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**CCL 23/02/21 - NOMINATION TO LIST NEWCASTLE  
RECREATION RESERVE (KING EDWARD PARK) ON THE STATE  
HERITAGE REGISTER**

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# Newcastle Recreation Reserve (under consideration)

## Item details

<b>Name of item:</b>	Newcastle Recreation Reserve (under consideration)
<b>Other name/s:</b>	Upper Reserve; King Edward Park 'The Horseshoe' (1860s to 1880s) 'Upper Reserve' (1880s to 1910) 'King Edward Park', (1910 to present)
<b>Type of item:</b>	Landscape
<b>Group/Collection:</b>	Parks, Gardens and Trees
<b>Category:</b>	Reserve

## Property description

Lot/Volume Code	Lot/Volume Number	Section Number	Plan/Folio Code	Plan/Folio Number
LOT	7003		DP	1077043
LOT	7004		DP	1077043
LOT	1238		DP	1096744
LOT	3116		DP	755247

The boundary includes the public lands described as follows:

- (a) King Edward Park (Lot 7004 DP 1077043);  
 (b) Arcadia Park (Lot 7003 DP 1077043);  
 (c) The Obelisk Tennis Courts (within Lot 7004 DP 1077043);  
 (d) Obelisk Reserve (Lot 1238 DP 1096744);  
 (e) Shepherds Hill Defence Reserve Military Installations, Aboriginal name Khanterin (Lot 3116 DP 755247) ; and  
 (f) Part of cliffside above South Newcastle Beach, Aboriginal name Yi-ran-na-li, being from the top of the cliff (i.e. the eastern border of Lot 7059 DP116454) to the foot of the cliff-face (i.e. to the western kerb of Shortland Esplanade)

## Boundary:

Whilst historically connected, this item does not include the private land of King Edward Headland Reserve (Lot 3109 DP 755247)

## Owner/s

Organisation Name	Owner Category	Date Ownership Updated
City of Newcastle Council	Local Government	
Newcastle Coastal and Estuary Reserve Trust	State Government	07 Oct 20

## Statement of significance:

The Newcastle Recreation Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in its demonstration of activities and processes of importance in the history of NSW. The Reserve includes sites of known cultural significance to the Awabakal people, and was the scene of important early interactions with Europeans. The Reserve is a rare example in NSW of a comparatively undeveloped inner city natural, Aboriginal and European landscape influenced by convict labour and recorded by important colonial artists.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its inclusion of Themeda grasslands, an endangered ecological community.

The Reserve maybe of state significance for its convict associations, including the grazing of government stock by convict shepherds; the construction of an early windmill; and the provision of the Bogey Hole and The Horseshoe access path. The convict mine workings demonstrate the transition between public sector and private sector operations, while The Obelisk demonstrates early public sector intervention in coastal navigation. The Bogey Hole and Horseshoe as later developed exemplify early sea bathing activities, together with the transition between gendered and ungendered bathing.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its association with important historical and community events and commemorations, and also for its association with important Federation-era, pre-War and wartime defence installations that demonstrate progress in armaments technology during the Twentieth Century. The Shepherds Hill structures, in particular, have an apparently unique importance in their occupation by all three Services. Strongly associated with Major James Thomas Morisset, a figure of importance in the history of NSW, the Reserve is specially associated with Biraban, an Awabakal man, and with Rev. Lancelot Threlkeld, a missionary and scholar of great importance to knowledge of Aboriginal cultures. The cliff face and cliff top called Yi-ran-na-li contribute to the way of life, traditions and belief system of the Awabakal people, and is representative of the Dreaming.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in its setting, which incorporates coastal hills, headlands, gullies and sea cliffs with wide views across the lower Hunter Valley and the ocean. It has the principal characteristics of a nineteenth century belvedere park in the Picturesque style, demonstrating Victorian and Edwardian technical achievement, philosophy and customs, as well as continuity and change in the cultural landscape of NSW recreation reserves.

The convict-related and defence-related heritage items within the Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in providing archaeological and other information as to convict coal workings, as to which there is as yet comparatively little knowledge. The defence relics at, and to the east of The Obelisk are also little known, and like those of the Shepherds Hill Defence Group may be of state heritage significance for their potential to supply information as to the development of Federation era and WWII defence technology.

**Date significance updated:** 14 Oct 20

*Note: The State Heritage Inventory provides information about heritage items listed by local and State government agencies. The State Heritage Inventory is continually being updated by local and State agencies as new information becomes available. Read the [OEH copyright and disclaimer](#).*

## Description

**Designer/Maker:** NSW government and local government

**Builder/Maker:** NSW government and local government

**Construction years:** 1818-2004

**Physical description:** The Newcastle Recreation Reserve (the Reserve) is located on Shepherds Hill, just south of the Newcastle CBD. Its landforms range from rolling hillocks to steep gullies and offer extensive ocean views. The majority of the site, called King Edward Park, is laid out in the Picturesque style of landscape architecture. Some of the northern portion of the Reserve is divided by roads into smaller areas known as Obelisk Park; the Obelisk Tennis Courts; and Arcadia Park. Adjoining King Edward Park is the King Edward Headland Reserve. Whilst all these parcels are historically part of the Reserve as dedicated for public recreation in 1856 and extended and rededicated in 1894, the now privately owned King Edward Headland Reserve is not included in this Newcastle Recreation Reserve site.

Historic items include the Bogey Hole baths (SHR 01678), the Shepherds Hill Defence Group Military Installations (SHR 01806); convict coal mine workings; The Obelisk navigational marker and adjoining infilled reservoir (the site of a convict-built windmill, miller's residence and store) and several defence-related sites. There are important geographical features of significance to Aboriginal people. The Newcastle Government House and Domain (SHR 01841) site is located just to the north. The landscape features of the Reserve display a mixture of Victorian, Edwardian and more modern influences, although some areas, including about 4 ha of Themeda grasslands, preserve their pre-European attributes.

