

PORT AUTHORITY OF NSW HERITAGE INVENTORY

State Heritage Inventory

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| SHI Number: 3930015 | | Study Number: N/A | |
| Item Name: Macquarie Pier (including sandstone retaining wall and steps) | | | |
| 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: Nobbys Breakwater | | | |
| Area/Group/Complex: | | Group ID: Other - Urban Area | |
| Aboriginal Area: Awabakal | | | |
| Curtilage/Boundary: | | | |
| Item Type: Landscape; Seawall | Group: | Category: | |
| Owner: Port Authority of New South Wales | | | |
| Current Use: Access to Nobbys; navigation | | | |
| Former Uses: Access to Nobbys; navigation; defence | | | |
| Assessed Significance: State | | Endorsed Significance: State (as part of Coal River Precinct SHR 01674) | |
| <p>Statement of Significance: Macquarie Pier was part of an ambitious public works project undertaken by convict labour, critical in the early development of Newcastle as a working harbour, the city and its economy more generally.</p> <p>The pier is associated with the development of Newcastle as a thriving port for the inland river trade and with the development of a substantial coal export market. Macquarie Pier and its beach have been closely associated with the historical and cultural development of Newcastle, and are esteemed by the city's populace. The pier is a well-known and much-frequented thoroughfare on the approach to Nobbys and is considered an integral part of the local landmark.</p> | | | |
| <p>Historical Notes or Provenance:</p> <p>Constructed between 1818 and 1846 to link Nobbys Island with the mainland, it is Newcastle's most significant tangible legacy of the convict period. The original pier was not strongly built, and was often breached by heavy seas. Hoping to create a beach by which the convict-built structure would be protected, Merion Marshall Moriarty, Colonial Harbour Master, built two groynes near the centre of the pier but they were partially destroyed in a gale.</p> <p>In 1867, the Resident Engineer for Newcastle Harbour Works, Cecil West Darley, Cecil suggested the use of large rocks rather than of ballast to fill the gaps in the pier. The sandstone steps, romantically but incorrectly regarded by some as having been built by convicts, may be associated with this period. Stone was railed from a quarry at Waratah, east of Newcastle, and later from other quarries in that area. Wagons were shunted along a lengthy siding which later served the Nobbys breakwater as well. Its</p> | | | |

remnants, as well as those of an associated siding at which sand was loaded for public purposes, may still be seen, despite its having been covered by asphalt.

During the Second World War, two quick firing 3-pounder guns were mounted along the pier. One gun platform remains extant, although the gun was dismounted at the end of the war. The sandstone wall near the base of Nobbys is presumed to date from 1875, when work commenced on the Southern Breakwater. This low retaining wall was built in conjunction with the extension of the road and path around the north of the base of Nobbys for breakwater construction purposes. The name 'Macquarie Pier' fell from general use until the 1990s, when it was revived.

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| 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: Perhaps Francis Greenway; Capt. James Wallis; James Meehan

Maker / Builder: Various; convict labour used into 1850s.

Year Started: 1818

Year Completed: 1846

Circa:

Physical Description: Macquarie Pier is a section of man-made and natural breakwater and beach between the mainland and Nobbys Head, consisting of a base construction of sandstone, with more recent overlays of cement and/or concrete. A low height wall or sandstone blocks, also serving as seating and a barrier to adjacent beach landscaping runs the length of the eastern boundary of Macquarie Pier from the end of the Nobbys beach carpark to the base of Nobbys.

Metal two-railed guardrail with metal bollards lines the north length of the Pier. Nobbys Beach lies to the south, Horseshoe Beach to the north. Stony Point, largely dredged away, projects to the north approximately midway along the Pier. A modern sandstone obelisk is located at the entrance of the Pier at the mainland (west) end. An electrical substation is located at the eastern end at the base of Nobbys.

The sandstone wall is a dwarf retaining wall along the eastern edge of the breakwater road at the foot of Nobbys. It is constructed of Waratah sandstone in regular course. The sandstone steps are a flight of sandstone steps descending from the road level down to beach level. Pitch is equal to that of the pier wall face, and is therefore consistently steeper than is normal. They are of dressed Waratah sandstone, the same grey sandstone of the pier, with large arris to the balustrade stones. These steps have been given the romantic but misleading appellation of the 'Convict Steps'. The steps are clearly part of the breakwater strengthening programme, not an older feature subsequently incorporated into the rebuilt structure.

