



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

16/12/2020

Heritage Council of NSW
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Letter of support by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) NSW Chapter

Re: **Notice of Intention to consider listing on the State Heritage Register of**
Item: Newcastle Recreation Reserve
Address: 3 & 5A Ordnance Street, The Hill, 41 The Terrace, Newcastle, and Shortland
Esplanade(part), Newcastle.

PREFACE

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for the Landscape Architecture. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members with training, recognition, and a community of practice, to share knowledge, ideas and action. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design and planning of the natural and built environment.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 3,500 landscape architects and promotes excellence in planning, design and management for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability through a unique approach to planning issues via innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, landscape architects contribute towards better environmental, social and economic outcomes for all Australians.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed listing on the State Heritage Register of Newcastle Recreation Reserve including; Khanterin and Yi-ran-na-li, King Edward Park, Obelisk Park, Arcadia Park, Obelisk Tennis Courts. We understand King Edward Headland Reserve is privately owned and not included.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We have reviewed the information about the history and heritage significance presented in the nomination and letter notifying intention to list (DOC 20/9/930420) dated 17 November.

We refer to the issues and performance targets of the Newcastle Coastal Plan of Management 2015 which contains the objectives;

- to increase knowledge of the value of the coast
- to rehabilitate natural areas of the coastline with locally indigenous species
- to identify and protect heritage items and to promote the heritage of the coast as a unique and vibrant asset.
- to integrate information on the history (both indigenous and European) of Newcastle coastline in different ways and means
- promote the heritage of the coastal reserves (p36).
- to manage the heritage values and identify specific improvements for King Edward Park and Shepherds Hill (also referred to as Khanterin) (p.37) and recommendation for further studies:
 - biodiversity background study
 - indigenous heritage study
 - master plans/ public domain plans for Newcastle and King Edward Park.

These recommended studies, with additional investigations of **shared** heritage, if conducted by qualified professionals including Landscape Architects, in consultation with stakeholders and local communities, may assist the integration of geomorphological, cultural and ecological information and narratives. The history of the aboriginal pathways, routes, and ceremonial grounds, observed in the early 1800s, interventions by Morisset, dedication of the public reserve in perpetuity - chiefly promulgated by Bingle (Di Gravio 2012a) and the competition winning design by architect, environmentalist artist and landscape designer Alfred Sharp(e), influenced by Repton, Loudon and Ruskin (Reedman 2008; Evans, 2016), and the continuing defence of community values, including Arbor Day commemorative planting, could be further highlighted in the statement of significance. Geoffrey Britton sums up the aesthetic and historic significance detailed in Robert Evans' 2016 publication in this way;

- the site of one the first deep-shaft mines in Australia,
- the site of early windmills (now Obelisk Hill),
- the Bogey Hole swimming area from the 1820s and
- the Shepherd's Hill defence establishment from where, uniquely, all three military services operated simultaneously in the 1940s.
- the park has many valuable attributes worth defending – not least its overall integrity.

In the case v Newcastle City Council, Mr Roberston for the applicant, Friends of King Edward Park inc. stated this was;

- a “most significant vantage point” for the Hunter coast, and
- “part of the lungs and breathing space of the City of Newcastle”. He also argued that
- it has high aboriginal significance
- has other heritage significance, including as the site of some of the nation's “earliest coal shafts”.

Deborah Dates, an Aboriginal Elder of the Worimi tribe, deposed, in her affidavit affirmed on 20 August 2012, to the cultural significance of the proposed development site for her people. It is called “the place of falling rocks”. (Friends of King Edward Park Inc v Newcastle City Council)

Kerrie Breuer, registered native title claimant in respect of the adjacent land, director of the Awabakal Aboriginal Land Council, deposed that her ancestors lived there before colonisation, and that the Obelisk was at a corroboree place. (FKEP v NCC)

Di Gravio's presentation to the Splendour of the Park public meeting illustrates the shared history of the place through map overlays and artists impressions. He traces Commissioner Bingle's observations of Morisset's private pleasure ground to Bingle's later establishment of the Chamber of Commerce that lobbied for the reservation (Bingle, 1876). Further analysis by Di Gravio of Bingle's records reveals his attempt to inspire civic resolution towards the mutual benefit of township's economic prosperity and the public good. (p.47) Di Gravio draws a parallel with the notion of the corroboree ground as a place of lore or conflict resolution. Further information can be found at Hunter Living History website.

