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View of Scott Street from the corner of Cross Street to the corner of Harris street, June 20, 1996.
Above. North-west corner of the building after the demolition of the roof and upper floor. June 20, 1996. The shop windows were boarded up by City West Development Corporation in 1994.

Below. Detail. The plinth stones and rubble coursed foundations below. The shop window near the corner door had been bricked up, the upper part 'bricked up' with bottles. The shop window (left): partly of cedar.
Introduction

The subject of this report was a shop and residence located on the corner of Harris and Scott Streets. It was a typical corner shop with corner entrance and classic shop window arrangements, reminiscent of those seen in the early 1870s Holtermann Collection of photographs. The upper storey would have been used as a residence. The structure was actually two shops on different levels but was constructed as one building.

The original concept was to adapt the building, according to heritage guidelines consistent with the Heritage Act of New South Wales (1977, with amendments) for the purpose of serving as a police station.

This report records the events of the site from June 20, soon after the demolition of the upper floor, until August 9, 1996 when the old foundations were grubbed out and concrete piers were being installed. As there was limited funding for this report, the correspondence regarding the site is included in the appendices to broaden the scope of the documentation.

In part, number 52 Harris Street received attention in two or three previous reports: one report on the Scott and Cross Street terraces, April 1995 and a sample excavation report to determine the stratigraphy of 52 Harris Street and 1 Cross Street, October 1995, both reports were by Wendy Thorp, archaeologist. These reports highlighted the requirements of the Heritage Act of New South Wales (1977) in regard to any changes made to the fabric and the archaeology of the site.

The April 1995 Thorp report states:

'At this time the only immediate work is for the former shop and residence at the corner of Harris and Scott Streets. This is to be adapted for use as a community police station. Apart from the stabilization and adaptation of the above ground structure it is anticipated that the work will require disturbance to the sub-floor spaces (due to the need for a new floor and possibly improve ventilation) and the excavation of some service trenches.' (Item 6.3).
Of the above-ground structures, the report continued:

'Specific recommendations for the preservation and restoration of the above ground buildings have been presented in the Conservation Plan for the site (Schwager Brooks, 1994, Section 7.4). An additional recommendation that has bearing for archaeological purposes is the need to record fabric that is revealed and removed as part of the renovation and adaptation programme'.

'This is a principle expressed in the Burra Charter.....an above ground and intact structure is as much an “archaeological” relic as a fragmentary below ground structure......Removal without recording of structural or other evidence from the buildings is likely to result in the loss of archival evidence particularly pertinent to the later nineteenth century development of the site.’ (Section 6.4.2).

Further:

'...works that disturb the surface of the ground should also be monitored in these areas for the purpose of recording additional structural evidence, cultural deposits or assemblages.’ (Section 6.4.4).

'...any work which disturbs the surface of the ground will require monitoring and recording as necessary.’ (Section 6.4.5, p 22).

'renovation, restoration and adaptation of the extant buildings which requires intervention and/or removal of existing fabric should be accompanied by an ongoing recording programme.’ (Section 6.4.5, p 23).

'All archaeological work on this site will require application to be made to the Heritage Council of NSW for an Excavation Permit.’ (Section 6.4.5, p 23).

This report is an outcome of the above recommendations, though the extent of the fire damage, the state of the foundations, the demolitions and disturbance to underground deposits could not have been anticipated at the time the earlier reports were written:

‘Apart from the stabilization and adaptation of the above ground structure it is anticipated that the work will require disturbance to the sub-floor spaces (due to the need for a new floor and possibly improve ventilation) and the excavation of some service trenches.’ (Item 6.3).
Demolition Stage 1. June 20, 1996. View from the south-east looking toward the north-west; taken from Scott Street. The plan had been to remove the roof. It was at this stage that the archaeologist was called in.

Demolition Stage 3. July 21, 1996. View from the south-east looking toward the north-west; taken from Scott Street. The demolition rubble and protective sand layer had been removed so that the archaeologist could examine the site to assess early site features and stratigraphy.

Demolition Stage 4. August 8, 1996. An engineer found that the massive foundation did not rest on bedrock, so the foundations were grubbed out in favour of concrete piers. A fraction of the stratigraphy survived.
The stabilization, adaptation with some disturbance to underfloor spaces and some service trenches turned into what eventually amounted to full-scale demolition and the loss of the stratigraphy. The events which led to this situation were complex and occurred in stages.

After the removal of the roof, the former owners, City West Development Corporation urged the new owners, Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd to demolish the upper floor of the building and contributed to the costs of this and further demolition. The structure had been weakened by fire. At the time the City West Development Corporation was installing services 0.5 m away from the building and since the building was judged to be unsafe, work could not proceed until the building had come down. Dennis & Dennis Investments had every intention to restore the building but an engineer's report had suggested that this was impossible. Soon after the first floor was demolished, the Department of Planning and Urban Affairs called Dennis and Dennis Investments seeking an explanation but found that the City West Development had given the order for demolition, (pers. comm. Mr Dennis Lidis).

The author of this report was called in at short notice, soon after the roof and upper storey had been demolished. The subsequent events are recorded in the section entitled 'Site Transactions'. The author of this report was under the impression that approval had been gained in regard to the Heritage Act of New South Wales (1977).

