

# Building colonial histories: the archaeology of the Menzies Centre site, Hobart

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*In 2007 the excavation of a city block occupied by the Menzies Centre Research Institute on the northern fringe of Hobart CBD revealed the substantial remains of early-nineteenth-century architecture. The site was occupied by Hobart's elite for a mix of residential and commercial use from the mid-1820s to the early twentieth century. It was excavated, conserved and interpreted by team of consultant archaeologists and other specialists working closely with the site owner and the local consent authority. In this paper, we introduce the history and archaeology of the site, focusing on one of the six historic allotments: 53 Campbell Street. We then discuss the conservation and interpretation of all surviving remains below the ground floor of a multi-storey medical research and teaching facility. We reflect on the process of building colonial histories in the regulatory framework of urban planning and embedding them in the landscapes of urban renewal.*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an introduction to a developer-funded archaeological project on the site of the Menzies Centre Research Institute in Hobart, Tasmania. Excavation of the city block on the northern fringe of the CBD in 2007 revealed substantial remains of housing stock dating back to the 1820s. The block was occupied by Hobart's elite for a mix of residential and commercial use from the mid-1820s to the early twentieth century. We begin with a contextual history of the project and site, and then focus on the history and archaeology of only one allotment: 53 Campbell Street. We then outline the process of conserving the remains, presenting them to the public and offer a reflection on the outcomes of the project overall.

## URBAN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN TASMANIA

The historical archaeology of Tasmanian urban life is a subject of great interest but little renown. Of the 292 papers and short reports published in *Australasian Historical Archaeology* since 1983, 25 (8.5 per cent) address or cite historical archaeological research in Tasmania. Only two addressed urban sites in Hobart: Anglesea Military Barracks (Morrison 2001) and an 1858 cottage on Warwick Street (Ranson 2014) in which a well-preserved hay rope was recovered from the subfloor. Eleven papers on Tasmania discussed institutional sites and 13 papers addressed industrial sites.

A number of historical archaeological sites have been excavated in urban areas in Tasmania – mostly in Hobart – as part of development works and heritage management projects in the 1990s and 2000s. There are some high profile institutional sites, such as the Cascades Female Factory and other domestic and commercial sites, mostly from working-class wharf precincts such as 'Wapping'. Unofficially named after the waterfront district of London, this flood-prone neighbourhood, just south of the Menzies site, was subject to dense subdivision and attracted boarding houses and tenements in the 1830s and 1840s. The condition of housing declined

steadily and the area developed an unfair reputation as a notorious slum (Petrow 1992). Various excavations between 1996 and 2009 revealed evidence of domestic, commercial and some industrial occupation from the 1820s to 1960s over more than a dozen allotments (Austral Archaeology 2002; Austral Tasmania 2009). One cottage, built by Captain William Wilson in c.1826 and later used as government offices, then the Shakespeare Tavern, had a sandstone basement standing 1.8 m deep (Austral Tasmania 2009:20).

In a block directly opposite the former Menzies Centre site, the remains of Sargeant's Cottage and outbuildings (1820s to 1908) were found below the Blundstone Factory (Austral Archaeology 1994). Like many sites in this area, they were subject to heavy disturbance.

Elsewhere in Hobart, excavations at 374 Macquarie Street revealed evidence of domestic occupation of a former mill in the 1880s (Austral Tasmania 2008:17, 46). Work on the site of Hadley's Hotel revealed the footprint of a c.1840s sandstone cottage and associated yard and cesspit deposits owned by the founder of the Cascades Brewery, Peter Degraives (Godden Mackay Logan [GML] 2009). A substantial assemblage from a cesspit, backfilled in the early-twentieth century, was recovered and likely represents the end of a 58-year occupation of the house by the family of local dentist, Dr John Sharp (GML 2009:87–88). (See Godden Mackay Logan 2009:87 for a preliminary comparison of the Hadley's Hotel cesspit and 53 Campbell Street.)

With the exception of the Hadley's Hotel site, the sites investigated in Hobart fit the pattern of much urban archaeological research across Australia, which has explored working-class domestic cultures in great detail (e.g. Godden Mackay 1999; GML, Austral Archaeology and La Trobe University 2004; Lampard 2009; see also Young 2003:6). Archaeological explorations of the middle classes in Australia tends to be in pastoral or semi-rural settings (e.g. Connah 2009; Hayes 2007; Lawrence *et al.* 2009) or vice-regal (Crook and Murray 2006), although there have been recent efforts to mine the suburbs of Melbourne for its archaeological resource (Murray 2013:858–859). In this context, the former Menzies Centre site provides a rare glimpse of an urban middle-class neighbourhood, its people and material legacy.

## The University of Tasmania Co-location Project

In 2005 the University of Tasmania embarked on an ambitious program to build a world-class research and education facility