The stone obelisk (c.1988) approximately 600mm square, 2100mm high. Constructed with seven blocks of grey-yellow sandstone on a concrete footing. The inscription 'Macquarie Pier, AD 1818' and the name of 'C. Hunter', the stonemason, are carved on the southern face of the middle block. The design is a conjectural reconstruction of the obelisk that stood approximately midway along the Pier between Fort Scratchley and Nobbys. A large metal sign stands behind the obelisk with details of those responsible for erecting it, and brief historical notes.

The Gun Emplacement is located on the northern side of the base of Nobbys. The structure which has been unoccupied for decades appears a functionally designed building of in situ cast concrete with a

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| <p>board marked finish. The structure has a ground floor podium configuration with a three-storey tower/turret structure above, it is closed off from public access.</p> |
| <p>Physical Condition: The Macquarie Pier is believed to be structurally sound; the surface paving has been recently replaced and is in good condition throughout. As was proposed in the previous application, the new surface was constructed over the top of the previous surface leaving the older substrate and most importantly, the former railway tracks intact and untouched underneath. The safety railings along the northern edge are also consistently new and in good condition. The lighting and sandstone seating blocks are also new and in good condition. (EJE Heritage, 2021)</p> <p>The Gun Emplacement at the base of Nobbys Headland has been unoccupied for decades. There are few images of the Gun Emplacement from near the time of its construction, but what evidence there is suggests that the structure was originally left raw-finished. Since its abandonment, the gun emplacement has been a target for vandalism and graffiti. It has also suffered neglect and natural deterioration due to its unused status and proximity to the ocean. Security fencing was installed around the building in an effort to keep vandals out, though this was not a guarantee that further damage would not occur. The Macquarie Pier, Nobbys Head and Southern Breakwater Conservation Management Plan records that the Gun Emplacement building was filled with sand in April 2000. (EJE Heritage, 2021)</p> <p>The Southern Breakwater (separate from Macquarie Pier item 2170241) is robust and maintaining a sound condition. It was originally constructed of rubble stone and boulders. It has been augmented with disused concrete tank traps, and large blocks of mass concrete some up to 60 tonnes in weight and many cast on-site. The rail installation used for constructing and maintaining the breakwater has been obscured by concrete paving laid down along its length. Hundreds of pedestrians daily exercise themselves, their dogs or their children by traversing the length of the Macquarie Pier and Southern Breakwater. Extensive ocean views are available constantly from the breakwater along with regular views of shipping entering / leaving the harbour, and seasonal views of whales or dolphins migrating. (EJE Heritage, 2021)</p> |
| <p>Modification Dates: Various; refer to Historical Notes/Provenance.</p> <p>2000 - Addition of guardrail and bollards along pier</p> <p>2020 – Revitalisation of the pier including repair and resurfacing of the pathway, balustrading, lighting upgrades, landscaping the provision of sandstone seating blocks and interpretation signage</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Conserve all elements in accordance with Conservation Management Plan. Follow State Agency Heritage Guide.</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:</p> |
| <p>Criteria a) Macquarie Pier is historically significant for its links to the early development of the harbour. The original Pier was built by convicts which remains in the substructure. The sandstone wall is historically significant as a part of the stabilisation works undertaken in 1875. The stone steps are significant as an integral part of the breakwater construction of the 1860s-1870s. The sandstone retaining wall was possibly constructed from stone off cuts left from the construction of the pier wall addressing the harbour side. The stone steps have previously and incorrectly been referred to as the 'convict steps', indicating their loss of context since the removal of most of Stony Point.</p> |

