

Item Details

Name

Royal Oak Inn (former)

SHR/LEP/S170

SHR #00698

Address

Windsor Road ROUSE HILL NSW 2155

Local Govt Area

The Hills

Local Aboriginal Land Council

Deerubbin

Item Type

Built

Group/Collection

Commercial

Category

Inn/Tavern

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	The Hills	Deerubbin	Castle Hill	Cumberland	CASTLE HILL	Primary Address

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The former Royal Oak Inn (now the Mean Fiddler Inn) has State significance as an important survivor of an early colonial coaching inn of the 1820-40 period with the main part of the original complex of buildings remaining intact. It is believed to be the site of one of the first inns on the Parramatta to Windsor/Richmond route and one of the earliest licensed premises in the colony, dating to 1830.

It is rare on Windsor Road between Parramatta and Windsor as an inn which remains in use as a "watering hole" or "stop over" for the general public and travellers along the Windsor Road. Its Georgian sandstone frontage and elegant verandah facing Windsor Road is a vivid reminder of the inns once were plentiful along Windsor and Old Windsor Roads

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The Inn is a significant component in Windsor Road's urban landscape, representing a site important in the development of early travel routes in the colony. The historical development of the site reflects the changing nature of roadside inns, particularly in response to the increase of rail travel following the construction of the railway line. This further evolved with the rise of car ownership from the mid twentieth century.

The inn is indicative of an era when such buildings were used as resting places and watering holes between Parramatta and Windsor prior to the construction of the railway line and played an important role in the economic and social development of the local area during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Criteria b)

Historical Association Significance

The inn has associations with numerous owners of the site who were involved in some of the earliest development of the area.

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

The site has local significance for the way its development mirrored the early development of small grants through the north west of the Cumberland Plain.

Criteria e)

Research Potential

The archaeological deposits associated with the underfloor areas of the site have State significance for their potential to demonstrate the nature of domestic and commercial activity on the site from it's earliest European occupation.

Criteria f)

Rarity

The former Royal Oak Inn has State significance as an important and rare survivor of an early colonial coaching inn dating from the 1829-30. It is a vivid reminder of roadside inns once plentiful along Windsor and Old Windsor Roads. It is also the site of one of the earliest licensed premises in the colony.

Criteria g)

Representative

The Mean Fiddler has State significance for its ability to represent an important class of traveller amenities once common on the early road system of NSW.

Integrity/Intactness

The former Royal Oak has a level of integrity which is fair. The main part of the original complex remains intact.

Owners

Records Retrieved: 0

Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Date Ownership Updated
No Results Found		

Description

Designer

Builder/Maker

Physical Description

Updated

Single storey Georgian sandstone inn, with front verandah and a single pitch tiled hip roof over the whole. Street front verandah has doubled timber Doric columns and a simple scalloped valance. Front six-panel door has glazing in the upper four panels, flanked by side lights and surmounted by a large fanlight. French doors open onto the verandah either side of the central front door with shutters. Four panelled doors sit on the outside of the French doors. All doors have sandstone headers and thresholds. The Front elevation of dressed sandstone, sides and rear are random-coursed.

The building has stone cellars below, and sandstock brick extensions to the rear (south-eastern end of inn building) on a lower ground level (originally a kitchen, possible smoke house/ meat preserving room, high roofed open sided area possibly for carriage storage, and large room with a baker's oven, then an attached blacksmith's shop built of timber slab.

Part of the original kitchen wing is incorporated into later additions. The rear verandah is detached from the main roof.

In addition to the former inn, there has been a substantial amount of redevelopment on the subject site, to the back of the building. In summary, works have included a motel development adjacent to the former inn, alterations and additions in 1996, an acoustic wall in 2001 with an addition in 2003, a courtyard bar in 2002 and additions to the Royal Oak Restaurant in 2003.