**Physical condition and/or Archaeological potential:** The Reserve has a generally high level of integrity. The rotunda; sandstone drinking fountain (restored after May 2012 vandalism); gardens; drives; The Obelisk; and two surviving sandstone gate columns are well maintained. The Bogey Hole requires maintenance. The condition of historic military items varies according to their age, location and materials, with some in poor condition from vandalism.

**Date condition updated:** 05 Sep 16

**Modifications and dates:** Pre-1801: the Awabakal people use the sparsely-vegetated site for hunting, gathering, and cultural purposes.

1801: the site of the Reserve is remarked upon by a naval and military party exploring the Awabakal lands; the Newcastle penal settlement is founded, but within a year is withdrawn.

1804: an ongoing penal settlement is founded. At or after this time, convicts begin to graze stock on the sparsely-vegetated future site of the Reserve.

c.1814: a coal shaft is sunk. At least two additional shafts are later sunk.

1818-1823: J.T. Morisset is military commandant at Newcastle; Bogey Hole and access path are excavated by convict labour.

c.1820: the Prospect Hill windmill, miller's cottage and store are constructed by convict labour.

1847: the convict windmill, miller's cottage and store are demolished.

1850: The Obelisk is constructed on the site of the windmill.

1856: the northern part of the Reserve is dedicated.

1863: Newcastle Council is made Reserve trustee; improvement works are begun.

c.1865: part of the Commandant's Walk is widened for vehicles.

1884: the Bogey Hole is much enlarged by Council.

1880s-1890s: Reserve paths are established or extended; portions of the northern gully are filled; plantings occur. Roads are constructed near the northern boundary of the Reserve; Prospect Hill is quarried near The Obelisk.

1880-1889: sewage is disposed of in one of the coal shafts on the later site of the

Newcastle Bowling Club.

1885: a water supply reservoir is constructed adjacent to The Obelisk

c.1889: the 1879-era sandstone drinking fountain is relocated from Newcastle Railway Station.

1890: the Shepherds Hill 8-inch gun position is completed; the gun is mounted the following year.

1891: the Newcastle Bowling Club (later the Newcastle City Bowling Club) establishes a green and clubhouse within the Reserve.

1894: the Reserve is extended well to the south, and is rededicated.

1898: the bandstand rotunda is erected. A coastal artillery Observation Post is provided at The Obelisk.

1907: four-columned ornamental gates are constructed at the northern entry to the Reserve. 1906: more of the northern gully is filled.

1910: the main body of the Reserve is named King Edward Park.

1920s: more of the northern gully is filled to create Garside Gardens, a sunken garden, and a new carriageway.

1927: the new carriageway is extended to the southern entry, and renamed York Drive.

1936: a new northern vehicular entry is constructed in conjunction with the new Shortland Esplanade; the two larger gate columns are relocated to the southern entry to York Drive.

Pre-WWII and WWII: additional military positions are constructed.

1950: the lower part of the northern gully is reshaped as a grassed amphitheatre.

1966: the Bowling Club is granted a Crown lease over its site.

1978: the No. 2 gun emplacement is bulldozed and partly infilled.

1985: a town gas explosion damages The Obelisk reservoir, which is afterwards infilled.

2001: Newcastle City Bowling Club goes into liquidation.

2000s: Bathers Way, a coastal path, is commenced and extended.

2004: much of the remainder of the lower gully, including the remains of the Sunken Garden, is filled.

2009: the redevelopment of the bowling club site is announced.

2010: the bowling club premises are demolished, Lot 1309 DP 755247 created

2012: Aboriginal land claim made for former bowling green

2018: Land claim granted to Awabakal LALC for Lot 1309 DP 755247 former bowling green

**Further information:**

The Newcastle Recreation Reserve consists of six elements being the following public lands:

(a) King Edward Park (1A Ordnance Street and 3 Ordnance Street, The Hill, Crown Reserve 570075, including Bogey Hole Public Baths, Lot 7004, DP 1077043, including public reserve, drinking fountain and rotunda, vested in Newcastle Coastal and Estuary Reserve Trust with Newcastle City Council as Reserve Trust Manager);

(b) Arcadia Park (off Wolfe Street, physically separated from King Edward Park by Reserve Road, Crown Reserve 570075, Lot 7003, DP 1077043, vested in Newcastle Coastal and Estuary Reserve Trust with Newcastle City Council as Reserve Trust Manager);

(c) The Obelisk Tennis Courts (off Reserve Road, physically separated from King Edward Park by Reserve Road, adjoining Obelisk Park, Crown Reserve 570075, within Lot 7004, DP 1077043, vested in Newcastle Coastal and Estuary Reserve Trust with Newcastle City Council as Reserve Trust Manager);

(d) Obelisk Park (Lot 1238 DP 1096744, physically separated from King Edward Park by



Reserve Road and from Arcadia Park by Wolfe Street, since 2009 vested in Newcastle City Council, classified as Community Land under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and burdened by positive covenant for retention for community use in perpetuity);

(e) Shepherds Hill Defence Reserve Military Installations (41 The Terrace, Newcastle, Crown Reserve 170100, Lot 3116, DP 755247), including residence, observation post and gun placement, surrounded by King Edward Park, vested in Newcastle Coastal and Estuary Reserve Trust with Newcastle City Council as Reserve Trust Manager, transferred from the Commonwealth in 1988, with covenants for the protection of the place), Aboriginal name Khanterin; and

(f) Cliffside above South Newcastle Beach (abutting Crown Reserve 570019 ie.the eastern boundary of Lot 7059 DP 1116454, to the western kerbside of Shortland Esplanade, thence adjoining King Edward Park, Newcastle City Council as Manager), Aboriginal name Yi-ran-na-li.

Whilst historically connected, this item does not include the private land of King Edward Headland Reserve (Lot 3109 DP 755247)

<b>Current use:</b>	Recreation Reserve
<b>Former use:</b>	Aboriginal land, Recreation Reserve

## History

**Historical notes:** Aboriginal cultures: pre- and post-contact Aboriginal custodianship

The site of the Reserve is within the traditional lands of the Awabakal people, who despatched over long-distances tools crafted from stone from the nearby cliffs. (AHMS, 'Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit No. 1098622 Excavation Report', May 2011). The whole site would be important, with three places of special significance, to the local Aboriginal community.