As it was a requirement of law to have such site disturbance supervised, recorded and relics retrieved, the supervision, recording and retrieval of stratigraphic material took place. Representatives of the site owners were urged to find place for the larger items retrieved on site, such as the 1870s shop window, some large slabs of stone etc. This form of site management was not an ideal one because of the circumstances and little provision had been made in the budget for the Heritage Act requirements of the site and for the storage of significant items from the site.

The commission was a verbal one by Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd, under urgent circumstances, and recording, supervision, retrieval of artefacts, basic processing with report was done according to the guidelines required by law under the Heritage Act and, as it happened, according to the heritage reports and Schwager Brooks Conservation Plan (commissioned by City West Development Corporation).
Acknowledgements

My thanks to Dennis Lidis of Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd who made previous reports by Wendy Thorp available and Jennifer Hill, director of Architectural Projects Pty Ltd who was aware of the statutory requirements of the project. My thanks also to builder, Samir Jammal of Contrast Design & Construction Pty Ltd who co-operated under difficult circumstances.

Statement of Significance

Comprehensive statements of significance are to be found in the several reports on the area written between 1993 and 1995.

A working class area corner shop of the late 1870s of conservative design. It was a memorial to the working class people of the area, its rôle changing with the fortunes of the area until it became a ‘squat’ from the 1970s.

The shop was an important element in the streetscape of lower Harris Street and Scott Street, a rare survival of urban architecture for the working class by absentee landlords.

Although of conservative design, the building materials were of the latest mass-production types. In particular, the wire-drawn nails and dry-press brick manufacture, the latter of which came to be accepted in Sydney during the decade the house was built.

Methodology

Under ideal circumstances a site should be first thoroughly researched and then analysed, so that special features may be predicted or at least interpreted when they come to light. The archaeologist had to keep ahead of events. Fortunately a historical outline had been written in the reports of Wendy Thorp but there was a delay in getting a copy. As this was what could be termed an ‘emergency’ site from the point of view of the archaeologist, the methodology was basically at the mercy of building schedules.
Corner Harris and Scott Streets. View from the corner doorstep. The site after the remaining walls and shop windows (left and foreground) had been pushed into the foundation area. July 15, 1996.
The first step was to analyse the building materials to obtain dates and establish a phasing. As soon as it became clear that the site was to be destroyed, test trenches were sunk so that suspected early remains could be worked in as part of the new structure or, at least, that a representative of early deposits could be retrieved before destruction. The results contradicted some of the earlier findings predicted for the site.

The site and stratigraphy were recorded by drawing and photographically. Artefacts were cleaned and bagged according to area and category on the basis of material compatibility (for example; no metals with other categories, no metal mixes such as copper and iron together, and leather bagged alone).

The demolition, as required was archaeologically supervised and material retrieved where ever possible. All large items, such as shop window fragments and stone slabs were left on site.
INDICATIVE PROFILE
CORNER OF HARRIS AND SCOTT STS
PYRMONT

Bedrock is uneven
But seems to
slope gradually
Toward the waterfront
AND SLOWLY
From east to west

Above Plinth demolished by 15 July 1996

NB: the drawing made before my
first visit to Scott
15 July 1996
See profile
23 July 1996

Possible site of
First House

Indicative Plan
Timber Cottage

Former Structure
Part of which (Ground Plan) Destroyed
Pre-Date The House As Seen In Brickwork

Possible Site Of
Old Rafters

Former Structure
Demolished To Plinth Level
By 15 July 1996

Scott St

Archaeologist
Dr. R. J. Taylor
Historical Outline

The following has been culled from the research found in the report of Wendy Thorp (April 1995). There are anomalies in the sources where, for example, some houses built were demolished within a few years of erection:

No 46 Harris Street. Built between 1854 and 1858 but demolished in 1859. Site re-occupied 1878/1879.


No 52 Harris Street. Built around 1869, demolished about 1871.

For No 52, at least, no evidence was found of a previous structure in the footings of the circa 1879 building or in the stratigraphy during the initial examination or during the removal of the footings. It is strongly suspected that there was a fault in the documents used. An entry or omission in the Sands’ Directory need not imply anything more than the clerk who collected or collated the entries used the wrong numbers or just forgot to put them in. In at least one case the Sands’ Directory was reprinted using the previous years’ data without any change. In another case whole entries were swapped and ended up under headings applicable to another entry. One can not assume that a house was built or demolished on the basis of the Sands Directory alone. More likely, house numbers were not always stable. Street numbers may have changed two or three times over the years in some streets.

CHRONOLOGY

1795. Grant to Thomas Jones.

Before 1799. Land to Obadiah Iken.

1799. John Macarthur, part of the Pyrmont Estate. Nearby hill had a mill (present Mill and Church Streets).
1830s. Land passed to Edward Macarthur. Macarthur attempted to sell the land in 1836, 1839 and 1840. The latter years were not good for real estate because the economy had collapsed. Macarthur would have decided to hold onto the land.

1840s-1853/1854. Various parcels of land were leased out. The stratigraphy of 52 suggests that a sandstone quarry was located nearby.

1854. George Wigram Allen of Glebe obtained a lease from the Macarthurs for 99 years at 120 pounds per annum.

1854-1858 George Wigram Allen sub-leased areas (some of the leases may have dated from before he obtained the 99 year lease).

1878/1879. There was a draper (Mr Ingram?) on or near the site as early as circa 1869 to 1871, as listed in Sands Directories. By this time a Mr Ingram had obtained a lease for No 50 and probably 52. Mr Ingram was listed as a draper when the house appeared in the directory for 1878/1879, he is very likely the same draper as was listed from about 1869 but lived elsewhere on the block.

