

PORT AUTHORITY OF NSW HERITAGE INVENTORY

State Heritage Inventory

SHI Number: 2170241		Study Number: N/A	
Item Name: Nobbys Headland			
Location: Nobbys Road, Newcastle East			
Address: Nobbys Road Newcastle East 2300, part Lot 1053, DP 1189091		DUAP Region: Hunter & Central Coast	
Suburb / Nearest Town: Newcastle East 2300		Historic Region: Lower Hunter	
Local Govt Area: Newcastle		Parish: Newcastle	
State: NSW		County: Northumberland	
Other/Former Names:			
Area/Group/Complex:		Group ID:	
Aboriginal Area: Awabakal			
Curtilage/Boundary:			
Item Type: Landscape, Seawall	Group: Other – Urban Area	Category:	
Owner: Port Authority of New South Wales			
Current Use: Cottages are being used as a community facility. Nobbys Lighthouse and signal station are active navigational facilities located on separate lots and owned by the Commonwealth (AMSA).			
Former Uses: Navigation, shipping control, defence			
Assessed Significance: State		Endorsed Significance: State (as part of Coal River Precinct SHR 01674)	
Statement of Significance: Nobbys headland, originally an island, is a historically, culturally and aesthetically significant symbol of Newcastle. It is a prominent geological feature with great importance to local Awabakal and Worimi people; its Awabakal name is Whibayganba. As a distinctive symbol of Newcastle, it is highly esteemed by the general community, and has attracted the attention of many artists, from E.C. Close and Conrad Martens to Margaret Olley and Brett Whiteley. Nobbys is associated with the development of Newcastle as a thriving port for the inland river trade, and with the development of a great coal export market. The headland has become closely associated with the historical and cultural development of Newcastle, and is esteemed by the city's populace.			
Historical Notes or Provenance:			
<p>Nobbys Headland is located on the land of the Awabakal people, the traditional custodians of what is now known as the mid-North Coast of New South Wales. It is situated at the entrance to Newcastle Harbour and is recognised both as 'Nobbys', due to its resemblance to one of two 'nobs' that define the river the harbour was built on, and '<i>Whibayganba</i>', its name in the Awabakal language. Captain James Cook is credited with being the first European to sight Nobbys Headland – Cook's reaction, recorded in his journal, was somewhat indifferent, describing the site as a 'small clump of an island'. In 1790 a party of escaped convicts from the First and Second fleets arrived in the area, with the resulting chase bringing Government officials to the region - who subsequently established a penal colony, primarily for the exploitation of the area's natural resources.</p>			

<p>Nobbys Headland was joined with the mainland when Macquarie Pier was completed in 1846. A lighthouse with 24 nautical mile range was built in 1858 under the supervision of the then Colonial Architect, Alexander Dawson. Significant additions to the site occurred during the Second World War when Nobbys Headland was controlled by the military, with one of the three cottages built on the site hit by a shell fired from a Japanese submarine which failed to explode. When the military vacated the site in 1945 the cottages were occupied by signal staff who operated lighthouse until the late 1990s.</p> <p>Nobby's Headland is owned by Port Authority of NSW with the Lighthouse and Signal Station on separate lots and owned by the Commonwealth (AMSA).</p>			
Themes:	National Theme:	State Theme:	Local Theme:
	2. Peopling	Convict	Convict
	3. Economy	Environment – cultural landmark	
	3. Economy	Transport	The shipping of coal and other goods
	7. Governing	Defence	Defence of Newcastle Port
Designer: Various			
Maker / Builder: Various			
Year Started: Various	Year Completed: Various	Circa:	
<p>Physical Description: Nobbys, formerly an island variously called Hackings Island, Coal Island, The Nob, The Nobby, or one of the two 'Nobbies', and now a headland, is now joined to the mainland by the convict-built Macquarie Pier (s.170 item no. 3930015), completed in 1846 and rebuilt between 1866 and 1873, along which a wide beach has grown. Nobbys is said to be the eroded remains of a volcanic plug. Being windswept, it has no significant vegetation, bitou bush being very apparent. Nobby's Headland forms part of Lot 1053 in DP 118091, with the remainder of the lot being Macquarie Pier (lot owned by Port Authority of NSW).</p> <p>Geographical formation of the eroded remains of a volcanic plug, sloping upwards from southwest to northeast, terminating in a sheer rock cliff-face looking out to the ocean and Newcastle Breakwater. The top of the formation is accessed via a paved pathway running northeast from Macquarie Pier. The grounds at the top include built items of various descriptions: three cottages, a brick battery wall (c1880s) surrounding the signal station; weather monitoring equipment; navigation equipment; remnant staircase; concrete slabs; a concrete searchlight (fighting light) shed (its concrete action position shelter was demolished in 1969); and anti-tank tetrahedrons at the base of Nobbys Head. The cottages are currently leased out as a community facility.</p> <p>Lot 1051 in DP 118091 (Nobby's Head Signal Station) Contains the four-storey signal tower building of brick construction, built in 1953. The land and building are owned by the Commonwealth (AMSA). The building is of a generally functional design emphasising its purpose as a signal control tower, with the exception of its simple but decorative brick coursing to the curved stairwell structure. Lot 1051 DP 118091 does not form part of the Nobby's Headland Section 170 heritage listing (SHI 2170241).</p> <p>Lot 1052 in DP 118091 (Nobby's Head Lighthouse) contains the Nobby's Lighthouse, built in 1858. The Lighthouse is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage Register (Place ID: 105373), included within the Coal River Precinct curtilage of the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR ID: 01674) and listed as a heritage item in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 (NSW) as part of the</p>			

