

# **Queanbeyan Hospital.**

## **A History and Archaeological Assessment**

**April 2006**



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## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

This report was commissioned by Wayne McPhee Architects Pty Ltd on 23 March 2006, on behalf of the NSW Department of Commerce. It is an historical and archaeological assessment of Ruston House and its grounds. The NSW Department of Commerce is planning demolition and construction works at Queanbeyan Hospital in Queanbeyan. These works, however, are not proposed for Ruston House or its historic site. Ruston House and its grounds is currently the subject of a Conservation Management Plan, into which this present report is to be incorporated.

### **1.1. Study Objectives.**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Management System described in the *NSW Heritage Manual* and follows procedures and approaches outlined in *Archaeological Assessments*.<sup>1</sup> The following investigation examines the history and development of Queanbeyan Hospital, particularly Ruston House and its grounds - that earlier part of the hospital. It evaluates the probable extent, nature and integrity of surface and sub-surface remains at or in the vicinity of Ruston House and across the wider hospital grounds and assesses historical archaeological significance. Based on the findings, this report identifies areas of potential archaeological sensitivity. Included in this report are recommendations having regard to the significance of the area and statutory requirements. In particular, given that the NSW Department of Commerce is proposing construction works on the wider hospital grounds (though outside of the curtilage of Ruston House, as specified in Figure 6.3 and that of a Permanent Conservation Order gazetted in 1988), this report includes advice with regards to an excavation permit application under Section 60 of the NSW Heritage Act (1977) and Standard Exemption (No.4 - excavation).

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *NSW Heritage Manual*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Archaeological Assessments. Archaeological Assessment Guidelines*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

## ***1.2. The Site and its Location.***

The address of the subject site is 87-105 Collett Street, Queanbeyan, NSW. Rusten House is located at the corner of Antill Street with frontage to Collett Street within the more extensive grounds of Queanbeyan Hospital (Part Lot 2, DP226590). Today, the wider hospital grounds encompass an area of 2.369 hectares bounded by Collett Street to the northeast, Antill Street to the southeast, and Erin Street to the northwest. It is situated within the Local Government Area of Queanbeyan in the Parish of Queanbeyan and the County of Murray (Figure 1.2).

## ***1.3. Previous Studies.***

Rusten House was recorded by Peter Freeman & Partners in 1988 as part of a study of Queanbeyan's heritage.<sup>2</sup> The building and its site were also assessed by Schwager, Brooks and Partners in 1992 for entry onto the s170 Register of the NSW Department of Health. In 2005, a heritage study was completed for the Queanbeyan District Hospital by Heritage Management Consultants Pty Ltd.<sup>3</sup> This study includes discussions of Rusten House, its history, the site and archaeological potential. This work has been referred to for the current assessment. Rusten House and Queanbeyan Hospital is also a focus in various local or thematic histories including that by E. Lea-Scarlett from 1968 and that by A. Prouste from 1994.

## ***1.4. Author identification.***

Site inspection was undertaken by Dr. Louise Steding, Mr Gerald Steding and Ms Kylie Sparkes of Stedinger Associates on 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2006. This report was written by Dr. Louise Steding with contributions by Mr Gerald Steding, Dr. Jill Mizzi and Ms Kylie Sparkes

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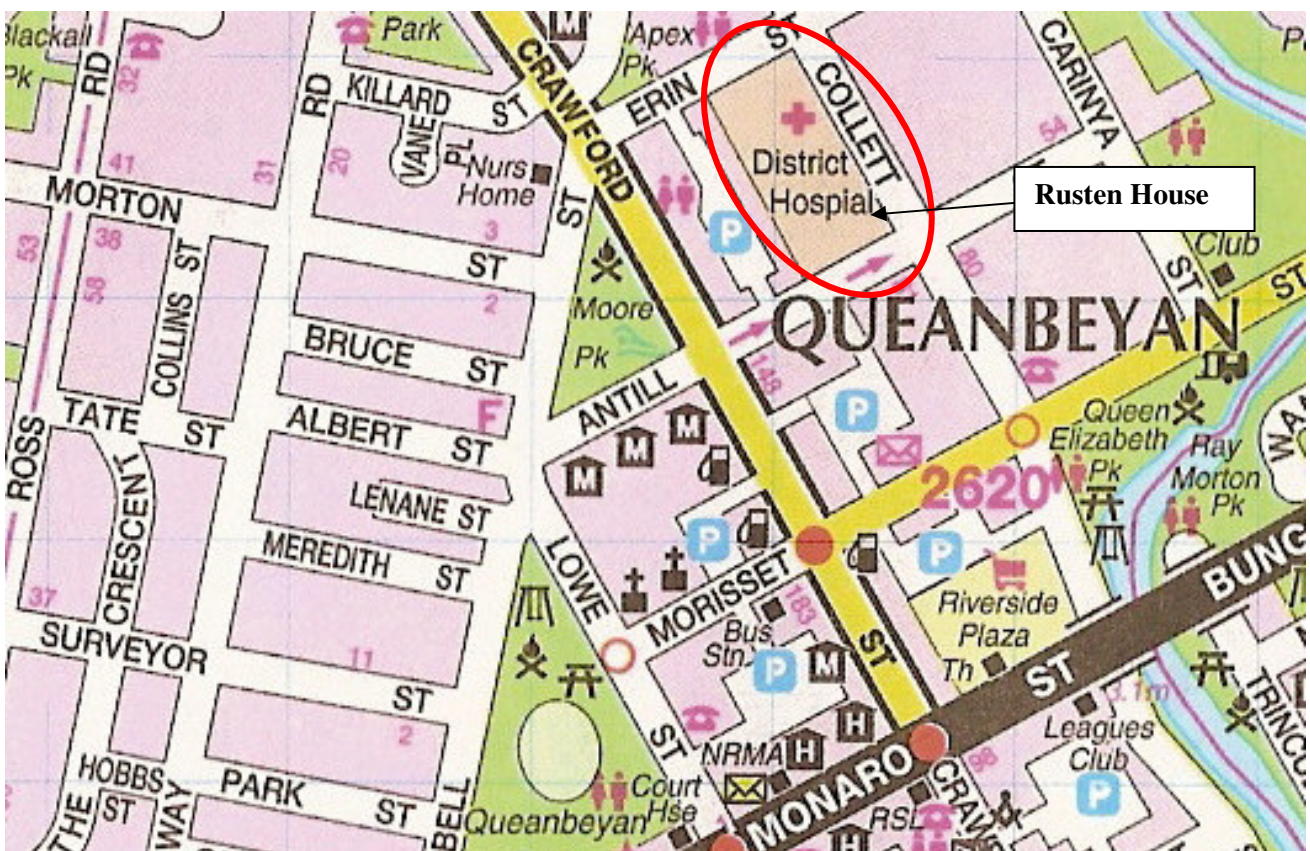
<sup>2</sup> Freeman, Peter & Partners and Meredith Walker. 1988. 1988. *Queanbeyan Heritage Study*. For Queanbeyan City Council.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service.



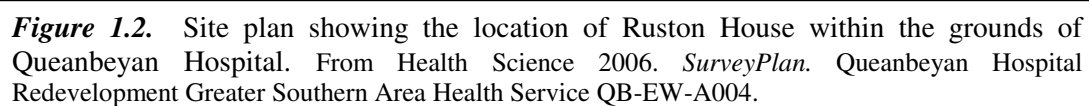


Queanbeyan, NSW.



*Figure 1.1.* Location plan showing Queanbeyan Hospital, Queanbeyan.





## **2. HERITAGE OBLIGATIONS AND STATUS.**

### **2.1. The NSW Heritage Act and the Relics Provision.**

The NSW Heritage Act of 1977 is a statutory framework for the identification and conservation of heritage in New South Wales. Under section 4(1) of the Act a 'relic' is defined as:

Any deposit, object or material evidence relating to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and which is 50 or more years old.

The 'relics' provision of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 applies generally to all land in New South Wales, whether or not a site has been listed as a heritage item. For the protection of archaeological relics Section 139 of the NSW Heritage Act provides that:

- (1) a person must not disturb or excavate any land knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit.
- (2) a person must not disturb or excavate any land on which the person has discovered or exposed a relic except in accordance with an excavation permit.

If a site is listed on the State Heritage Register or is the subject of an Interim Heritage Order then approval to excavate is required under section 60 of the NSW Heritage Act. If a site is not listed on the State Heritage Register or the subject of an Interim Heritage Order under the NSW Heritage Act then an excavation permit is required under section 140.

Where future works are likely to involve the disturbance or destruction of sub surface deposits or relics, the appropriate excavation permit is required under the NSW Heritage Act 1977 prior to the commencement of those works.

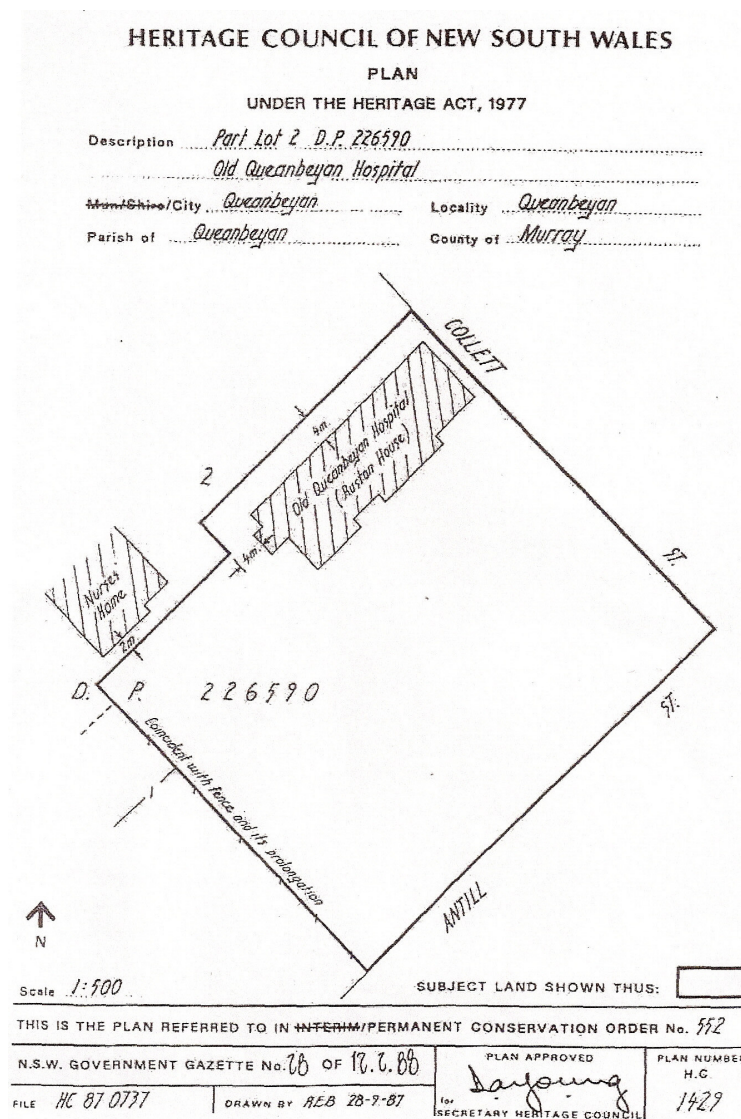
### **2.2. Statutory Heritage Listings.**

In addition to the relics provisions of the Heritage Act 1977, statutory heritage listings are the principal means of protecting items of our State's heritage. In New South Wales the registers of statutory listings are:

- the State Heritage Register; and
- schedules to local or regional environmental plans (LEP's and REP's).