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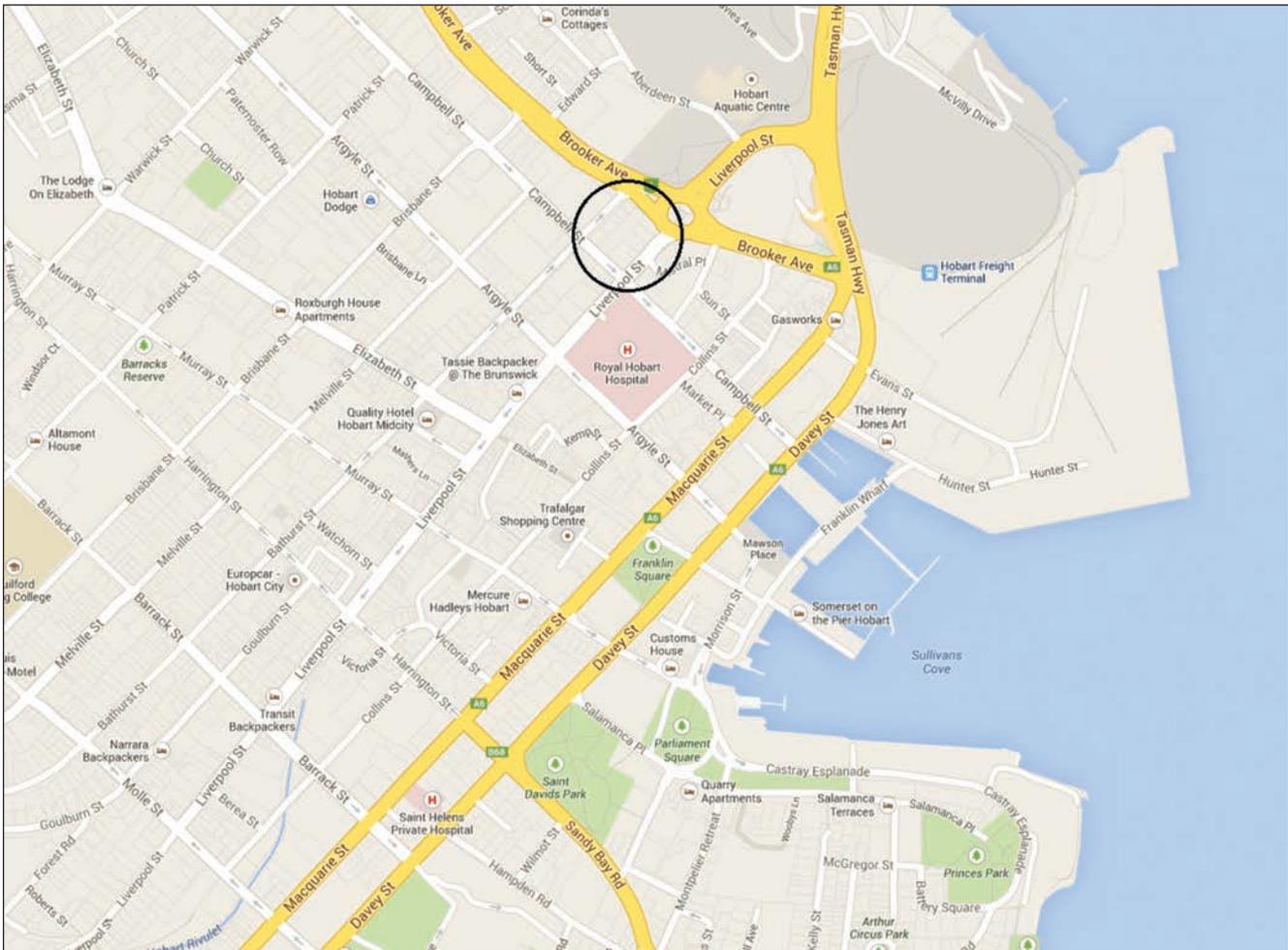


Fig 1: Location of the former Menzies Centre archaeological site. (Map Data ©2013 Google)

on the corner of Campbell and Liverpool Streets, Hobart (Figure 1). Known as the Co-location Project, the goal of Stage 1 was to accommodate the Menzies Research Institute, which has occupied the site since the 1980s, a new Medical School and several Faculty of Health Science facilities, in the one complex (Figure 2). The development site then comprised a mix of modern buildings, including the Menzies Research Centre (a c.1960s former furniture warehouse) and impressive standing structures dating back to the 1820s. Two of these were (and continue to be) listed on the Tasmanian Heritage

Register: Hollydene House and Advocate House. Given the site's development history, the likelihood of significant archaeological remains on the block was high.

As it transpired, archaeological investigations by ArcTas between 2007 and 2009 revealed the extensive remains of dwellings and outbuildings across six historic allotments (Figure 3). The three that fronted Campbell Street had been home to some of Hobart's most prominent families. They were described in various advertisements as 'mansions' and evolved into a curious mix of domestic and professional purposes, having been used from time to time as lodging houses, schools, surgeries, storehouses and later warehouses.

Despite the fact that only three allotments were listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, the University of Tasmania agreed to continue excavations across the whole site according to the standards established under Practice Note 2 (Tasmanian Heritage Council 2006). Godden Mackay Logan was engaged as independent advisors in May 2007 and assisted ArcTas with the preparation of an Archaeological Method Statement which governed all remaining excavation work on site (ArcTas and GML 2007). The Method Statement outlined a comprehensive research design and an ambitious program of public engagement and outputs – a reflection of the importance of this city site. This process also included regular reporting, and an open dialogue, with the consent authority, Heritage Tasmania.

The archaeological investigation of the Former Menzies Centre site was large and complex. The topography, nature of twentieth-century development and demolition in each allotment led to different survival rates in different areas of each property. Archaeological works comprised a mix of test-trenching, controlled open-area excavation, machine-aided



Fig 2: The Medical Science I building on the site of the former Menzies Centre. (P. Crook, July 2010)

