

Item Details

Name
Rouse Hill House and Farm
SHR/LEP/S170
SHR #00002
Address
Windsor Road ROUSE HILL NSW 2155
Local Govt Area
Blacktown
Local Aboriginal Land Council
Deerubbin



Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Landscape	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
	Windsor Road	ROUSE HILL/NSW/2155	Blacktown	Deerubbin	Gidley	Cumberland	RIVERSTONE	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, allowing 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.

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

The historical relationship of Rouse Hill to other properties owned by the Rouse family is representative of historical patterns of settlement in NSW in which first generation properties on the Cumberland Plain were supplemented or eclipsed by larger seco

Integrity/Intactness

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)

Owners

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

Description

DesignerBuilder/Maker

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

Physical DescriptionUpdated 01/12/2024

Farm:
The property is perhaps unique for its survival as a largely intact estate with an unbroken chain of occupancy, allowing 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.

Garden:
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).

Dominating the garden and seen from afar are tall, mature Araucaria pines (Bunya pine - A.bidwillii (2) and hoop pine (A.cunninghamii (5) (Stuart Read, 6/2014 visit). Other notable plantings are Moreton Bay figs (Ficus macrophylla), English oak (Quercus robur), funeral cypress (Cupressus funebris), Norfolk Island hibiscus (Lagunaria patersonia) and jacaranda (J.mimosifolia) both near the main house, loquat (Eriobotrya japonica), purple cherry plum (Prunus cerasifera 'Nigra'), African olive (Olea europaea var. africana), Mediterranean cypress (Cupressus sempervirens), purple climbing Bougainvillea glabra cv. (Halliday, 2019; Stuart Read, 29/4/2019). Other key plantings include ground cover red geraniums (Pelargonium cv.), the climber Chinese wisteria (W.sinensis), ground cover of kaffir lilies (Clivia miniata) and freesia bulbs (F.alba, or F. leichtlinii x F.alba) from South Africa and climbing golden Lady Banks rose (Rosa banksiae 'Aurea')(Halliday, 2017).

A large crepe myrtle (Lagerstroemia indica) on the gravel front path dominates the garden in summer when blooming. the lilac-coloured crepe myrtles in Rouse Hill's front garden were probably planted in the 1950s or 1960s when crepe myrtles were at the peak of their post-war popularity. At the old Caretaker's Cottage at the back of the property is a spectacular carmine-pink form (Innes, 2018).

A visit by the then young Australian Garden History Society in 1981 described it as a garden 'now near to total ruin. A few specimen trees remain, together with considerable evidence of the ground plan and some charming buildings, including the summer house and brick bathhouse. Of the trees, the (Jamaican) fiddlewood (Citharexylum spinosum) drew the most attention, being at least a hundred years old and possibly the oldest specimen in the state. A horticultural plan of management is being drawn up... (Patrick & Watts, 1981, 31).

The timber arbour is covered with Cape honeysuckle (Tecoma(ria) capensis) the orange-red flowers of which are a spectacle in mid-autumn (Halliday, 2019). This erect scrambling evergreen shrub has been widely planted on the property, in particularly along the arbour path. A native of South Africa, this hardy plant was widely used in ornamental garden situations and also provided dense stock hedging (Halliday, 2018).

House:
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.

Outbuildings:

Several outbuildings are on site, which include:

- a slab built cow shed,
- a reconstructed timber summer house,
- a brick stables (Chivell 1978)

School House:

1888 designed by William Kemp, architect for Public Schools, from his standardised plans, adapted to the requirements of the site. Continuously used until 2003, and now a popular site for learning excursions (visitors) (Ruggeri, 2022, 18).

Bath House (1858):

Picturesque (brick, with iron roof) building in the garden thought to have been built by Scottish-born Parramatta builder and architect, James Houison, it originally featured fine arched timber trellises on the two verandahs and porches on each side. This treillage supported climbing plants and gave some privacy to users of the bathroom and lavatory. Morewood & Rogers roofing (tin) tiles, stone flagging. Restored in 2017 (<https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/what-lies-beneath-conservation-works>).