Ruston House and its grounds are afforded statutory protection by their listing as a heritage item in the Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1998 (Item No.5).<sup>4</sup> The building and its site were also entered on the State Heritage Register for N.S.W in April 1999 (Database No. 5045169 and 3500270).<sup>5</sup> A Permanent Conservation Order had been placed on the building and its site in 1988.<sup>6</sup>

The site was also recorded on the s170 Register for the Department of Health in 1992, assessed by Schwager, Brooks & Partners Pty Ltd. While not a statutory listing, given that Ruston House is not a Commonwealth owned property, it is also noted that the site was entered on the Register of the National Estate on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1992 (Place ID 1154).



**Figure 2.1.** Permanent Conservation Order No.552, 2/4/1988.

<sup>4</sup> Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan, Gazette 148, p.8341.

<sup>5</sup> State Heritage Register, Gazetted 02<sup>nd</sup> of April 1999. Gazette No.27, p.1546.

<sup>6</sup> PCO No.552, dated 12 February 1988. NSW Government Gazette No.28. Plan No. HC 1429.



### 3. *HISTORICAL CONTEXT.*

This chapter is a contextual history of Ruston House, its grounds and its place within Queanbeyan Hospital in Collett Street, Queanbeyan. It describes the early hospital's association with historic persons, and the historical developments and major processes of construction that have shaped the site. This work provides an important framework with which to predict areas of potential archaeological sensitivity and facilitates the interpretation and assessment of relics and associated structures.

#### A History of the Site.

##### **3.1. *Queanbeyan District Hospital.***

The Queanbeyan region was first settled by Europeans in the early 1820s and the township of Queanbeyan was officially proclaimed in October 1838.<sup>7</sup> For years little assistance was available to the district's poor when they fell sick. According to the *Queanbeyan Age*, pioneers, fossickers and servants would 'die like beasts of the field' unable to afford medical treatment. On the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1847 a number of businessmen, graziers and Queanbeyan's more affluent citizens formed a Benevolent Society with the intention of establishing a 'Benevolent Asylum' or hospital for the needy.<sup>8</sup> The society received support from, among others, Dr James Fitzgerald Murray, the Reverend Edward Smith, Captain Alured Tasker Faunce (Police Magistrate) and T. H. Macquoid.<sup>9</sup>

The Queanbeyan Benevolent Asylum opened with Mary Ann Rusten, an untrained nurse, as its foundation matron. For the first fifteen years of its existence the institution was housed in a rented cottage in Irishtown (later named East Queanbeyan).<sup>10</sup> In July 1859, government architect W. H. Downey (who designed the first bridge over the Queanbeyan River) drew up plans for Queanbeyan's first purpose-built hospital.

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<sup>7</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*;  
Sheedy, P.B. and E. A. Percy. 1995. *Moneroo to Monaro. History of Monaro Street, 1830s-1995*  
*Queanbeyan*. Queanbeyan City Council, p.xiii.

<sup>8</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

<sup>9</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*;  
Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area  
Health Service. pp.20 and 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.;  
Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area  
Health Service. pp.20 and 22;

Downey's design called for the construction of a stone building, measuring 74 feet long by 32 feet wide (22.5 metres by 9.75 metres), which would accommodate up to sixteen patients.<sup>11</sup> The new hospital was constructed on the elevated site (likely chosen by Downey) of the current Queanbeyan District Hospital beyond the reach of flood waters, in what was then called Balcombe Street (later renamed Collett Street in recognition of the Collett family's long-standing involvement in the hospital's Board of Directors).<sup>12</sup> It was built in the years between 1859 and 1861 at a cost of £1051; delayed by at least one dispute over payments to the builders, Daniel Jordan and Gibson.<sup>13</sup> Jordan and Gibson used stone excavated from Simms' quarry in the 'Honeysuckle'. The building accommodated a boardroom, mortuary, a male ward and a female ward, each with room for eight beds.<sup>14</sup> This original hospital building, now known as 'Rusten House', is still standing. Indeed, it is one of the oldest buildings in Queanbeyan.<sup>15</sup>

Although construction of the hospital was completed in 1861 the building remained unfurnished and unoccupied for over a year until Christmas 1862 when the matron's family, the Rustens, settled into the premises. The matron's husband, William Rusten, became the hospital's wardsman.<sup>16</sup> At the time, he was also employed as the keeper for the police lock-up.<sup>17</sup> The hospital then had no patients and, before long, the Rustens occupied almost every room in the hospital.<sup>18</sup> The family (with the later addition of two children whom they adopted when the parents died in the hospital) used the female ward

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Register of the National Estate. Place ID 1154. Place File No. 1/08/299/0009.

<sup>11</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.

<sup>12</sup> Local Studies File, Queanbeyan – "Collett";

Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1860;

*Queanbeyan Age*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> Register of the National Estate. Place ID 1154. Place File No. 1/08/299/0009.

<sup>15</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 22;

Freeman, Peter & Partners and Meredith Walker. 1988. *Queanbeyan Heritage Study*. For Queanbeyan City Council, p.2.

<sup>16</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932;

Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 22.

<sup>17</sup> Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9.

<sup>18</sup> Cross, Rex L. (ed.) 1986. *Queanbeyan & District Hospital Museum Society: Issue No.1*. Newsletter of the Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society, p.7;  
*Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.

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as their main bedroom and the boardroom as their dining room.<sup>19</sup> During that first year only six patients were admitted to the hospital and were accommodated in the Men's Ward. The first of these to die was a woman named Mary Ann Keyes, whom the *Golden Age* described as “a person associated with the notorious Bush family of Jerrewa”.<sup>20</sup>

In 1862 the Queanbeyan Benevolent Asylum was proclaimed a district hospital but this did not result in any increase in funding.<sup>21</sup> Few donations or subscriptions had been made to the hospital so the institution was relying heavily on funds derived from Police Court fines and fees paid for impounding stray animals.<sup>22</sup> The Annual Meeting of the Benevolent Society for 1862 attempted to address the problem by setting subscriptions to the hospital at £1 and life membership at £10; with subscribers having their name listed in the foyer.<sup>23</sup> The meeting also set admission fees at £3 which would cover the patient for one month. Beyond this the patient would be asked to pay an additional daily amount of 2s 6d.<sup>24</sup> Few working class people could afford such fees and the hospital remained almost empty in the early 1860s.<sup>25</sup>

The Benevolent Society began to request government funding in 1863, but it wasn't until 1865 that the hospital received its first subsidy — a sum of £58/7/11.<sup>26</sup> At the time, the hospital was still short of funds. Most patients (although there were few) were non-fee paying. They had been referred by the police with diagnoses of diseases of the liver, jaundice, delirium tremens, dropsy, old age, diseases of the lungs, fever, bilious colic, asthma and poverty and neglect.<sup>27</sup> According to the Medical Officers' Report for 1869,

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<sup>19</sup> Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9;

*Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.

<sup>20</sup> Cross, Rex L. (ed.) 1986. *Queanbeyan & District Hospital Museum Society: Issue No.1*. Newsletter of the Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society, p.7.

<sup>21</sup> Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9.

<sup>22</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

<sup>23</sup> Lea-Scarlett, E. 1968. *Queanbeyan District and People*. Queanbeyan Municipal Council. p.44.

<sup>24</sup> Lea-Scarlett, E. 1968. *Queanbeyan District and People*. Queanbeyan Municipal Council. p.44;

Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9.

<sup>25</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932;

Lea-Scarlett, E. 1968. *Queanbeyan District and People*. Queanbeyan Municipal Council. p.44.

<sup>26</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20-23.

<sup>27</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

twelve males and two females had been admitted to the hospital in the preceding year. Of these, seven were “cured”, five were “relieved” and two died. Their average length of stay in the hospital had been fifteen days.<sup>28</sup>

In 1870, the hospital grounds were planted with oaks, elms and pines and, in the following year, £46/10/- was spent on the construction of a kitchen - either inside the hospital building where the Rusten family was living or outside, as a separate near-by structure.<sup>29</sup> The precise location of this kitchen is unknown but the fact that the building’s tender included “a brick floor” suggests that it may well have been built as a separate or connecting structure near to the hospital. Even these minor works, however, taxed the hospital’s budget and had been delayed by limitations on funding.<sup>30</sup> In 1872 the hospital budget consisted of £200; £85 from subscriptions, £85 from government subsidies and £30 from fees and fines.<sup>31</sup>

The hospital’s matron, Mary Ann Rusten, died in office on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1875, shortly before her 67<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her contribution to Queanbeyan was later recognised when a street was named in her honour.<sup>32</sup> Within months Rusten’s replacement, possibly Mrs Mary Barnett, a former innkeeper, lost favour with the hospital committee. Dr Johnston officially reported that the matron had returned to the hospital from Goulburn, drunk and supporting a black eye. The new matron was reprimanded and threatened with dismissal should there be any repetition of such behaviour. By the end of 1875, however, she was again in trouble; this time for “tampering with the religious views of the patients”. She was cleared of the charge at a subsequent enquiry.<sup>33</sup>

Mrs Barnett resigned in 1881 and was succeeded by Mrs Jane Luxton. After only three years the position of Mrs Luxton was occupied by Mrs James Land. Again, after only a brief term, in 1888 Mrs Land's role was taken on by Mrs Mary McTernan. In 1996 Mrs

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<sup>28</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1870.

<sup>29</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*; Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O’Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.23.

<sup>30</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1870.

<sup>31</sup> Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9.

<sup>32</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1991;  
*Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.