The directories and the archaeology relating to the site suggest a late 1870s date for the construction of No 52. The building materials could not possibly be earlier than the 1870s.

1878/1879 to 1913. The place remained a drapery shop until about 1913. Quite a number of pins were found in the under-floor area.

1911 The title of the 99 year lease changed to the 'Camden Park Estate' but it remained an Allen family company until about 1940.

1913 to 1931 No 52 was operated by a hairdresser.

1931 to the late 1930s, thought to be vacant. These were the difficult years of the Great Depression, and people found they could cut their own hair at home without cost.

Late 1930s No 52 became part of the Waterside Workers Club.

From about 1940 to 1948 the property was taken over by Pyrmont Properties Pty Ltd. The company tried to seek permission to demolish the building but they were unsuccessful.

1948. No 52 was taken over by the local Council. The house was occupied until the early 1970s.

1978 to 1984 squatters took over the place but were eventually evicted through a Court Order.
1984. No 52 was Classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).


1994. The property was fenced and the building boarded up by City West Development Corporation.

1997. No 52 was demolished and the foundations grubbed up to construct a new police station. Patches of the stratigraphy escaped this work.
RIGHT OLD WALL THIS
PATTERN...SUGGESTING A
PREVIOUS HANG TO INTERLACE
WITH.

LATER?!)
THE LATER!!)
WORK RESPECTS
AN EARLIER
DECK/@NOW
GARDEN WALL
BOLD?

INHUMAN
PRE-EXISTING
STRUCTURE

S2 HARRIS STREET

FAIRLY SYRE
EVERY 4TH BRICK
DEMONISHED
BEFORE I COULD
HAVE A SECOND LOOK.

RECONSTRUCTION
1996

SITE PLAN

1887

TIMBER HOUSE

NO 50

1887

UNDENNANNED
STRUCTURE

NO 52

HARRIS STREET

ADDITION

NO 44

SCOTT STREET

SCOTT STREET

AS FOR DER LANDS
METHF DETAIL SERIES NL NGA
4 111. 12/1 SECTION V2
AS REPRODUCED IN WENYMOORE
REPORT APRIL 1995

RVJ
JULY 1996

NO 52 OBVIOUSLY TWO UNITS... WITH SEPARATE FRONT AND BACK DOORS
-SHARING A SEMI-DETACHED TOILET; ONE OWNER TWO LEASES; OWNER
Earlier Structures

One other of the main tasks required was to locate signs of an earlier structure because the documentation seemed to suggest an earlier building on the site. Careful above-ground and below-ground examination, proved that the structure was built at one time on two levels.

The evidence of an earlier structure relating to No 50 Harris Street was found in ‘ghost’ form. On the north elevation on the ground floor, a number of vertically-located brick gaps were found in the mid section of the wall. It was quite clear that the wall was built against an earlier brick structure which must have been partly demolished when No 52 was built. The jagged ends of the bricks of the previous structure were incorporated into the new wall. The older structure was demolished at some stage, leaving an outline on the north elevation.

To make certain that the north foundation was not part of the earlier structure a trench was sunk along the wall down to pre-European levels. No evidence of two phases was found. This trench served a second purpose, to establish the stratigraphic sequence of the site. It was found to complement the findings of the trench of the south-east corner and the later earthworks on the site but not exactly as Wendy Thorp found in 1995 (possibly due to the peculiarities of the locations she chose for her two or three test squares).
Right. North foundation wall on the inside. Excavation before demolition. The foundation was found to be 1500mm deep but was still above bedrock. Here the foundation cut through the artefact dump layer, whereas on the south side the footings were partly on top of the dump layer. The upper end of the view shows the mid dividing wall, upper part demolished, which only extended 950 mm from the top of the north wall.

Below. Detail. Here the original site surface was reached at about 1300mm, a typical poor Sydney soil and subsoil profile. See description.
52 HARRIS STREET, PYRMONT.

BELLOW FLOOR PROFILE - NORTHWEST ROOM, NORTH-EAST CORNER.

ORIGINAL FLOOR LIGHER - ABOUT 100 mm.

-100 mm NORTH ELEVATION FOUNDATION WALL

-500 mm MIDDLE WALL NORTH-WEST ROOM

TOP OF MID WALL N-W ROOM

BRICK + PLASTER JUN/JULY 1936 DEMOLITION

SAND DEPOSITED

ROOFING SLATE, LATHS FROM CEILING, MIXED WITH 1940'S - 1950'S + LATER MATERIAL, DARK SOIL.

QUARRY CHIPS (CANDY STONE PIECES) MIXED WITH CERAMICS + GLASS

BASIS OF MID WALL N-W ROOM.

-500 mm SAND

-1000 mm CLAYEY SAND

-1500 mm COARSE SAND

DISTINCTLY GREY LOAMY SOIL ALMOST CERTAINLY THE ORIGINAL PRE-CONSTRUCTION SURFACE.

SOIL BECOMES MUCH LIGHTER.

VIRGIN QUEEN SOIL ROUND + FLAT STONE - HIGH IRON CONTENT ALSO BOURBOUX-RED STONES.

INSET PLAN - LOCATION OF TRENCH

TIMBER COTTAGE

EXCAVATED TO FIRST UNDERFLOOR SURFACE.

EXCAVATED TO PRE-SETTLEMENT 400 mm.

