

Item Details

Name
Sandstone Culvert, approx 200m south of Meurants Lane
SHR/LEP/S170
s170
Address
Old Windsor Road GLENWOOD NSW 2768
Local Govt Area
Blacktown
Local Aboriginal Land Council
Unknown

Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Built	Transport - Land	Road Embankment/Cutting

All Addresses

Addresses									Records Retrieved: 1
Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type	
	Old Windsor Road	GLENWOOD/NSW/2768	Blacktown	Unknown			Unknown	Primary Address	

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The sandstone culvert 200m south of Meurants Lane on the disused portion of the Old Windsor Road is of Local significance as it is part of one of the earliest road systems of the Colony. It possesses technical and research value embodied in its construction; associative significance in its association with early road builders of the Colony, Lt. Francis Grose and surveyor Charles Grimes. The culvert is a rare remnant of early road infrastructure, more so as the road upgrades in the area are either impacting physically on the original road alignment or in this case, the original alignment has been abandoned and neglect is a potential threat to the culvert’s survival.

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The culvert has a high level of significance beyond the local level, for its role in the expansion of the Colony in the early period. It is part of a network of roads constructed to facilitate movement from Sydney to the Hawkesbury and good agricultural lands, possibly before 1800.

Criteria b)

Historical Association Significance

The Old Windsor Road was constructed under the orders of Lieutenant-Governor Francis Grose and surveyed by Charles Grimes, two prominent individuals in the establishment of the Colony and associated infrastructure. The subject culvert would be part of the construction and ongoing maintenance of the road

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

The culvert near Meurants Lane is a fine example of early road associated construction. It displays a high degree of aesthetic value associated with the early roads in NSW. It's location on a disused section of the Old Windsor Road contributes to the overall aesthetic value of the place evoking a sense of the past that is being lost with the necessary upgrades of the road. Particularly evocative is the stretch of road where the culvert is located, now disused, surrounded just to the south by a narrow cutting overshadowed by large eucalypts.

Criteria d)

Social/Cultural Significance

More research required to establish the social significance of the culvert specifically as its value is enhanced by its context on section of this section of Old Windsor Road, which as one of the oldest roads in NSW is valuable for its evocative qualities, relating to the early days of the British Colony.

Criteria e)

Research Potential

The level of skill used to construct this culvert is high, evidenced by its survival despite heavy usage of the road before it was diverted at this point. It has research value in that it has the potential to elucidate construction techniques and the relationships of structures to each other from the period.

Criteria f)

Rarity

The culvert is rare in the local and regional context as it is a remnant of the early road structure in the Colony, particularly as the road upgrades in the area are either modifying the original road or moving from the original alignment. The culvert was one of only two bridging structures along the stretch of Old Windsor Road between Seven Hills Road and Sunnyholt Road. The other bridge, 0.25km north of the culvert has since been demolished leaving only a dip to indicate its earlier presence. The culvert maintains a good degree of its physical integrity and its relationship to the road and associated features.

Criteria g)

Representative

Whilst the culvert is now rare on this stretch of road, it is representative of road infrastructure construction whilst the Colony was being established. It is representative of the organisation and structure of road gangs and convict labour under the supervision of the colonial engineers.

Integrity/Intactness

The culvert maintains a high degree of integrity on the western side of the road. The three top courses on the eastern side have collapsed, however the condition of the sandstone blocks is very good and the potential to reinstate them successfully is high.

Owners

Records Retrieved: 0		
Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Date Ownership Updated
No Results Found		

Description

Designer	Builder/Maker
Unknown	Unknown

Physical Description	Updated
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Very old sandstone culvert on both sides of a disused portion of the Old Windsor Road. Constructed of sparrow-pecked, hammer-dressed sandstone. The mouth of the culvert on the eastern side (upstream) of the road has collapsed to three courses from the top. A clay pipe runs under the base of the road at ground level. It was recorded as having four courses visible in 1993 (Casey & Lowe).The west side of the culvert is in good condition, although the general area is infested with weeds such as Lantana and blackberry that may compromise the structural integrity of the items by growing in cracks etc. Seven courses visible although the first course is almost obscured by silt. It appears as though the lintel has moved across to south on the western side.

