

Item Details

Name
Government Depot Site (former)
SHR/LEP/S170
SHR #00345

Address
Dunsmore Street ROOTY HILL NSW 2766

Local Govt Area
Blacktown
Local Aboriginal Land Council
Deerubbin



Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Complex / Group	Farming and Grazing	Homestead Complex

All Addresses

Addresses								
Records Retrieved: 2								
Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
	Eastern Road	ROOTY HILL/NSW/2766	Blacktown	Unknown	Rooty Hill	Cumberland	MOUNT DRUITT	Alternate Address
	Dunsmore Street	ROOTY HILL/NSW/2766	Blacktown	Deerubbin	Rooty Hill	Cumberland	MOUNT DRUITT	Primary Address

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The Government Depot site has potential State significance for its association with Governor Macquarie and is certainly of regional significance as the former residence of the Superintendent of the stock farm. The site also has local significance through its association with early travellers and settlers in the district (HO).

The station at Rooty Hill was the next principal one to that at Camden for the grazing of the Government horned cattle and horses in the early 1800s. (Bertie, 1935).

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The (former) Government Depot site is of historical significance for its association with Governor Macquarie and other travellers and early settlers in the Blacktown/Rooty Hill district. It is also of significance for its former role as a Government Stock Farm. (DUAP,1999). As part of the Government Stock Farm it was the second most important Government Station in the colony, after Camden. (Bertie, 1935, and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

The (former) Government Depot retains the fabric of a portion of the Government Stock Farm's original 6000 acres of land, and as open space which could be read as still 'rural', it has some aesthetic value, and some rarity in modern Western Sydney. (Bertie, 1935, and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

The superintendent's house site is considered to have little, if any, remaining built fabric. The site does retain the overall form and remnants of the overseer's garden. This latter site therefore has relatively little aesthetic significance, at present. (DUAP, 1999 and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

Criteria d)

Social/Cultural Significance

The (former) Government Depot is of social significance for its association with early settlers and travellers through the Blacktown/Rooty Hill district. It has further significance for the role it played in the raising of stock for the young colony and for its association with early industry in the district. It would have provided employment for many early settlers. (DUAP, 1999)

Criteria e)

Research Potential

The (former) Government Depot may be of technical significance should the existence of any early structures be confirmed, and for its association with early farming and stock raising techniques - which may be demonstrated through any remains on the site which are yet to be discovered. These may provide insights into field sizes, shapes, fencing materials and types, animal and crop residues. (DUAP, 1999 and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

Criteria f)

Rarity

The (former) Government Depot retains the fabric of a portion of the Government Stock Farm's original 6000 acres of land, and as open space which could be read as still 'rural', it has some aesthetic value, and some rarity in modern Western Sydney. As part of the Government Stock Farm it was the second most important Government Station in the colony, after Camden. (Bertie, 1935, and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

Criteria g)

Representative

Cannot be assessed at this point in time (DUAP, 1999).

The Government Stock Farm was one of the two most important such stations in the colony in the early 1820s, and still retains potential to demonstrate through its archaeological resources, a representative example of a colonial era farm, with typical farm elements of that era. (Bertie, 1935, and Read, S., pers. comm., 2006).

Integrity/Intactness

It is considered that there is very little, if any built fabric remaining and the overseer's house site cannot therefore be considered to be intact. However it does retain the overall form and elements of the house's garden, and open space, remnant of the former Government Stock Farm. (DUAP, 1999 and Read, S., 2006)

Owners

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

Description

Designer	Builder/Maker
Not known	Not known

Physical Description

Updated

The site once comprised the former c.6000 acre Government Stock Farm and associated Superintendent's residence built in 1815.

Between January 1810 and November 1821, there was (in terms of buildings on site):

"At Rooty Hill:

1. a brick built house of two stories high for the residence and accomodation of the superintendent and principal overseer of the Government stock at the station, reserving one room for the use of the Governor, when occasionally there, with kitchen, stables and other necessary out-offices and kitchen garden enclosed;
2. four paddocks of 50 acres, each enclosed for the grazing of young cattle and raising of wheat and maize for the use of the stockmen;
3. temporary log huts or barracks for the accomodation of 20 stockkeepers, with small kitchen garden attached thereto.

