OLD SYDNEY GAOL
1979 RESCUE EXCAVATION
PRELIMINARY REPORT
OLD SYDNEY GAOL
THE 1970 RESCUE EXCAVATION
A report written by
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September 1980
The archaeological excavation on the site of the old Sydney gaol in Harrington Lane was restricted both by time and by the lack of experienced manpower and can be classified as a "rescue and salvage excavation." The site of the old gaol is shown in Plate I and is on land controlled by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority. It is bounded by George, Essex and Harrington Streets and the Cahill Expressway in the City of Sydney, New South Wales. The area is shortly to be redeveloped, as the site of the Regent of Sydney hotel complex.

Historical evidence and archaeological fieldwork suggested that the site possessed a background of some prominence in the early colony. It indicated that the first known stone gaol in Sydney was erected on the site in 1799 and, further, that this building had replaced a timber gaol which was burnt down at the beginning of that year. Documents specified that the gaol was finally demolished in the early 1840s.

Archaeological investigation on the site was aimed at substantiating documentary facts by locating and recording any evidence relating to the gaol, and the history of this site, before its imminent destruction.

The director's brief, provided by the Heritage Council, allowed for eight weeks for excavation and research. It included the following...
instructions:

(i) survey the site before the excavation begins;
(ii) supervise the removal of bitumen in appropriate areas of Harrington Lane;
(iii) excavate areas of interest and record any features or structures uncovered; and
(iv) process any artefacts located.

Excavation was preceded by considerable historic research and the major source of documentary information prior to any archaeological excavation, was in the form of a number of datable plans of the site and of buildings from the period when the site accommodated the first gaol. Initial reference to these plans instigated the need for a physical examination of the site. Also, this information was studied later in more depth in an attempt to gain an idea of the possible location of the structures within the old gaol complex on the present site. Total excavation of the site was not feasible because of the limited time and resources available.

The site was analysed using a unit approach. This means that each layer and feature on the site was excavated in sequence and was given a unit number in the order in which it was excavated. Information from the excavation of each of the units was recorded in detail on a proforma by the excavator responsible. This approach gives some discretion to the individual excavator and allows the director greater time to consider the strategic aspects of the site. Naturally, this is of great significance in a rescue excavation. Each unit number is linked to plan.
section, photograph and site book numbers and references. The
analysis of soil, structures, relationships with other units,
genral information on finds and post excavation interpretation
by the excavator were also recorded on the proformas, allowing
for later comprehensive interpretation by the director.

As the excavation progressed it became necessary to explore
three specific areas. Each of these areas was sub-divided as the
main trenches were developed (see Plate VII).

2. History of the site

What does the documentary evidence suggest?

The various documentary sources included literature about, and
plans and pictorial representations of the site and the
surrounding area. These sources complement each other and
suggest the following chronological development on the site of
the old gaol.

Evidence from the first few years (1788 to 1796)

Authentic sketches and plans of Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,
produced by Captain John Hunter dated 1789 are readily available
(Mouroy, 1969). These documents show that the area which was
to become the site of the first permanent gaol in the colony was
already occupied by store-houses and convict tents. In 1789 a
map was produced to reflect the plan for Sydney envisaged by
Governor Phillip (Tooley, 1968). The exact position of the later
gaol site cannot be determined on this plan however, the
approximate site of the gaol appears to have been allocated as
Phillip's plans appear largely to have been disregarded as the town had taken a different form by that date (Mitchell Library). Hence, little useful information can be gained from the 1789 plan. It was still not possible to locate the exact position of the old gaol site on this later map. However, a prison is marked in a position further to the south-east than the expected position of the future gaol buildings.

Further, Collins (1798) noted in *An Account of the English Colony in N.S.W.* that in July, 1794, the first accommodation for prisoners in the colony was merely an addition to the guardhouse, situated on the east side of the Cove. Again it is not possible to pin-point the exact site to which he refers.

