

4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT – THE PROJECT AREA

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Objectives

This section presents an historical framework for the project area. The emphasis is on the evolution of the cultural landscape within the project area and its connection to its immediate environs.

The purpose of this analysis is to determine how the cultural landscape and its components, above ground and as archaeological relics, have evolved from first settlement to the present time. This analysis provides the evidence that informs all other cultural evaluations and, ultimately, the assessment of significance. The latter provides the basis of making recommendations for management.

Windsor is one of the oldest towns in Australia as well as being one of the five “Macquarie towns” declared by Governor Macquarie in 1810 as part of his policy of encouraging free settlement in the colony. Windsor has a high public profile as an “historic” place. The town has evolved through several periods of development associated with economic and social change. The proposed bridge would be located on the Hawkesbury River at the northern end of Thompson Square. Thompson Square could be said to be the genesis of the town of Windsor; a civic precinct was established there in 1795. It was the focus of almost all the principal government buildings of the early settlement to the 1830s. The relationship to the river and an anchorage there established this place as the direct link between the agricultural settlement at Green Hills and the principal town at Sydney. It became a focus of community and commercial activity.

In the second half of the nineteenth century it evolved into a residential and commercial precinct with the Macquarie Arms Hotel on one corner and houses of varying types along the western and eastern sides. These buildings and public spaces formed an instantly recognisable and much recorded panorama of the town.

On the northern bank of the river settlement commenced in the early 1790s with farms dispersed over a wide area. Much of the landscape was devoted to pastures or crop fields with houses and out-buildings providing a focus for each farm. The ferry, the punt and later the bridge provided the vital link between the farming community on one side and the commercial and service area on the other.

4.1.2 The Analysis

This analysis discusses the development of the project area according to a chronological approach. Within that overriding framework several themes are explored that highlight aspects of particular importance at certain times.

The historical analysis is divided into two broad categories: the first category details the development of Windsor within a regional and local context; the second category discusses the history of the Windsor Bridge in detail.

4.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1 Topography

Understanding the topography of a place is critical for cultural study. Landform influences how places were used and that use can tell us much about the concerns and values of people at any given time. The changes made to the topography to make it more useful can have serious implications for the preservation of older features and deposits of archaeological value, which are concerns for the present day.

Thompson Square is located on sloping ground running down from an elevated ridge line at the southern end of Thompson Square. This rise provided one of the few locations in the district close to the river, but which was not flood-prone. It was influential in the decision of Governor Macquarie to form a town here. The land slopes to the river; but to the north along the river bank and to the west, the ground is a floodplain. Underlying Thompson Square is a remnant ancient sand dune created at the end of the last Ice Age, more than ten thousand years ago.¹⁶ In the intervening centuries a soil profile developed above it that supported distinctive vegetation.

Thompson Square today has been much modified; its original topography is best seen in early images. These consistently record a ridgeline high above the river with the land between them characterised by a steep and uneven descent to the waterline. By the time the earliest images were created around c.1807 the majority of the land in the area of Thompson Square had been cleared and tracks had been formed down the slope and across the contours.



Plate 6: The area of Thompson Square in c. 1810/1811 recorded in a watercolour attributed to William George Evans ("The Head of Navigation Hawkesbury River")¹⁷

¹⁶ A previous archaeological investigation has identified Pleistocene deposits; refer Austral Archaeology (Draft) 2009 for the results of the excavation prior to the construction of the Museum on Baker Street.

¹⁷ ML SVIB/Wind/6.

One feature that may have been instrumental in the choice of this site for settlement is what appears on a drawing of 1813 to have been a narrow sandy beach at the base of the slope. It is not so evident in earlier images of 1807 and 1809 but these could have been drawn when the water was higher. The 1813 image by Philip Slaeger shows what appears to be a semi-circular beach or cove at low tide; what is likely to have been a boat slip was exposed and a boat is drawn up on it. A sheltered, accessible inlet such as this would have been highly desirable for establishing an early landing place.



Plate 7: Philip Slaeger, *A View of Part of the Town of Windsor in New South Wales taken from the Banks of the Hawkesbury 1813*¹⁸

4.2.2 Soil

Windsor is within the Cumberland Plain where soils are deep clays developed from the shale of the Wianamatta Group, Bringelly Shale and Ashfield Shale. Close to the rivers are deep deposits of fertile alluvium.¹⁹ The alluvial sediments, sands and gravels, were deposited by the river systems over millennia and were frequently added to by floods. It was this single fact of fertile soils that made the area the third earliest settlement in the colony as expansion was governed greatly by the need to feed the colonists.

4.2.3 Vegetation

Governor Philip provided the first impressions of the vast tree covered plains to the west and north-west of the settlement at Sydney, describing open, easily penetrable vegetation free of shrubs with an open grassy under-storey.²⁰ James Atkinson described the same landscape in the mid-1820s as "one immense tract of forest land from Windsor to Appin".²¹ He reported it as thick forest with iron and stringy bark trees, box, blue and other gum trees and mahogany.²² Most of the levee banks were covered with tall open forest stands with eucalypts over thirty metres in height.²³ Of the alluvial banks Atkinson write "most of the alluvial lands were originally forest; the timber was large, principally blue

¹⁸ ML DL F81/21 pl.19.

¹⁹ Benson and Howell (1995); *Taken for Granted*: 19.

²⁰ Quoted in *Ibid*:

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ *Ibid*: 21.

and flooded gum with an abundance of the tree known in the colony by the appellation of the apple tree which is of little value".²⁴

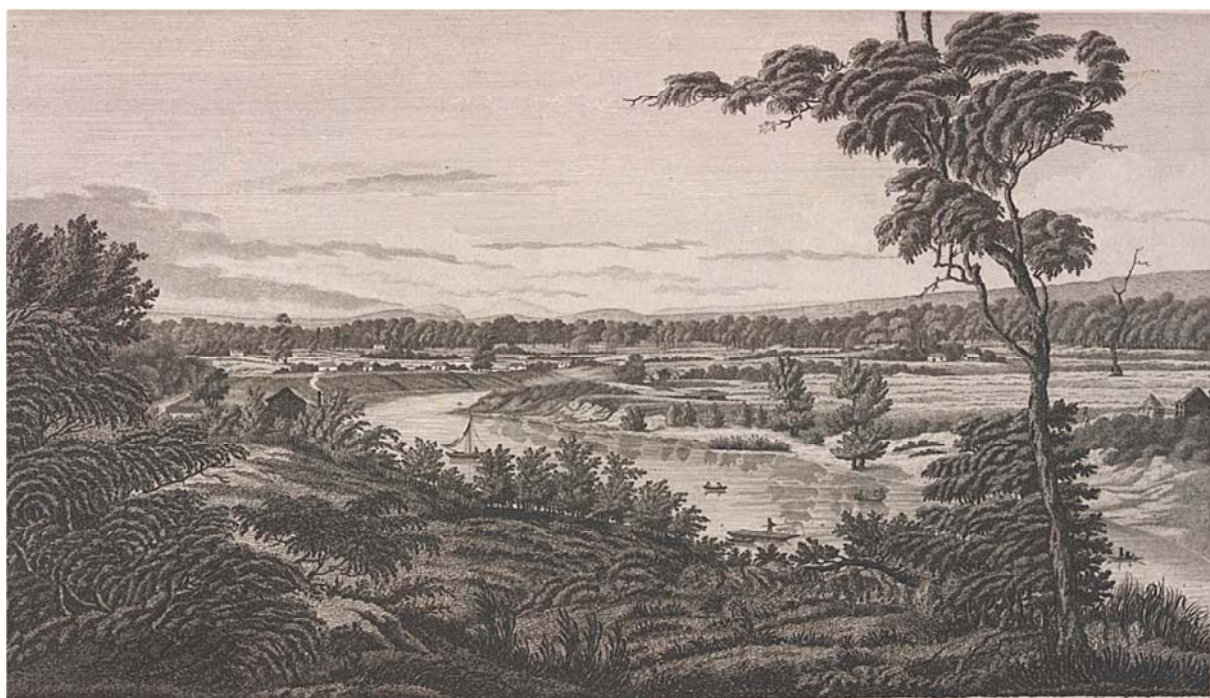


Plate 8: A View of the Banks of the Hawkesbury in New South Wales by H. Preston from a Painting by J. Lewin in the Possession of His Excellency Governor Macquarie, engraving by Absolom West c.1813.²⁵ The building on the left in profile is probably the Government House at Windsor with the area of Thompson Square spreading beyond it.

His gum trees were variations of the Sydney Gum, Forest Red Gum and Cabbage Gum. The apple was the Broad-leaved Apple or Rough-barked Apple. The under-storey was probably spinosa shrub and grasses. Along the levee banks the under-storey appears to have been particularly dense.²⁶

His descriptions are supported by the early nineteenth century images of the area around Windsor. These record the dense tree-cover that is likely to have characterised Thompson Square prior to the arrival of Europeans; this was removed very soon after that arrival in the 1790s to make way for buildings and allotments and to be used in construction. A view of the river in 1813 gives a good impression of the tree cover and native grasses that covered the land closest to the river. The view, dated c.1813 although painted earlier²⁷ shows the impact of the earliest settlers on that vegetation.

4.2.4 The River

The river was the lifeblood of the region and its greatest threat; it provided water and created the fertile soils that made this one of the great food-producing regions of the colony. It also regularly destroyed houses, crops, animals and people when it flooded for miles beyond its banks. Floods not only influenced where and how people settled but the scale of development. By 1810 many settlers who lost crops, homes and family members had given up their grants. It meant that those willing to take risks could amalgamate several grants.

The river's edge was characterised by steep banks; these could separate swamps or marshy depressions from the main river. Those banks are evident in every image of the early settlement. On the western side of the future civic precinct, on the southern bank, was a stream; it was probably influential in determining this as the site of the civic precinct due to the availability of fresh water. The

²⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*

²⁵ ML V*/EXPL/1.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 21-22.

²⁷ The engraved plate by Absolom in 1813 is taken from a painting by John Lewin.

stream is recorded on a survey of c. 1835; it ran through the back of the allotments on the western side of the square. Other streams entered the river further west of this site.

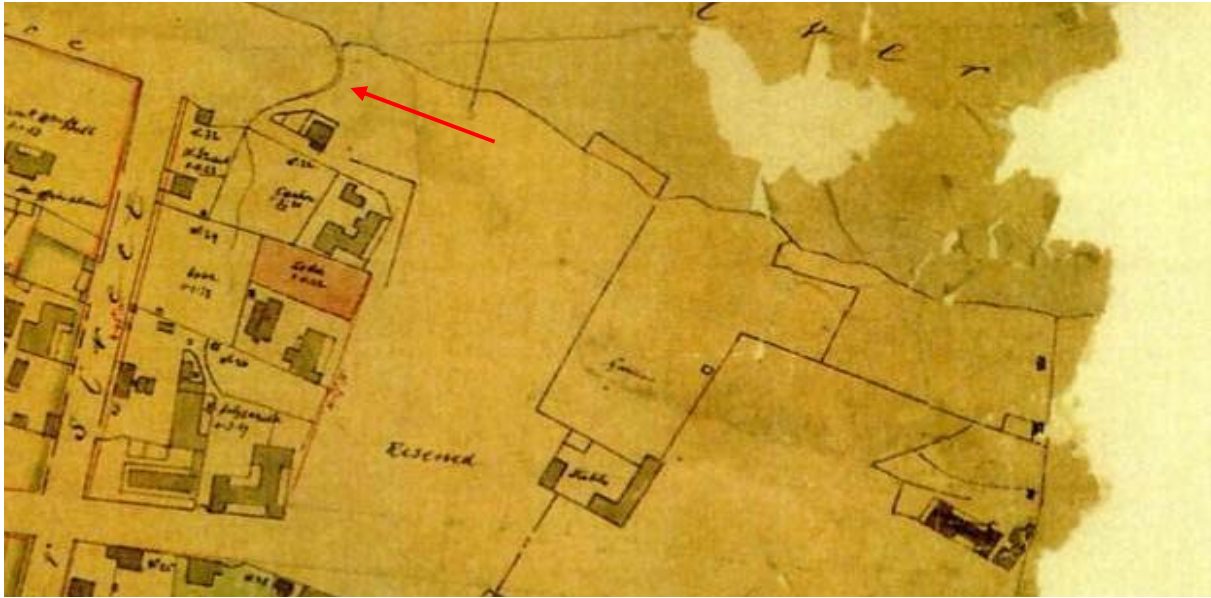


Plate 9: Detail of c. 1835-1840 survey showing the stream running through the western side of the allotments and emptying into the river²⁸

Floods were recorded from the first days of settlement in the 1790s and their impacts were reported back to the main settlement. In 1801 and 1802 the Governor observed that the settlers were in a miserable state due to floods and in 1806 King wrote that *"in their paths, the floods swept growing crops, the wheaten stacks of the years before, stock, tools, buildings and the hopes of the industrious, leaving behind in their wake silt, weeds, destruction and even sand which sometimes turned a good farm into a useless field"*.²⁹

In the first decades of the nineteenth century major floods occurred in 1806, 1809, 1816/1817, 1818 and 1819, emphasising the importance of the elevated ridge.³⁰ The situation stabilised in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s but reoccurred in the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s. In 1857 the Hawkesbury rose thirty-three feet in twelve hours and ultimately to thirty-eight feet.³¹ In 1864 many buildings were destroyed or badly affected; the water was so deep and calm in Bridge Street that it was reported that a counter floated out of the tavern with all the glassware on it intact.³²

²⁸ SRO Map 5968.

²⁹ Quoted in Sue Rosen (1995); Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment: 26.

³⁰ *Ibid*: 38.

³¹ *Ibid*: 76.

³² Quoted in *Ibid*: 76.



Plate 10: Bridge Street in 1879 cut by floodwaters.³³ The view appears to be adjacent to the old police station looking south towards McGraths Hill. The Toll House roof can be seen above the floodwaters to the left. The figure closest to the camera may be standing on the corner of Macquarie Street, which would have since been widened.

In 1870 there were two major, and thirteen lesser floods; the 1870s flood was considered to be one of the most damaging because the velocity of the water was so great. The highest flood was in 1867 and few parts of the town were not inundated; water reached over fifteen metres above the decking of the current bridge. A journalist sent to bring news to Sydney of the disaster vividly reported the impact of this flood on the town and on the northern side of the river:

"the devastation along the banks of the river is truly dreadful. Houses have been washed away with all their content, the inmates having to take shelter in the rocks and caves on the mountains glad to escape with their lives. Farm produce of all kinds...has been carried away or left covered with mud, Orange orchards have been totally or partly destroyed... Some places are covered in sand to a depth of fifteen feet and others have huge swathes cut in them by the raging torrent ... three churches have been totally destroyed. About the neighbourhood of Windsor ... the scene is most dreary and the destruction caused becomes every day more apparent. From Windsor Ferry to the township of Wilberforce and also along Freemans Reach Road to the Highlands there are not more than eight dwellings left standing and most of these are damaged the barns, stables and other out-buildings with a great quantity of fencing have been washed away or very seriously damaged. I should say that a hundred houses in the town of Windsor are more or less damaged and some are completely wrecked".³⁴

From 1799 to 1965 there were forty-one major floods. Thompson Square because of its position in relation to the river was regularly flooded and there are marks on buildings recording the peak levels.

³³ ML SPF Windsor.

³⁴ [Sydney Morning Herald](#) 14 January 1867; 02.

4.2.5 Environmental Impacts

Floods greatly damaged the landscape, especially near the river course, as banks were undermined and collapsed and swathes of adjoining land were washed away. But the methods of land clearance and agriculture used by the early settlers exacerbated the problems. In particular, clearing the trees destabilised the soil and led to erosion and the loss of fields and property.

The problem was recognised early; Governor King issued a general order in 1803 to stop the environmental degradation; he described how:

*“from the improvident method taken by the first settlers on the sides of the Hawkesbury and creeks in cutting down timber and cultivating the banks, many acres of grounds have been removed, lands inundated, houses, stacks of wheat and stock washed away by former floods, which might have been prevented in some measure if the trees and other native plants had been suffered to remain and instead of cutting any down to have planted others to bind the soil of the banks closer and render them less liable to be carried away by every considerable flood”.*³⁵

He ordered fines for those who cut down trees close to the river and he urged those with waterside properties to replant the banks. Another problem of the method of clearing was that the waterways were jammed with discarded timbers. Farmers felling trees in the early settlement simply rolled them into the river where they became a hazard.

The development of Thompson Square exemplified the impact of early settlement on the landscape. The images of the square show that all trees were completely removed by the early years of the nineteenth century. Clearing along the river bank to enable access and a wharf to be constructed, destabilised the banks and many images show clear evidence of banks collapsing and slipping into the river.

Descriptions from the nineteenth century included earlier in this section record the problems of erosion, complete land loss and inundation with silt. These issues continued to plague those living along the river and the same issues affect the present-day community. The flood of 1992 caused a severe landslide on the banks of the river at the northern approach to the bridge. The bridge pylons needed to be shored and the bank reinforced to stabilise it. On the southern side of the river close to the present site of the Windsor wharf stone-filled gabions were used to shore up the banks and the approaches to the southern side of the bridge after the 1990 flood.

4.2.6 AN ABORIGINAL PLACE

Before European settlement, the Hawkesbury was home to a large Aboriginal population supported by the numerous resources offered by the land and rivers. There were two main language groups associated with the Hawkesbury; the Dharug and the Guringai. Evidence of their lives is abundant in rock carvings, paintings and archaeological sites. This evidence indicates that Aboriginal people have been in the area for more than 13,000 years. The local Aboriginal peoples were the Baramatagal, who later in the nineteenth century after disruption by the new migrants, joined with other Aboriginal groups to form the Lower Portland group.

Contact was made between Europeans and Aboriginal people during the initial exploration of the area by Governor Philip in 1791 and continued in the following years. Conflict with the new arrivals in 1794 was gradual but intensified as the spread of settlement denied Aboriginal people access to resources and their spiritual areas. From 1796 troops were stationed in the area to provide protection for white settlers and to disperse and drive away the traditional owners. After twenty years of white settlement the Aboriginal population had been substantially decreased through violence, disease or by moving to areas less populated by Europeans.³⁶

Apart from archaeological evidence much of our information concerning the original owners, their lives and interaction with their environment is provided by contemporary reports written by European observers. As the century progressed much of that observation and commentary became increasingly racially prejudiced but it still provides glimpses of Aboriginal people and their lives in the town in the nineteenth century and their interaction with the townspeople.

³⁵ 4 October 1803; HRNSW Volume 5: 230-231.

³⁶ Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society (1987); The Ferry The Branch The Creek: 4-8.

In 1845 the following was reported;

*"One Monday evening three Aborigines were amusing themselves and several of the Military who flocked around them by throwing the Boomerang in Thompson's Square. Robert Fitzgerald Esq, on seeing the crowd and hearing the noise which they occasioned ordered the Natives to be confined in the watch house. A constable named Brien, who was present at the time, on hearing the Magistrate's order immediately rushed to one of them and dragged and cuffed him along until he was fairly incarcerated".*³⁷

The issue of who was causing the noise was not considered or, as it was reported that it was a just call, but there was an editorial that considered the rights of the Aboriginal people;

*"We do not question the propriety of Mr Fitzgerald's order for imprisoning them but we do question the right of this constable to ill-treat them or any of her Majesty's subjects in this manner".*³⁸

The paternalistic systems of the earlier nineteenth century carried into the later part of the century. An annual "Blanket Day" was arranged on the Queen's Birthday when the Aboriginal people of the district would gather at the court house to receive blankets. In 1881 the local newspaper recorded the names of what they described as the Lower Portland Tribe, a total of thirty-one people:

Eliza Captain 28; Margaret Shaw 23; Jane Shaw 6; Christina Shaw 5; an infant one week old; Sally Barber 23; Charles Cumber 50; Matilda 35; Joseph Frederick 3; Elizabeth Doyle 27; Bertie Newland 24; Tony Barber 3; Albert Shaw 3; Andrew Barber 26; Albert Andrew Barber; Boney Stewart 22; Rachael Lenart; Harry Cubrer 25; Margaret Cumber 30; Willie Cumber 12; Alfred E. Everingham 10; Emily Everingham 2; Sally Bowman 23; Tommy Cox 60; George Captain 37; Johnny Barber 55; Elizabth Barber 24; Edward Barber 8; Charles Barber 6; Arthur Muley 4; Jane Barber 18.³⁹

By the later 1890s it seems that Thompson Square had become a place for isolated groups of Aboriginal people to meet, along with others the town considered nuisances. In 1892 it was reported that *"Thompson's Square appears to be now used for no other purpose than as a resting place for inebriated Aborigines and tramps"*.⁴⁰ A man was charged in 1890 for supplying rum to Aboriginal men near Thompson Square. The constable was congratulated on trying to protect the Aboriginal men⁴¹. A year later another policeman shouted at three Aboriginal ladies camped on the square asking what they were doing there. The ladies replied that they were not "Dora Dora blacks";⁴² a reference to two Aboriginal men on the run from Dora Dora station near Albury. The men were suspected of attacking a settler, Sovran Mursczkvitz, who later died in hospital.⁴³

In 1889 an Aboriginal Reserve was dedicated at Sackville North. The last few Aboriginal residents are reported to have moved from the district to La Perouse in the early years of the twentieth century.⁴⁴

In 1983 the land on the northern side of the river within the project area was acquired by the Aboriginal Development Commission for use as a training farm. It remained as such until it was sold in 1991.⁴⁵

A separate report on the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area and the potential archaeological resources of the project area with respect to this occupation has been prepared for this study.⁴⁶

³⁷ Hawkesbury Courier and Agricultural and General Advertiser 13 February 1845; 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Australian, Windsor, Richmond and Hawkesbury Advertiser 28 May 1881; 2.

⁴⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 10 September 1892; 3.

⁴¹ Sydney Morning Herald 15 March 1890; 12.

⁴² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 22 August 1891; 4.

⁴³ "The Dora Dora Blacks. The Chase Continued. The £5 Note Identified. The Money Of The Murdered Man", *The Brisbane Courier*, Friday 16 December 1892, p 6.

⁴⁴ J. Barkley; "Venrubbin's People" in Barkley and Nichols (1994), Hawkesbury 1794-1994: 03.

⁴⁵ LPI, CT Volume 3512 Folio 239.

⁴⁶ Kelleher Nightingale Consultants 2012.

4.3 MULGRAVE PLACE: 1794

4.3.1 Impetus for Settlement

In the first years of settlement the most pressing need of the colony was for food in order to alleviate possible famine and become self-supporting. The soil in Sydney was poor, and while better results were obtained at Parramatta, the estimates of production were still too small to support the growing colony. In 1793 the colony was still only farming 1700 acres.⁴⁷ The need to find tracts of fertile ground was a priority. The land around present-day Windsor was surveyed for this purpose in the earliest years of settlement but Governor Philip vetoed permanent settlement there due to its distance from Sydney.

4.3.2 First Settlement and Allocation of Land

Specific instructions had been sent from England regarding the alienation of land to settlers in grants, which were followed to the letter by Governor Phillip. Despite the prohibition of permanent settlement at Windsor, when land was granted to James Ruse and Charles Williams by Lieutenant Governor Grose in 1794 these men, along with twenty others and their families, were already established on farms with crops in the ground in the area now called Pitt Town Bottoms. Pitt Town Bottoms is an area to the north-east of the present town of Windsor, well beyond the project area. These first twenty-two farms were primarily located on the eastern bank of the Hawkesbury River and a lesser number on the eastern bank of South Creek close to its confluence with the Hawkesbury River. Between April 1794 and the beginning of 1795 another ninety-six grants were made or promised bringing a total of 118 promised grants in the first year of settlement.⁴⁸

The first settlers called the place Green Hills but Grose called it Mulgrave Place; grants were described as being in “the District of Mulgrave Place”. Five years after the allocation of the first land grants over six hundred people were living in the area. Acting Governor Paterson followed the same method of land distribution as his predecessor offering land without consideration of official instructions. Formal title was in many cases not afforded for several years later than acquisition of the land.

4.3.3 Character of the Settlement

It has been argued that the distance from Sydney and its bureaucracy of this new settlement influenced its character; many of the new settlers were ex-convicts.⁴⁹ To encourage settlement and farming in this district, Grose offered convicts a reduction in their sentences if they took up farming here. As well as ex-convicts, there were poor free farmers and soldiers. Recent research has shown that the population in the first few years of settlement was 95% ex-convict and the remainder poor, free settlers.⁵⁰

This character changed as the separation between the two places was minimised by the construction of a new track from Parramatta, which reduced travel from two days to eight hours⁵¹ and river traffic increased through the local construction of ships. Initially however, this part of the Hawkesbury was a series of individual farms rather than an agricultural settlement with a focus.

What is incontestable is the success of the area for farming. The ease with which good crops could be had from the fertile soil led several commentators to conclude that the settlers were becoming dissipated due to the easy living that arose from these circumstances.⁵² It was to be a stereotype of the local settler for many years to come and has been recently challenged by local historians.

⁴⁷ Karskens, G (2009); *The Colony A History of Early Sydney*, p 117.

⁴⁸ J.Barkley-Jack (2012); *The History of Thompson Square*, p 3.

⁴⁹ Karskens, G (2009); *The Colony A History of Early Sydney*, p 119-120.

⁵⁰ J.Barkley-Jack (2012); *The History of Thompson Square*, p 04.

⁵¹ Karskens, G, 2009, *The Colony A History of Early Sydney*, pp 118, 121.

⁵² For example David Collins quoted in Barkley-Jack, J (2009); *Hawkesbury Settlement Revealed*; 9-11.

4.3.4 Edward Whitton

On the northern side of the river the fertile river flats were allocated in long thirty-acre parcels with narrow frontages to the river. The land on this side of the river encompassed by the project area was granted to Edward Whitton in December 1794 for an annual rent of one shilling, the rent not to commence for ten years.⁵³

Whitton is most likely to be identified as Edward Witten, a twenty-six year old labourer who was sentenced to death in Maidstone in 1783 for highway robbery. He was pardoned on condition of transportation for life. He left England in February 1787 and arrived with the First Fleet on the *Scarborough*.⁵⁴ Sometime in 1792 Whitton began to live with Ann Slator and their first child Jane was born in March 1794. The child died at birth and was buried at St Philips in Sydney.⁵⁵ They then moved to the Hawkesbury after he acquired his grant.

There is no evidence for what improvements Whitton made to his land although almost certainly he cleared it and established some form of home and farm buildings. The first evidence for the developed farm is from the earliest years of the nineteenth century.

4.3.5 The Future Square

Surveyor Augustus Alt prepared the first reliable plan of the new settlement in 1794. This comprised farming allotments to the north east and east of Windsor, facing the river and South Creek. The present day area of Thompson Square (as well as the rest of the future Windsor township) was outside the area surveyed by Alt and it infers that nothing had as yet been developed in that area in the first year of settlement. In fact there appears to have been little thought for the infrastructure that would be required to support the settlers and manage their produce. There is no evidence that in this first year consideration was given to establishing stores or wharves or any form of infrastructure. The only possible suggestion that the site of Thompson Square was considered as a future civic or common area might be that it and the land on both the eastern and western sides of it was not allocated in grants although there was a similar unallocated area on the northern side of the river. In this first year of settlement there is no evidence to suggest that the present-day area of Thompson Square was actively developed in any way.

