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- THE AUSTRALIAN CITY, HUW 110, UNIT A -

ASSIGNMENT 02: HOME AND ENVIRONMENT EXERCISE

"ST. JOHN'S RECTORY, LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA"

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St. John's Rectory, shown in Plate 1, was built in 1878 during the Incumbency of the Reverend Canon M. B. Brownrigg (1868-1887) and



Plate 1

St. John's Rectory, Launceston 1985 (Built 1878) when Charles Henry Bromby was Bishop of Tasmania (1864-1882).¹ The practicality of the house for Australian conditions is questioned, especially the difficulties of heating large rooms, the lack of sufficient sunlight into the rooms, plus the sizable task keeping the house clean and maintained. The clergy of 1878 were perceived in a different protocol station to those of 1985. As a Clerk in Holy Orders within the Church of England, they were still regarded as being part of the Established Church in England, even though independence from Britain was a growing reality. Unlike the first Rector of St. John's,² Brownrigg receive his salary under the Sustentation Fund introduced in 1855 when parishes became responsible for providing salaries. Under cross-examination Youl reported that this salary was paid "By a bill on Mr. Drenman the Commissary of Sydney payable in 30 days after sight."³ As a Colony Chaplain, Youl also received Land Grants and Indulgences⁴ which were not available at the end of Archdeacon W. H. Browne's Incumbency (1828-1868). Brownrigg was an extremely able man, having designed the house, engaged in homeopathy, and exhibited a missionary zeal by building his own boats and spending much time on the water between Launceston and the Furneaux Group of islands extending ministry to the islanders.

Because of its history and place in Launceston society, St. John's

Parish has long been regarded as "the Established Church" of the City, or in more recent decades, as "the Liberal Party at prayer!" Its major influence has centred more on the upper and middle classes in the community. In 1985 the Rectory is no longer situated within a predominantly residential area. The congregation reflects a wide sociological perspective and a growing concern for outreach into the wider community. It is a parish in transition or change.

On entering the Rectory front door a visitor is impressed by the very large entrance hall, as seen in Figure 1. The hall is approximately forty feet long, twelve feet wide, with fourteen foot ceiling height and a wooden stairway to the upper floor. The large room to the right