The first, 'Khanterin', generally known as South Shepherds Hill, is the highest point on Shepherds Hill. (Henry T. Plews, 'On the Coalfield of New South Wales', in Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers, Vol. VI, 1858; Rev. W.B. Clarke to Chairman of the Coal Inquiry Committee, Sydney Morning Herald, 13 October 1847, p.2)

The second, 'Yi-ran-na-li', the cliff extending from east of King Edward Headland Reserve to a line east of the southern side of Church Street at its intersection with Watt Street, adjacent to South Newcastle Beach. Its Awabakal name was recorded by local missionary Rev. Lancelot Threlkeld following a conversation with his friend Biraban, also known as Eagle Hawk or John McGill. Threlkeld noted that beneath 'Yi-ran-na-li' was a sacred place at which speech was thought to cause stones to fall from the unstable cliff above. When Biraban, in company with other Awabakal, conducted his friend to the spot, Threlkeld called out to him, whereupon some small stones did indeed fall. The Awabakal at once motioned Threlkeld to be silent and to hurry on. (Neil Gunson (ed.), Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824-1859, 1974, p.65)

The third is The Obelisk hill (Prospect Hill), which may have been a duelling and corroboree place. Here, in November 1801, two Awabakal men, observed by Aboriginal people summoned with message sticks, as well as by curious British servicemen, are said to have fought with nulla nullas. (H.W.H. Huntington, 'History of Newcastle and the Northern District, Number XXXVII', in Newcastle Morning Herald, 14th December 1897) A panorama of Newcastle shows Awabakal people at a corroboree just south-east of the present site of The Obelisk, while daylight battles between Awabakal and other clans are known to have occurred nearby. (E.C. Close, Panorama of Newcastle, 1821; Cynthia Hunter, The 1827 Newcastle Notebook and Letters of Lieutenant William S Coke, H.M. 39th Regiment,

European:

Convict: the Newcastle penal settlement

The Reserve forms part of an area known as Shepherds Hill, originally called 'Sheep Pasture Hills' as suggested by Lieutenant Colonel Paterson during his 1801 exploring expedition. (Paterson to King, 25 June 1801, in F.M Bladen (ed.), *Historical Records of NSW*, Vol. IV., 1896, p.448) After the failure of an initial convict settlement, a second was established in 1804. Convict shepherds grazed government stock in the area adjoining the Government Domain.

Mining: convict coal mines

The Newcastle penal station, a place of secondary punishment, employed convicts in lime burning, timber getting and coal mining. As coal easily obtainable by drift mining was gradually exhausted, shafts were sunk in various localities. The track along which some of the coal was carted to the harbour wharf evolved into Watt Street, Newcastle's first commercial thoroughfare. (John Turner, *Newcastle as a Convict Settlement: the Evidence Before J.T. Bigge in 1819-1821*, Newcastle, 1973; Wilfred Goold, *The Growth of Newcastle*, Newcastle, 1985, p. 32)

At least three, and possibly four, mine shafts sunk by convict labour are situated on and around the northern headland of the Reserve. (Suters Architects for Newcastle City Council, 'Newcastle Archaeological Management Plan', 1997) These are the so-called Bowling Green shaft; another shaft nearby, possibly for ventilation; a dewatering shaft; and perhaps another situated nearer what is now The Obelisk. Parts of these workings are connected by a convict-driven drainage adit, later called The Blowhole, to the sea cliffs, while a later adit appears to be drained into the steep gully to the south. (David Branagan, *Geology and Coal Mining in the Hunter Valley, 1791 - 1861*, Newcastle, 1972, p.32; Henry Dangar, 'Plan of the Town of Newcastle on Hunter's River', State Records AO Map 4398; George Boyle White, 'Sketch of the land in the Town of Newcastle', National Archives UK MPH1-681-(67)-NSW-Newcastle; NMH, 20 September 1887, p.4; John Armstrong, 'Plan of the Town of Newcastle Shewing its Present Actual State', 1830; Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence at Newcastle, 1908, reported in NMH, 20 February 1908, p.3; Newcastle Archaeological Management Plan (1997), Item 124)

The workings appear to date from between January 1820, when Commissioner J.T. Bigge visited Newcastle and noted the location of an earlier shaft, and the time of their description by Surgeon Peter Cunningham, who visited Newcastle in 1825 and perhaps earlier: 'The coal shaft is sunk upon the summit of the hill, and the coals carted down by bullocks; but from the defective nature of the working, and the lazy habits of the incorrigibles [sic] who are sentenced to this labour, the produce does not at all correspond with what may be expected when a more efficient system is introduced.' (P. Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, London, 1827, pp. 148-149)

Leisure: The Bogey Hole and Bowling Club

The rock shelf pool known as the Bogey Hole (SHR 01678) was excavated at some time between 1819 and 1823 by order of James Thomas Morisset, military commandant of the Newcastle penal station, who was fond of sea bathing. (John Bingle, *Past and Present Records of Newcastle*, Newcastle, 1873, pp.11-12) It was connected to the nearby Government Domain by the 'Commandant's Walk', leading from the end of the track to the mines. The pool was called the 'Commandant's Bath', the 'Commandant's Hole' or 'Morisset's Bath', although other members of the military, as well as Morisset's family, may well have used it. It may have been enlarged from an existing rock pool; but its Awabakal name, if any, is unknown. The fact that Commissioner J.T. Bigge did not mention the bath may indicate that it was built after January 1820, although this cannot be conclusive.

