

The creation and furnishing of Government House, Hobart

BY LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS SORELL, ARTHUR AND FRANKLIN BETWEEN 1817–1843
PART 1: SORELL (1817 – 1824)

In the first of a three part series, John Hawkins looks into how the early governors' residences in Hobart were furnished.

John Hawkins

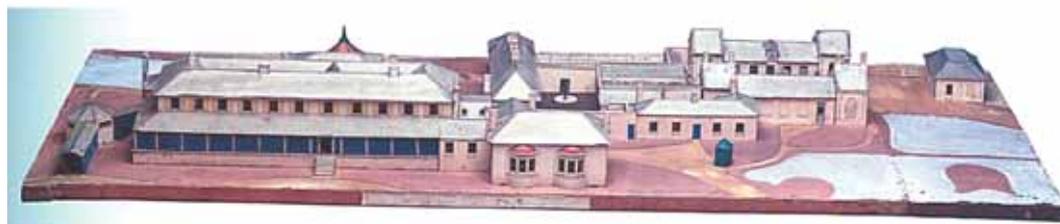
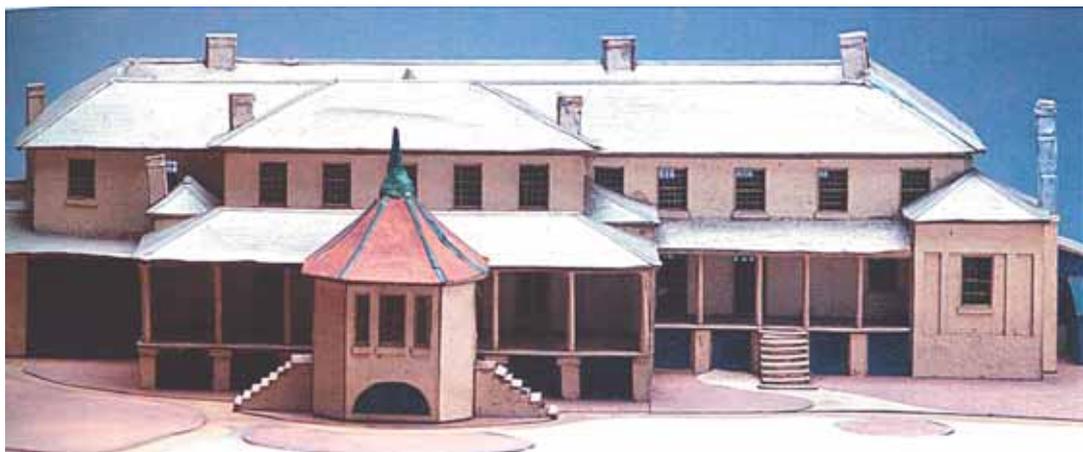
Between first settlement in 1803 and 1817, Lieutenant-Governors David Collins and Thomas Davey had little or no input into the creation of the Government House. Their modest residence can be seen at the end of Elizabeth Street in the model of the complex made circa 1837 (plate 1). By the time Davey's

administration of the colony ceased in April 1817, the European population of the colony was 3,114, of whom 566 resided on the northern side of the island.¹

An indication of the state of the colony then is the hand-over document between Davey and William Sorell dated 8 April 1817.² Davey listed a small number of state documents, the Royal Church Plate in a box labelled 'Port Phillip',³ the

Royal Standard, 24 chairs, a stove, a set of fire irons, a pair of globes, a 20-volume encyclopaedia and the Colonial Seal, for which Sorell signed – with the exception of the Colonial Seal and the 24 chairs.

Davey remained for some time as a settler. Unsuccessful, he returned to England, where he died on 2 May 1823. His daughter married the Hobart surgeon James Scott who built 'Boa Vista', then Hobart's finest



1 The model of Government House, Macquarie Street, Hobart as it stood in 1837, constructed by Francis Low and commissioned by Jane, Lady Franklin. Collection Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart.

This accurate scale model, exhibited in London in 1841, is the only record of the complex now known as Old Government House. The lower view from Macquarie Street shows the first Government House inhabited by Collins and Davey, the cottage facing Macquarie Street with two later bow windows. To the left is Sorell's second Government House, the two-storey, badly built 110 x 35 ft house with a veranda. The upper view is looking from Sullivan's Cove with Arthur's two storey, five-bay third addition supporting and attached to the back of Government House, with a summer house with its octagonal roof providing access to the veranda

house, and a likely resting place for the missing 24 chairs mentioned above. Furniture with a Tasmanian provenance which may be of this date are a pair of cane-bottomed, sabre-leg armchairs in the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, presumed by that Museum to have been in Government House, and probably of Indian origin (plate 2).⁴

Governor Macquarie first visited Hobart in 1811. As a result he issued a government and general order completely realigning the streets and prospects, confirmed by a plan drawn up by his surveyor, James Meehan (plate 3).⁵ On his return, writing from Sydney in February 1812 Macquarie decreed that⁶

The present Government House for the residence of the Lt. Governor of Hobart Town, being much too small and incommodious, and being also in a state of decay, it is absolutely necessary that a new one should be built as soon as the means of Government will admit thereof.

This first Government House (plate 8A) is, I suggest, the small cottage by then with two bow windows to be seen in plate 1, facing Macquarie Street.

At this time the creation and furnishing of a Government House was a direct consequence of the skill level of the convicts working in the Lumber Yards in Sydney or Hobart. One such skilled convict was Lawrence Butler (c 1750-1820) a cabinet-maker by trade and Australia's first furniture maker of note. Born in Ireland, he was transported for life for his participation in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Arriving in Sydney in 1802, he was immediately employed in the Lumber Yard. Macquarie needed skilled men, so Butler remained in the Lumber Yard on a ticket of leave until granted a conditional pardon in 1813. I suggest that any furniture supplied to Government House Hobart between 1803 and Sorell's departure in 1817 originated from Butler's workshops in the Sydney Lumber Yard.