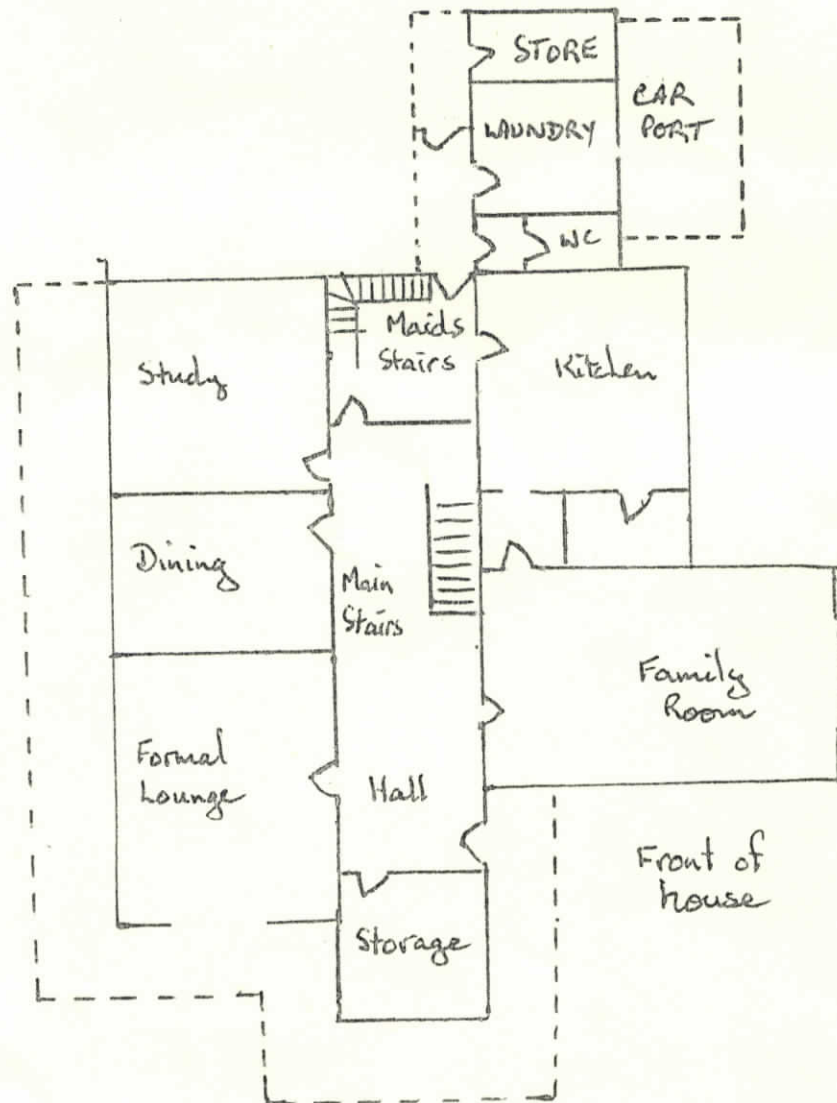


Figure 1

St. John's Rectory, Ground Floor Plan

is presently used as a family room but because of its size, it has in the past served as a formal entertainment area. Originally no direct access was provided from the large room to the kitchen which is still in use, although substantially modified. Old stables and out-buildings have been removed while a toilet/laundry section has been added to the house, as can be seen in Plate 11. Looking toward the front door,



Plate 11

Rear of St. John's Rectory showing added section

the three rooms on the right are now in more formal use. The backroom is the Rector's study, the middle room is the formal dining area, which was used by the previous occupants as the family TVroom. The front room is now used as a formal lounge but it has, in the past, been the Rector's study or formal dining room. At the front of the hallway is a small room now used for general storage but variously used as a cloakroom or parish office in earlier years.

Once having climbed the main stairway, and looking toward the front of the house, the three main bedrooms are on the right, as shown in Figure 2. The two small rooms immediately to the front were used as dressing and wardrobe areas, being adjacent to the master bedroom on the right and the nursery in the large room to the left. The small room further to the left and adjacent to the main bathroom is now used as the Guest Room. Originally this whole area housed the live-in maid or servant. It is an unusual arrangement as servants' quarters were usually kept separate from the family living area or thoroughfare. The original bathroom, located at the top of the servants' stairway, is still in use although substantially modified.