Morisset's connection with the bath gradually faded, for in 1852 English traveller John

Askew misheard its name as 'the Accommodence Hole', but nevertheless carefully recorded its dimensions as being 15 feet in length, 7 feet in width and 6 feet in depth, confirming the accuracy of an 1841 sketch by Conrad Martens. Askew commented as to the 'hoarse voice of the ocean, while lashed into fury by the north-east wind', and was struck by the 'thundering sound of its seething waters, as I have never been by any of the awe-inspiring phenomenon [sic] of nature'. He proclaimed that 'The feelings awakened by this majestic scene are indescribable; and I never stood on any spot which so heightened the impressiveness of a scene so terribly sublime'. (John Askew, *A Voyage to Australia and New Zealand*, London, 1857, pp. 260-261) From 1863 the pool was opened to the public. The isolated location was suitable for male bathing, which, as swimming costumes were not then worn, was elsewhere prohibited between 6am and 8pm. Further south were two more dangerous swimming spots called the Bar and Reef and The Gulf. From the early 1860s females had ceased to use the Bogey Hole; and not until 1911 were two days per week reserved for their use. (NMH, 14 December 1861, p.2; 26 January 1911, p.4)

In 1884 the bath was considerably extended by a Council contractor, whose plan shows the removal of nearly all of the original fabric, although part of Morisset's original floor survived. (Newcastle Council Minute Book 1883-1886, 21 April 1884, p.16, NMH, 18 June 1884, p.3, 2 September 1884, p. 3.) By this time the baths had become known as the Bogey Hole, a name not of local Aboriginal origin. (R.M.W. Dixon, *The Languages of Australia*, Cambridge, 1980, pp.69-71) From 1956, the baths were used for annual Greek Orthodox Epiphany Blessing of the Waters liturgies. From 1971, the Macedonian Orthodox community conducted a similar liturgy. Commemorating Christ's baptism by John the Baptist, participants pray for prosperity and the safety of seafarers before young men (and latterly women), watched by a clifftop crowd, dive into the pool in trying to retrieve a silver cross thrown from above by a priest.

Convict: the windmill

The Obelisk, a former navigational marker, stands on the site of the Government Flour Mill, a convict-built brick windmill, miller's house and grain store, all built c.1820 by order of J.T. Morisset. Here was ground wheat from the Newcastle government farm and Wallis Plains convict farms, so helping to improve the prisoners' diet, which Bigge had found inadequate. ('Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, Settlement of Hunter's River', 1822) After the transfer of the penal station to Port Macquarie, the windmill was offered for lease to private parties. (Sydney Gazette, 25 March 1824; Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January 1832, p.4) By the 1840s its usefulness had passed, but mariners had for years used it as a navigation mark for entering Port Hunter. The colonial government, apparently unaware of this, in 1848 sold the mill to Thomas Adam, a local businessman, for demolition. (Colonial Secretary to Mortimer Lewis, 12 December 1848) It is said that Adam hurried to pull down the building before mariners could force a review of the decision. (J.D. Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales*, 3rd ed., 1852, pp.230-231) The miller's house and store, too, appear to have been demolished at or before this time.

Transport: The Obelisk

In 1850, when Sir Charles FitzRoy was Governor, the windmill was replaced by a purpose-built stone navigational marker in the form of an Egyptian obelisk. It was also known as 'The Monument' or 'Fitz Roy Pillar', perhaps in the mistaken belief that it commemorated FitzRoy himself. (John Askew, *A Voyage to Australia and New Zealand*, London, 1857, p.262). A similar but smaller obelisk already stood in Macquarie Place (1818, SHI No. 758942); later structures include navigational obelisks at Robe and Port Elliot in South Australia (early 1850s), together with the Lady FitzRoy monument in Parramatta Park (1888, SHR 596). Prominent on the skyline of Prospect Hill, also called Monument Hill, the structure was at some stage rendered and painted white. Not altogether successful in its role, in 1858 The Obelisk was supplemented by a timber-built version some distance to the north. Both structures became obsolete when, in the mid-1860s, they were replaced by leading light towers. As a splendid vantage point offering 360-degree views, the site of The Obelisk was used by colonial artists Joseph Lycett, Walter Preston, James Wallis, E.C. Close and Conrad Martens in their paintings of Newcastle, incorporating parts of what was to become the Recreation Reserve.

After the reopening of the State Dockyard in 1942, a timber pole with a triangle at its apex was erected just north of Shepherds Hill fort so as to mark a measured sea mile for ships'

trials. Part of this may remain below the surface. (NMH, 16 February 1946, p.5; additional information supplied by local historian Graeme Steinbeck, May 2016)

#### Health: The Obelisk reservoir

In 1885, as part of the Hunter district water supply scheme devised by William Clark (1821-1880), an English engineer who consulted in the supply of water in India and the Australasian colonies, a masonry-and-iron-built reservoir was completed adjacent to The Obelisk. (George Boase, 'Clark, William, 1821-1880', in Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Vol. 10, 1887, p.410) The construction of the reservoir, coupled with the quarrying of Prospect Hill, disrupted the natural landform, while road construction visually separated the 5.3 ha Obelisk site from the remainder of the Reserve.

In 1935, The Hill Tennis Club relocated from the bowling club to new courts just south of The Obelisk; its pavilion, which remains extant, was designed by F.A. Scorer, the City Architect. (NMH, 12 July 1935, p.20) In the late 1930s access to The Obelisk was improved by terracing and flights of steps. In 1967 the Hunter District Water Board provided a lookout plinth and in-ground commemorative plaques celebrating its 75th anniversary and tracing the history of the district's water supply. In 1985 the reservoir, damaged by a gas explosion, was drained and filled in, although The Obelisk itself was itself later damaged by lightning strikes and the 1989 earthquake. In 2009, the site was transferred to Newcastle City Council. (SMH, 25 September 1985, p.8; Robert Evans, King Edward Park, Newcastle: A History, Newcastle, 2016, p.131)