Isdahl became the hospital's matron for one year. Like Matron Rusten, all were untrained nurses. The first qualified nurse was Matron Aitken, engaged in May 1897.<sup>34</sup>

Also in 1875, during the term of Matron Rusten, work began on the construction of a washhouse. This structure, together with its covered passageway to the hospital, was built at a cost of £57/10/-. Two years later, the hospital committee purchased two iron ships' tanks to collect rain-water and in 1876 they erected guttering and pipes to run water into the tanks. Until then the hospital had received all of its water by way of the waterman who carted it from the river.<sup>35</sup>

In 1884, the number of hospital patients increased dramatically. Railway workers who were building the line to Queanbeyan were admitted in large numbers; reflecting the high accident rates for workers exposed to rock-falls resulting from blasting operations.<sup>36</sup> The railway contractors (A. Johnstone and Co.) donated £210 to the hospital to cover the costs of treating their employees.<sup>37</sup> At its peak, the number of patients rose to 42 (of whom 38 were male). Prior to this, the hospital had never treated more than twenty patients at any one time. This dramatic increase in the demand for hospital beds encouraged calls for extensions to the hospital. In 1885, at a cost of £210, a contractor was hired to construct a fever ward at the northeastern end of Rusten House. That year, the number of patients leapt to 98. Again, most of these patients were railway workers and the railway contractors donated a further £315 to contribute to their care. Despite these contributions, the hospital committee demanded, the following year, that the railway contractor pay ten shillings per day for each of its employees. The contractor refused to pay this sum and opened an alternative hospital in the Kent House Hotel to treat railway employees. The number of patients in the Queanbeyan Hospital fell in 1887 to thirty-five and in 1889 to eighteen.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital 125 Annual Report*.

<sup>34</sup> Register of the National Estate. Place ID 1154. Place File No. 1/08/299/0009.

<sup>35</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932;

Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.23.

<sup>36</sup> Proust, A. J. (ed.). 1994. *History of Medicine in Canberra and Queanbeyan and their Hospitals*. Gundaroo. Brolga Press, p.9.

<sup>37</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

Clearly still troubled by a lack of funding, the committee formally closed the hospital to paupers in September 1890, with the exception of those sent by the police. Admissions were even more severely curtailed in 1891 by a policy of accepting only those patients recommended by a subscriber to the hospital.<sup>39</sup> In making these decisions, the hospital committee had all but abandoned the Benevolent Society's original desire to serve the community's needy. By this time too, the hospital was servicing a sizeable Queanbeyan population of 1261.<sup>40</sup> The New South Wales government intervened in 1892, applying the 1880s' Hospital Act which obliged the institution to accept all patients, irrespective of whether they could pay or came recommended by one of the hospital's subscribers.<sup>41</sup>

In the closing years of the century, the hospital grounds were fenced, the hospital buildings were re-roofed with galvanised iron and a skylight was installed in the boardroom. In 1902 tenders were sought for the construction of a morgue or "dead house", to the northwest of Rusten House (this was earmarked for demolition in 1932 and a new morgue was constructed that year).<sup>42</sup> Repairs were carried out on wards, verandas and fences and the committee sought funds to construct an operating theatre. They applied for direct government subsidy, raised money through their annual ball and collected donations from local shearing sheds. With the help of donations and a special government grant, a new operating theatre, built at a cost of £202, was constructed in 1903. In 1905 the hospital also saw the construction of a sitting room, three new bedrooms and two bathrooms for resident nurses (who had previously been housed on the wards). These nurses' quarters were located northwest of Rusten House and perhaps incorporated the old laundry. That year, repairs were also carried out to the kitchen, laundry and fever ward (just in time for the 1906 outbreak of typhoid in the region).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 24.

<sup>39</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.24.

<sup>40</sup> Freeman, Peter & Partners and Meredith Walker. 1988. *Queanbeyan Heritage Study*. For Queanbeyan City Council, p.1.

<sup>41</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.24.

<sup>42</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital Block Plan Showing Sewerage & Stormwater Drains*. 1932.; Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.25-26.

<sup>43</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932; Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.25-26.

While these improvements were made to the site in the early twentieth century, alongside the introduction of acetylene gas lighting and minor renovations and additions, the hospital began to struggle with large numbers of patients. In 1911, when Canberra had been selected as the nation's capital, there were 209 patients admitted to Queanbeyan Hospital.<sup>44</sup> The federal government introduced an annual subsidy of £100 on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1912, to help the hospital cope. This subsidy was increased, after much haggling, the following year to £200 and the federal government began plans to construct a small and temporary hospital in Canberra. Acton Hospital opened in 1914. It had only 22 beds and could not cope with complicated medical or surgical treatment. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1917, as work ceased on the construction of the new capital, the federal government decreased its annual subsidy to £100 and, at the end of June, it abolished the subsidy altogether. At the same time, the federal government closed Acton Hospital, leaving Queanbeyan District Hospital as the only hospital in the region. By December of that year, the hospital committee wrote in desperation to the Department of Home Affairs, requesting permission to dismantle, move and then reconstruct Acton Hospital's isolation ward on their own premises. The government refused permission.<sup>45</sup> It was only after the First World War, in the years 1919 to 1920, that an isolation ward was built at Queanbeyan District Hospital (at a cost of £1,333). In the meantime, victims of the 1919 influenza epidemic were treated at the Church of England Rectory which, with the exception of Ruston House, is now Queanbeyan's oldest surviving hospital structure.<sup>46</sup>

By 1921 Queanbeyan's population had risen to 1825, fuelled by the return of Canberra's workmen and their families.<sup>47</sup> While Acton Hospital re-opened in 1922, Queanbeyan District Hospital continued to be the main regional hospital and it struggled to service a growing number of patients. Electricity had replaced gas lighting throughout the hospital in 1921 and in 1924 plans were drawn-up for a sizeable new wing and an additional 1.5 acres were purchased for the hospital. Pressure was alleviated when

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<sup>44</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.26.

<sup>45</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.26.

<sup>46</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 27.

<sup>47</sup> Freeman, Peter & Partners and Meredith Walker. 1988. *Queanbeyan Heritage Study*. For Queanbeyan City Council, p.1.

Acton Hospital increased its original 22 beds to 60 beds but relief was short-lived.<sup>48</sup> With increasing operational costs, many of Queanbeyan's private hospitals closed down; some five out of seven had closed their doors by 1927.<sup>49</sup>

In 1929, the New South Wales Government passed a Public Hospital Act, bringing the Queanbeyan District Hospital, together with other government hospitals, under its direct and centralised control. One positive repercussion was increased incentive for the government to channel public funds into hospitals; increasing moves to renovate, expand and equip existing hospitals. Like many other hospitals, the Queanbeyan was struggling to provide modern specialised equipment and needed to upgrade its facilities. When Ancel Johnston succeeded Harry Downey as the hospital's secretary in that year, he described the Queanbeyan District Hospital as 'still a tiny place ... with outmoded facilities and difficult working conditions for the very small staff.'<sup>50</sup>

The ladies' auxiliary (formed in 1927) spent much of 1930 and 1931 renovating the nurses' quarters, kitchen, laundry and wards and in 1932 the Minister for Works gave approval for the hospital's new wing. Construction began in October 1932 but by February the following year the *Queanbeyan Age* headlined that the "New Hospital Will Not Be Finished for a Long While Yet".<sup>51</sup> In August 1933 the new wing was finally completed, some nine years after its design.<sup>52</sup> The new building cost £17,096/18/4; £12,000 of which had been granted by the New South Wales government. It was one of ten hospital buildings funded in New South Wales by the government between 1933 and 1936.<sup>53</sup> The New South Wales government had been keen to address local unemployment, which had risen significantly after the cessation of work on Canberra. The construction of the new wing of Queanbeyan Hospital gave employment to 257

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<sup>48</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 27.

<sup>49</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.28.

<sup>50</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.28.

<sup>51</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1933.

<sup>52</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1933.

<sup>53</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932;

Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 27-29.

local men.<sup>54</sup> Superseded as the main hospital, Rusten House became a dormitory for nursing staff.<sup>55</sup>

In 1934 a diphtheria epidemic increased pressures on the hospital. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1933 and the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1934, there were 789 admissions to the hospital, more than in any previous period.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, by these years the vast majority of patients were women (as distinct from the early years when numbers were heavily male dominated).<sup>57</sup> In 1934 the Hospital Board requested a private ward and extensions to the hospital's maternity section. The construction of a new private ward would free space for a waiting room and office. Plans for the extensions were prepared in 1936.<sup>58</sup> These plans were put on hold with the commencement of the Second World War. Only minor improvements and repairs (such as flyscreens on the windows, the installation of radios and the purchase of a mobile x-ray unit) were conducted until the end of the war in 1945.<sup>59</sup> Then, in 1946, work began on the construction of a maternity unit, private wing and nurses' home; with the additions opening in 1952. An emergency power system was also installed that year, following the death of a boy who haemorrhaged from a tonsillectomy just as the power failed.<sup>60</sup>

Grants of over £10 000 from the Hospital Commission of NSW and internal funds of another £4000 enabled continued renovations and purchases in the early 1960s. A new Administration Wing was added to the hospital in 1963-64; as were a Casualty Department, Radiography Unit, Physiotherapy Department and Pathology Department. In 1965 the District Nursing Service began operating from the hospital. This did little, however, to alleviate. Doctors were concerned that they would soon have to turn

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<sup>54</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

<sup>55</sup> Register of the National Estate. Place ID 1154. Place File No. 1/08/299/0009.

<sup>56</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20, 27 and 29.

<sup>57</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1932.

<sup>58</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1936.

<sup>59</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20, 27 and 29.

<sup>60</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20, 29-30.

patients away. In consultation with the Minister for Health and the Hospital Commission, plans for expansion were approved.<sup>61</sup>

A new Maternity Unit and Operating Theatre were constructed and, in the late 1970s, an Intensive Care Unit and an Acute Nursing Care Ward were built. In 1987 the hospital saw the opening of a new Care for the Aged and Distressed Elderly (CADE) centre called the Pepper Tree Lodge. Finance was also requested in the 1980s for a major refurbishment on the understanding that the hospital would be used as a “Community Treatment Facility” and, according to the *Queanbeyan Age*, some of the hospital’s mental health service clients were refurbishing Rusten House in 1991 as part of a “Restoration of Heritage” project.<sup>62</sup> Pepper Tree Lodge, still marked on a 2001 block plan of the hospital as a “new group home”, was closed in 2004.<sup>63</sup>

Despite all of these changes, there has been debate in the early years of the twentieth-first century about the adequacy of the hospital to function efficiently. The options raised include: re-furbishing the whole hospital again to ensure that it complies with modern standards, demolishing some of the existing structures and rebuilding them and demolishing all of the existing structures, abandoning the site and constructing a new modern hospital elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

### 3.2. *Historical Themes.*

The following themes have emerged from the history of Queanbeyan Hospital discussed at national, state and local levels:

- 1. National Theme: Developing local, regional and national economies.  
State Theme: Health.

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<sup>61</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O’Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20, 30-31.

<sup>62</sup> Curry, R. (ed.) 1988. *Queanbeyan & District Hospital Museum Society: Issue No.1*. Newsletter of the Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society, p.15;  
*Queanbeyan Age*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1991.

<sup>63</sup> *Queanbeyan District Hospital Block Plan*. 2001;  
Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O’Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. pp.20 and 34.