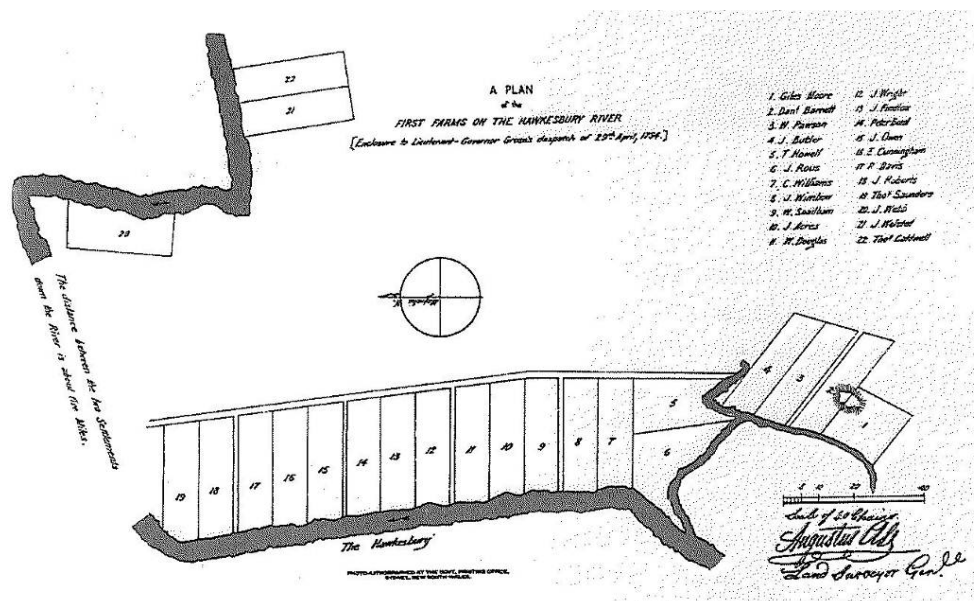


Plate 11: Augustus Alt (1794) "A Plan of the first farms of the Hawkesbury River", (this location is between Pitt Town and the river)⁵⁶

⁵³ Land grant 326 LPI Grants Index Book 1A.

⁵⁴ Don Chapman (1986); 1788 *The People of the First Fleet*; 186 and *Australian Convict Transportation Registers 1787-1788* Home Office HO11 (on line Ancestry.com).

⁵⁵ Edward Whitten Member Profile Ancestry.com

⁵⁶ Rosen 1995: 14.

4.4 GREEN HILLS: 1795 - 1800

4.4.1 The Changing Character of the Settlement

At the invitation of the acting Governor, Captain Paterson, military officers came to the Hawkesbury in 1795 to select land to farm although it is likely, at best, they were absentee landlords. However, the character and purpose of the settlement on the river changed significantly in the same year with the establishment of a store and small military garrison. These buildings and the men who were associated with them were located away from the established area of Mulgrave Place. This new settlement was located further to the west on the southern side of the river where a landing place could be made for boats. This was the genesis of Thompson Square and ultimately of the town of Windsor. The creation of the stores, wharf and small garrison provided the focus for an administrative settlement that became Windsor.

4.4.2 The Growing Settlement and Establishing a Precinct

By the end of 1795 two hundred and fifty-five parcels of land had been granted along the Hawkesbury River and South Creek. What was to become the government precinct and Thompson Square was defined on the eastern side by a grant made in 1794 to Samuel Wilcox⁵⁷ and on the western side by a grant promised to James Whitehouse.⁵⁸ On the northern side of the river the land encompassed by the project area was already granted to Edward Whitton.

There appears to have been no formal decision that the land on the southern side of the river would become a government precinct unless the absence of a grant in 1794 can be taken as indicative of intent, but this is only speculation. There also appears to be no particular reason why this land was chosen; early images indicate that there were other open areas accessible from the river. Perhaps it was a combination of proximity to the road from Sydney and the potential for establishing a landing place at the sandy beach. Barkley-Jack speculates that the decision could have been made by the Deputy Surveyor to facilitate Acting Governor William Patterson's decision that the excess grain and crops of the Hawkesbury could be used to feed the main settlement.⁵⁹ Certainly during 1795 the land between Whitehead's and Wilcox's land was used for government purposes and these defined its character for over half a century.

4.4.3 James Whitehouse to Baker's Farm

James Whitehouse, aged about ten years old, had been convicted in Warwickshire in 1788 for the burglary of a shop. He was sentenced to seven years transportation and arrived with the Second Fleet in 1789.⁶⁰ It is claimed that it was his good behaviour in the colony that earned him his grant. His land on the western side of the precinct was promised to him in 1794 when he would have been about fifteen years old; it was not registered until 1797. There is no evidence to determine whether he made use of his property in any way or even cleared it. Given his young age it seems unlikely; William Baker purchased it with a new grant issued to him for it on 20 June 1800.⁶¹

William Baker was sentenced when he was thirteen years old for stealing two silver spoons from his employer who ran a tavern in London. He was sentenced to seven years transportation and arrived in New South Wales on the *Neptune* in 1790.⁶² He acquired his freedom in 1796 after serving his full sentence. He went on to acquire several properties in Sydney and Windsor and eventually became landlord of the Royal Oak Inn at Windsor.⁶³

At the time that he purchased Whitehouse's grant in 1800 he had been appointed as the first storekeeper responsible for the supplies and a small stores building established by Paterson in 1795 to service the growing settlement at Mulgrave Place and house its produce.

⁵⁷ Land Grants Register Book 1, 133.

⁵⁸ Land Grants Register Book 2, 172.

⁵⁹ J.Barkley-Jack (2012); *The History of Thompson Square*: 07.

⁶⁰ Australian Convict Transport Register 1789-1790 and Michael Flynn (2001); *The Second Fleet*: 609.

⁶¹ SRO Col. Secretary Special Bundles 9/2731; 84-5.

⁶² Member Profiles, William Baker Ancestry.com transcripts of Old Bailey and Michael Flynn (2001); *The Second Fleet*: 145.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

There is an image published in 1798 in David Collins *Account of the English Colony in NSW* that shows Baker's Farm high above the riverbank. There are two substantial buildings, one certainly his house and possibly a barn and other improvements that must date between 1795 and 1798. The image is described as Baker's Farm so it is unlikely that either was the store erected for the settlement. The image also shows the land practices and consequent environmental damage discussed in the preceding section. The trees have been completely cleared from the land adjoining the river; stumps can be seen left in the ground. There is evidence of erosion along the water's edge.

Baker did little with his farm; between 1803 and 1807 while he owned twenty-six acres he had only half an acre under cultivation for peas, beans or potatoes. He had seven cows and a dozen pigs. Baker had a record of improper practices in his duties at the store and he was dismissed in 1810 and his position was taken over by Richard Fitzgerald. On his dismissal he moved to another farm in the Evan district.⁶⁴



Plate 12: Baker's Farm above the Hawkesbury published in 1798⁶⁵

4.4.4 Government Precinct and Reserve

The land between the Wilcox grant on the eastern side and the Whitehouse/Barker land on the west was used as the site for the construction of a storehouse; access to the river was vital. It was this store that Baker was sent to the Hawkesbury to manage.

The store, a wharf and a building constructed to house a military guard formed a nucleus around which the government precinct would evolve over the next decades and through several administrations. Barkley-Jack makes the point, based on several contemporary images, that this government precinct in its original form was much larger than the present area of Thompson Square.⁶⁶ This can be demonstrated by superimposing contemporary plans that record buildings such as the Government House and stores buildings on a present-day plan (refer to Figures 5 to 9). As it evolved the precinct stretched as far to the east as Catherine Street and at least to Baker Street on the western side; from the river, it stretched back to South Creek.

That the land was reserved for Government purposes by 1799 can be confirmed by the conditions of Andrew Thompson's lease within the precinct. This was a grant made to a private citizen (refer Section 4.5.8) that specifically refers to it being within ground reserved for the use of the Crown,⁶⁷

⁶⁴ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 120.

⁶⁵ Included in David Collins "Account of the English Colony of NSW" Volume 1: 340.

⁶⁶ Refer discussion J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*.

⁶⁷ LPI, Register of Grants Series 2; p320.

Meehan's plan of 1812 identifies the site of Thompson's lease and it is located on land bordering the present Thompson Square. Within the larger precinct of official buildings and improvements there was a smaller domain that was specifically associated with the Government House built in 1796. This domain or reserve occupied the eastern side of the precinct providing an open space around the house. It shared a boundary with Andrew Thompson's allotment that was situated on the eastern side of the present Thompson Square.

4.4.5 Clearing the Site

The first works to improve the precinct involved clearing it; the earliest images from the first decade of the nineteenth century show it to be cleared of heavy timber. There are no contemporary plans that show the precise location of the first improvements made to the government precinct in 1795. What is known is that work commenced on the store and wharf immediately in January 1795 and the store was complete a month later, so clearing of the site must have been rapid.

4.4.6 The First Store

The store was built close to the river but not at the lowest level; when it was built the river was at a higher level than normal and receded more than a metre after the building was completed in February 1795.⁶⁸ The store must have been built within fifty feet of the river as it was swept away in the 1799 flood, which was the height that the flood waters reached. It is more than likely that the store was somewhere within the project area at the northern end of Thompson Square, probably towards the centre or western side to be close to the wharf but the precise location cannot be identified from contemporary records. The store was later described as slight and it was reported in May 1799 that, *"the Government Store, which had been built upon the first settling of this part of the country, was not out of reach of this inundation and was, with all the provision, it contain'd swept away"*.⁶⁹

4.4.7 The First Wharf and a Boat Slip

Like the first store there are no contemporary plans to determine the precise location of the wharf but unlike the store it survived into the nineteenth century and images from that period suggest that it was probably towards the centre of the waterfront of the present-day Thompson Square. Evans' 1809 image shows a boat close to the river bank; if it was anchored close to the wharf that would place it in the central area of the waterfront. It is certainly not obvious in any of the pre-1810 images; it suggests that the structure is hidden behind the boats. Further, the main track recorded running down the hill ends at this location; the most likely destination was the wharf. The relationship of this wharf with its replacement in 1815 is discussed in Section 4.7.8; the conclusion from that analysis is that the original wharf or jetty ran out from the beach into the small cove under or close to the site of the present bridge.



Plate 13: Detail of G. W. Evans watercolour of 1809 showing a boat possibly in front of the wharf and the track running down to it⁷⁰

⁶⁸ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*; 07.

⁶⁹ HRA Series 1 Volume 2; 354.

⁷⁰ ML PXD 388 V3 f7.

The 1812 survey of the town might provide some confirmation of this location although it is tenuous. The survey shows a slight break in the shoreline in this area, approximately below the present-day site of the Doctor's House. That might be interpreted as the site of the wharf. If so, it suggests that the original wharf was set out into the river rather than running along the bank as the later wharf did.

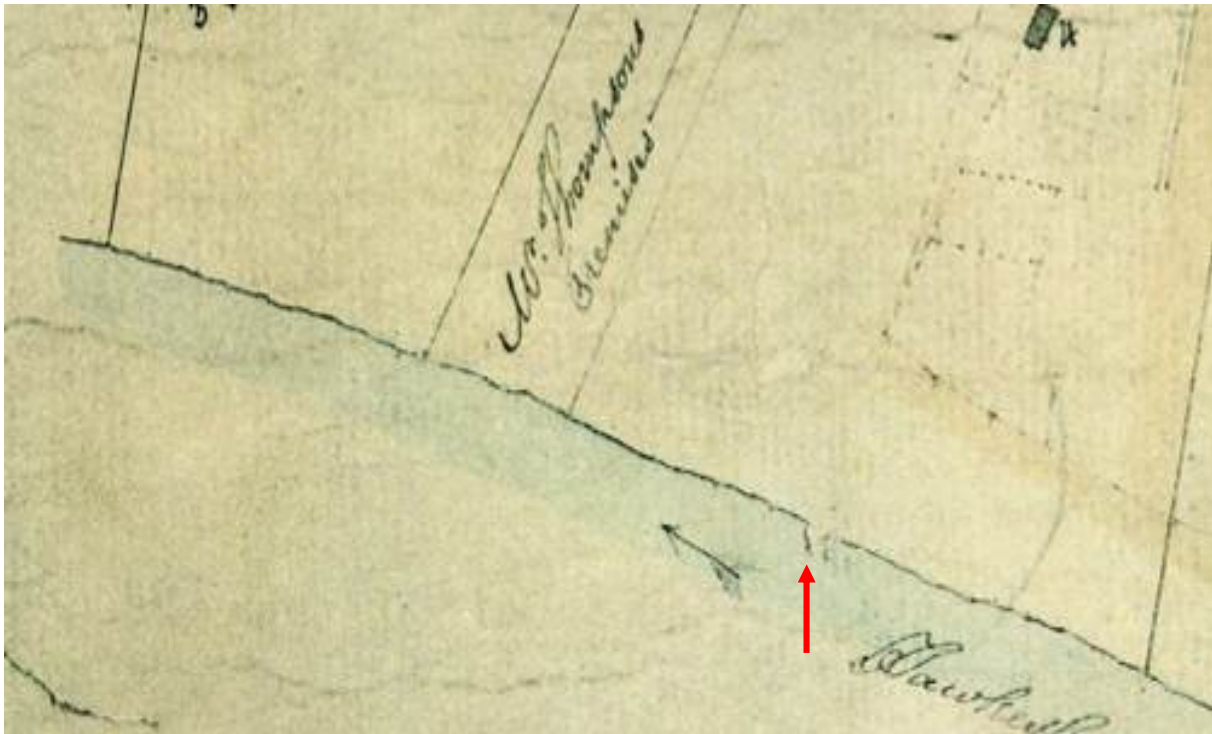


Plate 14: Detail from James Meehan's survey of 1812 with possible indication of the wharf or a beach⁷¹

Some further confirmation of the location comes from the contract for the construction of the replacement wharf in 1815, which "*shall extend the width of the Square on a line with the present Jetty or Wharf but three feet higher*". If the original wharf was approximately where this discussion posits it, the construction of the new wharf to the east gives a location where later surveys record the early nineteenth century wharf to be. However, if the new wharf were built on the western side of the existing jetty it would have run into the punt. A more or less central location in the area of the present bridge seems to be the only position that accommodates the few archival references to this structure.

4.4.8 The First Guard House

Security for the storehouse was first provided by a small detachment of privates and a sergeant. Their accommodation is unknown; it may have been a small building associated with the store. If so the location of this building is unknown but likely to have been close to the river given the proximity of the store to the river.

Barkley-Jack describes the guards' accommodation as a building constructed in 1795 on the side of a small stream that entered the river between Barker Street and Thompson Square on the western side; that would make it outside the project area but its precise location is unknown. It is likely to be one of the buildings referred to in the Return of Works of 1796-1800; the military barracks or officer's dwellings or even one of the miscellaneous public brick buildings. It almost certainly survived into the new century.

4.4.9 First Barracks

During 1795 a detachment of soldiers was brought to the Hawkesbury to provide protection for the settlers. This was separate to the guard at the storehouse. A barracks was built to house them. It is referred to in a return of buildings dated 1796. In 1800 it was the subject of repairs. This is probably the building shown on an 1812 survey. Here the Military Barracks was located close to the

⁷¹ SRO Map SZ 529.

intersection of Bridge Street and George Street and partly within the site of the present-day Macquarie Arms Hotel.⁷²

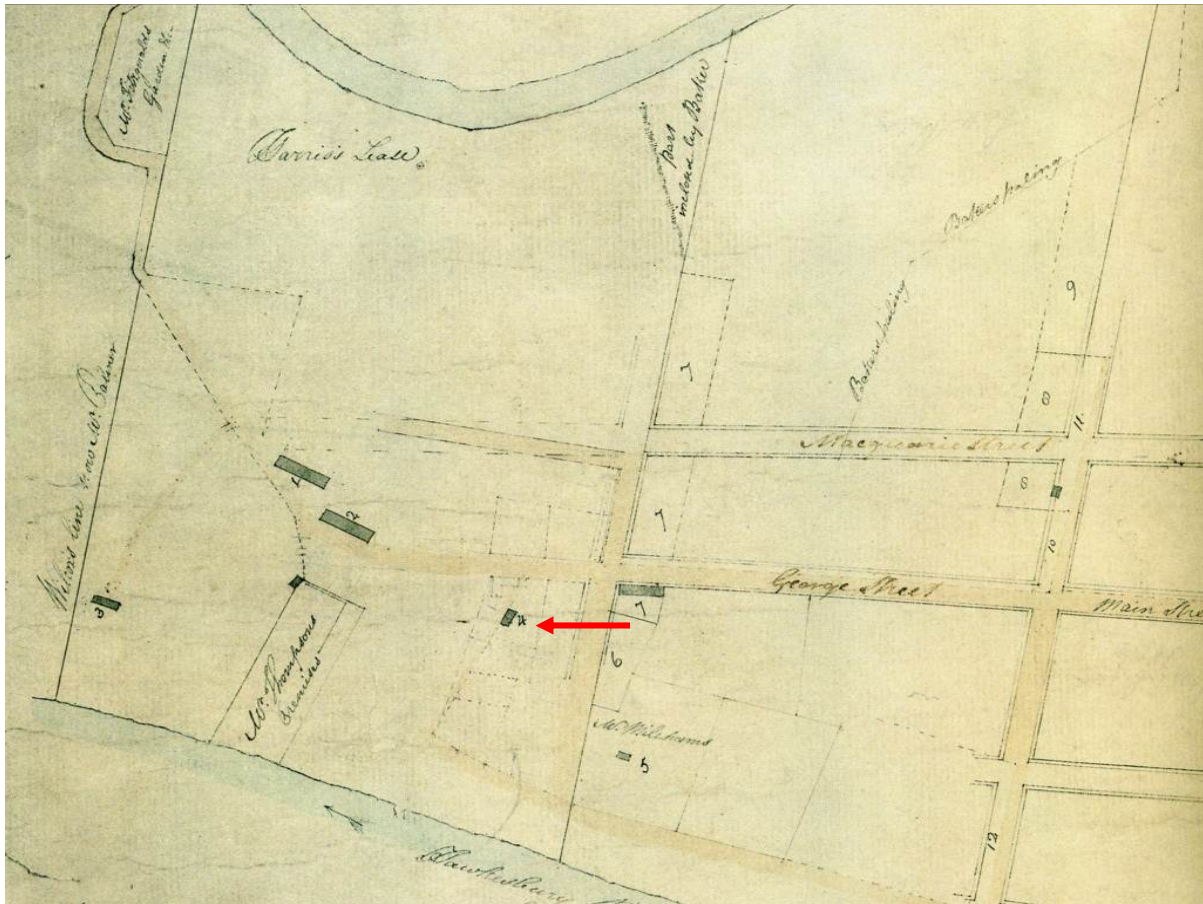


Plate 15: Meehan's survey of 1812 with the position of the barracks indicated on the right⁷³

4.4.10 First Tracks and Roads

From the first months of clearing and construction, tracks and paths would have begun to appear in the space being developed as a civic precinct. There would have been paths between buildings, but especially a path must have formed to the wharf. There are no plans or images from this earliest period but Evans' 1809 watercolour (Plate 13) shows a well-defined path that snaked down the hill and apparently across the contour from the south-east edge of the open space to the north-eastern corner. This track probably was the original path made in the first months of settlement; however, there is no contemporary evidence to confirm it, nor any record of construction of a new track.

The same image also appears to show a well-defined path running east-west across the ridge line in the area of present-day George Street. The track to the river connected to this higher thoroughfare.

⁷² Higginbotham, E (1986) Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson Square Windsor: 18.

⁷³ Higginbotham, E (SRP Map SZ529).



Plate 16: Detail of Evans' 1809 image showing a track leading to the river's edge and what is likely to have been the wharf.⁷⁴ The log granary is likely to be the dark-coloured building to the left (refer to Section 4.5.1).

4.5 Further Improvements: 1796-1800

4.5.1 Log Granaries

Before the first year at Green Hills ended, more buildings were constructed in the precinct to improve on those that already existed or expand those facilities. The military barracks constructed in mid-1795 could be considered the first, but it was necessary to make provision for the wheat and other crops that were coming in from the surrounding farms. The first store was too small and larger buildings were needed to house the produce. Governor Hunter summarised the program of works carried out in 1796 - 1800 in a return of buildings constructed in this period:

"Erected two log granaries of one hundred feet in length each (one of wheat and one for maize) on the Green Hills at the Hawkesbury and inclosed (sic) them round with paling. Thoroughly repaired, coated with lime and whitewashed the two government houses, military barracks, storehouses, and granaries, officers' dwellings, with all the public brick buildings for the purpose of preservation, they being found in a state of rapid decay.

"Built a framed and weather-boarded house on the Green Hills at the Hawkesbury for the residence of the commanding officer of that district. This house was shingled, and furnished with a cellar, skilling kitchen, and other accommodation, inclosed around with paling. Built a barrack for the military guard stationed at that place".⁷⁵

⁷⁴ George William Evans 1809 Watercolour Windsor ML PXD 388 V3 Folio 7.

⁷⁵ Return of Works including Works from October 1796 to 1800: HRA Series 1 Volume 2 pp 560-561.

The evidence suggests that at the beginning of settlement, the majority of structures were on the western side of the precinct with the space used to separate it from a government reserve on the eastern side. Initially it seems only the new log granaries were located on this side of the precinct with the government house.

Governor Hunter caused the construction of two granaries, both log-built and one hundred feet in length and both enclosed behind a paling fence. The description indicates that the two buildings were placed together. One survived into the early years of the nineteenth century c.1809. Evan's drawing of that year shows a large timber building at the head of what appears to be a boat-ramp. Almost certainly by that date its function had changed but it must have commenced as one of Hunter's log granaries. If that is the case then the second must have been next to it to enable them to be secured in the paling fence. The small building on the right of the store in the image might have been a guardhouse.

4.5.2 "Two Government Houses"

These buildings are described in Hunter's Return of Public Works but their precise location is unknown. The buildings were present when he made the return of works suggesting that they could have been built before 1796. If this was the case it could refer to the old guard house. In 1800 they were the subjects of repairs. There are several buildings shown on the western and southern side of the precinct in the earliest nineteenth century image any of which could be those buildings referred to as the government houses. Equally one or both of them could be the small houses shown in the Evans' 1809 image adjoining the log granary on either side. Andrew Thompson occupied one of these houses, on the eastern side, of the building before 1799.

4.5.3 Storehouses and Granaries

Cited in Hunter's Return of Public Works in 1800 the granaries are described separately to the two log buildings that the Governor had caused to be erected. The storehouses could include the original 1795 building but by 1800 it had been swept away by floods. There is a reference in 1806 to "one old thatched store", then unfit for service and it is possible that this building was one of these earliest stores. Bowd suggests that these may have been replaced by a brick granary on the site of the boot factory at the corner of George and Bridge Streets.⁷⁶ The Evans' image of 1809 records two small buildings close to the river with what appear to be ventilated roofs; these might also be the storehouses but there is insufficient primary evidence to precisely and certainly locate these buildings.

⁷⁶ D.G. Bowd (1986); Hawkesbury Journey: 86.



Plate 17: Detail of G. W. Evans' watercolour of 1809; the building indicated by the blue arrow is probably one of the c. 1796 granaries. The buildings indicated by the red arrow might be two of the store buildings⁷⁷

4.5.4 Officers' Dwellings

These were referred to as having been repaired in the 1800 return of public works; their location is unknown.

4.5.5 Miscellaneous "Public brick buildings"

Referred to as being subject to repair in the 1800 return of Public Works; their nature, use and locations are unknown.

4.5.6 Lock Up

The only reference to a building for the purpose of a lock up was in 1800 when Governor Hunter noted his intention to build a more secure prison, not thatched as the existing timber or log building was but tiled or shingled. The location of the older lock-up is not known.

4.5.7 Government House

Hunter describes how he caused a building to be erected for the commanding officer of the district; it was a weatherboard house, shingled, with a cellar, a skillion kitchen and "other accommodation" enclosed within a paling fence.⁷⁸ This house is almost certainly the house later referred to as the government house. It was situated well to the east of the present-day Thompson Square and is visible in many contemporary images.

In 1806 it was reported that the roof and foundation of the building was totally decayed. The building was repaired in 1807 and two new rooms added to it. The building survived until 1919; it was

⁷⁷ ML PXD 388 V3 f7.

⁷⁸ HRNSW Volume 3: 80 and HRNSW Volume 4: 152.

described in 1916 as timber-built and plastered inside and out. It had a great deal of brickwork in the cellar, chimneys, verandah etc. It was located outside the project area.



Plate 18: Government House at Windsor before its demolition in 1919⁷⁹

The government house was set in a domain on the eastern side of the square with a carriage entrance that faced it; a path or track led from the entrance to the cottage. This can be seen on early images.

The cottage was home to the commandant of the military detachment and then was used by the first magistrate for the district.⁸⁰

Reference to the Slaeger image printed in 1813 suggest that Government House had its own dedicated wharf on the river flat below.

4.5.8 Andrew Thompson's Allotment

Thompson's Square is named for Andrew Thompson, an ex-convict who joined the constabulary and arrived in the Hawkesbury in 1796 and who was given one acre on the Government Reserve overlooking the river in 1799; Macquarie named the square for him after his death. Thompson lived on this property before his official lease was granted to him. When his lease was formalised in 1799 he was described as being "now in occupation".

Thompson's lease was on the eastern side of the precinct. The position of his grant was described as bound on the north by the Hawkesbury River and on all sides by "ground reserved for the use of the Crown".⁸¹ Specifically, Thompson's eastern boundary was within the reserve that surrounded the house built for the commanding officer, later referred to as Government House. It also adjoined the government granaries.⁸² Meehan's plan of 1812 identifies Thompson's land in this location where it is described as "Mr Thompson's premises".

The lease for the land also stated that if the Governor deemed it necessary to "build or enlarge the public storehouses adjacent thereto" as much of Thompson's land as was required to achieve this objective would revert to the Crown.⁸³

⁷⁹ M. Nichols (2004); *Pictorial History Hawkesbury*: 10.

⁸⁰ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*: 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Noted in his lease Land Grants Register Book 2 No 320.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

4.5.9 Thompson's First House: the Watch House?

Thompson appears to have been housed at first in a small timber house on the eastern side of the square. It was set in an allotment within the Government reserve and adjoining storehouses. It is likely to be the small cottage that can be seen in Evans' 1809 image. It shows a single-storey cottage with a skillion-roofed room behind it. This is likely to be the house he occupied when his lease was formalised in 1799.



Plate 19: Detail of G. W. Evans' watercolour of 1809; the building indicated is probably Thompson's original house predating 1799⁸⁴

The house was set on one side of an extensive garden that stretched from the river to a point nearly contiguous with present-day George Street. The garden can also be seen in Evans' 1809 image.

It is unclear if this house might be the watch-house that was standing in the square in 1798. Barkley-Jack has described the evidence for the watch house, being the record of a court case in which the building was described as not far from the Commandant's House⁸⁵; that was certainly the case for Thompson's cottage. The case was tried in 1798 at which time Thompson was a constable making it possible that his house could be described as an official building.

⁸⁴ ML PXD 388 V3 f7.

⁸⁵ J.Barkley-Jack (2012); History of Thompson Square: 16.

4.6 CONSOLIDATING THE PRECINCT: 1800 - 1810

4.6.1 New Additions

In 1800 Governor Hunter proposed that new buildings should be constructed:

"Two new stores and a guard house, at the Green Hills Hawkesbury; the stores were to be of brick and the guard house to be a weather-boarded building – much wanted for the security of the stores and grain at that distant settlement; bricks are to be burnt for the purpose.

