

REPORT ON THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
OF THE TODD HOLDEN SITE,
18-20 CLARENCE STREET,
PORT MACQUARIE,
N.S.W.

Summary of main findings.



Edward A K Higginbotham,
MA (Cambridge), PhD (Sydney),
MAACAI.

**EDWARD HIGGINBOTHAM
& ASSOCIATES PTY LTD.**

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MA (Cambridge), PhD (Sydney), MAACAI.
EDWARD HIGGINBOTHAM & ASSOCIATES PTY LTD
13 O'Connor Street
HABERFIELD, NSW 2045.
PO Box 97
HABERFIELD, NSW 2045.
Phone. (02) 9716-5154
Fax. (02) 9716-8547.
www.higginbotham.com.au

For
16 Clarence Street Pty Ltd.

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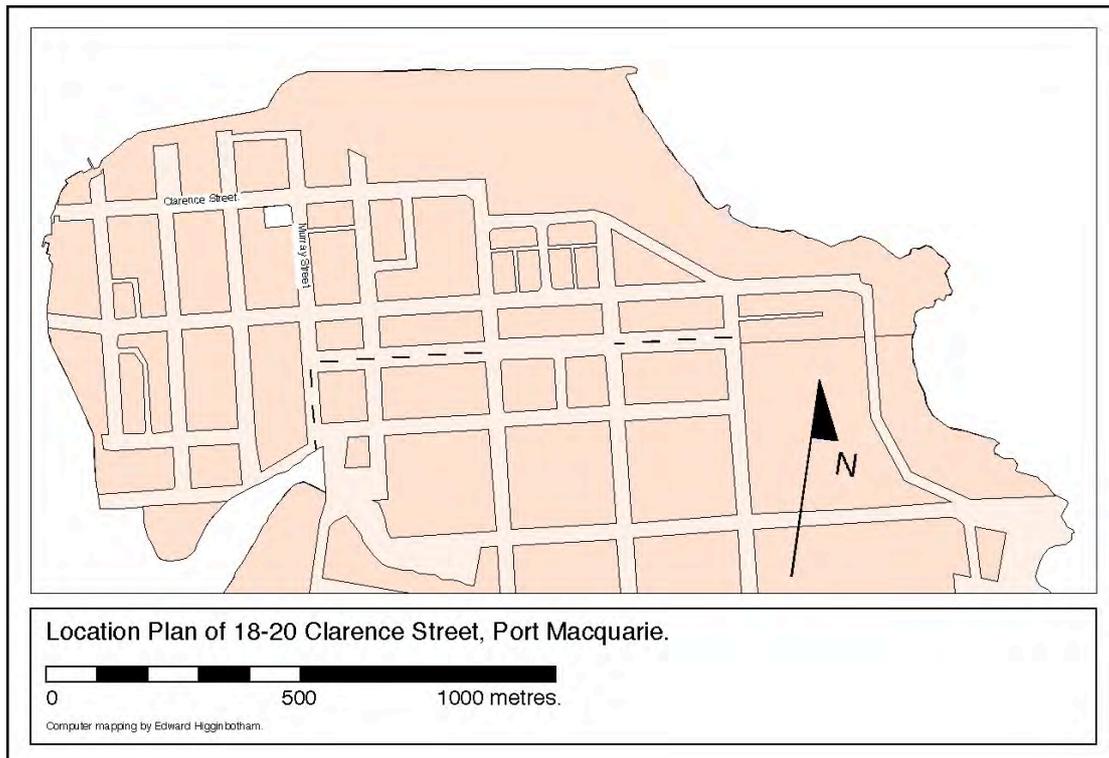
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SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS.

The subject site (Allotment 2, Section 5) is located at 18-20 Clarence Street, Port Macquarie (Figure 1.1). It is located on the corner of Clarence and Murray Streets.

The site is listed in the Port Macquarie Archaeological Management Plan as site number 133.¹



An assessment report was prepared for the site in August 2006.² An application for an excavation permit, together with a research design, was submitted to the NSW Heritage Office on 11 September 2006.³ The excavation permit was approved on 6 November 2006.⁴

¹ Edward Higginbotham & Associates Pty Ltd. Archaeological Management Plan, Port Macquarie. Hastings Council, 1994-1995.