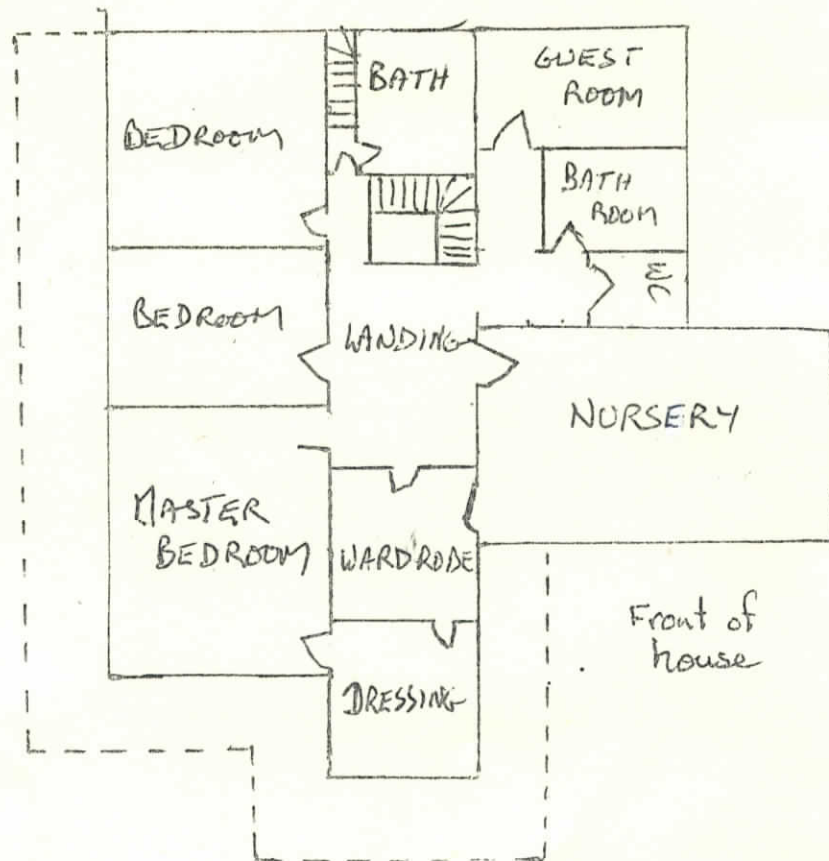


Figure 2

St. John's Rectory, Upper Floor Plan

The Rectory is located within an environment under constant change. When the original Church of St. John⁵ opened for worship in December 1825, its location and design had been subject to controversy. Because the building was located on the outskirts of the settlement many complaints were made about the church in the bush. In fact, a search party was raised after the Official Opening Ceremony to find a woman who became lost as she returned home from the service.⁶ William Wilson was Colonial Architect responsible for St. David's Cathedral and St. John's. It is claimed he "was ordered through Governor Arthur to cut the length of the nave of St. John's down by one third, which gave the church a squat look,"⁷ as can be seen in Figure 3. If the original plan had proceeded St. John's would have been grander in scale than the Cathedral in Hobart. That would never do! Today, St. John's is on the border of the central commercial area of Launceston City. Whereas it was once surrounded by bush, followed by residential housing, it is now bounded on three sides by roadways, with a Motel and some housing

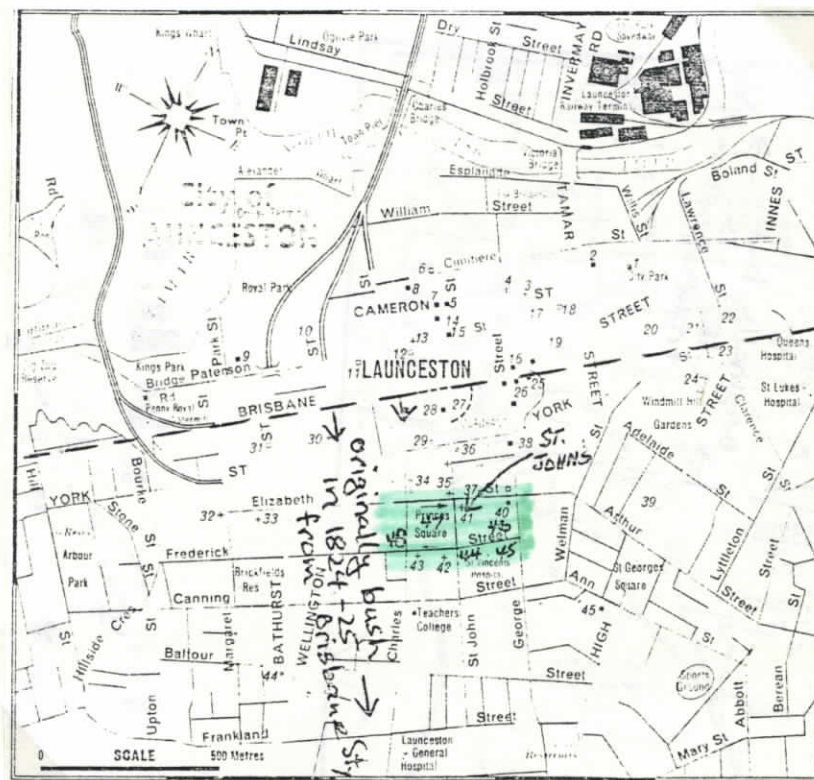


ORIGINAL CHURCH

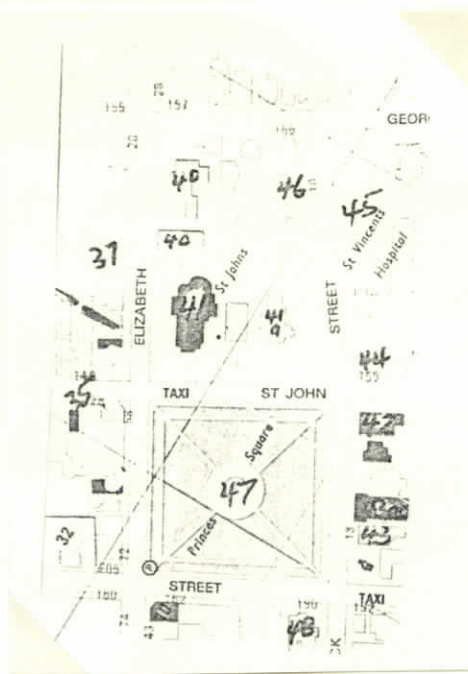
Figure 3

St. John's after 1835 when new clock had been fitted.