"A strong log prison or lock up house, is much wanted at Hawkesbury not to be thatched as formerly but to be either tyled (sic) or shingled".⁸⁶

The work was to be carried out by his successor Governor King.

Until this period the principal access to the precinct had been from the north with the river providing the best access to the government buildings. The road to Sydney provided access to the southern side of the square but South Creek had to be forded just before the traveller arrived there. In 1802 Andrew Thompson built a bridge over the creek, for which he charged a toll. The new bridge made entry to and through the precinct much easier and more reliable.⁸⁷

4.6.2 Guardhouse

In the dispatch of 1800 Hunter noted that, as well as the stores, a new weatherboard guardhouse needed to be built in association with them. It is uncertain whether this building was undertaken and completed and its location is unknown.

4.6.3 Log Prison

As well as the stores and guard house the list of requirements for the settlement included "a strong log prison" to be tiled or shingled; it was to replace an older building of the same purpose. The locations of neither the original building nor its replacement, is known.

4.6.4 The New Store House

In August 1803 it was reported:

"A very spacious Brick Granary with Three Floors, is now completed at the Hawkesbury for the Public Use – I have employed the people in that quarter to burn bricks for building a large school house (100 ft by 24) and Offices with Garden etc. For a House of Public Instruction for the Male Youth of this Colony – In the course of three Months I hope to see it finished".⁸⁸

"Built a Brick Granary at the Hawkesbury of the following dimensions length 101 feet, breadth 25 feet, Height to Wall Plate 23 Feet, with Three floors: Burning Bricks for a Public School for Boys".⁸⁹

The three-storey granary is the building depicted on the ridgeline in the 1809 Evans' drawing (Plate 20). It is likely that it was this building that was used as the place of execution for one of the leaders of the convict insurrection at Castle Hill, Philip Cunningham. Cunningham was summarily tried under martial law and was executed in the stair well of the public store at Windsor.⁹⁰

The three-storey store would be located outside of the present-day area of Thompson's Square and beyond the project area.

⁸⁶ HRA Series 1 Volume 2: 618.

⁸⁷ Refer the discussion in J.Barkley-Jack (2012); History of Thompson Square: 20.

⁸⁸ HRA Series 1 Volume 4: 311.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*: 319.

⁹⁰ Insurrection; Sydney Gazette 11 March 1804: 2.

4.6.5 The Boys' School and Chapel

The stores were planned by Governor Hunter and completed by Governor King. The school, though, was King's enterprise. The new Governor and his wife had a special concern for the children of the colony; the first orphanage was established during the early years of his administration in Sydney. At Windsor the new school was described as follows:

*"Made 250,000 Bricks and Built a House 100 feet long x 24ft. wide, with two Floors, for the purpose of a Public School for the Youth of that Quarter, and as a Chapel for the Celebration of Divine Worship, will be completed on the 1st October next".*⁹¹

By August 1804 the building was being roofed but there are conflicting reports about its completion; it was somewhere between 1806 and 1807. In a Return of Public Works for 1806 the following is recorded:

*"One New Building, intended School unfinished:..".*⁹²

The two-storey building can be seen in the 1809 drawing just to the west of the three-storey store (Plate 20).

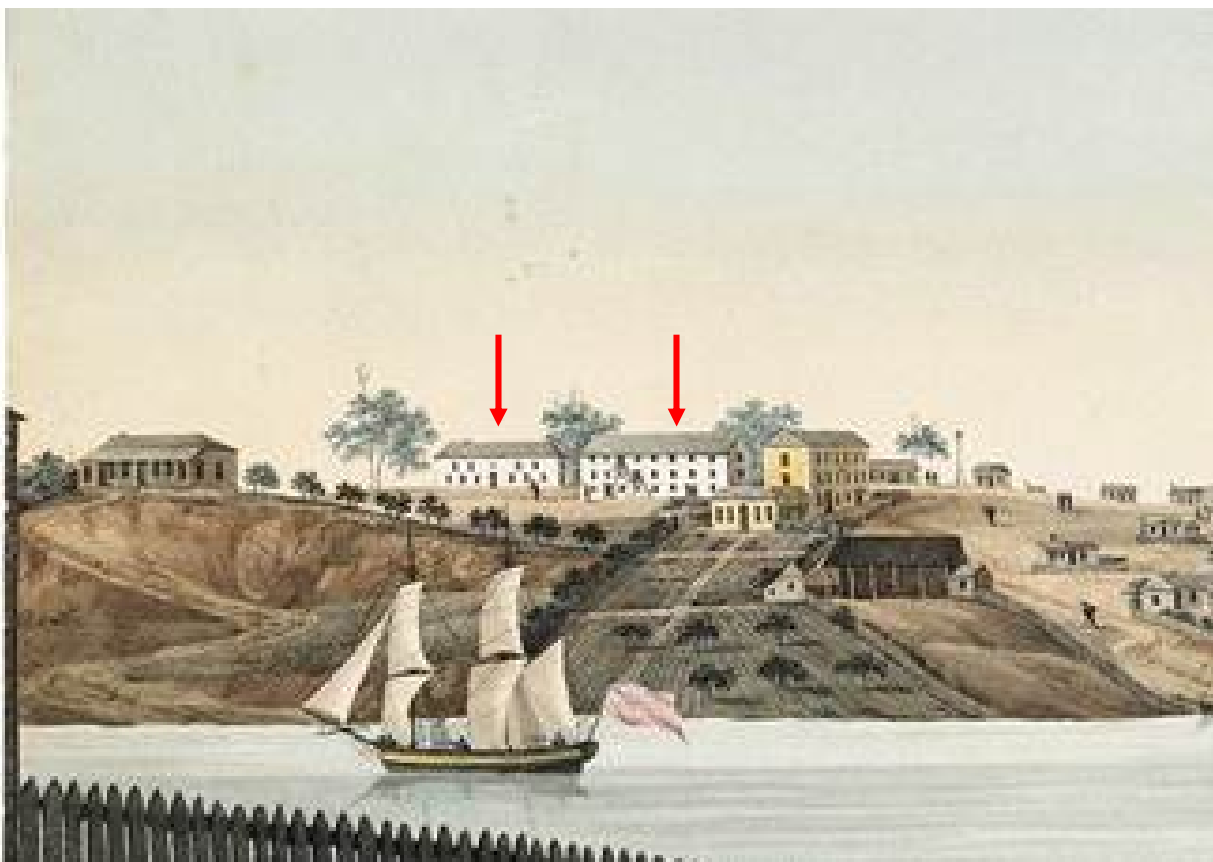


Plate 20: Detail of G. W. Evans Windsor 1809; the two-storey school and chapel is indicated on the ridgeline to the left and the three-storey to its right (the building on the far left is the government house)⁹³

⁹¹ Return of Public Works 1 July 183 to 30 June 1804 HRA Series 1 Volume 5: 46.

⁹² HRA Series 1 Volume 5: 97.

⁹³ ML PXD V3 Folio 7.

4.6.6 Progress

In a Return of Public Works for 1806 the following is recorded:

*“One New Building, intended School unfinished: One New Granary, with Three Floors, one Floor Unfinished: Roof and Foundation of Government House totally decayed and untenable; one Old thatched Store unfit for Service”.*⁹⁴

Later in the year it could be recorded that;

*“Government House – repaired and two new Rooms added. The Church School and Granary – Finished. One thatched Storehouse – Out of Repair”.*⁹⁵

William Bligh became Governor of the colony in 1806. While a popular man with the Hawkesbury settlers his relations with the military were not on good standing and a coup-d’etat removed him from office in 1808. The new administration followed this by removing from office men who had been appointed by Bligh and could owe their allegiance to him or those suspected of this. Andrew Thompson was dismissed from his post at the Hawkesbury; it was awarded to Richard Fitzgerald.

After his dismissal Thompson concentrated on his own business in both Sydney and Windsor. His works here included construction of buildings on his lease on the eastern side of the Government precinct.

4.6.7 Thompson’s Store, Workshop and Stables

Thompson had acquired a farm outside the main precinct on South Creek and this became his principal home at Windsor. His lease on the square became the focus of his commercial activities here. The 1807 image (and repeated in the 1809 image) shows two large buildings at the southern end of his riverside lease. One, the larger, was a three-storey store erected by Thompson that not only was a warehouse but provided necessities for the settlers. Apart from the store contemporary but later evidence records that behind it were stables and workshops. It was described as

*“an acre from the waterside, the Cottage Garden, in front towards the River, as well as a range of Stabling and Workshops at the back of the Store near to which the present Govt. Stables are built”.*⁹⁶

The store had cellars at the back of the building with an entrance from there in the ground that could be accessed from the Government Domain. There was a trapdoor from the cellars to the stores above.⁹⁷

4.6.8 The Government Reserve and Stables

The second building in the 1809 image is probably the Government Stables referred to in the evidence presented in the preceding section. A large, squat building it appears to have windows on at least two sides and the distinctive high rounded door in the southern wall. This opened to Thompson’s garden allotment.

Thompson’s river allotment must have provided access to the stables and to Government House. The 1809 image (Plate 21) shows the tree-lined drive to Government House running down to the hedge that surrounded the allotment on the eastern side and then a path following the same alignment through the allotment to the open space of the precinct; a small gatehouse can be seen in the same image at this point.

The image shows the path sweeping across the front of the Government House snaking down to the river front through a highly eroded and unimproved landscape.

⁹⁴ HRA Series 1 Volume 5: 97.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: 170.

⁹⁶ Evidence of John Howe to the Bigge Commission of Enquiry: 15 December 1820. Bigge Report Bonwick Transcripts Box 2: 48981-2.

⁹⁷ Higginbotham, E (1986); Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson Square Windsor: 17-18.

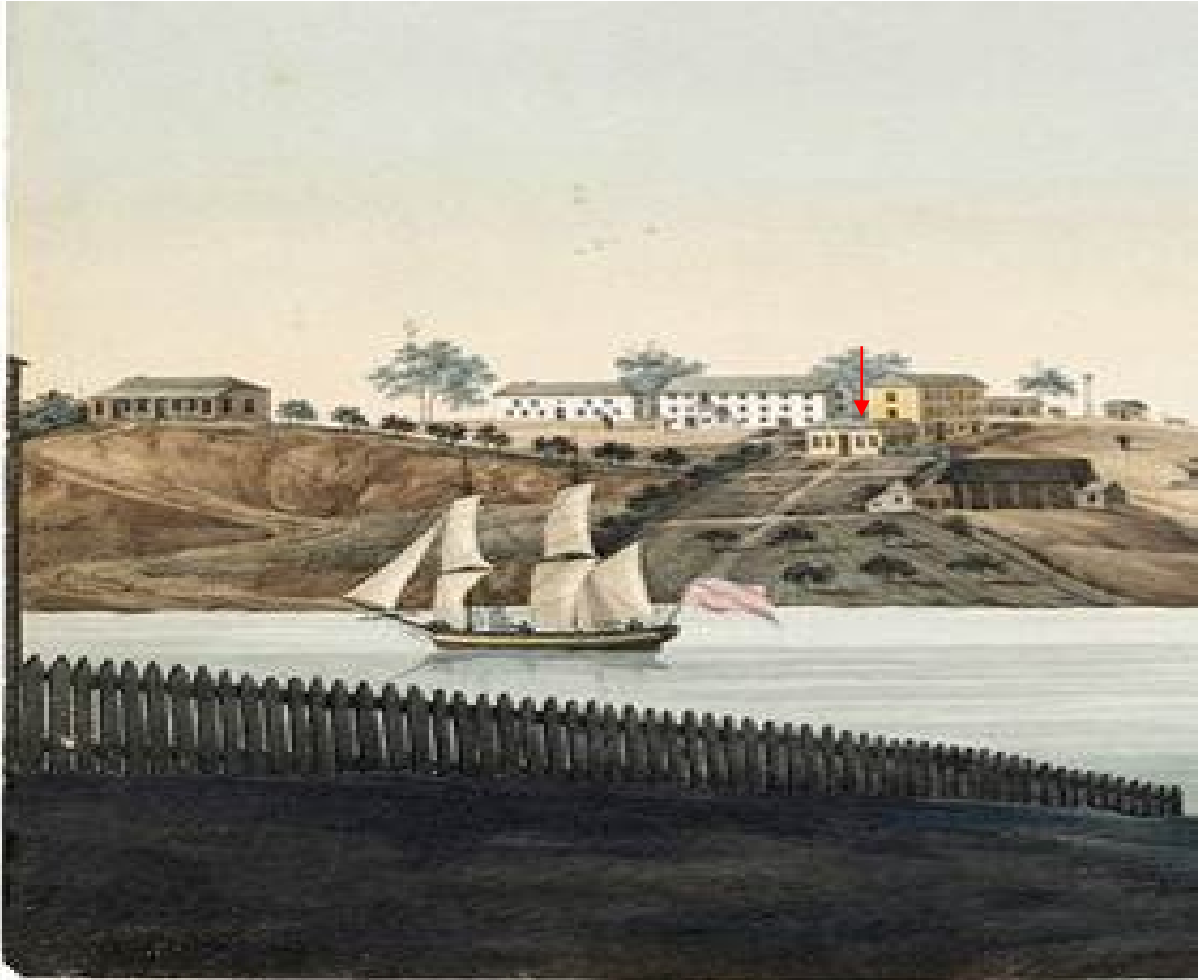


Plate 21: Detail from G. W. Evans *Windsor 1809* showing the Government House on the left and the drive running down to Thompson's allotment and through it; the likely government stables are indicated by the arrow⁹⁸

4.6.9 A Second Wharf?

There is a later image that raises the possibility that the Government House had its own wharf although there is no primary archival material that mentions the presence of it. An engraving made in 1821 (Plate 22) shows what appears to be the ruin of a timber wharf with a boat pulled up to it on the slope below the government house on a sandy beach. Slaeger's earlier image of 1813 (Plate 23) shows what might have been the structure before it was ruined. The perspective of both are quite different but the evidence, even taking into account the picturesque style of the 1821 image, raises the possibility that there was a wharf or jetty dedicated to the government reserve. It is unlikely to be the ruin of a wharf built in 1815 that was swept away; the position shown in the images would make it inconvenient for loading from and to the stores. If the 1813 image shows the same feature, it predated the new wharf and was too ruinous to be the existing wharf.

⁹⁸ ML PXD V3 Folio 7.



Plate 22: Detail from Captain Wallis (1821), *Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains in Views in New South Wales and Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales*⁹⁹



Plate 23: Detail from Philip Slaeger 1813 showing what appears to be a timber structure at the waterline below Government House¹⁰⁰

There was a government wharf in Sydney separate from the commercial wharves and in 1817 it was reported that His Excellency the Governor “*had lately caused a small Landing Place to be constructed near Bennelong’s Point within the Government Domain for his own personal Accommodation and that of his Family*”. It was strictly forbidden for the use of any but the Governor and his family.¹⁰¹ The structure at Windsor appears to have been in existence by 1813 and in ruins by 1821. It could have been a Macquarie initiative similar to that he caused to be built in Sydney in 1817 or, more likely, that it was part of the original construction associated with the Government House in c. 1800.

⁹⁹ ML PX*D.

¹⁰⁰ A view of Part of the Town of Windsor in New South Wales Taken from the Banks of the River Hawkesbury ML DL F81/21 pl.19.

¹⁰¹ *Sydney Gazette* 30 August 1817; 1.

The site of this separate wharf is to the west of the project area in the area of the flats at the northern end of Arndell Street if it was extended to the river. Identifying this wharf and other components such as boat slips (refer to the following section) infers that the waterfront of the square and its immediate environs was more complex and more actively used than other archival sources might indicate.

4.6.10 Boat Dock or Slip

The idea that the waterfront along the square and its near environs was more actively used than has been considered to date is given further support by the 1809 image (Plate 24). It records what is likely to have been one of the later eighteenth century log granaries adjoining Thompson's lease as well as what is likely to have been a guardhouse on one side and Thompson's original cottage/watch house on the other. In front of the former granary, possibly the "thatched storehouse out of repair" reported in 1806 is a long, wide cleared slope to the river enclosed between paling fences. The 1807¹⁰² image of the same scene, shows a well defined timber slip with an oared boat drawn up it in front of the timber granary. The evidence could suggest that after the granary went out of use it was converted for use as a boathouse with the slip in front. There are many drawings of similar buildings used as boathouses, for example, around Darling Harbour. If it had been converted for this purpose it appears that the slip may have gone out of use by 1809; its position is just visible in the slope.



Plate 24: Detail from Evan's 1809 image that shows the faint outline of the earlier boat slip¹⁰³

This image also demonstrates that by this date, and earlier in 1807, the second large timber granary had been demolished; it stood close to this remaining building.

4.6.11 Additions to Thompson's Land

In 1809 Thompson received another lease on the government reserve. This new lease contained a little over an acre and was bound to the south by South Creek, to the west by Bridge Street and to the east approximately by Arndell Street.¹⁰⁴ This became his farm and part-time home and advertisements for its auction after his death describe the extensive improvements that had been made to it.

*"The valuable house and Premises late the Residence of A. THOMPSON Esq deceased situate at Windsor comprising a Good Dwelling House, Stores, Granaries, Cellars, Stabling and other convenient and spacious warehouses adapted to the beneficial trade of the extensive and populous Settlement at the Hawkesbury."*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² The 1807 watercolour attributed to George William Evans cannot be reproduced in this report due to copyright restrictions.

¹⁰³ ML PXD 388 V3 f7.

¹⁰⁴ E. Higginbotham (1986); *Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson Square Windsor*; 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Sydney Gazette* 22 December 1810; 3.

4.6.12 Whitton's Property

Across the river on the northern bank Edward Whitton and his family would have had a prime view of the many improvements that were taking place in the open land on the southern bank. There is less evidence to determine what the Commandant would have seen on Whitton's property as he looked across the river from his house.

In 1796 Whitton's second child with Ann Slator was born at Mulgrave Place.¹⁰⁶ A son, William, was also born on the property in 1799. Edward Whitton was granted an absolute pardon on 4 June 1800.¹⁰⁷

From the Muster Book of 1800 we get some idea of what Edward had done with his land in the previous six years. He was recorded as having nine hogs, seventeen acres of wheat sown and five acres of maize were to be planted. When he was pardoned in 1800 he elected to remain in the colony and was recorded in 1801 as a "settler".¹⁰⁸ Edward died in 1802. His estate passed to Anne Slator. Whitton must have built a house, farm buildings, fences and the like, but there is no primary evidence of this time to identify them. The image of the Hawkesbury made in 1813 from a painting by Lewin looks across Whitton's land. In the distance, set well back from the high and eroding banks of the river can be seen a cluster of buildings and an isolated building closer to the foreground on the northern side of the river. Some or all of these must have been Whitton's property.

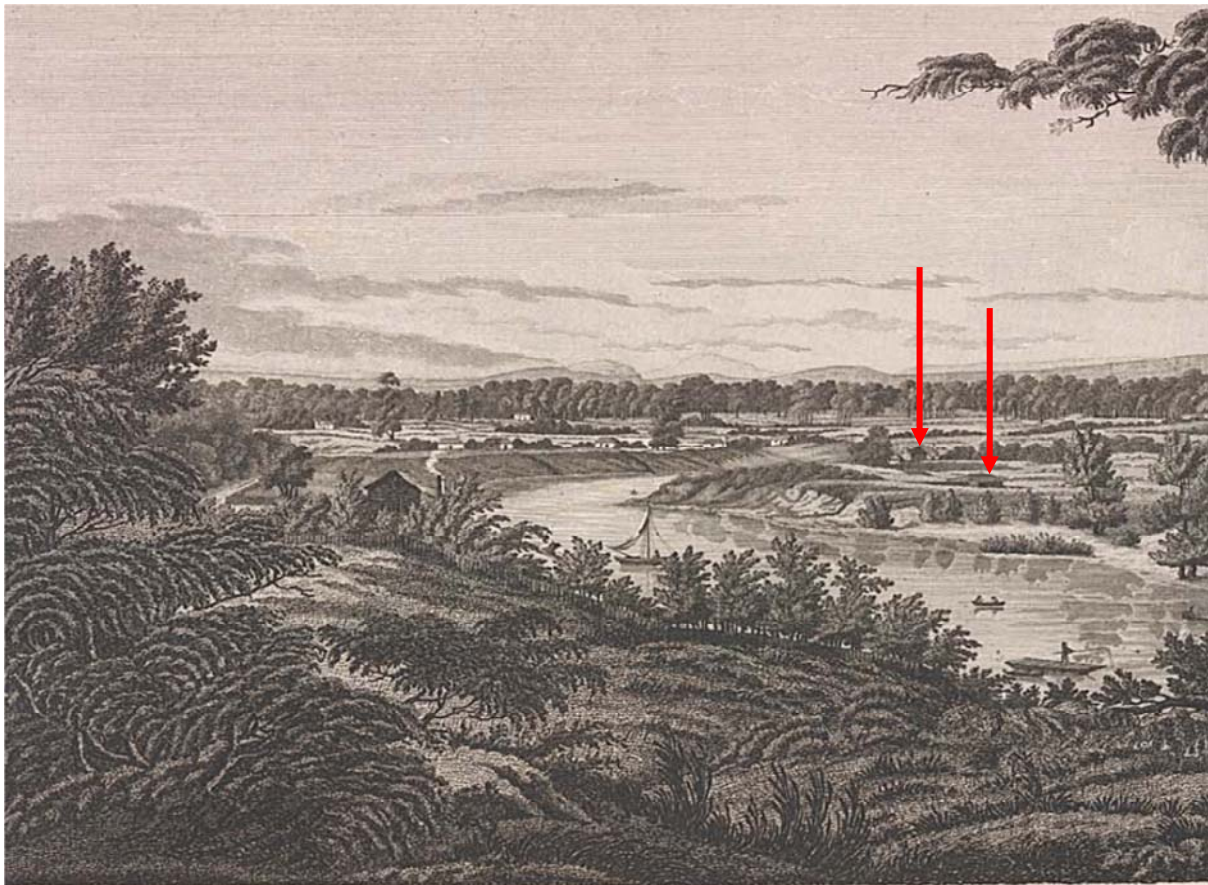


Plate 25: Details from *A View of the Banks of the Hawkesbury in New South Wales* by H. Preston from a Painting by J. Lewin in the Possession of His Excellency Governor Macquarie, engraving by Absalom West c. 1813.¹⁰⁹ the buildings on the northern bank are indicated by arrows.

¹⁰⁶ Member Profile Edward Whitton Ancestry.com

¹⁰⁷ Australian Convict Registers of Conditional and Absolute Pardons 1791-1867.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ ML V*/EXPL/1.

4.7 A MACQUARIE TOWN: 1810 – 1820s

4.7.1 The Five Towns and a Little Village

Windsor was one of five towns in the Hawkesbury–Nepean district named and greatly influenced in their plan and appearance by Governor Macquarie. The towns were founded to provide accommodation and security for the settlers in those districts, to provide the administrative services of the government and civil and ecclesiastic benefits. The situation of the towns was also intended to diminish the effects of flooding; the townships were all above flood levels.¹¹⁰

With Windsor, Governor Macquarie already had an established village on his favoured site. The previous fifteen years had seen an ill-defined open space become a well-established government precinct with the beginnings of free enterprise emerging in the shape of Thompson's stores. The images of 1807 and 1809 record the clusters of buildings on the eastern and western sides of the open space as well as a few older buildings, notably one of the old timber granaries and the slip in front that intruded into the open space through which the road ran down to the wharf. It looked like a village, much as Sydney had done in its first few years of settlement and it was acknowledged as such by Macquarie who referred to it as a village in 1810.

He stated in his diary that he walked out from Government House on 6 December 1810

"to survey the grounds belonging to the Crown in and near the present village on the Green Hills and also the adjoining Public Common marked out for this part of the country in the time of Governor King; a convenient part of which it is now my intention to appropriate for a large town and township for the accommodation of the settlers inhabiting the south side of the River Hawkesbury, whose farms are liable to be flooded by any inundation of the river and to connect the present township on the Green Hills with the intended new town and township. After viewing the ground... the scite [sic] and situation of the new town was fixed finally upon; the exact scite [sic] of the new church and great square being particularly marked out as well as the extent and situation of the new burying ground ... I gave the name of Windsor to the town intended to be erected in the district of the Green Hills, in continuation of the present village".¹¹¹

Shortly afterward he made this survey the Governor went out again to direct how the existing village would be integrated with his planned new town adjoining it.

"to explore the scite [sic] of the intended new town of Windsor accompanied by the two surveyors to whom I communicated my plans and final orders respecting the scite [sic] of the church, great square in the new town and small square and streets intended to be formed in the present village which is henceforth to form part of the town of Windsor... I laid out several new streets and gave direction for enlarging and improving the old ones as well as respecting the size and descriptions of all future houses..."¹¹²

Macquarie sent out detailed instructions for the establishment of the towns including the creation of a uniform grid pattern for each. There was to be a central square that was intended to house the church, school, gaol and guardhouse. Windsor was exempt from these rules because the governor recognised that it already had some of these improvements in the existing precinct established since 1795. It was unique in this respect in that it was the only town that incorporated an existing small village. The completed town plan was presented to the governor and signed in 1812.

4.7.2 The Town Squares

Each of the "Macquarie towns" was planned to have a large town square in an important position. At Windsor, Castlereagh and Wilberforce the square was planned close to the church and schools. At Richmond and Castlereagh and possibly the original Pitt Town the square was to be in the centre of the town. At Windsor and Wilberforce it was on an edge. For Windsor the large new town square was the present site of McQuade Park.

But at Windsor there was already an open space that functioned to all purposes as a town square. This was the steep, open area between the civic buildings and the river. Macquarie recognised its

¹¹⁰ Sue Rosen (1995); *Losing Ground*: 34.

¹¹¹ Lachlan Macquarie; *Tours of NSW and VDL* 1810-1822; 6 December 1810 31.

¹¹² *Ibid*: 33 7 December 1810.

function and deliberately incorporated it into his planning, using streets to connect the existing and planned town sites. This smaller square can be seen to conform to the model that the Governor was using for all his towns. Smaller squares were established in most to provide open land for markets, cemeteries, church yards and the like. The inclusion of the existing improvements at Green Hills into his planned town of Windsor was similar to the manner in which Governor Macquarie imposed order on the town of Sydney as he found it. The completely new towns founded along the Hawkesbury allowed the Governor to express his purest vision for town planning; places such as Parramatta, Sydney and Green Hills shows how he adapted this vision to encompass the realities of the colony as he found it.

4.7.3 Founding Thompson Square

On 12 January 1811 Macquarie recorded in his diary that after he marked out the Glebe;

"I walked over the whole of the present village of Green Hills forming the beginning or basis for the town of Windsor, in which I planned a square and several new streets; directing the old ones to be enlarged and improved in various respects and at the same time marking out several new allotments...I gave Mr Fitzgerald a large allotment in the square on the express condition of his building immediately thereon a handsome commodious inn of brick or stone...The principal street in the present town of Windsor...I have called George Street in honour of His Present Most Gracious Majesty and which street from the present square to the new intended one in the township will be nearly an English mile long. The square in the present town I have named Thompson Square in honor of the memory of the good and worthy late Andrew Thompson Esqr... who may justly be said to be the father and founder of the village hitherto known by the name of Green Hills; there being hardly a vestige of a single building here, excepting the Government Granary, when he first came to reside on the Green Hills ten years ago. I had a post erected this afternoon in Thompson Square having a board nailed thereon with the name painted on it in large characters..."¹¹³

Macquarie recognised that the open land around the government buildings functioned as a town square, and described it as such. It was given a formal identity by its naming and then it was physically changed to conform more to the standard ideal of a town square.