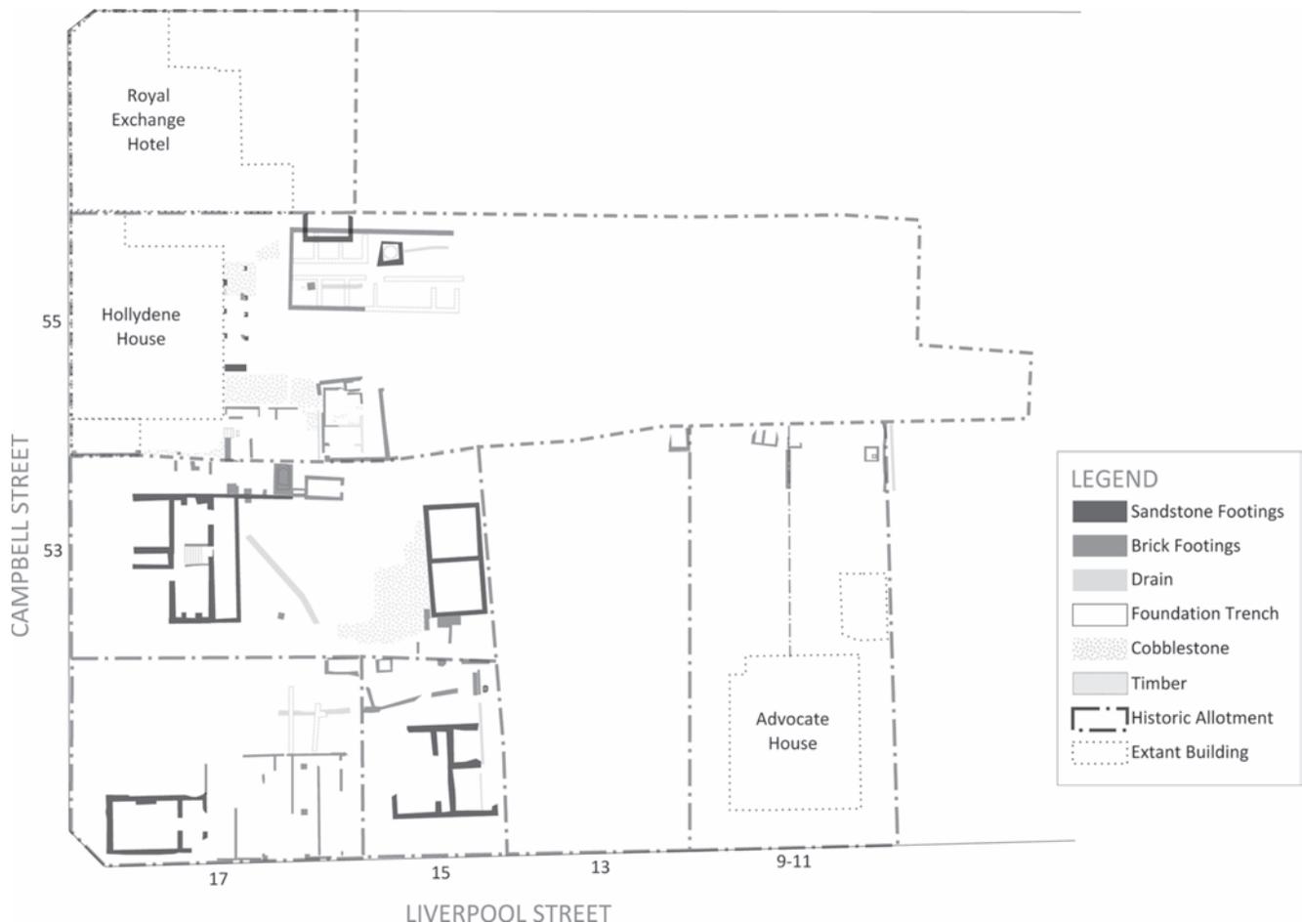


Fig 3: Site plan, showing subsurface remains. (P. Crook, after Peacock, Darcey & Anderson Pty Ltd, 'Archaeological Survey Campbell & Liverpool Street', for University of Tasmania, 7 February, 2012, Drawing No.: M566U-5)

excavation and monitoring of the demolition of standing structures and additions. More than 88 days were spent on site between 2007 and 2009, and a total of 74 features, 759 contexts and 36,000 artefacts were exposed (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol. 2]:27). Preservation at the site was good, with the remains of cellars at 53 Campbell Street and 17 Liverpool Street standing up to 1.85 m tall and some organic materials, such as a timber-capped bricked drain, surviving in good condition.

The majority of features dated from the 1820s to the late twentieth century but remnant strata from the pre-1804 environment were discovered in 17 Liverpool Street (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 1]:26). A total of 26 flaked pieces of silcrete and chert in various forms and stages of manufacture were uncovered in one such 'proto-historic' layer that was unfortunately heavily disturbed by footings for an early-twentieth-century warehouse. The artefact assemblage as a whole presents a later history, with 16,571 of 36,108 sherds (45.8% of the assemblage) being recovered from contexts with a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) of 1900 or later. A further 3,929 (10.9%) have TPQs of 1875–1899; 9,783 (27.1%) are from contexts with TPQs of 1850–1875; and 5,825 (16.1%) have TPQs pre-dating 1840. Assemblages from the first three categories may well have been deposited after 1900.

The majority of contexts (40%) were recovered from 53 Campbell Street and the discussion that follows will focus on that property. (For information about Hollydene House, 17 Liverpool Street or the other properties, see ArcTas and GML 2013 [volumes 2 and 3].)

### On the fringes of Hobart Town: the former Menzies Centre site

The first penal settlement in Tasmania was established in 1803 on the eastern shores of the Derwent River at Risdon Cove. In 1804 the settlement was relocated to Sullivans Cove, and Australia's second oldest capital city, Hobart Town, was established. The settlement grew in an ad hoc fashion, much to the disappointment of Governor-in-Chief Lachlan Macquarie, who inspected Hobart Town in 1811 and ordered surveyor James Meehan to mark out a new town plan (Bolt 1981). At this time, the former Menzies Centre site was north of a garden belonging to the Assistant Colonial Surgeon, Matthew Bowden and probably under the leasehold of assistant surgeon William Hopley.