at the rear of the block. Much of the immediate residential area has been replaced by car park, commercial enterprise, doctor's surgeries, a hospital or other churches as can be seen in Figures 4 and 5.



St. John's location within the City context



Legend

- 35 Jewish Synagogue
- 37 Council Car Park
- 40 Colonial Motor Inn
- 41 St. John's Church
- 41a St. John's Rectory
- 42 Chalmers Presbyterian Church
- 43 Milton Hall
- 43a Christ Church Baptist
- 44 159 St. John Street, "Nelumie"
- 45 St. Vincent's Hospital
- 46 and 44 Doctors' establishments
- 47 Princes Square
- 48 Morton House

Figure 5

St. John's and its neighbours

Many of the houses which remain from early settlement days reveal the area to have been for the upper classes, see Plates 111, 1V, V, and VI.



Plate 111

Corner of Elizabeth Street, looking down George Street



Plate IV

George Street between Frederick and Elizabeth Streets, north side



Plate V

In St. John Street, near corner of Canning Street



Plate VI

Corner of St. John's and Canning Streets

The smaller, wooden type housing for the working class is located in a different area of the township. Housing which still exists in close proximity to the Rectory has mostly been divided or constructed into flats, as seen in Plate VII, while others are in commercial use as seen in Plates VIII and IX.



Plate VII

Flats at the corner of Frederick and George Streets



Plate VIII

Commercial use of old houses, south side of George Street



Plate IX

Commercial properties and Council Car Park, Elizabeth Street

The first house in Launceston lit by gas was also the residence of the first man to administer anaesthetics in the Southern Hemisphere.⁸ The house, see Plate X, is marked Number 44 on Figure 5. It is used as



Plate X

"Nelumie", 159 St. John Street with St. Vincent's Hospital in left background

a Pathology practice today and still called "Nelumie". Morton House, seen in Plate XI, was originally St. John's Hospital and can be located as Number 48 on Figure 5. This was the building in which surgical anaesthesia



Plate XI

Morton House, originally St. John's Hospital

was first practised in the Southern Hemisphere⁹ but the building is now used by private enterprise. Immediately behind St. John's Church is the Colonial Motor Inn, as shown in Plate Xll, and No. 40 on Figure 5. Originally known as "Overton House"¹⁰ where in 1846 the Launceston Church Grammar School was opened. The School has since moved to a new site but is claimed as the longest-established boys' school in Australia.



Plate Xll

"Overton House", now Colonial Motor Inn

St. John's Church has itself been under constant change. Built in 1825 by convict labour, with modification to the tower and clock in 1830 and 1835 respectively, plus the addition of a Sanctuary in 1886. From 1901-1911 the first major changes took place in accordance with a grand new design by the Architect, Alexander North. At first the dome and chancel area was built on the end of the old church. In the 1930's the roofline of the original church was substantially raised in height by increasing the old walls of the Nave within a new structure, as can be seen in Plate Xlll. As recently as 1965 a decision by parishioners stopped further implementation of the design and therefore, saved the original tower from demolition. In 1981 a \$280,000 restoration program was undertaken, the most visible benefit of which is the exterior finish to the old tower section of the church.