² Edward Higginbotham & Associates Pty Ltd. Historical and archaeological assessment of Todd Holden Site, 18-20 Clarence Street, Port Macquarie. Debbie Moore Real Estate Pty Ltd. August 2006.

³ Dr. Edward Higginbotham to Mr. Vince Sicari, NSW Heritage Office, 11 September 2006. Excavation permit application and research design.

⁴ NSW Heritage Office. Application Number 2006/S140/033. File. S95/00246/09. HRL. 41997.



The excavation revealed a series of outbuildings behind a house on the Clarence Street frontage. The house was built in the 1830s. The Kitchen Wing of the house had been converted from a building erected as the Post Office for the Penal Settlement. The Post Office had been erected in 1825-1826.

The archaeological assessment report determined that the eastern part of the allotment was disturbed by fuel tanks and inspection pits for servicing vehicles. These items belonged to the previous petrol station and car service centre. The disturbance was confirmed by test-excavation, completed on 28 February 2007.

Area excavation to recover the significance of the site prior to redevelopment was completed in August and September 2007.

The area excavation of the site concentrated on the western part of the allotment. The site was opened up by machine on 6-7 August 2007 and manual excavation was completed between 13 August and 14 September 2007.

Post Office, later kitchen and other outbuildings.

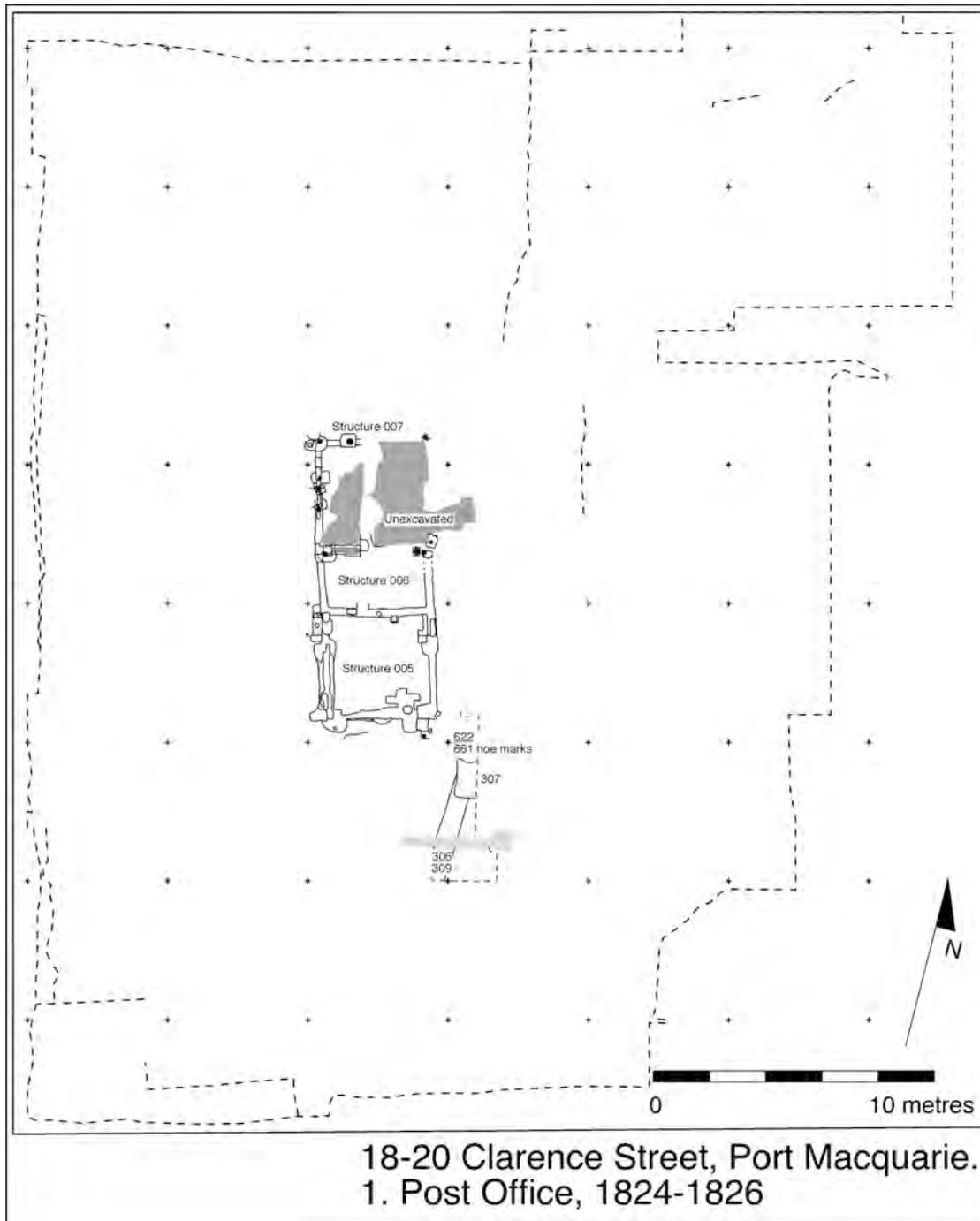
The area excavation located the site of the Post Office, erected between 1825 and 1826 to serve the Penal Settlement at Port Macquarie. The building measured 10.1 metres in length by 4.2 metres in width (33 feet by 13 feet 9 inches). It possessed a central hallway, 2.2 metres wide (7 feet 2 1/2 inches), flanked by a pair of rooms, 4 metres wide (13 feet). The archaeological remains suggest a timber framed weatherboard building, but slab construction cannot be ruled out.

