

PORT AUTHORITY OF NSW HERITAGE INVENTORY

State Heritage Inventory

SHI Number: 4560025		Study Number: N/A	
Item Name: Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct			
Location: Circular Quay Way			
Address: 112-156 George Street		DUAP Region: Sydney South	
Suburb / Nearest Town: The Rocks 2000		Historic Region: Sydney	
Local Govt Area: Sydney		Parish: St. Philip	
State: NSW		County: Cumberland	
Other/Former Names:			
Area/Group/Complex:		Group ID:	
Aboriginal Area: Gadigal			
Curtilage/Boundary: The relevant SHR Listing curtilage (within the area owned by Port Authority of NSW) is the archaeological layer only of the site and does not include above ground buildings or structures.			
Item Type: Archaeological - Terrestrial	Group:	Category:	
Owner: Port Authority of New South Wales owns a small section of land within the curtilage of the Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct, being part of Lot 1 DP 876516 (refer to Image 1).			
Current Use:			
Former Uses:			
Assessed Significance: State		Endorsed Significance: State	
Statement of Significance: The Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct is a site of exceptional archaeological significance as evidence of some of the earliest colonial and maritime infrastructure of the convict settlement of Australia. (Heritage NSW, State Heritage Inventory)			
<p>Historical Notes or Provenance: Sydney Cove is situated on the border of the Eora nation, in the country of the Gadigal people, who, before the arrival of Europeans, knew the site as 'Warrane'. The traditional custodians of the place now known as Sydney are the Gadigal people, who are part of the 29 clan groups of the Eora Nation. Warrane / Sydney Cove (today's Circular Quay) is a place of historical significance, both as a site of early contact between the Eora and the Berewalgal (people from a distant place, that is, the Europeans), and locus for the colonial settlement after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.</p> <p>The topography of Sydney Cove determined the command structure of the new settlement, with civil authorities settled to the east of the water tributary known as the Tank Stream and military authorities and convicts to the west. Sydney Cove's first market place was erected in 1790, and in 1800, work was completed on a dockyard. Private homes were also built with noted emancipists Isaac Nichols and Mary Reiby among the first to build residences.</p> <p>From the mid-nineteenth century an increasing number of commercial ships began to visit Sydney Cove and in the 1870s passenger ferry services were established. Extensive foreshore redevelopment commenced in the 1950s, work which resulted in the final shoreline reclamation to its current</p>			

configuration. Notable late 20th and early 21st century work to Sydney Cove includes First Fleet Park and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA).			
Themes:	National Theme:	State Theme:	Local Theme:
Designer:			
Maker / Builder:			
Year Started:	Year Completed:	Circa:	
<p>Physical Description: The existing elements of the Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct are subterranean and subsequently are not visible from above ground inspection. Areas relevant to the subject site largely relate to the c.1828 Dockyards site, the northern dock in particular and subsequent structural elements related to their alignment below the infilled shoreline of Circular Quay West.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This dock is known to have had stepped sides. - 1997 testing of the southern wall located a row of rough sandstone blocks with stone rubble core and no wall facing. This indicates that the stepped ashlar coursing of this part of the northern dock has been removed. - Testing of the western end of the northern dock revealed mortar beds which suggests that the upper ashlar courses have been removed. - Testing in 1997 did not locate the northern dock wall. - Testing was carried out in 1998 along the northern site boundary to determine the alignment of the northern wall of the northern dock. This revealed that intact stone coursing of the western end wall and north-west corner of the dock remained at lower levels. Above these courses the stonework had been removed leaving the mortar beds on which the stone had rested. Testing along the northern wall indicated that the lower steps were cut into bedrock. - 1998 testing also revealed a vertical stone wall that was built on the northern dock wall. This was interpreted as a retaining wall built in the 1850s when Argyle Street was extended eastwards over the infilled dockyard to the newly created Circular Quay waterfront. <p>(Source: Godden Mackay Logan, First Fleet Park, The Rocks, Conservation Management Strategy, Final Report, November 2009, pp. 32-35.)</p>			
Physical Condition:			
Modification Dates:			
<p>Recommended Management: Retain in situ</p> <p>Refer to the 'First Fleet Park, The Rocks Conservation Management Strategy' prepared for the site in 2009 by GML, should be referred to for ongoing management, where required.</p> <p>Development work to any below ground area of this site, may require development approval under the EP&A Act and may require approval under the Heritage Act 1977. Contact relevant consent authorities.</p> <p>Aboriginal and European cultural archaeological sites are protected under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> and the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> respectively. Excavation permits and development approvals may be required. Contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Heritage NSW</p>			
Management: Statutory Instrument			
Further Comments:			