Physical Condition

Updated 01/05/2012

Historical evidence suggests that the major physical development of the site was focused on the Windsor Road frontage and specifically the position of the first Inn. The archaeological resource is likely to exist in the form of disturbed occupation deposits within the footprint of the Inn and rear extension. Deeper sub-surface features at the rear (east) of the Inn and extension. These would take the form of backfilled wells and cesspits. The potential archaeological resource away from the main Inn complex had been severely disturbed by development of the site, especially grading works associated with the carpark. (Kelly: 2005, 35)

Modifications And Dates

c1820s - early residence on land between Inn and corner of Commercial/Old Windsor Roads (part Lot A DP 83867) has been demolished
1916 - onwards - Peterson replaced overmantles on fireplaces, repaired eroded brick extension
1916-25 - upgrading of property as farmhouse including reroofing, verandah, lattice panels, fireplace surrounds and other joinery repairs
1923 - shingle roof replaced with tiles
1936 - Peterson bought land between the Inn and Commercial Road and his son, John built a house on the corner and ran a produce shed from this site.
1947-63 - antique shop - residence and restaurant refreshment rooms present
1949 - Peterson subdivided the estate and sold the inn site to Stuart Binns, a 'dog fancier' of Gosford
1954 - part of the Old Windsor Road/Commercial Road excluding the house site of John Peterson sold to Emmanuel Schembri then to Binns
1962 - Old Windsor Road realigned, widened and sealed (formerly winding, narrow and unsealed).
1963 - Binns subdivided inn and Old Windsor Road side of land to Cecil, Eric and Valerie John Kroehnert. Proposal to convert antique shop and residence into a restaurant, approved by Council but not implemented.
1970 - Inn began trading as "the Windsor Wayhouse" offering colonial fare and hayrides. Restaurant use recommenced, car park constructed.
1976 - Inn leased to Graham Bridgewater and Kieran Waner who renovated it as a licensed restaurant "The Royal Oak Inn". The Kroehnerts constructed a barn for storage, then sold antiques from here and ran an outdoor eating area on lawn behind the inn (without council consent), and a caravan annexe display and riding school on the next door lot 2)
1979 - the 5 acre lot 3 (with the inn on it and 66m frontage to OWR) sold to Peakhurst Properties - an application for extensions to include an arts and crafts centre was rejected by Council.
1983 - property transferred to Norlex Holdings P/L
1984 - John Peterson's house (corner OWR/Commercial Road) passed to Robert Thompson, 1989 to David Commins, then owner into Bankruptcy, later to Norlex Holdings P/L.
1983-4 - Courtyard canopy constructed.
1985 - Rear machinery shed extended to form Vinegar Hill Woolshed.
1986-7 - Wedding Reception Hall constructed (to rear on north-eastern side of old inn)..
1987 - Norlex Holdings consolidated its land holdings (lot 3 and the Commercial Road property).
1988 - Woolshed additions.
1990s - considerable alterations and additions to the rear of the inn and extension.
1991 - Motel development on western side/adjacent to Royal Oak Inn, change of use from Wedding Reception Centre to licensed Tavern.
1996 - additions and alterations .
1997 - refurbishment and restoration works to inn building.
1998 - Internal alterations and additional office space.
2001 - acoustic wall constructed.
2002 - demolition of dwelling on Lot 2 DP 13580156. Courtyard Bar also constructed.
2003 - Additions to the Royal Oak Restaurant, extension of existing acoustic sound wall, subdivision and reconfiguration of existing carpark
2004 - Alterations and additions to the Mean Fiddler Hotel.
2005 - Bottle shop and take away constructed. Demolition of dwelling, swimming pool and 5 agricultural buildings to construct bottle shop and associated parking lot.
2006 - Restaurant and bistro works
2007 - Relocation of existing TAB, new lounge area and new bar
2009 - Motel health spa, pool, gym and associated parking works
2010 - Conversion of existing take away shop to new take away restaurant with drive through facility

Further Comments

Current Use

hotel complex

Former Use

Inn, residence, antique store, refreshment rooms

Listings

Listings

Records Retrieved: 5					
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Local Environmental Plan		117	2/2/1990 12:00:00 AM	18	882
Local Environmental Plan		1991	3/1/1991 12:00:00 AM	037	1808
Heritage Act - State Heritage Register		00698	4/2/1999 12:00:00 AM	27	1546
State Environmental Planning Policy			6/30/1989 12:00:00 AM		
Heritage Act - Permanent Conservation Order - former		00698	11/10/1989 12:00:00 AM	109	9524

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 3

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		7/19/2012 12:00:00 AM	
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Heritage Act		11/10/1989 12:00:00 AM	

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

Rouse Hill was first referred to be Governor King in relation to the clearing of land at Castle Hill in March 1802. Originally the locality was known as part of Mulgrave Place. It was changed to Upper Nelson when the original Hawkesbury Road was constructed. The convict uprising at the Government Farm at Castle Hill and subsequent events in 1804 and known as the Battle of Vinegar Hill saw the locality become known as Vinegar Hill for a time before being changed to Rouse Hill following a request by local landowner Richard Rouse. Rouse had occupied his grant from 1813, although the official grant was not made until some time later.