It is not known precisely when the first allotments within the new grid were allocated but the first builder on site, merchant Thomas Atkinson, was granted the land in 1823 and by 8 July 1825 he was advertising clothing, hardware and general ironmongery for sale in his new store (and home) in Campbell Street (*Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser* 8 July 1825:4). The building, fronting Campbell Street, was later named Hollydene and still stands today (it was restored as part of the Co-location Project). Atkinson's block was then surrounded by native vegetation, yet to be tamed by an ornamental garden established by the 1840s (*Hobart Town Courier* 19 February 1848), and looked over the growing town and down to the wharves where his cargo and merchandise arrived into port. To the north-east was the Government Paddock, perched high above the settlement

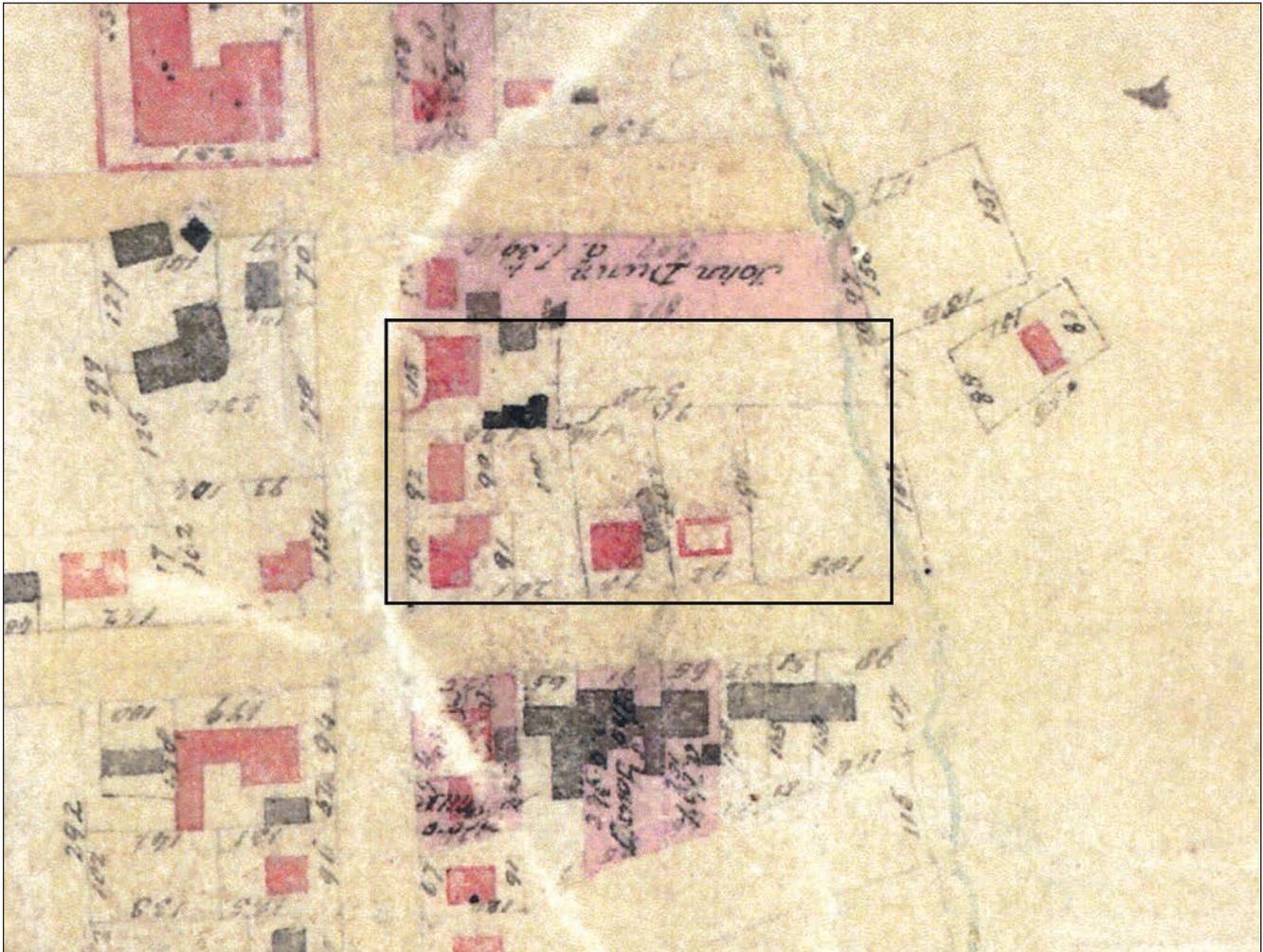


Fig 4: Footprints of the dwellings on Campbell and Liverpool Streets, c1830 (Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Information and Land Services Division, Hobart Historic Chart No. 5)

and separated by the Domain Rivulet which marked the boundary of the township (Scripps 2006:2).

Subdivision continued and in 1830 there were substantial buildings on either side of Atkinson. The proximity to the wharves made this location on the fringes of the town an obvious choice for merchants like Atkinson and those who succeeded him. It was also an area favoured by doctors and surgeons owing to its proximity to the Hobart General Hospital, which was erected between 1819 and 1820 in Liverpool Street, directly south of the former Menzies Centre site (Rimmer 1981:5). The first hospital and dispensary had been in this same block (bounded by Liverpool, Campbell, Argyle and Collins) and the precinct developed into a complex of hospital wings and associated public buildings, including the official residence of the Colonial Surgeon.

Over the years, the city block was home to several notable figures in Hobart's history, including surgeon and parliamentarian Sir Robert Officer (discussed below), Mayor George Crisp, emancipist Robert Jillett and whaler William Young. Several other well-known persons lived and worked there for brief periods, or owned allotments, including surgeon and parliamentarian Dr William L. Crowther, solicitor and parliamentarians R.W. Nutt and William Fisher, solicitor Arthur Perry and furniture retailer Arthur Mathers.

