

## PORT AUTHORITY OF NSW HERITAGE INVENTORY

### State Heritage Inventory

SHI Number: 4560030		Study Number: 4920030	
Item Name: The Spit Lighthouse – Rear Lead			
Location: Parriwi Road, The Spit			
Address: 53B Parriwi Road, Mosman		DUAP Region: Sydney North	
Suburb / Nearest Town: Mosman 2088		Historic Region: Sydney	
Local Govt Area: Mosman		Parish: Willoughby	
State: NSW		County: Cumberland	
Other/Former Names: The Spit leading Light Rosherville; Parriwi Head; Chinamans Beach; Main Entrance			
Area/Group/Complex: Category 1 Aid to Navigation Port Safety Operating Licence (SYD-002B)			Group ID: 1
Aboriginal Area: Borogegal clan			
Curtilage/Boundary:			
Item Type: Built	Group: Maritime Industry		Category: Lighthouse Tower
Owner: Port Authority of New South Wales			
Current Use: Aid to navigation under the Port Safety Operating Licence			
Former Uses:			
Assessed Significance: State		Endorsed Significance:	
<p>Statement of Significance: The light is of State significance as part of a group of navigational lights and beacons that collectively form the core of the navigational system for Sydney Harbour which enable it to operate as a world class port. The Lighthouse is of architectural significance as a notable example of a purpose-built structure housing a navigation aid (Anglin 1990:3011). The tall imposing tower has architectural quality and is a dominant feature of the maritime landscape of Middle Harbour, particularly when viewed from the direction of the Heads. It has visual unity with Grotto Point Lighthouse (Hunt 1988).</p>			
<p>Historical Notes or Provenance:</p> <p>The Sydney Harbour Trust's annual report for the year ended 30 June 1909 noted there were discussions about constructing leading lights for the entrance to Port Jackson for the previous three years. The Harbourmaster, Alfred T Pritchard, concluded:</p> <p>'From a navigation point of view great necessity exists for a leading light at the entrance of Port Jackson. At the present time the master of any vessel entering the port at night time has to trust entirely to his own judgment as to his distance off the land on the northern side when entering between the heads, and a vessel outward bound is in the same position as regards her distance off when rounding the south reef.</p> <p>This is not a new matter as it was brought under the notice of the Commissioners some three years ago, the idea at that time being that a light on Middle Head would be preferable to lighting the leading marks. Further consideration, however, led to the substitution of Grotto Point for Middle Head, and the proposition now before you is to erect a lighthouse at this point, fitted with a light of good power divided</p>			

into coloured sectors, which would serve the same purpose as lighting the leading marks and also be an aid to navigation in many other ways.'

The Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners hosted a conference to gather the feedback and perspectives of the industry's leading shipping companies and their master mariners on 26 July 1909, and it was decided to erect leading lights at Spit Road (Rosherville also known as the Parriwi Head Leading Light) and Grotto Point (The Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Tenth Report being for the year ended 30 June 1910, page 6). 'Leading lights' said one mariner, 'would be an improvement, and they would also be of great assistance. Navigation at Sydney Heads very often is risky...' (Evening News, 29 July 1909).

Land was purchased near Spit Road and plans prepared for the Light Tower by mid-1910 (Engineer in Chiefs report appended to The Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Tenth Report being for the year ended 30 June 1910, page 11). The local newspapers reported on the new scheme, devised by the Sydney Harbour Trust, in February and March 1910 (Australian Town and Country Journal, 2 February 1910, page 29 and The Daily Telegraph, 27 July 1910, page 10).

Despite this, a scheme developed by the Irish master mariner, Maurice Festu (1865-1941), drew much media attention in July 1910 and was deemed superior to that of the Sydney Harbour Trust. Although Festu is often credited as the architect of the Grotto Point and Spit lighthouses, and other navigation aids in Sydney Harbour, there is no evidence to suggest the mariner played any role in the design or construction of any of the leading lights.