Physical Condition

Updated 04/17/2009

Original condition assessment: 'East side of the culvert (upstream) has partially collapsed although the sandstone blocks are still in excellent condition. West side of the culvert is in excellent condition. Clay pipe (1993-94) in good condition.' (Last updated: 8/03/2005.)

2007-08 condition update: 'Poor (east) - Fair (west).' (Last updated: 17/4/09.)

Modifications And Dates

Unknown

Further Comments

Although the culvert has suffered some damage, it is repairable and it is imperative to do so. Ideally, this section of the Old Windsor Road will be preserved as a hard-edge park. Comparison with a photograph in the 1993 Casey & Lowe report indicates that the culvert has silted up. The stretch of Old Windsor Road on which the culvert is located was the subject of a larger heritage assessment in preparation for the road widening. A recommendation by Tanner and supported by Casey & Lowe was that this stretch of road is left intact and the new line of road is moved around it (Casey & Lowe 1993a: 12). This recommendation was taken up by the RTA and the road has been left intact with the culvert and associated cuttings (the cuttings are not the subject of this report). The survival of this section of the road has contributed to the formulation of draft policy No. 6 (this form).

Current Use

Culvert

Former Use

Culvert

Listings

Listings

			Records Retrieved: 1		
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register			3/8/2005 12:00:00 AM		

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 0					
Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
No Results Found					

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

The Cumberland region was first accessed via the Hawkesbury River and all supplies arriving and agricultural goods departing were

transported by this route. Many factors constrained this mode of transport. The cost and difficulty associated with transporting produce to the Sydney markets by boat was inhibitive and the fear of "convict escape by boat was a significant restraint on early maritime construction" (HLA, 2001:8).

Lt. Francis Grose recognising the dilemma of reliance on a river based transport system sought to make an overland route joining the Hawkesbury settlements with Sydney via Parramatta. Charles Grimes surveyed the road in August 1794, and later that year Grose claimed:

"I have caused a very good road to be made from Sydney to the banks of the Hawkesbury by which we discover the distance from this place by land is much less than expected
(cited in Tanner 1984:2.3.1)."

This road was initially known as the Hawkesbury Road, later becoming the Old Windsor Road. The Government Stock Yard, north of Meurants Lane was established by 1800, indicating that this alignment of the Old Windsor Road was in use. The construction of the subject culvert is harder to date as it may have been part of the original road construction or it may have been part of the overall upgrade ordered by Governor Macquarie in 1809 (Casey & Lowe 1993b: 4-5).

The branch of Windsor Road Linked to the Great North Road via Castle Hill (known as Windsor Road to distinguish it from Old Windsor Road) was established around 1812 (Casey and Lowe 1993b:5). It appears that this newer branch of Windsor Road was developed to avoid crossing the Government Domain at Parramatta, resulting in a more direct route to Sydney. It also increased the road haulage capacity over the length of both Windsor Roads (HLA 2001:8).

However it was the Old Windsor Road which remained the principal route for settlers and the movement of produce. The condition of both roads was a source of much complaint. Despite Grimes assertions that it was a "very good road", Governor Macquarie thought differently, declaring shortly after his arrival that "the present road is scarcely intitled [sic] to that name. It is in so bad a state of repair as to be scarcely passable" (cited in Tanner 1984:2.3.1). It is likely that the culvert in this section of Old Windsor Road was present by the time the Government Stock Yard was installed on the north side of Meurants Lane in 1800 (Casey & Lowe 1993b: 4) although it may have been constructed as part of the 1797 programme of road upgrades undertaken by the residents in the region. An earlier bridge was located 0.25km north of the culvert as shown on the Survey plan of 1885, but has since been demolished leaving no trace (Casey & Lowe 1993b: 17).