Nobby's Headland, Lighthouse and Breakwater. Lot 1052 DP 118091 does not form part of the Nobby's Headland Section 170 heritage listing (SHI 2170241).			
Physical Condition: Good, apart from recurrent bitou bush infestation. Stability of landform is unknown: refer to Geotechnical Report summarised in Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head Conservation Management Plan. Soft landscape consists mainly of Bitou bush. Nobbys Beach lies to the south, Horseshoe Beach to the north. An electrical substation is located at the eastern end at the base of Nobbys Head. Existing cottages, signal station, lighthouse, garage and storage areas still in use are in generally good condition, with the exception of the southern garage/shed structure, which appears to require general repairs and maintenance works.			
Modification Dates: Various; refer to Historical Notes/Provenance.			
Recommended Management: Preparation of an updated Conservation Management Plan for the site to provide a comprehensive guide to the future conservation and management of the item. Conserve all elements in accordance with an updated Conservation Management Plan. Preparation of an Interpretation Strategy for the site Preparation of a Maintenance and Conservation Works Schedule to ensure acceptable condition and assist in long-term conservation. Follow State Agency Heritage Guide.			
Management: Statutory Instrument			
Further Comments:			
Criteria a) Nobbys is significant in demonstrating aspects of the establishment and development of the Port of Newcastle. The island is spiritually and culturally significant to Aboriginal people. It is significant to the European history through its sighting by from H.M. Bark Endeavour in 1770, the Coal River penal colony, convict labour, and defence. The headland evinces attempts by government to improve the safety of a port increasingly valuable in generating revenues, and to prevent high-casualty passenger and cargo shipwrecks.			
Criteria b) Nobbys is associated with Lt. James Cook, R.N., through its recorded sighting in his ship's and private Logs in 1770. It is also associated with Lt. James Grant, R.N., who first displayed the new Union Flag (incorporating the Cross of St. Patrick) on the island in 1801.			
Criteria c) Nobbys Head is a local landmark, when viewed either from landward or seaward. They have been represented, as part of the whole Nobbys context, by a number of well-known Australian artists from the early engravers to Margaret Olley and Brett Whiteley.			
Criteria d) The head is significant to the contemporary community of mariners, and to Novocastrians generally. The buildings are associated with the many past signal station staff and their families.			
Criteria e) The place has the potential to reveal archaeological resources from earlier structures, since demolished.			
Criteria f) The place is rare at a State and National level as a significant geographic feature closely associated with the Aboriginal and European development of the Colony of New South Wales. Nobbys Head is probably unique in an Australian context, and cannot, therefore, be representative.			
Criteria g)			
Integrity / Intactness: Nobbys has been considerably modified.			
References:	Author:	Title:	Year:

	Suters Architects		Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head Conservation Management Plan		2000
Studies:	Author:	Title:	Number:	Year:	
	Suters Architects	s170 Heritage & Conservation Register		2001	
	Turner, John	Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head Historical Report		1994	
Parcels:	Parcel Code:	Lot Number:	Section:	Plan Code: DP	Plan Number:
		Part 1053			1189091
Latitude:			Longitude:		
Listings:	Name:	Title:	Number:	Date:	
	Heritage Act – S.170 NSW State agency heritage register	Nobbys Headland	2170241		
	Heritage Act 1977 (NSW): State Heritage Register	Coal River Precinct	01674	19/12/2003	
	National Trust of Australia Classified (non-statutory)	Coal River Precinct			
	State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	Nobbys Lighthouse, Headland and Breakwater			
Data Entry:	Date First Entered: 20/02/23		Date Updated: 20/02/23		Status: Basic

Image: 1



Caption: Structures at the top of Nobbys Head including signal station and lighthouse

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Image: 2



Caption: Nobbys Head parapet wall

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Image: 3



Caption: Nobbys Head signal master's cottage

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Image: 4



Caption: Nobbys Head signal worker's cottages, looking south towards Newcastle

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Image:5



Caption: Nobbys Head view looking northeast to breakwater from Signal Station

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Image: 6



Caption: View looking up towards Nobbys Head from Macquarie Pier

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Image: 7



Caption: Nobbys Head northern cliff face

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Image Path:

Image: 8



Caption: Location plan for Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Headland

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Image Date: 14/03/2023

Image File: RNCPO32A_Final