In 1796 Governor Hunter of N.S.W. included a prison for Sydney amongst a list of excessively wanted buildings required by the community. Stone footings for a log gaol were laid in September of that year. There was no attempt to quarry a flat site on the bedrock for this construction and by June 1797 the building had been finished (Kerr, 1977:30). Descriptions by Collins (1802) provide clear evidence of the site of this gaol in the High Street, on the corners of what later became George and Essex Streets. The main building of the gaol is described as being 80 feet long and divided into 22 cells. The log building had a thatched roof and a wooden floor which was coated 8 inches deep with stiff clay. The gaol complex was enclosed with a strong.
The stone gaol (1799 to 1841)

Collins states that in January 1799, Governor Hunter had once again begun to instigate the erection of a new stone gaol. Progress in building the gaol appears to have been slow, probably as a result of the great demands on the labour of the public men of the convicts. However, in a despatch dated 25th September 1800, to Under Secretary King, Hunter stated that the building was completed at a cost of $3,954 pounds. The gaol is marked clearly on Keenan’s plan of the town of Sydney which is dated 30th October 1807 (Mourot 1969: 7). Several contemporary pictures illustrate the gaol buildings. The view published in Earle’s lithograph of 1826 is perhaps the clearest of these.

The main gaol structure had an army barracks plan with six cells attached for condemned felons. It was a single storey, hipped roof building with small windows. The layout was rectangular with a central corridor and identical wings to the north and south. These were flanked by cells with a central corridor and identical wings to the north and south. These were flanked by cells with a central corridor and identical wings to the north and south. These were flanked by cells.
cookhouse, debtors, disorderlies and cells for females, is not
described in detail in any available sources. A commentary in
1823, made in a report on the judicial establishments of N.S.W. by
J.T. Bigge, gives a description of the buildings within the gaol
complex. This is reproduced below because it was expected that
these buildings would be directly within the area that was
suitable for excavation.

The Sydney Gaol is situated in one of the principal streets
called George Street and upon the declivity of a rugged and
rocky hill that overlooks the harbour of Sydney Cove.

The entrance from the street is through a courtyard 97 by
34 feet, in which there are two small lodges, one for the
gaoler's office and the other for the confinement of
misdemeanants. On one side of the courtyard is a place of
deposit for wood and coals, and a house for the under
gaoler; and at the other is a separate courtyard 71 feet by
20, with a wooden building at the upper end, containing two
small rooms for the separate confinement of female
prisoners. The principal building stands on a raised
terrace, to which there is a steep and inconvenient stair-
case, and it is divided by a passage of 10 feet into 2
apartments that measure 32 feet by 22.

In these rooms there are fire-places and raised wooden
platforms upon which the prisoners sleep. The walls of
these rooms, as well as the wooden platforms and the floors, have been much damaged, although they have been frequently repaired. The yard behind the gaol is 165 feet in length by 79 in breadth, is well flagged and contains a pump that affords a good supply of water; at the upper end is the building that is appropriated to the debtors containing two rooms, one of which is 28 feet by 12 and divided into two bedrooms, and the other is 28 feet by 17; on the same side, and in front of the yard, two rooms have been lately appropriated for the women, each 27 feet by 16, and in which two fire-places have been constructed......there are three cells at each end of the principal building for the confinement of prisoners under sentence of death, or condemned to solitary confinement.

The report indicates that the whole site was enclosed by a perimeter wall. The elevated area between the present day Gloucester and Harrington Streets outside the west wall of the gaol complex became known as Gallow’s, or Hangman’s, Hill. From this position it seems that the public could observe any hangings which took place in the gallows yard to the west of the main building.

