ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

HAEFLIGER'S COTTAGE
HILL END

2008

CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This report presents the evidence recovered from an archaeological investigation undertaken at Haefliger's Cottage in Hill End. The investigation was carried out as part of a programme of stabilization works required for the front wall of the cottage and other works intended to ensure the long-term stability of the structure. The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to record and provide a permanent record of any archaeological evidence associated with Haefliger's Cottage. The stabilization works also provided a unique opportunity to investigate deposits that could yield evidence of earlier land use.

The work entailed:

- Removal of a strip of cement along the front wall and excavation under it to reveal and renew the wall plate;
- Removal and relaying a small portion of the internal floors to allow access to the wall plate;
- Clearing some debris along the western wall of the cottage.

The principal results of the investigation were:

- The identification of the original verandah surface for the present cottage; compressed clay with small river pebble inclusions.
- Recording of the wall plates for the present building along with a stump that had been used to support them;
- Recording of a clay bedding deposit that had been laid around the stump and wall plates to stabilise the structure;
- The identification of several small artefacts associated with the verandah construction one of which might suggest a post-1861 date of construction for this building.
- The identification of a rammed earth floor from an earlier building on this site, probably of the 1850s.
- The identification of two post-holes and what is likely to be a timber threshold from the front or side wall of this same older building.
- The remains of what is likely to have been a brick or part-brick hearth within this structure as well as charcoal from the fire.

The interpretation of the evidence of occupation pre-dating the cottage would have benefited from some additional primary research. This work was not approved as part of this programme.
2.0

THE WORK
2.1 PROJECT INITIATION

The programme of archaeological work described in this report has arisen because of stabilisation and maintenance works required for portions of Haefliger's Cottage at Hill End. The front wall of the building was showing signs of serious deterioration and the maintenance works were intended to identify the cause of the problem and to rectify it.

The work was likely to disturb potential archaeological evidence. For this reason a programme of monitoring was initiated with the intention of identifying, recording and interpreting this evidence as it was revealed during the course of the building works. This programme of work is an outcome of recommendations made in a conservation management plan prepared for the building 1.

![Work underway at the cottage in July 2007 revealing the original wall construction](image)

2.2 THE STUDY AREA

Haefliger's Cottage is located on the corner of Denison and Havilah Streets Hill End. The property may be identified as Lot 7 Section 8, Parish of Tambaroora, County of Wellington.

The cottage is a six-room house constructed with wattle and daub walls. It has a separate studio and car port, a pit toilet, a garden comprising individual and bedded planting and boundary plantings.

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1 High Ground Consulting (2206). Conservation Management Strategy Haefliger's Cottage Hill End
Only a small portion of the building was subject to stabilisation and maintenance works being part of the front verandah and the deposits under it and the sub-floor space of the cottage immediately adjacent to the front wall. Built-up deposits abutting the western wall of the cottage were also to be addressed by the work.

Haefliger's Cottage is listed on the State Heritage Inventory of NSW. It is a component of the Hill End Historic Site, an item on the State Heritage Register.

2.3 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Hill End as an historic site has national significance. The cottage is a contributing component to that significance. The specific significance of this cottage was assessed for its entry to the State Heritage Inventory. It was evaluated to have exceptional state significance for its historical associations and a high level of state significance for its rarity. It possesses moderate state significance for aesthetic, social and research values. The principal reasons for this assessment are:
• It is representative of many residences constructed in Hill End in the mid-later part of the nineteenth century;

• It is an important component of the village of Hill End;

• It is demonstrative of representative historical processes influential in the development of several gold mining regions;

• It has important and direct associations with several significant Australian artists.

The specific significance of the archaeological potential of the site is listed in the State Heritage Inventory form as:

• Moderate in the area under and immediately surrounding the cottage

• Low on the rest of the block.

This assessment was derived from the archaeological management plan prepared in 2002 which determined this site to be of a moderate level of state significance for its archaeological potential. The conservation management strategy for the cottage identified the potential significance of any sub-floor deposit found within the building.

2.4 THE COTTAGE WORKS

These works required the repair and replacement of the base plate and posts of the front wall of the cottage as well as the introduction of protective measures including termite barriers. In order to achieve these works the following actions were undertaken (only those that impacted in archaeological works are noted):

• part of the cement verandah was removed along the base of the wall

• the soil beneath the cement was excavated to reveal the base plate

• five rows of floor boards (a recent replacement of the original floor) were removed from the front rooms of the house to provide clear access to the base plate.

