

# PORT AUTHORITY OF NSW HERITAGE INVENTORY

## State Heritage Inventory

SHI Number: 4560023		Study Number: N/A	
Item Name: Overseas Passenger Terminal			
Location: Circular Quay, Sydney			
Address: Circular Quay		DUAP Region: Sydney South	
Suburb / Nearest Town: Sydney 2000		Historic Region: Sydney	
Local Govt Area: Sydney		Parish: St. Philip	
State: NSW		County: Cumberland	
Other/Former Names: Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal, Circular Quay			
Area/Group/Complex: Overseas Passenger Terminal		Group ID: 4	
Aboriginal Area: Warrane / Sydney Cove (dual name), Gadigal clan			
Curtilage/Boundary:			
Item Type: Built	Group: Transport - Water	Category: Water Transport Administration Building	
Owner: Port Authority of New South Wales			
Current Use: Overseas Passenger Terminal			
Former Uses:			
Assessed Significance: Local		Endorsed Significance:	
<p>Statement of Significance:</p> <p>The Overseas Passenger Terminal is a significant building on the shores of Sydney Harbour. The site is important for its ongoing historical use as a commercial and passenger shipping facility and its early role as a public gateway to the city.</p> <p>The building displays a twentieth century approach to adaptive re-use in response to changing community needs and, in its fabric, illustrates layers of its own history and use.</p> <p>The original building constructed in 1958-60 has historical associations with the changing needs of international travel. As the first point of entry for many immigrants during the post-World War II period in Australia, the building also possesses social value. The architecture of the building is representative of the utilitarian approach to terminal design at the time with its 'functionalist' character influenced by international trends.</p> <p>The 1988 modifications to the building by Lawrence Nield and Peter Tonkin form part of the Bicentennial works that focused on improving the urban design character of Sydney Cove. The building responded to a desire for increased public access to the foreshore and an enhanced interrelationship with open spaces including First Fleet Park and Campbells Cove Plaza. The architecture is of aesthetic significance for its successful adaptive re-use and reductionalist approach and reinterpretation of the robust steel portal frame structure. With its maritime imagery and use of strong visual devices, including the northern tower, the building is of landmark value from Sydney Harbour.</p> <p>The site has archaeological potential arising from the likely subsurface presence of remains of early wharfage, the nineteenth century seawall and the original shoreline deposits. The building is also</p>			

important for its ability to demonstrate an early use of concrete caisson technology as foreshore reinforcement.

Historical Notes or Provenance:

### **Development of Sydney Cove**

The western shore of Sydney Cove, though contested by historians, is generally believed to be the site of the landing of the First Fleet in 1788. It was from Sydney Cove that all subsequent development spread during the early years of the colony.

Wharves, docks and warehouses spread along the western side of the cove and during the nineteenth century major reclamation works changed the face of the cove. By the 1870s expansion of trade and the need to be near the rail network saw much of the shipping trade relocate to Darling Harbour. In 1879 the first ferry wharf was constructed at the southern end of the cove (today known as Circular Quay) and commercial shipping was pushed back as the area increasingly became the focus of passenger transport.

During the twentieth century dramatic changes occurred at Circular Quay. On the western side, the Commissariat store, built in 1809, was replaced by the headquarters of the Maritime Services Board (MSB, now the Museum of Contemporary Art) in 1940, and the warehouses which had serviced the wool trade since the 1850s were demolished in the 1950s.

### **The Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal (1960)**

The Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal was constructed by the MSB for a reported £1.75 million and opened on 20 December 1960 by the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, John Brophy Renshaw.

Until World War II passenger traffic in the port of Sydney had stabilised at 20,000-30,000 arrivals and departures each year. Following the war, a combination of high immigration, increased tourism and short cruises instigated by shipping lines lifted arrivals and departures to 160,000 in 1962. By then larger ships with associated needs for customs clearance and visitor facilities had prompted development of specialised facilities, initially at Pyrmont by the early 1950s, then at Woolloomooloo in 1956. The MSB recognised this as a stop-gap measure and had already investigated Sydney Cove as the site of a third passenger terminal.