In a document dated July 1835, which included comments made to the N.S.W. Legislative Council Committee on Police and Gaols, by the High Sheriff Thomas Macquoid, Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis, Sheriff’s Bailiff Henry Kingsmill, and the Principal Gaoler John Weston, attention was drawn to the insecure and
delapidated state of the present buildings. The walls of the gaol were described as being held up by iron rods extending from one wall to another. As a result of overcrowding the gaol afforded no proper facilities for exercise or the segregation of different classes of prisoners. The report indicated that the greatest number ever confined in the gaol had been in the month of August 1834 when 326 prisoners were held and that in January 1835 there were 62 females and eight children confined in one small room alone. The report also explained that it was not infrequent, in the two wards allocated to prisoners awaiting trial and prisoners under sentence to ironed gags, for there to be insufficient space for all prisoners to lie down and take rest at the same time. It was recommended that a new gaol be built but that, until completion of the new project, the present building needed improvement. This proposition for a new Sydney gaol was finally accepted. On the 7th and 8th June 1841, the prisoners were chained together and marched in procession to the new gaol which had been built at Darlinghurst (Brodsky 1969:20).

(iv) Occupation of the site (1841 to c.1865)

It is difficult to establish exactly when the gaol buildings were demolished. A map dated as early as 1836 (Mitchell Library) indicates that consideration had been given to extending George Street to the north directly through the site of the gaol. This appears to have been aborted because evidence from a plan of 1845, drawn up by the Lands Department when Anvil Lane (later to become Harrington Lane) was established and when 17 allotments owned by William Long were specified, shows that
George Street had retained its previous alignment (Sydney Council, Lands Department). Between 1848 and 1850 Joseph Fowles produced his engraving of the facades of the buildings in the major streets of Sydney. His engravings of George Street show a distinct gap at the old site of the gaol.

Later, in 1856, a map was produced by the City Council which indicated that several temporary buildings had been established along the junction of George and Essex Streets (Sydney City Council). Sydney City Council Rate Assessment Books of Gipps Ward provided further details of these properties. Between 1858 and 1867 two of the buildings are described as being single storeyed, and either shops or dwellings built of iron and wood.

The terraced cottages of Anvil Lane and Queen Street (c. 1865 to 1905)

Some useful evidence was forthcoming from the Sydney Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. Plate II reproduces a map of the area produced in 1865 by the Water Board. It incorporates the temporary 1856 phase of occupation with an elaborate subdivision of the site which followed the ideas of the Lands Department plans drawn up in 1848 (Plan of Trigonometrical Survey of the City of Sydney, Section B.2). This subdivision is confirmed in one of the maps in Percy Dove's City Plan Directory (dated 1880). By this time, Anvil Lane had been renamed Queen Street. The key produced with this guide, and information from later Gipps Ward Council Rate Assessment books, give a clear description of the two storeyed, four roomed, buildings in brick
with slate roofs, which were constructed on site. It is recorded that the outer buildings in the yards, which backed onto a {flight of way}, were built in wood and iron.

(iv) The Vernon terrace and Harrington Lane (1905 to 1980)

At the turn of the twentieth century overcrowding, poor sanitation, unsatisfactory housing and, finally, the bubonic plague, which broke out in Sydney in 1900, led the City Improvement Authority to initiate a program for the resumption of properties on a considerable scale in 1907 (Birch and MacMillan 1962:153 and Bertie 1920:14).

The area of reorganisation encompassed the old gaol site. A Lands Department plan dated 1905 shows that planning was underway for the erection of the shops, later known as the Vernon terrace, along George and Essex Streets (Sydney City Council, Lands Department). As part of this development Queen Street was realigned slightly to the west, to allow for the widening of George Street, and was at the same time renamed Harrington Lane. Deep quarrying into the bedrock along the east side of Harrington Lane was undertaken during the construction of the Vernon terrace. It is thought that the facade of the Vernon terrace along George Street was demolished a few years later and that it was rebuilt further west to allow for additional widening of George Street. However, there is no documentary evidence to verify this matter.