Caretaker's House / Overseer's Cottage:

Built in 1856 - then just a simple 2-roomed structure of vertical timber slabs, a ceiling that may have been hessian sheets tacked into place. After 1910 it was extended by Edwin Rouse's son Edwin Stephen Rouse with a 2nd bedroom and a rear kitchen skillion. Two decades later it was extended again by E.S.'s grandson Gerald Terry, who concreted the front verandah and built a new brick annex with a bathroom and third bedroom. Has seen extensive conservation since 1978 (including rebuilding a brick wall, inserting a waterproof membrane behind the skillion weatherboards, new bearers beneath the kitchen, underground drainage to remove excessive moisture. Post 2014 storm damage eastern extension roof entirely re-sheeted (original iron) (Hill & Reid, 2022, 25).

Dairy:

The dairy design is essentially the same as one for a model dairy promoted in 1947 by the NSW Department of Agriculture as suitable for smaller farmers. 'Model dairies' (a term dating to the 1800s) were structures that exemplified the most up-to-date hygiene and production principles and materials, and could serve as a model to other farmers to copy. The Rouse dairy contains a linear row of bails, with a gabled, fibre-cement-clad 'milk house' at the western end that held the pumping machinery and generator. As per 1947 plan specifications, the floor was laid with easily washed concrete to maintain strict hygiene. A much earlier timber structure, containing two cow bails for hand-milking, also survives at Rouse Hill House and features in tours of its outbuildings (Hill, 2016).

Old Windsor (Turnpike) Road (section):

A section of Old Windsor Road also forms part of the Rouse Hill House and Farm property of Sydney Living Museums. This road predates the (early 19th century) R.H. House, and Rouse got the land as part compensation for his operation of the turnpike road between Parramatta and Windsor. Today, a remnant section of the later 'Windsor Road' that replaced the turnpike road, extends for 600m through Rouse Hill Estate, comprising a reconstructed gravelled road along the same alignment as the earlier turnpike road. Before Windsor Road was moved to its current position and widened, it ran through a deep road cutting here, constructed in the 1930s, that was filled in 2006 to return the road surface to its original (ground) levels. The road surface mostly comprises finely-crushed sandstone and shale, locally sourced materials... (Leong, 2022, 19).

Physical Condition

Updated 09/18/1997

Physical Condition - 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 refurnished
 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 refurnished
 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

 1888 Rouse Hill public school opened to the east of Rouse Hill House and farm

 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 re-routed 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)

 2008: HHT got first stage funding for education component of its vision for the site.
 10/3/2009 Remnant RTA lands were transferred to the HHT (from the Windsor Road bypass which is open further to the east than the old road alignment (in a cutting). The Hills Shire Council approved stage one development application for works.

 2009-10: Construction program almost complete on former RTA land and Rouse Hill Public School (former) adjoining re-aligned Windsor Road: School house conserved, repainted in Victorian colour scheme and interpreted as 19th century school; cafe, retail, education centre and outdoor auditorium (for 60); parking; security; flexible public spaces to be used as venues and landscaping works completed. Property's capacity and visitation rate increased, including increasing numbers of local schools (capacity now for 20,000 children a year to visit)(Mackanness, 2010, 4-5).

 6/2016 increased visitation has been achieved by introducing a series of limited-number tours of the house's interiors. Works to conserve the farm's dairy precinct are now complete. Two main posts whose subsoil bases had decayed were re-footed, with new spliced material and a pad footing. Guttering was replaced, along with some roof sheeting where discrete patching was no longer sufficient and decayed timber trimming on the milk house has been replaced (Hill, 2016)

Further Comments

Current Use

House Museum, farm and residence of Mr Gerald Terry

Former Use

Aboriginal land, pastoral property and residence

Listings

Listings

Records Retrieved: 6					
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
Local Environmental Plan			5/7/1993 12:00:00 AM		
Register of the National Estate			3/21/1978 12:00:00 AM		
Heritage Act - State Heritage Register		00002	4/2/1999 12:00:00 AM	27	1546
State Environmental Planning Policy			6/3/1989 12:00:00 AM		
Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register					
Heritage Act - Permanent Conservation Order - former		00002	6/22/1979 12:00:00 AM	84	

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 5					
Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Standard Exemptions		11/9/2020 12:00:00 AM	
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Heritage Act - Site Specific Exemptions		4/24/2008 12:00:00 AM	
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Heritage Act		2/27/1998 12:00:00 AM	
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Heritage Act		7/17/1992 12:00:00 AM	
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Heritage Act		2/7/1986 12:00:00 AM	

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

Richard Rouse (1774-1852) appears to have begun building at Rouse Hill in 1813 although the grant of 450 acres (182 hectares) was not

made until October 1816 (Broadbent & Bogle 1990:7) . Sometime between 1818 and 1825 Rouse, his wife Elizabeth (1772-1849) and family moved from Parramatta to the new house. The son of an Oxfordshire cabinet maker and shop-keeper, Rouse came to the colony, free, in 1801. Prospering quickly, by 1805 he was Superintendent of Public Works and Convicts at Parramatta.