On his release in 1815, Butler advertises that he has for sale⁷

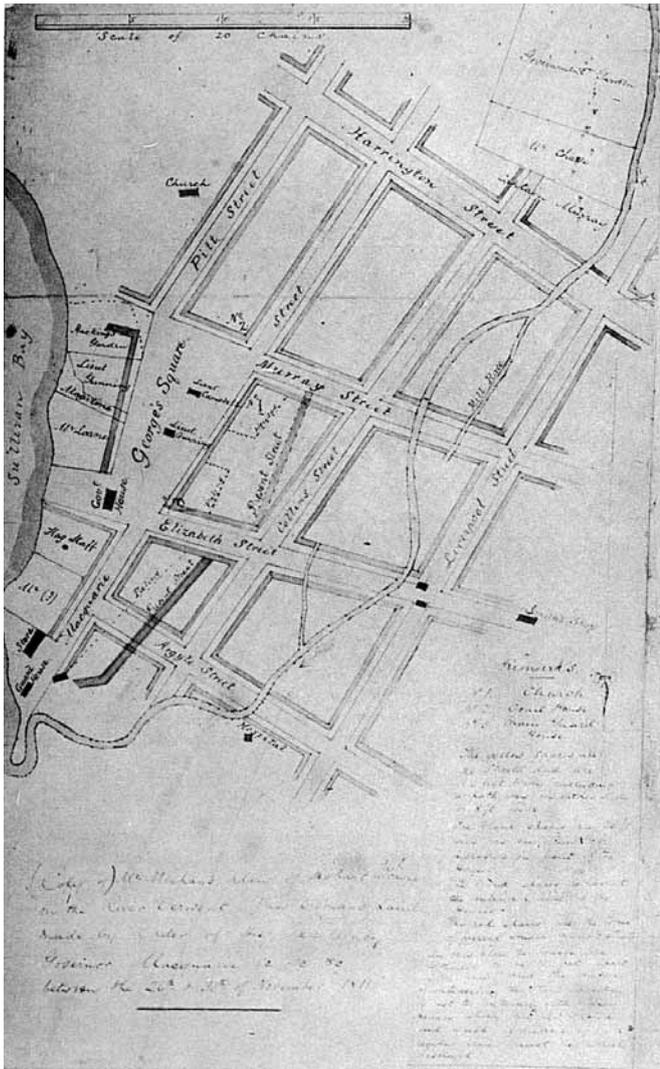
chairs, tables, and sofas, drawers and clothes presses, patent dining tables on pillars, on the newest construction, dressing and shaving boxes with glasses, card tables, an elegant cabinet and escritoire, bedsteads and mattresses, &c. Made under his immediate inspection and warranted of the best materials.

Butler's work was highly regarded, and of sufficient merit to warrant his providing the furniture for the new Courts of Justice and for the chambers of Judge Jeffrey Bent of the Supreme Court, Sydney; the £210.10.0 payment for this work was made from the Police Fund in March 1816. Government House was furnished from the Police Fund, which collected government monies for licences to import and sell alcohol. In the *Sydney Gazette*, 4 April 1816, Butler advertised for two journeymen and an apprentice.⁸ As this was in addition to the four apprentices already operating within his workshop, demand for his furniture must have been brisk.

In 1820 Commissioner J.T. Bigge visited both Tasmania and New South

Wales to investigate Macquarie's government of the Colony. Tasmania's Lt Governor William Sorell (1775-1848) was to benefit from Bigge's reports, as Bigge appears to have disliked Macquarie and approved of Sorell. Bigge's reports to government on his return to Britain are vital for an understanding of how the various lumber yards worked. The existing system enabled the governors to furnish their houses without being held to account on departure for their contents; Bigge had seen through this and I quote his solutions in full:⁹

I may here be permitted to observe to Your Lordship that the Salary



3 Meehan's 1811 map showing Government House directly opposite the exit to Elizabeth Street with all the streets realigned and named. The small bow-windowed Collins/Davey Government House is positioned centrally as part of Macquarie's grand plan

direction, a list of all the furniture that was then in the Government Houses in New South Wales, and that had been either purchased or made at the Public expense. This List I thought proper to suggest for Governor Macquarie's justification, as well as for the benefit of his Successor, and is to be found in the Appendix.¹¹ I think it is all right to state that all due attention had been paid to economy in the purchase of furniture or in the orders for it, when made by the convict workmen. I should therefore recommend that the salary of the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land should be raised to the Sum of £2,000 per annum, and that he should be allowed a Ration for himself and four of the servants of his Household; but that, in future, as furniture can now be purchased both in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, that all allowances consisting of Articles of Furniture and Forage for Horses should be withdrawn and the expense of purchasing them should be defrayed by the Governor and Lieut. Governor, except in cases where they should have previously received Your Lordship's express commands.

Captain Thomas Bell of the 48th Regiment, the Engineer and overseer of Convicts at the Hobart Lumber Yard, prepared this statement for Bigge regarding the public buildings built in Hobart during his time as Chief Engineer:¹²

... the public buildings erected and in progress since the arrival of the present inspector includes the whole of the inside work of government house completed and a kitchen, servants hall, coach house and stable with a veranda in front built, and the house stuccoed. At the lumber yard a brick building erected for a blacksmith's shop and a

and Allowances made to the Lieut. Governor of Van Diemen's Land do not appear to me to be adequate to the necessary importance of the situation. The salary of the Lieutenant Governor amounts to £800 Sterling. He draws 36 daily rations from the Store for his household Servants, most of whom are convicts. Some of them are victualled as Constables, and draw the increased ration and a weekly quantity of spirits. The Lieut. Governor has also the advantage of obtaining the Services of Mechanics from amongst the Convicts, when required for repairs of the Government House and Garden, or the making of furniture, the materials of some part of which have been purchased and defrayed

from the Police Fund.¹⁰ His Horses, Harness and Carriage have been purchased at the public expense, and, generally, by drafts of cattle from the Govt. Herds to Individuals, who received an Order for supplying them to the King's Store, and then received the usual price for the quantity of meat they produced. I suggested to Lieut. Governor Sorell, as well as to Governor Macquarie, the propriety of taking Inventories of all property that had been purchased for their use at the Public Expense and that remained or in future should be placed in any of the Government Houses. In this suggestion they concurred, and I received from Brigade Major Antill by Governor Macquarie's

stone building erected for government stores ...

