andrew Thompson's 1799 lease and on the west by the western curtilage of Baker Street. The boundaries of the c.18 hectare Government Precinct are indicated by the outside parallel lines. The two buildings sited close to each other are the Commissariat store and the school. State Records NSW, Map SZ529.

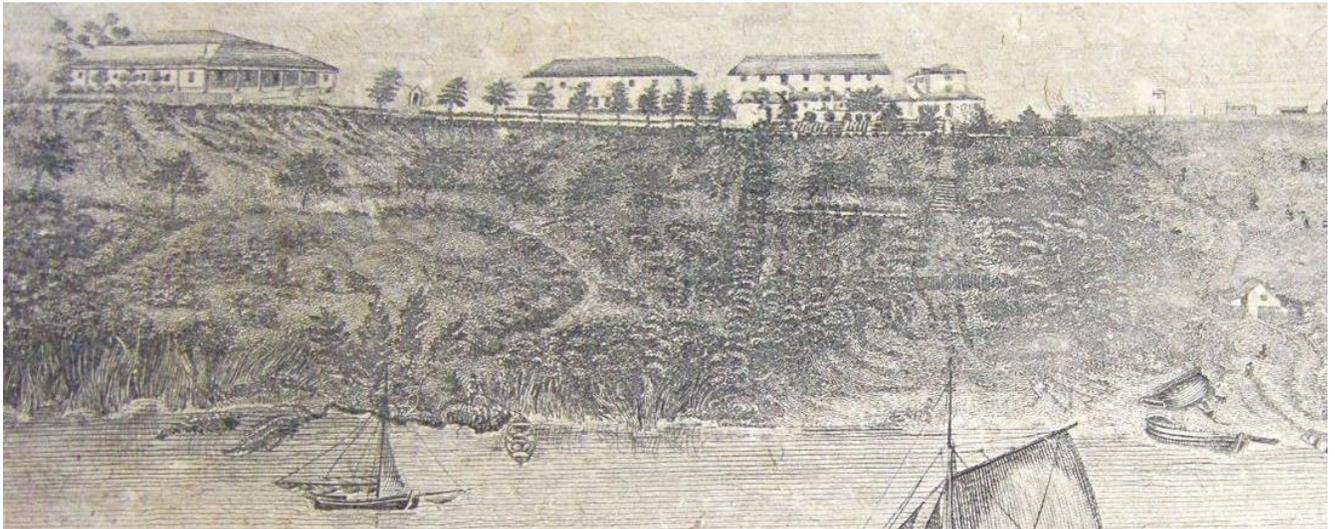


Figure 8: Hawkesbury Government House garden, 1812-1813 after Thompson's lease had reverted to the government and became part of the Government House's garden. It appears much improved by Macquarie. Philip Slaeger, 1812-1813.

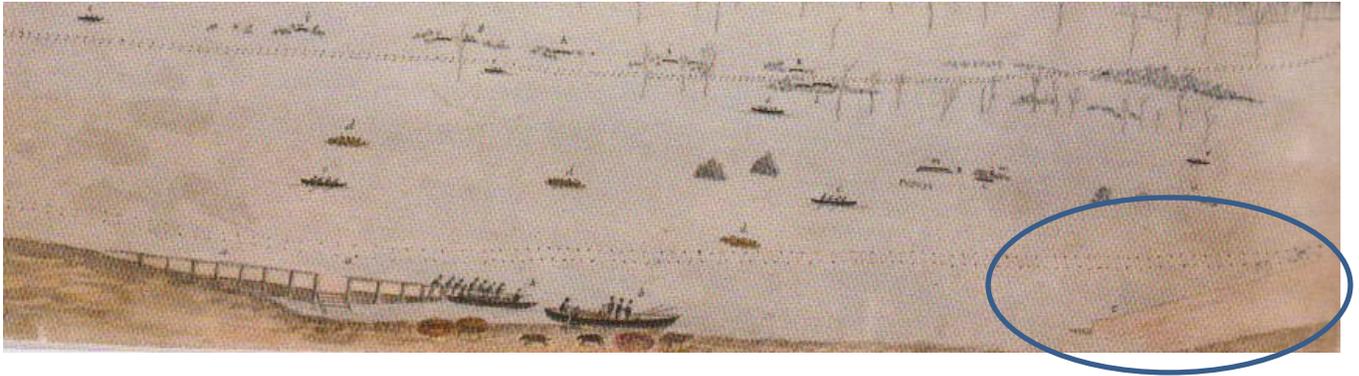


Figure 9: The 1816 flood in Windsor Reach, Windsor. The extent of the flood waters is apparent from the dotted black lines of the painting which indicate the normal width of the river at this point. Marked as item 'c' on the painting, and highlighted within the superimposed blue oval, is the wall of the Government Garden running down to the river and into the floodwaters. The brick wall is at right angles to the bank apparently along the line that had formed the boundary frontage to the open part of the square of Andrew Thompson's lease. At the lower end, just visible as it submerges is a paling or picket type fencing. The wharf is Beasley's wharf. 'Sketch of the inundation in the neighbourhood of Windsor... 2 June 1816', ML, NSW, PX*D264.