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| Criteria b) Macquarie Pier is significant for its link to Governor Macquarie, Wallis, Meehan and Greenway. | | | | | |
| Criteria c) Macquarie Pier is aesthetically significant for its construction and its contribution to the harbour context. It has 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. The stone steps are aesthetically significant in the use of Waratah stone with some simple tooling in the arris. The pier as part of the approach more generally is also considered an integral part of Nobby's as a local landmark. | | | | | |
| Criteria d) Macquarie Pier is significant to the contemporary community of mariners, and to Novocastrians generally. | | | | | |
| Criteria e) The pier has the potential to reveal archaeological resources from structures since demolished. In accordance with the Newcastle Archaeological Management Plan, the pier has potential archaeological research value, and has been recommended for listing as an archaeological site. | | | | | |
| Criteria f) The original pier is rare in a state context as an early convict built structure. | | | | | |
| Criteria g) The form, although slightly altered with new material, is built upon the original and retains the original structure, purpose and location. | | | | | |
| Integrity / Intactness: Nobbys Headland and Macquarie Pier have been considerably modified, but retain historic integrity | | | | | |
| References: | Author: Suters Architects | Title: Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head Conservation Management Plan | | | Year: 2000 |
| Studies: | Author: Suters Architects | Title: s170 Heritage & Conservation Register | | Number: | Year: 2001 |
| | Turner, John W | Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head Historical Report | | | 1994 |
| Parcels: | Parcel Code: | Lot Number: Part 1053 | Section: | Plan Code: DP | Plan Number: 1189091 |
| Latitude: | | | Longitude: | | |
| Listings: | Name: Heritage Act – S.170 NSW State agency heritage register | Title: Macquarie Pier (Including Sandstone Retaining Wall and Steps) | Number: 3930015 | Date: | |
| | Heritage Act 1977 (NSW): State Heritage Register | Coal River Precinct | 01674 | 19/12/2003 | |
| | National Trust of Australia Classified (non-statutory) | Coal River Precinct | 2221 01 S | 08/08/2003 24/06/1998 | |
| | State Environmental Planning Policy | Nobbys Lighthouse, | | | |

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| | (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 | Headland and Breakwater | | |
| Data Entry: | Date First Entered: 03/08/01 | Date Updated: 10/01/2023 | Status: Basic | |

Image: 1



Caption: Nobbys, as viewed from Horseshoe Beach. Macquarie Pier (rebuilt) is to the right

Copyright: EJE Architecture

Image By: Shea Hedley

Image Date: 9/02/2007

Image File: 3930008i.jpg

Image: 2



Caption: The Macquarie Pier looking west, with Newcastle City in the distance.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930015a.jpg

Image: 3



Caption: The north side of the pier from Stony Point.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930015c.jpg

Image: 4



Caption: The north side of the pier from Horseshoe Beach.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930015d.jpg

Image: 5



Caption: Macquarie Pier: stone retaining wall at right, with Nobbys in the upper right distance.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930013.jpg

Image: 6



Caption: Top of sandstone steps, with newer timber balustrade running over top.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930014.jpg

Image: 7



Caption: Stone obelisk (c.1988) located at the entrance of the pier.

Copyright: Suters Architects

Image By: Linda Smith

Image Date: 30/07/2001

Image File: 3930015e.jpg

Image: 8



Caption: Macquarie Pier looking west towards the city

Copyright: EJE Architecture

Image By: Shea Hedley

Image Date: 9/02/2007

Image File: 3930015g.jpg

Image: 9



Caption: Macquarie Pier, looking north towards Nobbys Head

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Zach Nix - NBRS

Image Date: 21/10/2022

Image File:

Image: 10



Caption: Macquarie Pier, looking south towards Fort Scratchley

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Zach Nix - NBRS

Image Date: 21/10/2022

Image File:

Image: 11



Caption: Gun emplacement on northern side of Nobbys

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Zach Nix - NBRS

Image Date: 21/10/2022

Image File:

Image: 12



Caption: Southern Breakwater north of Nobbys Head

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Zach Nix - NBRIS

Image Date: 21/10/2022

Image File:

Image: 13



Caption: Existing interpretation on Macquarie Pier

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Zach Nix - NBRS

Image Date: 21/10/2022

Image File:

Image: 14



Caption: Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Head, Newcastle

Copyright: Out of copyright, courtesy of University of Newcastle, ASGN0875-B39

Image By: Ralph Snowball

Image Date: 3/05/1901

Image File:

Image: 15



Caption: Nobby's Island and pier, Newcastle

Copyright: Out of copyright, courtesy of State Library of New South Wales, DG SV1B/10

Image By: unknown

Image Date: 23/01/1820

Image File:

Image: 16



Caption: Detail from 'Rough sketch of Newcastle Harbour shewing the Breakwater, Soundings and drawn to accompany Report called for by the Colonial Secretary's letter dated 11 October 1849'

Copyright: Out of copyright, courtesy of State Library of New South Wales, D Z/ Cb 85/ 11

Image By: George Barney

Image Date: 1850

Image File:

Image: 17



Caption: Location plan for Macquarie Pier and Nobbys Headland

Copyright: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image By: Port Authority of New South Wales

Image Date: 14/03/2023

Image File: RNCP032A_Final