This Government House is the long central section depicted in the model (plate 1), with eleven windows facing Macquarie Street. Bell continues:

Government House and offices were completed in 1819. Built and roofed in but very little inside work done. The outbuildings partly done ... Government House - Length 110 ft; Breadth, 35 ft¹³

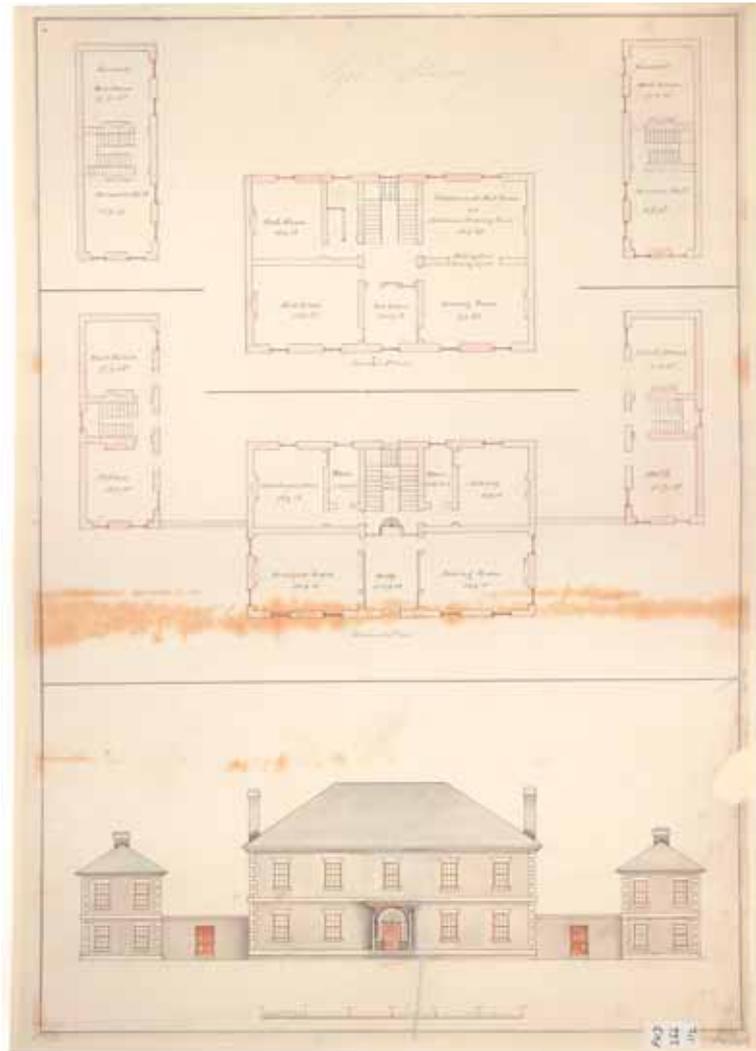
A building (plate 6) of this breadth would be difficult to span using the skill base then available in the settlement. A shingled roof with a central valley would be certain to leak.

At this time, and towards the end of his governorship, Lachlan Macquarie commissioned two convict artisans, William Temple and John Webster, to make him two large ornamental chairs (plate 5). These chairs appear to have been designed for purposes of state rather than personal comfort, and are likely to be the two large armchairs listed in the inventory of the contents requested by Bigge as being in the drawing room of Government House, Sydney, and drawn up by Macquarie's aide-de-camp, Henry Colden Antill, in March 1821.¹⁴ One of these chairs is now the property of Macquarie University, the other belongs to the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

William Temple was a native of Boston, Lincolnshire. Transported for life to New South Wales in 1813, he arrived in Sydney on the convict transport *General Hewitt* on 7 February 1814. On 7 May 1814, when he appeared before the Bench of Magistrates as a witness in the case between Captain Gill of the 46th Regiment and Lawrence Butler, Temple stated that

I am a prisoner and a cabinetmaker by trade. I have been in the employ of Laurence Butler ... I used to go to Butler, immediately

4 Plan for the Sorell Government House (1817). This bears many similarities with Government House, Parramatta designed by Lt John Watts of the 46th Regiment, who arrived in Sydney in 1814 and departed in 1819. The quoins to the sides of all the buildings depicted in the elevation are to be found on his Military Hospital Sydney (1814), the Surgeons Barracks, Sydney (1814) and the twin towers to St John's Church Parramatta (1819). This design feature is peculiar to his work and was not used by Greenway. Watts' complex was probably too expensive to construct in Hobart at this date, and as a result the simple straight-fronted, barrack-type building was completed by 1820, shown to the centre of the model, as seen in plates 6 & 7



after I had done my government work ... I have been in the habit of working for Butler during my after hours ever since my arrival.

When Temple applied for and was granted a conditional pardon by Governor Macquarie in November 1821, he was listed as a 'cabinet maker'. In his petition for a conditional pardon he stated that he had been 'exclusively employed under your Excellency's direction for the last 18 months at Government House' - a New South Wales precedent probably repeated in Hobart.