Local Theme: The health and physical welfare of the people of Queanbeyan.

- 2. National Themes: Building settlements, towns and cities.

State Themes: Towns, suburbs and villages.

Local Themes: Developing and servicing the Queanbeyan region.

- 3. National Themes: Governing.

State themes: Building and servicing the Australian Capital City.

Local Themes: Government intervention in local health; issues and funding.

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<sup>64</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.20.

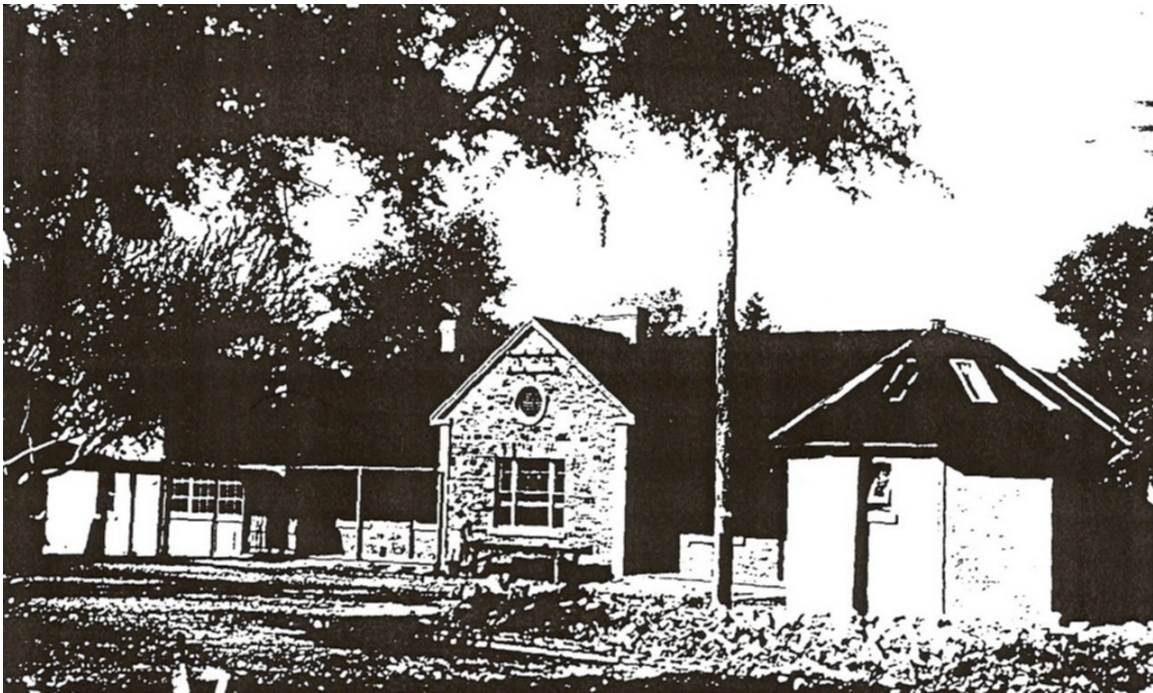


### 3.3. *Historic Photographs and Plans.*

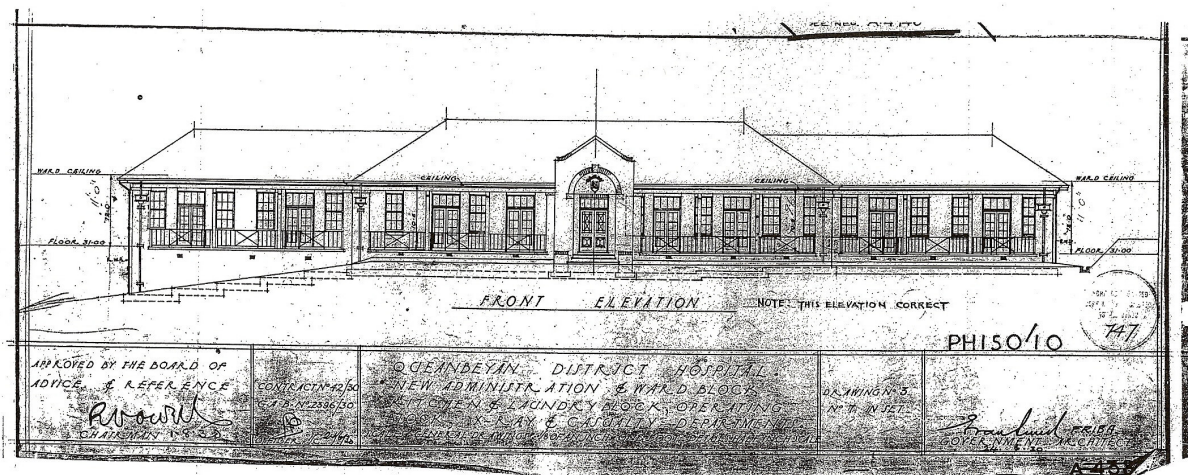


*Figure 3.1.* Queanbeyan Hospital c.1876. In P.B. Sheedy, 'A Tour of Historical Queanbeyan', Canberra and District Historical Society.

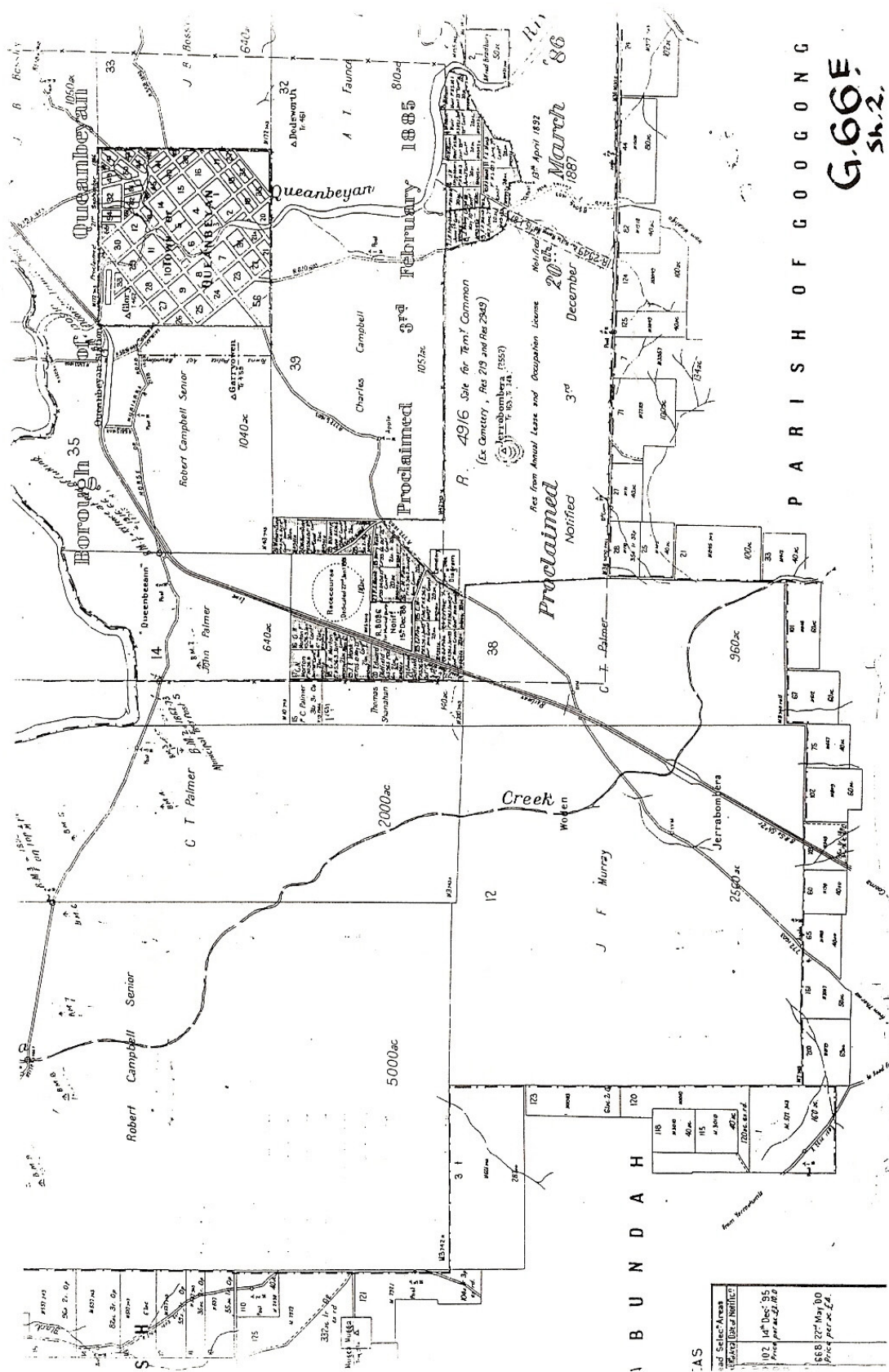




**Figure 3.2.** Rear view of Queanbeyan Hospital showing the Operating Theatre, 1890's. In R.L. Cross, (editor), 1986. Newsletter of the Queanbeyan & District Historical Society. p.15.