From a walk around the overgrown area where the original building is thought to have been, there is little visible evidence remaining of any structures above ground. The area is almost completely overgrown with thorn bushes. The only evidence found included several timber posts, from a post and rail fence and a large cement rendered brick pit (possibly a well). It has been filled with various items and debris. Remnants of the garden which would have served the main building are discernable, as is the overall form of the garden.

A 1992 DUAP listing described the remains of the depot to include: mounds of bricks, stone flagging, timber slabs, and a five metre diameter well, however, with the exception of the well, none of these structures are visible and appear unlikely to have survived.

Physical Condition

Updated 11/23/2000

The residence is a ruin, although its exact condition cannot be ascertained owing to the overgrown condition of the site. The site has high potential archaeological value associated with its former use as a Government Stock Farm.

Modifications And Dates

1810-22: two rooms were added for the Governor (Macquarie's) convenience.
c6000 acres of land of a very superior description, and ... this grazing ground (1821)

October 1821 Macquarie carved a large slice off the reservation by giving Major Druitt a grant of 1000 acres 'out of the Rooty Hill Government allotment on Ross's Creek'.

about 6000 acres of land is centrically situated, being on the Great Western Road and only 10 miles distant from Parramatta, it 1824 Captain P P King, son of Governor King, was given a grant of 1500 acres, also part of the Rooty Hill establishment.

1935 photo shows the original two story 'old homestead with two chimneys at each end gable, a half-hipped/hipped gable roof form, with corrugated iron sheeting on it (originally would have been shingled), what appears to be a gum tree to one side, close to the house, and a low picket fence in front. Another shows a fairly large oak tree (*Quercus* sp., probably common English oak, *Q. robur*) at the same location, with a picket fenced ?paddock? around it. This tree reputedly dated from Macquarie's era. (Bertie, 1935).

Demolished c. 1960s.

Further Comments

Very little is known about the site and a detailed physical survey does not appear to be have been carried out to date. Owing to the site's former use and its association with Governor Macquarie, further investigation is warranted. It should be noted that due to the uncertainty whether there is anything left of the building at all, there is some urgency attached to this. What remains of the site should be carefully documented. If there is very little remaining, there may be potential for the site's removal from the register. Refer to Historical notes for management recommendations and to Action Plan for more detailed short term management guidelines.

Current Use

Vacant/ruin

Former Use

Stock farm and residence

Listings

Listings

Records Retrieved: 5					
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
Local Environmental Plan			1/1/1988 12:00:00 AM		
Heritage Act - State Heritage Register		00345	4/2/1999 12:00:00 AM	27	1546
Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register			2/11/1999 12:00:00 AM		
Local Environmental Plan		1988	1/3/1992 12:00:00 AM	002	33
Heritage Act - Permanent Conservation Order - former		00345	7/11/1986 12:00:00 AM	110	3337

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 1					
Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Standard Exemptions		11/9/2020 12:00:00 AM	

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

There is much speculation about the source of the name Rooty Hill. Mr William Freame wandered much in these parts collecting information from old residents. In 1931 in an article in a country newspaper on place names he wrote regarding the name: "Old hands assure me that the hill received its name from the roots and other debris left around its bare fields when the Eastern Creek was in flood, and this appears to be a very reasonable deduction." Mrs Hawkins' description quoted later in the derivation does not appear reasonable. Captain J H Watson's version, he as a young man having been in India, and he derives the name from 'ruti', the Hindustani word for bread. Governor Macquarie as a young man had been in India, and if the settlement at the hill had been devoted to agriculture there would have been a connection, but it was a stockyard. A third and anonymous writer puts forward a Captain Thomas Rooty as a resident in the locality. No information can be found on him.

The district was used as a Government stockyard, and in a lengthy list which Governor Macquarie prepared of the buildings and works erected during his regime between January 1810 and November 1821, we find the following:

"At Rooty Hill:

1. a brick built house of two stories high for the residence and accommodation of the superintendent and principal overseer of the Government stock at the station, reserving one room for the use of the Governor, when occasionally there, with kitchen, stables and other necessary out-offices and kitchen garden enclosed;
2. four paddocks of 50 acres, each enclosed for the grazing of young cattle and raising of wheat and maize for the use of the stockmen;
3. temporary log huts or barracks for the accommodation of 20 stockkeepers, with small kitchen garden attached thereto.