The two armchairs were constructed from Australian rose mahogany (*Dysoxylon fraserianum*) and are the earliest known examples of Colonial Gothic, derived in part from designs appearing in George Smith's *Collection*

of *Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* published in London in 1808. They, like the Tasmanian sofa to be discussed later, are of a sophisticated design and I suggest bespoke, from a commissioned design, possibly suggested by Mrs Macquarie and drawn by the convict architect Francis Greenway who drew up the plans in 1820 for the still surviving Gothic stable block, now the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney.

When Governor Macquarie left New South Wales in February 1822, he took the two chairs back with him to Scotland. Is this an example of Macquarie commissioning furniture from convict mechanics through the Sydney Lumber Yard and keeping it at the end of his tenure, or as noted in



5 One of a pair of armchairs made for Macquarie by the firm of Temple & Webster, Sydney 1821 and possibly intended for his Executive Council Office. A third chair of related form made for Archdeacon Scott implies that Mrs Macquarie had very little or no input into designing these chairs, despite her known interest in matters Gothic. If architect designed, Greenway is the most likely design source. Hobart had neither the skills nor designers to produce furniture of this quality to furnish Government House at this date. I suggest that Sorell sourced the furnishings for Government House from Sydney and that they were either Anglo-Indian or from the workshops of Lawrence Butler, Alexander Hart or Temple & Webster. Webster may have had familial connections with Lancaster; this chair bears many stylistic correlations with Gillows' Porden-designed Gothic furniture supplied to Eaton Hall in 1817

Bigge's assessment, personal furniture made in the Lumber Yard paid for by Macquarie and kept on his retirement? I suggest the latter.

On inspecting Government House Hobart in 1817, William Sorell decided that it was uninhabitable, uncomfortable and lacked proper security, so he ordered additions and alterations.¹⁵ In the meantime he and his family stayed at the home of the timber merchant Thomas Birch.¹⁶ In July a house and offices at New Town were purchased for Sorell's use from the former convict Andrew Whitehead, but soon after these burnt down. As there was no other residence within easy reach of the town that could accommodate Sorell and his family, they returned to Government House, with all its faults.

Bigge's investigation into the workings of the Hobart Lumber Yard are contained within the transcripts for his commission as detailed in *Historical Records of Australia*

(*HRA*). This important published record places the problems of running a colonial Lumber Yard 12,000 miles from Britain into a local context.

Examination of Captain T. Bell, 48th Regiment - Chief Engineer Hobart¹⁷

Q. Do you think you could not have obtained the same work from the Prisoners in Govt. employ without giving a promise of a ticket of leave?

A. I do not think I could have got the same quantity of work done in the same space of time; it also operated as a security for their good behaviour in places where superintendance could not be provided. the men, who obtained Tickets of leave, worked at various Distances from the Town, without any overseers, and only subject to casual Inspection of myself or

my assistant.

Q. Do you keep any other list of Convicts who arrive here, distinguishing the ship they come by, the date of arrival, their assignment to settlers, or employment, and any memorandum of their future destination?

A. Yes, I do. I enter in a book the name of every convict on his landing and the date with the name of the Ship, by which he arrived, and also to whom they are assigned, both on or off the Store.

Examination of G. Read 1820 Superintendent of Carpenters in the Lumber Yard Hobart¹⁸

Q. How long have you held your situation of superintendent of carpenters at this station?

A. About 12 months.

Q. What is your pay and what other emoluments do you receive?

A. I receive £30 per annum from the Police Fund, and I have two Government men.

Q. How many convict carpenters are there placed under your superintendance?

A. I believe there are about 30.

Q. Are they good workmen?

A. There are not above eight that can be called good workmen.

Q. Do you ever Task them to their work?

A. I do it where I can and put 2 or 3 to a job.

Q. How do you limit the task work?

A. By calculating as much as an ordinary carpenter can perform in the hours of Govt. work.

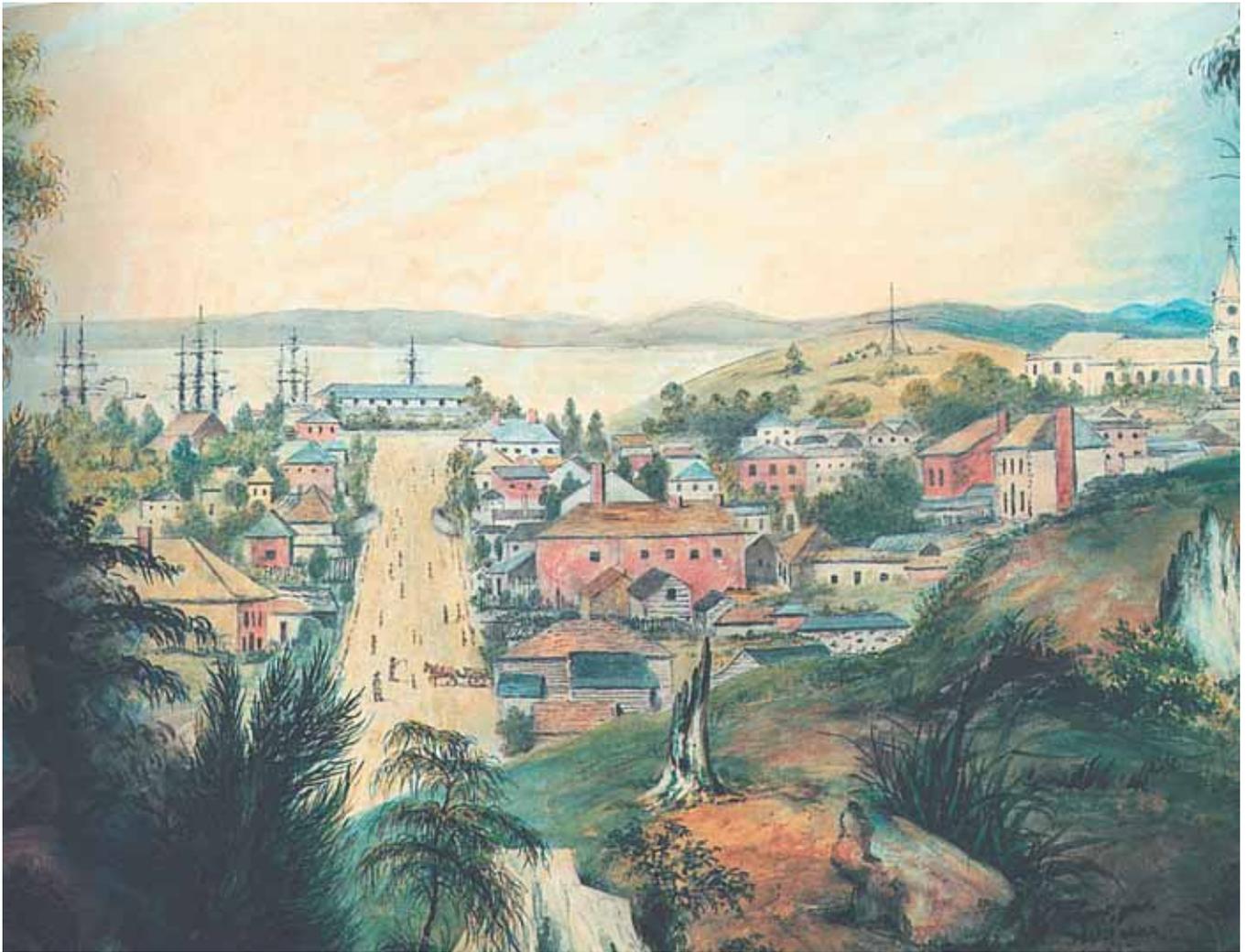
Q. Have you reason to be satisfied with the manner in which the carpenters perform their work?