4.7.4 Clearing the Slate

What is obvious from an image of 1813 is that to put his vision of a small town square into practice much of the existing and older work was comprehensively removed from Thompson Square. The engraving made by Philip Slaeger in that year (Plate 7) demonstrates that he removed large numbers of buildings leaving essentially only the most substantial buildings from the previous fifteen years; the stores, the Government House, Thompson's store, his first small cottage and the barracks.

Between the government reserve on the eastern side of the precinct and the barracks and buildings further west on Barker's farm was a wide, open and largely empty slope. The remains of the old tracks can be seen and Thompson's original house at the top of a track that runs down to what appears to be a replacement for the boat slip seen in the 1807 view. The new slip was located just to the east of that earlier site. Several boats are drawn up on the sandy beach.

The extent of clearance and the intent of the proposed integration of the existing village with the proposed town are made clear by the survey prepared in 1812. On it are shown the Government buildings that survived the demolition program. These amounted to the two stores, Government house and its gate lodge and the military barracks. Thompson's lease is also shown on the survey.

The survey shows the intention to create allotments on the western side and extend streets into the long, open Government precinct.

The outcome of this work would be to regularise the ill-defined open space, regularise its use and mould it to the type of small square that was being created in the undeveloped land of the other new towns.

¹¹³ Lachlan Macquarie; Tour of NSW and VDL 1810-1822; 12 January 1811: 42-43.

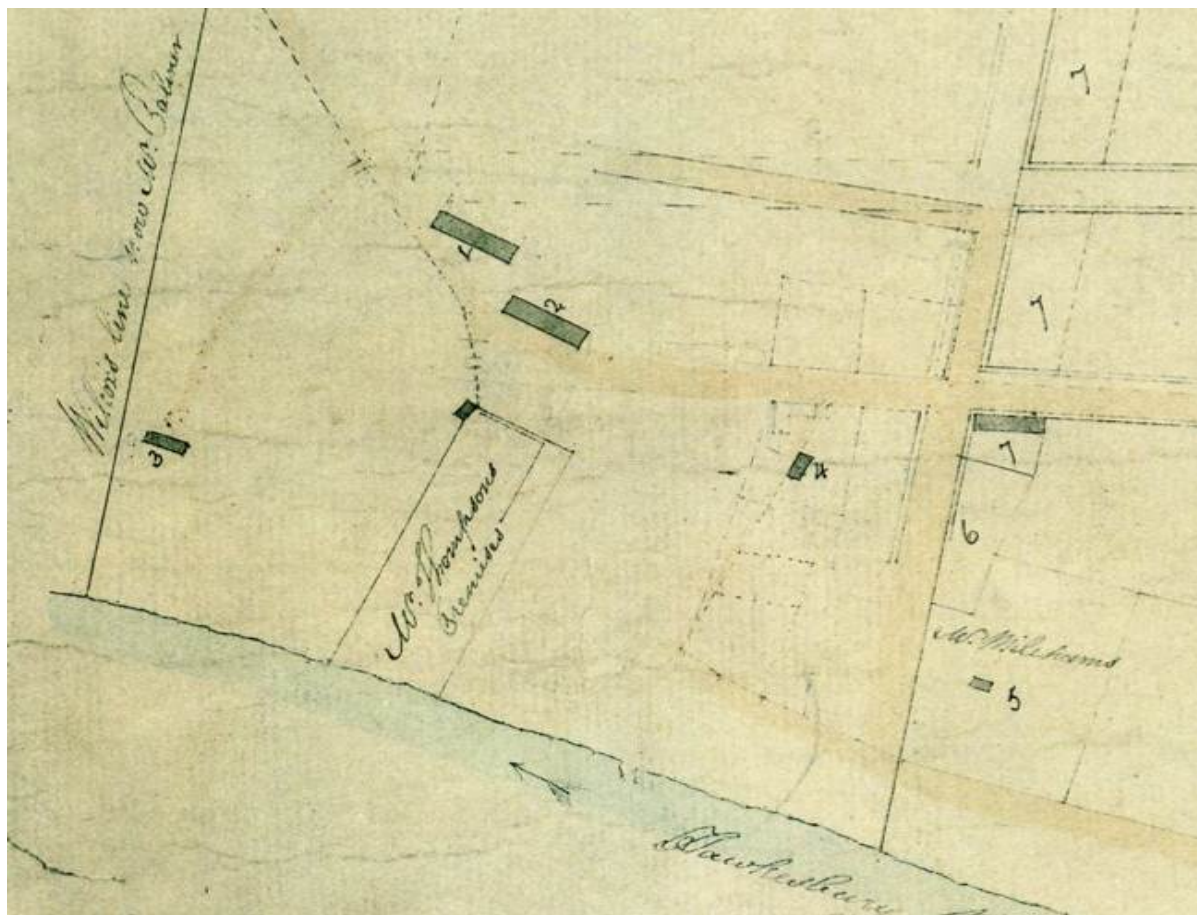


Plate 26: Detail of the 1812 survey of Windsor showing the government precinct and the government-owned buildings that remained after the major program of demolition was undertaken. The building at the southern end of the precinct labeled No 1 is the Church and School House; No 2 is the granary and store; No 3 is the Government House and No 4 is the Military Barracks.¹¹⁴

4.7.5 Using Thompson's Legacy

Andrew Thompson was and is a legendary figure in the development of the Hawkesbury. An ex-convict, he was widely acknowledged as a good and honest man who rose to be the colony's first ex-convict magistrate. He was a personal friend of Governor Macquarie and much valued by him. Macquarie claimed that he "*may justly be said to be the father and founder of the village hitherto known by the name of the Green Hills*".¹¹⁵ The precinct that Macquarie incorporated into his new town of Windsor as a small square was posthumously named by the Governor in Thompson's honour.

His legacy continued after his death in October 1810. Thompson divided his valuable estate with half given to his family and one quarter each to Governor Macquarie and the merchant trader Simeon Lord. His leasehold property and the buildings erected upon it either reverted to the Crown or were purchased by it. By this means a hospital and gaol were rented from the estate of Andrew Thompson until 1812 and the barracks until c. 1818 along with a granary and house.¹¹⁶

His three-storey store on the square was rented after his death for £140 per annum and after the expiry of the lease was purchased by the Crown for £1500 in 1815. The garden allotment on the northern side to the river was also purchased then. It was described as:

*"A small Cottage and Garden, belonging to the same estate and attached to the said stores was purchased along with it and added to the Government Domain at Windsor which joined to Mr Thompson's premises."*¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ SRO Plan SZ 529.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*: 28.

¹¹⁶ E. Higginbotham (1986); *Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson Square Windsor*: 13.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*: 48977, 48979 and HRA Series 1 Volume 10; 691.

4.7.6 The Bell Post Square

There is a long-standing tradition that Thompson's Square had an earlier identity or focus, the Bell Post. This was *"the alleged scene of more than one execution in the early days and certainly as having been the site upon which many an ill judged culprit stood in the pillory or sat in the stocks to expiate an offence which would now be regarded as simply one of venial nature. Then as time passed the Bell Post developed into Thompson's Square"*.¹¹⁸

The bell was said to have called convicts from their huts to work. It was also reported that the Bell Post Square contained a whipping post where floggings were carried out. Old residents who were alive when convicts had been living in the town were questioned in the 1890s. Much of the later tradition derives from these reports.

"Regarding the prisoners, he says that the best-conducted of them – those who had not been punished – lived in huts scattered about where the town is now built. They were not under strict surveillance and enjoyed a reasonable amount of freedom...The worst of the prisoners were quartered at the gaol....A bell affixed to a post in what is now Thompson's Square rang every morning at six o'clock which was the signal for breakfast".¹¹⁹

This informant discounted the square as the site of floggings; he stated that the triangle was located in the gaol or that some were carried out in make-shift situations such as a man being tied to the back of cart.¹²⁰ The square could be used for punishment. In 1822 it was reported that one prisoner was ordered to stand for one hour in the square for each of four days with a notice around his neck stating his crimes; he was then sent to Macquarie Harbour.¹²¹

Some of the pre-1810 images show a tall post on the ridge at the southern end of Thompson Square that might have been a bell post but at this time no primary archival evidence has been found for the bell post pre-dating 1821. It may have been an initiative of Governor Macquarie who regulated all the convicts' activities; the first public clock in the settlement was installed at the convict barracks at Hyde Park.

To date the earliest reference found to the bell post is from 1821 where a disputed house was put to auction at the Bell Post.¹²² The Bell Post was used as the site of many auctions throughout the 1820s and 1830s proven by the numerous advertisements placed in the Sydney Gazette naming it as the site for these transactions. The practice certainly continued into the 1840s; there is one advertisement for the sale of horses at the Bell Post in 1842.¹²³

The Bell Post was also used as a public notice board; the report of a court case in 1845 noted the defendant stating that he had advertised his find of a saddle by placing a sign on the Bell Post.¹²⁴

There are no further public notices about this feature of the square after the mid-1840s and it is presumed that the post was removed after this time.

4.7.7 Macquarie's Legacy

By the time Macquarie left office in 1822 Thompson Square had completely changed from its Green Hills beginnings, many of the original buildings and features had been removed, new buildings had been constructed and old buildings renovated or adapted for new purposes. The irregular open space of the old precinct was in the process of becoming a formally defined open square. Macquarie described his works at Windsor at the end of his time in office; the principal achievements can be summarised as follows:

- The larger of the two granaries was converted in 1810 to a temporary chapel; one part of the upper floor was used as a residence for the chaplain and the remaining part as a public school.

¹¹⁸ Old Windsor A Reverie Windsor and Richmond Gazette 12 December 1896; 19.

¹¹⁹ The Good Old Days Prisoners and Punishment Windsor and Richmond Gazette 5 August 1893; 8.

¹²⁰ The Good Old Days Prisoners and Punishment Windsor and Richmond Gazette 5 August 1893; 8.

¹²¹ Sydney Gazette 3 May 1822: 2.

¹²² Sydney Gazette 24 November 1821; 2.

¹²³ Sydney Gazette 1 February 1842; 3.

¹²⁴ Hawkesbury Courier 9 January 1845; 2.

It was reroofed and completely repaired. Out offices were added and a small garden in a fenced enclosure.¹²⁵

- A new wharf was built at the northern end of the square
- Piling and changes to the river banks were carried out for the construction of the wharf
- A new ferry was established across the river
- A major new sewerage system was built in the square

4.7.8 A New Wharf and Land Forming

This analysis has concluded that the first wharf built in 1795 was most likely constructed towards the centre of a sandy inlet, the structure of the wharf probably running out into the river. The site would be approximately where the present bridge now crosses the river. Adjoining it to the east, at least by the early years of the nineteenth century was a boat slip. This was a commercial wharf that serviced the town; the earlier discussion has raised the possibility that a second wharf or jetty serviced the government reserve.

The original commercial wharf was replaced in 1815. Macquarie described this new structure:

"A Large substantial wooden wharf or quay Constructed in the Centre of Town on the right Bank of the River Hawkesbury for the convenience of Vessels and Boats, trading to Windsor, and at which Quay Vessels of 100 tons burthen can load their Cargoes".¹²⁶

The wharf was built for the sum of £1179.10s.¹²⁷ The contracts for the wharf survive; one is dated 8 August 1814 and the second 24 April 1815. The 1814 contract documents the way in which the wharf was made including the changes required to the riverbank:

"The front of the Square to be piled with sound piles from 16 to 18 inches thick to be from three to four feet Apart in the (illegible) to be three feet above the Water Mark at Spring Tides (but in a line with it). Well capped and Secured by Land-Ties to extend from side line to side line of the Square to be planked on the Inside of the Piles and then filled up to the top.

"The Wharf to Commence from the Upper Side Line of the Square to Extend Eighteen feet from the above row of Piles which will be in deep water to extend fifty feet in length to be planked on the inside and filled up unless it should be thought best to plank the top and in that Case the same is to be planked and not filled up, the whole to be Capped and well secured by Land Ties as also to the Row of Piles in the Front of the Square".¹²⁸

The wharf ran along the shoreline rather than out into it as the earlier wharf or jetty appears to have done. In fact, the new wharf appears to have been an extension of the existing wharf. The first payment made to John Howe for the work in November 1815 was for *"enlarging and improving the wharf at Windsor".¹²⁹*

The first contract gave more details about the land-forming required:

"...piling the front of Thompson's Square for filling up the Same and reducing it to a gradual slope from the Rise or Ridge on which His Majesty's Store stands".

Payment made to Howe in 1815 was in part for "filling up Thompson's Square".¹³⁰ A second payment in 1816 was for *"leveling the great square in the town".¹³¹*

The second contract appears to be for a variation to the first contract. This required the builders,

"To erect a Wharf or Platform in the front of Thompson's Square in the Town of Windsor in this Territory which shall extend the width of the Square on a line with the present

¹²⁵ HRA Series 1 Volume 10; 690-1.

¹²⁶ HRA Series 1 Volume 10; 690-1.

¹²⁷ Bigge Report Appendix Bonwick Transcripts Box 12; 317.

¹²⁸ ML MSS 106 Article 37 8 August 1814.

¹²⁹ *Sydney Gazette* 4 November 1815; 2.

¹³⁰ *Sydney Gazette* 5 August 1815; 2.

¹³¹ *Sydney Gazette* 11 May 1816; 2.

Jetty or Wharf but three feet higher, the said wharf to be constructed to have two Rows of Piles without the present platform and one Row behind the whole to be secured with Land Ties and Caps and planked with sound two inch Planks, and not more than six inches wide to be spiked with five inch Spikes, and the whole of the Square to slope down from the Crown or Range on which His Majesty's Store stands gradually to the point of the said platform, the Bank to the Westward of the New Wharf and adjoining to that point of the River where the Punt and Ferry Boats Land is to be cut away sufficiently wide to admit of carts turning at the Landing Place".¹³²

Work was well underway when a flood, probably in June 1816, washed away the work completed to date. It was reported by Governor Macquarie that;

"In consideration of the greater part of the Govt. Quay or Wharf already erected by the contractors having been carried away or destroyed by the late Floods of the Hawkesbury, I have this day agreed on an estimate made out and submitted to me by Mr Greenway the Govt. Civil Architect of the additional expense of repairing and Completing the same in a solid and durable manner (agreeably to a Plan thereof made out by Mr Greenway), to allow and pay unto Messrs Howe and McGrath the additional sum of Two Hundred and Twenty (including Twenty Pounds for Mr Greenway's trouble in planning and directing the work) Pounds Sterling; allowing them also for payment such Iron and Spike Nails from the Stores as can be spared – with a carpenter and a Pair of Sawyers off the store; the Contractors now engaging to complete the said Quay or Wharf in Eight Months from this date".¹³³

Greenway's plan for the works has not been found and may not have survived. The works were completed in 1820.



Plate 27: The earliest reliable survey showing the position of the new wharf in c. 1835¹³⁴

4.7.9 A New Sewer or Drain

The second contract gave instructions for a new sewer or drain that was to be built within the square:

¹³² ML MSS 106 Article 88 24 April 1815.

¹³³ Quoted in E. Higginbotham (1986); Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson Square Windsor:

27.

¹³⁴ SRO Map 5968.

"To Sink and Erect One Sewer in the middle of the Square with Channels leading thereto or to sink and Erect two sewers one on each side of the Square as laid down in the Plan in the possession of His Excellency Governor Macquarie".

The contractors for the work were John Howe and James McGrath of Windsor. The first contract was paid for with £350 and 350 gallons of Bengal Rum or other spirits "of the best kind" and the second was paid at £600. They were allowed the use of bullocks and carts and for the sewer they were allowed to make between 120,000 to 150,000 bricks on the new government brickfields at Windsor and they could purchase spikes from the store. They were contracted to complete the first contract in six months and the second in twelve months.

4.7.10 Extension of the Streets

Part of Macquarie's vision to incorporate the existing village with the new town was to make the street plan the means of connecting the two areas. Today, George Street is the visual and practical end of the square and Barkley-Jack argues that a street was planned there from as early as 1799. Thompson's lease of 1799 required a road reservation of one hundred feet and she has suggested that this road would have been at the southern end of the lease in the position of the present-day George Street.¹³⁵ It is a reasonable conclusion and seems on the basis of pictorial evidence pre-dating 1810 to have been put into action. Further confirmation is provided by the 1812 survey that appears to show the wide George Street of the plan meeting the narrower existing street that was to provide a direct access to the Government Domain. It suggests that the existing street had a role in determining the layout of the town.

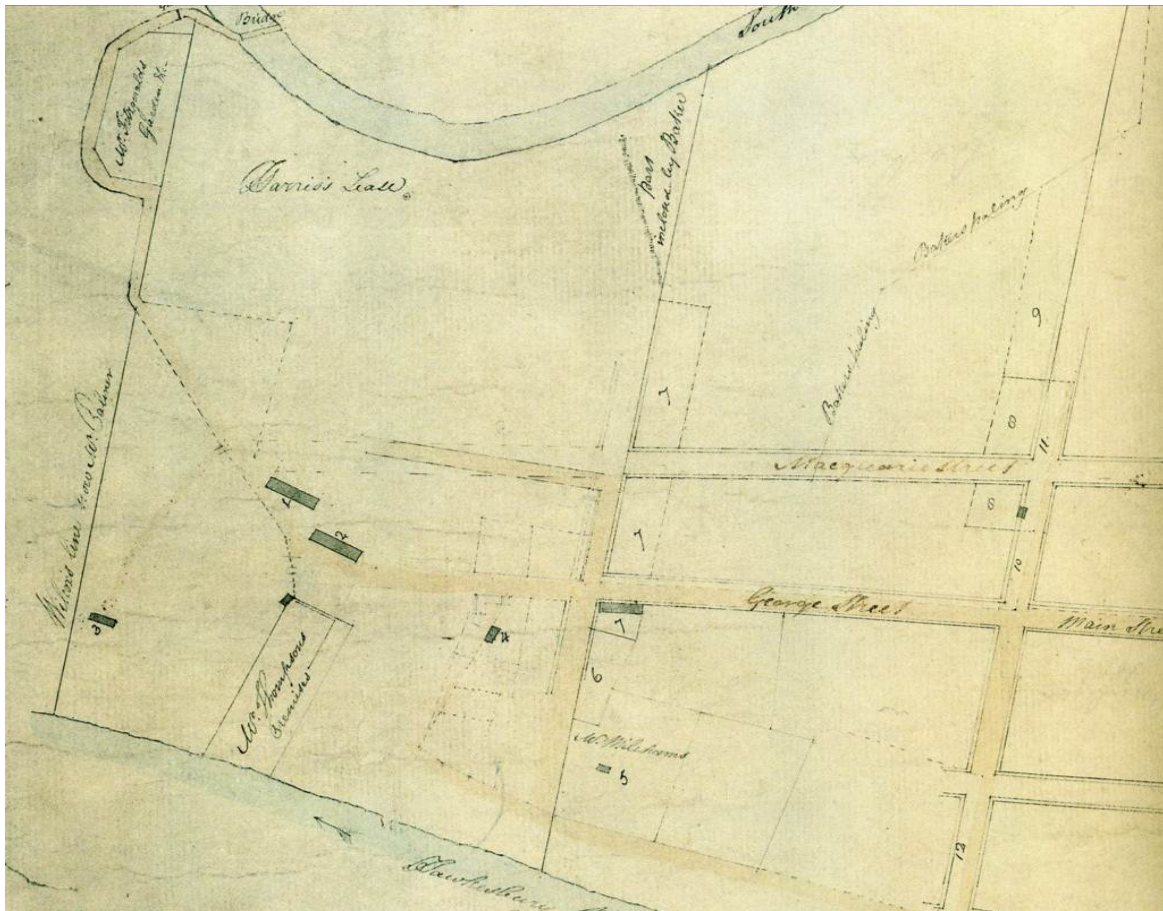


Plate 28: Meehan's survey of 1812 showing the street plan proposed for the new town of Windsor; the extension of George Street to the Government Domain is likely to have taken advantage of an existing street or path. The Hawkesbury River is at the bottom of the page.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*: 15.

¹³⁶ SRO Map SZ 529.

4.7.11 The Ferry

To enable more convenient and regular access between the northern and southern banks “...a very convenient ferry has been established from the same Wharf to the North Bank of the River by a large Punt.”¹³⁷ It was not the first ferry; Lachlan Macquarie recorded in his diary of a tour of NSW in December 1810 that he had “crossed the ferry at the Green Hills to the north side of the river”.¹³⁸

The new ferry was by means of a boat that left from the landing to the west of the wharf and went to a cutting on the northern side of the river. It is shown in Wallis’ image of the river printed in 1821 (Plate 29). The punt carried both people and livestock.

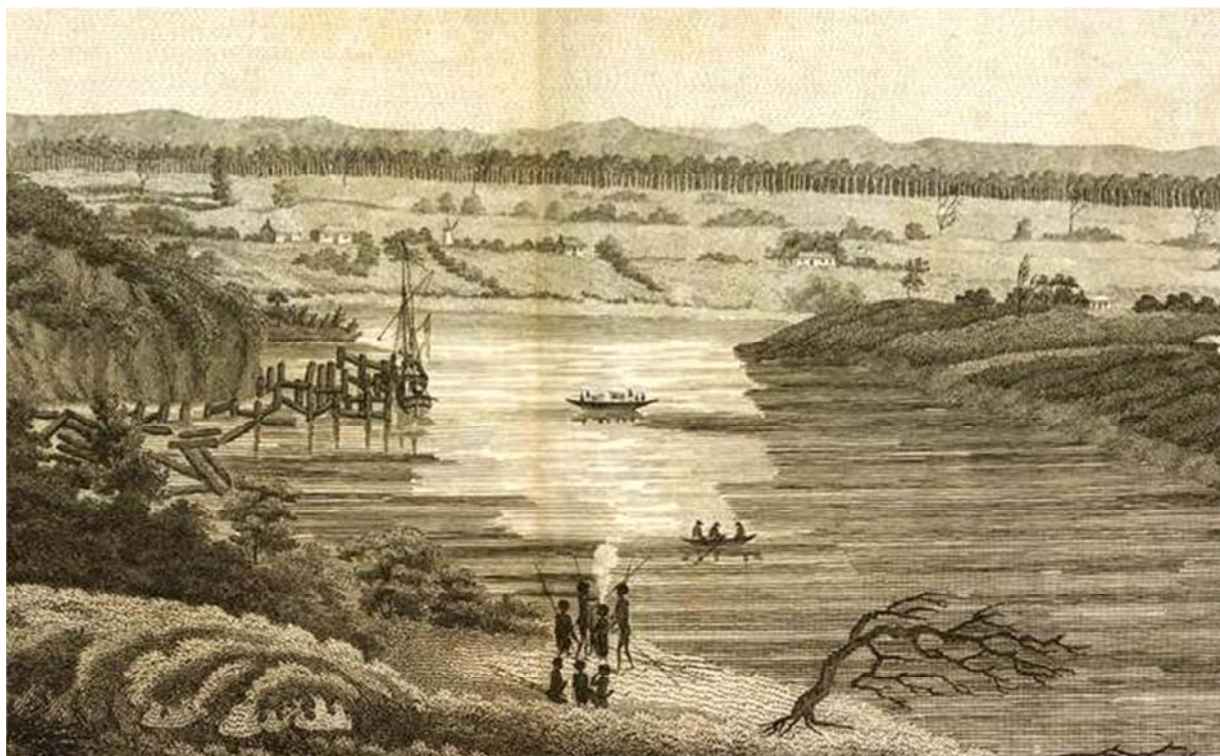


Plate 29: Detail of Captain Wallis (1821), *Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains in Views in New South Wales and Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales*.¹³⁹ The ferry can be seen in the middle of the river.

4.7.12 The Government Domain

The former reserve on the eastern side of the square was enlarged by the addition of Andrew Thompson’s leasehold after his death. The Government Stables that had been built at the southern end near Thompson’s store were still standing but were now incorporated within the Domain. As well, while the hedge that had defined the eastern boundary of the old lease was retained the formerly eroded and fairly barren land immediately around the Government House was levelled and landscaped with trees and substantial paths made in the new park-like grounds. Some of the older paths in Thompson’s lease were maintained as well. What had been the central path in the allotment running from the stables to the river appears to have been reconstructed as a ditch, possibly intended as a ha-ha. In Slaeger’s image of 1813 there appear to be bridges at different places along it. The ditch might have served as a drainage measure as well as a landscape item. As discussed earlier the image might also record the presence of a jetty (or ruin of one) at the edge of the water (Plate 30).

¹³⁷ HRA Series 1 Volume 10; 690-1.

¹³⁸ Lachlan Macquarie; *Journals of His Tours in New South Wales and VDL 1810-1822*: 31.

¹³⁹ ML PX*D.

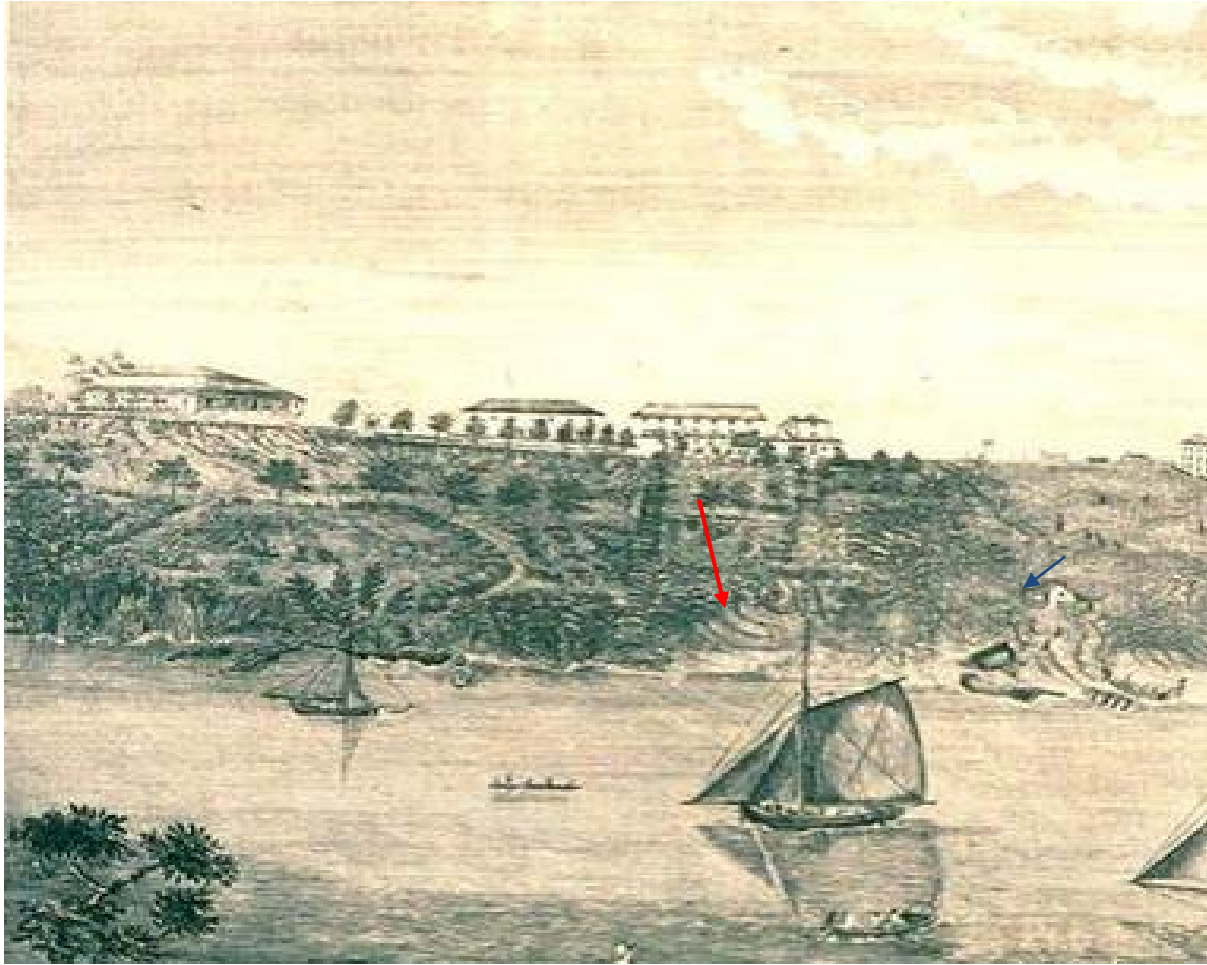


Plate 30: Detail from Philip Slaeger, *A View of Part of the Town of Windsor in New South Wales taken from the Banks of the Hawkesbury 1813* showing the newly landscaped Government Domain on the left; the possible ditch or ha-ha is shown by the arrow and the possible slip by the blue arrow.¹⁴⁰

On the eastern side adjoining the Square Thompson's original house was retained; in Slaeger's image a path or possibly boat slip runs from the house to the waterfront where there is a small boat dragged up on what could be a slip and others lie to the side. Between the house and the ditch the formerly well-ordered plots and plantings of Thompson's garden, recorded in the two Evans' images (Plate 6 and Plate 13), have largely been lost. So too is the hedge or fence that once separated the leasehold from the open space in the square at the northern end but what might be a paling fence still defines the southern end of the former leasehold area. Slaeger's image might also indicate the presence of a small building at the entrance to the Domain at this point.