The three room layout of the Post Office was a common pattern associated with both penal and military works of the early 19th century.

The building was aligned approximately at rightangles to the street on its south side, which ran across the site during the Penal Settlement from 1821 to 1830.

The modern street pattern was laid out in 1830. By 1836 a house had been built on this allotment, fronting Clarence Street. The former Post Office became the kitchen wing to this house. It is possible that the brick floor was added at this time, together with a kitchen range and chimney.

Behind the kitchen, a row of outbuildings extended to the southern boundary of the allotment. Another range of outbuildings ran along the southern boundary of the allotment in a westerly direction, perhaps as far as the western boundary.



The extent of the outbuildings, apart from the former Post Office, was previously unknown, not being mentioned in any historical documentation or plan.

The outbuildings went out of use in the 1860s. This change of use may be related to the change in ownership, which took place in 1859, when the property was purchased by Henry Frederick Brown.

The Main House.

A new house was erected on the Clarence Street frontage by 1836. It became the family home of Stephen Partridge, who was Superintendent of Convicts from 1821 to 1830, then from 1836 to 1846. By 1841, Stephen Partridge and his second wife were raising 11 children in this household (see Chapter 2).

The house had two principal rooms, together measuring 9.4 metres long, by 4.7 metres wide (30 feet 10 inches by 15 feet 5 inches). These rooms were surrounded on the front and sides respectively by a verandah and side rooms, measuring 2 metres wide (6 feet 6 inches). At the back was a lean-to structure, running the full length of the two main rooms by 2.65 metres wide (12 feet).