A. I have.

Q. Do you think they work as well as free men?

A. Some are good work men and take a Pride in doing their work well. There are others whom it is impossible to make work.

Q. It has been the practice here I



believe to employ all the Govt. mechanics in their extra hours on Govt. labour?

A. The carpenters have not been so employed with the exception of Brown, who had the making of the Church windows; and he agreed to make them for £9 a window and allowed his Govt. time to be deducted out of that, rating it at 5 shgs. per day.

Q. Do not you observe that the carpenters as well as other mechanics and labourers in Govt. employ that are set to task work, can finish it before their Govt. hours are expired?

A. They certainly do, for they will work hard to finish their task work.

Q. Do you think they do their work as well altho' they do it

quicker?

A. They do not do it well, unless they are well looked after.

Q. Do you find that the wood of this country is well adapted to building purposes?

A. The Huon Pine is very good for fittings and inside work and the Stringy Bark is good for carpenter's work.¹⁹

Q. Do you not find that the latter shrinks very much?

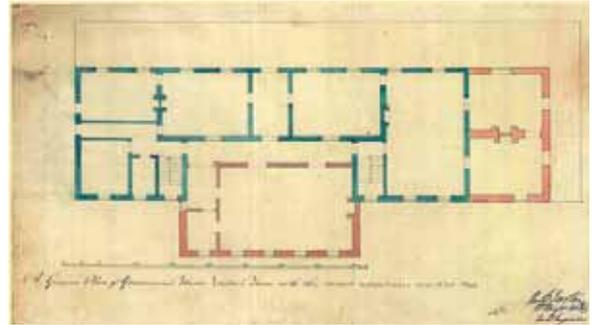
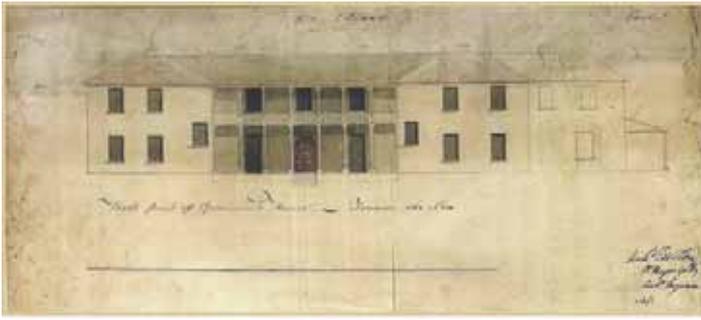
A. It does, but it stands well if seasoned. The large logs or an old tree also stand well.

Q. Does the working of these woods destroy the tools?

A. It does.

Q. All the carpenters and mechanics are allowed to take their tools home with them and to use them in their own work?

6 Benjamin Duterreau, view down Elizabeth Street to the Derwent with Government House to the centre, the verandah fronting onto Macquarie Street, c 1836, watercolour. Collection Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart



7A This previously unpublished watercolour is an elevation drawn up in 1826 by Major Turton, acting Engineer of the 40th Foot, then Garrison Regiment in Hobart. It portrays the harbour front of Sorell's Government House with its unusual verandah inset between the two bays, with the oddly placed staircase windows lighting the two internal staircases. The front overdoor and side windows survived the demolition of the building in 1858-9 and were sold to the Union Chapel at Woodbridge (then Peppermint Bay) for £6/10/-.³⁰ It is dated as being received in London, 7 April 1828. National Archives, Kew, England

7B The footprint plan showing Major Turton's solution to the falling down 1820 Sorell building. The red infills are the proposed new building, designed to support the existing structure. The plan was completed before September 1827 when Arthur dispatched it from Hobart as his solution to providing a new Government House. This watercolour is in the National Archives, Kew

A. They are.

Q. Are the workmen, when employed in their extra time by Government, paid according to their time or to the work they do?

A. They are paid according to their time, three shillings for extra time for a mechanic and two for a labourer.

In 1817 of the 454 convicts who all arrived from Sydney, three were carpenters. In 1818 of the 540 convicts who arrived (149 from England, 491 from Sydney) ten were carpenters, and in 1819 of the 588 convicts who arrived (162 from England and 426 from Sydney) 13 were carpenters, making a

total of 26 over the three years.²⁰

In 1819 included among the 1,732 miscellaneous labourers was one chair caner.²¹ No convict was willing to call himself a 'cabinetmaker' or for that matter a 'joiner', but it was from this skill base that Sorell's Government House was built.