(viii) Conservation House (c.1927 to 1980)
The area to the west of Harrington Lane remained derelict until the construction of Conservation House. While the exact date of construction is not available, informed sources suggest that it took place in 1927. It was not clear whether any temporary structures were erected on this land prior to the final phase of development. This rectangular reinforced concrete building had six main storeys and an additional construction on the roof. Finally, the Vernon Terrace was demolished in 1978 in preparation for the redevelopment of the whole site by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority. By June 1980 complete clearance had taken place including the demolition of Conservation House and destruction of Harrington Lane.

**Summary of Documentary Evidence**

In summary, the documentary evidence draws attention to the following points which were considered during the rescue excavation:

1. The old Sydney Gaol was abandoned in 1841 and since that time the area now known as Harrington Lane has provided access to various phases of development which lay to the east and west of the Lane.
2. The available documentary evidence indicated that the area directly beneath the Lane was largely undisturbed. However, the width and exact position of the Lane has changed over time in line with the various developments that have taken place on either side (east and west) of the Lane.
3. It can be seen that one conclusion to be drawn from
available documentary evidence is that the area below Harrington Lane had been disturbed less than surrounding areas. A second conclusion is that several walls from the old Sydney Gaol originally straddled the area bounded by the surface of Harrington Lane. These two conclusions indicated that it would be worthwhile to undertake selective excavation in Harrington Lane in order to record and rescue any structures and artefacts that might still be in situ.
Discoveries of archaeological interest

(a) Structures

The trenches for archaeological investigation were placed in areas along Harrington Lane where documentary evidence suggested that there was a possibility that some of the structures associated with the gaol may have remained undisturbed. Plate III provides a plan of the position of the trenches on a map which incorporates the building lines of 1834, 1848 and 1905. A section through the east edge of Harrington Lane, provided by the earlier demolition of the Vernon terrace, was surveyed before excavation. This examination emphasised the undulating nature of the bedrock and the large amount of disturbance in the lane caused by the laying of water, gas and electricity supplies.

(1) Phase I. 1788 to 1841

No definite evidence of any of the early buildings was established. Later phases of building appear to have disturbed the whole area. However, there were two main features which can be discussed in relation to this phase of occupation:

1. It can be suggested that the very large, worked stones which were used as foundation stones for later brick buildings on site (c. 1865), found in trench I, and shown in Plate IVa, may be worked stones which had remained on the site from the old gaol building. These stones had been cut to a width of c.35 cm and depth of c.30 cm. The length of the stones varied according to the building requirements and the longest piece measured c.120 cm. Two worked stones in trench I (c.30 cm deep; c.65 cm wide; respectively) formed a separate and c.95 and 200 cm long...
category. It can be seen in Plate IVb that the builders of the 1865 row of terraced houses had also adapted a large piece of bedrock to form another foundation wall. The makeshift nature of these foundations does allow the possibility of the re-use of large worked stones, in particular those in trench I, which were already available on the site.

2. The association of the well (which was excavated in trench I. See Plate IVb), with the gaol complex must also be considered. The only reference to a water supply for the gaol is found in Bigge's report dated 1823. He notes that in the yard behind the gaol, there is a flagged area which contains a pump that 'affords a good supply of water'. The well, which was cut into the bedrock to a depth of approximately 7.25 metres is located in what could have been this area. However:

X (I) there were no artefacts in the well which can be definitely dated to the first phase on the site;

X (II) four notches cut into the top edge of the well, c.18 cm wide, suggest that this structure may have been used as an open well at some stage. These notches seem to be in appropriate positions for a structure built across the top of the well, c.145 cm in width, to form the scaffold for a pulley system;

✓ (III) the cramped position of the well within the walls of the 1865 phase of building suggests that perhaps the well was not designed and excavated in this period. However, the foundation walls were very carefully constructed around the well.

In conclusion, there is no clear evidence which can
definitely pinpoint the original excavation of the well to any one phase of occupation on the site. There is at present very little detailed information about the location and structure of wells in the early history of Sydney upon which we can draw.