A garden bed abutting the western wall of the house was also subject to work. This consisted of clearing around the brick chimney to determine the origin of several internal leakages and the cause of a slump in the front wall.

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2 High Ground Consulting. Conservation Management Strategy Haefliger’s Cottage: 37, 39
View inside the front wall with the floor boards removed to provide access to the wall plate.

View of the northern side of the cottage and the chimney showing the deposits built up against the wall. The front wall of the cottage is on the left side with the plaster removed to show the structure under it.
2.5 EXCAVATION PERMIT

An application for the archaeological work was prepared as part of a Section 60 application under the provisions of the NSW Heritage Act. The parameters of the permit were for monitoring and recording. Allowance was made in the permit for some test excavation if the remedial works required more extensive disturbance; this was not the case and the archaeological work was confined to monitoring and recording.

An archival recording of the building was to be prepared by DEC separate to the archaeological programme.

The approval was made under delegated authority (Ref: DOC 07/23726) and the work was carried out in July 2007.

The cement verandah removed along the line of the front wall; the wall has also been removed to expose the base plate just visible at the surface on the left.
2.6 THE POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

At the time of the permit application there was no evidence to determine whether this site had an occupation or use pre-dating the present cottage. Evidence of this type was a consideration in the application for work on site. The principal types of evidence considered likely to be found in the small area that was required to be disturbed on the verandah were:

- Earlier verandah surfaces or evidence of earlier structural elements including post-holes, boards or hard surfaces;
- Cultural material from an earlier sub-verandah space
- External hard surfaces.

The work inside the house could expose or disturb:

- Sub-floor cultural deposits
- Evidence of construction associated with the cottage
- Evidence of European occupation pre-dating the cottage.

An archaeological management plan prepared for Hill End in 2004 identified the cottage as a site of archaeological potential (Archaeological Feature AF S8.2)\(^3\).

2.7 OBJECTIVES AND TASKS: RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of the work essentially was to identify, record and interpret the archaeological evidence revealed by the remedial maintenance programme. The research design prepared as part of the excavation permit identified three possible areas of information that this investigation could address.

- Structural/Architectural: information specific to the present building
- Cultural: evidence relevant to the use of the building and specific people who have occupied it
- Earlier History: evidence that could reveal an earlier European use of the site.

The ability of the archaeological programme to fulfil the research design was limited by the small sample of the site revealed by the remedial works.

2.8 AUTHORSHIP, CLIENT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been written by Wendy Thorp (Cultural Resources Management) based on field notes and a preliminary analysis prepared by Guadalupe Cincunegui (Cultural Resources Management). CRM retains copyright of the work. The field work recording was undertaken by Guadalupe Cincunegui and the plan of the site and its features in this report was also prepared by Guadalupe Cincunegui. The work was

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\(^3\) Andrew Long and Associates (2002), *Hill End Historic Site Archaeological Landscape Management Plan*
undertaken on behalf of Kayandel Pty Ltd. The applicant for the Permit was the Department of Environment and Conservation.

2.9 CONSTRAINTS

The archaeological evidence revealed by this programme included material that indicated use of the site pre-dating the construction of Haefliger's Cottage. The interpretation of this evidence would have benefited from some additional primary research. This additional work was not approved as part of this project.

The front wall in the course of being demolished.
3.0

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Haefliger's Cottage has been the subject of some historical research in the past. The existing information has been used for the purposes of this report. The results of the archaeological programme indicate that more research would be of benefit for this site with respect to the use of the land before the existing cottage. Research of this type was not permitted for this programme.

3.1 CONTEXT WITHIN THE TOWN

Although the region was explored and settled by Europeans during the period 1813-1822 there is no evidence to suggest that the Hill End district came under European influence until the 1840s. At that time the district was divided between four pastoral stations although no specific sites of this period are known to have been established at Hill End.

Alluvial gold was first discovered near Tambaroora in 1851. Gold was then found in Hill End Creek in 1852 and by 1853 most readily accessible alluvial deposits were being worked. Reef mining began in the mid-1850s on elevated land near Bald Hill.

An unplanned town grew up around the diggings. A formal street plan was laid in 1859. The place was named Hill End in 1867.