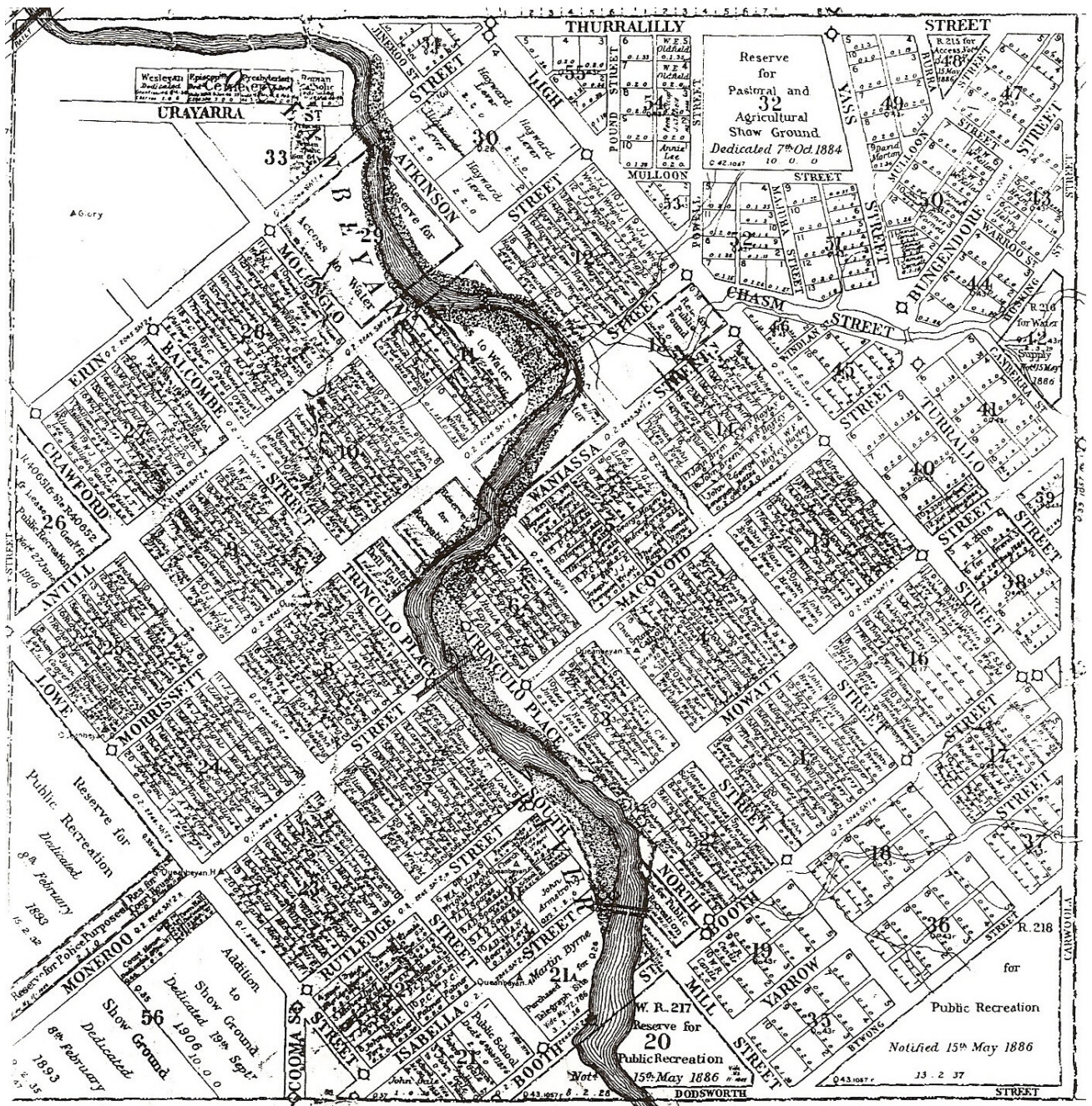


**Figure 3.3.** Front Elevation of Queanbeyan District Hospital. New administration and ward block, kitchen and laundry block, operating block, x-ray and casualty departments, Drawing No.3. Government Architect, 1930.



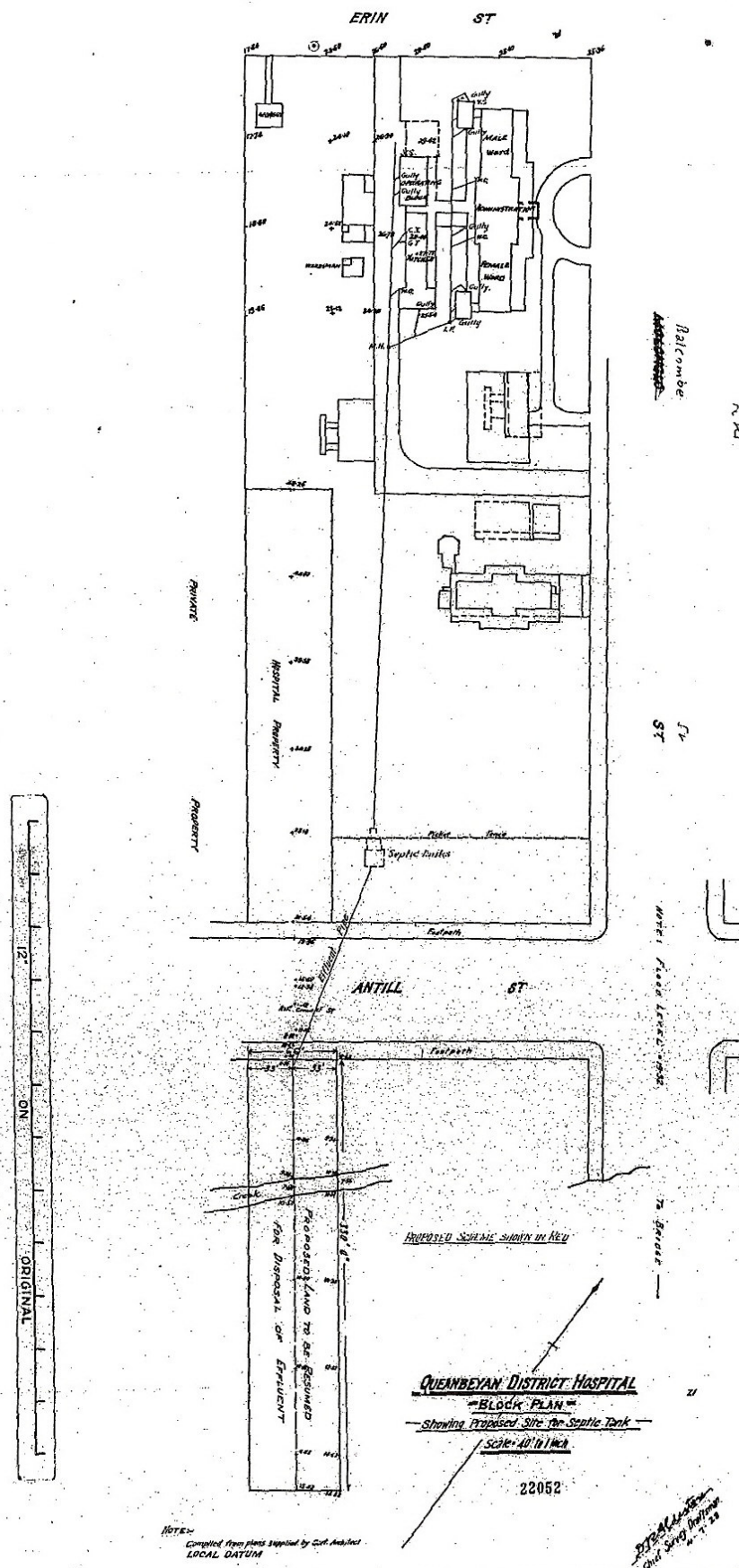
**Figure 3.4.** Parish of Queanbeyan, County of Murray, Land District of Queanbeyan, Eastern Division of NSW. Department of Lands, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1904.





**Figure 3.5.** Survey Plan of Queanbeyan, post 1906 (Local Studies Section, Queanbeyan Library).





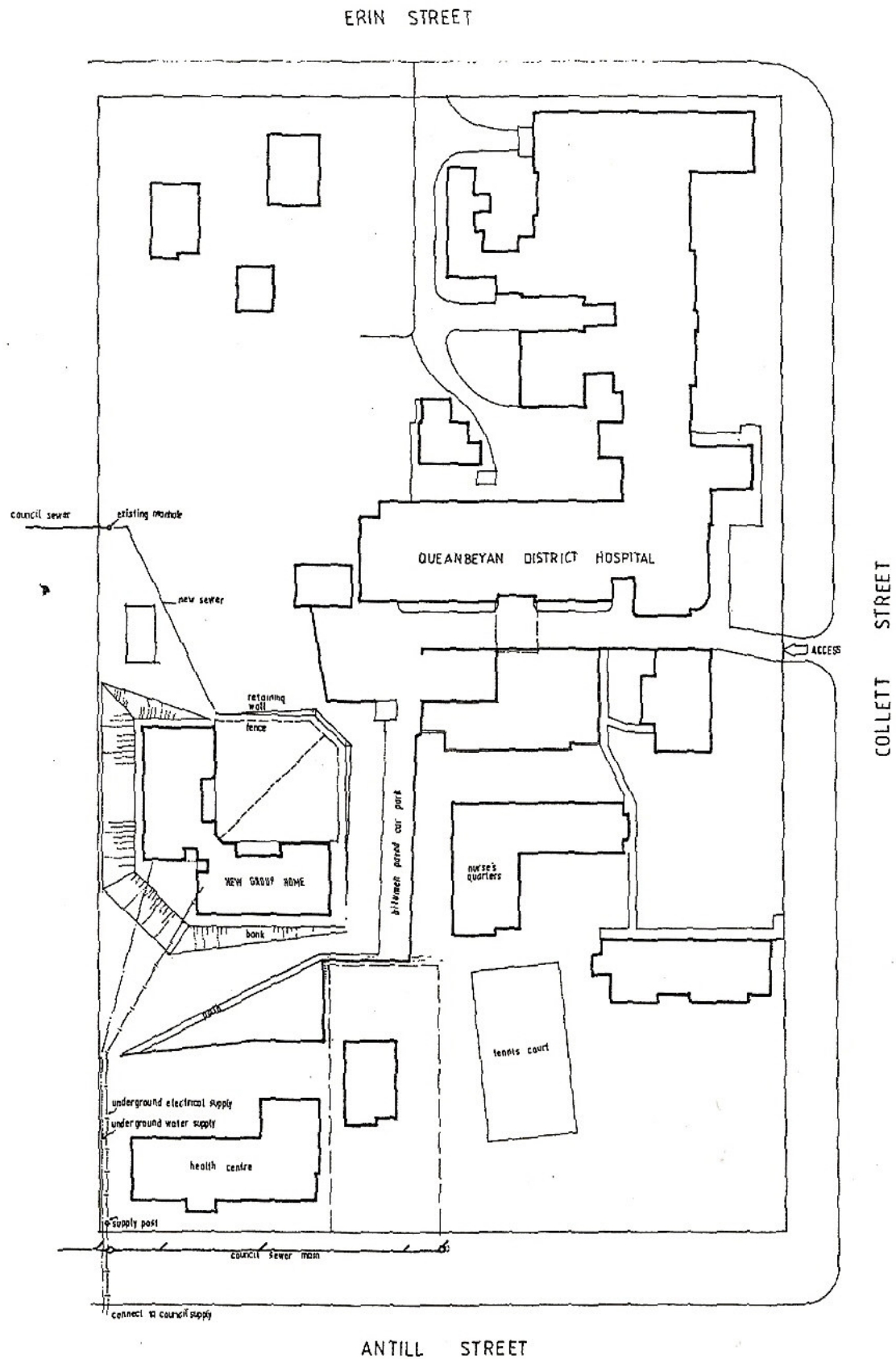
**Figure 3.6.** Queanbeyan District Hospital. Block Plan. Showing Proposed Site for Septic Tank. Chief Survey Draftsman. July 1928.





**Figure 3.7.** Queanbeyan District Hospital. Block Plan. Showing Sewerage & Stormwater Drainage. ... Drawing Office. October 1932.





**Figure 3.8.** Site Location Plan. Group Home for Confused and Disturbed Elderly Residents at Queanbeyan District Hospital, Queanbeyan NSW. Peter A. O'Neill Associates Pty Ltd. June 1986.