The site containing the former Royal Oak in was originally part of a 36 acre grant to Charles Davis on 13 January 1818. (Portion 80 in the Shire of Baulkham Hills, Parish of Castle Hill). It was bounded by Thomas Kelly's land to the north west, Windsor Road to the south west, Lucy Mileham's land to the south east and the Chain of Ponds (Caddies Creek) on to the north east. Davis arrived as a convict in the colony on the Hillsborough in 1799 and was granted a conditional pardon in 1812.

By 1818, Windsor Road was still a track and Davis held a total of 82 acres of which 46 were cleared and 15 under cultivation. he had 2 horses, 18 head of cattle and employed labourer John Dunn. A house was located on the property by 1823 at the intersection of Windsor Road and later Commercial Road, since demolished. In 1829 he leased part of his land to William Cross who constructed the White Hart Inn, one of the earliest licensed premises in the colony. A publican's license, the first for the site, was issued to Cross for the inn in 1830. Davis was farming elsewhere on the site (Kelly, 2005).

Convicted London joiner and carpenter James Gough (1790-1876) who arrived on the Earl Spencer in 1813 and got a conditional pardon in 1821 won a private commission for the White Hart Inn between Parramatta and Windsor (Dalkin, 2014, 31).

By 1839 John Booth was the licensee for the White Hart and on 3 March 1841 Davis leased the in site to Booth, a former convict who married Sarah Tighe in 1839, and the licensee for the inn between 1832 and 1834. The inn license changed hands several times before returning to Booth. John Booth bought the Davis land and Inn during 1841 and changed the name to the Queens Arms. He renamed the inn the Royal Oak in 1845. Davis continued to own and farm the surrounding land.

During the 1840s depression Booth found himself in financial trouble and his creditors foreclosed on his property, selling it to George A Sheffield in 1852. Booth died in 1866 and was credited as being the first person to carry mail from Sydney on the Bathurst and Windsor Roads. In 1853 Davis leased an adjoining 110 acres which he worked as Vinegar Hill Farm.

John Seath purchased the Inn in 1858 and had changed the name back to the White Hart Inn by 1865. He had arrived as a convict on the Minstrel in 1825 and was assigned as a carpenter to William Cox. He married in 1839 and was included as a member of the Hawkesbury Agricultural Society when it was formed in 1850. He also purchased the license and additional lots adjoining Davis' original holding to the north and east of the property. He ran the inn until his death in 1876. It was during this period that there was an expansion in railways and rail transport which saw a decline in the role of roadside inns for transport and travelling purposes. For example, the rail connection to Windsor was completed in 1864.

Following Seath's death the property passed to his wife Ann and son John Seath Junior, and the inn license lapsed. It does not appear to have been reactivated in the district for a significant period. By 1900 the inn property appears to have been subdivided and part of it, including the weatherboard house sold to a Mrs E Miles and later Mrs E Verdon remained in the house until her death in 1936. The inn site remained in the property of Ann Seath until her death in 1916 when ownership passed to her sons John Junior and Charles Seath. They transferred the property to Thomas Alfred Paterson of Rouse Hill who consolidated this parcel with his other holdings to the east to create a 98 acre property. Peterson, a contractor and poultry farmer, undertook many changes including upgrading the former inn to become a residence between 1916 and 1925. Work included replacement of the original shingle roof with tiles and repairs to the brickwork.

In 1941 Petersen subdivided the land into two allotments. Lot A was sold to Petersen's wife in 1949 and the land previously sold to Mrs Miles. It is believed to have probably been the site of Davis' original home constructed in 1823. Lot B, the former in site, was sold to John Cooper from the Parramatta Hotel in 1947. Cooper sold the property in the same year to Stuart Lester Binns, a dog fancier from Gosford who operated the building as a restaurant, antique shop, refreshment rooms and residence between 1947 and 1963.