EXCAVATION JULY 1936.

22 JULY 1936.

NS

R V J V

21 07 19 36
Stratigraphic Sequence

The stratigraphic sequence was best represented along the north wall of the structure because it was of a greater depth than along the south and east walls. However, the sequence was the same in both places. See illustrated profiles. The measurements were taken from top of the stone wall, roughly the former floor level. Because the lines are straight in the illustration below, the levels are approximate only.

0mm-----------------original floor level-------------
rubble from June/July 1996 demolition

450mm-----------------floor level of north side rooms-------
rubble from June/July demolition

550mm-----------------sand deposit placed there to protect (?) the layers below.

520mm-----------------roof and upper storey demolition layer--roofing slate, laths from ceilings and ceiling plaster mixed in with 1940s to 1980s and later material--dark organic material from the attic.

750mm-----------------original underfloor surface-------
dump and quarry tailings deposit---sandstone pieces, quarry chips, quarry sand mixed in with domestic material from a dump dating earlier than the house, hence pre-1878/1879---transfer printed ware, willow pattern, bottle glass, broken glasses, a few pipe stems, a number of shoe remains. Some of this material was churned up when the foundation was dug.

920mm-----------------foundation base of the mid dividing wall-------
layer of sand under what was once a dump. The sand had probably washed onto the site from a near-by stone quarry.

1050mm-----------------a curious thin layer of what appeared to be stone lime mortar---very possibly from a construction site nearby where they mixed the mortar for brick or stone work.

1060mm-----------------a clayey sand layer introduced to the site, gradually integrated into the deposit below.

1180mm-----------------a coarse sand layer, probably originating from a stone quarry.

1300mm-----------------A very distinct layer of grey loamy soil--this would have been the original bush topsoil of pre-European times. The layer becomes lighter lower down and then is integrated into the rocky layer of the virgin sub-soil.

1500mm-----------------Rounded and flat stones of high iron content, typical of Sydney sub-soil—also burgundy-red sandstone from the bedrock found deeper down.
Artefacts

Artefacts recovered from site fall into two procedural levels.

(a) Material excavated according to level and change of stratigraphy as outlined in the site journal.

This material was bagged according to the stratigraphy in which the material was found. The material later had to be washed (except for leather) and sorted into artefact categories for conservation purposes.

A list of part of the material recovered is included in manuscript form along with a sample of what is to be found in the bags. As the site manager was not sympathetic particularly to this phase of the work, only the minimum was done after cleaning and sorting.

(b) Material recovered during the archaeological supervision of the mechanical excavation and grubbing out of the foundations on August 8 and 9, 1996.

Very strictly speaking, the material is without stratigraphic context. However, it is certain that 99% of the material came from the dump layer over which No 52 was built.

This material was also washed and re-bagged for conservation purposes.

If any of the excavated material is used for display purposes, each item must be labelled according to exact provenance. The artefacts have the potential to reveal aspects of the life in that area before 1878/1879 not otherwise recorded. It may also be helpful in dating other sites in Sydney because of the 1878/1879 cut-off date.

The bulk of the material dated between the 1850s and 1870s, though closer to the 1870s than the 1850s. Most of the material recovered was composed of glass or ceramics of British manufacture.
Very light corrosion on bottle: company origin, contains lead

Artifacts represent:

Glass:
- Light blue glass decanter bottle - base only "NOP" - one lead glass
- Blown glass - wine bottle glass - several small fragments
- Dutch gin - shoulder
- Medium olive - prob. wine

Stone:
- 2 x ginger beak - good whole life
- 1x blackening jar - shoulder

Ceramics general:
- Tan body, clear glaze jar base - moulded sides

- Lead paste jar fragment - moulded outside - wheel marks on inside, Illich
- Two underglaze, 2x jars
- Lead paste: brown rim
- Various white ware
- Transfer
- Edge of brown ware: flatter on large plate
- Side of light project blue transfer ware: leaf flowers: similar here in Kherson Ware
- Blue body: high glaze
- Fragment Williams Killed
- " 2x purple transfer ware
  " blue
  " brown
  " poor jar

breakfast plate: dark purple transfer ware: very good Kherson
LIST OF

- brass button 22 bore, Age - imprinted "DOUBLE RING EDGE" - early 1900s
- small modern marble-looking object
- Sun-dried gas pipe remains
- 1930-1950 headliner tiles - 2x, paint
- Mother of pearl button - 25mm
- metal fragments - more.
- 1958 30 Australian - canted
- 1960 60 Australian - canted.
- old bottle top, "DAIRY KIK" - 1950-1960...
- Newspaper rolled up

2. S-W room, S-W (rare) doorway:
- plastic bag strip
- brass curtain ring
- wire window glasses, mail
- large old style matchbook - pre 1900-1910s
- glass shell
- one taper & large match (in two pieces)
- caskan 1864 & American mended 1864 - canted (found in mantel - chipped stone).
- 1960/70 roll of newspaper


23 JULY 1936
Above. View of No 52 Harris Street (corner of Scott Street) after the roof and upper floor demolition. June 20, 1996. Note the three shop windows: the one covered with corrugated iron had a doorway and display window of several cedar arches enframed by timber pilasters and a field above for signage, all as a single feature.