J Lakeland, Assistant Inspector of Public Works, Hobart²²

Q. Are the Mechanics and Tradesmen in Govt. employ at this settlement of a good or inferior description?

A. The generality of them are very inferior. We have only six good Carpenters and Two good Blacksmiths. The Demand for these last both in the country and for Govt. is very great and has been always.

Q. Has Govt. made Purchases of Huon Pine?

A. To a considerable amount, as much as £400 in my time, and I know that a large quantity was Purchased before.

Q. Of whom was it Purchased?

A. Of Mr. Birch Principally.

Q. To what Purpose was it applied?

A. For linings and fittings of the Govt. House and for the Church.

Q. At what price was it Purchased?

A. On one occasion the sum of £200 was given for a whole cargo and I do not know what the Quantity in Feet was, tho' there were 63 Logs, but at other times we have purchased the Pine of Mr. Birch at 6d. per superficial Foot.

Captain Bell was questioned later about timber:²³

Q. From whence do you procure the wood from this Settlement?

A. On my arrival, the wood, used in common buildings called Stringy Bark, was procured from a place called Cascade about 3 miles from the Town. About a year after, that Supply failed and now it is brought by water from Northwest Bay in D'Entrecasteaux's Straights about 20 miles off.

Q. From Whence do you obtain the common cedar and the Huon Pine?

A. We have lately procured a Ship load of common cedar or what is called pencil wood from the Huon River, and the Huon Pine is procured in any quantity from Macquarie Harbour on the West side of this island; but the Govt. Vessel now here draws too much water to enter that harbour...

Q. Have you ever required any supplies of wood from Sydney for the works here?

A. Yes, we have received some cedar for the finishing the Pews and Pulpit in the Church...

Captain Bell continued his evidence:²⁴

Q. From whence do you Procure Tools and Utensils for the Public Works?

A. Utensils, such as Iron Pots and Frying Pans, have been always sent from Sydney. Tools formerly were, latterly they have been principally bought or made in the works.

Q. Do you keep an account of the receipts and Issues of these Tools and generally of the Stores in your charge and is that account ever inspected by the Lt. Govr?

A. I keep an account of all receipts and Issues. The Lt. Govr. receives a quarterly return of them, and they are transmitted to the Governor in Chief.

Q. Has the Government House at Hobart Town been finished during your period of service?

A. It has.

Q. Has it been finished, as far as was practicable by work done in the Government yard or at Govt. expense?

A. It has, and work is now going on the same account.

Q. Are Purchases of furniture ever made by you on that account?

A. A few trifling things but of absolute necessity for the accommodation of the Lt. Governor or his family have been Purchased by me on the verbal or written authority of the Lt. Govr., and they appear in the accounts.

Q. Do you know of any other Purchases of the same nature, not made by you, and defrayed out of the Police Fund?

A. As an auditor of the Police Fund, I have seen bills of that Description, which did not bear my signature. I was asked to sign them by the Treasurer of the Police Fund at the audit, but I declined to do so for reasons that I stated in writing to the Lt. Govr.

Bell's reference to Macquarie Harbour becomes important under the Governorship of Sir George Arthur (1754-1854) who moved part of the Lumber Yard workshop to Macquarie Harbour, circa 1826. He skirted around the issue of purchases for the Lieutenant Governor and his family out of the Police Fund, placing the responsibility with the Lt Governor.

The problems of ordering chattels from the nearest major metropolis, in this case Sydney, are exemplified in a letter written by G T W B Boyes (1787-1853), Colonial Auditor, to his wife, in England on 24 September 1825, from Sydney.

I received a letter from him [Sorell's son who was to marry Elizabeth, daughter of Anthony Fenn Kemp] some time ago announcing the coming event and requesting me to purchase some plate for him at this place. You will hardly believe that I could not find a single piece of new English Silver in the Town and I am quite sure there is not one. I went to Robertson's, the greatest rogue in Sydney I believe/bye the bye he was an apprentice of Grimaldi & Johnson's/ and he made me pay for plate of Chinese manufacture/ horribly rough and mean looking/ upwards of eleven shillings an ounce. I never regretted laying out thirty pounds or upwards but I could not allow Sorell to be cheated to such an extent. I have been obliged to purchase 1/2 a dozen table spoons, as many tea spoons, the same number of forks - a Fish slice and a couple of sauce ladles but I got them at a reasonable price say eight shillings an ounce - but all second hand and somewhat worn - but they are English and that is something.²⁵

Maybe Arthur was aware of this problem, for with the imminent changeover from Sorell, from on board ship off the coast of England he writes a letter which begs the question of how he was able to assess the current state of furnishings within Government House Hobart from the other side of the world. He was soon to receive a short sharp reply.²⁶

Furniture for Government House.
Letter from Lieut.-Governor Arthur

to Under Secretary Horton dated Plymouth, 18th August, 1823.Sir,

I do myself the honor to represent to you that I find the small quantity of furniture, which has hitherto been supplied for the Government House at Van Diemen's Land, consists chiefly of tables and chairs made in the Government Yard and that much is required both for the comfort and respectability of the dwelling. As a transport is taken up for the purpose of conveying stores to the colony, I beg through your kindness to request that the agent may be authorized to procure and ship those necessary articles of furniture, which are most required, and may be supplied from hence on much more advantageous terms than in the colony.

The charge, I should conceive, need not exceed £500, and may be defrayed out of the Police Fund.