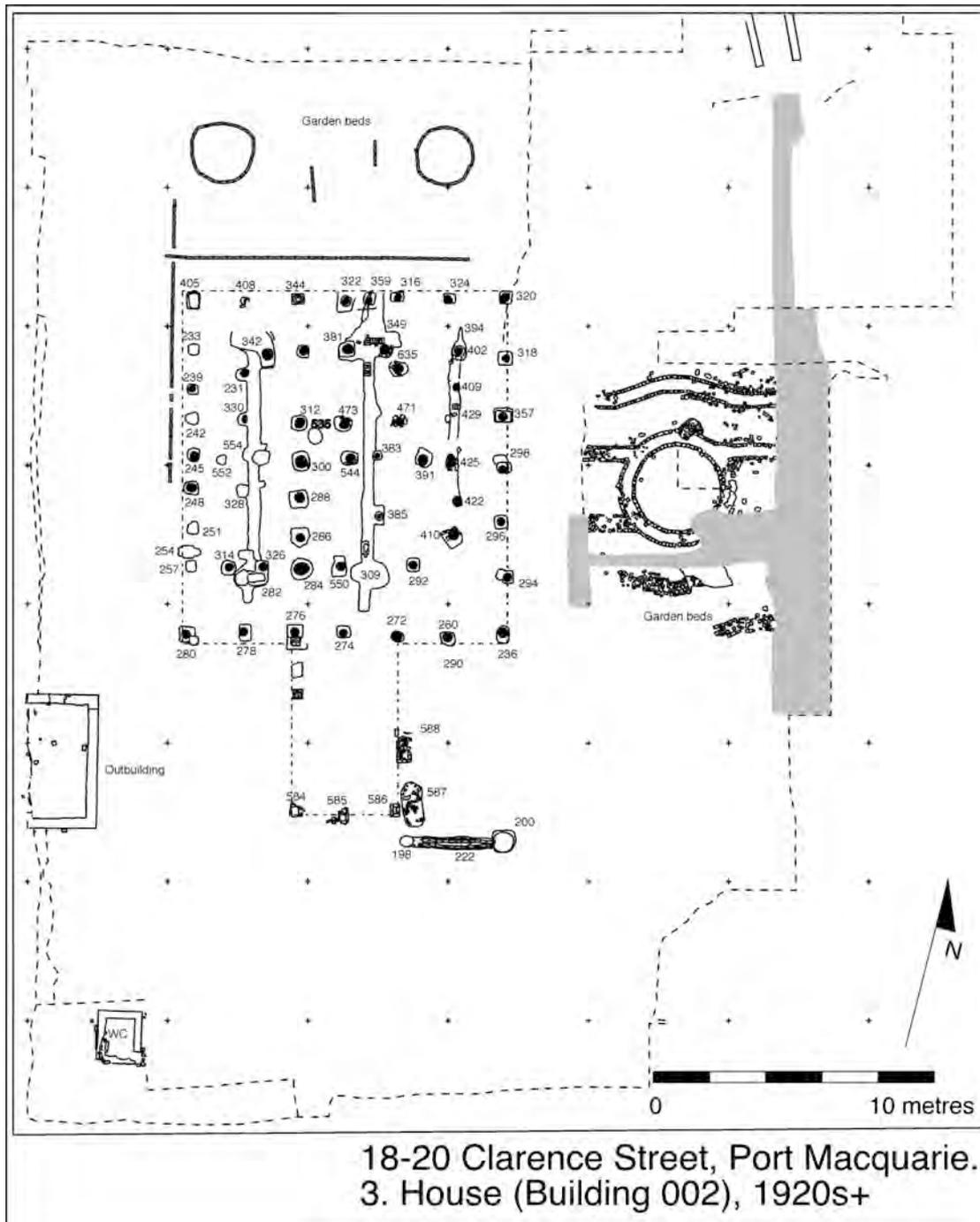


The footings of the 1830s house on the Clarence Street frontage survived in good condition.

The house was constructed with substantial log wall plates and a timber framed superstructure. The internal walls were lath and plastered, the outer walls were either slab or weatherboard. A coarse mortar mix provided added bulk and insulation to the walls.

The house was maintained and repaired over time, the only possible extension being to the room on the east end (Room 7). The house appears to have been demolished in

the early 20th century. Brick pathways and cobbled areas provided access between the house and kitchen wing. A large rubbish pit was located in the back yard.



The Second House.

Historical evidence suggests that a second house was built on the western portion of the allotment before 1925. The house was a timber framed weatherboard structure on

timber as well as brick piers. The excavation revealed a number of outbuildings and garden features, defined by brick edging.



Drainage channel and Brick Barrel Drain.

A drainage channel crossed the allotment diagonally, flowing north towards the Hastings River. The brick barrel drain, 1 metre in diameter, was constructed between 1830 and 1842, but probably soon after Clarence Street was laid out in 1830. This public work is likely to have been undertaken by convict labour, perhaps even supervised by Stephen Partridge, the Superintendent of Convicts.