(ii) Phase II. 1841 to c.1865

These temporary buildings appeared to have been completely destroyed. Excavation in trench I revealed the only unit (see para. Ib) which might be associated with this, or earlier phases of occupation on the site. It is clear that trenches were cut into earlier units for the foundation stones of the c.1865 houses (Plate VIb). At the moment it is not possible to specify by how much time those units predated the c.1865 phase but in the more detailed analysis, which is shortly to be undertaken, particular attention will be paid to the artefacts discovered in these units in case they are related to the earlier development on site.

(iii) Phase III. c.1865 to 1905

The majority of the features and finds from the excavation can be assigned to this phase. Plates IVa to VII illustrate that in all three trenches remain of the large, worked foundation stones of the row of brick terraced cottages, which had been built along Queen Street in this period, were found "in situ". In some areas this construction took place on bedrock or natural soil and frequently two courses of stones had been built to compensate for the considerable slope in the bedrock. Traces of mortar, and occasionally slate for damp courting, were found on top of these large stones. In trench II a gully, c.15 cm deep and c.18 cm
wide, which possibly provided a form of drainage from the
buildings, was cut into the bedrock. The pattern of these walls
fits the plots which were marked out for the site in the Percy
Dove's City Plan Directory of 1880.

(iv) Phase IV, 1905 to 1927
The 1865 row of terrace dwellings were demolished to the level of
the foundation stones to make way for the construction of the
Vernon terrace. The whole area, which included the foundation
trenches and the well, appears to have been filled with rubble
which seems to have been imported onto the site. At the
earliest, the fill may have been brought to the site c. 1865
during the construction of the row of terraced properties. At
the latest it may have provided a level surface for the
construction of Harrington Lane sometime after 1905. A further
layer of sandy fill was distributed over the whole site and the
laneway was covered subsequently with a well packed cobbled
surface. There was little evidence of wear on this surface
suggesting that it may have been the foundation for the final
bitumen surfaces. Three layers of bitumen of varying quality,
had been laid on different occasions. Plate VIb shows these
layers very clearly in the south section of trench I. Waterpipes
and electric cables had also been laid from north to south along
the east side of Harrington Lane (Plate V). It has already been
noted that the Vernon terrace itself was completely demolished
about two years ago. (Frontispiece).

(v) Phase V, 1927 to present
Previous phases of occupation on the site were disturbed by the trenches which were cut into Harrington Lane for the laying of sewerage and gas pipes for Conservation House (Plates IVa to Vb). The footpath alongside the building, from north to south, to the west of Harrington Lane covered an area which had been excavated for the foundations of this building. Conservation House, at the time of excavation, was still standing.

Artefacts

A large number of finds were recovered from all three trenches. The rescue nature of the project meant that only a preliminary study of this material was possible for this first report.

1. Ceramics

Pottery provided the most abundant class of finds from the excavation. However, neither whole nor very large sherds were excavated. The material could be divided into three classes according to the type of clay and method of production. The approximate number of pieces for each class was, porcelain, 70%; glazed earthenware, 23%; stoneware, 7%. These figures also give a fair indication of the volume produced in each class. They are representative of pottery which was used throughout the 19th century, hence, exact dating of "units" could not be facilitated by these sherds without more specific classification. Work on such a classification is in progress by the author. During the 19th century the pottery and porcelain industries of England, and elsewhere, manufactured many wares that were not found in the excavations at the site. The technique involved...
a process in which 'stiff' mineral colour was used to fill the designs on a heated copperplate. Fine paper was pressed by iron rollers onto the surface of the copperplate and then was removed to be worked onto the ceramic surface to be printed (Graham p.11). These wares were cheap to produce and were exported in great quantity to overseas destinations including Australia.