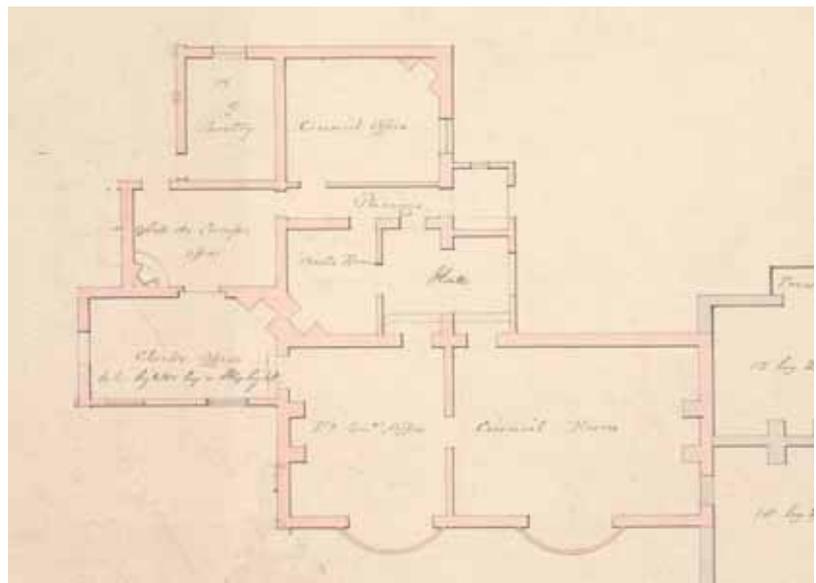
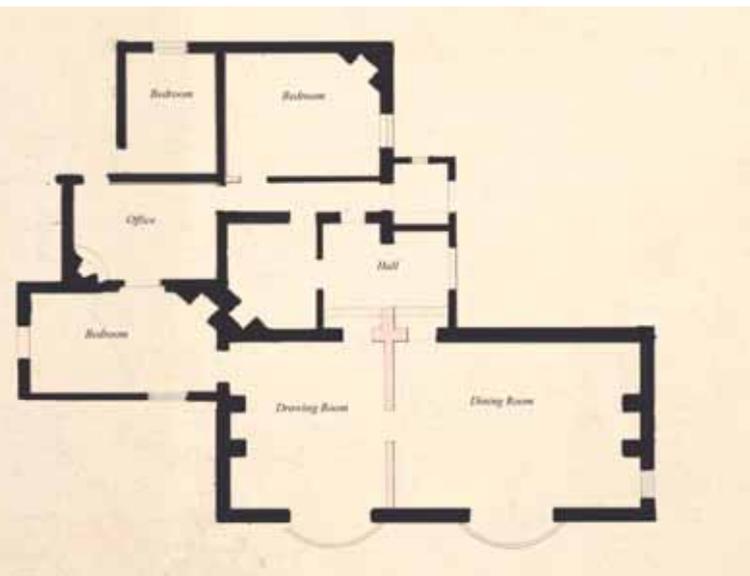
I have, &c., Geo. Arthur

He received the following reply.

Letter from Under Secretary Horton to Lieut.-Governor Arthur dated Downing Street, 4th September, 1823.²⁷

Sir,

Having received, and laid before Earl Bathurst your letter of the 18th ulto., I am directed by his Lordship to acquaint you that he is by no means prepared, without more explicit information upon the state of the Government House at Van Diemen's Land, to decide whether in principle that House should be furnished at the public Charge; but under any circumstances His Lordship thinks that it would be far more expedient to make arrangements for manufacturing upon the Spot the additional Furniture, which may be considered necessary or desirable, and his Lordship is



8A 'Plan of Govt House, Hobart Town.
 NB: The walls tinted red denote the present buildings, the walls tinted grey denote the new additions, estimated cost to the Govt. £350.
 This is a later footprint plan of c 1829 which I suggest includes the original Collins-Davey Government House as offices for the new Executive Council. Upon separation from NSW in 1826, Arthur required new offices for the Executive Council and the additions costing £350 were approved. It would be a nice thought on the part of Arthur to place the executive arm of Government in the recently restored Davey/Collins Government House, and I suggest it was he who added the bay windows. PND266/122

8B I suggest that the existing walls tinted red show the scale and footprint of the Collins-Davey, pre-1817 Government House, Hobart with its two bow windows (which appear to be later additions to encompass the original window openings) on the Francis Low model in plate 1. I have extracted a suggested first Government House from the footprint plan shown in plate 8A and given the rooms their possible original usage under Lt Governor Davey in 1817

induced to suggest this arrangement not only in consideration of the heavy expense, which would attend the purchase of Furniture in this Country, and its conveyance to Van Diemen's Land, but because he considers it generally more expedient that wants of this nature should be supplied from the means which are at the disposal of the local Government.
 I am, &c., R. Wilmot Horton²⁸

As a result, and prior to the arrival of John Lee Archer as Chief Engineer in August 1827, things had moved slowly with regard to both the improvements and furnishing of Government House as confirmed by this dispatch from Arthur over suggested acquisitions.

Sir,
 I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 1st December last, transmitting by Lord Bathurst's directions Copy of a Treasury Minute of 9th November, 1826, on the Requisition for Stores to be supplied for the Public Service in this Colony, and requesting an explanation of the grounds on

which the articles, enumerated therein as objectionable, were applied for, viz., 12 Pieces of Green Baize 3 dozen Table Covers, 12 pieces Carpeting contained in Requisition No. 2 were applied for by Captain Cotton, the Acting Engineer, for the year 1825, in his Requisition dated June, 1824. Most of the articles applied for by this Requisition were sent by the *Catherine Stewart Forbes*, but such of them as were omitted were again applied for by a Requisition signed by Major Kirkwood, then Acting Engineer, and forwarded to England in my Dispatch No. 9, as articles required by the Engineer's Department and headed "Tools and Stores included in the Requisition for 1825, but not yet supplied." There is no note of Captain Cotton to show the purpose to which it was intended to apply them, but the Assistant Engineer is of opinion that the Green Baize and Table covers were required for the tables in the new Court House, and several Public Offices; the carpeting for the Government House, there not being a yard to be procured in the Colony. It was an Article of Furniture much required, and

which had hitherto been supplied at the Public expense.