<p>Criteria a) The site has outstanding and unique historical significance for the identified, predictive and potential archaeology of: the first Government naval dockyards established in Australia (1797) that were improved and enlarged by Governor Macquarie (1818-22); the Commissariat Stores buildings constructed by Governor Macquarie (1810 and 1812); the seawall constructed for Circular Quay (1840s-1850s); the first public wharf built in the colony (c. 1798); the colony's first market place (c.1807-11), the first post office (c.1811), the Colonial Storekeepers Building (1823) and one of the colony's earliest commercial and residential precincts that included the residences and premises of important early emancipists Mary Reiby and Isaac Nichols (dating from c.1798). The site may also contain remains associated with pre-1788 Aboriginal occupation of the area.</p> <p>The site has state significance as a convict landing place. The general area for the landing of the First Fleet is likely to have been the western foreshores of Sydney Cove, somewhere north of the former Maritime Services Board building. The Third Fleet are known to have landed at the Hospital Wharf in 1791.</p> <p>Sydney Cove is the iconic marker of European settlement of Australia, and a site of historical significance for earliest contact of the Aboriginal people with European colonisers and of consequent Aboriginal dispossession. The site has social significance for the people of Australia as both a site of dispossession and of settlement, being one of the earliest sites of European settlement of the colony of NSW, and a site of over 200 years of continuous European occupation. (Heritage NSW, State Heritage Inventory)</p>			
<p>Criteria b) Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct has state significance for its associations with Governor John Hunter, who established the colonial dockyard in 1797; with the military administrator Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Foveaux who commissioned and started the Commissariat Stores building in 1809; with Governor Macquarie who completed the 1810 and commissioned the 1812 Commissariat Stores buildings and improved and enlarged the dockyard in 1818-22 with additional premises and four new docks; with significant early emancipists Isaac Nichols and Mary Reiby who built their residences, warehouse and the colony's first post office on the site of First Fleet Park between 1798 and 1811; with the convicts of the Third Fleet who disembarked at Hospital Wharf in 1791, and with Lieutenant-Colonel George Barney, colonial engineer, for the construction of this section of Circular Quay between 1844 and 1859. (Heritage NSW, State Heritage Inventory)</p>			
<p>Criteria c)</p>			
<p>Criteria d) The site has social significance for the public debate of 1939 following the demolition of the Commissariat Stores buildings that fostered the beginnings of a public awareness of the heritage of NSW and the formation of the National Trust of Australia, after World War II, in 1949. (Heritage NSW, State Heritage Inventory)</p>			
<p>Criteria e) The site has high research potential through the large extant archaeological remains on the site. Sites containing earliest 19th century (and potentially late 18th century) archaeological remains are very rare in Australia. The Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct is a very rare archaeological resource due to the extent of late twentieth century disturbance of most early sites of this nature. It is potentially capable of answering questions about the earliest years of European settlement in Australia and represents a finite, rare and endangered resource. (Heritage NSW, State Heritage Inventory)</p>			
<p>Criteria f)</p>			
<p>Criteria g)</p>			
<p>Integrity / Intactness:</p>			
References:	Author: GML	Title: First Fleet Park Conservation Management Strategy (and Ground	Year: 2009

				Penetrating Radar Survey)							
Studies:		Author:		Title:		Number:		Year:			
Parcels:		Parcel Code:		Lot Number:		Section:		Plan Code:		Plan Number:	
Latitude:						Longitude:					
Listings:		Name:		Title:		Number:		Date:			
		Heritage Act – S.170 NSW State agency heritage register		Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct		4560025					
		State Heritage Register		Sydney Cove West Archaeological Precinct		01860		05/08/2011			
		State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts-Eastern Harbour City) 2021		Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone							
		National Trust of Australia Register						30/03/2016			
Data Entry:			Date First Entered:			Date Updated:			Status:		
			06/02/2023			06/02/2023			Basic		

Image: 1

Heritage Council of New South Wales





State Heritage Register
Gazetted: 5 August 2011

The listing applies to the archaeological layer only of the land in Plan 2384 and excludes the foundations of current buildings.