#### **4.     *ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT.***

Site inspection of Queanbeyan Hospital, in particular the site of Rusten House and its surrounds, was carried out by Dr. Louise Steding, Mr Gerald Steding and Kylie Sparkes of Stedinger Associates on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006. The site was examined for evidence of surviving surface features, potential archaeological deposits and relics.

##### **4.1.   *Site Description, its context, form and fabric.***

Rusten House is sited towards the crest of a hill on Collett Street not far from the town centre of Queanbeyan. Today, the site includes a host of buildings and features, ranging from metal sheds and portable buildings to substantial brick buildings, an historic sandstone building (Rusten House), retaining walls, car parks, a tennis court, amenities and gardens. Specifically, southeastern portion of the hospital site, and the focus of this present study, includes Rusten House (1861), the Occupational Therapy Building (1920), the Mental Health Building (1947), two demountable buildings (1995), a tennis court (post 1946), and terraced gardens (mid 20thC) (Refer to Figure 1.2).

##### **Rusten House**

Situated in the southeast corner of the hospital site, Rusten House (1861) itself is a single storey sandstone building with a corrugated iron roof and timber verandahs. The verandahs have since been enclosed with fibro and additions adjoin the northeast and southwest ends of the building. That to the northeast dates to c.1885. To the southwest the small extension appears in a plan dating 1928. More recently a modern verandah has been added to the northeast extension.

##### **Other Buildings**

To the northwest of Rusten House is the Occupational Therapy Building (1920), once originally known as the “Isolation Block”. It is a brick building with a corrugated iron roof. The Mental Health building (1947) lies to the west of Rusten House. This building is double brick with a tiled roof and was built to a basic 'L-shaped' plan. Immediately to the west of the Mental Health Building are two recent portable buildings set upon better block piers in 1995.

### Features and Surfaces

Concrete paths extend around Rusten House, with one leading southwest to the neighbouring Mental Health Building. Additional features in vicinity include a terraced garden and tennis court. The terraced garden was established in the 1920s on the southeast side of Rusten House extending down to Antill Street. It contains a variety of plantings of different ages, with most shrubs originating from the mid twentieth century. Some older trees, such as Pines, Oaks and Elms, may date from the 1870s when a tree planting program was initiated (refer to Chapter 3). They occur to the southeast and northwest of Rusten House. A Cyprus Pine, also possibly planted in the 1870's, survives immediately to the east of the Occupational Therapy Building. Former Tennis Courts lie to the southeast of the Mental Health Building. They were built after 1946 and are currently being used as a hospital car parking area. The tennis courts are now surfaced with gravel and enclosed by a chain-wire fence. Elsewhere, most of the grounds around Rusten House are surfaced with grass.

Several retaining walls (circa 1940's – 1950's) have been laid across the hospital site. They retain soil where the site of buildings has been cut into the original hill slope on which Rusten House is located. A concrete rendered retaining wall, for example, abuts the Mental Health building to the southeast (the wall post dates 1947). Brick walls also retain the landscape behind the Occupational Therapy Building and beside the main entrance to the hospital to heights of up to 1 metre. Similar retaining walls extend further northwest in association with more recent buildings on the hospital grounds, such as the Obstetrics Building from the 1970s. Indeed, the entire hospital site has been stepped or benched to varying extents for construction purposes.

As discussed below, services including stormwater drainage, septic tanks and sewerage, electricity, communications, drink water and gas are located underground.

## ***4.2. Former Structures, Features and Artefactual Remains.***

No substantial structures appear to have existed on the site prior to the construction of Rusten House. According to the early town map this land appears to have been specifically set aside for the use of a hospital since the late nineteenth century. Prior to



the construction of Rusten House in 1859-1861, the land was likely to have been a vacant semi-rural portion (No.27) situated on the outskirts of the town.

Since 1861, a number of structures and features have been associated with Rusten House and its grounds during the site's use as a hospital and residence. Former structures include a morgue (1902), a kitchen (1871), a wash house (1875), earth closets (pre-1932), an operating theatre (1903), and nurses' quarters (1905).

### Morgues

According to an historical plan, the early morgue was housed within the hospital (refer to chapter 3). The site of the 1902 morgue or 'dead house' lies far to the northwest of Rusten House where the northeast wall of the Obstetrics Building is now located. This morgue was demolished in 1932 and a new morgue erected. The later morgue was built where the northwest wall of the Obstetrics building is now located and remained in use until 1972.

### Kitchens

The location of the early kitchen erected in 1871 is unknown. It may have been sited within Rusten House or erected as a separate building nearby. Prior to the 1880s, pre-dating formal hospital or municipal garbage collection services, early kitchen refuse and other waste is likely to have been buried in the gardens of Rusten House in relatively close proximity to the kitchen.

A slight indentation or sinkage in the soil surface is visible to the northwest of Rusten House beside the base of a tree. There is a possibility that this may be the site of a feature, such as a refuse dump of former earth closet, where biodegradable materials have compacted resulting in minor soil subsidence. The tree itself appears to be only approximately 50 years of age.

### Washhouse

A washhouse with a covered passage was built in 1875. Its location is unknown. It may have been sited northwest of Rusten House and demolished to make way for the Nurses' Quarters in 1905. Alternatively, the old washhouse may be represented by the structure

shown adjoining the Nurse's Quarters in the 1932 plan or may have been incorporated into the Nurse's Quarters itself.

### Earth Closets

As shown on a 1932 plan of the hospital, earth closets were located on northwest side of the front portable building on near the north corner of the Mental Health Building. Their site is southwest of the Occupational Therapy building almost in line with the south eastern wall of this structure. Although planned for demolition in 1932, as shown in the plan, according to Pearson et.al, the building for the earth closets was retained as a fumigation room before being replaced in 1946.<sup>65</sup> The later structure was demolished in 1964. Septic tanks had been installed to the southeast of Rusten House by 1928.

### Operating Theatre

An historic photograph and plan (1928 and 1932) show a structure adjoining the southwest corner of Rusten House. This structure is likely to have been the operating theatre built in 1903. In particular, this structure was designed with a large bay window allowing maximum light to enter the room. The 1932 plan shows it as being scheduled for demolition.

### Nurses' Quarters

Nurses quarters were erected to the northwest of Rusten House in 1905. It included a sitting room, three new bedrooms and two bathrooms for resident nurses (who had previously been housed on the wards). As shown in a plan from 1932, the quarters fronted Collett Street and were linked to Rusten House by a walkway or covered passage. Another structure is also shown in the 1932 plan adjoining the southwest side of the nurses' quarters. This rear building may have been a kitchen or the old washhouse. Its function is unknown. The Nurses' Quarters were demolished in 1947.

### Other Structures

Additional structures were located further from Rusten House. Gardener's sheds were located to the far southwest of Rusten House, near Peperree House. They were removed

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<sup>65</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.37.

sometime after 1975. Two years later a cottage behind the tennis courts was demolished. That year a boiler house was removed northwest of the Obstetrics Building. Also in the 1970s a cottage used for occupational therapy was demolished south of the more recent Boiler Workshop. An incinerator to the southwest was demolished in c.1986. These structures were not in the immediate vicinity of Rusten House nor within the curtilage of the Permanent Conservation Order issued in 1988 (refer to Figures 2.1., Figure 4.2 and chapter 6).

### ***4.3. Site Disturbance.***

Much of the area to the northwest and southwest of the site remains relatively undisturbed. The area remains relatively undeveloped. Much of its surface is grassed and the laying of concrete pedestrian pathways would have caused minimal disturbance to underlying deposits. Some disturbance had occurred on the northwest side where services for water and drainage, gas, electricity and communications were noted. Channels for these services have also been dug on the southeast side of the building and west to the Mental Health Building. Most services would have been introduced in the early twentieth century, including electricity in 1921 and a septic system by 1928.

The original sandstone footings of Rusten House would be trench footings extending from 400mm to 600mm in depth. To the northwest and southeast the verandah footings have been replaced with brick and extend to a depth of approximately 400mm. A concrete ramp has also been added to the southeast side and would be set at least 200mm into the earth. Construction of the verandah footings and concrete ramp at Rusten House represent areas of minor disturbance.

In preparation for the construction of the Mental Health building (1947), the original hillside was cut into at a considerable depth of up to 2 metres from northwest to southeast. The Mental Health Building is single-storey brick structure with a basement to the south. On the higher ground to the north, the Mental Health building was constructed using trench footings 400mm to 500mm deep. The type of footings used for the lower to the south portion is less clear. Considerable disturbance has occurred at this site.

Footings of the portable buildings on the northwest side of the Mental Health Building consist of only stacked besser blocks possibly resting on poured footings. These footings would extend some 200mm into the ground each within a spot area measuring 400mm by 400mm. While the pier footings themselves would have caused some minor disturbance to the site, a retaining wall was noted immediately northwest of the portable buildings. Additional benching or cutting into the original hillside has occurred at this part of the site. Indeed, the site of the portable buildings appears to have been excavated and levelled to a depth of approximately half a metre.

The Occupational Therapy Building (1920) is a single storey brick structure. This building has trench footings and possibly an internal trench with pad footings. Here, the trench footings would extend from 400mm to 600mm in depth. The pad footings would most likely reach a depth of 600mm. To the north a retaining wall at the main entrance of the hospital indicates that original hillside was cut into by about 500mm in order to create a level surface on which to build the Occupational Therapy Building. This area has been considerably disturbed. However, further southeast, a Cyprus Pine, possibly planted in the 1870's, survives indicates that the surrounding grassed area has seen little disturbance.

Major earthworks were involved in the construction of the tennis courts. This area was built up and levelled. Material excavated in preparation for the construction of the Mental Health Building may have been used as fill at the tennis court site.

#### ***4.4. Archaeological Potential.***

Rusten House and its immediate grounds have high archaeological potential. It is likely that a variety of subsurface remains survive relatively in tact and in situ at this site. These remains may include footings of former buildings, privies, rubbish pits and artefactual deposits. They would be associated with the use of the site as both a hospital and the home of the Rusten family and may provide new evidence of the former organization and layout of the hospital, the various activities there and the lives of those who lived, worked and convalesced there.

In particular, remains of the Nurses' Quarters and an adjoining structure are likely to exist beneath the grassed area northwest of Rusten House. Indeed, Pearson et.al notes that the foundations of possibly the Nurses' Quarters were recently uncovered during the installation of the sewer line.<sup>66</sup> Here, the lawn area is likely to contain footings, associated artefacts, features and deposits associated with the use of the building and its occupants. Subsurface footings or remains of the Operating Theatre, demolished in 1932, may exist at the northwest corner of the building beneath the grass and footpath.

Additional footings and features may exist to the southeast near Rusten House. This area might contain remains of the early kitchen, rubbish pits or privies and possibly the washhouse, for which there is no known location.