The works on the leading lights were completed by the end of year report dated 30 June 1911. The Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioner's Report for the Year ending June 1912 noted:

'A considerable improvement has been made within the year in the matter of lighting the Port. Since 1st September 1911, the Commissioners have established leading lights to mark the entrance to Port Jackson. These lights are shown from towers, one of which has been erected on the high lands south of The Spit, and the other on Grotto Point. A red light is shown from the upper Tower (Spit) and a white light with coloured sectors, from the lower (Grotto Point). The illuminant used is acetylene gas, and the lights can be so arranged as to burn continuously for 60 days'.

By 1918, the light was converted to the AGA system (Dalén light), which was a method for the automation of lighthouses incorporating acetylene gas and a sun valve, invented by the Swedish engineer, Nils Gustaf Dalén (Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Eighteenth Annual Report for Year ending 30th June 1918, page 17).

Themes:	National Theme: 3. Economy	State Theme: Transport	Local Theme: (none)
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Designer:

Maker / Builder: Sydney Harbour Trust

Year Started: 1910	Year Completed: 1911	Circa: No
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Physical Description: The Spit Lighthouse - Rear Lead, is a white tower. It houses a fixed green light which acts as a leading beacon for the entrance when lined up with Grotto Point Lighthouse. It was designed to provide a clear daylight beacon for shipping moving through Sydney Heads. Vessels line up the shorter front leading tower at Grotto Point with the taller rear leading tower of Rosherville (DPWS Heritage Group 1998:99).

The light runs off Mains electricity and is a Green Light. Flash Rate : FL 3sec 1 on 2 off.

<p>Set within residential surroundings, the light is a distinctive feature from the water. It is a tall white painted brick tower, faced with render which is lined to simulate ashlar masonry. It is approximately 14m high overlooking Middle Harbour. It is the tallest navigation light in Sydney Harbour.</p> <p>The pleasing proportioned tower is cylindrical and tapers gradually to a corbelled buttressed rim which supports a domed roof carrying an elegant copper lightening conductor. Below the dome on the seaward side, a horizontal slit provides the opening for the lantern. A stage provides sloping access from the road to the doorway about halfway up the tower's west side.</p> <p>The lighthouse is a dominant element in the maritime landscape of Middle Harbour. Its full length can be seen over a broad sweep of water and shoreline from Clontarf Beach, Grotto Point and adjacent Sydney Harbour National Park, Middle Head, Wyargine Point and to the south end of Chinamans Beach. More distant but full views are from North Head and vessels entering Sydney Harbour (Hunt 1988 quoted in DPWS Heritage Group 1998).</p>
<p>Physical Condition: The lighthouse appears in generally good condition, with minor issues identified such as the presence of environmental grime, particularly beneath the Parriwi Road access point. The structure would benefit from an overall condition assessment.</p>
<p>Modification Dates:</p> <p>1918 – A new wharf, 80 by 6 feet was constructed in the vicinity of the light tower to facilitate the landing of the gas cylinders in connection with the light (The Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Eighteenth Report being for the year ended 30 June 1918, page 17). The light tower was then fitted with the AGA system.</p>
<p>Recommended Management:</p> <p>Retain in situ and conserve</p> <p>Preparation of a Heritage Assessment of Port Authority of NSW Sydney Harbour Aids to Navigation in order to confirm relevance of group listing, assessed State significance and applicability of individual items.</p> <p>Preparation of a Maintenance and Conservation Works Schedule to ensure acceptable condition and assist in long-term conservation.</p>
<p>Management: Statutory Instrument</p>
<p>Further Comments: Port Authority of New South Wales Category 1 aid to navigation under the Port Safety Operating Licence.</p>
<p>Criteria a) The Spit Lighthouse, otherwise known as Rosherville, is of historical significance for its associations with early 20th century navigation.</p>
<p>Criteria b)</p>
<p>Criteria c) The Lighthouse is of architectural significance as a notable example of a purpose-built structure housing a navigation aid (Anglin 1990:3011). The tall imposing tower has architectural quality and is a dominant feature of the maritime landscape of Middle Harbour, particularly when viewed from the direction of the Heads. It has visual unity with Grotto Point Lighthouse (Hunt 1988).</p>
<p>Criteria d) The Spit Lighthouse is of major nautical significance as the rear leading light navigation beacon for vessels moving through Sydney Heads.</p>
<p>Criteria e)</p>
<p>Criteria f)</p>

Criteria g) The light is representative of a group of navigational lights and beacons that collectively form the core of the navigational system for Sydney Harbour which enable it to operate as a world class port. Of State significance as part of the group.