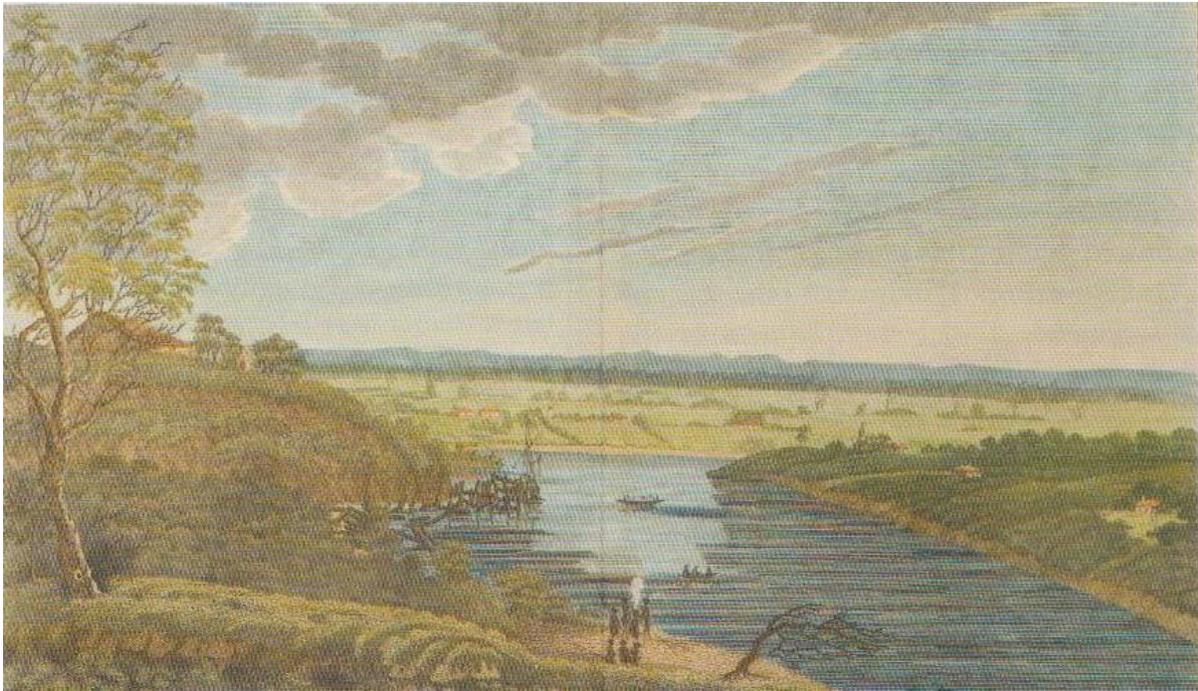


Figure 10: The view from the area adjacent to the Government Precinct at the Hawkesbury settlement in Macquarie's time looking west. It is recognisably the rural sight line visible from Thompson Square today and the left hand bank in the foreground shows Thompson Square river banks together with the square's wharf and punt. 'A View of Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains', Wallis, sketched probably 1816 and etched a few years later. Courtesy of St Andrew's College, in Barkley-Jack, 2009, p. 21.

After Andrew Thompson died in October 1810, his Estate was so large it took years to resolve. The government resumed the lease but didn't immediately purchase the retail outlet and dwelling that Thompson had built on his lease as it was required to do. Thompson's lease became part of the Government Garden and then part of the Government Domain. In 1815 a directive went out from Governor Macquarie that a fence had been built around the new Government Domain and no longer would anyone be allowed to enter the Domain without permission. This was the same as at Sydney and Parramatta.⁵ The Government Domain at Windsor stretched to South Creek and did so until subdivided.

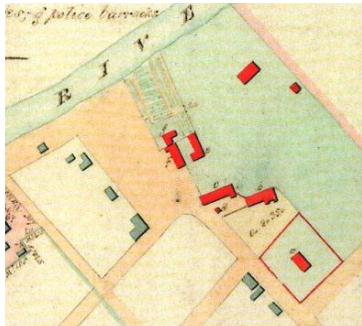


Figure 11: The Government Domain is shaded green on this 1831 map. The street on the right leading to the open area of the Square is what is today Bridge Street. The formally laid out Government garden is beside the river. Abbott, 1831, State Records NSW, Map 1816.



Figure 12: Detail of Government House Garden, 1831. Abbott, 1831, State Records NSW, Map 1816.

The Reverend James Steele takes up the story of the Government House and Domain:

The historical old Government House was sold at public auction by the Crown on the 8th March, 1854, the purchaser being John McCall, junior. The land measured two roods twelve and-a-half perches, having a frontage of two hundred and twelve links to George Street, and two hundred and twenty-nine links to the river.

The old stable and coach house site at the corner was sold the same date to Mr. J.J. Kettle, except the allotment at the corner next the Windsor wharf in Thompson Square, which had been granted for a Manse site to the Presbyterian Church in 1851.⁶

⁵ Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856 [database on line], 19 August 1815, pp. 3-10, Series NRS 897, Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072, ancestry.com.au, accessed 24 March 2018.

⁶ The Reverend James Steele, *Early days of Windsor*, Tyrrell's Ltd., Sydney, 1916, reproduced on line, gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1302241h.html, accessed 24 May 2020.