The prominence of these individuals aided the historical research of their properties using digital newspaper transcriptions from the period prior to the allocation of street numbers. Advertisements for buildings 'between Mr Atkinson's and Mr

Young's residences', for example, have been invaluable for describing the various functions of rooms and some out-buildings, as there are no known architectural plans of the site to reveal room use (see Scripps 2005, 2006 and Evans 2007).

In the following section we discuss the history and archaeology of 53 Campbell Street, the historic allotment with the most extensive archaeological footprint.

#### **'That commodious family residence': 53 Campbell Street**

On 30 January 1830, 'a neat and commodious Dwelling-house' on Campbell Street situated 'between the late residence of Mr T. Atkinson and Mr Young's' was advertised in the *Hobart Town Courier* to be let, 'with immediate possession'. It was described as being 'just finished in a superior manner', with 11 rooms, two cellars and a neat garden. This was the first of many advertisements for the sale and lease of 53 Campbell Street over its 130-odd-year life (we have identified at least four, see ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 1]:32). The property, with its 11 (occasionally 13) rooms, was always described as 'commodious', well-finished and suitable for 'genteel' families. The advertisement indicates that it was probably constructed in the summer of 1828–1829, but by whom is uncertain (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 1]:30–31).

The archaeological evidence attests to the 'superior manner' of the construction of the dwelling house, as the new block was set into the steep slope. The wall footings were of well-hewn and regular sandstone blocks with a sandy lime mortar (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 2]:78). The walls

themselves comprised bonded-rubble sandstone and were 42 cm thick, but were probably carried up in brick. They were rendered with horse-hair plaster and traces of cream and teal blue paint. Below this level were the impressive remains of a three-roomed cellar or basement, with walls surviving to a depth of 1.85 m. Cement-lined brick stairs led down from the Photographic evidence from the turn of the twentieth century shows the ‘mansion’s’ Georgian form with a row of five windows on the upper storey and four on the lower (Figure 6). The door was marked with a simple lintel in the Classical style. It was large but elegant and, on looks alone, suitable for a genteel family. It had a low fence along Campbell Street and was described in 1851 as being ‘securely walled in’ (*The Courier* 2 March 1850). Archaeological works in the front yard revealed that the gardens were built up on fresh loam brought in from other properties (ArcTas and GML 2013

[volume 2]:87). The property survived in this form until at least 1962 when it was documented by urban geographer, Robert J. Solomon (1976:186).

### Sir Robert Officer: ‘Father of the City’

In January 1842, surgeon and Medical Officer for the colony, Dr Robert Officer, moved his family of ten, and their two assigned servants, from their ‘commodious premises’ at 16 Brisbane Street to 31 (later 53) Campbell Street (Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, 1843 CEN1/1/18–161 p. 2; *Colonial Times* 25 January 1842). At the time, the property was owned by the Officers’ family friend, Suetonius Henry Tod, a colonel in the Bengal Army. Tod had acquired it in 1836 – a transaction arranged by agents, as he was living in Edinburgh at the time (Evans 2007:4). Tod was a family friend



Fig 5: View of the cellar and footings of 53 Campbell Street, from above. (Alastair Bett, April 2007)

Fig 6: The corner of Campbell and Liverpool Streets, Hobart, c.1900. From right to left are: 17 Liverpool Street, 53 Campbell and 55 Campbell Streets (with the verandah). The hotel which pre-dates the Royal Exchange, on the corner of Campbell and Bathurst Streets, can be seen on the far left (Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart’ ADRI: NS3121-1-313)



of the Officers (Hugh Forster, pers. comm.) and their third son, Suetonius Henry (born 1830) was named in his honour. The Officers continued to live at the property after its sale to Henry Vicary in 1850 and they remained until August 1853.

Robert Officer was born in Kincardineshire, near Dundee, Scotland, in 1800, the youngest of six children (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1967). He first arrived in Hobart in 1822, one year after qualifying to become a member of the Royal College of Surgeons (Forster 2009). He married fellow immigrant Jamima Patterson in 1823. It is believed that they met aboard the *Castle Forbes* on which Officer was the ship's doctor. They moved to Bothwell, New Norfolk, in 1824 and returned to Hobart in 1835. Robert became the Inspector of the Colonial and Convict Medical Department in 1838 and then resigned to manage his failing business ventures in Port Phillip (*Colonial Times*, 23 Oct. 1840:6-7).

In 1841, he was appointed Medical Officer of Hobart, a position he held until 1850. As part of his duties he was called upon to examine the sanitary conditions of the colony each year (Wapping History Group 1988:32). His reports of his own neighbourhood – or that part of it known as Wapping – were scathing:

*Dunghills, pigsties, neglected privies, stagnant water and other accumulations of offensive matter ... are everywhere to be seen and exert a most unfavourable influence on the public health.* (Archives Office Tasmania, CSO 8/23/205, quoted in Petrow and Alexander 2008:6)

In 1846, Officer became one of the first publicly elected (but unpaid) members of the short-lived Hobart City Commission, representing the Argyle Ward. Collectively, the commissioners were described as 'men of intelligence and large property' (Petrow and Alexander 2008:8) and to be eligible for nomination they were required to own property worth £500 or make an annual payment of £50 in rent. Both his property in New Norfolk and the annual rents at No. 53 would have made Officer eligible.

The Officers had 14 children born between 1825 and 1844, eight of whom survived childhood (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1967; Forster 2009). Four died in infancy. The Officers' last two children, Jamima (Jr) and Mary Reid, were born while the family lived at 53 Campbell Street. They also lost a child while living there: their fifth daughter Margaret, who died in October 1847, aged 10.