The location was ideal due to its proximity to public transport, its situation in a bustling commercial centre surrounded by stately buildings, and as an area with a rich history. A further impetus to development came when P and O Line built two super liners 'Oriana' and 'Canberra' for the Australian route.

Following extensive research and investigation to determine the most satisfactory form of construction, the MSB commenced work, to designs by MSB architects R Appleton, A Buck and K Brown, on the new facility at Sydney Cove in 1958. Wharves and sheds were demolished, and a seawall was constructed using reinforced concrete caissons (constructed at the MSB's Rozelle Bay depot) to enclose solid fill reclamation. This method had the advantages of being cheap, easy to construct and practically free of maintenance problems. The wall was 720 feet long. Behind a 40-foot apron the building extended 625 feet north south and was 111 feet wide. The ground floor was taken up with cargo handling and the first floor catered for passengers and customs facilities (Port of Sydney: 1960). The Sydney Morning Herald reported the terminal would have 'the largest snapped ribbed aluminium roof in Australia' (Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April 1959, page 21).

The new 625-foot long terminal was opened on 20 December 1960 and 10 days later the SS Oriana on her maiden voyage berthed at the terminal, the largest ocean liner to arrive in Australia since World War II. Over the next two decades the terminal was the arrival point of many newcomers and played an important role in Australia's migration story.

The Sydney Morning Herald described the building in detail in their edition of 30 December 1960 (page 15): 'The entrance hall leads to an escalator and stairway rising to a vestibule on the upper floor. This

vestibule is in the tower section and links to a waiting hall 130 feet long with the Customs hall, 380 feet long'. The central tower and visitor's waiting hall had an 'exterior surface of white terrazzo blocks decorated with yellow marble chips'. The hall was equipped with a post office, telephones, railway and tourist bureaus, a flower stall and snack bar (Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April 1959, page 21). Port worker amenities included change rooms, toilets and showers at wharf level, with lunchrooms on the mezzanine level. The five gangways were hydraulically operated, each weighed 20 tons, and were reportedly the first of its kind installed in the Southern Hemisphere.

The newspaper noted the 'modern' design was influenced by 'four basic considerations – function, economy, speed of construction, and freedom from maintenance.' In place of weatherboard cladding was the use of glass and aluminium in conjunction with precast wall slabs, faced by exposed aggregate 'bringing light and air into the building'. The 'wing-sloped' roof was covered in aluminium and supported by a steel framework: 'The wings cantilever out over the promenades to give them shelter.' Colour was employed in the form of glass mosaics on the north and south ends of the passenger level. The customs hall had aluminium-framed windows from floor to ceiling on the eastern side, and ceramic tiles with a vitreous finish up to three feet above the floor on the western side. Above the three-foot ceramic tiles were large aluminium-glazed frames with coloured glass panels.

Various contractors worked on the aluminium curtain walling, windows and doors (supplied by H T Worrall and Sons Pty Ltd), terrazzo work and 'Melcote' concrete paving (Melocco Brothers Pty Ltd), 'Snaprib' aluminium roofing, gutters and downpipes, 'Alcraft' architectural aluminium cladding and glazing bars (Lightweight Structures Pty Ltd), 'Nylex Super-Vinyl' floor tiles (Moulded Products Australia Pty Ltd), five mobile passenger units or gangways constructed of steel and aluminium (designed and built by McNamee Industries Pty Ltd), over 1,000 tons of fabricated steelwork (supplied, erected and welded by Cullen Brothers Ltd), glass glazing (J C Goodwin and Company Ltd).

#### **Alterations and additions to Overseas Passenger Terminal**

By the 1980s the price of air travel had dropped to a point where it became an affordable option for many travellers. In 1983, when an ideas competition was run to gather suggestions for re-use of the terminal, it was suggested that up to one third of the terminal was obsolete.