In this role he supervised the building of Governor and Mrs Macquarie's additions to Government House, Parramatta in the mid 1810s. It is possible that these works influenced Rouse to build a bigger house than he first intended, adding larger, longer rooms behind the front range.

He chose the site of his new house while building toll houses for Macquarie's upgraded road to the Hawkesbury. Rouse sited the new house prominently, possibly with an eye to its possible use as an inn, on a hilltop adjacent to the toll house (also built by him) on the Parramatta to Windsor Turnpike.

He acquired other properties, more fertile than the Rouse Hill farm, but Rouse Hill had the advantage of strategic siting. While other early colonial homesteads overlooked their crops or pastures, Rouse Hill has always overlooked the busy Windsor Road. It was from here that Rouse and his descendants oversaw their distant pastoral and agricultural interests, rather than the estate itself being the focus of those interests.

Rouse was not bred to the land, but was shrewd and capable, careful of money and acquisitive of property. He left, on his death in 1852, extensive holdings throughout the colony (www.hht.net.au/museums/rouse_hill, accessed 15/10/10).

The Rouse Hill estate grew to 1200 acres (486 hectares) by Rouse's death, by purchase of an adjacent grant (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)

1888 Rouse Hill public school opened to the east of Rouse Hill House and farm.

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.

In 1932 the studio converted into a breakfast room.

Estate 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 (Historic Houses Trust, 1997, 2).

When a family dispute occurred following the death of Edwin Rouse's grand-daughter Nina Terry in 1968, architect John Fisher (early member of the Institute of Architects, member of the Cumberland County Historic Buildings Committee and National Trust of Australia (NSW) Board member after its reformation in 1960) chaired the Rouse Hill Preservation Committee, which brought together the family and representatives of the National Trust of Australia (NSW). This led to the State Government resuming the property, which later became a property under the care of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (Lucas & McGinness, 2012).

A further subdivision in 1974 reduced the homestead block to 8.15 hectares (ibid, 1997, 2)

In March 1978 the NSW government purchased the property which also contained 24 outbuildings (and half its contents (Mackaness, 2010, 5)). 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 Heritage Council's Restoration Steering (HC RS) Committee resolved to have a conservation statement prepared for the buildings and site. Urgent repair works to outbuildings were identified and undertaken under the supervision of the Government Architect's Branch, Public Works Department and the main entrance driveway was regraded and regravelled. Urgent repair and stabilisation on the homestead and outbuildings continued and a fire control service was installed in the garden. A gardener was contracted to carry out urgent garden maintenance. The HC RS Committee considered the need for accurate documentation of interior finishes and contents of the buildings and for curatorial and materials conservation work to be carried out. The initial conservation programme was endorsed and circulated to various interested conservation bodies for comment. The Royal Australian Historical Society was requested to undertake an historical research programme on the property. An archaeologist was contracted to be present during any excavation works associated with the repairs programme (HC, 1982).

A visit by the then young Australian Garden History Society in 1981 described it as a garden 'now near to total ruin. A few specimen trees remain, together with considerable evidence of the ground plan and some charming buildings, including the summer house and brick bathhouse. Of the trees, the (Jamaican) fiddlewood (*Citharexylum spinosum*) drew the most attention, being at least a hundred years old and possibly the oldest specimen in the state. A horticultural plan of management is being drawn up... (Patrick & Watts, 1981, 31).

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).

1984 the summer house was repaired/reconstructed and 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.

Since 1978 descendants have returned many significant family items and the collection now comprises over 20,000 objects as diverse as costume, furniture, tools and automobiles (Mackness, 2010, 5).

1993 - 25 acres (10 hectares) of land left (in HHT management)(Bogle, 1993).

When the HHT opened Rouse Hill House and Farm to the public in 1999 it was in a limited capacity and a very different context. In 2007, anticipating the extraordinary residential growth in the area, the HHT sought funding of \$19m from Treasury to provide new visitor and cultural facilities (interpretation, programs, research and access to the collection) along with commercial activities (cafe, retail, auditorium and flexible public spaces to be used as venues). The project aimed to improve the property's sustainability and allowed it to be opened up to thousands of visitors a year (Mackness, 2010, 5).