Reef mining reached a peak around 1872 matched by the expansion of the township. By the end of the 1870s mining activity had dwindled although limited reef mining continued into the early years of the twentieth century.

Hill End continued to decline during the War Years and Depression and into the period of the Second World War. In the post-war years interest in the town revived through the impact of works by artists who were inspired by the landscape and light. This interest led to the establishment of the nucleus of the historic site in 1967.

3.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF HAEFLIGER'S COTTAGE

There is no documented use or association of this site pre-dating the first official land transaction in 1870. In that year James Fox applied for a grant of the cottage lot. His application was made on the basis that he had made substantial improvements to the site by that date. It presumes that the cottage was built in the 1860s or even earlier. The recorded improvements amounted to a six-room house with a value of £50 although the potential for other structures, out-buildings and improvements should not be discounted. Fox appears to still have been the owner when he purchased the lot in 1875. There are no other official property dealings but it is noted that several Hill End families subsequently occupied the cottage.

The cottage was built when Hill End had reached its second peak as a gold-mining town. Further investigation and research may yield more detailed information about the use of this site prior to the construction of the cottage.
3.3 TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT AND ASSOCIATIONS.

The most prominent of the twentieth century occupants of the cottage was Paul Haefliger and his wife Jean Bellette. They acquired the cottage in 1954. Haefliger was both an artist and an art critic and his wife an artist. They were both prominent in the Australian art world. Bellette was twice the winner of the Sulman prize. The cottage became a week-ender for them and their equally influential friends from the art world often came to stay there. These included Russell Drysdale, Margaret Olley and Fred Jessup. The Haefligers were responsible for the construction of a studio here in the 1950s and substantial changes to the interior of the cottage as well as laying the new cement front verandah.

The couple used the cottage until their move to Spain in 1957. After Haefliger and Bellette left the country the cottage continued to be used by artists, on loan from the couple. They offered it to John Olsen and his family in 1961 and he produced several significant works during his time there. The renewed interest in Hill End during the mid-twentieth century owed much to the work of several artists, including those who had stayed at Haefliger's cottage.

The Crown resumed the cottage in 1972. It was leased to the Haefligers and it was associated with Jean until her death in 1991. In 1994 the cottage became the focus of an artist-in-residence programme and several works were undertaken on the building to improve its amenity, including the installation of a new bathroom.

The back of the cottage with additions and changes made in the twentieth century
4.0

THE EVIDENCE
4.1 THE COTTAGE

4.1.1 The Building

The details of the structure of the main building revealed by the remedial works were to be the subject of a separate archival recording by DEC. As a summary the wall was found to be made of wattle and daub using lathes for the wattling. The wall rested on hardwood wall plates (Section 4.1.3). The corner posts of the walls were little more than bush-poles. The main wall posts had been set into check-outs cut into the wall plates.

Detail of the wattle and daub construction revealed during the demolition of the front wall.
4.1.2 Verandah Surfaces: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

A 300-500mm wide trench next to the front wall of the cottage was cut through the existing cement verandah. This trench ran for a length of 8.5m. The cement [001] was found to be 70-100mm thick and had a quartz and river stone aggregate. This last surface was poured during the 1950s.

Removal of the cement revealed what is likely to have been the original surface for the verandah of the cottage laid in the nineteenth century and in use up until it was covered by the present cement floor.

This earlier verandah surface [002] was made from clay mixed with small, probably alluvial pebbles. This formed a hard and impervious surface 100-140mm thick.

When the verandah was resurfaced in the twentieth century sand and a mixture of old scrap iron [016] was thrown onto the clay surface [002]. This included a scythe head (seen in section), bolts, pieces of rod iron and the head of a shovel. The cement was poured directly over this material.

View north showing the existing verandah [001] on the sand and mixed fill bedding deposit [007]. This lies above the pebble encrusted original surface [002].
4.1.3 Constructing the Cottage

Removal of the nineteenth century verandah surface revealed some of the methods used to build the cottage in the c.1860s. The front wall was built on two separate base plates that were supported in the middle of the wall by a large stump made from a section cut from a tree trunk [008]. The stump measured 260x400mm had been set into the underlying deposits by means of a shallow pit. The cut for this pit could still be seen around it to a width of approximately 50mm [009]. The marks of a cross-cut saw could still be seen on the surface of the stump. This stump had suffered severe white ant damage and was replaced as part of the remedial programme of works.