A 1985-87 design by architects Lawrence Nield and Peter Tonkin was adopted for the Overseas ~~Sydney Cove~~ Passenger Terminal in the lead up to the 1988 Bicentennial commemorations (Godden Mackay Logan: 1999). Substantial alterations involved the addition of restaurants and cafes.

The building inspector cards in the City of Sydney Archives describe the various restaurant works and fitouts which took place at the terminal. In August 1987 the council approved fitout works by George Freeman and Architects to the restaurant on levels 3 and 4 to the tune of \$1 million (BA87/1489, City of Sydney Archives). The works were completed in 1991. In September 1987 the council approved a 'fitout for the day tour coach terminal (southern side)' with Peter Tonkin the listed architect and works estimated at \$90,000 (BA87/1104, City of Sydney Archives). Work commenced in January 1988 and was completed in May 1989 (Building Inspectors' Cards, City of Sydney Archives). Other works in 1987-88 involved a restaurant fitout by Clarke Percy Blackmore Pty Ltd valued at \$250,000 and installation of mechanical services by D S Thomas, Weatherall and Associates both at Doyles at the Quay (BA87/1402), and a fitout of the licenced restaurant on Level 1 (Billy Blues) by Roger James Pty Ltd to the value of \$410,000 (BA87/1056).

In the 1990s substantial planning took place for the East Rocks and Foreshore areas and in response to the 'Sydney Cove Waterfront Strategy' prepared in 1997, the former Sydney Ports Corporation proposed further changes to increase both public access and efficiency of functions within the building.

Since the major redevelopment of the terminal in the late 1980s, the OPT has undergone a number of alterations and upgrades to cater for the continued growth of the cruise ship industry within NSW, allowing the facility to successfully operate in keeping with the standards of a major cruise ship destination.

Themes:	National Theme:	State Theme:	Local Theme:
	2. Peopling	Migration	(none)
	3. Economy	Transport	(none)
Designer: R Appleton, A Buck and K Brown, architects at Maritime Services Board			
Maker / Builder: Maritime Services Board			
Year Started: 1958		Year Completed: 1960	Circa: No
<p>Physical Description: The Overseas Passenger Terminal is a large four-storey steel structure with large portal frame trusses, and a glazed curtainwall enclosure. The building presents as a largely contemporary structure through its 1988 Post-War International style additions, while retaining some elements of its original 1960 Modernist construction, particularly though the exposure of its original steel framework and coloured glass inserts on the upper levels. The terminal building is oriented north-south, with principal pedestrian access available to the ground floor from the southern foyer / landing area, and vehicular access available to the west on Circular Quay West, and to the second floor via a roadway flyover north from Hickson Road.</p>			
<p>Physical Condition: The building is considered to be in generally good condition due to the ongoing nature of the building's functional upgrades and refurbishments in order to meet the standards of a busy passenger terminal.</p>			
<p>Modification Dates:</p> <p>1960 – Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal was officially opened by the J B Renshaw, MLA, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Lands on the 20 December 1960.</p> <p>1987-88 – substantial modifications including restaurants and café additions took place as part of the Bicentennial celebrations (Godden Mackay Logan: 1999).</p> <p>2009 – Parallel elevated gangway installed.</p> <p>2014 – Extension of upper deck south, internal fitout changes and upgrade of vertical passenger flow systems.</p> <p>2018 – Replacement of seaward and landward rail beam and rail track.</p> <p>2019 – Replacement of three former gangways (2) telescopic, and (1) parallel elevated gangway, with two new self-supporting gangways.</p> <p>2018/19 – Alterations to balconies on northern end and construction of a separate 'brew pod' structure associated with the restaurant tenancy on the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floors.</p>			
<p>Recommended Management: 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:</p>			
<p>Criteria a) The construction at west Circular Quay represents an ongoing use of the site with a shipping function. The Overseas Passenger Terminal has historical significance through its original use as an international customs facility. Its construction in 1958-60 is associated with Australia's postwar migration story. It also represents an ongoing use of the site for shipping and demonstrates the importance of west Circular Quay as part of a gateway to the city.</p>			
<p>Criteria b)</p>			
<p>Criteria c) The building is of aesthetic significance for its successful adaptive re-use and reductionist approach and reinterpretation of the robust steel portal frame structure. With its maritime imagery and</p>			