#### Defence: Shepherds Hill Defence Group, King Edward Park and The Obelisk

Items of military heritage include the Shepherds Hill Defence Group (SHR 01806), together with other items in King Edward Park and at The Obelisk. In 1890 a disappearing gun position, in which was later mounted a Sir W.G. Armstrong and Co. 8-inch calibre hydro-pneumatic gun, was constructed against raids by enemy warships. The location was suggested by Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon, R.N. The position, sometimes known as Shepherd's Hill Fort, consisted of an open-topped gun pit and below-ground magazines, with a casemate reached via a ramp from the surface. It was protected by a post for a Nordenfeld machine gun. The gun, one of several imported from the UK in 1886, and identical to those installed at George's Head in Sydney, was mounted in 1891, and was first fired in 1892. (R.S. Mort, The Story of Shepherd's Hill, Newcastle, 1988; NMH, 7 February 1885, p.4, 28 May 1890, p.6, 24 November 1891, p.5)

A regular member of the NSW Military Forces lived in the associated District Gunner's Cottage, built to a standard NSW design. The gun position was also manned by part-time militia. In 1894, the land was belatedly reserved for defence purposes. In 1898 an Observation Post, of which the concrete slab survives, was provided near The Obelisk. (NMH, 6 December 1898) Having been transferred to the Commonwealth government, the gun was regularly used for practice shoots, but in 1906 the gun pit was cracked by mine subsidence. The gun was then dismantled, but for a time remained in situ nearby. (SMH, 17 May 1906; NMH, 6 January 1910, p.5) During and after WWI, the RAN operated a Port War Signal Station at the site. (NMH, 20 February 1918, p.8)

C.1938, a reinforced concrete Battery Observation Post was constructed at Shepherds Hill to serve new 9.2-inch counter-bombardment guns at Fort Wallace, at Stockton. During WWII, work began on Park Battery, a new gun position for 6-inch guns. No. 1 gun emplacement, accessible by tunnel from the yard of a neighbouring dwelling, was near the top of the cliff face, while No. 2 gun emplacement was further north, overlooking King Edward Park. At around the same time, two searchlight positions were provided: No.1 searchlight in the cliff face to the south, and No.2 searchlight near the bowling club to the north. Both were linked via tunnels to their subterranean engine rooms. Additions to the Fort Wallace Battery Observation Post provided for artillery requirements; a RAN Port War Signal Station; and a highly secret RAAF radar station with a prominent radar array. The use of the complex by all three Services at once is possibly unique, in an Australian context. (R.S. Mort, The Story of Shepherd's Hill)

During WWII, some Service personnel were housed in neighbouring homes, inside the redundant disappearing gun position and in huts built over and around it, while the redundant casemate housed an emergency electricity generator. Light machine-gun posts, a small-calibre quick-firing gun, air raid trenches, wire obstacles and the like were located nearby. (Information supplied by local historian Graeme Steinbeck, May 2016) From 1951, some of the huts housed 11 Cadet Battalion headquarters. (NMH, 30 November 1951, p.5) These were later removed, while the gun pit and magazines were partially filled. In 1978 No. 2 gun emplacement was collapsed and backfilled by Council (NMH, 6 March 1978); its site appears as a hillock, with some structural elements visible in the grass. No. 1 emplacement remains extant, although its subterranean entry is bricked off. The gunner's cottage continued in Service use until the mid-1980s. (Gardner Browne, 'Shepherds Hill Cottage and Surrounds Conservation Study', Newcastle, 1986, p.26)

In May 1942, just after the bombardment of Newcastle by a Japanese submarine, an alternate gun position was constructed just east of The Obelisk. The position, near the WWII Newcastle Defence Headquarters in nearby Jesmond House, consisted of two concrete circular gun platforms, amenities, and subterranean magazines, but guns were never mounted. The magazines, in one of which the cartridge racks remain intact, have now been sealed, but a concrete Depression Range Finder plinth remains. (NMH, 1 March 1952, p.5; Newcastle Sun, 5 June 1947, p.10; other information supplied by Graeme Steinbeck, May 2016 from Fort Scratchley records) In 1947, tank traps (tetrahedrons) from Merewether Beach were used to strengthen the sea wall along Shortland Esplanade, and also to seal the entry to the convict mine adit. (NMH, 29 May 1947, p.2) In 1965 the two six-inch guns of Fort Scratchley were remounted on plinths at The Obelisk, where their condition deteriorated until in 1978 they were returned to the Fort. (L. Carey (ed.), Fort Scratchley, Newcastle, New South Wales, Newcastle, 1986, pp.31-32)

Environment: naturally evolved

The Reserve includes areas of Themeda grasslands, an endangered ecological community found on NSW sea cliffs and coastal headlands. The Themeda grasslands of the Reserve are dominated by the species *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo Grass), a reddish, tufted, low growing native grass found along coastal cliffs and headlands. A range of shrubs and herbs, including *Acacia sophorae* (Coastal Wattle), *Banksia integrifolia* (Coast Banksia), *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny Headed Mat-Rush) and *Westringia fruticosa* (Coastal Rosemary) are also present.

Environment: cultural landscape

When in 1823 surveyor Henry Dangar laid out the town of Newcastle, he reserved land, later called the Newcastle City Extension Reserve, for urban development and public recreation. In 1856, when the city has only 1,500 residents, the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, inspired by the British movement for urban parks, successfully asked the colonial government 'to grant the citizens in perpetuity (35) thirty-five acres of land as a recreation ground in the most delightful and picturesque part of Newcastle from the top of Watt Street round the Horse Shoe to the Obelisk.' (John Bingle, Past and Present Records of Newcastle, Newcastle, 1873, p.21)

Although the northern portion of the Extension Reserve was sold for housing, the government gazetted much of the remainder as the Newcastle Recreation Reserve, of which in 1863 the Newcastle Council was made trustee. A further 5 acres were added, and from c.1865 engineer T.A. Ellis widened part of the Commandant's Walk, by then called The Horseshoe or Horseshoe Bend, and also formed paths and planted trees. The Upper Reserve, as it was called, catered for promenading; cricket; riding or driving; and later for tennis, lawn bowls and picnics. An ornate sandstone drinking fountain, erected in 1879 outside Newcastle railway station, in or around 1889 was relocated to the Reserve minus its livestock drinking basins. (NMH, 15 August 1879, p.3, 6 November 1888, p.8; Robert Evans, King Edward Park, p.78)

Entry to the widened portion of the walk, via the southern end of Watt Street, was from 1907 marked by ornate iron gates with four prominent stone columns and a decorative iron fence. These, designed by architect Frederick Menkens, were donated by Joseph Wood, who with his brother John operated the Castlemaine Brewery and Wood Brothers and

Company Ltd at Newcastle West. (NMH, 19 July 1906, p.4) The gates were near the round timber road alignment post placed in 1864 by surveyor D.M. Maitland when aligning Newcastle's streets. Whilst the post itself has disappeared, its location is marked by a concrete plinth and plaque.