Below. View toward the west and former shop frontage after the structure was demolished to plinth level. The windows ended up as rubble. July 15, 1996.
Site Journal

17 June 1996

Call from Robyn Pengelli of Architectural Projects regarding meeting with Jennifer Hill. I was asked for and gave my low-medium category hourly rate. This would be the first site involvement for both Jennifer Hill and myself.

20 June 1996

Meeting at 52 Harris Street, Pyrmont with Jennifer Hill, Robyn Pengelli and staff of Architectural Projects of Studio 45, Surry Hills. Site discussion and inspection. Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd or City West Development Corporation (former owner) were not represented at this meeting as far as I was aware.

It was found that the contractors (?) had demolished the upper floor instead of just the roof. Jennifer thought the whole structure should go, considering the damage. An engineer had said that the building does not rest on bedrock.

I read the building materials and took notes. Inspected what was left of the structure. Dry-press bricks and (grey to yellowish) rock lime mortar. Collected nails for later analysis. The late 1870s shop window (very 'Holtermann Collection') was damaged but not beyond saving. The underfloor area was covered with sand to protect the archaeological deposits but over that the demolition material. Jennifer wanted an interpretative display based on recovered items, these would be retrieved from necessary trenches etc. After they left, I went over the site again and collected sample materials for analysis. There from 1.40 to 3.40.

Travelled from the Central Coast. Examined the materials later. Analysis suggested a late 1870s date. Recorded site meeting. Sent a fax to Jennifer giving a summary of my impressions. (see appendix I).

15 July 1996

Sent fax to Jennifer in the morning advising that a Section 60 would be required if they needed an excavation, depending on their arrangement
with the Heritage Branch. I requested documentation for the site (Wendy Thorp reports).

This second site meeting was with Dennis Lidis of Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd and Jennifer Hill with the builder present, Samir Jammal.

The problem of the demolition of the top floor was raised by Jennifer and myself. Only the roof was supposed to have been replaced (hopefully with Heritage Branch approval). However, the reason was stated to be that the upper walls had become unsafe after the demolition of the roof but no-one had been notified. (See Introduction for further background. The structure had been damaged by a fire).

Since the first site meeting on June 20, the walls had been demolished down to the plinth. Nothing of the timber work of the building was retrieved. The 1870s shop windows had been pushed into the building site with the surrounding walls and smashed to pieces. The arches of the window were made of cedar. Part of the stratigraphy of the back yard had been scooped away. The builder had received no clear instructions. Later took photographs and collected representative materials.

For this visit the archaeologist had been requested to examine the yards on the two sides of the building but demolition debris now covered the entire house and yard site. Pointed this out to those present and reminded them of the Heritage laws.

Problems seemed to be resolved regarding the mode of demolition and removal of materials between owner and builder. Further site examination and later office work. Travelled from the Central Coast. There from 1.30 to 3.30. Recorded site meeting and prepared a list of aspects needed to be done or clarified regarding excavation, heritage status of the site and management of building materials and the clearing of the site so a proper archaeological examination might take place. Faxed on the 16th. (See Appendix II)

18 July 1996:

Contacted urgently by Architectural Projects and a site meeting scheduled for this day was cancelled in favour of the 19th. Prepared a historical summary of the site so that sensitive areas could be predicted and historical notes made for the site meeting.
Above. South-east corner of No 52. It was discovered that the former skillion was added after the building had been completed. June 20, 1996. Note blocked windows and door to the right.

Below. South-east corner after demolition showing the air passage located under the former doorway. The large stone was reused from another site. Note the plinth stones (left), these were along the street elevations only.
Above: Prior to the foundations being removed this corner was excavated to determine the stratigraphy. A number of pins were found here relating possibly to the Draper’s period, 1870s-1913. A thick deposit had built up here from foundation level disturbance (quarry chips and dump material) mixed in with layers of coke. Mouse activity.

Below: Detail. Here the foundation from floor plate level was only 850mm deep. The artefact layer (former dump) was found to continue under the foundations.
No52 Harris Street, Pyrmont
South-East Room
South-East Corner

South Wall
Squared - dressed plinth stone.

This break in the wall a latent feature as ventilation for the false skillion addition.

Fill of roofing slates, ceiling plaster, fragments of the stairs/ceiling & roof mixed in with black soil from fill above mixed with black mortar.

Yellow sandstone & sandstone chips and sand & loam sand (source: street origin).

Distinct old over-run loamy sand (source: street origin).

A distinct layer of rounded stones.

Subsoil below this?

Stratigraphy continues under wall.
At about 200mm (at ceiling).
No shown stratigraphy in colour.

Sunday, 22nd of July 1936

Scale 1:10
19 July 1996

Third site meeting: Jennifer Hill, Dennis Lidis with Samir Jammal. Received the second Wendy Thorp report (but no plans or stratigraphy). Sam (Sammir) had removed the demolition debris from over the building and the sand layer as requested last time, without destroying the plinth. Work had to be done as quickly as possible because the builder couldn’t be stalled.

After the meeting worked on the remains of the demolition. Put down trenches to determine the nature of door areas, south-east corner, north wall and determined the extent of the stratigraphy since it seemed that they were permitted to excavate the site. Later recorded the results.

Fax to Samir, as Dennis suggested, so that he would have my numbers to call me when the work was about to begin.

21 July 1996: (Sun): Emergency recording/excavation (along north wall) of areas of likely significance which might be destroyed. Drew up site trench.