Integrity / Intactness:

References:	Author:	Title:	Year:
	Bayldon, F J	'History of the Pilotage Service' in RAHSJ vol 22	1934
	Hunt, G.	National Trust of Australia (NSW) Classification	1988
	Ibbotson, J	Lighthouses of Australia- A Visitors Guide	2003
	Sydney Harbour Trust	Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Twelfth Annual Report for Year ending 30th June 1912	1912
	Sydney Harbour Trust	Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners' Eighteenth Annual Report for Year ending 30th June 1918	1918
	Sydney Harbour Trust	Engineer-In Chiefs report appended to the SHT Commissioners' Tenth Report, year ended 30th June 1910	1910
	Ward, A M	'The Entrance Channels, Port Jackson' in Port of Sydney Journal (Jan-April)	1951
	Sydney Harbour Trust	The Port of Sydney NSW: Official Handbook	1913
	Unknown	'Lights at Sydney Heads', Evening News, page 5	29/07/1909
	Unknown	'Leading Lights in the Harbor', Evening News, page 7	7/08/1909
	Unknown	'To Meet the Mariner', The Daily Telegraph, page 14	2/09/1911
	John MacRitchie	'Grotto Point lighthouse', The Dictionary of Sydney, <a href="https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/grotto_point_lighthouse">https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/grotto_point_lighthouse</a>	2008
	R G Fenn, Electrical engineer	'Lighting in the Port of Sydney, Part II', Port of Sydney Journal, volume 2, no. 8	April 1950

Studies:	Author:	Title:	Number:	Year:
	Heritage Group, Dept of Public Works	NSW Marine Ministerial Holding Corporation, Heritage and Conservation Register	4920030	1998
	Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy Heritage Consultants	Sydney Ports Corporation Heritage and Conservation Register	4560030	2004
	Anglin Associates	Sydney Harbour Maritime Services Board Heritage and Conservation Register	3011	1990

	Travis Partners Pty Ltd Architects, Planners	Mosman Heritage Study			143	1986
Parcels:	Parcel Code:	Lot Number: 1	Section:	Plan Code: DP	Plan Number: 800420	
Latitude: -33.812127			Longitude: 151.246377			
Listings:	Name: Heritage Act – S.170 NSW State agency heritage register	Title: The Spit Lighthouse – Rear Lead		Number: 4560030	Date: 1/07/2004	
	Mosman Local Environmental Plan 2012	The Spit Lighthouse (also known as the Rosherville Lighthouse)		1203		
	National Parks and Wildlife Register	Sydney Harbour				
	Heritage study			143	25/04/1986	
	National Trust of Australia Register	Rosherville Lighthouse		CL (file 324)	21/03/1988	
	Within a National Trust conservation area	Sydney Harbour Landscape Conservation Area			24/01/1983	
Data Entry:	Date First Entered:		Date Updated: 22/12/2022		Status: Basic	

Image: 1



Caption: The Spit Lighthouse – Rear Lead

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy

Image Date:

Image File: 4560030b1.jpg

Image: 2



Caption: The Spit Lighthouse – Rear Lead

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Image File: 4560030b2.jpg

Image: 3



Caption: Base of the lighthouse

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Image: 4



Caption: View to the lighthouse from Parriwi Road footpath

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Image: 5



Caption: Lighthouse dome and finial

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Image File: 4560030b5.jpg

Image: 6



Caption: Existing interpretation signage opposite Parriwi Road footpath

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Image File: 4560030b6.jpg

Image: 7



Caption: The Spit Road Lighthouse, 1924.

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Image By:

Image Date: 14.11.1924

Image File: 4560030b7.jpg