The artifact assemblage.

The dating analysis of the assemblage revealed the close fit of the archaeological and historical dating evidence.

Where the historical sources were lacking, the artifact dating provided highly significant evidence for the continuity of occupation of the former Post Office as the kitchen of the house on the frontage (Building 001). It also demonstrated that the former Post Office building survived intact until the 1860s and that the other outbuildings to the south of the former Post Office also survived for a similar length of time (Structures 002 to 004).

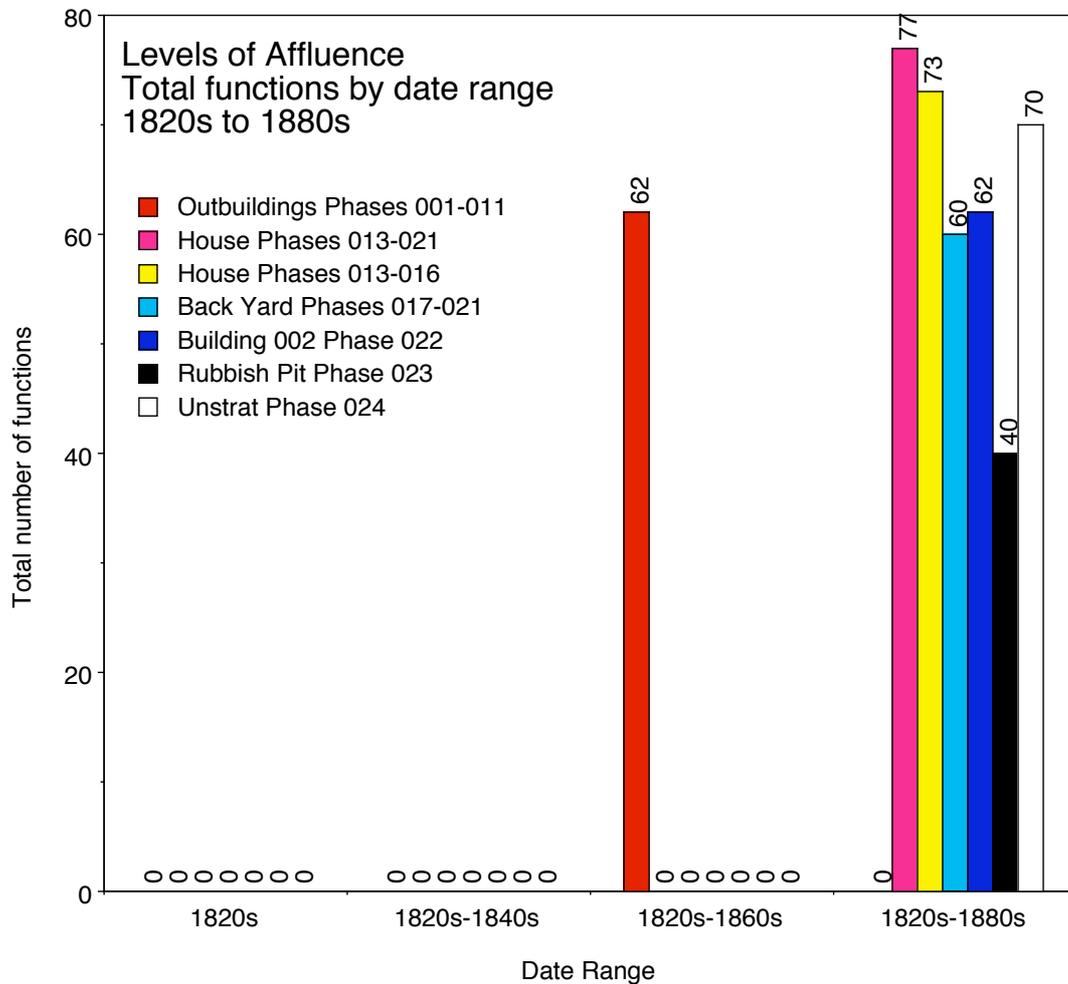
Another highly significant finding from the dating analysis is that deposition of artifact on the site largely ceased around the 1880s. In other words, later occupation of the site produced very few artifacts.