Excavated along the north wall of the north-west room to a depth of 1500mm below the top of the wall, as I was requested to determine if the wall belonged to an earlier phase (Wendy Thorp theory of this building using the foundations of an earlier building). Full stratigraphic sequence found, starting with this month’s demolitions down to pre-settlement times. No evidence found of M/s Thorp’s ‘brick and slate’ building, though there was such a deposit but it related to the demolition of the roof. Cleared the top of the wall above to discern if that wall belonged to an earlier building.

Artefacts bagged according to stratigraphic context and later part of the material washed, sorted and bagged for conservation reasons.

22 July 1996

Final excavation. Excavated the south-east corner of the south-east room. A logical stratigraphic sequence was found. Reached 1150mm (measurements from the the inner ledge of the east wall). Large amount of artefacts going into pre-construction times, that is before the late
19th July 1996 CONT.

Cleaned off most ledges, not much.

STRAIGHTNESS

RE-USED STONE

INfilled

broken at

lower level

these rooms

smaller

stone

T.30cm

500mm

THICK PIECES - LOT OF

Slate tiles mixed in

case of 1800cm N

some glasses

DEEP IN S-N corner with brick layer.
Right. A yard deposit to the east of the house. Upper surface soil and mixed early and recent material with signs of former paving set on a bed of coke. Below the coke, a mixed deposit of yard soil above the original clayey soil or subsoil giving way to bedrock. No sign of dump material. There was probably a stone ledge or sudden drop in level between the yard and the house site, the rubbish being thrown into the low ground. Machine excavation, August 9, 1996.

Below. Machine excavation over the house site, showing the sandy quarry tailings and dump deposit with the unstable sides of the excavation. Quite a number of artefacts were found here. August 8, 1996.
of artefacts going into preconstruction times, that is before the late 1870s. Came into coarse sand layers, most likely originating from a nearby quarry.

Later wrote up the findings and listed the bags of artefacts after artefact cleaning, sorting and labelling. Sent a four page account with a list of the proceedings and conclusions to Jennifer Hill. Sent a second fax regarding Heritage Branch advice.

23 July 1996: Discussed site and heritage problems with Jennifer Hill in regard to the faxes sent earlier.


28 July 1996: Processing of site artefacts. Analysis to ascertain a date for the ‘dump’ layer artefacts.

5 August 1996: Telephone call from Dennis Lidis of Dennis & Dennis Investments Pty Ltd regarding the commencement of mechanical excavation work on Wednesday (but it turned out to be Thursday because they could not get the required machinery or ?). He wanted the site excavated and the new footings poured on the same day. Dennis asked Sam to phone me to work out the details, which we did.

8 August 1996: Supervised mechanical excavations, photographic recording and retrieving artefacts from the excavated material.

Delays with the site because of the depth of the mechanical excavations to get to solid rock for new footings. The sides of the excavations unstable resulting in soil disturbance more than wanted. I was warned out of the holes because of the instability of the sides. The stone footings and plinths were removed and dumped to the edge of the site so that I could examine them, ditto regarding the soil. Round-sectioned forms were installed ready for the concrete but the concrete did not come.

A fair amount of ceramics, 'black' glass, drinking glass fragments, leather etc., turned up. Some fine transfer printed ware and glassware. All the material recovered pre-dated the house. Seems to have been the site of a domestic dump.
Above. Drainage pipes from the east end of the yard probably dating to 1878/1879. Above the pipe mixed deposits of coke, yard dirt, construction material, above which, asphalt and early brick pavers. As it happened, there was no provision to properly examine the yard. August 9, 1996.

Below. The larger foundation stones and plinth stones. August 8, 1996.
9 August 1996

Mechanical excavation work continued on site. I retrieved what I could but the site became so congested that the piled earth became too large to examine properly. The last of the excavations brought up very little. Dennis Lidis visited the site and spoke to all and took leave. The concrete arrived at 3.20 and I left the site for the last time at 3.30.

Later artefact cleaning, processing and bagging.

11 August 1996: Typed letter to Jennifer Hill regarding the satisfactory completion of the project, suggested report options. Telephone call ditto
Facsimile Transmission

ROBERT V J VARMAN Ph D (Syd) | ARCHAEOLOGIST
HERITAGE CONSULTANT

31 WOMBAT STREET | BERKELEYVALE | CENTRAL COAST, NSW 2261
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APPENDIX I | Internet varman@ozemail.com.au

Attention: JENNIFER HILL, Director
Company: ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS
Subject: Letter: Blaxland Street (19-21), Wood Street, Pyrmont

Date: 20 JUNE 1996
Pages: 1

COMMENTS:

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for the meeting with your colleagues, [names], representing Architectural Projects.

Just to confirm my initial observations:

1. The bricks, mortar, stone work (not too useful as a diagnostic tool), some of the timber cladding (didn't get to have a detailed look - as per the nails etc), leads me to suggest that the age of the structure (as surviving) easily fits the date you mentioned as a candidate, 1879. Dry-press bricks were just beginning to be accepted by builders. Lack-lime mortar, wire nails (some square-shaft) lath and plaster bricks + clay bricks make it certain that the building can not be older than 1879.

2. If the remains must be demolished: demolish to stone rindle + fireplaces above with a level for further archaeological assessment. Remove the sand only inside the building. Clean the yard to previous ground level (brick + demolition piles).

3. If the remains must be demolished, keep a good sample of all the building materials. Keep intact the Heidelberg...
Collection-type doors, windows, jalousies, cornice and interior finishes. I assume that you've recorded the inside and outside of the building (thinking of Heritage Council).