Considerable disturbance has occurred to the sites of the Occupational Therapy and Mental Health Buildings. In addition to this, no earlier structures or features are known to have been located at either site. As such, no archaeological remains are anticipated at these sites. Furthermore, should unanticipated relics exist, they are unlikely to be in tact or in situ.

That area immediately northwest of the Mental Health Building, however, was the site of some early earth closets or privies. While this area has been considerably disturbed by excavation and levelling, the depth of the privy would have exceeded that of more recent disturbance by at least a metre. Pearson et.al, also notes that earth closets were often a place in which inadequate or outdated equipment and materials were discarded as well as being a place of ablution.<sup>67</sup> It is likely that significant archaeological remains survive in this area.

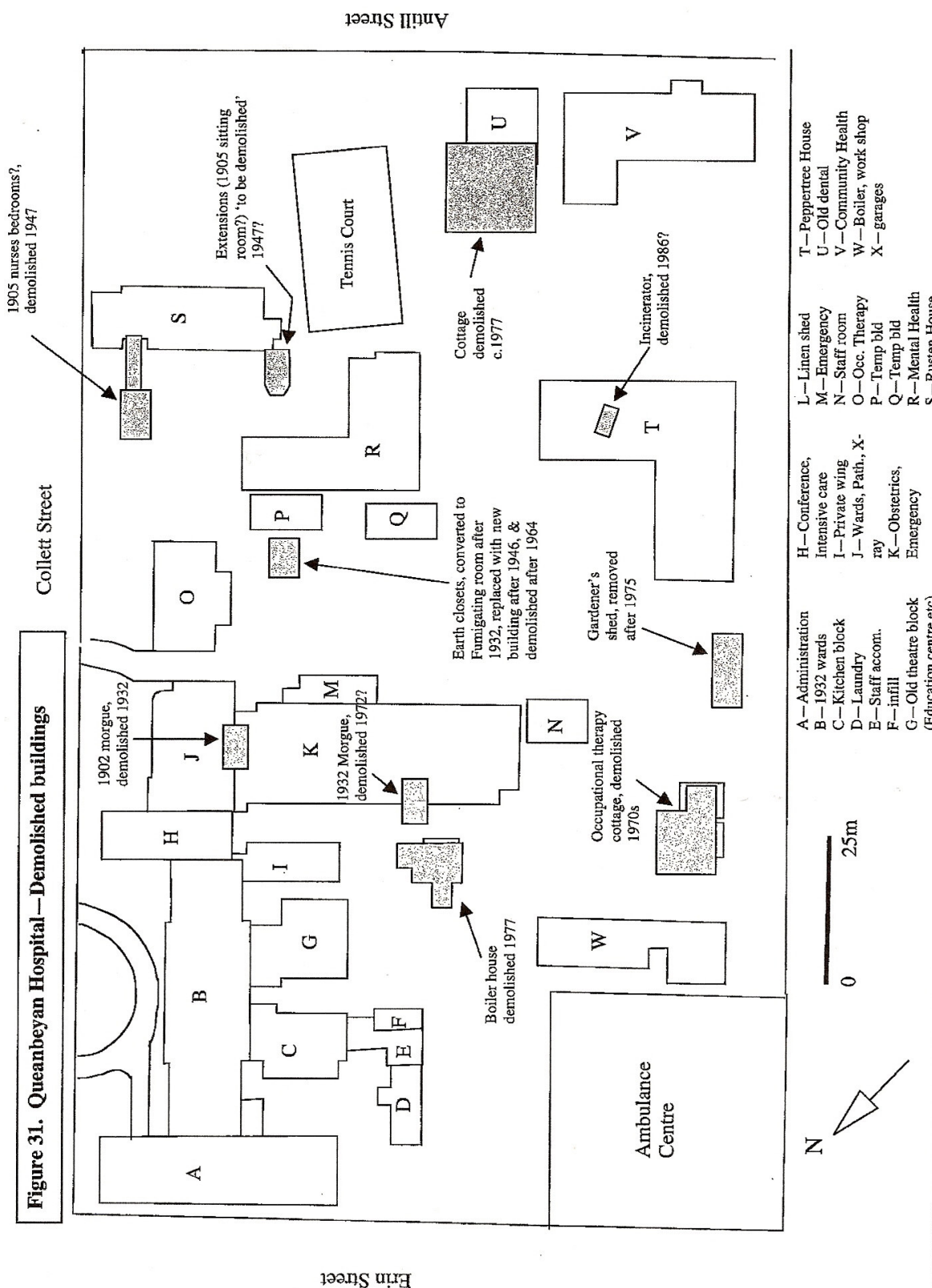
Finally, the grounds of Rusten House are not likely to contain wells, as water was initially carted to the site from the Queanbeyan River and later collected in rainwater tanks.

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<sup>66</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.71.

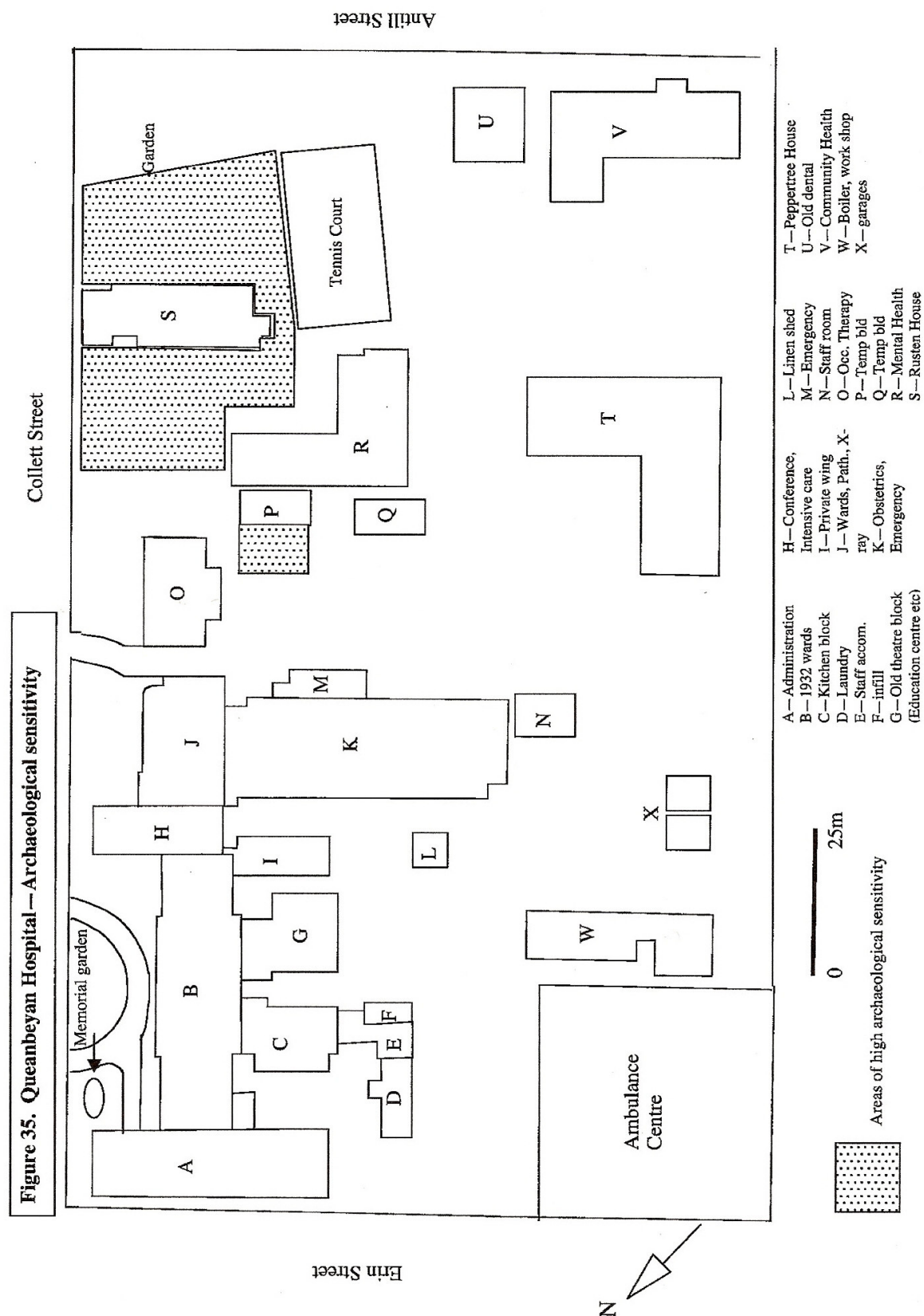
<sup>67</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.71.

#### 4.5. Site Plans.



**Figure 4.1.** Site Plan showing the location of existing and former structures. From Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service.p.37.





**Figure 4.2.** Site Plan showing areas of archaeological sensitivity. From Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O’Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. Figure 35.

#### 4.6. *Photographs.*



*Plate 4.1.* The grassed northwest of Rusten House. This area is likely to contain archaeological relics. Facing southeast.



*Plate 4.2.* The grassed area southeast of Rusten House. Facing west.





**Plate 4.3.** Terraced gardens southeast of Rusten House beside Antill Street. Facing southeast.



**Plate 4.4.** The 1885 extension to Rusten House fronting Collett Street. Facing southwest.



**Plate 4.5.** Site of the former earth closets northwest of the portable buildings. Facing southwest.





**Plate 4.6.** The rear of the Occupational Therapy Building where the ground has been excavated, leveled and retained. Facing northwest.



**Plate 4.7.** View of a basement at the southeast corner of the Mental Health Building where the ground has been excavated and leveled. Facing east.



**Plate 4.8.** View of the 1933 addition to Queanbeyan Hospital from Collett Street. Facing south.

## 5. *ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.*

### 5.1. *Archaeological Significance.*

Archaeological significance depends upon the extent to which further studies of the physical evidence may reasonably be expected to provide information not available from other sources and to present the opportunity for research that will significantly contribute to our understanding of the past. Here, the preservation of the site, the availability of comparative sites, and the extent of historical documentation are relevant.

Historical research and site survey indicate that substantial and archaeological remains are likely to exist below ground at the subject site. Footings, features and rich artefactual deposits associated with Rusten House, associated neighbouring buildings and amenities may exist in situ, which are important components of the cultural fabric of Queanbeyan Hospital. The site does appear to have the potential to yield important archaeological information, evidence associated with significant activities and historical phases. As such, Rusten House and its grounds are considered to have high archaeological potential and significance.

While detailed history and primary sources are available on the hospital since its early years, physical remains are likely to provide the opportunity to examine themes not well documented in historical sources. Such themes may include, for example, the Rusten's residential/domestic use of the site, as compared to its early use as a benevolent institution. Other archaeological research themes may be the availability, type and use of early hospital goods or items and changes in these items over time, discard practices, early construction and building techniques and organizational or spatial relationships relevant to the treatment of patients and early health care in New South Wales.