NB: The station at Rooty Hill is the next principal one to Camden for the grazing of the Government horned cattle and horses, and consists of about 6000 acres of land of a very superior description, and, as this grazing ground is centrally situated, being on the Great Western Road and only 10 miles distant from Parramatta, it ought not to be on any account alienated from the Crown.

Macquarie seems to have forgotten that he had already carved a large slice off the reservation by giving Major Druitt in October 1821 a grant of 1000 acres 'out of the Rooty Hill Government allotment on Ross's Creek'. Mount Druitt is a permanent reminder of this grant. In 1824 Captain P P King, son of Governor King, was given a grant of 1500 acres, also part of the Rooty Hill establishment.

On January 11, 1822 T H Hawkins arrived in Sydney with wife and 8 children and mother in law. A few months later he received an appointment as commissariat storekeeper at Bathurst, and on April 5 set out from Sydney, at the head of a cavalcade of bullock waggons, carts, drays and belongings over the Blue Mountains to their new home. Late that night the party reached Rooty Hill, a distance of 25 miles from Sydney, the Government House was ready to receive them.

...Hawkins described the place 'I could have been contented to remain there for ever - the house was good, and the land around like a fine wooded park in England'.

The 'brick built house of two stories' still stands (1935), with galvanised iron roof (seen in a photo) where once it was shingle-roofed. The oak tree (also shown in a photo) would have been small in Macquarie's time, but is now a veteran, ... a sturdy sample of the genus' (sic).

(the above paragraphs are all from: Bertie, 1935, p36, 37, with slight modifications/paraphrasing by Read, S., 2006).

Very little is known about the history of the site other than that it was a Stock Farm, whose original boundary was the present City of Blacktown perimeter. The original building on the site was the Superintendent's residence and was also used by Governor Macquarie and other passing travellers. The site was later known as "Thornleigh" and then "Stratton" although the origin of these names is not known.

Two rooms were added for Governor Macquarie's convenience. It was in a ruinous state in the 1960s, and was demolished. (Broadbent & Hughes, 1988).

1935 photographs showed the two story 'old homestead on old Government Stock Farm, Rooty Hill', with two chimneys at each end gable, a half-hipped/hipped gable roof form, what appears to be a gum tree to one side, close to the house, and a low picket fence in front. Another photograph showed a fairly large oak tree (*Quercus* sp., probably common English oak, *Q. robur*) at the same location, with a picket fenced ?paddock? around it. (Bertie, 1935).

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 6

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with Aaron Muron Bolot, architect
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Developing roles for government - public land administration
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Developing roles for government - facilitating pastoralism
3. Economy	Agriculture	Operating government-owned farms
3. Economy	Agriculture	Ancillary structures - wells, cisterns
2. Peopling	Convict	Working for the Crown

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Further assessment of the site by an archaeologist, once the overgrown vegetation has been removed by a clearance team. This is considered urgent and should be undertaken before the site deteriorates any further. (Refer to Action Plan for further details).

As previously noted, the site cannot be accurately assessed in its current condition. Should the Department wish to explore either the possible removal of the site from their s.170 register, or possible future uses for the site, it is recommended that the site first be cleared, under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist.

Following this, archaeological investigation of the site should take place in areas considered most likely to have significant sub-surface artifacts. A full historical analysis of the site should be undertaken in conjunction with the archaeological investigation. The clearance and investigation of the site should be fully recorded and documented along with any findings. Following the results of the investigation, a suitably qualified conservation architect or archaeologist should be consulted regarding recommendations for future use and the site's status as a heritage item.

Further assessment should be undertaken prior to a clearance taking place as to future use.

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 3

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
S.170 Register DUAP			1999		Paul Davies Pty Ltd
SHI Inventory Sheet			1998		(not known)
SHI Inventory Sheet			1998		(not stated)

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 5

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	Banksia Heritage & Archaeology	2004	The Government Depot Site, Rooty Hill: Conservation Management Plan	
Written	Knox & Partners et.al	2003	The Rooty Hill and Morreau reserve : conservation plan	
Written	Unknown	1998	SHI Inventory sheet	
Written	Broadbent, J, Hughes, J., et al.	1988	Demolished for the Public Good: Crimes, Follies and Misfortunes	
Written	Bertie, C. H.	1935	Touched by the lazy hand of time	

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Heritage NSW	Heritage NSW	5045415

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