4. The bricks and holes along the north are more complex than I thought to some extent. In any event, there was a brick wall there before the main building was built. We will need to pay close attention to the below-ground footings.

5. Had a quick look at the other brick building along Scott Street – all are of a similar date – despite appearances more elaborate than the Esqts. Notice fairly old wc plumbing hard to tell if updated or if of a later date – drains gone! This means that there may not be a long drop (letting with pit hole). The ash pit might have been disturbed already. However, a test square and trench would still be in order. The underfloor area might be more potential.

Jennifer, let me know if you wish me to present a more formal report based on this alone. Otherwise let me know when the place has been cleared for the second inspection.

Best wishes,

[Signature]
Dear Jennifer,

Just a few points in case an excavation is warranted:

1. The works will need a Section 60 - depending on the arrangement with the Heritage Branch.
2. To apply for a Section 60, I'll need a good site plan (+ elevations if possible) and other historical research as backing documents. Processing usually takes about 30 days.

I will see you around 1:30.

[Signature]

Robert J Varman
Arts OZemail.com.au
Dear Jennifer,

It’s good to see you again on site. Here are a few observations:

1. Spoke to Jim later, seems he wasn’t informed that the stratigraphy on architectural furniture were to be preserved. I just wonder if he is covered for such instances as hand-removal of fabric + disturbed remains of artefacts and destruction regarding archaeology/heritage? It’s cheaper for them to do the sensitive bit’s than me - hand-removal of sand in the foundations. Stick rubble directly over the old yard level. . . .

2. Could you ask them to first remove all the timber on site and pile up in a safe spot. I noticed the shop windows fragments all over the site. Even the small bits.

3. To confirm that the building rubble is to be removed from the yard and foundation area - under the foundations. That as it’s OK to destroy the foundation, that can then demolish the top of the wall along Scott Street so as to scrape out the demolition material (after the timber bit’s are removed).

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4. If there is some doubt about the strength of the walls, the excavation of the inside area of the building will soon tell you what is on behave or not + solve the archaeology at the same time. The excavation could be confined to the paraffin of the internal walls (4-5 rooms) including the east addition. We'll need the earlier excavation report to weigh up things.

5. Confirm the Heritage Act standing of the site to see if I'll need to apply for a section 60. If the site is to be grubbed out, I wouldn't need a permit to excavate the building site.

6. Include an indicative plan of the site as a memory jogger.

7. Let me know when next to visit the site. I'm in Panamatta-report-writing-mode, so will be at home most time. Stand faze if you have difficulty contacting me. Notice to visit the site - one day in advance while I'm in report-writing-mode! (Any excuse to get out of other house at least).

Sue's Wiseman.
INDICATIVE PROFILE
CORNERS OF HARRIS AND SCOTT ST
PYRMONT

INDICATIVE PLAN

TIMBER COTTAGE

Former Structure
Part of which (remaining structure) pre-dated the house as seen in brickwork.
Dear Jennifer,

Did the south-south east corner again as orderly progression to pre-structure time.

As in Weedy's report, there is a dump layer which pre-dates all building on the site. In today's excavation this dump layer was about 200mm thick in a sand (sandstone origin) with various layers - some of the stone suggests a nearby road. The bulk of the deposit is quarry waste mixed in with 1850-1870 material.

The wall here, as the Engineer found, does not rest on solid rock, rather a dump of quarry waste - larger lumps of stones - as in the N-W room.

I checked the walls - all of one period, would fit either 1869 or 1879 but the brick walls were more likely to have been 1879 rather than 1869.
The upper layer of quarry tailings + artefacts seems a fairly contemporary fill.

What you need to know is:

1. The footings are not earlier than 1869. The structure was circa 1879 - suspect that the whole was built then. There may have been a prelate building there before, if the research is correct.
2. The dump deposit is of local significance, and in earlier times the building - range of dates 1840 - 1870, but knowing the site history, seems to be circa 1860s (the earlier ceramics conservative on "hand-me-downs").
3. Evidence of changes were found to the structure - or built in 1879 - mostly confined to the east elevation regarding doors vs. windows (by 1877).
4. The quarry tailings + artefacts record deposit, ca 1877 seem to "known in" soon after an earlier immediately after construction Credence stone line deposit in the north-west section.
5. If grubbing out the foundations in permeable, the earth should be retained on site to remove artefacts - especially under the footings. The profile of the excavation be recorded.
6. The artefacts 1860 - 1870, relate to household's nearby, or in the case of the early 70s fill, whenever they got the fill from (which considering carriages, carts would have been fairly local).
7. The timber from the windows etc., need a storage site.
8. There are some good pieces, though small, for a display reflecting the site history - ceramics from Geo V, 3 pins from the discovery period (1661 - 1913), some fragmented ceramic designs, building materials etc.
Dear Jennifer,

I'll be as brief as possible about my findings so far. Had to revisit the site yesterday because it seemed.

from Friday's examination that much of a late 1870s (mined with earlier stuff) still remains. Not only that, there is a logical sequence of deposits from pre-settlement times to the present including evidence of a construction phase. Also, rubbish did get through the T+G an similar interlocking floor-beads (as stated was highly unlikely by the previous reports, probably originating from the Golden Pheasants report) this has implications for other buildings. As at the Hyde Park Building, rats, mice tunnelled in the softer fill and dragged in what they fancied. Casually bones but sometimes human artefacts. I can't understand Wendy Sharp's conclusions, unless the area she selected was radically different to mine. It is clear that she did not excavate the whole underfloor area (Nor that she was briefed to do that, it just wasn't clear from her...
excavation report). There is evidence of change, made to doorways along the eastern side.