In 1962 Windsor Road was realigned, widened, straightened and sealed, and appears to have been the impetus for Binns to subdivide the inn site into at least 5 allotments under deposited plan 30916. Lot 4 contained the former inn. All the other allotments had been sold by 1964. In 1966 Emanuel Schembri, a sign writer from Prospect, his wife Catherine and Dominic Schembri purchased the inn site. The leased it to Graham Bridgewater and Kieran Warner who renovated the inn and operated it as the licensed restaurant "The Royal Oak Inn". It was during this period that the first car park was constructed. It was later used as an antique store before being returned to use as a restaurant again. In the late 1970s the property was advertised as the Windsor Wayhouse offering hayrides followed by a meal by the fire.

From 1977 a series of reconfigurations of the former allotments comprising Lots A & B created by Petersen in 1941 have taken place. This has allowed the construction of the rear machinery shed to form the Vinegar Hill Woolshed in 1985 and a Wedding reception hall to the northeast of the old inn in 1986-87. Some land was lost to road widening in 1977 and there has been further lot reconfiguration since the 1980s. (Kelly:2005).

(Old) Windsor Road had a major upgrade in 2006 when significant works were undertaken along its length (City Plan Heritage, 2013, 20).

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 6

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
9. Phases of Life	Persons	Associations with James Gough, emancipist joiner and carpenter
3. Economy	Commerce	Innkeeping
3. Economy	Commerce	Innkeeping
3. Economy	Commerce	Innkeeping
2. Peopling	Convict	Demonstrating emancipist's entrepreneurial activities
2. Peopling	Convict	Demonstrating emancipist's entrepreneurial activities

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Conservation Policy

The major concern in future conservation is to retain the integrity of the original main building

To ensure this integrity the architectural treatment of any appertenant structures should be carried out in sympathy and in character with the original building.

Elements which are more recent alterations and recent interior decorating elements (1991) should be removed progressively to reinstate the building fabric back to its mid-19th century origins.

Character & Significance

The primary historic, architectural and visual significance of the original inn building should be retained and reinforced in any future development.

The texture, colour, and sizes of locally quarried stones are important elements in the character of the building.

While hardwood shingles have most likely been the original roofing material, corrugated iron was the most likely replacement for part of its life. In future upgrading, this material is preferred to the terracotta tiles now (1991) on the building.

As the roof form is important, the architectural form of any new or replacement work should be in character with the original hips, and roof slopes.

Colour and finish of future architectural works should be in close sympathy with the existing fabric.

Use of buildings

Continuity of use reinforces the significance of a heritage item. In this context the use for receptions, tavern and associated activities is seen as effective and appropriate.

While the fabric of the original inn is of considerable significance, it forms part of a much larger complex. It is also readily adaptable to a range of uses given the size and proportion of rooms, without requiring major internal alterations. Several of the rooms are proposed to be used for administrative offices which are seen as entirely compatible uses.

Retention of building fabric

The size and proportion of rooms should be retained in keeping with the origins of the building.

External pavings - external stone pavings dominating the verandah area are significant building elements. Retention and rectification of sagged panels and continuation of this style of paving is recommended particularly at ends of verandah where stabilisation of moisture content in subsoil clays is needed (Kremmer, 1991).

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 0

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
No Results Found					

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 9

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	City Plan Heritage	2013	Rouse Hill Town Centre - Northern Precinct - Heritage Impact Statement	
Written	Kelly, Matthew, on behalf of Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions	2005	Mean Fiddler, Windsor Road: Historical Archaeological Assessment & Development Impact Assessment	
Written	Kelly, Matthew, on behalf of Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions	2005	Mean Fiddler, Windsor Road: Historical Archaeological Assessment & Development Impact Assessment	
Written	Graham Edds & Associates	1996	Fabric Analysis & Proposed Conservation Works to Royal Oak Inn, Windsor Road, Rouse Hill	
Written	Graham Edds & Associates	1996	Fabric Analysis & Proposed Conservation Works to Royal Oak Inn, Windsor Road, Rouse Hill	
Written	Graham Edds & Associates	1991	Documentary & Physical Analysis of Proposed Motel Site, Windsor & Commercial Roads, Kellyville	
Written	Kremer & Associates Architects & Planners	1991	Royal Oak Inn - A Conservation Plan	
Written	Graham Edds & Associates	1991	Documentary & Physical Analysis of Proposed Motel Site, Windsor & Commercial Roads, Kellyville	
Written	Kremer & Associates Architects & Planners	1991	Royal Oak Inn - A Conservation Plan	

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Heritage NSW	Heritage NSW	5045488

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