use of strong visual devices, including the northern tower, the building is of landmark value from Sydney Harbour. The building with the retention of elements of its original construction and 1980s adaptation, illustrates layers of its own history and use.				
Criteria d) The Terminal is of social significance for its role as the first point of entry for immigrants into Australia, especially in the post-war period.  The public nature of the building, its legible functions (such as the farewell deck) as well as its prominent location at the entrance to Circular Quay makes the Overseas Passenger Terminal an identifiable landmark to the residents of Sydney.				
Criteria e) The Terminal has technical significance arising from its early use of reinforced concrete caissons as seawall foundations.				
Criteria f)				
Criteria g)				
Integrity / Intactness:				
References:	Author:	Title:	Year:	
	Maritime Services Board	On the Construction Front - Port of Sydney Journal Vol 7 - 1	1959	
	Maritime Services Board	A New Ship - A New Terminal Sydney Ports Journal Vol 7 - 5	1960	
	John Kenny	'Engineers Remake the Cove', Sydney Morning Herald, page 15	30/05/1959	
	Unknown	'Features of New Overseas Terminal', Sydney Morning Herald, page 21	21/04/1959	
	Unknown	'Terminal Serves a Busy Port', Sydney Morning Herald, page 15	30/12/1960	
	Planning and Building Department, Sydney City Council	Building Inspectors Card: Overseas Passenger Terminal Circular Quay, Sydney - Overseas Passenger, A-00420416	1987	
	Planning and Building Department, Sydney City Council	Building Inspectors Card: Sydney - Fit out restaurant E levels 3 and 4 - Overseas Passenger, A-00420783	1987	
Studies:	Author:	Title:	Number:	Year:
	J B A & Berkhout Urban Planning Consultants	Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal Upgrade. Statement of Environmental Effects.		1999
	Godden Mackay Logan	Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal - Heritage Impact Statement		1999
	Godden Mackay Logan	Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal - Heritage Impact Statement		1999
	Godden Mackay Logan	Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal - Heritage Impact Statement		1999

	Futurepast Heritage Consulting	Overseas Passenger Terminal Upgrade, Circular Quay West Archaeological Monitoring Report			2014
	Aecom	Historic Heritage Research Design and Methodology			2014
Parcels:	Parcel Code:	Lot Number: 1	Section:	Plan Code: DP	Plan Number: 876516
Latitude:			Longitude:		
Listings:	Name: Heritage Act – S.170 NSW State agency heritage register	Title: Overseas Passenger Terminal		Number: 4560023	Date:
	State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts- Eastern Harbour City) 2021	Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone			
Data Entry:		Date First Entered: 05/07/2004	Date Updated: 19/12/2022		Status: Basic

Image: 1



Caption: Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy Heritage Consultants

Image Date:

Image File: 4560023b1.jpg



Image: 2



Caption: Overseas Passenger Terminal

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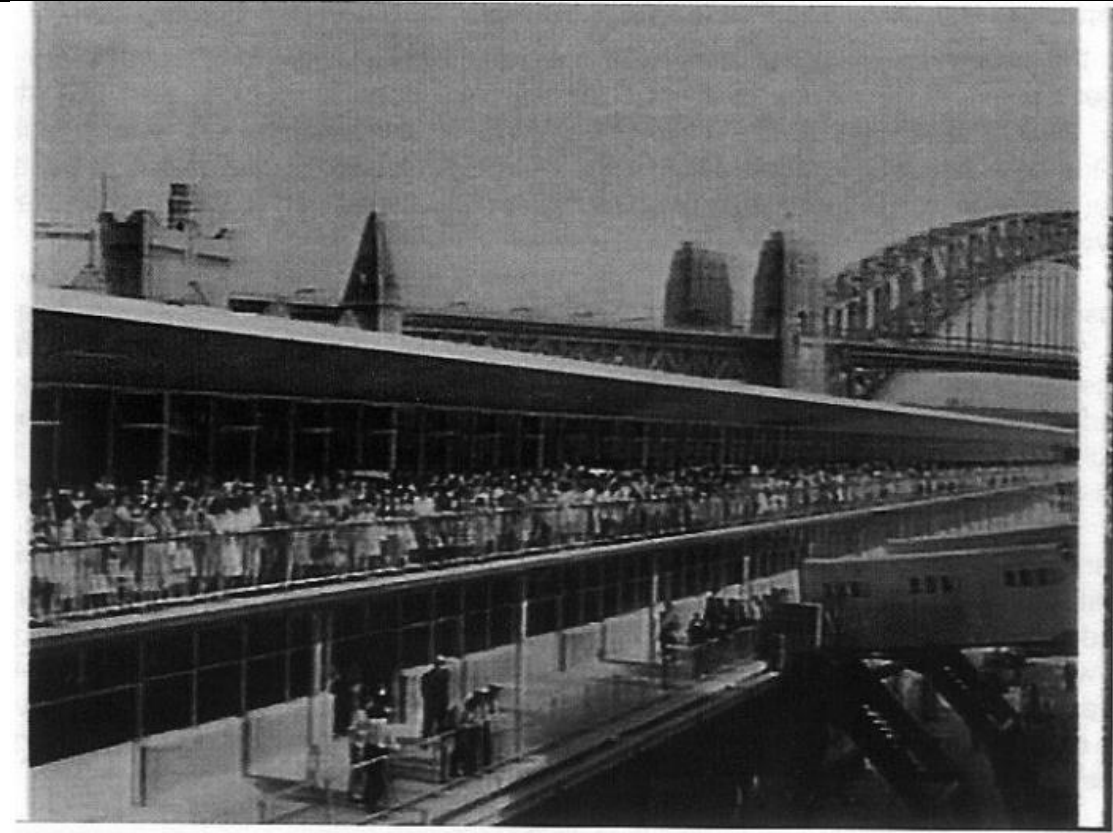
Image By: Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy Heritage Consultants

Image Date:

Image File: 4560023b2.jpg



Image: 3



*Greek migrants arrive at the Overseas Passenger Terminal on the liner 'Patris'.*

Caption: Greek Migrants arrive at the Overseas passenger Terminal on the liner 'Patris'

Copyright: Mitchell Library

Image By: D.McPhedran

Image Date: 1/09/1961

Image File: 4560023b3.jpg

Image: 4



Caption: The northern side of the Overseas Passenger Terminal from Campbells Cove

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Nicole Cama - NBRIS

Image Date: 21/09/2022

Image File: 4560023b4.jpg

Image: 5



Caption: The southern side of the Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