I'd like till another few hours on the site to judge the fate of the wall. The surprising sequence of the stratigraphy (implications on the phasing of the building) took up my time when there.

I would suggest that you discuss with the Heritage Branch about the new footings because in Andy's first report (April 1995—which I gave to Don—is) arranged for me in pretty strong (see 6.3 (general 6.4.2). Her artefacts report (October 1995) seems to clear the underground areas (2.3) but I don't think she anticipated that the entire structure would be removed. I believe that she underestimated the value of the below-floor deposits.

If the Heritage Branch allows you to remove the footings, I would suggest that:

1. The threshold stones be carefully removed and reused.
2. The planter stones be carefully removed and reused on the new building or be incorporated into the landscape design at the base of the building.
3. That the supervising archaeologist be able to retrieve artefacts — examine and record the trenches within a day's grace to do so.
4. As the building is to go into the yard — that should be done under supervision — start preliminary study.

This has the makings of a new section 60 but you will have to square the position with the Heritage Branch.

Will be on site tomorrow afternoon — will let you know the results on Tuesday or Wednesday. Would suggest:

Send some preliminary drawings.
No 52 Harris Street, Pyrmont
South-East Room
South-East Corner

Stratigraphy
- Continued under wall
  at about 600mm (as shown)
- Ubiquitous stratigraphy in colour

Scale 1:10

Date: 22 July 1996
SOUTH-EAST ROOM, SOUTH-EAST CORNER
22 JULY 1996 (INCLUDING MISC. PLASTER SAMPLES).

8.1. DEMOLITION MATERIAL - ROOFING SLATE, ROOF ET Cмеча NAILS, MATERIAL FROM OLD
STAIRCASE - SURFACE RUBBISH, DUMP LEVEL 150MM - 410MM -
MEASUREMENTS FROM THE LOWER INTERNAL PLINTH

8.2. MISC. SURFACE (SOUTH SIDE OF HOUSE).

8.3. PLASTER WEST WALL FOOTING

8.4. SOUTH WALL

8.5. MID WALL NORTH-SOUTH DIRECTION, FROM FOOTING

8.6. MID WALL EAST-WEST DIRECTION

8.7. EAST WALL FOOTING

8.8. NORTH WALL

8.9. AT CA 850MM AS FOR 16 BUT SLIGHTLY LOWER "DEBRIS+LIGHT SAND LAYER UNDER SUBSOIL"

8.10. AT CA 850MM - SMOOTH ORIGINAL LIGHT SAND

8.11. AT CA 900MM - SANDY LAYER

8.12. AT 780MM - ABSOLUTE SURFACE OF SAND LAYER.

8.13. AT 780 - 850MM SANDY SOIL BECOMES LIGHTER

8.14. AT 1100MM - DOT AS FOR AN EXCAVATOR

8.15. AT 350MM - SAND BECAUSE STONE - INTRODUCED + LOCAL SAND STORE

8.16. AT 880MM - LIGHT SAND BECOMES DRIER

8.17. AT CA 900MM AS FOR 16.

8.18. FROM SLOPING SURFACE OF SAND+SANDSTONE 410 - 580MM TO ABOUT 780MM

8.19. FROM SLOPING SURFACE 410 - 580MM SURFACE OF SAND+SANDSTONE LEVEL

8.20. SURFACE OF DUMPED SAND/SANDSTONE - 530MM (HEIGHT AT FRAME) - 3x FINIS
By: Graham

To: Dick Barry, Don Felsen

Date: 08/08/96

Subject: Talk with S.

S. was in a rather angry mood. He was talking about the sink that he had seen in the living room. He said that he had seen a hole in the wall, but when he checked, it was just a hole in the wall. He was also concerned about the paint on the wall, which he said was almost pure lead. He said that the walls were covered in a sticky yellow clay that was very hard to clean.

S. also mentioned that he had seen some of the interior decor and was concerned about the health effects. He said that there were some moldy spots in the kitchen and that the paint was peeling. He also mentioned that the kitchen was cold and that he had to wear a coat to keep warm.

S. was concerned about the safety of the building and asked if there were any plans to make improvements. He also mentioned that he had seen some of the old pictures of the building and was concerned about the condition of the walls.

S. ended the conversation by saying that he was going to try to get more information about the building and to see if there were any plans to improve it.
Dear Jennifer,

I finished up at No. 52 today. Witnessed the excavations in spark heaps today — yesterday afternoon.

The footings (pier) were being poured as of 3.20 today.

1. Found some good material for a display from the dump under drain. Footings — packs of plates, platters, cups, bowls — one really good transfer were pictorial — base of a small bowl. It's a good cross-section of mainly 1870s stuff.

2. What sort of report would you like? (a) Summary of the broad findings — 4 hours (b) DETAILED with overview of all artifacts — 10 hours (c) as specified at $65 per hour.

3. The windows (shop windows) await a decision. Could we store them in one of the nearby buildings?

4. Sam tells me that there is no space for landscaping at the back of the building (used for parking?). So what should be done with the stone (some nice blocks there)? Sam said he needs a "front" instruction.

That's about all,

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]