

## Item Details

**Name**  
Rouse Hill House Estate

**SHR/LEP/S170**  
LEP #

**Address**  
980 Windsor Road ROUSE HILL NSW 2155

**Local Govt Area**  
Blacktown  
**Local Aboriginal Land Council**  
Unknown

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

## All Addresses

### Addresses

Records Retrieved: 1

Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
980	Windsor Road	ROUSE HILL/NSW/2155	Blacktown	Unknown	Gidley	Cumberland	Unknown	Primary Address

## Significance

### Statement Of Significance

Rouse Hill House is one of the most significant and substantial houses of the Macquarie period which dates from 1810 to 1822. Rouse Hill House Estate is the largest and most complete publically owned physical record - in the form of buildings, furnishings, artefacts and landscape relationship - of the occupancy and culture of a European-Australian family, encompassing the tastes, fortunes, and endeavours of seven generations from the early 19th century to the late 20th century (Historic Houses Trust 1997:8).

The property is perhaps unique for its survival as a largely intact estate with an unbroken chain of occupancy, allwing the survival of major garden and interior elements of every period of its history to the present. This layering of artefacts and fashions is especially prevalent in the gardens where designs and physical details such as edging, fencing, planting containers, bed designs and paths provide a case history for the study of the development of garden practices in Australia.

The garden is perhaps Australia's oldest surviving colonial garden in relatively intact form. The surviving physical evidence in the gardens includes borders in a variety of materials, fence and gate remnants, fragments of trellis and arbours, paving and numerous soil displacements that become evident with the location's annual dry spells. These physical remains, matched with pictorial evidence from photographs, drawings and engravings of the property, and writings, have resulted in the identification of four stages of the garden's development: c.1825, c.1865, c.1885 and c.1968. This continuity and evidence of evolution of a very early intact garden from the first quarter of the 19th century to the Edwardian era and 20th century is extremely rare in Australia. (Bogle, 1993 adapted by Read, S., 2004

**Criteria a)**  
**Historical Significance**

Rouse Hill House is significant for the record of the Rouse and Terry family occupancy over the seven generations and 180 years which the property constitutes. This record is to be found physically in the house, its outbuildings, finishes, collection, garden and rural curtilage.

The property is significant for:

- Its association with Richard Rouse, building contractor and free settler, and Superintendent of Public Works, based at Parramatta.
- Its association with the convict period through assignment of convicts for the building of the house and operation of Rouse Hill House and nearby properties.
- As a record of the history of taste and level of cultural awareness held by a particular class of people in the history of New South Wales.

The property provides evidence of recurrent themes in NSW history, for example, the family's prosperity throughout the 19th century followed by relative poverty in the 20th century is representative of 'Boom and Bust' themes in Australian social and economic history.

#### **Criteria b)**

##### **Historical Association Significance**

Rouse Hill House is significant for the record of the Rouse and Terry family occupancy over the seven generations and 180 years which the property constitutes. This record is to be found physically in the house, its outbuildings, finishes, collection, garden and rural curtilage.

The property is significant for:

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- Its association with the convict period through assignment of convicts for the building of the house and operation of Rouse Hill House and nearby properties.
- As a record of the history of taste and level of cultural awareness held by a particular class of people in the history of New South Wales.

Of local significance is its association with a local population which included men and women who worked on the Rouse Hill property, shop keepers, local clergy, school masters and their families.

(Historic Houses Trust 1997:6-7)

#### **Criteria c)**

##### **Aesthetic/Technical Significance**

Rouse Hill House is exceptional as a record of the aesthetic tastes of seven generations of a single family.

The aesthetic responses to the place depend on the diversity of the visual evidence - in the building, range of decorative and applied arts, garden and the agricultural surrounds, and their interconnectedness.

(Historic Houses Trust 1997:7)

#### **Criteria d)**

##### **Social/Cultural Significance**

The family history is representative of a class of people who survived the 1840s depression to rise to social prominence in the second half of the 19th century. It encompasses:

- the family's role as landowners with significant commercial interests in Parramatta
- the family's pre c1910 commercial and social prominence as pastoralists
- the social make-up of the extended family which included, free settlers, emancipists, pastoralists, businessmen, merchants and military, political and engineering men.

(Historic Houses Trust 1997:6)

#### **Criteria e)**

##### **Research Potential**

The property is significant for:

- The evidence that the wide range of building works, including agricultural works, provides of various forms of design and construction from 1812 to the present
- the wide range of services and domestic equipment at the place dating from 1812 to the present.
- the immense research potential of the continuum of building techniques, services and equipment on the site and for the one family.

(Historic Houses Trust 1997:7)

#### **Criteria f)**

##### **Rarity**

THE GARDEN is important for its layout rather than its plants. It is perhaps the earliest garden design to have survived in NSW, almost unaltered in form although modified slightly in detail.