As on other sites in Port Macquarie, the fall off in deposition of artifacts in the 1880s is likely to be associated with different patterns of garbage disposal, namely off site rather than on site disposal. This change in the pattern of garbage disposal may be associated with municipal garbage collection.

The significance of this finding is that the occupation materials associated with the Post Office and first house (Building 001) remain largely uncontaminated by later occupation and can be reliably used to analyse the usage of the buildings as well as the social and economic standing of the occupants during the 19th century.

The dating analysis also revealed that the usage of the Post Office building cannot be differentiated from its later use as a kitchen. Thus there are no recognisable assemblages belonging solely to the period prior to 1830, during the Penal Settlement.

One of the important features of the artifact assemblage from this site is that there is a relatively large sample from each phase. Large samples are less susceptible to small sample bias.



However the dating of the phases from the 1820s or 1830s to the 1860s for the outbuildings and to the 1880s or later for the main house (Building 001) does not allow for the analysis of the assemblage at regular intervals throughout the 19th century.

The analysis has revealed that there were a large number of functions in most phases, between 60 and 77 functions, but limited to 40 functions in only one case. Compared with other sites, this reveals a high level of affluence for the owners and occupants of the site, namely Stephen Partridge and his family up to the 1850s and Henry Frederick Brown for the remainder of the 19th century.

This level of affluence suggests that not all the inhabitants of Port Macquarie suffered the consequences of the economic downturn of the 1840s or the removal of the government penal establishment in 1847, but were able to display a high level of affluence from the 1820s to the 1860s as well as to the 1880s, by which time the town was experiencing a major recovery of economic fortunes.

The large numbers of artifacts from each major phase or location on the site has allowed the usage of each part of the site to be interpreted. The results are summarised below:

Main House – Family members.

Front Verandah – The favourite place for family activities and leisure, during daylight hours. Collectible items, ornaments, plants. Teaching the children to read and write. Female family members. Some dressmaking and mending. Losing small change or playing games. Children at play. Taking medicines. Smoking. Needing glasses to see properly. The cat and its prey, the rodent. Fishing tackle and tools.