In his spare time, Dr Officer was known to assist at Bible meetings and local schools, deliver lectures on geology at the Mechanics Institute, and present specimens to the Royal Society. It was reported in local newspapers in 1842 that Dr Officer was present during a meeting of the Lieutenant-Governor Sir John and Lady Franklin and Aboriginal leader Walter George Arthur (chief of the Ben Lomond tribe), his wife Mary Anne, and two other unnamed Aboriginal persons 'lately arrived on their way from Port Phillip to Flinders Island' (*Launceston Examiner* 19 Oct. 1842:3-4). Officer was a well-regarded and well-connected Tasmanian. He was knighted in 1869 – many years after living at No. 53 – for his parliamentary service.

### Improvements

In 1850, or a few years prior, a number of improvements were made to 53 Campbell Street. A new wing was added along the north-west boundary of the allotment, adjacent to 55 Campbell Street, and is visible in Sprent's c.1850 survey (Solomon 1967). It is possible that the renovations were made in order to prepare the property for sale. As soon as Suetonius Tod was officially granted the allotment of land in 1850, he put it on the market. The dwelling was described as being in 'the highest

state of repair; a considerable sum having been recently expended in giving it a superior finish' (*The Courier* 2 March 1850). Whether these sums were expended on the new wing or other maintenance is unclear. It is likely that the new owner, Henry James Vicary, Esq. and JP, of Rosstrevor, Spring Bay in north-western Tasmania, undertook some additional works, as he bought the property for £650 and sold it the following year to Hobart merchant, Henry Hopkins, for £800 (Evans 2007:4).

The 'West Wing' comprised three rooms. The first was an office or parlour which fronted Campbell Street and ran alongside the main house. It is visible in Figure 5. It was 8.5 m x 3 m in size (approximately 28 x 10 feet) with a fireplace and probably divided in two. The wall footings were similar to the main house, being 600 mm wide and in brown sandstone, but the walls were carried up in brick (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol. 2]:82). Unfortunately, no underfloor deposits were recovered to clarify the use of this space. Behind this was a room described as a kitchen extension, based on the high proportion of animal waste recovered from its drains. The room contained a sink and a brick plinth in the south-eastern corner that may have been the base for a cooking oven or boiler. Behind these were ablutions rooms, with two large privies that were in use throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Feature 12 was a large ovoid brick-lined pit cut into the bedrock, measuring 2.8 m long, 1.3 m wide and 1.3 m deep (Figure 7). Thought to be installed at the time of the West Wing c.1840, it has several 'toe-holds' which may have provided access for periodical cleaning. Feature 9 was also brick-lined, but of a more typical rectangular form, measuring 3.5 m x 2 m (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol. 2]: 87-88). Both privies are thought to have been replaced by plumbed toilets in the early twentieth century (see below). At the time of the pits' installation, Dr Officer was the Medical Officer of Hobart and he had regularly reported on the health implications of poor sanitation. It is possible that Dr Officer oversaw the installation of the ovoid pit and perhaps considered it a new and experimental form of waste management – although this is of course speculation.



Fig 7: Ovoid cesspit (Feature 12). (Alastair Bett, May 2007)

### Life after the Officers

The Officer family relocated to their country home, 'Hall Green', New Norfolk, in 1853 when the lease of 53 Campbell Street expired. This was shortly before Officer's election to the Legislative Council as a member for Buckingham, in October. He succeeded, and was endorsed by, solicitor Robert William Nutt, the member for Buckingham from 1851 to 1852. Nutt and his wife, Ellen, appear to have moved into No. 53 immediately after the departure of the Officers. They lived there until at least March 1855 when Mrs Nutt advertised for a housemaid and cook (*The Courier* 16 March 1855).

From 1856 the property was owned or leased by bankers, politicians and clergymen, with their families and servants. Edward Wilkinson, Manager of the Van Diemen's Land Bank, and his family were resident owners from 1856 to at least 1876. Wilkinson had been principal accountant at the bank since at least 1830 and remained a director until his death in 1874 at the age of 73. Edward's wife, Mary, was the sister of wool merchant Peter Facy and they had five children. Three children were still living when the Wilkinsons owned 53 Campbell Street, the youngest was 17. Little is known of their time there. They appear to have contemplated moving in November 1858 when the property was put up for auction (*The Hobart Town Daily Mercury* 10 Nov. 1858:4). It did not sell and the family stayed for another 18 years. In 1868 they participated in the welcoming celebrations for Prince Alfred by displaying a gas-powered illuminated star at No. 53 (*The Mercury* 1 Feb. 1868:2).

When Edward Wilkinson died in 1874 his estate was worth £10,950 (Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office AD960/1/9, Will 1667). His eldest son, Frederick, and his brother-in-law, Peter Facy, were joint executors of the estate. Mary Wilkinson continued to live at 53 Campbell Street. Frederick, who lived nearby at 3 Liverpool Street, died the following year in July 1875, aged 38. Mary died a few months later in November, aged 69 years. Her youngest child and only surviving son, Peter Facy Wilkinson, and his wife, Isabella, lived on at No. 53 until at least 1876, when their son was born.

By May 1878 William Fisher, the merchant seaman, ship builder and politician acquired the property and named it 'Northam' (*The Mercury* 29 May 1878). As the business partner of Peter Facy – the sole executor of the Wilkinson family estate – it is little surprise how he acquired the property. Fisher lived there with his wife, Sarah Ann, and up to 11 of their 13 children until his death in 1882. Sarah Ann moved away three years later, selling all her household effects in 1885 (*The Mercury* 21 Oct. 1885). The property was leased to several tenants, including the Reverend C.L. Dundas, Dean of St. David's Cathedral, during the construction of a new deanery (Ford 1930:133 cited by Evans 2007:6). It was rented to Catherine Babington in 1888 and from 1890 to 1894 to the Auditor-General of Tasmania, William Lovett (Evans 2007:6).