(Broadbent & Bogle 1990:24)

#### **Criteria g)**

##### **Representative**

Rouse Hill House is arguably unrivalled in Australia for the wealth of physical evidence of its own history and its use by the family which built it. This intactness extends to all aspects of the property. (Historic Houses Trust 1997:6)

Integrity/Intactness

High

Owners

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

Description

Designer Builder/Maker

Richard Rouse (attributed), John Horbury Hunt (Stables) Convicts

Physical Description Updated

Rouse Hill House is a large two storey Georgian House set on top of a ridge which falls away gradually to all cardinal points. The house is oriented to the northeast, midway between Parramatta & Windsor. The house has a separate two storey brick service wing, offices forming an arcaded courtyard, 22 rooms, staircase hall, service stair and two cellar rooms. The house has a fine stone-flagged stair hall with cantilevered timber stair. The doors are all six panelled with some architraves and panelled jamb linings. The main house is built of sandstone with a slate roof, timber floors (kitchen, scullery, staircase, hall, arcade and verandah are flagged) and oakgrained hardwood joinery.

Other buildings on the site include a slab built cow shed, brick bath house, a reconstructed timber summer house and brick stables (Chivell 1978).

The property is perhaps unique for its survival as a largely intact estate with an unbroken chain of occupancy, allwing the survival of major garden and interior elements of every period of its history to the present. This layering of artefacts and fashions is especially prevalent in the gardens where designs and physical details such as edging, fencing, planting containers, bed designs and paths provide a case history for the study of the development of garden practices in Australia.

The garden is perhaps Australia's oldest surviving colonial garden in relatively intact form. The surviving physical evidence in the gardens includes borders in a variety of materials, fence and gate remnants, fragments of trellis and arbours, paving and numerous soil displacements that become evident with the location's annual dry spells. These physical remains, matched with pictorial evidence from photographs, drawings and engravings of the property, and writings, have resulted in the identification of four stages of the garden's development: c.1825, c.1865, c.1885 and c.1968. This continuity and evidence of evolution of a very early intact garden from the first quarter of the 19th century to the Edwardian era and 20th century is extremely rare in Australia. The effects of new technologies in Australian estate gardening with replacement of palings with wire fences, displacement of stone and brick garden or path edgings with terracotta tile edgings etc are quite evident. (Bogle, 1993 adapted by Read, S., 2004)

The house is a large two storey Georgian house with separate two storey brick service wing, offices forming an arcaded courtyard, 22 rooms, staircase, hall and two cellar rooms.

The brick stables are a noted example of the work of John Horbury Hunt.

Physical Condition Updated 03/07/2006

Good

Modifications And Dates

1813 house begun, 450 acres (182 hectares) 1818 house completed c1820 - cottage built 1825 family took up residence c.1825 - stage 1 of garden laid out with oval carriage loop and squared Georgian fashion to northeast of house, all borders to paths thought to be 'dug', brick and stone borders and gutters added later, Moreton Bay figs northeast of house must date to this period (Ficus macrophylla) 1840s - Barn, woolshed and laundry wing built. 1855 - Verandahs added to house and summerhouse and slaughter house built. - House redecorated and substantially refurbished 1860s - Two storey service wing 1862 - Roof of house slated. C.1865 - garden modification - stage 2 garden bridges over gutter northeast of squared beds east of house, drain added also in this location, garden beds (diamond and 4 triangles) cut in front of house, paling fence added to southeast, picket fence or gate to southwest near house, entrance driveway formalised, more fencing 1865-67 - Two storey service wing added 1876-77 - Stables built. - Bathroom linking service wing with terrace built 1885 - House decorated and partially refurbished c.1885 - stage 3 garden modifications, sandstone drain and bridges to northeast of squared garden east of house, kitchen garden and drying yard added to southeast of house, paving in between western wings of house, circular drive loop west of house, 2 picket gates northwest side of house, trellis frame on northern wall of northern rear wing west of house, shed and octagonal summer house added in garden east of house, new garden bed immediately adjacent to east wall of house (near front faade but to the side), arbours /trellis added on two crossing garden paths east of house 1932 - Studio converted into a breakfast room 1951-63 - Subdivision. Land reduced to 106 acres 1957 - Bathhouse renovated 1961 - Demolition of glass enclosure to western verandah 1965 - Nursery floor replaced c.1968 - stage 4 garden modifications - driveway rerouted WWII, two rear (west of house) gates added, steel tank added west of house, rockery added southwest of house, two gates added east of house connecting to pre-existing paths, vehicle gate and path added further east of garden towards Windsor Road, garden east of house used as grazing paddock, embankment cut into Windsor Road (with road upgrading), loss of arbours/trellis on one of two garden paths (of c.1885 creation), stone kerbing on 3 garden paths (north-south) east of house replace. Earlier brick borders. 1968 - Further subdivision 1974 - Final subdivision (Historic Houses Trust 1997:2, Bogle & Broadbent 1990:12-15) 1984 summer house repair/reconstructed 1993 - 25 acres (10 hectares) of land left (in HHT management) (Bogle, 1993)