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
Metres

Legend

- SHR Curtilage
- LGAs
- Suburbs
- Land Parcels

Scale: 1:1,500 @A4
Produced by: Sophie Copley

Caption: SHR Plan 1860

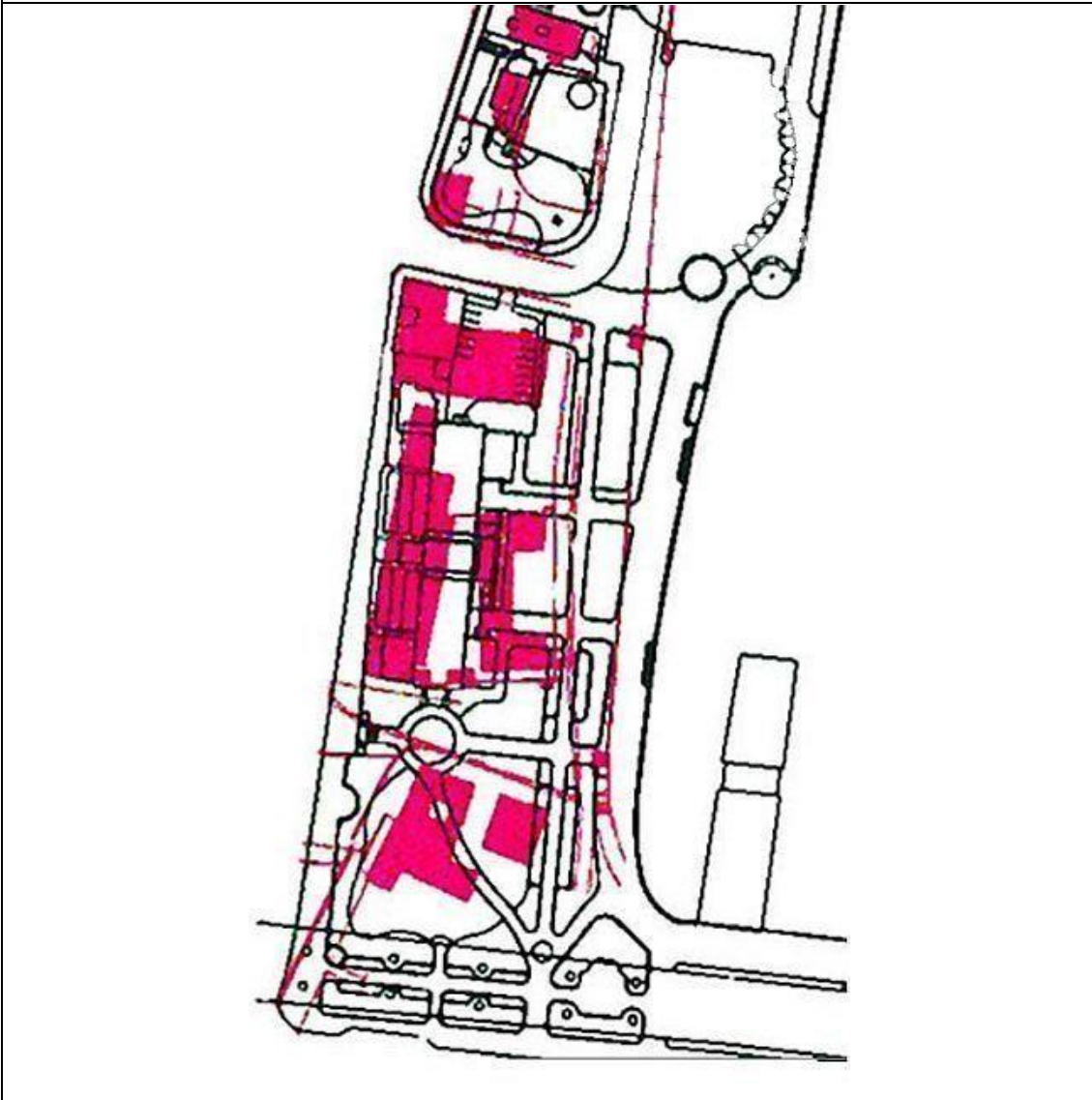
Copyright: No Credit

Image By: Sophie Copley (accessed via SHR inventory database)