6 Church-bells, 6 Church-clocks. Three of the Church-bells and Church Clocks were applied for on the representation of the Archdeacon for the churches already erected at Launceston, Pittwater, and New Norfolk; the other three for the small churches he recommended to be built. As nothing is more important in a convict colony than the regular muster of the prisoners, the church bell and clock are particularly useful, and could not be purchased but at a most extravagant price; they are absolutely desirable for the benefit of the public service...

The Government House in this Colony, as in all others, I believe, has hitherto been supplied with the ordinary articles of furniture, sofas, chairs, tables, and carpeting, partly made in the Lumber Yard and partly purchased at the Public charge. Those which have been made here are of a very inferior description, and now in a condition so unserviceable, that I have been under the necessary of directing such as cannot be repaired to be replaced.

Prior to leaving England on 16 July 1825, the new Governor of New South Wales General Ralph Darling had been given two separate but practically duplicate commissions. He was to call at Hobart on his way to Sydney to hand over one commission, namely the full powers of Governor to Arthur 'it being intended that the two colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land should be henceforth distinct and separate Governments.'²⁹

With this commission, Arthur was no longer subservient to His Excellency in Sydney. Hence he was capable of using his decision-making powers to furnish and commission a new Government House appropriately, as will be shown in Part II of this series of articles.

NOTES

- 1 *The Jubilee History of Tasmania*, vol 1 p 19
- 2 *HRA Series III*, vol 3, p 650
- 3 JB Hawkins, 'Royal Presentation Silver with an Australian History', *Australian Antique Collector*, 1980 pp 78-81 for a similar Royal Service for NSW.
- 4 J Broadbent, *India, China, Australia Trade and Society, 1788-1850*, p 107, plate 47. Broadbent illustrates two of these chairs which are in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and believed to have a Treasury provenance. Another from this set at Old Government House Parramatta has a seat number stamped with a 1/2" chisel in Roman numerals in the 20s. They are of Anglo-Indian pegged construction.
- 5 *HRA Series III*, vol 1, p 512: 'His Excellency the Governor, having observed with much regret, since his arrival here, that the several Public and Private Buildings in Hobart Town have hitherto been erected in a very irregular manner and without any Plan whatever, has judged it expedient, and essentially necessary for the better appearance of the Town itself, and the accommodation of the Inhabitants, to frame and mark out a regular Plan of it for the future guidance and observance of all such Persons as may be permitted to reside and build in it. The Acting Surveyor has accordingly by His Excellency's direction, marked out with Stakes, in appropriate Places, the different divisions of the Town, which is for the present to consist of a large Square nearly in the centre of it, and Seven Streets, three of them running nearly Parallel, the whole length of the Town, and the remaining four Crossing the three long Streets at Right Angles. The Governor has named the Square George's Square, in honor of our most Gracious Sovereign, and has given the following names to the Seven Streets: Viz. Liverpool, Collins, and Macquarie are the names given to the three long Streets, Argyle, Elizabeth, Murray and Harrington being the names given to the four Cross Streets.'
- 6 *HRA Series III*, vol 1 pp 458-460 *Sydney Gazette*, 9 Dec 1815 www.lib.mq.edu.au/lmr/temple.html
- 7 *HRA*, Series III, vol IV, p 686 Bigge to Bathurst
- 8 To confuse the auditors of the Police Fund, it would seem that only materials were charged to the fund not the labour or the finished product. This is probably why furniture is so rarely mentioned in contemporary records.
- 9 These lists compiled by Governor Macquarie's ADC Henry Antill for the Government Houses in Sydney and Parramatta still exist. J B Hawkins. 'The Art of the Cabinetmaker 1788-1820. The Known Survivors', *Australian Antique Collector* 1984, pp 56-63 for my interpretation of Antill's inventories dated 21 March 1821. No surviving or recorded inventory prepared by Sorell appears to have survived.
- 10 *HRA*, Series III, vol III, pp 552-561
- 11 *HRA*, Series III, vol III, p 561
- 12 Hawkins, 'The Art of the Cabinetmaker', *op cit* p 62
- 13 *HRA Series III*, vol II, p 196
- 14 This building survives as Macquarie House in Davey Street, Hobart. Only one of the original 8-panel cedar doors is locatable in the interior and may qualify as the earliest surviving door in the Colony. Information supplied by Warwick Oakman.
- 15 *HRA Series III*, vol III, p 236, 26 Feb 1820
- 16 *HRA*, Series III, vol III pp 333-335 March 1820
- 17 The TMAG sofa has seat rails of mountain blue gum and stringing of pear wood. Information supplied by Warwick Oakman.
- 18 *HRA Series III*, vol III, p 552
- 19 *HRA Series III*, vol III p 556
- 20 *HRA Series III*, vol III, p 330 23 March 1820
- 21 *HRA Series III* vol III, pp 239, 240 29 Feb 1820
- 23 *HRA Series III*, vol III, p.241, 29 Feb 1820
- 24 *The Diaries and Letters of G.T.W.B. Boyes* p 239 Letter: Sydney, 25 September 1825
- 25 *HRA Series III*, vol IV p 82
- 26 *HRA Series III*, vol IV p 87
- 28 *HRA Series III*, vol VI, pp 54-55. Letter from Lieut.-Governor Arthur to Under Secretary Hay, dated Government House, Van Diemen's Land, 20 May 1827.
- 29 *HRA Series I*, vol XII, pp 40, Bathurst to Darling, 27 July 1825.
- 30 AOT/NS499/462 by Mr Goran. The building was destroyed by fire on 3 January 1898.