Northam remained part of the estate of the Fisher family until 1896 when it was purchased by Hobart-local, Hugh Campbell, partner of Campbell & Minchin saddlery. Hugh was a bachelor and probably lived at Northam with one or more of his unmarried sisters. From 20 January that year, 'Miss Campbell' – likely one of Hugh's sisters (c.f. Evans 2007:8) – reopened her private school (formerly on Brisbane Street) at 53 Campbell Street (*The Mercury* 20 Jan. 1896:3). Hugh died in January 1907 (*Examiner* 22 Jan. 1907) and Miss Campbell's private school moved on quickly (Evans 2007:8).

A survey by the Hobart Metropolitan Drainage Board was drafted in c.1905 during the Campbells' occupancy. The plan shows a substantial residence set back from the street, with a large verandah and 'L' shaped wing overlooking an ornamental garden. There is a separate water closet (north of those built in the 1850s as part of the west wing) and outbuilding (the stables) which forms a works yard at the rear (Hobart City Council c.1905).

By 1908 the property had been acquired by furniture proprietor Arthur Mathers. He had recently taken over the family furniture business, Mathers & Son, following the death of his father, William Mathers, in 1904 (Evans 2007:8). The business had been established in 1854 on the opposite corner of Liverpool and Campbell Streets. Arthur built a new shop and warehouse on the former Menzies Centre site, at 17 Liverpool Street, and purchased the adjacent lots, including 53 Campbell Street. The shop at No. 17 was demolished in the

1960s and uncovered during archaeological works (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 2]:169-193, Scripps 2006:13-14). Mathers may have had plans for future growth, but they were not realised, and No. 53 was not used for warehousing. It was leased to a variety of boarding house keepers from 1909 to 1953 (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 1]: 40). Sanitation works dating to Mathers' occupation were revealed during archaeological excavation. The dating of their assemblages suggests that they renovated No. 53 at around the same time as building No. 17.

The largest assemblage recovered from 53 Campbell Street was a post-1907 backfill of the rectangular cesspit (Feature 9) with 2,721 individual pieces. Artefact specialist Jenny Porter demonstrated it to be contemporaneous with bedding for a night-pan toilet (Feature 10, see ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 2]:88) and argued it to be coincident with Mathers' renovation (ArcTAS and GML 2013 [vol. 3]:94, 100). The property title changes at the time of the backfilling present an interesting challenge for interpretation. In most cases it is reasonable to assume that when opportunities to discard rubbish arose, the residents of the allotment were responsible for its infill, and the refuse is *likely* to come from that dwelling (Crook and Murray 2004:44-56). While the Mathers owned the property by 1908, we do not know if they resided there, but it is more likely that it was vacant or leased out. Given that the Mathers had owned the opposing block for several decades, it is not unreasonable to speculate that they took the opportunity of a household clear-out while plumbing the cesspits on their new site. Alternatively, the cesspits may have been filled with goods and chattels left behind by the previous owners, the Campbells, or short-term tenants absent from the historical record.



Fig 8: Matching gilt bone china teacup set from context 09/14, 53 Campbell Street. (Alastair Bett, May 2007)

The difficulty in ascertaining the family responsible for its discard is disappointing because the assemblage itself is part of an interesting pattern amongst cesspit fills from neighbouring houses. Jenny Porter found that over two-thirds of teawares from Feature 9 were bone china or porcelain, just a little more than their neighbours at 55 Campbell Street and six times more than their neighbours at 17 Liverpool Street. Conversely, less than 15 per cent of all ceramics from the Campbell Street cesspits were common transfer-prints compared with over 40 per cent of the Liverpool Street cesspit. Porter argued that these differences reflect varying consumer strategies that preferred functionality over quality, design and 'possibly fashion' (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol. 3]:133-135).

## Other evidence

Despite the substantive structural evidence, few occupational deposits were recovered from 53 Campbell Street (nor the houses fronting Campbell Street) owing largely to the presence of cellars and the disturbance of later phases. A small underfloor deposit (with a total of 1,671 pieces) was recovered from an 1850s single-roomed timber outbuilding with verandah (Feature 1) in the north-east corner of the yard at 53 Campbell Street (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol.2]:87). The structure is visible in a c.1905 plan. The internal floor space measured 4 m by 2 m. The primary occupation layer (Context 01/03) dates from at least 1884, on account of a medicine bottle supplied by Hobart chemist W.J. Clewer (Elizabeth Street, c.1884–1919), and associated strata contain Bakelite sherds which post-date 1907. Being a palimpsest, it may have formed earlier, but it is likely to predominantly reflect the post-Officer, and probably post-Wilkinson, era occupation of No. 53. Formation following Mathers' acquisition in 1908 cannot be ruled out. It is possible that this served as living quarters for a domestic servant or stable hand (being adjacent to the stables), or as a work room. All occupants of 53 Campbell Street until (and probably including) the Campbells had domestic servants. They worked (and possibly slept) in quarters in the lightless, damp basement level. Next door at No. 55, pulleys from the servants' bells system were recovered, and are a reminder of the tireless work of domestic service.

Amongst the 'cottage' assemblage from Context 01/03 were 152 sewing pins, comprising 83 per cent of all pins recovered from the Former Menzies Centre site. As Jenny Porter notes, a large number of pins could be the result of a single event in which a box of pins was dropped and found its way into the archaeological record en masse (ArcTas and GML 2013 [vol. 3]:90). Other sewing paraphernalia from the building included a large needle (possible for leather or hides), scissors, hooks-and-eyes and 34 buttons, suggesting the presence of a seamstress mending clothes of the main house, rather than a domestic servant caring for their own family's needs.

While individually these assemblages are difficult to connect to a particular family or associated workplace, collectively they provide evidence for the comfortable domestic arrangements and relative wealth of occupants of the site at the turn of the century, when the neighbourhood was at the beginning of its transformation to a commercial precinct.