View south of the central stump [008] and the cut [009] made into an underlying deposit [004].
View east of the verandah excavation showing the stump in the middle of the trench. The front wall of the cottage has been removed for the repairs.

The wall plates were two beams, one measuring 4.5 metres in length [013] and the other 4.0 metres long [014]. Check-outs had been made in them for the wall posts. Apart from the deteriorated stump it was the decayed end of the western base plate that had caused the slump in the wall. Water running down the chimney had pooled under the floor and destroyed the end of the plate.

The decayed end of the western wall plate, view to the south.
View east of the exposed base plates [013, 014] with the top of the clay packing [003] exposed.

The base plates and stump had been stabilised by the introduction of a thick deposit of clay [003]. This orange-red coloured clay had smaller grey inclusions. It was thicker on the northern side sloping down to encircle the stump and the space under the wall plates. The latter sat just on this deposit.

There was considerable evidence of root activity within this bedding clay and a small quantity of artefacts. Most had no potential for useful dating purposes. They included two pieces of white single-glazed earthenware, a single sherd of blue transfer printed
Willow pattern bowl/cup and four pieces of colourless glass from an unidentifiable container. There was part of a peach seed. There was a badly corroded alloy button. The ceramics, glass and button are shown in the image below.

The group included a 120mm long pebble (shown above) that appears to have wear along one side. It could have been some form of whetstone. A scythe blade was found in the deposit (pictured on the following page).
There was also what appears to be a small metal brooch setting. This is the only artefact that might have some value for chronology. It would have had a glass cover to allow either a picture or even hair from mourning jewellery to be set in it. The latter, because of the size (two centimetre oval), is more likely to have been the case.

If this was a mourning brooch it could provide a date for the earliest year of construction for this cottage. Mourning jewellery of this type, although made for several centuries, came into particular prominence after 1861, the death of Prince Albert. Queen Victoria started a vogue for this type of hair jewellery. It suggests that the cottage was made in the mid-later 1860s which accords with the title evidence.

*The reverse of the small brooch setting showing the remains of the pin catch.*
4.2 AN EARLIER BUILDING

The archaeological evidence revealed the presence of an older building that had occupied this site before the construction of the present cottage in the 1860s. In terms of the history of the town it probably dates to the first period of alluvial mining in the 1850s. Too little was revealed by the small sample exposed by the remedial works to make any conclusions with respect to use.

4.2.1 Floor

Removal of the packing clay [003] around the stump [008] and base plates [013, 014] revealed a very distinctive surface that certainly pre-dates the construction of the cottage. This relationship is evidenced by the packing clay that was used in the original construction of the cottage lying over this surface and its several features.

The older surface [004] was made using orange coloured clay that had been rammed to make a flat and very compact and impervious surface. The other evidence found in association with this surface suggests that it had been the floor of an older building. It had been damaged when the stump [008] used to support the two wall plates of the present cottage [013, 014] had been set into a shallow pit cut into it [009]. This older floor was approximately 400-500mm below the present surface of the verandah.

View west along the rammed earth floor [004] with a post-hole [005/006/007] cut into it.
4.2.2 Wall and Threshold?

Two post-holes were exposed at the northern side of the trench. They are likely to represent the line of the outer wall of this older building. They were both found on the eastern end of the trench. The easternmost post-hole was only partly exposed in the trench. It may have been the same size as the fully exposed post-hole [012] but only 150 x 160mm of the cut [005] was exposed in the excavation. Within the cut was the outline of the post being 110x120x200mm [006]. When the building was demolished the beam was removed and the space was filled with mixed debris [007] including some of the packing clay [003] of the present structure. The second post-hole [012] measured 180 x 200mm. The two post holes were approximately two metres apart on the same east-west alignment. The larger post-hole [012] was 200mm in depth and the easternmost post-hole [005] was only 80mm in depth.

Post-hole 005/006/007 set in surface [004] looking south

Post-hole 012 looking east.
At a distance of approximately 650mm from the second post-hole [012] was part of a hardwood log [010]. It measured 700mm x 350mm and was 300mm thick. The log had been sawn at both ends but was still largely in its natural state including the preservation of some bark. It was considerably worn on its upper surface towards the centre. It rested on the hard surface [004]. It had been completely covered when the clay used to stabilise the present cottage [003] was packed around the stump and wall plates.
View south of the hardwood, sawn log [010].