In the 1880s, Wolfe Street and Wolfe Street were extended to a new thoroughfare, called Reserve Road. This divided the Reserve in three: the Upper Reserve; the Lower Reserve; and what was later called Arcadia Park. An 1890 park design competition was won by Alfred Sharp (1836-1908; originally Alfred Sharpe), an English-born watercolour artist, architect and conservationist who by the time he had come from New Zealand to Newcastle to join his prosperous brother William was profoundly deaf, and communicated via manual sign language. Sharp's plan for the Upper Reserve was for a park in the Picturesque style centred on the spring-fed watercourse in the steep lower northern gully. Here he planned to create a series of pools surrounded by groves of trees and spanned by bridges. He also planned recreational areas and ornamental plantings. (NMH, 22 March 1890, p.11; Newcastle City Council, 'Heritage Places: Strategic Plan and Plans of Management', 2014, p.78; Roger Blackley, *The Art of Alfred Sharp*)

Sharp's design was only partly executed. A belvedere arrangement of paths on different levels allowed courting couples to 'walk out' together under discrete observation by their chaperone. Pohutukawa saplings were introduced from New Zealand, and the upper northern gully was terraced to create a cricket ground and lower garden, although their form and features disregarded Sharp's plan and the natural rock formations were destroyed. (NMH, 16 August 1992, p.5) A rotunda, perhaps relocated from Sydney's Centennial Park, was erected in 1898, but not in the place of Sharp's choice. (NMH, 2 August 1898, p.5) A frustrated Sharp became severely critical, adopting the pen-name 'Asmodeus', after the mythical demon of that name, for letters to the editor of the leading local newspaper. (NMH, 25 April 1893, p.7)

In August 1910, Council altered the name of the Upper Reserve to King Edward Park. (Motion of Council, 29 August 1910) During the 1920s, the city's head gardener, J.V. Coleman, established east of the rotunda lawn the walled garden later called Garside Gardens after R. Garside, a long-serving parks and gardens supervisor. This was later joined by a sunken garden and rockery. Norfolk Island pine trees, now a defining feature of the park, were favoured by Coleman, although this further strayed from Sharp's plan.

The present northern entry to The Horseshoe, now part of Shortland Esplanade, completed c.1937, dates from 1936, when the vehicular entry through the Wood gates was closed, the larger gate columns being relocated to the south-western entry to York Drive, so named after the 1926 visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, who later became King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later known as Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother). (NMH, 5 June 1936, p.5, 23 October 1936; Newcastle Sun, 29 January 1927, p.3) The smaller columns are believed to have been transferred to a private residence.

After the Second World War the lower gully was shaped into a grassed amphitheatre for outdoor performances. A music shell was planned, but was not built. In 2004 much of this area was infilled. Bathers Way, a coastal path, now extends along the coastline.

#### Events

The Reserve has hosted many public events, such as Queen's Birthday and Anniversary Day (Australia Day) celebrations; musical concerts; torchlight processions; church services; Christmas events; war rallies; hospital rallies; and Anzac Day services. The Reserve continues to draw large crowds for open-air film nights; concerts; Christmas carols and the like.

## Historic themes

Australian theme	New South Wales theme	Local
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(abbrev)		theme
1. Environment-Tracing the evolution of a continent's special environments	Environment - naturally evolved-Activities associated with the physical surroundings that support human life and influence or shape human cultures.	(none)-
2. Peopling-Peopling the continent	Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures-Activities associated with maintaining, developing, experiencing and remembering Aboriginal cultural identities and practices, past and present.	(none)-
2. Peopling-Peopling the continent	Convict-Activities relating to incarceration, transport, reform, accommodation and working during the convict period in NSW (1788-1850) - does not include activities associated with the conviction of persons in NSW that are unrelated to the imperial 'convict system': use the theme of Law & Order for such activities	(none)-
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Environment - cultural landscape-Activities associated with the interactions between humans, human societies and the shaping of their physical surroundings	(none)-
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Events-Activities and processes that mark the consequences of natural and cultural occurrences	(none)-
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Health-Activities associated with preparing and providing medical assistance and/or promoting or maintaining the well being of humans	(none)-
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Mining-Activities associated with the identification, extraction, processing and distribution of mineral ores, precious stones and other such inorganic substances.	(none)-
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Transport-Activities associated with the moving of people and goods from one place to another, and systems for the provision of such movements	(none)-
7. Governing-Governing	Defence-Activities associated with defending places from hostile takeover and occupation	(none)-
8. Culture-Developing cultural institutions	Leisure-Activities associated with recreation and relaxation	(none)-

and ways of life

## Assessment of significance

### SHR Criteria a)

[Historical  
significance]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its strong association with activities important in the history of NSW. The Reserve area was used for cultural purposes by the Awabakal people, while two geographical features are identified by their Aboriginal names; one of these, 'Yi-ran-na-li', has cultural significance in the early interaction of Aboriginal people and Europeans. Considerable convict-related activity has occurred within the Reserve: the grazing of government stock by convict shepherds; coal mining; the construction and operation of the convict-built windmill, residence and store; and the creation of the original Bogey Hole and the Commandant's Walk. These demonstrate continuity and change from the NSW convict era to modern times.