2008: HHT got first stage funding for the education component of its vision for the site. To protect the heritage precinct the State Government established the Rouse Hill Regional Park, transferred the 1888 Rouse Hill Public School (former) and adjacent lands to the HHT and diverted the upgraded Windsor Road (to the east away from the house and school)(ibid, 5). Advocacy by the Friends of the Historic Houses Trust was in large part responsible for moving the road to create this bypass, protecting the site's setting from encroachment (Watts, 2014).

10/3/2009 Remnant RTA lands were transferred to the HHT (from the Windsor Road bypass which is open further to the east than the old road alignment (in a cutting). The Hills Shire Council approved stage one development application for works.

2009-10: Construction program almost complete on former RTA land and Rouse Hill Public School (former) adjoining re-aligned Windsor Road: School house conserved, repainted in Victorian colour scheme and interpreted as 19th century school; cafe, retail, education centre and outdoor auditorium (for 60); parking; security; flexible public spaces to be used as venues and landscaping works completed. Property's capacity and visitation rate increased, including increasing numbers of local schools (capacity now for 20,000 children a year to visit). Transfer of the remnant RTA lands created a new opportunity for research and interpretation. HHT historians Joy Hughes, Jane Kelso and curator Fergus Clunie began gathering historic maps of the region. Searching for the location of the original Toll House at Rouse Hill, he unearthed new evidence about the line of the old Hawkesbury Road (1794-1813) on which the pursuit and 'battle of Vinegar Hill', an armed conflagration between convicts and troops, took place in 1804. Although the road has long since disappeared, it defined the boundary of the first land grant in the area, the 1000 acre 'Copenhagen' given to Captain William Bligh. It also ran close to the surviving kilometre stretch of the old Windsor Road built by convicts in 1812-13 as the first turnpike in the colony between Sydney and the Hawkesbury. The exact location of the battle of Vinegar Hill has long been debated, but the map evidence and line of the old Hawkesbury Road indicate that it most likely took place between Second Ponds Creek and the crest of Rouse Hill, formerly known as Vinegar Hill. A line of very early trees at the edge of the road is believed to date back to the time of the battle. Rouse Hill House dating from 1813, is remarkable as one of the longest continuously occupied houses in Australia, set in the oldest surviving garden in Australia and with original outbuildings, interiors and collections intact. As the likely site of the battle of Vinegar Hill, it now has a new level of significance, with exciting interpretive possibilities, and this has encouraged HHT to rethink its approach to the property (ibid, 4-5).

2004 Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Award received.

6/2016 increased visitation has been achieved by introducing a series of limited-number tours of the house's interiors. Works to conserve the farm's dairy precinct are now complete. Two main posts whose subsoil bases had decayed were re-footed, with new spliced material and a pad footing. Guttering was replaced, along with some roof sheeting where discrete patching was no longer sufficient and decayed timber trimming on the milk house has been replaced (Hill, 2016)

9/2017
 Bathhouse conserved and repaired (Long, 2017).

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 50

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with Gerald Terry, tenant farmer
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with Elizabeth Rouse, farmer
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with Richard Rouse, Superintendent of government works, Parramatta
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with Nina Rouse, later Terry, grazier
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with John Horbury Hunt, architect
8. Culture	Leisure	Visiting places of romantic inspiration
8. Culture	Leisure	Outdoor relief
8. Culture	Leisure	Enjoying public parks and gardens
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Vernacular structures and building techniques
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Landscaping - Victorian gardenesque style
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Landscaping - Federation period
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Landscaping - colonial period
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Landscaping - 20th century interwar
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Interior design styles and periods - Colonial
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Designing landscapes in an exemplary style
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Designing in an exemplary architectural style
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Building in response to natural landscape features.
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Architectural styles and periods - Victorian (mid)
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Adaptation of overseas design for local use
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Developing roles for government - providing museums
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Developing roles for government - parks and open spaces
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Developing roles for government - administering public roads and bridges
5. Working	Labour	Working with animals
5. Working	Labour	Working independently on the land
4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and villages	Role of Transport in Settlement

4. Settlement	Land tenure	Early farming (sheep grazing)
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Changing land uses - from rural to suburban
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Sub-division of large estates
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Post and rail fencing
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Early land grants
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Shearers' Accommodation
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Shearers' Accommodation
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Living on the land
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Farm homestead
4. Settlement	Accommodation	early settlement or worker's cottage
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Country Villa
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Accommodating workers in workers' housing
4. Settlement	Accommodation	Accommodating convicts
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Working for pastoralists
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Wool/shearing shed
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Modifying landscapes to increase productivity
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Livestock structures
3. Economy	Pastoralism	Agisting and fattening stock for slaughter
3. Economy	Events	Developing local landmarks
3. Economy	Environment - cultural landscape	Landscapes and countryside of rural charm
3. Economy	Agriculture	Rural Estates
3. Economy	Agriculture	Attempting to transplant European farming practices to Australian environments
1. Environment	Environment - naturally evolved	Other open space
1. Environment	Environment - naturally evolved	Gardens
1. Environment	Environment - naturally evolved	Environment/Contact: What do we know of the Contact Environment?