4.7.13 New Town Allotments

Possibly the most important act that gave definition to the newly named square was Macquarie's decision to create town allotments on the western side of the open space. Previously the buildings and hedges of Thompson's lease and warehouse and the government stables had defined the eastern side of the open space but the western side had been irregular with small buildings and the barracks conforming to no particular alignment. After the removal of the majority of these buildings in c.1812 town allotments were formed here along the boundary of Baker's Farm. One of the most significant of these was expressly determined by the Governor. He awarded to the Chief Constable Richard Fitzgerald "a large allotment on the square on the express condition of his building immediately thereon a handsome commodious inn of brick or stone and to be at least two stories

¹⁴⁰ ML DL F81/21 pl.19.

high".¹⁴¹ The resulting inn, the Macquarie Arms, provided then and continues to provide one of the significant landmarks of the square.

4.7.14 The Macquarie Arms Hotel (81 George Street)

The construction of this inn was completed in c. 1813 and was officially opened by the Governor in 1815. A boundary wall was built around it in 1817. It was used as an inn until 1835.¹⁴² The *Sydney Gazette*¹⁴³ reported that as well as being a "large and commodious House", it had also been "some Time" [sic] in construction and was "lately completed". A close look at Meehan's survey plan of 1812 shows the outline of an "L" shaped building in the location of the hotel.

4.7.15 Howe's House (7 Thompson's Square part of Hawkesbury Regional Museum)

John Howe had settled in the Hawkesbury in 1803. He was a close associate of Andrew Thompson, managing many of Thompson's interests for him after he became ill. Subsequently he became Chief Constable. He was also one of the contractors for the new wharf and established the ferry or punt service. He acquired one of the newly formed town allotments, on a site previously occupied in part by the military barracks.

The exact date of the construction of this house is unknown; it was completed by 1812 when Howe advertised it;

*"The house and premises situate in Thompson Square Windsor comprising a commodious Dwelling House, Granary, Warehouse, Convenient domestic offices, stabling, coach house etc etc".*¹⁴⁴

4.7.16 The Lord Nelson Inn (1-3 Thompson's Square)

The Doctor's House now occupies the northernmost of the town allotments on the western side of the square; in 1819 this site was occupied by the Lord Nelson Inn. James Steele described this land as William Izzard's allotment.¹⁴⁵ The earliest licence granted for this inn is dated 1813 and it was issued to Charles Beasley. He retained the licence until 1817. From 1818 it was taken up by James Doyle until 1830¹⁴⁶ and remained in his possession until his death in 1836. The Lord Nelson Inn was demolished to make way for the building that is currently on the site.

4.7.17 On the Northern Side of the River

After Edward Whitton's death in 1802 his common-law-wife Ann inherited the farm on the northern side of the river adjoining the punt landing. Ann died in 1806 and her daughter inherited the farm. Ann's daughter married Richard Barnes in 1811.¹⁴⁷ No archival evidence has been found to determine what changes may have been made to the farm or its improvements. Evans' 1811 view of Thompson's Square includes on the left a detail of a substantial building on the northern side of the river enclosed within a paling fence. It could have been part of the Whitton farm.

¹⁴¹ Lachlan Macquarie; *Journals of His Tours in New South Wales and VDL* 1810-1822: 42.

¹⁴² D.G. Bowd (1986): *Hawkesbury Journey*: 86.

¹⁴³ *Sydney Gazette* 15 July 1815.

¹⁴⁴ *Sydney Gazette* 31 October 1812; 2.

¹⁴⁵ James Steele (1916); *Early Days of Windsor*; 240.

¹⁴⁶ Society of Genealogists Pubs and Publicans Database.

¹⁴⁷ Member profile Ann Slator; Ancestry. com



Plate 31: The substantial house on the northern side of the river recorded by William George Evans in c. 1811 (*"The Head of Navigation Hawkesbury River"*)¹⁴⁸

The image by Captain Wallis (Plate 32) of the punt crossing shows a small house close to the punt landing which may be the same house in the image above (Plate 31). There were houses further to the east and west of this building.



Plate 32: Detail of Captain Wallis' (1821), *Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains in Views in New South Wales and Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales*¹⁴⁹ showing the small building close to the punt landing on the Wilberforce side of the river.

¹⁴⁸ ML SVIB/Wind/6.

¹⁴⁹ ML PX*D.

4.8 REGIONAL CENTRE 1820s – 1840s

4.8.1 Reduction of the Government Precinct

By the later 1820s more than 32,000 acres had been cleared on the Hawkesbury and half had been cultivated.¹⁵⁰ This was the largest cultivated area in the colony. The town of Windsor served as a regional centre with over twenty public buildings and substantial numbers of privately owned premises were in the course of development. The success of farming in the region and greater element of free enterprise that now characterised the town had its impact on Thompson Square. Many of the buildings erected there for government purposes, such as the storehouses, were no longer required and were either demolished or abandoned. One of the early brick granaries, for example, was still present in 1848 but it was marked as an unoccupied warehouse and was demolished in 1861 to be replaced by a School of Arts. In 1840 the town of Windsor was described as follows: *“the town of Windsor is supported by a very wealthy agricultural district characterised as the granary of New South Wales and its interior trade influences the value of properties daily besides which it has lately become an important military garrison and everyone there is making money”*.¹⁵¹

4.8.2 The Public and Private Faces of the Square

A town plan of 1827 demonstrates the increasing subdivision occurring with the main part of the town. At Thompson Square the land on the eastern side was devoted to Government purposes; in the 1840s it was still part of the Government Domain. It housed the Government Cottage and Stables, shown on plans of 1841 and 1842.¹⁵² The western side of the square was subdivided between individuals with four buildings shown occupying the street frontage, two being hotels. Thompson's house appears to still survive on the street frontage at the western end of the Government Domain.



Plate 33: Detail from the 1827 survey showing the government domain coloured green: on the left, the open space of Thompson Square and the town allotments made by Macquarie on the western side of the square¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Barkley and Nicholls (1994); *Hawkesbury 1794 – 1994*: 30.

¹⁵¹ *Australia's Chronicle* 29 September 1840; 3.

¹⁵² D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 89.

¹⁵³ SRO Map SZ 526.

4.8.3 The Official Square

During the Macquarie period Thompson's Square still retained a strong link with its genesis as a civic precinct. The entire eastern side was devoted to official purposes. This is best seen on a plan of the area prepared in 1831.¹⁵⁴ The old Government House is on the extreme eastern side but by this time it was in use by the Police Magistrate.

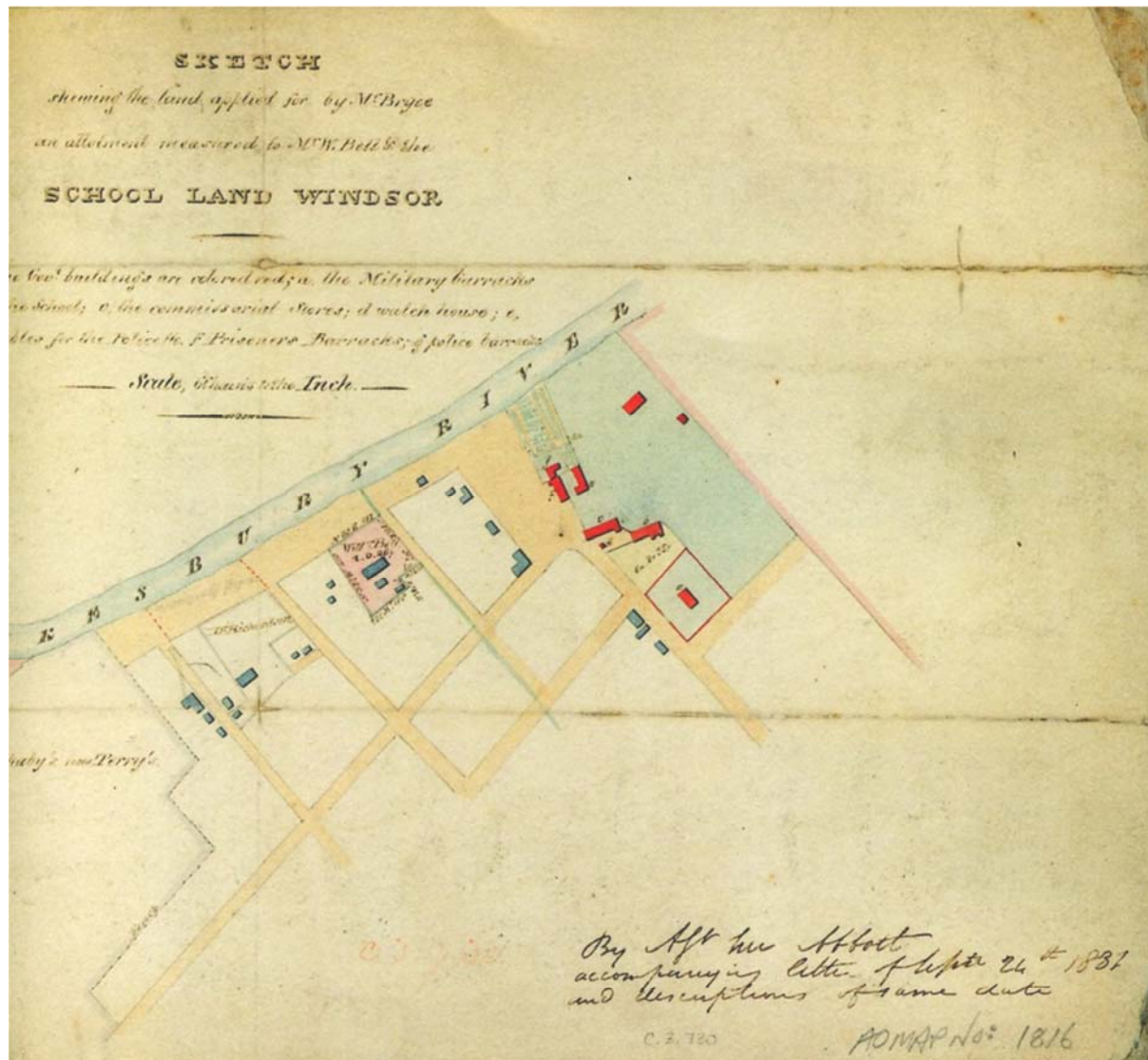


Plate 34: Thompson Square in 1831 by Surveyor Abbott showing the Government reserve on the eastern side of the square, coloured green¹⁵⁵

4.8.4 Police Buildings

The former Government Domain had been repurposed as a precinct associated with the police; the Magistrate occupied Government House. Thompson's old house had been demolished but the government stables remained and were now used for the police horses. The two other buildings in the group were described as a prisoner's barracks and a barracks for the police. These were built between 1827 and 1830. To the north of this group of buildings was a garden laid out in plots running down to the river.

The buildings remained in use for this purpose up to the 1840s. In 1848 they were described as being in a "ruinous state". Part of the land associated with these buildings was put up for sale in 1848 at

¹⁵⁴ Sketch Showing the Land Applied for By Mr McBryde SRO Map 1816.

¹⁵⁵ SRO AO Map 1816.

which time the stables were described as ruinous. Several allotments were sold but the Colonial Secretary canceled some sales.¹⁵⁶

4.8.5 Watch House

A general order of 1810 required watch houses to be built in every district.¹⁵⁷ The ordinary constables operated from a watch house in the town and in 1830 there were twenty-seven constables in Windsor. One of the constables operated from a watch house that has been identified as the small building on the 1831 survey close to the corner of Bridge and George Streets (Plate 35). In 1830 a visitor to Windsor described the “strong house” there. It had three rooms, a narrow central one and two side rooms. The keeper stayed in the middle and the felons - males and females were separated into the rooms either side.¹⁵⁸

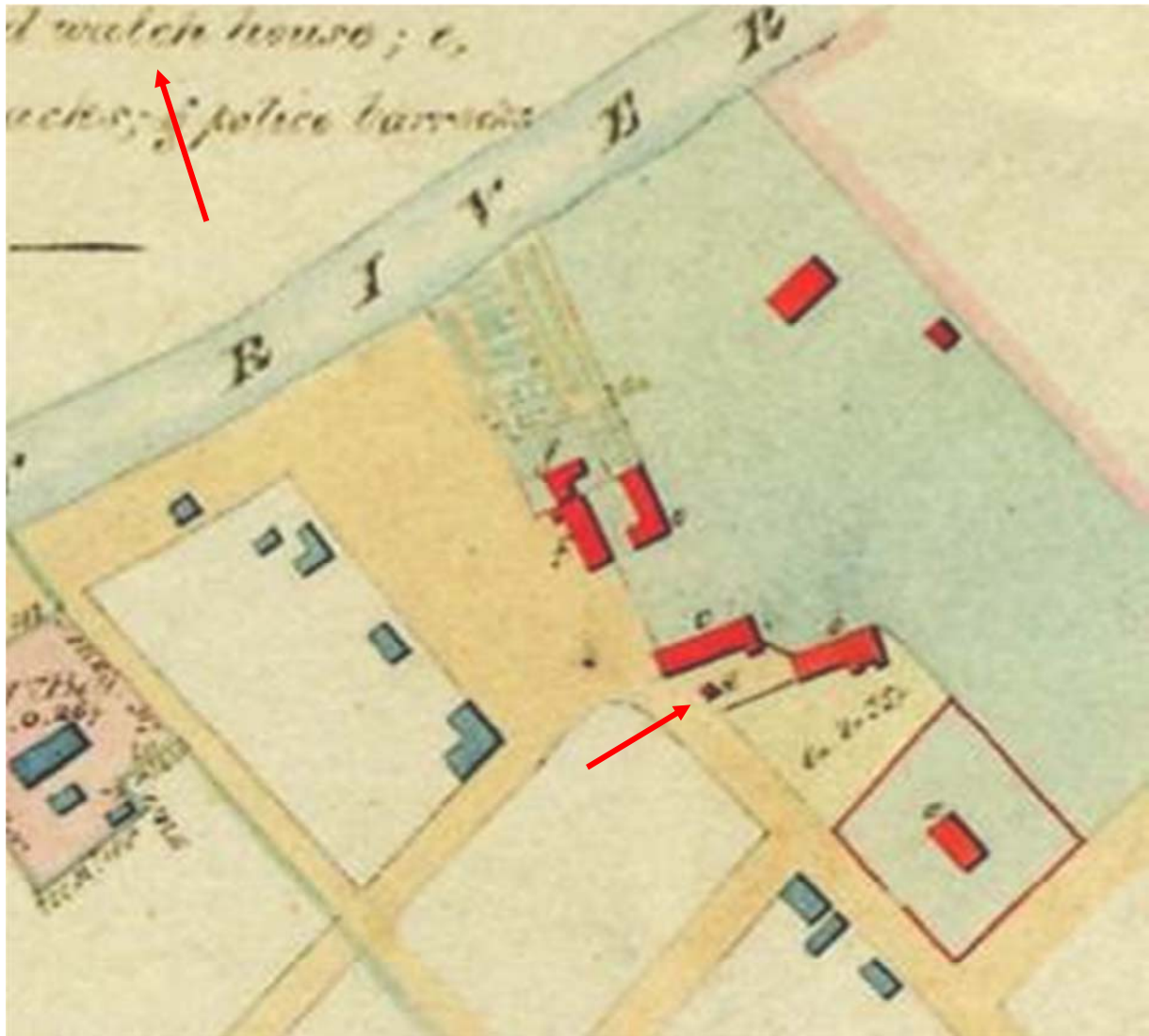


Plate 35: Detail of 1831 survey showing the position of a watch house.¹⁵⁹ It is identified by the key to the plan, part of which is reproduced in this detail in the top left corner.

¹⁵⁶ Plan of the Town of Windsor Showing the Mounted Police Paddock and the allotments for sale 1848 LPI 22.873.

¹⁵⁷ *Sydney Gazette* 22 December 1810: 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Sydney Gazette* 15 April 1830; 3.

¹⁵⁹ SRO Map 1816.

Tenders issued for the erection of a watch house at Windsor¹⁶⁰ in 1835 are more likely to refer to the gaol.

4.8.6 The Private and Commercial Square

In this period hotels, taking advantage of the location near the punt and wharf, dominated the western side of the square. Several of these buildings were adapted for new purposes in this period. They are shown on Armstrong's plan of the town in 1842 where they are labeled as the "old inn" and Coffey's Inn and the former Macquarie Arms was labeled as the mess. Comparing the 1831 and 1842 plans also demonstrates the development of a commercial precinct at the southern end of the Square on George Street facing it.



Plate 36: Detail of Armstrong's plan of the town in 1842 showing the stables on the eastern side of the Square, the inns and private properties on the western side and the commercial precinct at the southern end.¹⁶¹

4.8.7 Roads

The only evidence for a road through the square in this period is from Armstrong's 1842 survey. It shows a curving road or track that led to the punt on the river as well as providing a connection to the path through the Government Domain. In contrast to Evans' 1809 image, the road to the river now commenced from the western side of the Square at the corner of George Street and the Macquarie Arms. The lower alignment close to the river is very similar to the images of the road that serviced the original wharf in its navigation across the contour and down the slope. Armstrong's 1842 plan of the

¹⁶⁰ Sydney Gazette 21 March 1835; 4.

¹⁶¹ Armstrong, J. & White (1842) for Laban. & Baker (Firm), Allotments comprising the Peninsular farm adjoining the town of Windsor. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-f187>.

eastern extent of George Street shows that the road is not yet formed but that the shape would be incorporated into the modern plan of Windsor (Plate 36 and Plate 37).

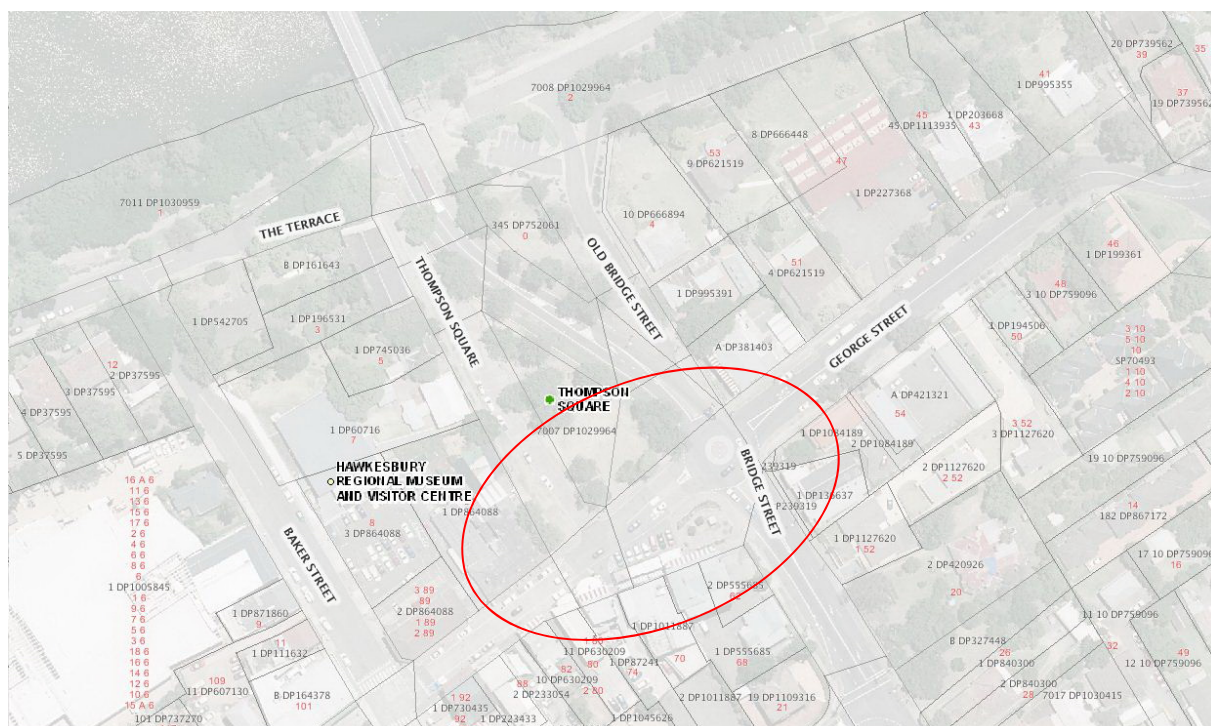


Plate 37: Cadastral overlay on an aerial photograph of Windsor. Compare the shape of the road reserve on the corner of George and Bridge Street in this image with that in Armstrong's 1842 plan. The orientation is slightly different but the shape of George Street at this intersection is still recognisable (circled).¹⁶²

4.8.8 The Macquarie Arms Hotel (81 George Street)

The hotel at the corner of Thompson Square and George Street, opened in 1815, remained in use as an inn until 1835. Between 1835 and 1845 it was used as military mess room. Thereafter it went into private ownership until 1865.¹⁶³

4.8.9 Howe's House / Coffey's Inn (7 Thompson Square)

In 1837 John Howe placed an advertisement for his "roomy, substantial and newly erected house situate in Thompson's Square".¹⁶⁴ In 1812 he had also advertised a newly constructed house. The 1842 survey shows two buildings on his allotment, one behind the other, which suggests that both the earlier and later buildings co-existed; however, the advertisement for the new building states that it faced the market place. The earlier surveys of the town show the first building in this position. The most likely explanation is that the original building was demolished in the early 1830s and the new building, with out-buildings took its place in 1837. The advertisement for the new house is detailed: it contained;

*"Five roomy dry cellars, flagged and planked; on the ground floor two parlours, a spacious hall, 24 by 10, two bed rooms, office and store room, and five sleeping rooms above stairs. The situation is particularly adapted for an Inn, which is much wanted; it is in view of the wharf, facing the Market Place and with proper attention would secure to the holder an independence. The back premises contain a kitchen, wash-house, servants room and a granary over all, capable of containing six hundred bushels of grain with stabling for six horses and a garden of about half an acre. Possession may be had the latter end of June. Apply on the premises to the Proprietor Mr Howe who is about removing to the Hunter".*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² SixViewer, Dept of Land and Property Information.

¹⁶³ D.G. Bowed (1986): *Hawkesbury Journey*: 86.

¹⁶⁴ *Sydney Herald* 27 March 1837; 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

His reference to the lack of inns confirms our archival sources; in 1837 the former Macquarie Arms Hotel was in use as the officers' mess and the Lord Nelson was used as a private house. Despite its many fine advantages he found it very hard to let. It was advertised again in 1839 where new ideas for its use were aired;

*"To Parties wanting a Country Store, the Situation and Premises are well adapted as the vacant space will admit of several erections, if they should required, or the premises are equally adapted for a first rate inn, or an Academy from the healthy and airy situation, in view of the River, fronting the Square and Road (by the ferry) to Wilberforce, Portland etc".*¹⁶⁶

It was used as an inn from 1837 to 1848, the Daniel O'Connell or the O'Connell Inn, leased from the Howe family (who owned it until 1874¹⁶⁷) by Edward Coffey.¹⁶⁸ On the 1842 survey the buildings are described as "Coffeys Inn".

Howe did advertise the property, named as the O'Connell Inn, for lease or sale in 1844¹⁶⁹, at which time Coffey re-signed the lease. When the inn was advertised again in 1849 Coffey did not re-sign his lease; he was retiring.¹⁷⁰ The advertisement gives a good impression of how the house had been adapted for the trade:

*"The Hotel so long established and known as Coffee's Hotel [sic], pleasantly situated in Thompson's Square on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. The house contains two sitting rooms, large ball room and eleven bedrooms, with ample cellarage and now doing a first rate trade; immediate possession can be given, the present tenant Mr Coffee [sic] retiring from business would dispose of his stock to the party going in at valuation".*¹⁷¹

By the later 1850s the hotel and the adjoining property, the site of the former Lord Nelson Hotel, were owned by one man (or consortium). Together they were known as "Burke's Buildings". The entire group was advertised for sale in 1858. The advertisement notes that the former inn was still leased as a hotel at that date by Mr Donley. It was described as follows:

*"It contains on the ground floor a large tap room, bar and 4 parlours. The first floor which is reached by a good wide staircase contains a large concert room, 38 x 16 feet and three bedrooms. The attic floor also contains 3 bedrooms. The basement – kitchen and coal cellars, and four other cellars now used as wine and spirit stores. A large yard at the rear, with stabling, sheds and other conveniences..."*¹⁷²

4.8.10 The Lord Nelson (1 – 3 Thompson Square, later the Doctors House)

The former Lord Nelson Inn at the northern end of the square had been used as the previous publican's home to 1836. On the 1842 survey it was still referred to as an "old inn". A local historian claims that the present terraces were constructed on the site in 1844¹⁷³ but no primary archival source has yet been found to confirm that date. The same historian described it as being used as a post office from 1851 to 1855.¹⁷⁴ In 1858 it was advertised along with the former "Coffee's Hotel" [sic] as part of the "extensive premises known as Burke's Buildings". They were let to a Doctor Day;

"The entire range is built of brick with slated roofs, occupied as two homes. The dwelling house occupied by Dr Day contains on the ground floor a spacious entrance-hall extending through into which open by separate doors four large rooms all of which have fireplaces in them. A wide staircase leads to the landing on the first floor on which there are four good bedrooms – the largest 25 x 16 feet and the smallest is 16 x 14 feet all with fire places. Above these again is the attic floor in which there are three rooms measuring respectively 19 x 15 feet, 19 x 10 feet and 26 x 9 feet. In the basement are a

¹⁶⁶ Sydney Herald 24 June 1839; 3.

¹⁶⁷ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 87- 88.

¹⁶⁸ Society of Genealogists Pubs and Publicans Database.

¹⁶⁹ Sydney Herald 18 April 1844; 3.