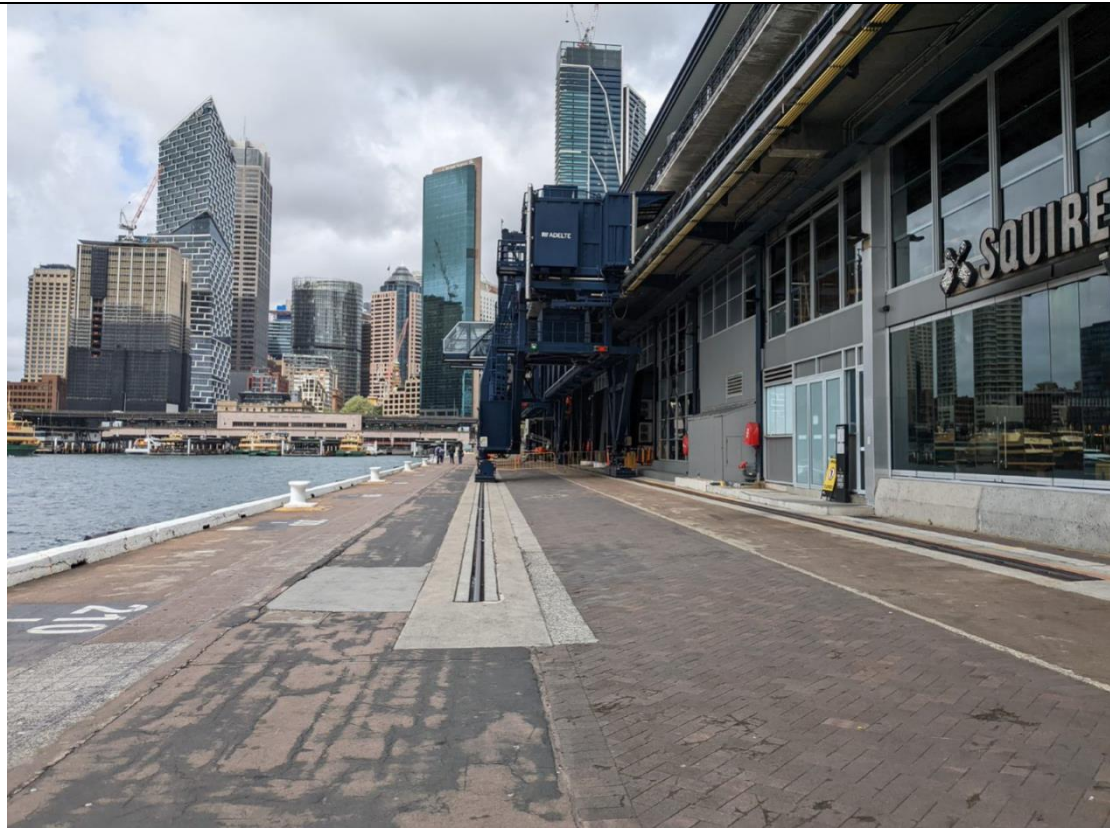
Image By: Nicole Cama - NBRS

Image Date: 21/09/2022

Image File: 4560023b5.jpg



Image: 6



Caption: Eastern side of the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Squires Landing

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Nicole Cama - NBRS

Image Date: 21/09/2022

Image File: 4560023b6.jpg

Image: 7



Caption: Attaching concrete slabs to steel framework of Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), Graeme Andrews Working Harbour Collection, courtesy City of Sydney Archives, A-00078899

Image By: Fred Saxon

Image Date: 1959

Image File: 4560023b7.jpg

Image: 8



Caption: Maritime Services Board divers with crew at the new Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), Graeme Andrews Working Harbour Collection, courtesy City of Sydney Archives, A-00077311

Image By: Unknown

Image Date: May 1959

Image File: 4560023b8.jpg



Image: 9



Caption: Construction of the Overseas Passenger Terminal (foreground)

Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), Graeme Andrews Working Harbour Collection, courtesy City of Sydney Archives, A-00082967

Image By: Graeme Andrews

Image Date: 27/02/1959

Image File: 4560023b9.jpg

Image: 10



Caption: Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), Graeme Andrews Working Harbour Collection, courtesy City of Sydney Archives, A-00083395

Image By: Fred Saxon

Image Date: c1960

Image File: 4560023b10.jpg

Image: 11



Caption: Overseas Passenger Terminal construction site, Circular Quay West, The Rocks

Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), courtesy City of Sydney Archives, A-00044865

Image By: City Engineer's Photographic Negatives, Sydney City Council

Image Date: 29/07/1960

Image File: 4560023b11.jpg



Image: 12



Caption: Aerial view showing the SS Oronsay berthed at the Overseas Passenger Terminal

Copyright: Copyright not identified, City of Sydney Archives, A-00030053

Image By: unknown

Image Date: 8/07/1966

Image File: 4560023b12.jpg

Image: 13



Caption: Overseas Passenger Terminal prior to 1987-88 alterations and additions

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Image By: City Engineer's Department Negatives, Sydney City Council

Image Date: 4/06/1987

Image File: 4560023b13.jpg