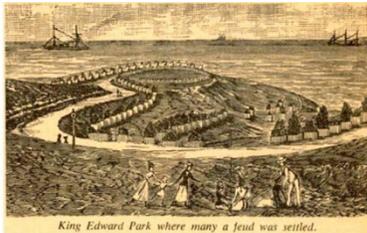


Figure 1 An Historical Survey 1858-1966: 108 years of Journalism in Newcastle (NMH 23/2/1966) p 8

While we agree the comprehensive information presented for listing supports the nomination for State heritage significance, the geological, topographical, geomorphological, visual and physical connections and the significance of the landscape as a whole, including spiritual significance to the Worimi and Awabakal, are understated, possibly due to cultural sensitivity or as a means of protection. Evidence of cooperation, conflict, and the story of dispossession and reparation are also not clear in the listing, though the adjacent successful Awabakal land claim is included in the timeline. More information may come to light in due course, or be reviewed for reference, such as the repository on the 'Hunter Living Histories' website under the heading Dreaming.

AILA supports the nomination of Newcastle Recreation Reserve including; Khanterin and Yi-ran-na-li, King Edward Park, Obelisk Park, Arcadia Park, Obelisk Tennis Courts as having state significance. Listing on the State Heritage Register will inform future decisions so that reasonable economic use of the land is respectfully balanced with the conservation of its multilayered significance. Listing will help the community to continue to protect this park, noted for its overall integrity, from unsympathetic and illegal development.

Kind regards,

Lee Andrews
AILA NSW President

LEAD SUBMISSION AUTHOR: Helen Armstrong, FAILA

SUBMISSION TEAM: Matthew Taylor, Chair, AILA Landscape Heritage Group, Annabel Murray AILA

REFERENCES

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<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-384330297/view?partId=nla.obj-384339236#page/n24/mode/1up>
- Britton, G, King Edward park, Newcastle, NSW - a history [Book Review] [online]. *Australian Garden History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Oct 2016: 28.
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- Cole, J 1985 Parks, Reserves and Recreation Area in New South Wales – a perspective of public resource development. UNSW Thesis for Master of Laws Vol.1.
- Di Gravo 29th August 2012a address to the Splendour in the Park, Public meeting at the Newcastle Town Hall. “The meeting featured a number of distinguished speakers from the University of Newcastle chaired by University Foundation Dr Bernard Curran and including world renown architects, Professor Richard Leplastrier and Professor Peter Stutchbury, Cultural Heritage Researcher and Historian, Ann Hardy, and Dr John Lewer from the University School of Business and Law and the Friends of King Edward Park Inc. Together, we presented an overview of this vitally important public open space, the heritage, history, and essential need for public participation.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qG28qds5Ko&feature=emb_title
- Di Gravo, G August 31 2012b ‘Origins of King Edward Park’, a talk given to Splendour in the Park – Public Meeting <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2012/08/31/origins-of-king-edward-park/> (Di Gravo was/is University of Newcastle Archivist and Chair, Coal River Working Party).
- Evans, R. 2016. *King Edward park, Newcastle, NSW - a history*, Friends of King Edward Park, Mayfield (Newcastle).
- Friends of King Edward Park Inc v Newcastle City Council (FKEP v NCC) (No 2) 2015 NSWLEC 76
<https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/554ac56ce4b0fc828c996ed4>
- Hardy, A, Australian Government National Heritage List Nomination : The Coal River Precinct, Newcastle
<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CRCNN09.pdf>
- Newcastle City Council 2014 Heritage Places Strategic Plans and Plans of Management pp78-81
- Reedman, L. 2008 *Early Architects of the Hunter Region; a hundred years to 1940* Brooklyn NSW, L Reedman & M. Walker, pp 124-126 <http://library.newcastle.edu.au/articles/2420882.29367/1.PDF>