Further Comments

Current Use

Musueum

Former Use

Residence, garden and rural estate

Listings

Listings

		Records Retrieved: 3			
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
State Environmental Planning Policy					
Local Environmental Plan	Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015	l107	7/7/2015 12:00:00 AM	430	
Local Environmental Plan	Amend No 143		4/12/2002 12:00:00 AM	72	2262

Procedures/Exemptions

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

# History

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## Historical Notes or Provenance

## Updated

The house was built between 1813 and 1818 by Richard Rouse, a free settler who arrived in Australia in 1801. He rose quickly in the colony and became the Superintendent of Public Works at Parramatta. The original grant was 450 acres (182 hectares), and this grew to 1200 acres (486 hectares) by Rouse's death.

In 1813 while building toll houses for Macquarie's upgraded road to the Hawkesbury, Rouse chose the site for his house. He received a 450 acre grant of land in 1816. (Broadbent & Bogle 1990:7) By 1823, as a result of the purchase of an adjacent grant, the property comprised of 1200 acres.(Historic Houses Trust 1997:2)

Rouse consolidated his land holdings at North Richmond from around 1806 and increased his pastoral holdings in the north west of New South Wales, using his sons to colonise further west while he continued to acquire land in Parramatta and Western Sydney.

A number of the property's outbuildings finished construction following the completion of the house, including the laundry wing, cottage, barn and woolshed. The garden layout reflects the construction of the house between 1813 and 1818. Some trees remain from the plantings in the mid 19th century. With the exception of outbuildings, Rouse seems to have made no other alterations to the property's buildings. This was left to later generations (Broadbent & Bogle 1990:7).

Rouse died in 1852 leaving the property to his son Edwin Rouse. The property went to Edwin's son Edwin Stephen Rouse on his death in 1862.

A summerhouse, woolshed and a two storey service wing was added in the 1860s, the stables built in 1876 and 1877 and the house redecorated and partly furnished in 1885. (Historic Houses Trust 1997:2) The service wing made no direct connection with the house. A verandah, weighted sash windows, a modified front door and sidelights and other late 19th century innovations were also installed. These too have been done in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the house. (Broadbent & Bogle 1990:7)

Edwin Stephen Rouse's eldest daughter Nina who had left the house in 1895 to marry George Terry returned with her husband to live at Rouse Hill in 1924. This was a result of their bankruptcy.

Following the death of Edwin Stephen Rouse in 1931 his estate was administered by Trustees, mainly family members and later a family company, until 1969. Subdivision had begun in 1951 and the property had been reduced to 106 acres by 1963. Nina Terry died at Rouse Hill House in 1968 and the following year the remaining 106 acres were subdivided. The homestead block of 29 acres went to her two sons Gerald and Roderick Terry as tenants in common. A further subdivision in 1974 reduced the homestead block to 8.15 hectares. (Historic Houses Trust 1997:2)

In March 1978 the NSW government purchased the property which also contained 24 outbuildings. It was administered by the Planning and Environment Commission, later the Department of Planning, which commissioned restoration works from the Public Works Department. (Broadbent & Bogle 1990:7)

The property was transferred to the Historic Houses Trust in 1987.

Family association with the property continued through the occupancy of Gerald Terry from 1968, Roderick Terry, 1968-80, and the latter's daughter and son in law, Miriam and Ian Hamilton and the Hamiltons' ownership of a significant portion of the collection. The collection was subsequently transferred to the Hamilton Rouse Hill Trust.

There has been a continuity of family ownership at Rouse Hill until 1978, particular forces in the family's history and those of wealth in the 19th century, followed by financial hardship, longevity and resistance to change in the 20th century have left the property in a poignantly fragile condition. This fragility is inherent in much of the property's historic fabric and is integral to the archival significance of the place. (Historic Houses Trust 1997:2)

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 9

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Unknown
4. Settlement	Utilities	Unknown
4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and villages	Settlement in the 19th Century
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Unknown
3. Economy	Technology	Unknown
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Rural Industry
3. Economy	Environment - cultural landscape	Unknown
3. Economy	Agriculture	Farming activities
2. Peopling	Convict	Pioneering and social pressures/settlement in the 19th Century

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 5

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
Blacktown Heritage Study			1995		(not stated)
Blacktown Heritage Study			1988		Jonathan Falk Planning Consultants in association with Rodney Jensen and Assoc.s
Heritage Study of the North Western sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner and Associates
Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner & Associates in association with Max Kelly and Elizabeth Vines
Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney			1984		Howard Tanner & Associates Pty Ltd

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 2

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	Historic Houses Trust of NSW	2006	Rouse Hill House Estate	
Written	NSW Heritage Office	1999	SHR listing for Rouse Hill House Estate	

Data Source

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The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Local Government	Blacktown City Council	1140122

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