Earthenware forms the bulk of the collection of pottery from the excavation. The sherds illustrate the gradual development of design from the early blue transfer printed wares with chinoiserie patterns to pieces which depict popular engravings, rural scenes and floral motifs and which employ the use of moulded borders. Other colours such as red, brown, green, black and purple were also adopted but these never replaced the popular and predominant blue underglaze. A small group of plain earthenware sherds was excavated together with other sherds which were decorated in a variety of colours and abstract designs datable to the turn of the century. Plates XI and X provide illustrations of the variety of earthenware excavated.

As in the other classes of pottery, most of the stoneware from the excavation consisted of a number of very small sherds which represented a variety of fabric and designs. Stoneware vessels were imported from England, and also produced locally in Australia, throughout the 19th century. The introduction of plaster of Paris moulds at this time enabled potters to produce a large range of highly decorated stoneware.
Two of the more interesting pieces of pottery from the site, in porcelain and stoneware respectively are illustrated in Plate VIII.

2. Bricks
A variety of bricks were excavated. No complete bricks were found but precise measurements were taken and samples have been sent to the N.S.W. Institute of Technology. The results were not available at the time of writing this report. It is hoped that these bricks will help to provide an independent chronology of events on the site.

3. Clay pipes
A large number and variety of clay pipes were excavated. Because these artefacts, like pottery, were easily broken, yet quite resilient, they are always found in abundance on sites of this period. A brief examination of the pipes showed that most of them had been produced locally. However, in light of the fact that imports were common throughout the 19th century, further study is required before a detailed assessment can be given.

Evolution of the clay pipe can be seen through changing stem lengths and shapes, the bowl forms and glazing of stem-tips. In terms of their size, form and decoration the examples found on site belong to the mid to late 19th century (Plate IX). A small group of the clay pipe sherds have either the initials, name or part of the name of the maker on the stem or spurs. As Fletcher (1976) suggests that fewer than 1% of clay pipes of this period are found with initials or trade marks several of the
discovered artefacts are of particular interest. A small group
(Plate IXb) is marked with some part of the name Elliott, Maker.
Clarence Street and is perhaps associated with a group which is
discussed by Birmingham from the excavation of the old Sydney
burial ground, which is inscribed 'S. Elliott, Maker, Clarence
Street'. George Elliott (1828) and Joseph Elliott (1837) are the
only known clay pipe makers noted in the trade. Directly at
this stage it is not possible to say which maker was responsible
for these pipes.

Another unusual curved stem has a manufacturer's name plate
embossed on both sides, Squatters Own and J. Bartlett,
Sydney.

In the main the collection consisted of bottle fragments. Most
of the glass was well preserved but few pieces were large enough
to use for establishing size or complete shape. It was possible
to divide the fragments into two categories based on colour. The
largest group was a thick dense green, or brown to dark olive
green colour known as sko glass. It is easily
distinguishable from the finer clear glass of which there was
only a few examples. No coloured glass was discovered. The
majority of the identifiable vessel bodies appear to have been
formed in moulds rather than been made by machine. Lip and base
designs fall into a number of classes of hand-made types which
were found throughout the 19th century. Fletcher (1976) notes that after
points out that for various reasons after 1820 the question of
dating by body shape becomes very complicated. However, style
and mode of manufacture do indicate that most of the collection
may be assigned to the latter half of the 19th century (Plate
XIII). It is of interest to note that from 1813 making factories were established in Australia but, even as late
as 1925, large numbers of empty glass bottles were still being imported from England.

Most of the iron artefacts excavated from the site were heavily
corroded but the silver and bronze coins were
quite well preserved. Items of interest include:

1. A leg iron which is of a type used to restrain convicts
   in the early years of the colony (Plate Xa). However,
   this artefact was excavated from a very disturbed unit
   over gas pipes and therefore cannot be dated exactly.