Opposite St. John's Church and Rectory is a beautiful park, as seen in Plate XlV, now named Princes Square but originally called St. John's Square.¹¹ This area was used as a quarry¹² to obtain



Plate XlII
St. John's Launceston 1985



Plate XlV
Princes Square looking toward
Frederick Street and Christ Church

clay for the bricks to build St. John's Church. While it is a restful recreation area today it was once the scene of hard work and much pain. One person claimed it was an execution ground for condemned convicts.¹³ On the borders of the park today are a variety of church buildings of historical significance. Milton Hall, shown in Plate XV, and Number 43 on Figure 5, is now the church hall for the Christ Church



Plate XV

Milton Hall, originally St. John's Square Congregational Chapel (foreground) with Christ Church, Chalmers Church, "Nelumie" and St. Vincent's Hospital

Baptist congregation. Originally opened in 1842 as St. John's Square Congregational Chapel.¹⁴ One of its ministers, the Reverend John West,¹⁵ became a leading personality in the Anti-Transportation League and in the eventual cessation of transportation of convicts to Tasmania in 1853. The Jewish Synagogue, as seen in Plate XVI, and Number 35 on Figure 5, is claimed by Dennis Hodgkinson¹⁶ as the second oldest building of its type in Australia. He claims it was built in 1844 while another source claims it was opened 26th March, 1846.¹⁷ However, today it stands unused owing to insufficient numbers of Jewish adherents. Chalmers Presbyterian Church, as seen in Plate XVII, and Number 42 on Figure 5, was built for a breakaway congregation in 1860. Owing to the formation of the Uniting Church it has been unused for many years and was recently sold to a land developer who is attempting a complete redesign of the existing building so as to make it into town houses.



Plate XVI

Jewish Synagogue showing Princes Square on far left



Plate XVII

Chalmers Presbyterian Church

Statistical material available¹⁸ reveals a steady decline in persons living within the immediate area of St. John's Rectory, as can be seen in Appendix A, plus a decline in the number of dwellings available for housing, as shown in Appendix B. The 1981 Census figures¹⁹ for the area covered by the Parish of St. John's indicates a population of 7,120 occupying 2,538 private dwellings while another 249 were unoccupied. Of the 7,120 persons, 40.9% were married, another 26.8% were aged 15 years or over but not married, and 18.4% were aged less than 15 years. The mobility of the population is shown by the 50.2% who were still in the same residence as in 1976. Of those over 15 years of age 60.8% indicated they had no trade or educational qualification, and 71% had an annual income of \$12,000 or less. These figures indicate that the area is still in a state of transition and is certainly not the residential situation for the upper classes as only 143 persons indicated an income over \$26,000. St. John's Rectory is located in an environment which has changed substantially since 1878 and is still in the process of change.

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1. Herbert H. Condon, Charles Henry Bromby, Second Bishop of Tasmania, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 1964, p.8.
"A man who was not only a servant of the English Church but a pioneer statesman in the Colonial Church ... at a time when strong forces were making for separation and bringing confusion in their wake."
 2. A. D. Baker, The Life And Times of Sir Richard Dry, Oldham, Biddone and Meredith Pty. Ltd., Hobart. 1951, p.39; and Henry Button, Flotsam and Jetsam, Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., Ltd., London. 1909, p.63, 270, 217.
 3. Historical Records of Australia - Series 111, Volume 111, Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, p.445.
 4. Historical Records of Australia - Series 111, Volume 111, Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, p. 444.
 5. Henry Button, Flotsam and Jetsam, p.148.
 6. Ernest Whitfeld (St. John's Churchwarden and a Historian) wrote an article in 1907 which appeared in Church News, Diocese of Tasmania, "The good folks of Launceston complained at first that the church was placed in the bush ... and it was no uncommon thing for people to lose their way in going to and fro between the church and the centre of town. There is an amusing incident in connection with the opening service, which will give us some idea of what the bush was like on the site of the present city. A lady who resided on Brisbane road as it is now called, returning from the church on that day lost her way, and the afternoon was spent by her husband and his servants in scouring the hill in search of her. She was eventually found near the 'Devil's Punch Bowl' about two miles from her home."