¹⁷⁰ Sydney Morning Herald 25 June 1849; 4.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Sydney Morning Herald 15 December 1858; 7.

¹⁷³ D.G. Bowd (1982); *Macquarie Country*: 140.

¹⁷⁴ D.G. Bowd (1982); *Macquarie Country*: 141.

hall, kitchen 18 x 16 feet, laundry, wine and coal cellars. At the rear is a large yard with poultry houses, coach house and servants apartment. Also a small garden. These premises occupy the corner... there are iron balconies to both houses extending along the full frontage and commanding a very pretty view".¹⁷⁵

4.8.11 The Hawkesbury Stores (62 – 68 George Street)

At the southern end of the Square the largest building was a commercial premises known as the Hawkesbury Stores. It can be seen on the 1842 survey and was advertised in 1845. The sale notice described it as *"those valuable and extensive premises known as the Hawkesbury Stores in George Street, Windsor opposite Thompson Square with an allotment in the rear fronting Macquarie Street"*.¹⁷⁶ Barkley-Jack has identified this as the site of three single-storey terraces constructed by Uriah Moses after he purchased the land from Richard Fitzgerald in 1831.¹⁷⁷

4.8.12 The Public Square

Armstrong's 1842 plan (Plate 36) provides a little detail about the square between the official and private buildings on either side. A substantial track is indicated running down to the punt. There are no images of this square in this period. From the 1830s Thompson Square began to assume a more focused identity for the local community. From 1832 it became the site of a weekly market.¹⁷⁸ Less desirably it was also the site of public stocks or they were on the southern boundary. The following observation was made in 1844:

"the first thing which catches the eye of a stranger on ascending the hill in Bridge Street is the STOCKS. Should it be deemed necessary to retain these relics of the dark ages as a means of punishment we think they should be erected in the vicinity of the police office as more suitable ground for their reception and we hope the magistrates will order their speedy removal to the place pointed out".¹⁷⁹

4.8.13 The Punt

As discussed in earlier sections a ferry was established to provide communication between the northern and southern sides of the river in 1814. It was privately operated and left from the wharf. In 1832 the service was taken over by the Government and the ferry was replaced by a punt operating on a cable. It was located on the far western side of the square in a line with the private properties on this side of it. Below them was a small building that is described in later plans as a punt house. It is in the same location as the building earlier identified as the watch house and later evidence suggests that it was one and the same building.

¹⁷⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 December 1858; 7.

¹⁷⁶ *Hawkesbury Courier* 3 July 1845; 3.

¹⁷⁷ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*; 36.

¹⁷⁸ *The Australian* 7 December 1832.

¹⁷⁹ *Hawkesbury Courier* 29 August 1844.



Plate 38: Detail of a survey c. 1835 showing the punt, punt house (red arrow) and the wharf on the river's edge at the northern end of Thompson Square and a wide cutting on the northern side of the river¹⁸⁰

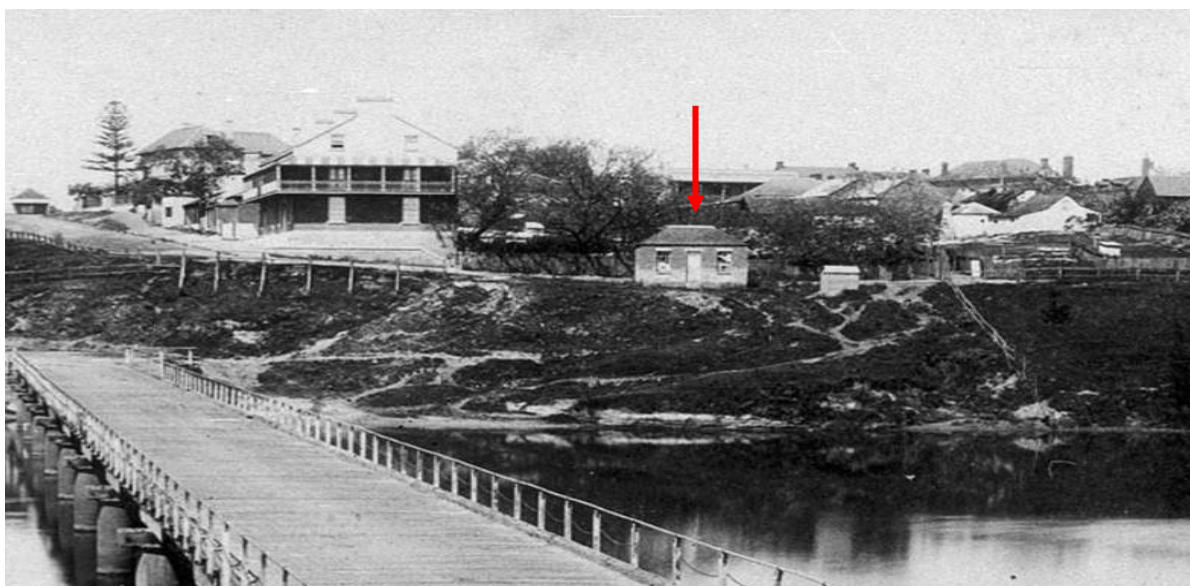


Plate 39: Detail from an image of 1888 that shows the punt house; the form suggests an early nineteenth century building¹⁸¹

By 1845 siltation that had plagued the river for decades had become so bad that the navigability of the river had declined it was recommended that a steam tug be employed to clear it.¹⁸²

4.8.14 Whitton's Farm and the Public House

There is little evidence of features or improvements on the northern side of the river at the time Mary Anne Whitton inherited the farm from her mother. She appears to have been in financial difficulties by 1812. In that year her husband put an advertisement in the paper stating that no one should give her credit because he would not be responsible for any of her debts.¹⁸³ The marriage did not last long

¹⁸⁰ AO Map 5968.

¹⁸¹ ML At Work and Play Image 04405.

¹⁸² Sue Rosen (1995); *Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment*: 61.

¹⁸³ *Sydney Gazette* 7 November 1812.

after that date. Mary Anne Whitton appears to have solved her problems by selling part of the farm although no trace of the transaction has been found to date.

The evidence for the action is that in 1821 half of the property was again put to auction apparently to settle the owner's debts. The man who owned it in 1821 was Thomas Clarkson, described as a dealer. The property at auction was described as Whitton's Farm and the sale was for a life interest in one moiety of it.¹⁸⁴ The first auction did not raise enough to cover his debts and a second was organised in 1824 for a half of the same property.¹⁸⁵ These two sales effectively halved the original grant; Mary Ann Whitton must have retained the remaining half. She remarried in 1827 to an ex-convict named John Eccleston.¹⁸⁶ The farm passed to him on her death in 1840.¹⁸⁷

The property was advertised for sale in 1839. It reveals that some substantial changes had been made to it:

*"consisting of about 15 acres of rich cleared land known as Whitton's Farm situate at the punt over the Hawkesbury and has a public house erected thereon now in full trade".*¹⁸⁸

4.9 A FRINGE AREA 1850s- 1900

4.9.1 The Demise of the River Trade

The position of the wharf and the punt at the bottom of Thompson Square meant that the square was a hive of activity during the first half of the nineteenth century with goods and people constantly moving through these two critical transport nodes. By the 1880s, the river began to noticeably silt up, making navigation more difficult. Shipping declined; in 1881, 468 large vessels berthed at Windsor but a few years later only ten percent of these were able to get through. Dredging was carried out for a short time but was not successful and was discontinued. From 1889 flood scouring appeared to improve the condition of the river by relieving siltation but it was short lived.¹⁸⁹

The demise of river trade caused by the silting up of the channel resulted in the growth of the area slowing and the population in the town began to decline. However, the region was a focus for agriculture and Windsor was the centre for produce as far downstream as the Macdonald River. The opening of the railway in 1864 confirmed Windsor's pre eminence in the regional economy but as the river became more difficult to navigate and the railway gained in importance it changed the economic dynamic. The floods of the 1850s and 1860s and construction of the railway in the 1860s contributed to the river's siltation.¹⁹⁰ Windsor went from being a rural settlement with some autonomy and identity to being dependent on the relationship to Sydney. Windsor gradually lost its role as a port and market centre. From 1890 passengers and cargo were transported from Sackville to the rail junction at Brooklyn.

¹⁸⁴ Sydney Gazette 23 June 1821.

¹⁸⁵ Sydney Gazette 8 April 1824.

¹⁸⁶ Member profile Ann Slator Ancestry.com

¹⁸⁷ LPI, Primary Application 18115.

¹⁸⁸ The Australian 27 April 1839; 4.

¹⁸⁹ Sue Rosen (1995); Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment: 93.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p 73, 75.

4.9.2 Subdivision

The erosion of Windsor's status was gradual and at the beginning of this phase important changes were being made in the town and new development undertaken. In Thompson Square the most important change, one that very substantially changed its use and appearance, was the subdivision of the Government Domain on the eastern side of the Square. Plans for the subdivision were prepared in 1848 but it was delayed for several years.



*Plate 40: Detail of a Plan of the Town of Windsor showing the proposed subdivision and the buildings as they then existed in 1848*¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Crown Plan 22-873.

The sale was advertised in 1855; the land was described as “the most eligible part of Windsor” for business or private development.¹⁹² Six lots were offered for sale; four had frontages to Thompson Square (one with a frontage to George Street as well) and two had frontages to George Street. As well as the sale of the land the auction offered “*the whole lot of materials at present constituting the Government Stables, Windsor*”.¹⁹³ These were the old stables (and possibly Thompson’s house) that had stood at the western end of the Government Domain on Thompson Square.

The land sold quickly; it was reported approximately two weeks after the sale in early December that five lots had been sold at a total purchase price of £454.¹⁹⁴ However it is clear from the title deeds that some of the allotments sold earlier than the auction. The new owner of three lots that included part of the stables was John Kettle. These properties comprise the present day 6 and 10 Bridge Street. Together they formed Allotment 5 of Section 11 of the Windsor Town Plan. Along with the adjoining Allotments 4 and 9, Allotment 5 was sold as grant by purchase to John Icke Kettle on 4 September 1851; it was registered in 1854.¹⁹⁵

4.10 New Residential Development

4.10.1 House and Outbuilding (5 Thompson Square)

None of the buildings on the eastern side of the Square have been precisely dated although all except one fall within this period of development, from 1850-1900. As well, the small cottage on the western side of the Square at 5 Thompson Square has been tentatively identified as having been built in this period.

This small house is located between Howe’s House and the Doctor’s house. Barkley-Jack claims that it was built in the early 1850s by a local man, John Cunningham and that its yard was used then or later for boat-building.¹⁹⁶¹⁹⁷ This may be the house that was advertised in 1857 as a “Superior Brick Built Cottage Thompson’s Square:

*“That newly erected brick built cottage containing four rooms, detached kitchen, out offices etc with a wide verandah in front and rear, situate in Thompson –square Windsor at present rented to Mr James Atkinson, builder at £50 per annum. This cottage being situate in the most healthy and pleasant locality in the town of Windsor commanding a splendid view of the River Hawkesbury and the adjacent country ... The cottage stands in an allotment of land having 70’ frontage to Thompson-square by a depth of 100”.*¹⁹⁸

4.10.2 Site of Thompson’s Garden, Later the Government Gardens 4 Bridge Street

The first title issued for the allotment was granted to the Presbyterian Church on 1 December 1874 for the purpose of establishing a manse.¹⁹⁹ Additional trustees for this property were appointed in 1897.²⁰⁰ In January 1899 a notice was issued in the Government Gazette that noted the reservation of a narrow triangular section on the north-eastern corner as a public road. This resumption resulted in the present angled frontage to Bridge Street. The resumption was formally recorded in 1903.²⁰¹ There is no evidence that the site was actively developed or used during the last years of the nineteenth century.

¹⁹² The Empire 13 December 1855; 7.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Sydney Morning Herald 24 December 1855; 3.

¹⁹⁵ ¹⁹⁵ Register of Town Purchases 1854 and CT Volume 2757 Folio 234.

¹⁹⁶ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); History of Thompson Square; 37.

¹⁹⁷ The listing report for the building claims a construction date of 1840s - Listings Report, Media Section, Information Branch, NSW Planning and Environment Commission, File 76/20230 PWP: 2.

¹⁹⁸ Sydney Morning Herald 23 December 1857; 7.

¹⁹⁹ LPI, CT Volume 459 Folio 32.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

4.10.3 1860s Cottage (6 [or 8] Bridge Street)

Bowd suggests that this cottage was built about 1860.²⁰² Behind it is a small two-storey brick building where Bowd claims that Miss Eliza Hopkins conducted a private school from c. 1871 – 1886. It is said to have been built at about the same time as the house on the front of the allotment.²⁰³

4.10.4 Joshua Dowe's House (10 Old Bridge Street)

Local historians claim that Dr Joshua Dowe erected this two-storey building in 1856. It was on the site of the government stables. Certainly it was advertised in 1860 as being recently built; it was advertised for lease:

"To let commodious dwelling now in occupation by John Dowe. It has recently been built, suitable for a family or hotel more particularly as the railroad to Blacktown will be opened on 2nd proximo and road connections to Windsor".²⁰⁴

The advertisement described the house as having an entrance hall fronting Thompson Square, flower gardens enclosed with a paling fence, a balcony and verandah, five spacious rooms on the ground floor and six rooms on the second floor, a kitchen and cellars under the verandah at the back. It had an extensive enclosed yard and there were stables, haylofts, and a coach house. It also had a paddock that ran down to the river.²⁰⁵

The house was used as a private girl's school called St Katherine's after which it was used as a Grammar School from 1875 to 1885. It was used as a private residence from 1887 to 1903.²⁰⁶

4.11 Old Residences

4.11.1 The Doctor's House (1-3 Thompson Square)

The terraces were built in the preceding period (c.1844) over the site of the "old inn" and were occupied by a doctor - a tradition that continued through the later years of the nineteenth century giving rise to the popular name for the building. In 1860 it was referred to as the property of Messrs Burke, Moloney and Izzard.²⁰⁷

4.11.2 Howe's House/the Daniel O'Connell Inn/Royal Oak Inn (7 Thompson Square)

By 1860 the old inn, now known as the Royal Oak Inn, was still serving customers. It was advertised in that year under this name. Described as situated between Fitzgerald's property (The Macquarie Arms) and that of Messrs Burke, Moloney and Izzard (the Doctors House)²⁰⁸ it was sold in 1860 by the Trustee of John Howe.

Between 1871 and 1899 the former inn was used by George Davies to print the *Australian*, a local newspaper. After this it was used as a private residence to 1967.²⁰⁹

4.11.3 School of Arts (14 Bridge Street)

The School of Arts was constructed on the site of the old Government Store or granary in 1861 at a cost of £674. It consisted of a central hall with a stage at one end and a library wing on the George Street side, a committee room, supper room and kitchen on the southern side. It served as a school of Arts until 1947 when it was sold to Enoch Taylor for a boot factory in 1947.²¹⁰

²⁰² D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 90.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Sydney Morning Herald 27 June 1860; 10.

²⁰⁵ Sydney Morning Herald 27 June 1860; 10.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: 91.

²⁰⁷ Sydney Morning Herald 25 February 1860; 11.

²⁰⁸ Sydney Morning Herald 25 February 1860; 11.

²⁰⁹ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 87- 88.

²¹⁰ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 92.



Plate 41: Undated image of the School of Arts²¹¹

4.11.4 The Bakery Building and the Hawkesbury Stores (62 – 68 George Street)

Across Bridge Street from the School of Arts is the small brick cottage possibly first built by Uriah Moses before or around 1840. In about 1880, the western half was demolished, cast iron columns, balustrading and other details were added and a large two-storey extension was made to the remaining part of the original building. This work was undertaken to accommodate the expanding grocery and bakery business of William Moses, the Hawkesbury Stores. The family had been in the bakery business since 1821. The general store and business had done well until the silting up of the Hawkesbury led to the decline in the river trade and the commercial centre moved from the Square to the block containing the bank and post offices. The third generation of Moses moved the general store to this precinct in 1920.²¹²

²¹¹ ML GPO 1-06260.

²¹² D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 93.

4.11.5 The Macquarie Arms Hotel (81 George Street)

Until 1865 the former inn was in private ownership and used as a residence. It reverted to use as an inn during 1873 and has provided service since that time.²¹³

4.11.6 The Hawkesbury Hotel (70 George Street)

In 1867 an advertisement for the sale of the Hawkesbury Hotel appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*; it was described as one of the “best businesses in Windsor”.²¹⁴ The premises encompassed a large entrance hall, a bar, eleven rooms and cellars. There was a detached kitchen as well as stables and sheds. It was noted that “a large portion of the ground was long established as horse and cattle sale yards”.²¹⁵

The building was located on George Street at the southern end of the Square and facing it, next to the Hawkesbury Stores. The first licensee was George Hall; he managed the hotel from 1865 to 1868. It was considerably renovated in 1893 and finally closed in 1911 (as the Sir John Young Hotel).

4.11.7 A New Road and an old Landform

There is little evidence for how the roads developed in the square during the later part of the nineteenth century other than what is shown in images from the 1870s. The surveys showing the square in the 1840 and 1850s give little indication of roads; in fact none are shown. The only survey of this period, one prepared for the construction of the bridge only record the road down to the punt sweeping across the hill much as it had from the 1790s.



Plate 42: Detail of survey for the new bridge showing the road running diagonally across the square. Note the location of the “Ferryman’s House” (punt house) to the left of the image.²¹⁶

One image prepared in 1863 by Henry Grant Lloyd shows the wharf and the road leading down to the ferry and it suggests that the open precinct of the square was still very much in its “natural” state.

²¹³ D.G. Bowed (1986): *Hawkesbury Journey*: 86.

²¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald* 19 April 1867; 7.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ RMS Plan 018 492BC0104.

Although the contours had been reshaped for the construction of the wharf earlier in the century there is little evidence of any formal spaces or improvements.



Plate 43: Henry Grant Lloyd, *On the Hawkesbury Windsor* (signed 1863) showing the wharf in the lower right and road to the ferry²¹⁷

One important improvement was made in this period. There is a reference in 1855 to “moneys expended for making a road to the Windsor Wharf – contractor for cutting, carting and macadamizing - £35”.²¹⁸ This is most likely an extension of Bridge Street across George Street to join the curve of the existing road as it turned north-west on the eastern side of the square to run down to the ferry. Pictorial evidence suggests that the extension of Bridge Street did not meet the curved road until after 1879 (Plate 50 and Plate 51). Some time between 1879 and 1888, the two alignments were joined. There is no evidence of a formal road on the western side of the square until later in the century.

4.11.8 The Squatters Arms (Freemans Reach)

John Eccleston left his farm on the northern side of the river to his son William; he inherited it after his father's death in 1867.²¹⁹ William Eccleston leased the farm to John Ryan; the lease was for thirteen years from 1 January 1868.²²⁰ Ryan probably took over the existing hotel that had stood on the site at least from 1839. James Steele stated in 1916 that Ryan kept a hotel known as the Squatters Arms but he dated his tenure from about 1846 to 1867. The hotel was said to have stood at the corner of Freemans Reach Road and Wilberforce Roads and the building was described as resembling Old Government House.²²¹

No specific surveys of the northern side of the river have been found but surveys prepared for the construction of the new bridge in the 1870s show the distribution of the old thirty-acre allotments including Whitton's property (Plate 44 below).

Another of the surveys prepared for the new bridge records a house and garden located at the intersection of the Freemans Reach and Wilberforce Roads; it is similar to the location that Steele described as the site of an early hotel but this building was on McQuade's property to the east of the Ryan grant.

²¹⁷ ML SPF Windsor.

²¹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 December 1855; 3.

²¹⁹ LPI, *Primary Application* 18115.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ James Steele; *The Good Old Days of Windsor*: 151.

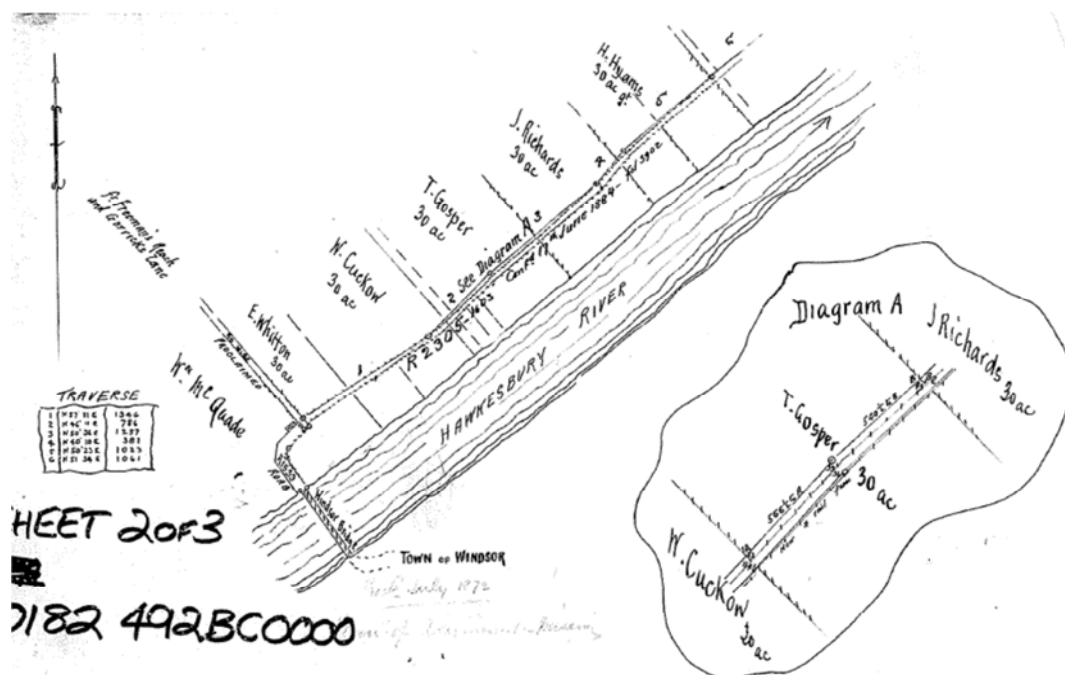


Plate 44: Survey for the new Windsor Bridge showing the allotments on the northern side of the river.²²²

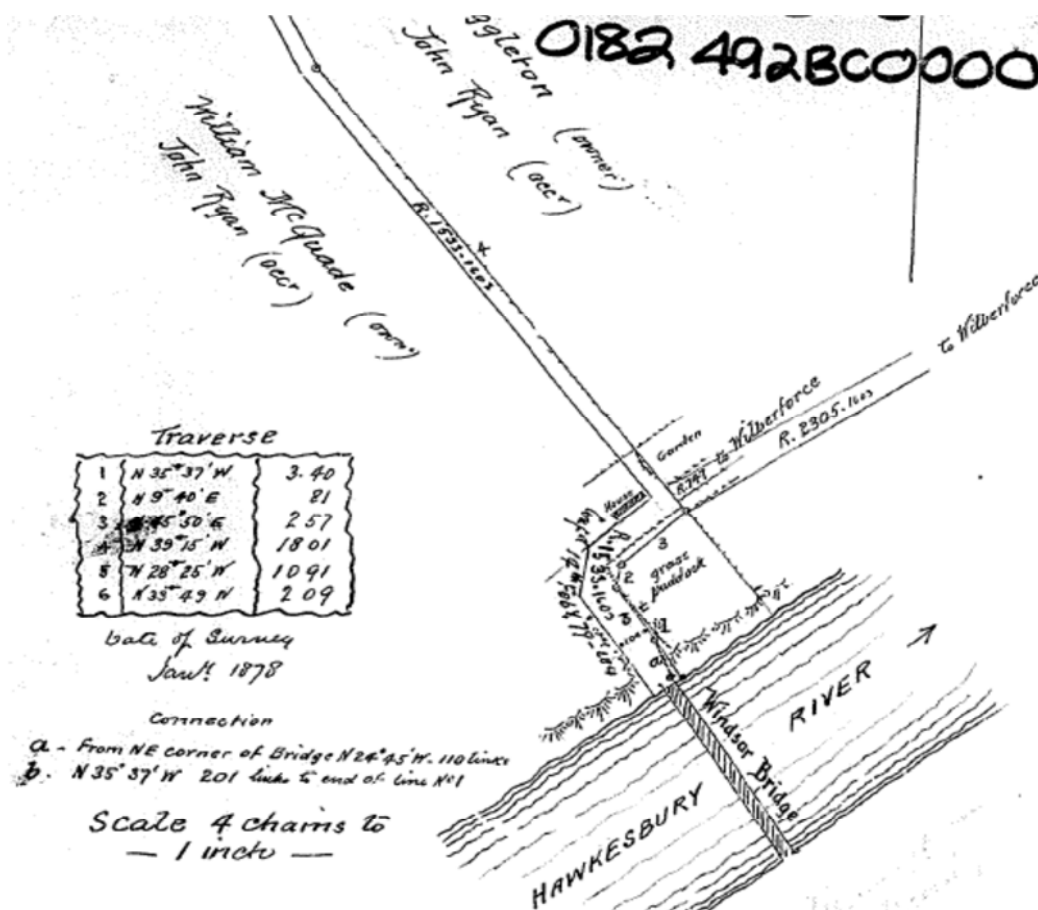


Plate 45: Survey for new Windsor Bridge showing the northern side of the river and the small house and garden at the intersection of Wilberforce and Freeman's reach Roads.²²³

²²² RMS Plan 018 492BC0104.

²²³ Ibid.

However, a report of the demolition of the building in 1914 does place the hotel on this side of the road.²²⁴ By 1893 the hotel was in ruins; it was reported in August of that year that *"the remains of which (hotel) stand just over the river"*.²²⁵

Many images from the later half of the nineteenth century show the land on the northern side of the river to be sparsely occupied and primarily devoted to grazing, dairying and horses and crops. It reflects a change in the economy of the region away from agriculture to pastoralism and citrus farms.

