ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

THE STABLES BUILDING

THROSBY PARK HISTORIC SITE

A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE NSW

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Background to the Investigation

This report details an archaeological investigation that was carried out on behalf of the managers of Throsby Park Historic Site, the National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW. The work involved observation and recording of deposits in a south-western room of the stables. The archaeological resource had been uncovered as part of a maintenance programme that involved lifting and replacing an existing floor and raising the level of that floor for the purpose of improving drainage.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the work were to observe and record the evidence; to define it, as far as possible, within the available historical evidence and to provide appropriate management strategies and an archival record of the work.

Methodology

The pre-existing floor had been removed prior to the commencement of this programme. The resultant debris was removed and the surface cleared by the consultant. The visible deposits and features were recorded but no further physical investigation was entered into as part of this programme. The intact deposits have been sealed by the new floor.

Historic Context

Throsby Park was established as a large estate on a grant made in 1819 by Governor Macquarie to Charles Throsby Senior. A farm had been established by 1820 and by 1828 a cottage and barn had been added to the site. The current house was built in c. 1834 and it is likely that the stables are contemporary with it. Mills and a boiling down works were added to the property during the 1840s.

The house and the various outbuildings have been added to and altered during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The estate remained in the hands of the Throsby family until its sale in 1974 to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

There is little and, in many cases, no documentary evidence for the development of specific buildings. In the case of the stables it has been assumed that they were built at the same time as the house but there is no contemporary evidence.
to validate this suggestion and no subsequent historical detail for its later development.

The Structural Evidence

The room exhibits at least three phases of construction. One brick wall and part of a second appear to relate to the original construction phase. A third wall, although apparently early, is later than the first phase. One wall and a portion of the second are also brick and are likely to have been built during the later years of the nineteenth century or first years of the twentieth century. The rafters show evidence of a former shingle roof that has been replaced by iron tiles. The pre-existing floor was composed of a cement slurry over a base of broken building rubble. This floor and most of the debris was removed prior to the archaeological investigation.

The Archaeological Deposits

Clearance of the debris revealed a consistent deposit of slightly compacted loam with rubble features embedded randomly throughout it.

Artefact Evidence

Very few artefacts were located in this area. They were bagged and labeled for permanent storage. These artefacts comprised common late nineteenth century and early twentieth century glass and ceramic sherds. The only diagnostic piece was the base of a tea cup signed "Clarice Cliff". The earliest date of manufacture for this artefact would be 1924 but it is much more likely to date to the later 1920s or 1930s.

Conclusions

Investigation of the deposits has added some detail to the story of the development of this room. It has made clear that the last floor was laid after 1924 at the earliest. This information adds another phase of work to those three that may be seen in the wall construction.

The underlying loam deposit may represent an open surface of the nineteenth century in an open sided shed. Future excavation of the deposit could reveal proof or additional evidence of this suggestion. Other surfaces may be uncovered as well.

The archaeological programme was curtailed at this point. There was no immediate benefit to be gained from disturbing the deposits and the maintenance requirements could be served by raising the existing floor by clean sand. The underlying deposits were sealed by this action and can be investigated in the future if that need arises.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT: THROSBY PARK STABLES

SECTION 2.0
INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

2.1  The Study Area - Parameters of the Investigation

This investigation was concerned with one room of the Throsby Park Stables. It is located in the south-western corner of the building adjacent to a harness room.

The examination of this room focused on all archaeological evidence that could contribute to an understanding of its past use and evolution. "Archaeological evidence" was understood to mean all structures, features, relics and deposits.

2.2  Initiative for Investigation

This investigation was carried out on behalf of the managers of the site, the National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW. The work arose because of the need to install a new floor and raise the level of that floor to improve drainage. Removal of the pre-existing floor exposed sub-floor deposits.

2.3  Objectives

The primary objectives of this work were to:

- observe and record archaeological evidence that had been uncovered as part of the maintenance programme
- define this evidence, as far as possible, within the available historic context
- recommend an appropriate management strategy for the archaeological resource
- prepare a report of this work that would serve as a permanent archival record of the programme and the evidence

2.4  Methodology

Prior to the site investigation NPWS staff had broken up and removed the existing cement floor leaving intact the sub-floor deposits. The archaeological investigation involved clearing the remaining surface debris and cleaning the underlying deposits and features. The latter were photographed and recorded. No further disturbance of the deposits was undertaken as part of this programme.
2.5 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by W. Thorp. The author would like to thank the Throsby Park Historic Site staff for their assistance and co-operation.
Figure 1: The Study Area
DR CHARLES THROSBY first took up land granted to him by Governor Macquarie at the present day Moss Vale in 1819. By 1820 Macquarie reported that Throsby had established a farm. By 1823 a house was in the process of being constructed for Throsby's nephew. This building still stands although it is not part of the historic site.