7. Private notes (1982) by Dennis Hodgkinson, Historian, Launceston.
8. Patsy Adam-Smith and Arthur Phillips, Launceston Sketchbook, Rigby, Adelaide, Revised 1982, p.24.
9. L. S. Bethell, The Story of Port Dalrymple, (Publisher and date not legible on library copy), p. 109.
10. P. Adam-Smith, A. Phillips, Launceston Sketchbook, p. 52
11. Dennis Hodgkinson, Did You Know?, from radio 7NT series, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Launceston. 1980, p. 45.
12. L. S. Bethell, The Story of Port Dalrymple, p. 81
13. Interview with Miss Jenny Gill, Parish Historian, St. John's Church, Launceston. 1985.
14. Henry Button, Flotsam and Jetsam, p. 58; and
Dennis Hodgkinson, Did You Know?, p. 32
15. Henry Button, Flotsam and Jetsam, p. 59f; and
A. D. Baker, The Life And Times of Sir Richard Dry, p. 71f.
16. Private notes (1982) by Dennis Hodgkinson, Historian, Launceston.
17. Henry Button, Flotsam and Jetsam, p. 117.
18. Tamar Regional Master Planning Authority, Urban Launceston Retail Strategy Study, 1980.
19. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing at St. John's Parish, Commonwealth of Australia, 1985.
(Summary Data - condensed format)

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- Whitfeld, E. Article in Church News, Diocese of Tasmania, 1907.

APPENDIX A

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN URBAN LAUNCESTON
1976, 1987, AND 1990

STUDY ZONE	NAME	NUMBER OF PERSONS			
		1976 (Census)	1987 (ABS Based Estim.)	1990 (ABS Based Estim.)	Change 1976-1990
1	Newnham	6,569	8,613	9,170	+2,601
2	Mowbray	7,070	5,950	5,645	-1,425
*3	C.B.D.	2,124	1,787	1,695	- 429
4	Ravenswood	2,870	3,281	3,393	+ 523
5	St Leonard	3,718	4,063	5,147	+1,429
6	Newstead	1,631	1,399	1,336	- 295
7	Norwood	2,344	3,243	3,488	+1,144
8	Youngtown	2,967	3,238	3,312	+ 345
9	Kings Meadows	5,005	4,357	4,180	- 825
10	Prospect	4,142	6,418	7,039	+2,897
11	W.L.	5,813	5,182	5,010	- 803
12	E.L.	6,393	5,757	5,584	- 809
13	S.L.	4,748	3,992	3,786	- 962
14	Trev.	3,326	3,213	3,182	- 144
15	Riverside	4,431	6,757	7,391	+2,960
	TOTAL	63,151	67,250	68,368	+5,217

Note: C.B.D. is the area applicable to St. John's immediate environment,
Not to the Parish as a whole.

APPENDIX B

PROJECTED TOTAL DWELLING NUMBERS
FOR URBAN LAUNCESTON 1976-1995

SUBURB	1976	1985	1990	1995
Ravenswood	1,015	1,315	1,325	1,345
Waverley	585	825	835	855
St. Leonards	433	473	493	526
Norwood	699	1,049	1,049	1,049
Penquite	368	448	448	448
Elphin	244	244	244	240
Youngtown	717	967	1,202	1,471
Punchbowl	558	688	688	680
Kings Meadows	748	848	898	898
Prospect Vale	654	934	1,169	1,413
Summerhill	544	834	924	924
West Launceston	1,170	1,350	1,350	1,340
Trevallyn	805	865	865	865
Central	975	890	810	750
South Launceston	2,185	2,120	2,060	2,000
Sandhill	690	695	695	690
Newstead	943	958	961	955
Elphin	549	549	549	545
Inveresk	656	615	585	560
Invermay	704	670	650	630
Mowbray	1,195	1,190	1,180	1,170
East Launceston	1,286	1,286	1,280	1,275
Riverside	2,012	2,797	3,072	3,072
Legana	250	500	890	1,380
Mayfield/Rocherlea	1,104	1,479	1,704	1,704
Alanvale/Newnham	709	989	1,239	1,574
Mt. Leslie	-	-	200	600
TOTAL	21,798	25,578	27,365	28,959

Past: 1971-1976 About 485 new homes a year

Assumptions: 1976-1985 Total of 4,010 new houses or Av. of 446 p..

: 1985-1990 Total of 2,000 " " " " 400 p..

: 1990-1995 Total of 1,810 " " " " 362 p..

Note: Central is the area applicable to St. John's immediate environment and not to the Parish as a whole.