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Finishes and details as survive should remain, all intervention to be recorded, renewal of fabric not to be for purely aesthetic reasons and ensure continued existence within historic curtilage. (Historic Houses Trust 1997:9&38, Broadbent & Bogle 1990:29)

Management

Records Retrieved: 3

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
		2/7/2024 6:05:08 PM
		2/7/2024 6:05:08 PM
		2/7/2024 6:05:08 PM

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 3

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW			2000		Geoffrey Britton and Colleen Morris for the NSW National Trust
Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW			2000		Morris, C., & Britton, G./NSW National Trust (for the Heritage Council of NSW)
Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW			2000		NSW Heritage Office

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 24

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	Hill, Dr Scott and Reid, Sophie	2022	Opening doors to the past (article re the Overseer's Cottage)	www.slm.com.au
Written	Leong, Ken	2022	Regraded: Old Windsor Road, Rouse Hill Estate	www.slm.com.au
Written	Ruggeri, Maria Elena	2022	Renewed: Rouse Hill Estate schoolhouse exterior	www.slm.com.au
Written	Ruggeri, Maria Elena; and Ellis, Michael	2021	A strong and simple structure: conserving the woolshed	www.slm.com.au
Written	Hill, Scott	2021	A herculean task: clearing the woolshed	www.slm.com.au
Written	Halliday, Steve	2019	Its Tecoma time again	https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/plant-your-history/its-tecoma-time-again?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=May%202019%20eNews&utm_content=May%202019%20eNews+CID_6deb6098dd601b901d695ee65bbe2fce&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Read%20more
Written	Halliday, Steve	2018	Cape Honeysuckle (Tecoma capensis)	https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/plant-your-history/cape-honeysuckle-tecoma-capensis
Written	Jones, Rebecca	2018	'Shrouded House: collection care at Rouse Hill House & Farm'	

Written	Innes, Ian	2018	'Summer scorchers don't trouble this old-fashioned beauty'	https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/plant-your-history/summer-scorchers-dont-trouble-old-fashioned-beauty
Written	Halliday, Steve	2017	What's in bloom at Rouse Hill House and Farm	https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/plant-your-history/whats-bloom-rouse-hill-house-and-farm
Written	Long, Elisha	2017	What lies beneath: Conservation works - Under the Paving stones at Rouse Hill House & Farm	https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/what-lies-beneath-conservation-works
Written	Hill, Scott	2016	'A Model Dairy'	
Written	Hill, Scott	2016	'Upstairs / Downstairs'	
Written	Curran, Helen & Stark, Todd	2016	'In Good Hands' & 'Working Smart'	
Written	Watts, Peter	2014	(Open) Letter to Tim Duddy, Chairman, Friends of Historic Houses Trust Inc.	
Written	Lucas, Clive & McGinness, Mark	2012	'John Fisher, 1924-2012 - Champion of the State's Structures'	
Written	Mackness, Caroline	2010	Rouse Hill House & Farm: new opportunities for interpretation	
Tourism	Historic Houses Trust	2004	Rouse Hill House and Farm	http://www.hht.net.au/museums/rouse_hill_house_and_farm
Written	Conybeare Morrison & Partners	2003	Rouse Hill Curtilage Study	www.hht.net.au
Written	Bogle, Michael	2002	'Rouse Hill' (entry)	http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au
Written	Bogle, Michael	1993	Rouse Hill House the historical development of the gardens	
Written	Heritage Council of NSW	1982	Annual Report 1982	
Written	Patrick, John and Watts, Peter	1981	Some Recollections (of the Australian Garden History Society's conference, 1-3/5/1981)	
Written				

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Heritage NSW	Heritage NSW	5044989

Every effort has been made to ensure that information contained in the State Heritage Inventory is correct. If you find any errors or omissions please send your comments to heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au

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