Throsby died in 1828 and he was succeeded by his nephew Charles Throsby Junior. At the time of Throsby Senior’s death the estate employed thirty people and various reports noted its success particularly in beef cattle. The barn was built in c. 1828.

Construction commenced on a new house, the current building, in 1834. It was completed by 1837; the stables are likely to be contemporary with this building. By 1841 there were approximately forty-seven people on the estate. A report of 1849 noted the recently completed boiling down works and flour mills.

Throsby Junior died in 1854 and his wife took over the management of the estate. Subdivision of the property commenced in 1864. In 1868 Throsby Park was leased to the Governor of NSW. It is possible that some extensions to the house had been made by that time.

The house was leased again in 1872 for eighteen years. By the 1890s the mill had been converted to a residence.

Elizabeth Throsby died in 1891 and the estate passed to Patrick Hill Throsby. It remained in the hands of the family for the rest of the twentieth century, with more of the land being subdivided, until it was acquired in 1974 by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

There is little and, in many cases, no documentary evidence for the development of specific buildings. In the case of the stables, they are assumed to have been built at the same time as the house but there is no contemporary evidence to validate this suggestion and no subsequent historical detail for their later development.
SECTION 4.0
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

4.1 Structural Evidence

The room is located in the south-western corner of the Throsby Park Historic Site stable building. It is adjacent to a harness room on the south-eastern side, grooms' quarters on the north-eastern side and stall to the north.

It is an irregularly shaped room, approximately L-shaped. The walls exhibit two styles of masonry (in possibly three phases of work) on stone foundations. The eastern wall and a portion of the northern wall appear to belong to the original construction phase. Both are supported on stone foundations. The southern wall is constructed from similar brickwork although in a different mortar. It is, however, not keyed into the eastern or western walls. It appears to be of an early construction phase although clearly not of original construction. The footings also differ from those of the eastern and western walls.

The remainder of the northern wall and the eastern wall are constructed from bricks that may be seen in a variety of places in the main house. They are machine made and are likely to date to the later years of the nineteenth century or first years of the twentieth century.

4.2 Deposits

Removal of the floor and rubble base revealed a slightly compacted loam deposit that had a high rubble accumulation embedded within it. It was unclear if this rubble, composed of brick and sandstone fragments, represented a demolition phase or loose fill. The deposit was consistent over the entire room although the northern half of this space appeared to contain a greater accumulation of the debris.

4.3 Artefacts

There were few artefacts located in this area. A small scatter was found within the loose upper surface of the loam deposit. These few artefacts comprised common late nineteenth and early twentieth century glass and ceramic sherds. The only diagnostic piece was the base of a tea cup signed "Clarice Cliffe". The earliest possible date for this artefact could be 1924 but it is more likely that it dates to the later 1920s or 1930s. This infers that the cement floor could only have been laid at the earliest after 1924.
4.4 Conclusions and Future Action

Investigation of the deposits has added some detail to the story of the development of this room. It has made clear that the last floor was laid after 1924. This adds another phase of work to those three that are seen in the wall construction.

The underlying loam deposit may represent an open surface of the nineteenth century in an open sided shed. Future excavation of the deposit may reveal proof or additional evidence of this suggestion. Other surfaces may be uncovered as well.

This programme was curtailed at this point. There was no immediate benefit to be gained from the disturbing the deposits and the maintenance requirements could be served by raising the existing floor by clean sand. The underlying deposits were sealed by this action and can be investigated in the future if that need arises.
Plate 1: The study area viewed south with cement floor partially intact

Plate 2: The study area viewed north with cement floor partially intact
Plate 3: The study area viewed south with sub-floor deposits exposed and cleaned

Plate 4: The study area viewed north with sub-floor deposits exposed and cleaned
Plate 5: Junction of Phases 2 & 3? brickwork
south-east corner of study area

Plate 6: Junction of Phases 1 & 2? brickwork
south-west corner of study area

Plate 7: Phase 3? brickwork, northern and eastern walls