Macquarie initiated general road maintenance program in 1810, tenders were invited for the improvements of roads and the construction of tollhouses in order to self fund improvements. The specification for Windsor Road at the stage was:

Two rods wide with a ditch on either side from 3 ft to 18 inched deep, for keeping the road perfectly dry, and carrying the water off; the centre of the road to be sufficiently elevated and made of lasting Materials, with the necessary Bridges, the timber to be cut down 4 Rods wide on each side of the Road all through out. The whole of this work to be completed within Six months... (cited in Lavelle 1997:3)

The contract was awarded to James Harrex, however as he failed to complete specified tasks the contract was rescinded and then reissued to Messrs Howe and McGrath. Governor Darling (1826-1832) followed Governor Macquarie in promoting the road network in the colony. Darling's road system was to be based on the 'Great Roads' of England and be maintained and constructed by convict labour.

Windsor Road was under the ministrations of No. 12 Road Gang during the 1830s, however most of their efforts were concentrated on the bridge over South Creek and the condition of the remainder of the road continued to deteriorate. In 1837 the road was described as being in a "dilapidated state", the section to McGraths Hill described as "nearly impassable owing to the number of large holes" (cited in Lavelle 1997:5).

The economic depression of the 1840s contributed to the already inadequate funding for maintenance, let alone improvement. The first issue of the Hawkesbury Courier (11/7/1844) states that "the road from Windsor to Parramatta has long been in a disgraceful state." The Sydney Morning Herald gives the following description of the state of Old Windsor Road:

The poor horses were tried to the utmost by the deep ruts and almost interminable sloughs, the soft yellow clay ploughed by the narrow wheels and hollows of veriest mud. We passed several teams on the road struggling for existence...About midway a large load of hay was capsized in the centre of the road and by the side of a hill a dray full of grain had also upset. (23/6/1857).

The official opening of the rail line from Blacktown to Windsor and Richmond in 1864 significantly reduced the importance of the road by offering a more comfortable and reliable transportation service. The introduction of a direct service to Sydney in the early 1890s further signalled the decline of Windsor Road. Road maintenance during the twentieth century is unclear.

During World War II sections of the road were reputedly widened. This was apparently so Windsor Road was able to support the rapid transport of large vehicles, thereby serving as one of the contingency evacuation routes from Sydney. Minor upgrades were part of this improvement however it is thought that some of the road cuts were also widened to accommodate the wider road (ERM 2001: 7).

During all the changes which have occurred in the region, Windsor Road, until recently, followed its original alignment. Those changes that have been made are relatively minor overall, as the new sections of road are adjacent to the old.

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 2

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
3. Economy	Transport	Unknown
2. Peopling	Convict	Unknown

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 2

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
RTA Heritage & Conservation Register Update Phase Two			2005		Austral Archaeology
RTA Heritage & Conservation Register Update Phase Two			2005		Austral Archaeology

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 12

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	HLA EnviroSciences P/L	2001	Windsor Road Significance Assessment Environmental Overview - Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage Study.	
Written	HLA EnviroSciences P/L	2001	Windsor Road Significance Assessment Environmental Overview - Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage Study.	
Written	Lavelle, S.	1997	Historical Archaeological Assessment of Alignment Stones, Windsor Road. Between Mulgrave and Kellyville, Sydney, NSW.	
Written	Lavelle, S.	1997	Historical Archaeological Assessment of Alignment Stones, Windsor Road. Between Mulgrave and Kellyville, Sydney, NSW.	
Written	Casey & Lowe	1993	Historical archaeological heritage study and assessment of Old Windsor Road and Windsor Road, Rouse Hill NSW for Rouse Hill Infrastructure Project (Stage 1).	
Written	Casey & Lowe	1993	Historical archaeological heritage study and assessment of Old Windsor Road and Windsor Road, Rouse Hill NSW	
Written	Casey & Lowe	1993	Historical archaeological heritage study and assessment of Old Windsor Road and Windsor Road, Rouse Hill NSW for Rouse Hill Infrastructure Project (Stage 1).	
Written	Casey & Lowe	1993	Historical archaeological heritage study and assessment of Old Windsor Road and Windsor Road, Rouse Hill NSW	
Written	Tanner, H. and Associates	1984	Heritage Study of the North Western Section of Sydney.	
Written	Tanner, H. and Associates	1984	Heritage Study of the North Western Section of Sydney.	
Written		1844	Hawkesbury Courier	
Written		1844	Hawkesbury Courier	

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
State Government	Transport for NSW	4300339

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