4.11.9 Erosion and Damage

Contemporary photographs also demonstrate the huge impact on the landscape from floods and destabilised river banks; in comparison to the gently sloping river's edge of early nineteenth century images the land has now been cut back leaving a low flat river frontage and steep banks at a distance from the water's edge. In 1870 there were two major and thirteen minor floods on the Hawkesbury and large landslips occurred along the banks. The river was widened and made shallower; opposite Windsor the riverbank fell in for a quarter of a mile from the site of the present bridge.²²⁶

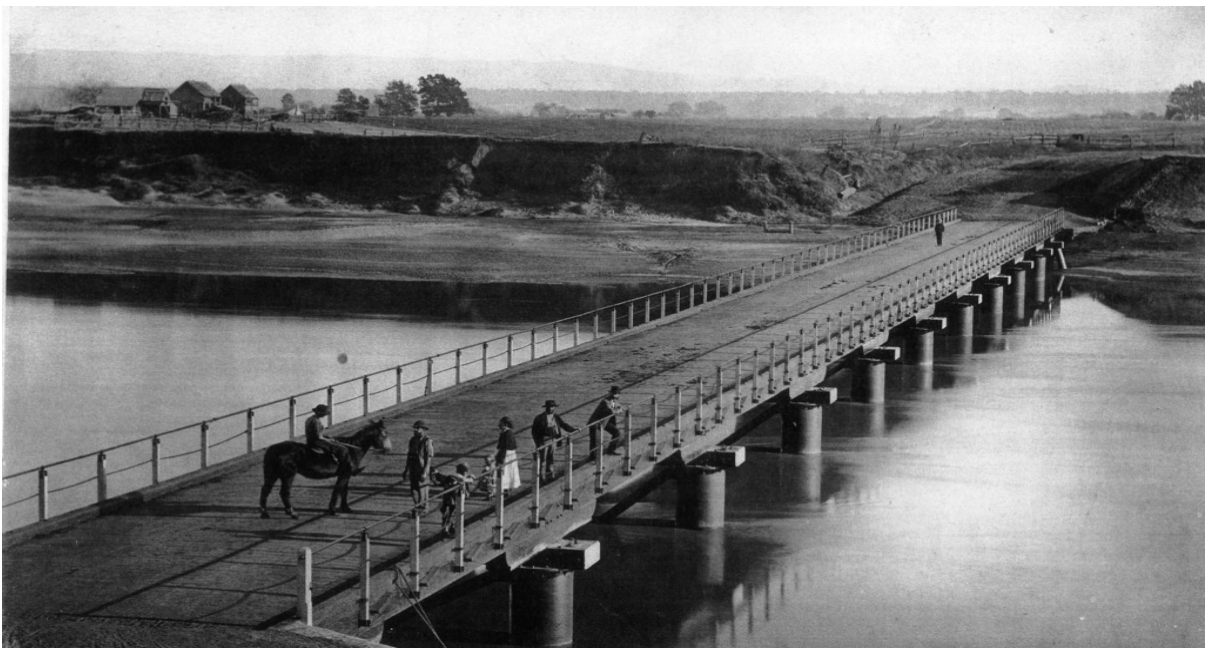


Plate 46: View across the original low level bridge to the northern side of the river showing the cutting made there for it and also illustrating the scattered occupation and open fields and pastures that characterised this side of the river.²²⁷

The damage was not confined to the northern side of the river. It was reported in May 1870 that due to floodwaters *"there is a large slip below Burke's Buildings, Thompson Square, which has carried away the railing that was erected to protect the bank after the flood of 1867 and broken nearly into the middle of the road"*.²²⁸ This would be the land below the Doctor's residence.

4.11.10 The Old Punt

Since 1815 the only way to cross the river from Thompson Square was by means of the ferry and then the punt located at the northern end of the square. Surveys prepared for the new bridge show that the approach to the punt was virtually the same track that appeared in the 1842 survey and earlier nineteenth century images sweeping across the contour of the slope. The survey also shows

²²⁴ Singleton Argus 24 October 1914: 1.

²²⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 26 August 1893; 6.

²²⁶ Sue Rosen (1995); *Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment*: 72.

²²⁷ ML SPF Windsor NSW Bridges.

²²⁸ Sydney Morning Herald 18 May 1870; 7.

the punt house or “ferryman’s house” (or earlier watch house) was still located on the riverbank at the base of the Doctor’s House.



Plate 47: Survey of the southern approach to the proposed new bridge; it shows the existing track and the punt house.²²⁹

Nearing the end of its life the punt was in poor condition particularly on the northern side of the river as was the road approaching it. In 1873 it was reported that “*the approach to this punt on the Wilberforce side is in a most disgraceful state owing to the bad state of the road. When the approach was in the hands of the Windsor Road Trust it was kept in passable order but since it ... has been placed in the hands of the Wilberforce and Freeman’s Reach Road Trusts it is in a dangerous and disgraceful state*”.²³⁰

4.11.11 Poor Sanitation

Increasingly during the last years of the nineteenth century the sanitation of the town was raised as an issue of concern. One particular area raised great anxiety; this was a sewer that emerged near the punt house. In March 1895 it was reported that “*complaints are being made respecting the sewer pipes emptying near the old punt house causing an intolerable nuisance. Some of the pipes have fallen in and sorts of disgusting rubbish has accumulated*”²³¹. Complaints were still being made about this place later in the year when it was observed that it was “*still in a filthy condition and likely to breed disease*”.²³²

²²⁹ RMS Plan 018 492BC0104.

²³⁰ AWRH Advertiser 25 October 1873; 3.

²³¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 30 March 1895; 9.

²³² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 29 June 1895; 3.

4.12 A New Bridge: 1874

4.12.1 Building the Bridge

There had been agitation for a bridge across the Hawkesbury River since 1864. The low level bridge was frequently affected by flood water and demands were made to raise the level of the bridge. It was not until 1874 that the new bridge was opened at the foot of Thompson Square. Plans for the new bridge were prepared and the surveys provide a good indication of the southern and northern approaches before work commenced there.

Two sites were considered for the new bridge; it was conceded that if the site near the ferry was chosen it would require substantial piling due to the rocky terrain. £7000 was allocated in the Government's budget for the work.²³³ The decision to build a low-level bridge was one considerably governed by expense; it was later claimed that a high level bridge would have cost £60,000; as it was the low-level bridge costs blew out to £10,000.²³⁴

The contractor for the bridge was William King Dixon; he commenced work in 1872 and it was finally opened in August 1874. Dixon was presented with a gold watch in appreciation of his efforts.²³⁵ He had come to Australia in 1852 as engineer for the construction of the first railway. The construction of the bridge entailed sinking eleven pairs of piers in the river - ten pairs being iron and one pair of wooden piers - through twelve feet of water, 26 feet of sand and twelve feet of boulders and rocks. Each pier consisted of iron cylinders 3' 6" in diameter sunk to depth and filled with concrete. In each case the piers were taken four feet into solid rock and there secured by a cross head with bolts four inches in diameter and nine feet long, six feet in the rock.²³⁶

The bridge comprised eleven bays of about forty-four feet with five girders in ironbark. The deck was formed of five inch ironbark planking each plank being 21' 6" long. The length of the deck was 455 feet (138.68 metres) and it was twenty feet (6.1 metres) wide between the kerb logs. The handrail was made so that it could be lowered beneath the level of the kerb log for protection from floating logs and debris. The total cost was £10,283.²³⁷

In 1873 it was reported that the contractors were working at a good rate; only one cylinder remained to be placed and work had commenced on the timber elements.²³⁸ It was completed in the following year.

There is one image of the bridge soon after it was built, a watercolour prepared in 1883. It shows the bridge and the old road that was maintained to provide access to the old wharf that lay on the eastern side of the bridge.

The history of the bridge is presented in more detail in Section 5.0.

²³³ The Empire 12 August 1871; 2.

²³⁴ Australian Town and Country Journal 22 August 1874; 9.

²³⁵ D.G. Dowd (1986); Hawkesbury Journey: 95.

²³⁶ D.G. Bowd; Macquarie Country: 62.

²³⁷ *Ibid*; 63.

²³⁸ AWRH Advertiser 8 November 1873; 2.



Plate 48: Andrew Williams (1883), *Windsor Bridge*²³⁹

4.12.2 Reconfiguring the Square: New Roads

The opening of the new bridge required changes to be made to the roads. The archival evidence indicates that at the time it was built, a wide road led to the punt by running diagonally across the slope from west at the top to east, much as it had from the early years of the nineteenth century (Plate 47). Part of the original curved road closest to the river was retained. In 1855 an extension of Bridge Street was made on the eastern side of the square from George Street to the existing road. By 1888 however, a single alignment crossed George Street and continued straight down the slope to the wharf and bridge.

The remnant curve in the middle of the square was connected on the western side to a new road that ran down in front of the town allotments ending at the embankment above the punt house. Changes also appear to have been made to the terrace in the area of the bridge (Plate 47, Plate 49 and Plate 50).

²³⁹ ML SVIB/WIND/7.



Plate 51: Detail of the 1888 James Mills photograph. The same view south across the square showing the post and rail fences that have been added and the junction between the 1855 and 1876 roads is connected. By the time this photograph was taken, the reserves had been fenced and some development had occurred to the buildings at the top of the square – compare this photograph with the one above.²⁴²



Plate 52: Detail of the 'Plan of Part of the Hawkesbury River at Windsor – Surveyed in October 1890' The river is to the left and the two roads servicing the wharf and the bridge are clearly defined. Compare this image with the one above.²⁴³

²⁴² ML At Work and Play Image 04405.

²⁴³ State Archives of NSW X1080- 74/12.

The separate reserves were gazetted in October 1899; the southern portion was Reserve 2990 and the northern portion Reserve 29901.

4.12.4 Raising the Bridge

The bridge frequently was covered with flood waters and this disrupted the delivery of produce from Wilberforce. There was much agitation to raise the level of the Windsor Bridge. Deputations were made to Parliament and in April 1895 the Commissioner for Roads and Bridges visited to inspect the site.²⁴⁴

4.12.5 Temporary Bridge

The work on the new bridge required a temporary bridge to be built while the existing bridge was raised eight feet (2.5 m). Approval was given for this new bridge and work commenced on 9 September 1896 with the piles being driven into the river.²⁴⁵ The piles for the bridge were sourced locally; a Mr H. Wholohan of Comleroy Road was awarded one contract²⁴⁶ and Mr Campbell of Freemans Reach Road.²⁴⁷

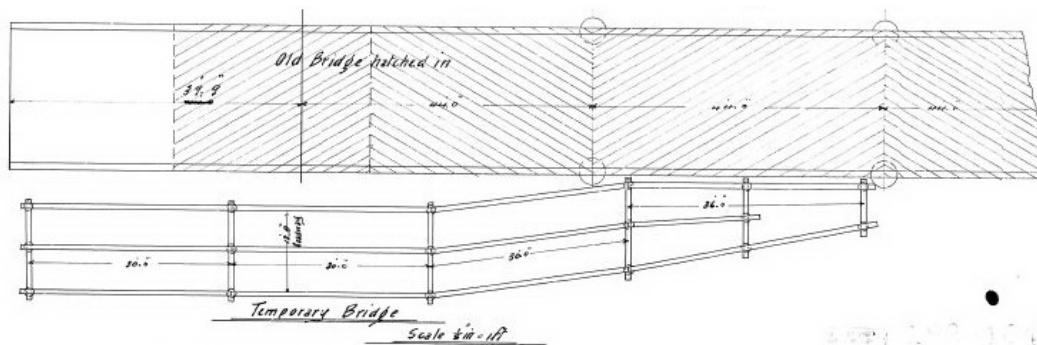


Plate 53: Detail from an 1895 plan showing the proposed location of the temporary bridge on the upstream side of the existing bridge. The extension, which is known to be on the Wilberforce side of the bridge is shown in this plan as the white section.²⁴⁸

The temporary bridge was 460 feet long and was completed in six weeks.²⁴⁹ It is very likely that it was located close to and upstream of the existing bridge (Plate 53). The strategy for the bridge was that as one side of the new bridge was decked the temporary structure would be removed.²⁵⁰

It was reported in March 1897 that the temporary bridge had been demolished.²⁵¹ The timbers from the bridge were stored in various places; in March 1898 timber that was still stored on the Wilberforce side was washed away in a flood and was found strewn along the banks of the river.²⁵² Council was also given some of the timber for use in repairing culverts and bridges in the area.²⁵³

²⁴⁴ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 20 April 1895: 12.

²⁴⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 26 September 1896: 3.

²⁴⁶ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 29 August 1896: 3.

²⁴⁷ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 11 July 1896: 3.

²⁴⁸ RMS plan 0182 492BC0104 Sheet 8 of 19.

²⁴⁹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 3 April 1897: 6.

²⁵⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 20 February 1897: 3.

²⁵¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 27 March 1897: 3.

²⁵² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 5 March 1898: 3.

²⁵³ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 5 June 1897: 3.

4.12.6 The High-Level Bridge: Unemployment Relief

The new height of the bridge was achieved by placing new cylinders on top of the existing cylinders. A new four-inch tallow wood deck was laid diagonally with new iron bark kerb logs twelve inches by twelve inches and new iron hand rails so that one man could raise and lower it in flood time.²⁵⁴

During the bridge work Thompson Square was used as a temporary storage and work area. It was reported in 1895 that *"great stacks of bridge timber are now piled up in Thompson Square awaiting developments. Mr Jack O'Brien now has the contract for carting from the railway where a number of logs are weighing over 3 tons each"*.²⁵⁵ There were several reports of concern about the slow start to the work.

The work took about seven months and cost £4000.²⁵⁶ Several reports make it clear that the work on both the temporary and permanent bridges provided welcome employment relief for the many unemployed during the recession of this decade. In October 1896 it was reported that work on the temporary bridge was going well and *"many men are awaiting employment"*.²⁵⁷ In the same month it was reported that *"twenty men have been employed on the temporary bridge which is now but all completed. The work of raising the existing structure will give further employment for some weeks"*.²⁵⁸

The bridge was opened in April 1897. Just before it was opened Council applied to have the railings, posts, piles and decking from the old bridge. The request was refused.²⁵⁹

4.12.7 The Approaches to the Bridge

Work on filling in the approaches to the bridge commenced in February 1897. It was reported in April 1897 that *"the approaches on either side have undergone a complete change for the two pinches have been considerably reduced thereby being rendered less difficult of ascent with a load. On the Windsor side where there is an embankment overlooking the wharf a railing has been erected and the safety of travelers has been conserved in every possible way"*.²⁶⁰

At the northern end of the bridge a new pier and abutment was added to the bridge lengthening the whole structure by twenty feet. As well the approach to the bridge was raised; it was noted in 1897 that the steep slope on the Wilberforce side had caused problems for the horse drays.²⁶¹

The large amount of material used to fill the approaches was said to have come from The Brickfields. It was reported in March 1897 that *"enormous excavations have been made in The Brickfields by the removal of dirt and gravel for filling in the bridge approaches"*.²⁶² Steele stated that *"hundreds of loads of soil were carted from the lowland near Mileham and Brabyn Streets to fill in the river bank to the higher level"*.²⁶³

4.12.8 Land Forming in the Square

The new height of the bridge required that the land on the southern side in Thompson Square be raised to accommodate it. It was eagerly awaited for in the community; *"it is rumoured that when the level of the Windsor Bridge has been raised the approach and roadway on the Windsor side will go straight up through the reserve. This should be a great improvement on the present winding road"*.²⁶⁴

The new arrangement was not entirely well received; one observer stated that *"it would bring tears from a red herring. It is inclined this way, that way and the other way"*.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁴ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 3 April 1897; 6.

²⁵⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 1 June 1895; 3.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 10 October 1896; 4.

²⁵⁸ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 24 October 1896; 3.

²⁵⁹ Hawkesbury Council Minutes 17 March 1897 Council Minutes 1889 – 1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Reel HAW 28.

²⁶⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 3 April 1897; 6.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 27 March 1897; 3.

²⁶³ James Steele (1916); The Early Days of Windsor: 184.

²⁶⁴ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 15 February 1896; 3.

²⁶⁵ AWRH Advertiser 7 May 1881; 2.



Plate 54: The 1879 panorama showing Thompson Square in the later part of the nineteenth century; it shows the residential character that had been established during the second half of the nineteenth century, the open reserves and the cuttings that had been made for the road. The punt cables are visible to the right of the bridge.²⁶⁶

Work continued well after the bridge was completed to alter the topography in the square. In 1885 it was reported that after a surveyor had made a thorough survey of the park, and much of the rest of the Borough, work had proceeded in Thompson Square to create a landform more conducive to better drainage and vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

*"The work started in Thompson Square certainly seems formidable at first sight and quite terrifying to people in Macquarie Street and the Terrace who are doomed to be cut down only a foot or two..."*²⁶⁷

The report refers to the houses on the western side of the square having the roadway lowered by three feet and six inches; it was considered that works started at this end could serve as an example of the worst that could happen, a kind of reassurance to ratepayers.

"It is a steep hill from the Royal Hotel corner to Mrs Betts residence and the Works Committee seemingly have resolved to make it a uniform grade and when the work is accomplished we do not think there are many who will say that it is not an improvement. But considering that the steepest part of the hill is from George Street to the Australian office it would be an easy matter too break the grade at that point so as to reduce the cutting from there to the lower corner to a minimum and neither the appearance of the street or the drainage affected thereby ... As for injuring the buildings we fail to see that cutting the road-way down three feet six inches will do so for it does not follow that the inner side of the pathways will be lowered that much. The pathways are about thirteen feet in width and fully twelve inches may be allowed for a slope from kerb to present alignment and allowing nine inches from top of kerb above the gutter reduces the depth just one half; so providing the council meets the proprietors in a proper spirit and allows

²⁶⁶ ML SPF.

²⁶⁷ Hawkesbury Chronicle 6 June 1885; 2.

*them to underpin and face up with brick, no injury can be done but on the contrary the properties very much improved both in stability and appearance”.*²⁶⁸

There is little evidence to identify works that were carried out after this is date. There is a single reference in Council Minutes to repairs being made to the road to the wharf in 1898.²⁶⁹

4.12.9 A Place for the Community

The open space between the shops, houses and hotels with the track leading to the punt and wharf had been used for community purposes for many years. It also evolved into a place for the community to enjoy itself. In 1909 one local resident remembered it as it was in the 1860s and 1870s;

*“Opposite the Royal Hotel on Thompson’s Square before the enclosure was erected and when it was more familiarly known as “The Bell Post”, most of the circuses that came to town set up their tents. On race and Show nights the Bell Post was the scene of great animation. The Bell Post had its circus and its score of itinerant hawkers. It was upon the Bell Post that a bullock roast was held in the early 70s to celebrate the opening of the Windsor Bridge ... the bullock roast was a ghastly affair – even now the vision of a half cooked carcass hacked with knives by all sorts of clean and dirty hands rises up and causes one to shudder again ... Other were the bullock roasts which took place upon this same little square mostly to commemorate political victories”.*²⁷⁰

The same resident remembered that it was home to a merry go round on occasions and after the bridge opened as a place to play cricket by the staff of the *Australian* working in their office on Thompson Square.²⁷¹



Plate 55: The southern end of Thompson Square (undated) after the new bridge opened; the large flat and featureless space was used for cricket, circuses and other community activities.²⁷² The wall adjoining the Macquarie Arms Hotel is not shown in this image.

In 1882 work commenced on building a pavilion in the square that did not meet universal approval. One commentator stated, “...the abortion at Thompson’s Square is rearing itself aloft. It strikes me

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Hawkesbury Council Minutes 2 March 1898 Council records 1889-1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Reel HAW 28.

²⁷⁰ J.C. L Fitzpatrick (1909); *When We Were Boys Together Reminiscences of the Hawkesbury District* 1909:13.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² MLd1-06257.

Richmond will shame us in the matter of pavilions".²⁷³ Later in the same year another £25 was voted for "...improving the pavilion in the Thompson Square enclosure".²⁷⁴ The pavilion was completed and many observations were made in the local newspapers to the effect that it created a nuisance rather than bringing benefits to the community. In 1892 a note in the local newspaper asked "...why not remove that glittering structure from Thompson Square, called for want of a better name, perhaps a pavilion to the park".²⁷⁵ A few months later it was observed that "...the pavilion in Thompson Square appears to be now used for no other purpose than as a resting place for inebriated aboriginals and tramps".²⁷⁶ In 1894 a proposal was made to remove it to McQuade Park.²⁷⁷

A summer house was also constructed in the reserve; £32-10s was voted for the work in March 1882.²⁷⁸ It is unclear if the two were actually different names for the same structure; the coincidence in dates for work and comment by the public suggest that it is likely to have been the case. By 1894 the summerhouse was unwanted; it was reported in the local newspaper that "...before the commencement of Spring Council should remove the summerhouse in Thompson Square to McQuade Park. It is neither useful nor ornamental where it is".²⁷⁹

The majority of these events occurred in the upper reserve. The lower reserve was leased out and in 1889 it was moved in Council "...that the river banks and Thompson Square should be opened for agistment. They are never used by the townspeople for recreation purposes".²⁸⁰

Possibly for that reason in 1891 a special committee to the council recommended, echoing the past, that "...the piece of ground known as Thompsons Square shall be known as Windsor Market and shall be used by growers and producers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays during the year from 5-10 in the morning and nothing but vegetables, poultry, fruit, butter and such like produce shall be sold or exposed for sale".²⁸¹ In December 1890 Council specified the site as "...that portion of land near the wharf in front of Dr Gibson's residence".²⁸²

The proposal appears not to have proceeded; it was raised again in 1894.²⁸³ In that year, after the square was dedicated in Council, it was surveyed ahead of it being dedicated as a recreation ground.²⁸⁴

4.12.10 Invested In Council

Even before the bridge was built Council wrote to the Lands Department to request that "...all that piece of ground known as Thompson's Square, also the land along the banks of the river from Fitzgerald Street to the Punt House be invested in Council".²⁸⁵ This duly occurred with the Riverside Park being proclaimed in 1887.

The vesting of this ground in Council caused a new plan to be raised in 1890; that the square be dedicated as the site for a town hall.²⁸⁶ Steele claims that the idea of using the square as the site for a town hall had emerged as early as 1875.²⁸⁷ The question of the future of the park continued to be pursued in this year. In September it was noted in Council that the site had been dedicated for a town hall but "...it is now a very valuable building site".²⁸⁸

²⁷³ AWRH Advertiser 4 March 1882; 2.

²⁷⁴ AWRH Advertiser 4 November 1882; 2.

²⁷⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 20 February 1892; 3.

²⁷⁶ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 10 September 1892; 3.

²⁷⁷ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 8 September 1894; 10.

²⁷⁸ AWRH Advertiser 25 March 1882; 2.

²⁷⁹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 28 July 1894; 3.

²⁸⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 20 April 1889; 3.

²⁸¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 17 June 1891; 3.

²⁸² Hawkesbury Council Minutes 17 December 1890 Council Records 1889 – 1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Reel HAW (28).99

²⁸³ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 27 October 1894; 3.

²⁸⁴ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 20 October 1894; 10 and Hawkesbury Council Minutes 3 October 1894 Council records 1889 – 1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Reel HAW (28).

²⁸⁵ Sydney Morning Herald 21 March 1874; 3.

²⁸⁶ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 2 August 1890; 3.

²⁸⁷ James Steele (1916); the Early days of Windsor: 223.

²⁸⁸ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 13 September 1890: 4.

Possibly the issue lapsed because of the uncertainty of its legal status. The question of what title Council held to the Square was raised again in 1894.²⁸⁹ The issue of the park's use continued for years. In 1895 it was reported that,

*"...some residents say that Thompson Square could be better put to use than it is at present and return a revenue. They suggest cutting down the trees and letting the place to traveling showmen and circus proprietors. At present it is a receptacle for everything that is vile; it is certainly the Domain of Windsor".*²⁹⁰

Much of the square was dedicated as a recreational reserve in 1899.²⁹¹

4.12.11 Renaming

For a short time it appears that Thompson Square was renamed in honour of a local politician. In 1881 it was noted that the local band would play in "Davis Park formerly known as Thompson's Square".²⁹² It did not achieve local usage and the name appears to have rarely been used.

4.12.12 An Eye-sore

There may have been new roads and planting but the square was not an attractive place. To begin with it was the repository for left over materials from the bridge construction, timbers and some of the cylinders.²⁹³ Council began to make efforts to clear it up, not always well received. As early as March 1874, before the new bridge was constructed one Councilor moved that a subscription be started for improvements to be made to Thompson's Square.²⁹⁴

In August 1878 a councilor moved that *"...the top portion of Thompsons-square be fenced in accordance with the specification and tenders called for fencing the same".*²⁹⁵ Tenders were called for the work shortly afterwards.²⁹⁶

In 1881 an alderman moved that *"...the piece of ground in Thompsons Square and South Creek reserve be fenced in at a cost of £5".*²⁹⁷ More discussion concerning issues of fencing reveal that the lower portion of the square, the lower reserve, was little used. The £5 was to be spent on fencing this lower portion *"so it may be leased as a grazing paddock. The lot in question hardly contains half an acre"*²⁹⁸ It was noted that two men spent one week fencing it and the lease was sold for £1 per year.²⁹⁹ Images of the lower part of the square demonstrate, even with fencing, why it was little used; the impact of the bridge construction, road construction and flood damage and erosion made the land at the southern end of the bridge steep and inhospitable.

In the last years of the nineteenth century Thompson Square was run down and no one had much of an idea of what it should or could be used for; there are several references to its poor state of repair. In 1892 the question was raised in the local newspaper; *"...could not the square as a whole be utilized in some way instead of remaining an eyesore to this end of town".*³⁰⁰ In 1898 it was noted that *"...the fence around Thompson Square is in a deplorable state"*³⁰¹ and in 1899 *"...the little park at Thompson Square is in a very dirty state and the fence looks shabby".*³⁰²

Some works were undertaken to redress the issue. Council Minutes noted in August 1890 that *"...the bad state of Thompson Square opposite Mr Maloney's has been put in good order"* at a cost of £4-2-

²⁸⁹ Hawkesbury Council Minutes 24 January 1894 Council records 1889-1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Reel HAW (28).

²⁹⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 26 January 1895: 3.

²⁹¹ James Steele (1916); the Early days of Windsor: 223.

²⁹² AWRH Advertiser 28 May 1881: 2.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ The Hawkesbury Advertiser 21 March 1874: 2.

²⁹⁵ Sydney Morning Herald 19 August 1878: 3.

²⁹⁶ Sydney Morning Herald 2 August 1878: 6.

²⁹⁷ AWRH Advertiser 1 January 1881: 2.

²⁹⁸ AWRH Advertiser 8 January 1881: 2.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 10 September 1892: 3.

³⁰¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 23 July 1898: 3.

³⁰² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 29 April 1899: 3.

0.³⁰³ In 1896 the old seats were repaired and repainted³⁰⁴ and in 1897 Council had the small reserve below Thompson Square leveled and trees and seats were added to it.³⁰⁵

4.12.13 Roads and Services

More than beautifying, the Square needed infrastructure. In 1880 questions were asked in Council concerning funds that had been allocated to repair the roadway in Thompson Square. The Works Committee reported that an additional £5 had been allocated to the project.³⁰⁶ In the same month funds were allocated for fencing in Thompson Square and for stone kerbing.³⁰⁷ In November 1880 it was reported that an additional £10 be spent on improving the road leading from the Bridge to George Street. It was also noted that at the time "certain works" had been satisfactorily completed.³⁰⁸ A question was asked in Council regarding £8 that had been granted to the repair of the road in the square. The money had been spent "...on widening the road in the locality mentioned".³⁰⁹ In 1881 a tender was accepted from W. Wood for gravelling the footpath in Bridge Street.³¹⁰

By 1883 kerb stones were being introduced to the square; questions were asked in Council in August of that year why the stone had been laid down in the square ready to be fixed without Council approval although all noted that Thompson Square was a priority for kerbing.³¹¹ Reaction to the work was mixed particularly as the work took a long time to complete. In 1886 it was reported;

*"...the forming of the road on the northern side of Thompson Square is a very good job in its way but there was certainly no necessity for it. On the other side of the Square where all the traffic is and where heavy rates are paid it was not considered good enough to kerb until recently."*³¹²

The roads in the square were still in a poor state in 1890; more money was voted to attend to "the bad state of road at Thompson Square".³¹³ Council minutes record the vote of "a sum not exceeding £10" to be used for the repair of the street on the southern side of Thompson Square from George Street to the banks of the river where there was to be clearing.³¹⁴ Kerbing and guttering was still being undertaken in the later 1890s in the square.³¹⁵

In 1889 it was reported that the water supply for Windsor was proceeding rapidly; In October of that year reticulated pipes had been laid down George Street from Railway Street to the end of Thompson Square.³¹⁶ At the same time the footpaths were being asphalted; the path in front of Stearn's premises was being asphalted in January 1889.³¹⁷

The street works were used in the early 1890s to combat unemployment caused by the severe recession that gripped the country. It was stated in 1893 that George Street was repaired from Thompson Square to Baker Street; *"the gutter is being taken up and lowered on account of the road not being level. Some fourteen men are at work employment having been found for Windsor's unemployed"*.³¹⁸

Lighting was another issue; Thompson Square at night was described in 1882 as "black as Erebus" and calls were made for lighting, two lamps at least.³¹⁹ A short time later an alderman donated a brand new gas lamp "...to light up the benighted region of the square".³²⁰

³⁰³ Hawkesbury Council Minutes 13 August 1890 Council records 1889-1902 Hawkesbury Local Studies Collection Reel HAW 28.