The Obelisk maybe of state heritage significance for its association with the progress of NSW coastal navigation, and also for its special relationship to Port Hunter, a harbour of great importance in the economic development of NSW. The Bogey Hole (SHR 01678) is of state heritage significance as an early example of the important NSW pastime of sea bathing, demonstrating the transition between unrestricted male bathing, restricted gendered bathing, and unrestricted ungendered bathing. The Horseshoe, now part of Shortland Esplanade, is an early example of a convict-built path later improved for vehicular traffic.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its defence sites, and for its association with the transition from convict industry to free labour and private enterprise. It maybe of state heritage significance in demonstrating continuity and change in public recreation from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

### SHR Criteria b)

[Associative  
significance]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance because of its special association with James Thomas Morisset, military Commandant of the Newcastle penal settlement between late 1818 and 1823, under whom both the Bogey Hole baths and The Horseshoe walk were built. Morisset is a figure of historical importance because of his later roles as Commandant at the Bathurst and Norfolk Island penal stations. 'Yi-ran-na-li', the cliff extending from King Edward Park Headland Reserve to a line extending east from the southern side of Church Street at its intersection with Watt Street adjacent to South Newcastle Beach, maybe of state heritage significance because of its special association with Biraban (otherwise known as Eaglehawk or McGill) and Rev. Lancelot Threlkeld, an early missionary to the Awabakal people.

The Reserve maybe of state significance because of its association with Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon R.N., an important figure in the development of the coastal fortifications of the Australian colonies, and with the Service personnel who between 1891 and the 1980s staffed or used the defence assets.

### SHR Criteria c)

[Aesthetic  
significance]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in demonstrating the development of landscape architecture in NSW. Having been laid out as a late nineteenth century belvedere park, one of few in NSW, the Reserve has visual and sensory appeal derived from its extensive views of the ocean and the Hunter Valley, especially from its elevated locations. The basic openness of the Reserve continues to reflect its 1804 description as 'the sheep pasture hills', while the Reserve area has been sketched and painted by important artists Edward Charles Close, Joseph Lycett, Walter Preston, James Wallis, E.C. Close and Conrad Martens.

Defence sites within the Reserve, including but not limited to SHR 01806, are of state heritage significance in their demonstration of a high degree of creative and technical achievement. The 8-inch disappearing gun position and associated relics at The Obelisk demonstrates the technological progression of NSW coastal artillery in the nineteenth century. The WWII observation and command post, gun emplacements and searchlight positions illustrate important advances in twentieth century defence technology in NSW. The alternate gun position at The Obelisk provides information as to contingency planning



in case of a major Japanese attack on the NSW coast.

Although most of the Bogey Hole (SHR 01678) and Horseshoe path post-date the convict era, enough remains to demonstrate the creation by convict labour of an early sea bathing pool from a natural rock shelf, with carefully planned access path.

The Obelisk, a rendered stone-built structure historically used as a navigation aid, maybe of state historical significance in that it appears to be the only navigational obelisk of its kind in NSW; is aesthetically distinctive; and has landmark qualities and considerable aesthetic appeal, being visible across a wide arc and over considerable distances.

The iron rotunda, sandstone drinking fountain and remaining stone gate columns are associated with a high degree of creative achievement, while the western part of the Reserve exemplifies late-nineteenth century park design.

**SHR Criteria d)**  
[Social significance]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its special association with the Aboriginal community of Newcastle and the Hunter Region. The Aboriginal names of two localities within the Reserve are known, with one of these localities, Yi-ran-na-li, being of demonstrable historical and cultural significance to the Awabakal people. Yi-ran-na-li is strongly associated with early interactions between the Awabakal people and Europeans by agency of Rev. Lancelot Threlkeld, a pioneering recorder of Aboriginal culture and language.

**SHR Criteria e)**  
[Research potential]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in its potential to yield new or further important archaeological information as to Aboriginal sites within the Reserve. These, together with artistic and documentary evidence, demonstrate early contact between Aboriginal and European people.

The convict mine shafts and drainage adit; the remaining convict-associated fabric of the Bogey Hole; and the site of the former windmill and associated buildings maybe of state heritage significance in the archaeology of early NSW coal mining. They have the potential to supply further information as to the transition between public sector and private sector coal mining in NSW, as well as information as to early sewage disposal technology.

The defence sites within the Reserve are of state heritage significance in demonstrating the way in which colonial and federal authorities reacted to changing defence technologies and threats, including the development of air power and the highly secret Ground Control Intercept radar network, and the fear of large-scale Japanese attack. The 8-inch gun pit is the oldest unmodified 8-inch disappearing gun pit in NSW, while the Shepherd's Hill position is probably unique in Australia in having been occupied by all three Services at once during WWII. The Obelisk and possible archaeological relics of the State Dockyard 'measured mile' post have the potential to supply information as to the maritime history of NSW. The remaining fabric of the Obelisk Reservoir has state significance in its potential to yield further information as to nineteenth century NSW water supply schemes, and particularly as to the work of William Clark, a hydraulic engineer of world standing.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its potential to supply further information as to the design and development of nineteenth century inner-city public reserves in NSW.

**SHR Criteria f)**  
[Rarity]

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance in possessing coastal native grasslands, including Themeda grass, in an inner-city location. Themeda grasslands on coastal headlands and sea cliffs in NSW are an endangered ecological community threatened by increasing coastal development and weed invasion.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its rare and uncommon features that include: The Bogey Hole and The Horseshoe, although much modified, are relics of the Newcastle penal station, and examples of Victorian era sea bathing amenities; The mine

workings are rare examples of convict coal mining activity and technology; The disappearing gun position is uncommon in regional NSW; and The relics of the former command post at The Obelisk are of state significance as a rare example in NSW of early Federation era coastal artillery command infrastructure.

The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance as a rare example in NSW of a comparatively undeveloped inner city natural, Aboriginal and European landscape influenced by convict labour and recorded by important artists such as Joseph Lycett; Walter Preston; James Wallis; E.C. Close and Conrad Martens.