## Preserving the past: conservation strategy

Owing to the significant archaeological discoveries on the former Menzies Centre site, the decision was made in 2007 to preserve *in situ* all extant remains on the site. Under the guidance of conservator, Anne Cummins, from Sydney Artefacts Conservation (SAC), walls were buttressed and backfilled in 2008 during construction work and piling. In 2009, selected areas were re-excavated and exposed brick-work was treated for salination and fungal growth, where required. Timber drain covers were also conserved (Cummins 2009).

Five glass-covered apertures were installed on the ground floor in November 2009. They allow viewing of *in situ* archaeological features from the rear of 53 Campbell Street, its associated outbuildings and the cellar of 17 Liverpool Street. Each window was positioned to maximise the display of remains from different angles, while making as little intrusion as possible on the available floor space (ArcTas and GML 2013

[vol. 1]:56). The apertures are positioned throughout the core of the complex in major thoroughfares and enclosed work areas. In addition to conventional floor-level apertures, one includes a display case. This innovative approach has maintained the prominence of these important archaeological features for the majority of passing pedestrian traffic and offers opportunities for more focused 'discovery' experience of relics in enclosed spaces occupied by students, staff and visitors over a longer period.

In high-traffic areas it was necessary to etch 30 per cent of the surface area of each glass plate to comply with building standards and minimum requirements for treadage. Instead of a plain diaper, the etched coverage was achieved with stylised images of historic artefacts, such as clay pipes and bottles (see Figure 9). Apertures in low traffic areas (for example in study rooms) have clear glass allowing a better view of the remains, however, the visibility through the etched glass remains, unexpectedly, high.

Interpretive panels prepared by Peter Tonkin of 3D Projects flank each aperture. A large artefact display case on the second floor, also developed by Tonkin, explores five themes (buildings, 'nobility', children, servants, collecting and gambling, see 3D Projects 2007). All apertures and cases were designed to meet minimum specifications for lighting and ventilation and environmental data sensors placed in underground spaces are monitored by University maintenance staff.

While there are several well-interpreted archaeological sites with *in situ* remains in Tasmania (the world-heritage-listed Port Arthur being the most sensational), including Hobart (e.g. Cascades Female Factory site, also world-heritage listed), the Medical Science 1 building is the only example of an historical archaeological site preserved within a modern development in Tasmania. The assemblage will be archived onsite and made available to interested researchers. In 2012 recommendations were made to make all reports and the full archive available on the Australian Historical Archaeology Database (AHAD), which has now been incorporated into the Federated Archaeological Information Management System (FAIMS) Repository ([repo.fedarch.org](http://repo.fedarch.org)).

The preservation of these remains has been the catalyst for a public engagement program that will continue well into the future. There was, of course, the typical media interest in the history and archaeology of the site during the most alluring



Fig 9: Artefact display case on Level 2. (P. Crook, July 2010)

part of the works: excavation (Waterhouse 2007). The University of Tasmania's newsletter led to additional exposure among non-archaeological academics (Nichols 2010). There were guided tours of the exposed remains immediately following the excavation, and visitors have continued to learn about the site and the construction of the Medical Science 1 building during Heritage Tasmania's successful 'Open Doors' program. A public-professional seminar was held on 21 November 2012 and attended by more than 45 people. This provided an excellent opportunity to explore points of view from archaeologists, architects, building occupants and agencies.

In 2011 Tracy Ireland (2012) conducted a survey of visitation to 19 archaeological sites across Australia and New Zealand with *in situ* subsurface remains preserved within new development sites. Fourteen of 190 respondents (8.4 per cent) had visited the Medical Sciences 1 building. While this seems small, it is a pleasing figure for a site that had been opened to the public for no more than two years. It demonstrates sufficient interest for the site to be considered part of a network of archaeological places that will attract visitors for years to come.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS: HISTORY IN THE MAKING

On a typical development-driven archaeological site, the enthusiasm surrounding excavation is steadily forgotten as construction proceeds. The history and archaeology of the place may be revealed in a small artefact display, but if subsurface remains are wholly removed, there are few other recalls in public memory (Ireland 2012). The history of a site may persist in publically available reports and academic publications (like this very article), but its public profile diminishes with time. Initiatives such as digital encyclopaedias and virtual reconstructions are invaluable, but there is no more compelling communiqué of archaeology than stone walls in the ground, and in this regard alone, the Menzies site is unique to Hobart and rare across Australia and New Zealand.

Its preservation, of course, came about owing to its historical importance: as the home and workplace of important Tasmanian identities; the remnants of a genteel part of Hobart Town overwhelmed by commercial and public uses in the twentieth century; and scarcer evidence of the long history which preceded Australia's second British settlement – albeit fragmentary and interfaced with 1820s construction strata. The archaeological remains themselves are remarkable and paired with rich documentary resources, news-clippings and photographs we have enabled, in some part, the reconstruction of these 'lost landscapes' (as per Mayne and Murray 1999, 2001).

This mix of public-minded archaeology, social-historical reconstruction and a remarkable site has delivered new colonial histories and marks a significant contribution of development-funded archaeology (as called for by Mackay and Karskens 1999). This is an excellent case where an ambitious set of 'requirements' from the regulator, working with a supportive client, led to good research outcomes and public interpretation. Limitations and conditions became opportunities, and the measures of public accountability were not just about telling the same story in different ways. Each 'project outcome' – the tours, report, seminar, even this paper – brought a need for additional research and review and actively shaped the creation of that story in subtle ways. Is this the final history of the site? Of course not. We hope the story of the Menzies site and its place in the history of colonial Hobart continues to be built and rebuilt, while its archaeological relics are trafficked underfoot of passers-by well into the future.

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