³⁰⁴ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 9 May 1896; 3.

³⁰⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 27 February 1897; 3.

³⁰⁶ AWRH Advertiser 25 September 1880: 2.

³⁰⁷ AWRH Advertiser 9 October 1880; 2.

³⁰⁸ AWRH Advertiser 6 November 1880; 2.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ AWRH Advertiser 26 March 1881; 3.

³¹¹ Hawkesbury Chronicle 18 August 1883; 2.

³¹² Hawkesbury Chronicle 14 August 1886; 2.

³¹³ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 16 August 1890; 3.

³¹⁴ Hawkesbury Council Minutes 30 July 1890 Council Records 1889-1902 Hawkesbury Library HAW (28).

³¹⁵ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 14 August 1897; 4.

³¹⁶ Windsor Richmond Gazette 5 October 1889; 4.

³¹⁷ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 26 January 1889; 2.

³¹⁸ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 4 November 1893; 3.

³¹⁹ Hawkesbury Chronicle 22 July 1882; 2.

4.13 “WINDSOR IS SETTLED IN ITS PLACE” 1900 – to the present

4.13.1 A Part of the Sydney Food Bowl

In 1920 it was reported that ‘*Windsor does not move back or go ahead. It simply moves on the even tenor of its way growing crops and looking askance at strangers. Windsor is settled in its place, it gathers its harvest and sends it to market, it works quietly and earnestly and sleeps well...especially sleeps*’.³²¹ The impetus of commercial activity and civic improvements of the later years of the nineteenth century had wound down and the town had achieved a sleepy stability disturbed only by disasters such as floods.

The economy of the area that had begun to change in the last quarter of the nineteenth century had also stabilised. By the mid-1920s the river flats near Windsor were subdivided into small farms and market gardens. Draught horse breeding began to decline as machines took their place. Mixed farms of fruit and vegetables supplied the Sydney markets. In the 1930s and 1940s farms remained small and dairying was still very important in the area. Aerial images of Freemans Reach in the 1940s demonstrate that up to the later years of the twentieth century and still today it remains a relatively sparsely settled area.

In Thompson Square the upheaval of road works and drainage and bridge construction had been left behind and it emerged as a picture postcard village square. The two reserves, sparsely planted were contained within white picket fences.

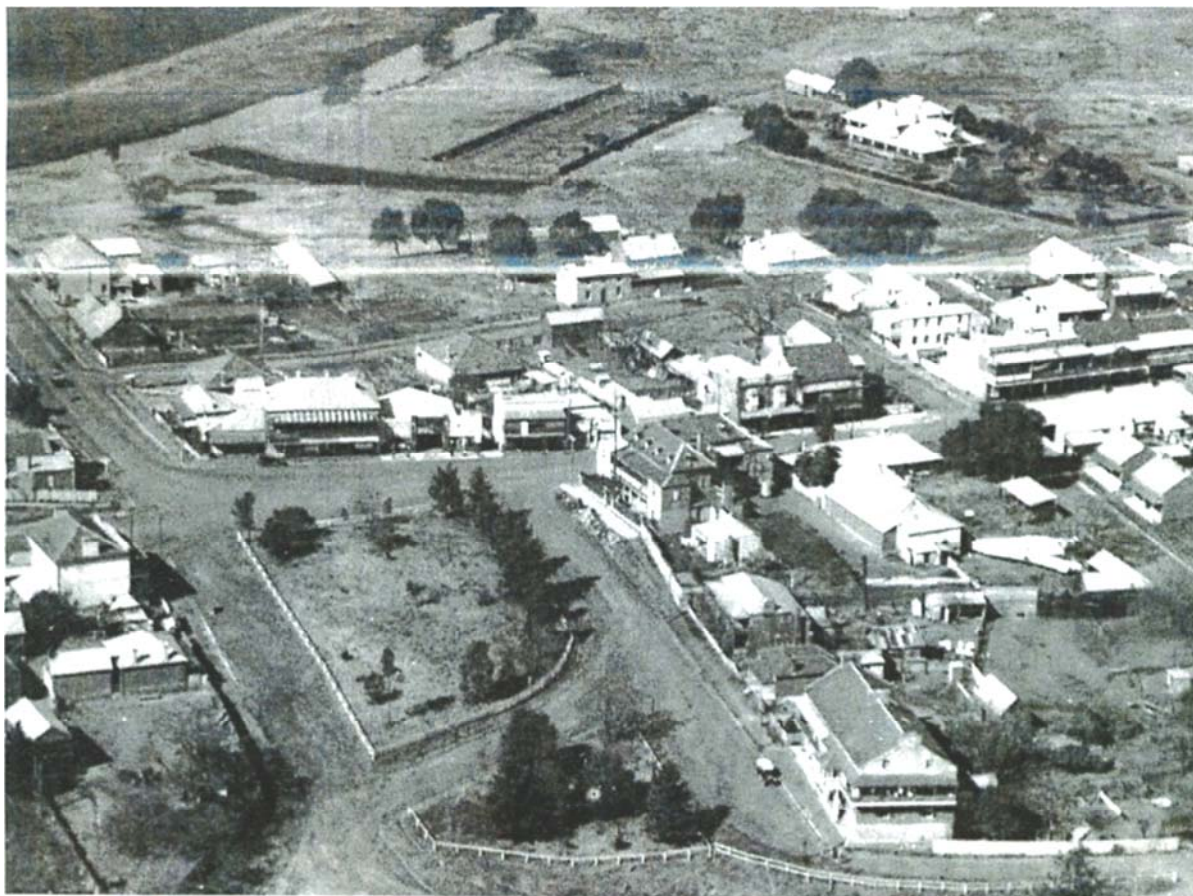


Plate 56: Thompson Square in 1929 before the final changes were made to the roads³²²

³²⁰ Hawkesbury Chronicle 2 September 1882; 2.

³²¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette quoted in Sue Rosen (1995): Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment: 105.

³²² JHHS 2011 No 2: 21.

4.13.2 The Ongoing Battle

The residents of 1920 were not better off than those of 1820 when it came to the river. The floods of 1916 and 1925 caused serious landslips; two hundred yards of the Freeman's reach road was washed away at this time³²³ and in 1926 it was reported that the river was 120 yards wide at the bridge and sand banks almost filled the channel. Below the bridge navigation was difficult even for rowing boats.³²⁴ Erosion was exacerbated on the river banks by the increased numbers of cattle grazing the surrounding pastures.

The 1949 flood was one of the worst and required the Freemans Reach Road to be realigned again.³²⁵ A second major flood occurred in 1952 and smaller floods in 1953-54 and another major flood in 1955. These floods scoured the river bed by about three metres and widened the channel. Between 1955 and the 1970s little change occurred to the channel but after the 1970s it is claimed that it began to return to a form similar to that of pre-1949.³²⁶ In 1961 the flood reached over fifteen metres and isolated the town and destroyed thousands of crops.³²⁷ Now degradation of the river banks is more commonly blamed on the introduction and increase of motor boats for water skiing.³²⁸

4.13.3 Punt Hill

The road leading to the bridge through Thompson Square was an increasing irritation to the community. In June 1901 under the heading "Things We Would Like To See", the local newspaper listed "...the road leading from Windsor Bridge to George Street rendered less winding and precipitous than at present".³²⁹ Council initiated a programme of enquiry to determine a better way to the bridge. A deputation to the Council in 1903 made the case for "...the urgent necessity for doing something to reduce the grade of Punt Hill... The great difficulty at present was the sharp turn on the hill. The steepest place was at the turn and there one horse has to hold the load and either pull it or let it go back for the leaders could do nothing till the corner was turned".³³⁰ A deviation around the old punt house was the favoured solution.

In February 1904 it was reported in the local paper that after the engineer had inspected the hill "*it appears that the route likely to be adopted in improving the grade of the hill will be round by the old punthouse which will be demolished, along the river bank then up Kable Street to George Street*".³³¹

4.13.4 The End of the Punt House

Since the construction of the new bridge and the removal of the punt the old punt house on the river banks had become redundant but was a well-known historical landmark.³³² It became an obstacle in the planned new approaches and in 1904 it was purchased by a Mr L. Pickup.³³³ It was demolished after that purchase.

4.13.5 Changes to the Bridge

The new century saw the introduction of motor vehicles and the changes that followed were many; in the first instance the bridge was upgraded in the 1920s after inspections revealed defective structural elements. Extensive work was carried out on the bridge in 1921 when the whole wooden superstructure was replaced by reinforced concrete. It was then reopened.³³⁴ Concrete decking and hardwood replaced the timber of former days. Cross bracing was renewed in 1941.

³²³ Sue Rosen (1995); Losing Ground An Environmental History of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment: 109.

³²⁴ *Ibid*: 110.

³²⁵ *Ibid*: 148.

³²⁶ *Ibid*: 149.

³²⁷ *Ibid*: 151.

³²⁸ *Ibid*.

³²⁹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 15 June 1901; 9.

³³⁰ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 26 September 1903; 4.

³³¹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 27 February 1904; 3.

³³² Windsor and Richmond Gazette 3 September 1904; 3.

³³³ *Ibid*.

³³⁴ *Ibid*: 96.



Plate 57: An early twentieth century image showing the bridge after it had been raised and improvements made to the deck³³⁵

4.13.6 New Approaches to the Bridge

A new approach was cut through Thompson Square on the Windsor side in 1934 to meet the requirements of motor traffic.³³⁶ The work was first proposed in 1928 but it met great opposition. The plan was to run a road from the south-eastern corner through the reserve to the bridge.³³⁷ Many objections were made; there were fears that the steep embankments caused by the work would make visibility an issue and others suggested that “it would mean cutting up the most historical part of Windsor”.³³⁸ It seems that a modified version of the scheme, following a relatively straight line on the western side of Thompson Square was undertaken in the mid-1930s creating the deep cuttings along its western side.

This work appears to be what is shown in several images; it indicates that amongst other works large retaining walls were built to stabilise the slopes and cuttings surrounding the approach to the bridge.

It is possible that these works may have been initiated as works had been in the 1890s as a form of depression relief work. There is evidence that substantial street works were carried out in the town in this period for the same purpose. There are several images showing works of this nature around the square and in other parts of the town.

³³⁵ Bridge over Hawkesbury River, at Windsor Nov 1947 Government Printing Office State Library NSW 1 – 40931.

³³⁶ D.G. Bowd (1985); *Macquarie Country*: 64.

³³⁷ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 2 August 1932; 7.

³³⁸ *Windsor And Richmond Gazette* 3 November 1935; 8.



Plate 58: Windsor Bridge Approach from the East 1934; this shows some of the large new retaining walls below the buildings on the eastern side of the square³³⁹



Plate 59: View of street works in 1938 close the square.³⁴⁰ The Macquarie Arms is to the right in the image but was called the Royal Hotel at the time.

³³⁹ ML GPO I-01880.

³⁴⁰ ML GPO 1-32538.

The same plan for a road that ran through the middle of the square was raised again and the outcome is the present road that connects George Street to the bridge by creating a fork at Old Bridge Road and running north-west to the bridge. It was surveyed in 1946 and gazetted in 1951.³⁴¹

Higginbotham states that between 1947 and 1951 the land directly behind the wharf was infilled to the level of the bridge.³⁴²

4.13.7 The End of the Squatters Arms

The Squatters Arms was in ruins by the early 1890s but those ruins were a picturesque landmark for many in the town and a reminder of good old days and tall stories. In 1904 it was observed that:

*“the old building on the other side of Windsor Bridge known in the palmy days of old as the Squatters Arms is slowly but surely crumbling away and in a few years to come no doubt that spot that has known it so long will know it no longer. It does not need a very gigantic imagination to enable one to picture at least some of the lively and rollicking episodes enacted within the four walls of the Squatters Arms in the days of its prime.”*³⁴³

The hotel was well known beyond the district as its demise was reported in the *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*:

*“An Ancient Pub The Squatter’s Arms, the oldest hotel at Windsor, Hawkesbury River, has just been demolished. It was built about 90 years ago, and was one of the best known landmarks in the State.”*³⁴⁴

The building was finally demolished in October 1914. It was reported at the time;

*“The Squatters Arms was completely demolished last week. The Squatter’s Arms Hotel stood on the western side of the bridge over the Hawkesbury River at Windsor...It was cottage shaped and constructed of stone, bricks and mortar with a few slates and a first class shingle roof. The old structure which stood on the western corner of the junction of Windsor Wilberforce Road and Windsor Freemans reach Road did a roaring trade in the old days”*³⁴⁵

The property was inherited by William Eccelstone’s widow Ann Davis Eccleston and Charles Passlow in 1911.³⁴⁶ Ann died in 1917 and the property passed to Charles Passlow.³⁴⁷ John Ryan, the former owner of the Squatters Arms purchased it immediately from Passlow in April 1917³⁴⁸ and then mortgaged it. It was paid out in 1919. It was then sold in that year to Robert Swords of Windsor, a saddler.³⁴⁹ A few months later Swords sold it to Annie May Curl in 1923.³⁵⁰ She was the wife of a publican in the town. The land encompassed a little over fourteen acres. Her son John inherited the property.

4.13.8 Market Garden

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that the land on the northern side of the bridge encompassed by the project area was used as a Chinese market garden at least from the later years of the nineteenth century or early years of the twentieth century. John Curl may have leased his land, which was then used in this fashion, but there is no formal lease recorded for it in this period.

Market gardening in this period was widespread and that Chinese gardeners operated some is certain. A newspaper account of 1931 records the story of a local man *“who pulled up his car at a Chinese market garden on the Wilberforce Road near Windsor to get fresh vegetables. Going into the hut of Hoong Bun, popularly known as Nugget he found him in great pain with a cut down his arm”*.³⁵¹

³⁴¹ J. Barkley-Jack (2012); *History of Thompson Square*: 42.

³⁴² Edward Higginbotham; Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Thompson’s Square Windsor NSW: 31.

³⁴³ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 10 September 1904; 1.

³⁴⁴ *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*. Friday 6th November 1914.

³⁴⁵ Singleton Argus 24 October 1914; 1.

³⁴⁶ LPI Primary Application 18115.

³⁴⁷ LPI, CT Volume 2456 Folio 199.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ LPI, CT Volume 3512 Folio 239.

³⁵¹ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 9 January 1931.

Oral history from some of the older residents in the town states that two Chinese men with the adopted European names of Sam and Louie ran the market garden within the project area. Before this garden they had farmed land on The Peninsula leased from the Tebbutt family. A lease for this land includes payment by Sung Quong Mow who might be identified with Sam. The local tradition is that Sam and Louie moved to the northern side of the river probably after the 1920s. They occupied a now ruined cottage outside the project area.³⁵²

The use of the area for market gardens was a long established tradition. Originally the Hawkesbury was valued for its ability to grow wheat for the colony but vegetables and fruit had both been grown here from the eighteenth century. The change to those crops becoming the dominant product occurred from the 1870s; rust began to blight the wheat crops and hugely impacted the yield. In 1870 214,691 bushels of wheat were recorded for the Hawkesbury and 5464 bushels of maize. Nichols reports that in less than a decade wheat was reduced to zero production with only minimal acreage dedicated to the crop again by the later years of the nineteenth century.³⁵³

By the later years of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century the Hawkesbury was a major supplier of vegetables to the Sydney market with crops including potatoes, cauliflowers, corn, cabbages and broccoli. Fruit fly badly affected many orchards from the 1930 but in 1944 the Hawkesbury still accounted for twenty percent of the state's citrus crop.³⁵⁴ The 1956 flood was responsible for the destruction of many orchards along the river with the trees actively removed afterwards.

No record has been found for how long this land may have been associated with the Chinese market gardener. It was sold in 1963 to Domenico Delii Carpini³⁵⁵ who appears to have continued the agricultural tradition. In 1973 it was acquired by Joseph Sultana, a farmer from Vineyard.³⁵⁶

In 1983 it was acquired by the Aboriginal Development Commission; the property was used by the Commission as a training farm.

4.13.9 Turf Farming

In the later years of the twentieth century there was a trend away from vegetable gardens and orchards to turf farms, particularly along the flood prone lower land; unless submerged for long periods turf could withstand being covered with floods with minimal impacts to the product. The present owner acquired the land on the northern side of the bridge in 1991 and it has been used since that time as a turf farm.³⁵⁷

4.14 Familiar Friends and a Few New Faces

4.14.1 The site of Andrew Thompson's Garden (4 Bridge Street)

In 1903 this property was sold by the Trustees to Eliza Hopkins of Windsor.³⁵⁸ It was sold again in 1913 to Thomas Maguire Senior and was resold in 1914 to Ernest Armstrong a farmer from Windsor.³⁵⁹ The property remains in the hands of the Armstrong family. The 1929 view shows the site to be fenced but vacant; it appears to have been so since the 1850s, except for a building on the shared boundary with the allotment behind it. The weatherboard cottage that now occupies the site was built in 1955.³⁶⁰

4.14.2 An 1860s Cottage (6 [or 8] Bridge Street)

The registered owner of the property in 1917 was Elizabeth Irwon of Sackville Reach. Irwon did not own the part of Allotment 5 that encompasses 6 Bridge Street. Her property was transferred to

³⁵² Information supplied by Prof. Ian Jack.

³⁵³ M. Nichols *Greatest Rural Luxuriance in Barkely and Nicholls Hawkesbury 1794-1994 The First 200 years of the Second Colonisation*: 30.

³⁵⁴ M. Nichols *Greatest Rural Luxuriance in Barkely and Nicholls Hawkesbury 1794-1994 The First 200 years of the Second Colonisation*: 32.

³⁵⁵ LPI, Ct Volume 2456 Folio 199.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ LPI, CT Volume 1482 Folio 183.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 90.

William Lumley in 1918 and then to Leo Armstrong in 1926.³⁶¹ In the same year Armstrong sold part of Allotment retaining ownership of Allotments 4, 9 and part of 5.³⁶²

In 1952 the portion of the property containing 10 Bridge Street was transferred to Joyce Douglas; Leo Armstrong retained Allotments 4 and 9.³⁶³

4.14.3 Joshua Dowe's House (10 Bridge Street)

The two-storey building erected by Dr Joshua Dowe in 1856 was used as a private residence from 1887 to 1903. The State Member for Hawkesbury then occupied it from 1901 to 1919 when it was known as *Lilburndale*. Subsequently it became a private maternity hospital named *Craigneish* from 1923 – 1934. The small corner shop was built in 1946.³⁶⁴

4.14.4 The Former School of Arts (14 Bridge Street)

Built in 1861 it served as a School of Arts until 1947 when it was sold to Enoch Taylor for a boot factory in 1947.³⁶⁵

4.14.5 The former Hawkesbury Stores (62 – 68 George Street)

The single storey cottage and adjacent two storey building that once housed the Moses' Hawkesbury Stores now operate as commercial premises.

4.14.6 Sir John Young Hotel (70 - 72 George Street; later the Hawkesbury Garage)

The hotel was closed in 1911. The building was destroyed by fire in 1913 and it was demolished in 1915. Following this H. A. Clements erected a garage on the site in 1923³⁶⁶; it remained in business for fifty years. In 1974 the old building was occupied by Hawkesbury Plumbing Supplies.³⁶⁷

4.14.7 The A C Stearn Building (No 74 George Street)

This is a shop erected in 1907 by A.C. Stearn after an earlier building was destroyed by fire.³⁶⁸

4.14.8 The Macquarie Arms (81 George Street)

The hotel is continuing to serve patrons and is a landmark in the town. The hotel had a Permanent Conservation Order placed on it in early 1981, eleven years after being the subject of an assessment of five historic houses by J M Freeland. The Secretary's Report, summarising Freeland's assessments noted that the Macquarie Arms Hotel was under threat from drastic renovations, some of which has already occurred. The report recommended that the Macquarie Arms Hotel be a place of historical interest and that it be included amongst the historic buildings covered by the Financial Agreement.³⁶⁹

³⁶¹ LPI, CT Volume 2757 Folio 234.

³⁶² LPI, CT Volume 3889 Folio 62 and *Ibid*.

³⁶³ LPI, CT Volumes 2889 Folio 234, CT Volume 6551 Folio 199.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*: 91.

³⁶⁵ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*; 92.

³⁶⁶ Historic Thompson Square; *Hawkesbury Gazette* 20 April 1988.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid*; 94.

³⁶⁸ Sydney Morning Herald 10 August 1905; 9.

³⁶⁹ Secretary's Report 56/70 of 21st October 1970. Heritage Branch file S90/06175/001.

4.14.9 Howe's House/the Daniel O'Connell Inn (7 Thompson Square)

From 1899 to 1967 the building was occupied as a private residence. Windsor Municipal Council then purchased it for use as a museum.³⁷⁰

4.14.10 House and Outbuilding (5 Thompson Square)

The house is a doctor's surgery. The house was acquired by the NSW Planning and Environment Commission (date not given), who had it restored in 1972. In November 1978 the house and property had a Permanent Conservation Order placed over it for its protection "for all time".³⁷¹

4.14.11 The Doctors House (1 – 3 Thompson Square)

The Doctors House has been used as a private residence during the twentieth century.

4.14.12 The Park Pavilion

After being vilified for so many years tenders were called in 1900 for the purchase and removal of the pavilion.³⁷² It was removed in February of that year;

"The so called pavilion in Thompson Square which has been a menace to that portion of the town for some time has been laid low it having been purchased by Harry Rogers for something like thirty shillings".³⁷³

4.14.13 The Boat Club

A boat club built on brick piers was constructed in the lower part of the reserve in the 1950s and demolished in the 1960s; it is said to have been built over part of the 1815 drain. Anecdotal evidence claims that the shed was relocated to Wilberforce when it was removed from the reserve.

4.14.14 The Wharf

The wharf appears to have been demolished or fell into ruin in the 1940s or early 1950s. It is no longer visible in aerial images of 1955. Remnants of this structure can still be seen from the bridge.

4.14.15 Mythology

From the early years of the twentieth century tales persisted of a smugglers' tunnel in Thompson Square. In 1931 when a party of the Royal Australian Historical Society visited Windsor they remarked on the alleged smugglers' tunnel in Thompson Square.³⁷⁴ A reply in the letter to the editors did nothing to scotch the rumour.

"The alleged cave in Thompsons Square demands some explanation. Illicit rum-running was rife along the Hawkesbury in the early days and residents frequently told me that kegs of spirits were brought up from the river bank through a tunnel into an excavation in Thompson-square. The tunnel is still there and none of the local authorities have been able to explain its use a fact which lends colour to the old tradition".³⁷⁵

Local historian Rex Stubbs carried out a spirited debunking of the myth.³⁷⁶ He noted that part of the sewer was uncovered during roadwork in Bridge Street in the 1930s and that this helped to promote the local legend. In 1985 part of the sewer was uncovered under the old Boat Club building and an archaeologist was employed to examine it; he concluded that it was similar to brick barrel tunnels in Parramatta and was certainly part of the sewer.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁰ D.G. Bowd (1986); *Hawkesbury Journey*: 87- 88.

³⁷¹ Original Windsor town house preserved Listings Report. Media statement May 8, 1979. Heritage Branch file S90/06110/001.

³⁷² *Hawkesbury Advocate* 9 February 1900; 4.

³⁷³ *Hawkesbury Advocate* 23 February 1900; 4.

³⁷⁴ Historic Windsor Smugglers Cave and Old Houses *Sydney Morning Herald* 22 June 1931: 8.

³⁷⁵ Letters to the Editor *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 July 1931; 7.

³⁷⁶ Rex Stubbs (ND); Windsor's Smugglers' Tunnel" E-resource.

³⁷⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*

Despite the evidence it is still a deeply held belief in the community that a smugglers' tunnel lies beneath Thompson's Square.

4.14.16 Identity

From the 1920s the charm of the square has attracted artists and those with an interest in the history of the area; William Hardy Wilson drew buildings in the square as did other artists, in one case reimagining the past and in the other evoking an atmosphere of history. Visitors arrived to view the past and imagine smugglers' tunnels.

The Square was one of the principal interests of a relatively short-lived Windsor Town Improvement Society that was active in the 1930s. In 1935 the association drew up a list of plans for improving "*the neglected and unprepossessing appearance of Thompson Square*". They included leveling the park, creating terraces and replanting it.³⁷⁸ Not many of the works were carried out but in 1937 it was reported that pines and other plants had been put in the park.³⁷⁹ The most extraordinary aspect of the work is that it was designed by "Windsor's Japanese Laundryman". Thomas Mina had spent a life traveling the world before settling in Windsor in the early years of the twentieth century. He established a laundry in George Street and joined the improvement society. He stated that he designed the layout of Thompson Square, McQuade Park and the garden plot in front of the School of Arts.³⁸⁰

The improvements made by the Society did not last too long past the end of the group. In 1941 it was reported that Thompson Square had to have a dilapidated fence removed, an iron gate, post and gate posts and hand rails.³⁸¹



Plate 60: M. J. MacNally, *Old Buildings in Thompson Square* (1931)³⁸²

³⁷⁸ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 3 November 1935; 8.

³⁷⁹ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 16 July 1937; 1.

³⁸⁰ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 10 September 1937; 5.

³⁸¹ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 14 March 1941; 12.

³⁸² MI VIB/Wind/2.

As early as 1975 there were plans to restore Thompson Square but it was not until money was made available from the Bicentennial Fund that work could commence on this project.³⁸³ Much of the present appearance of the square and its strong historical identity is owed to this project. It was described in the Hawkesbury Gazette during the course of work:

"Windsor's Thompson Square is a hive of activity as work continues on the Bicentennial restoration project to enhance this historic part of the town. With some of the buildings included in the project already restored and looking magnificent the owners of four more buildings have decided to improve their properties as well.

"The Copper Dog pet shop on George Street will now have a new verandah and façade and the Macquarie Arms Hotel, the old School of Arts and a small cottage located between Hawkesbury Museum and the Doctor's House are all in the process of being repainted to improve their appearance ... The \$500,000 project, a combined effort between the Government, Council and individual property owners is due for completion in mid-April for the official opening on April 22.

"Buildings already restored ... include 10 Bridge Street, 17 Bridge Street and the Hawkesbury Museum. Work is well underway on 64-68 George Street and 74 George Street, leaving some minor work to be undertaken on 62 George Street...

"Engineering and road works are also progressing well with roadway paving completed in Thompson Square itself and footpath paving well underway.

"The park area has been fenced and turfed and sandstone kerbing has been reconstructed with original stone removed from other parts of the shire.

"A major part of the engineering plan, a traffic island at the top end of George Street is currently being constructed with a sandstone retaining wall bordering it. When completed the island will be turfed and planted with an advanced plane tree.

"Work still to be done includes the installation of seating in the park, the construction of the Hawkesbury Pioneer Families monument and the installation of street lighting throughout the square".³⁸⁴

The restoration of Thompson Square reflects not only a local awareness of the importance and landmark qualities of this place but the growing appreciation and value imbued to these places in the growing heritage consciousness of the 1970s and 1980s. The square was the subject of a Permanent Conservation Order in 1982 (*Heritage Act 1977*). The Pioneer Monument was placed in the Square in 1988.

³⁸³ Thompson Square Open At Last Hawkesbury Courier 28 April 1985; 3.

³⁸⁴ Hawkesbury Gazette 30 May 1988; 3.