View west of the sawn hard wood log [010].
The most likely interpretation of the post-holes is that they are the remains of the outer wall of a building constructed using posts and possibly bark or wattle and daub. There was no evidence of slab construction. We could find no evidence of a post hole at the western end of the trench but the distance between the two eastern post-holes suggest that if another post-hole was to be found at the western end of this alignment it is likely to be outside the area exposed by this trench. It was an area, also, much damaged by water seepage from the chimney of the present cottage.

The large block of wood [010] to the west of the second post-hole might be an internal threshold for a door; there is certainly wear on the upper surface. The combination of these post-holes and possible threshold suggests that the building that preceded the present cottage would have been either larger than the present cottage by at least two metres if it was oriented in the same north-south direction. It is also possible that it could have been oriented east to west in which case this would be a side wall of the structure and we cannot determine the real size. The presence of a hearth on this side (Section 4.2.3) might give support to the interpretation of this as a side wall rather than front wall.

4.2.3 Hearth

At the southern edge of the trench, mid way between the two post-holes exposed in the excavation [005, 012], was a line of bricks set in the hard earth floor [004] apparently placed there during its construction. There was no sign of any cut having been made to insert these bricks [011] into the clay.

The bricks were hand-made one with a heart-shaped frog and the others with rounded rectangular frogs. They were broken or fragmentary pieces of brick and they formed a line...cm. Long. Close to these bricks, ground into the hard clay surface [004] was a scattered deposit of black charcoal [015].

View south of the remnant line of bricks [011]
This line of bricks is almost certainly a remnant of part of a hearth inside this older building. It was found approximately 300mm from the line of post-holes [005, 012] and may have been the front edge of the hearth. If this is the case the back of the structure was probably just outside the northern edge of the trench. The scattered charcoal was certainly debris from the fire.

When the present cottage was constructed here in the 1860s the eastern wall plate [014] was laid over this remnant line of bricks.

View west showing charcoal [015] ground into the underlying hard floor [004].
4.3 Garden

It was found that a large build up of leaves around the chimney and front verandah, coupled with a leaking roof drain at the front of the cottage had lead to the wooden base plate of the front wall decomposing. This had caused the wall to slump along with the decayed central stump. Removal of the leaves and debris revealed only top-soil.

View south of the exposed top-soil at the base of the chimney (the brick structure at the rear of the image).
4.4 THE SUB-FLOOR DEPOSIT

The original floor had been replaced with pine floor boards in recent times. The joists were supported on piers made using dry pressed and sandstock bricks. The new floor was slightly lower in level to that of the original floor. The gap created between the lower level of the floor and the original skirting board had been covered by a wider skirting board.

Removal of the floor boards revealed an extremely disturbed sub-floor deposit, the disturbance having been caused by the work associated with the floor renewal. The only artefacts found in the space were left by the last workmen and included a Coca Cola bottle and cigarette packs.

The soil had been heavily displaced but it appeared to be the same packing clay [003] that was observed on the external face of this wall under the verandah. Here it had been broken and crumbled at the surface.
4.5 RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The permit application for this work described three distinct areas of information that could be enriched by the information retrieved from the programme of archaeological work. These were:

- Structural/Architectural: information specific to the present building
- Cultural: evidence relevant to the use of the building and specific people who have occupied it
- Earlier History: evidence that could reveal an earlier European use of the site.

With respect to these aspects we may conclude the following:

- That the work has revealed specific evidence concerning the construction techniques used in this building including the stumping and clay packing
- That almost no evidence was found of the people who used this place but the areas exposed by the work were in one case heavily disturbed by recent work and, secondly, in a place unlikely to originally accumulate much in the way of small artefacts.
- That the work has conclusively revealed unequivocal evidence of an earlier phase of substantial occupation. This is the most significant outcome of the project.

The identification of an earlier phase of occupation would benefit from additional historical research. It also identifies the need for great caution to be exercised in any future works on this site that disturb the ground.
5.0

REFERENCES
Archaeological Investigation: Haefliger's Cottage Hill End


NSW Heritage Office  State Heritage Inventory Form: Haefliger's Cottage

CRM for NPWS