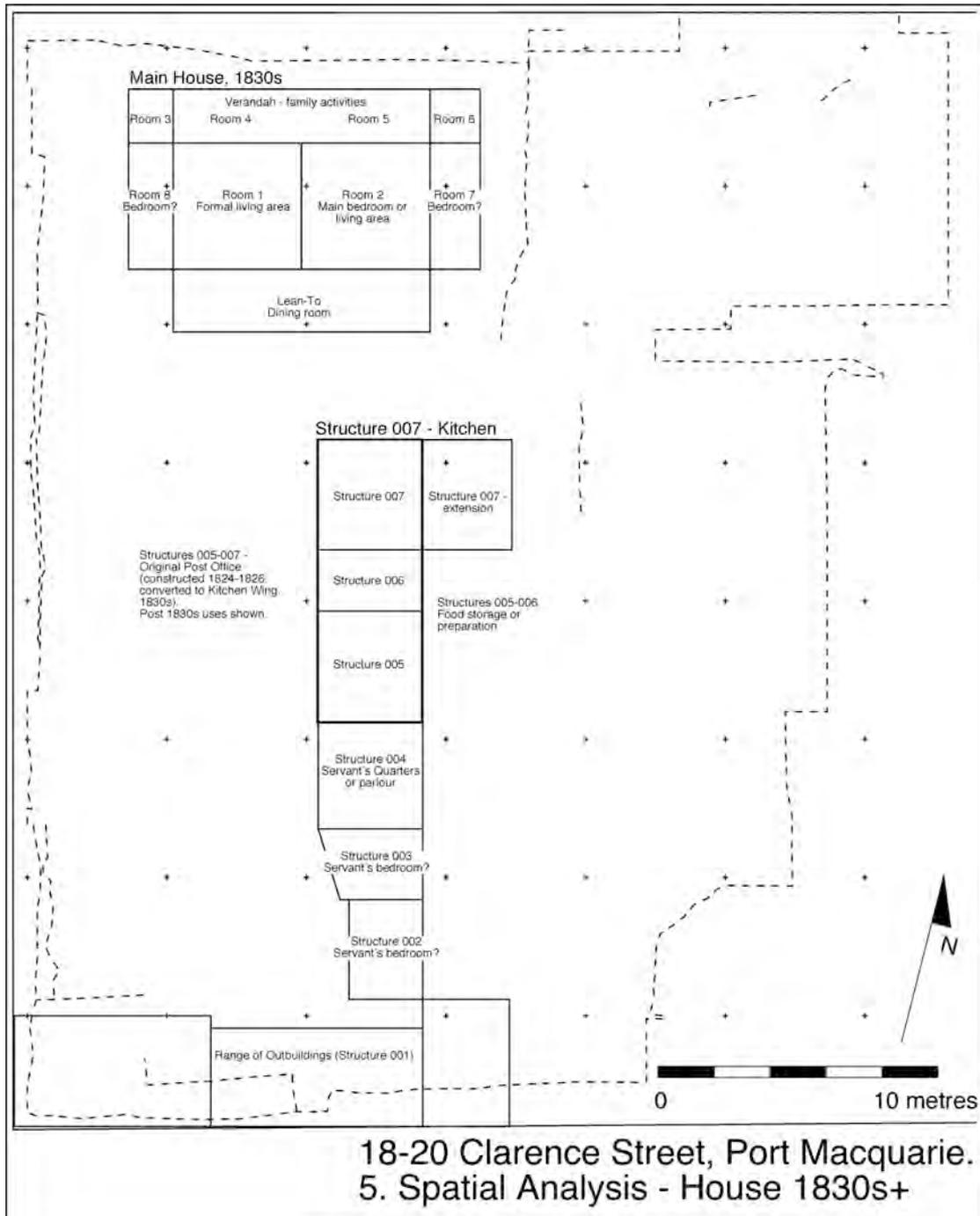
East Verandah – Possibly a bedroom, but also associated with the consumption of alcohol and the presence of women. A person requiring glasses.

West Verandah – Possibly another bedroom, association with women.

Room 1 – Formal living area for the family, also favourite area for evening activities – lit by oil lamps. Dressmaking and mending by the women.

Room 2 – Another well furnished room, possibly the main bedroom. A person requiring glasses. Someone with musical talents. House cleaning materials.

Lean-To – Another well furnished room, probably the dining room. Secure storage of items. Children. Women's dressmaking or mending.



The Outbuildings – the servant’s living and working spaces.

The Detached Kitchen (former Post Office) – Food preparation. The rat, but no cat. Fishing tackle. Personal items. Female children at play.

Rooms adjacent to the Kitchen (former Post Office) – Heating or food preparation. Alcohol consumption or storage. Female servants. Woodworking tools.

The Servant's Quarters (Structure 004) – The servant's parlour, focus of evening activities – lit by candle light. A well furnished room. Alcohol consumption or storage. Barrels. Possible food consumption. House cleaning materials. Chamber pots. Firearms. Secure storage of items. Personal items. Female items. Medicines and their preparation for use. Leisure and games. Work items.

Outbuilding (Structure 003) – Female items. Female children. Smoking – possibly a servant's bedroom, possibly with a stove or heater.

Outbuilding (Structure 002) – Barrels. Kitchenware or tableware. Possibly a servant's bedroom, possibly with a stove or heater. Personal items. Female children at play. The cat.

The spatial analysis of the artifact assemblages provides a revealing overview of a household in the 19th century at Port Macquarie and surprisingly indicates the segregation between master and servant, even in the detail of the kind of lighting they each used – oil lamps for the family, candles for the servants.

The assemblage also surprisingly demonstrates the presence of dual living spaces, one for the family in the main house, the other for the servants in their own quarters to the rear of the kitchen.

The analysis provides a vivid picture of life in a busy household where Stephen Partridge and his second wife brought up their eleven children, with the help of a number of servants.