- Historical Significance. [SHR Criteria (a and b)] The site is associated with the development and growth of Queanbeyan, in particular its health care. Rusten House is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Queanbeyan and is the second earliest hospital. It operated as a hospital for over 70 years.
- Aesthetic Significance [SHR Criteria (c)] The archaeological resource of this site is likely to have aesthetic significance. Exposed in situ archaeological remains, such as footings, features, deposits and artefacts, may have distinctive/attractive visual qualities for temporary public display during excavation and possibly selected permanent display.

- Social Significance [SHR Criteria (d)] There is a high potential for hospital staff and wider community interest in archaeological investigations at the site and the contribution of information to the history of early health care in Queanbeyan.
- Scientific Significance [SHR Criteria (e)] The site does have high potential to contribute scientific and historical information. The site is likely to contain a variety of archaeological resources that are in tact and in situ which relate to life and health care in Queanbeyan and NSW in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Rarity. [SHR Criteria (f)] The site is likely to contain rare archaeological resources or information on the early history of health care in Queanbeyan. The site is rare as one of Queanbeyan's earliest surviving buildings and second earliest hospitals.
- Representativeness [SHR Criteria (g)] The archaeological resource at the subject site may have the potential to provide physical evidence that is representative of early health care in Queanbeyan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Integrity. Archaeological evidence at this site is likely to be varied, in tact and in situ. Disturbance has occurred with the installation of services and construction and demolition in the twentieth century. However, that area southeast and northwest remain relatively undisturbed. As a site that operated as a hospital for 72 years there is also continuity of use.

The archaeological resource is anticipated to consist of domestic refuse, hospital associated artefacts, footings from various structures and features like earth closets.

## **5.2. *Statement of Archaeological Significance.***

Ruston House and its grounds (as shown in Figure 6.3) have high archaeological research potential. The physical archaeological evidence within this site is likely to include rich artefactual deposits and scatters, footings and features which have the potential to yield information relating to major historical themes including the development of a township and early health care in New South Wales. Archaeology at this site is likely to be varied, in tact and in situ.

## 6. **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### 6.1. **Archaeological Curtilage.**

As defined by the 1988 Permanent Conservation Order, the conservation area of Rusten House and its gardens extends to Collett and Antill Streets to the northeast and southeast.<sup>68</sup> Its northwest boundary runs alongside Rusten House at a distance of 4 metres from the building. To the southwest the boundary is aligned with a former fenceline adjacent the southwest corner of the Mental Health Building and including the tennis courts (refer to Figure 2.1).

In their recent heritage study, Pearson et.al write that "Rusten House and its landscape setting is of substantial significance, and should be conserved, including the removal ... and the protection of archaeological evidence of former extensions and out-buildings".<sup>69</sup> The authors have included an archaeological zoning plan in Appendix 3 of their report in which they identify areas of archaeological sensitivity across the wider site of Queanbeyan Hospital, including Rusten House and its surrounds (Figure 6.1).<sup>70</sup>

As identified by Pearson et.al, archaeologically sensitive areas include the northwest side of Rusten House for a distance of 18 metres. Within this area the nurses quarters and other features were once located. Unlike the PCO No.552, Pearson et.al do not include the site of the tennis courts. As described in Chapter 4 of this report, construction of the tennis courts involved considerable ground disturbance. Also, no former structures or features were located in this specific area.

This report agrees with the findings of Pearson et.al. The archaeological curtilage is identified to include the locations of former buildings and features where significant archaeological remains are likely to survive in situ and relatively in tact. The main area of archaeological sensitivity defined in this report has a frontage to Collett Street, extends 18 metres to the northwest of Rusten House, 20 metres to the southeast and 5 metres to the southwest as defined in Figure 6.1. It excludes the site of the tennis courts

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<sup>68</sup> PCO No.552, dated 12 February 1988. NSW Government Gazette No.28. Plan No. HC 1429.

<sup>69</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.71. p.52.



and that of the Mental Health Building. Like Pearson et.al, this report identifies the site of the morgue (1902), though separate, as a potential archaeological site located northwest of the Mental Health Building.

## **6.2. Statutory Obligations.**

While works are planned for the wider area of Queanbeyan Hospital, no excavation or demolition works are proposed for Rusten House or its grounds. The site is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. Should works involving excavation be proposed then an excavation permit for those works will be required for this conservation area under Section 60 of the NSW Heritage Act 1977, unless an exemption is granted under Section 57(1) of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 (as amended on 18 June 2004 and July 2005). This applies to land defined by PCO No.552 (1988) as well as those areas identified as having archaeological potential by Pearson et al.(2005) and the current authors (refer to Figure 6.1.).

For minor works in archaeologically sensitive areas at Ruston House and its grounds (as shown in Figure 6.1), an excavation permit exemption may be approved under Section 57(1) of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 (as amended on 18 June 2004 and July 2005).

According to Standard Exemption No.4, an excavation permit for the excavation or disturbance of land is not required under Section 57(1), where the Director of the Heritage Office (NSW Department of Planning) is satisfied that:

- (a) An archaeological assessment has been prepared in accordance with Guidelines published by the Heritage Council of NSW which indicates that any relics in the land are unlikely to have State or local heritage significance; or
  - (b). The excavation or disturbance of land will have a minor impact on archaeological relics;
- or

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<sup>70</sup> Pearson M., Marshall D. and B. O'Keefe. 2005. *Queanbeyan Hospital Heritage Study*. For Southern Area Health Service. p.71.

(c). The excavation or disturbance of land involves only the removal of unstratified fill which has been deposited on the land. [This refers to unstratified fill material of minor heritage significance that would have been deposited in a single episode].

Should the NSW Department of Commerce propose to undertake or disturb land in the manner described above, then they must notify the Director in writing describing the proposed works and explaining why they satisfy criteria (a), (b) or (c) above. Works at Ruston House and its grounds will not satisfy criteria (a). The site is of State and local significance. The Director will then notify the applicant as to whether or not an exemption is granted.

Persons who are to carry out any works in archaeologically sensitive areas, conservation or otherwise, should be informed of the requirements of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 in relation to archaeological relics.

While this report does not examine that area beyond Ruston House and its immediate surrounds, the NSW Department of Commerce should note that Section 146 of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 states that the accidental discovery of relics should be reported immediately to the NSW Heritage Office (Heritage Act 1977, section 146). It is also noted that, in their assessment of the wider hospital grounds, Pearson et.al concluded that there are no former building site that are likely to be of archaeological significance. Substantial site levelling and terracing, demolition and construction activities would indicate that this seems to be the case.

Copies to of this report should be forwarded to: the NSW Heritage Office, Queanbeyan Shire Council and the Queanbeyan Local Library.

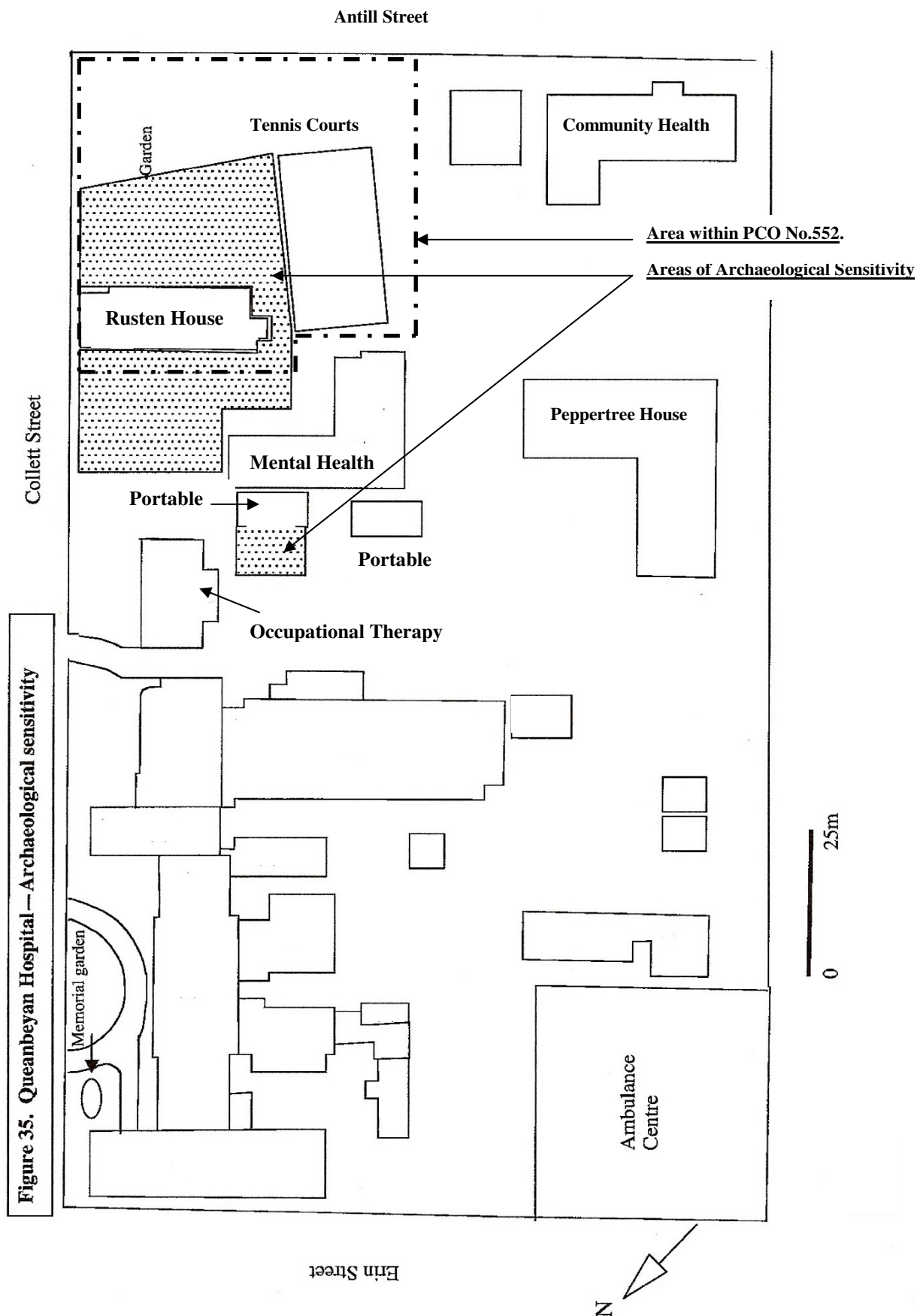


Figure 35. Queanbeyan Hospital — Archaeological sensitivity

**Figure 6.1.** Areas of Archaeological Sensitivity and Area Included within PCO No.552.

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