#### SHR Criteria g)

[Representativeness]


The Reserve maybe of state heritage significance for its representative values. The Themeda grasslands are a rare example of endangered native grasslands in a NSW inner-city location. The cliff face and cliff top called Yi-ran-na-li contribute to the way of life, traditions and belief system of the Awabakal people, and are representative of the Dreaming.

As an early example of a regional reserve granted through public lobbying, the Reserve demonstrates the principal characteristics of a late nineteenth century Belvedere park in the Picturesque style, and demonstrates the philosophy and customs of its Victorian founders and Edwardian developers. Its setting, incorporating coastal hills, headlands, gullies and sea cliffs with wide views across the lower Hunter Valley and the ocean, together with its internal vistas across a variety of terrain, make it of potential state significance in terms of its setting.

#### Integrity/Intactness:

The Reserve has a generally high level of integrity. The rotunda; sandstone drinking fountain (restored after May 2012 vandalism); gardens; drives; The Obelisk; and two surviving sandstone gate columns are well maintained. The Bogey Hole requires maintenance. The condition of historic military items varies according to their age, location and materials, with some in poor condition.

#### Assessment criteria:

Items are assessed against the  **State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria** to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

## Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Heritage Act - Under consideration for SHR/IHO listing	Nomination received from Coal River Working Party		11 Jul 12		
Heritage Act - Under consideration for SHR/IHO listing	nomination reactivated		16 Sep 20		
Local Environmental Plan		579-580	01 Jan 12		

## Study details

Title	Year	Number	Author	Inspected by	Guidelines used
Newcastle City Wide Heritage Study	1996		Suters Architects Snell		N o
Newcastle Archaeological	1997		Suters, Lavelle,		

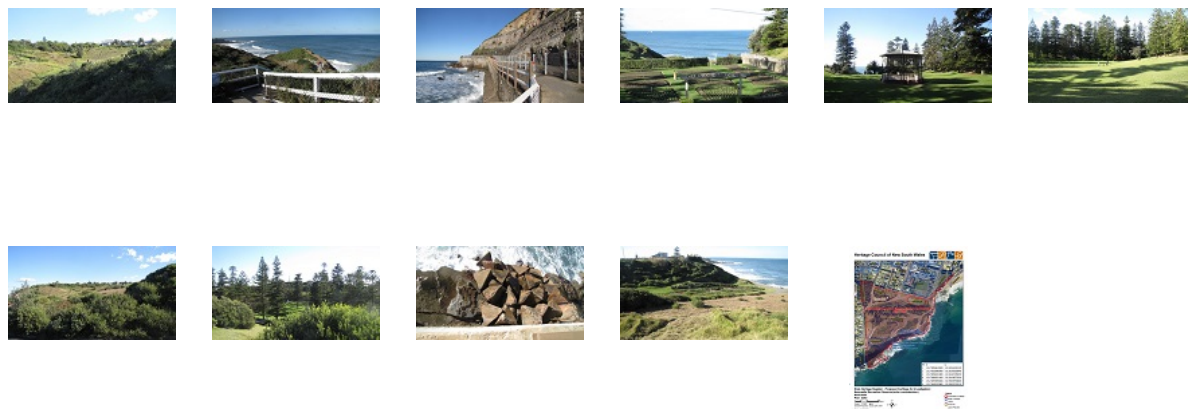
Management Plan			Doring, Turner		Y e s
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## References, internet links & images

Type	Author	Year	Title	Internet Links
Written	Blackley, Roger	1992	The Art of Alfred Sharpe	
Written	Cynthia Hunter	1997	The 1827 Newcastle Notebook and Letters of Lieutenant William S. Coke, H.M. 39th Regiment	
Written	David Branagan	1972	Geology and Coal Mining in the Hunter Valley, 1791-1861	
Written	Evans, Dr. Robert	2016	King Edward Park, Newcastle: a History	
Written	F.M. Bladen (ed.)	1896	Historical Records of NSW, Vol. IV	
Written	Gardner Brown	1986	Shepherds Hill Cottage and Surrounds Conservation Study	
Written	George Boase	1887	Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Vol 10	
Written	Henry T. Plews	1858	Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers	
Written	J.D. Lang	1852	An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales (3rd ed.)	
Written	James Tucker (attrib.)	1952	Ralph Rashleigh, or, The Life of an Exile	
Written	John Askew	1857	A Voyage to Australia and New Zealand	

Writt en	John Bingle	1873	Past and Present Records of Newcastle	
Writt en	John Turner	1973	Newcastle as a Convict Settlement: the Evidence before J.T. Bigge in 1819-1821	
Writt en	L. Carey (ed., rev. R.S. Mort)	1986	Fort Scratchley, Newcastle, New South Wales	
Writt en	Neil Gunson (ed.)	1974	Australian Reminiscences and Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824-1859	
Writt en	Newcastle City Council	2014	Heritage Places: Strategic Plans of Management	
Writt en	Peter Cunningham	1828	Two Years in New South Wales	
Writt en	R.M.W. Dixon	1980	The Languages of Australia	
Writt en	R.S. Mort	1988	The Story of Shepherd's Hill	
Writt en	Wilfred Goold	1985	The Growth of Newcastle	

Note: internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.



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## Data source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

**Name:** Heritage NSW

**Database number:** 5063469

**File number:** EF14/22624

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**CCL 23/02/21 - NOMINATION TO LIST NEWCASTLE  
RECREATION RESERVE (KING EDWARD PARK) ON THE STATE  
HERITAGE REGISTER**

**ITEM-2    Attachment B:**    State Heritage Register - Proposed Curtilage for  
Investigation dated 14 October 2020

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# Heritage Council of New South Wales



**State Heritage Register - Proposed Curtilage for Investigation:**  
**Newcastle Recreation Reserve (under consideration)**  
**Newcastle**  
**Plan: 3263**

0 50 100 200 Meters  
 Scale: 1:2,500 @A4  
 Datum/Projection: GCS GDA 1994  
 Date: 14/10/2020



- Legend**
- ▭ Proposed Curtilage
  - SHR Curtilage
  - LGAs
  - Suburbs
  - Land Parcels