2. A group of eight coins and one pawnbroker's token
   (Plate Xb). Most of the coins were found in units
   which had been heavily disturbed. Hence, their value
   for dating purposes is limited. Full details of the
   coins are as follows:

   i) Silver. George III. Poor condition. (Diam. c. 2.4cm)

   ii) Silver. Victoria 1900. Three pence. Good
       condition. (Diam c. 1.6cm).

   iii) Bronze. Ram Peace and Plenty, N.S.W. Sydney.
       Britannia. N.S.W. Poorly stamped. (Diam. c. 3.4
       cm).
Good condition. (Diam. c. 3 cm).

Bronze. Edward VII. One penny. 1907. (Diam. c. 3 cm).

Bronze. George V. Commonwealth of Australia.
One penny. 1911. (Diam. c. 3 cm).

Bronze. Victoria Britannia. Poor condition.
(Diam. c. 2.7 cm).

Bronze George III. 1799. One farthing. (Diam. c. 2.3 cm).

The collection included one bronze pawnbrokers token, discovered in the layer and fill below the cobbled surface and marked as follows:

Andrews and Garton, list only one pawnbroker with that name and address which is listed in the Australian coin catalogues. This pawnbroker lived in Hobart, Tasmania in 1857. The adoption of tokens as coinage arose from the insufficiency of legitimate small change in circulation in the colony at the beginning of the 19th Century. A number of firms and individuals produced these tokens, which also provided an excellent medium for the advertisement of their business.

A large amount of bone in reasonable condition for analysis was collected from all areas of the site. Little analysis has yet
be undertaken on the bone. No indication of human remains was apparent.

Miscellaneous

A number of unusual pottery discs, which had been filed by hand from sherds of blue and white transfer-printed earthenware, were found (Plate XIA). Had they been discovered in close proximity to one another it would be reasonable to conclude that they were counters for a game. In fact these discs were found dispersed over a wide area in trench I.

A smaller group of slate pegs was also discovered (Plate XIB).

While several of the pegs have pointed tips others have been finished with rounded ends and decorated with engraved concentric circles around the circumference.

The following materials from the site were sent for analysis at the N.S.W. Institute of Technology: charcoal, mortar, wood, leather, tiles, plaster, cloth, slate, bitumen, and shell. At the time of writing this report analytical results of the tests on the samples were not available.

The archaeological excavation of the site revealed that post gaol phases of development were founded on bedrock. Thus, any in situ remains of the structures from the old Sydney gaol must have been destroyed.
The main structural evidence revealed was associated with a row of terrace houses built sometime after 1865. There is some evidence to suggest that large stones which had remained on the site from the old gaol building may have been employed as foundations for these houses. Exact dates for the construction and use of the well, which was excavated in trench I, cannot be adduced. Neither can the possibility be ruled out that the well was associated with the old gaol.

Most artefacts recovered from the site were discovered in the foundation fill of the terraced cottages that were built c. 1865, and also in the well.

As far as dating of artefacts is concerned, in area 1a of the excavation, as noted in section 3(a)(iv) of this report, the earliest that the fill may have been brought to the site was either during or before the c. 1865 phase of occupation. At the latest it could have been deposited as a level surface for the construction of Harrington Lane sometime after 1905. Further analysis of the artefacts will provide greater accuracy on these points.

5. Recommendations to the Heritage Council

In view of the evidence available from the excavation the author could see little purpose being served through conservation of an area which has been largely disturbed since c. 1841. Hence, there seems to be no reason to delay the commencement of construction work for the Regent of Sydney hotel complex on conservation grounds.
6. Postscript: post excavation events

On 15th June, 1980, the site of the old Sydney gaol was recorded as having been totally destroyed by bulldozers in the process of excavating foundations for the new Regent of Sydney hotel (Plate XII). It is now certain that there is no longer any evidence in situ relating to the earlier history of this site; however,

The artefacts that were discovered and preserved from that period are now in trust with the Heritage Council. The result of a detailed examination of these artefacts, which is being undertaken by the author, is to be published in a separate supplement to this main report. A more detailed site report is to be printed in limited numbers and will be available from the Heritage Council.
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Scale 1:10

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