Image Date: August 2011

Image File:

Image: 2



Caption: Overlay of archaeological building footprints in red onto modern street plan

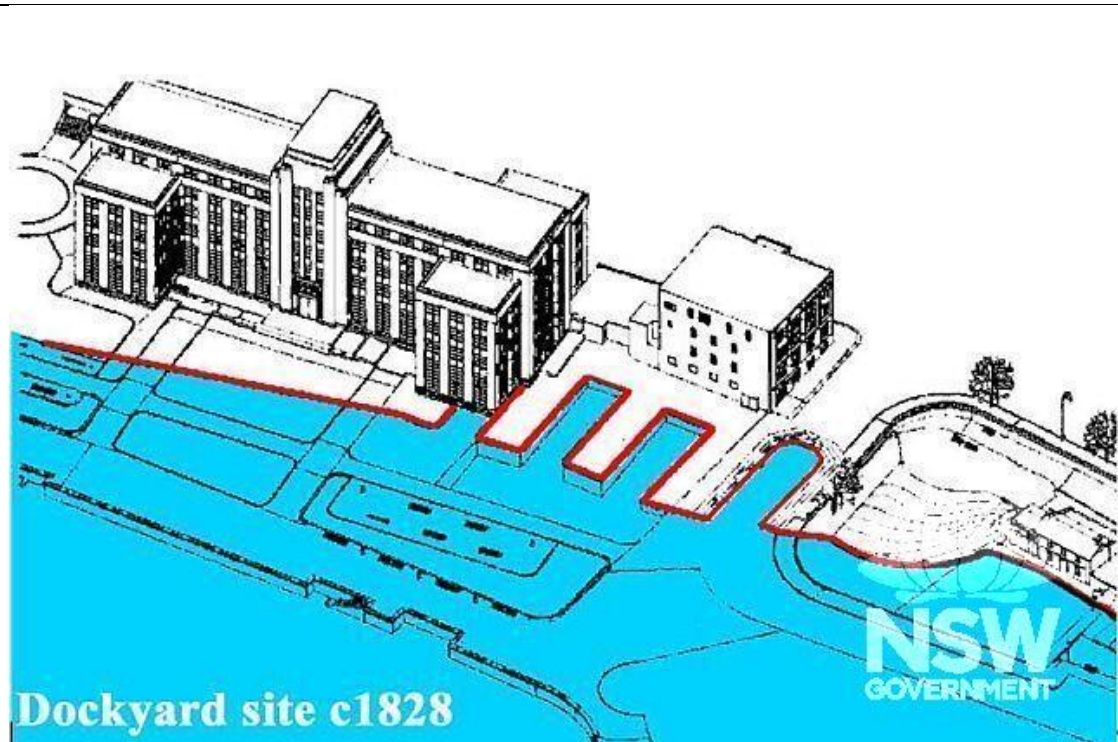
Copyright: No Credit

Image By: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (accessed via SHR inventory database)

Image Date: November 2009

Image File:

Image: 3



Caption: Dockyard site c.1828. Current buildings and the current infilled shoreline of west Circular Quay overlaid (in red) with the four Macquarie-era docks and the 1828 Sydney Cove shoreline.

Copyright: No Credit

Image By: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (accessed via SHR inventory database)

Image Date: November 2009

Image File:

Image: 4



Caption: Northwest corner of the northern dock showing intact stone coursing at depth. Scales 30cm and 1m (Casey & Lowe, Archaeological Management Plan, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009)

Copyright: No Credit

Image By: Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd

Image Date: September 2008

Image File: