

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*SCRATCHLEYS RESTAURANT
200 WHARF ROAD
NEWCASTLE, NSW*



Prepared by EJE Heritage
NOVEMBER 2015 REVISION A
10359-Historical Context - RevA

| HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This report by EJE Heritage documents the historical context of the site of the existing *Scratchley's Restaurant*, at 200 Wharf Rd, Newcastle NSW.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the use of the archive resources of the *University of Newcastle's Cultural Collections* and the *Coal River Working Party*, used extensively in the researching of this report.

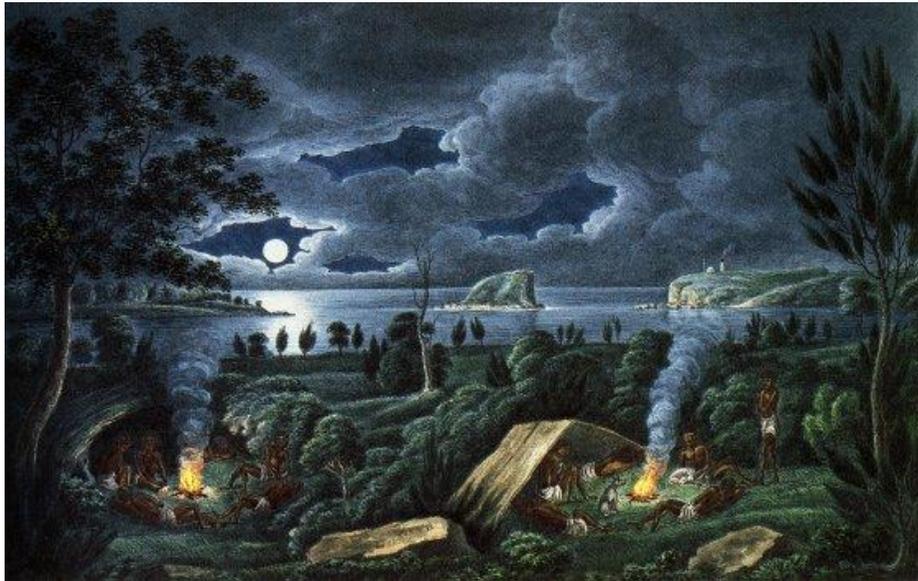


Figure 2. Lycett, Joseph (ca.1775 – 1828). Aborigines resting by a Camp Fire near the Mouth of the Hunter River, Newcastle, NSW.

National Library of Australia

PRE-COLONIAL INHABITATION

Prior to European exploration and settlement, *Muloobinba* (Newcastle) and the *Coqoon* (Hunter River) region hosted the traditional nations of the Awabakal and Worimi Aboriginal people. The river estuary at this time was considerably wider than the present day harbour, consisting of shifting sands and moving channels, with the area of today's Foreshore reserve then a large shallow lagoon.¹ Coastal *Banksia*, otherwise known as *Honeysuckle*, flourished along the banks of the river, an area rich in food sources for the traditional occupants. Sea food such as fish, oysters and pippies would have been a prominent source of bush tucker, with evidence of shell middens, a campsite, and ceremonial ground discovered at *Meekarlba* (today's Honeysuckle Precinct).

While not always confrontational in nature, European colonial occupation in the 19th century drastically affected the Aboriginal people; times of conflict, dispossession of hunting grounds, and the introduction of diseases such as small pox drastically reduced Aboriginal populations in the area. The first European census of aboriginal people in the area of Newcastle occurred in 1827, and counted only 140 individuals in receipt of government provisions.²

¹ *The Hunter Estuary as Discovered by Dr. John Shortland (Sept. 10, 1797)*, in: The Institution of Engineers, Australia, *Newcastle Harbour – A National Engineering Landmark*. 1989.

² NSW Government – Hunter Development Corporation, *History of Ferries in Newcastle*, n.d.

COLONIAL OCCUPATION AND COAL EXPORT

Lieutenant John Shortland described his discovery of the Hunter River when he stepped ashore in September 1797. He wrote that "...on its south shore and near the water a considerable quantity of coal was discovered"³ and that this was "...as good coals as any in England"⁴. He produced a sketch map of the river on this visit, noting only the word "Natives" on the south shore around the area of the subject site.

This discovery of readily accessible coal set the future direction of the area's colonisation, and the first loads of coal for export were loaded as early as 1799.⁵ In 1804, after the establishment of a stable penal colony, coal production by convicts began as an industry, with ships being loaded by wheelbarrow at the end of Watt St.

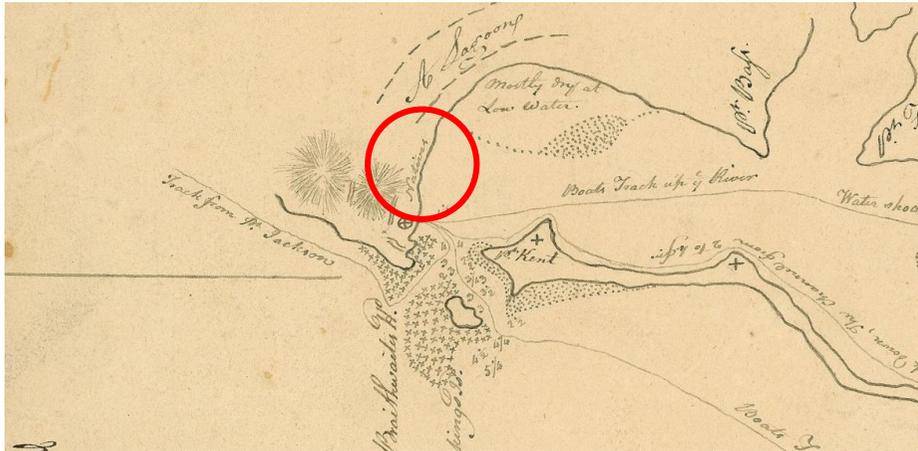


Figure 1. Lt. John Shortland. *An eye sketch of Hunter's River*. 1797. The site is circled in red.

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³ *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.3 pp 343 – 350.

⁴ Maitland and Stafford. *Architecture Newcastle*, p 6.

⁵ Newcastle Port Corporation, *Coal: Australia's First Export*, 2014.

The opening of the colony to free settlement in 1822 expanded the population, and Henry Dangar's plan for the city defined more regulated development. Within this scheme today's subject site sits at the (then unbuilt) end of Perkins St, within a Government Reserve.

An 1830 map shows the progressing construction of the city, with the "intended west side of Brown Street" noted. Assuming Brown Street as it sits today was in fact built in this location, the area of the subject site can be determined, slightly to its east along the Foreshore. A description in this area reads "The Companys (sic) Intended Wharf, the channel here runs near the bank".

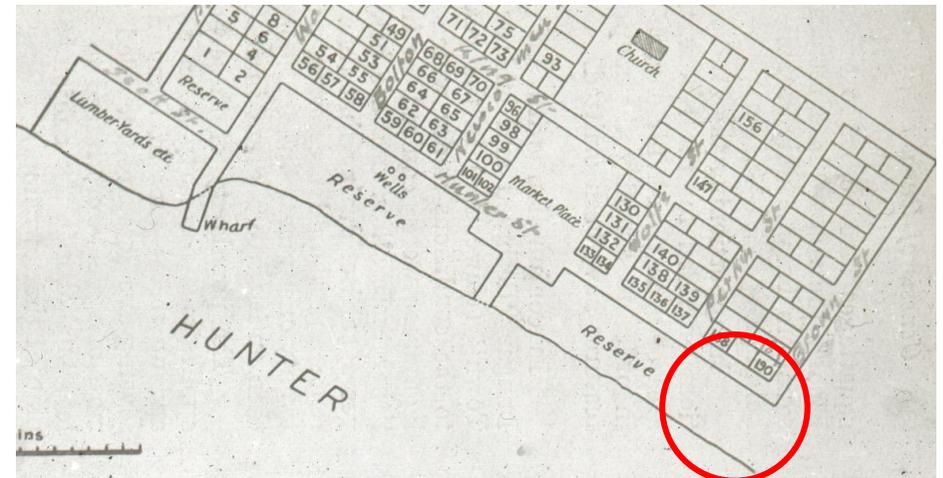


Figure 2. Henry Dangar. *Plan of Allotments in Kings Town 1823 to 1827*. The site is circled in red.

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Figure 3. Jno. Armstrong. Plan of the Town of Newcastle New South Wales shewing it's present actual state with part of the adjoining Country, and the coal works of The Australian Agricultural Company from a Careful Survey in 1830. The site is circled in red.

Coal River Working Party

THE COAL STAITHES

In 1831, it is recorded that a short wharf was erected at the foot of Brown St, not in the location shown above. The Australian Agricultural Company's lands extended west from the edge of Dangar's plan, close to but not encompassing the area of today's subject site. The boundary of the AA's land and the constructed coal wharf are shown to the west of today's site in Figure 4 below. In 1831 the AA company also constructed two raised coal staithes near the present day Merewether St, greatly accelerating the coal export expediency of the harbour. In 1849, Dr James Mitchell of the Burwood Estate built four more of such structures east of the AA company's, on the area of today's subject site.⁶ These structures loaded coal from the Australian Coal and Copper Company's mines on his property at Burwood; they were plagued with problems and their ineffectiveness was widely criticised.

⁶ Blaxel, G. *Newcastle Harbour – The development of the Port, Part 3*.

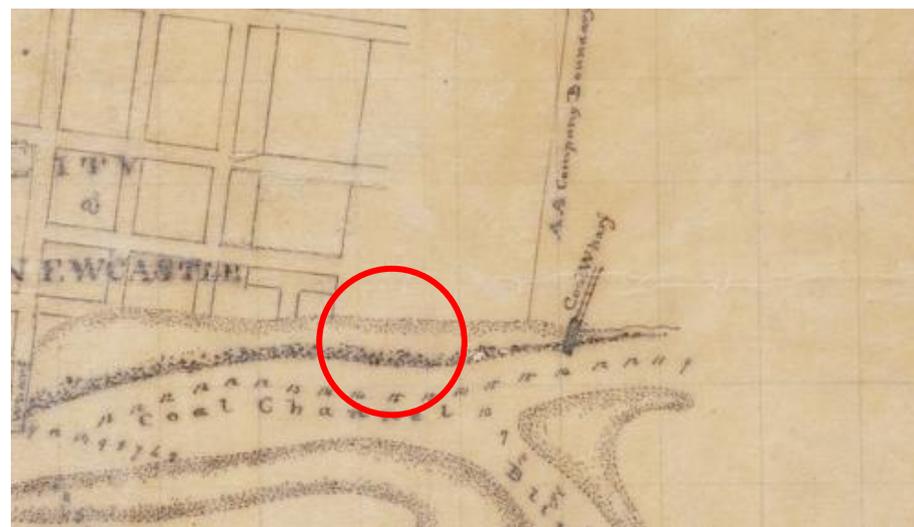


Figure 4. George Barney. *Rough sketch of Newcastle Harbour... dated 11 Oct. 1849*. The site is circled in red.

State Library of NSW

Reclamation of the swampy edge of the harbour had begun occurring by this time, with ad-hoc infill and construction of sea-walls as needed by industry around the harbour edge. Engineer Edward Orpen Moriarty arrived in Newcastle in 1855 and proposed large scale reconstruction of the harbour to make it more effective as a shipping port. Part of Moriarty's plan was the construction of a long stone "training wall" around the southern edge of the harbour, forming a smooth and even curve that would direct the tidal flow and help scour out the channel. The design was meticulous, requiring the demolition of previously built walls that interrupted the smooth curve. The training wall was constructed cheaply from rock ballast brought in on empty ships that were awaiting loads of coal. Moriarty's wall was built parallel out from the shoreline and backfilled behind, reclaiming a long stretch of new land for wharfage and industry. Construction began on this wall, in part forming the new "Queen's Wharf", in 1858, with the structure intended to stretch between the AA company's staithes to the west of the subject site, right around the harbour to link into Macquarie's pier (the breakwater).

The extent of the smooth rock wall and new Foreshore line in 1860 can be seen in Figure 5 below, along with the Coal and Copper Company's staithe stretching to the Foreshore.

By 1863, the length of the wharf had reached 2000ft, and steam cranes had been built along the shore to service the shipping industry. Partly due to inefficiency in the operation of the staithe, the Australian Coal and Copper Company dissolved in 1864, and the Government forcibly took possession of the land.⁷ Four more staithe were built in their place on the site in 1870, but these were again criticised for ineffectiveness. Coal shipping operations moved over to the Dyke at Carrington towards the end of the 19th century, and the government staithe on the subject site were demolished in 1890, replaced by berths for cargo shipping and tugs.⁸

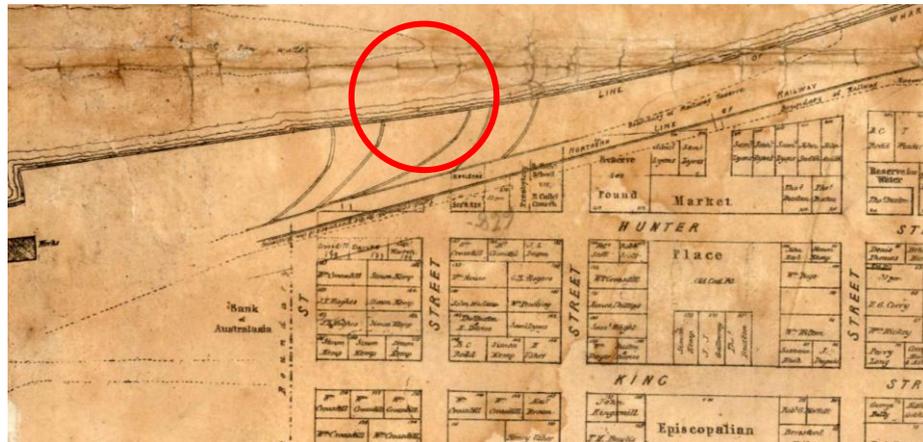


Figure 5. *Map of City of Newcastle, County of Northumberland, N.S.W.* Surveyor General's Office, Sydney, July, 1860. The site is circled in red.

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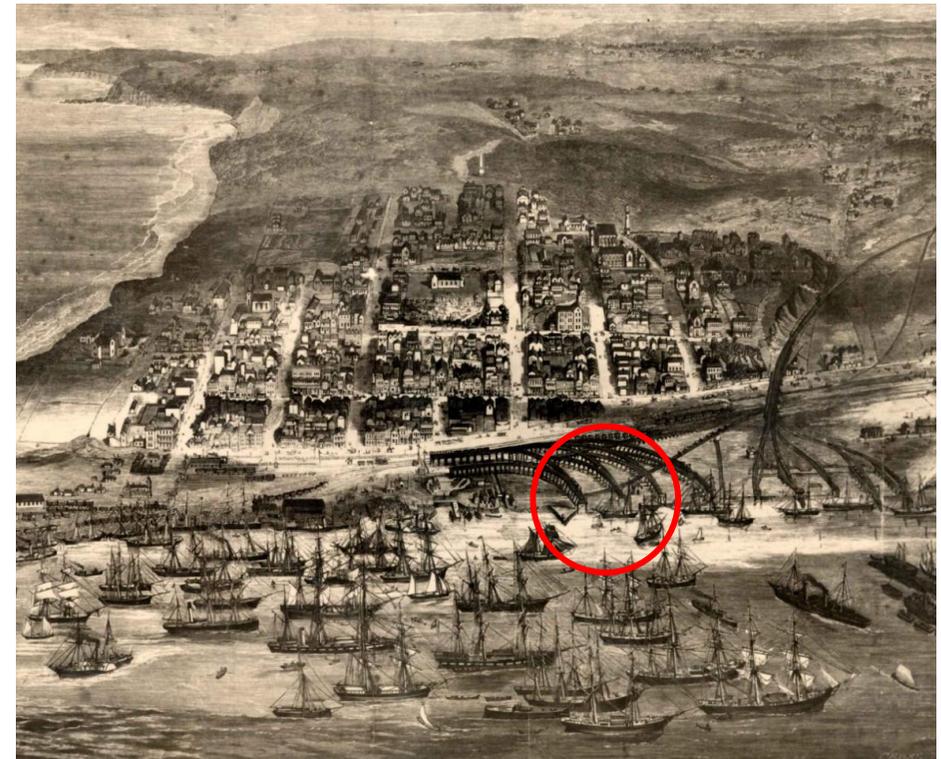


Figure 6. *Newcastle, Supplement to the Illustrated Sydney News, April 1875.* The picture's key (not shown) identifies the structures on the subject site as "High/Low level coal staithe, G.N. Railways". The site is circled in red.

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⁷ Callen, T. *Bar Dangerous*.

⁸ Ibid. See also: Blaxel, G. *Newcastle Harbour – The development of the Port, Part 3*.

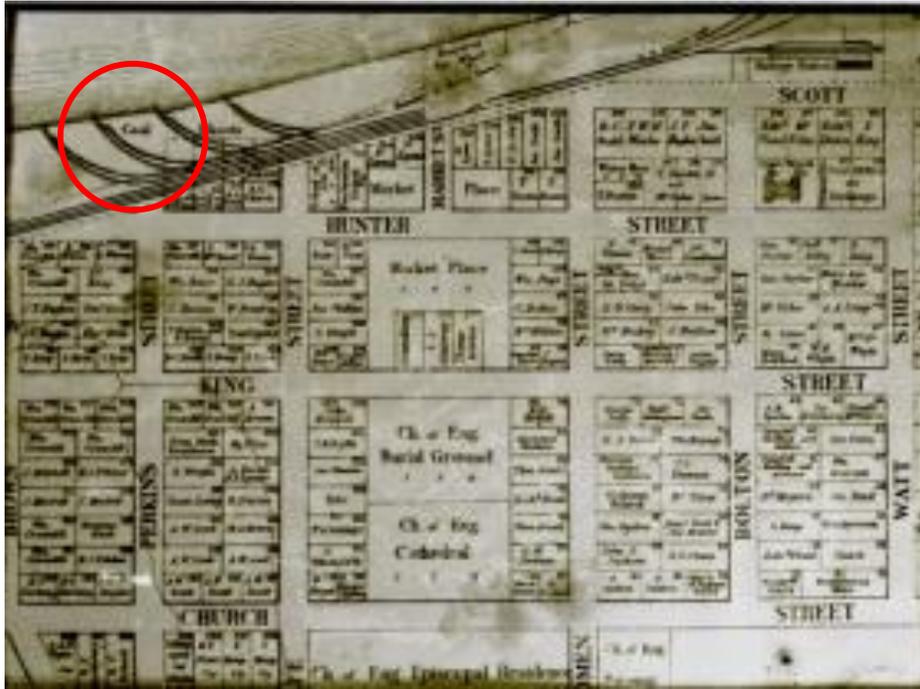


Figure 7. Newcastle. C. 1870-1890. Note interestingly that the Government Staithes built in 1870 are depicted as running in the opposite diagonal direction to the previous ones from 1849.

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Figure 8. Newcastle Harbour circa 1870 looking down from Perkin (sic) Street. The site is indicated by the red arrow.

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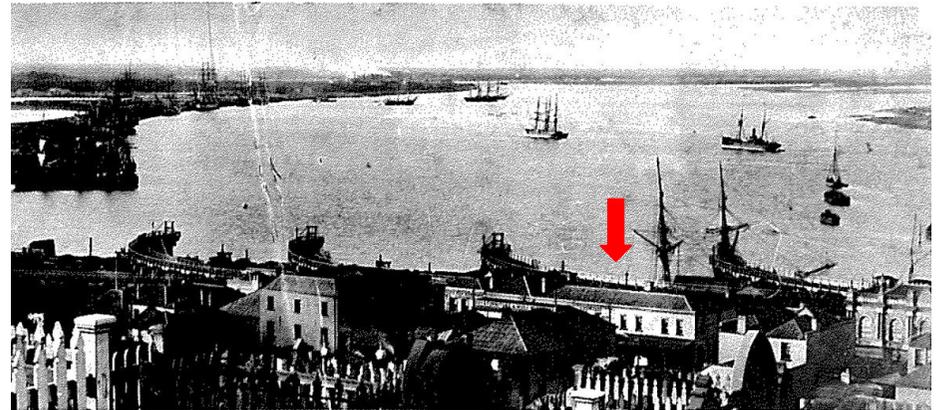


Figure 9. Government Coal Staithes c.1870-1890. The site is indicated by the red arrow.

Bar Dangerous

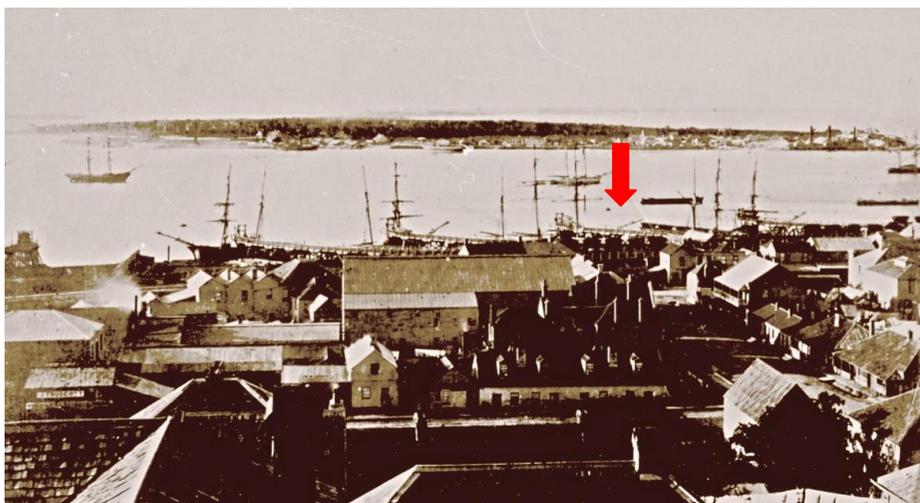


Figure 10. *Panorama of Newcastle, NSW. c.1870-1890.* The site is indicated by the red arrow.

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FERRY AND CARGO WHARFS

From the mid 19th century, ferries had been plying the waters between Newcastle and Stockton, landing in between the coal shipping infrastructure of the south side of the harbour.⁹ After the removal of coal shipping operations to Carrington at the beginning of the 20th century, cargo shipping, tug boat, and these passenger ferry services generally took over the city's shoreline. These land uses continued for close to a century. Passenger ferries generally berthed at the Market Street wharves to the east of the subject site, and a horse punt then later a vehicular ferry berthed at a wharf close to Argyle St, just west of the subject site.

⁹ NSW Government – Hunter Development Corporation, *History of Ferries in Newcastle*, n.d.



Figure 11. *Newcastle Port, NSW, c.1900.* The site is indicated by the red arrow. Coal ships can be seen loading at the Carrington Dyke, with smaller ships, perhaps steam powered tugs, berthed along the wharfs of the southern edge of the harbour.

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Timber cargo wharfs in a sawtooth pattern had been built on the subject site after the demolition of the coal staithes in 1890. These remained the predominant built structures on the site until the mid 20th century when photographs seem to indicate their disrepair/demolition. Historic photographs and maps also show the construction after 1890 of a small sheltered boat harbour about 100m to the south-west of the site, in the area of today's Council run "Boat Harbour Car Park". This would also appear to have been filled in by about 1950.



Figure 12. *Newcastle Harbour with Daltons steam tugs, NSW. c.1900.* The entrance to the boat harbour can be seen under the stone walls in the middle-right of the image. Today's subject site is in the area behind the tugboats, where the tall ships are berthed.

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Figure 13. *Newcastle Harbour, Newcastle, NSW. c.1900.* Photograph taken in a similar location to Figure 12, but clearly at a later date, as an open warehouse type structure has been built on the wharfs in the right of the image. The presence of the *David Cohen Warehouse* building in the far right background of the picture dates this photograph as pre-1908, as the building burned down in this year.

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Figure 14. *Boat Harbour, Newcastle, NSW. c.1900. The boat harbour in use, looking east. The warehouse seen in Figure 12 is in the background.*

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Figure 15. *Boat Harbour, Newcastle, NSW. c.1900. The boat harbour in use, looking south-west, Newcastle University Cultural Collections*

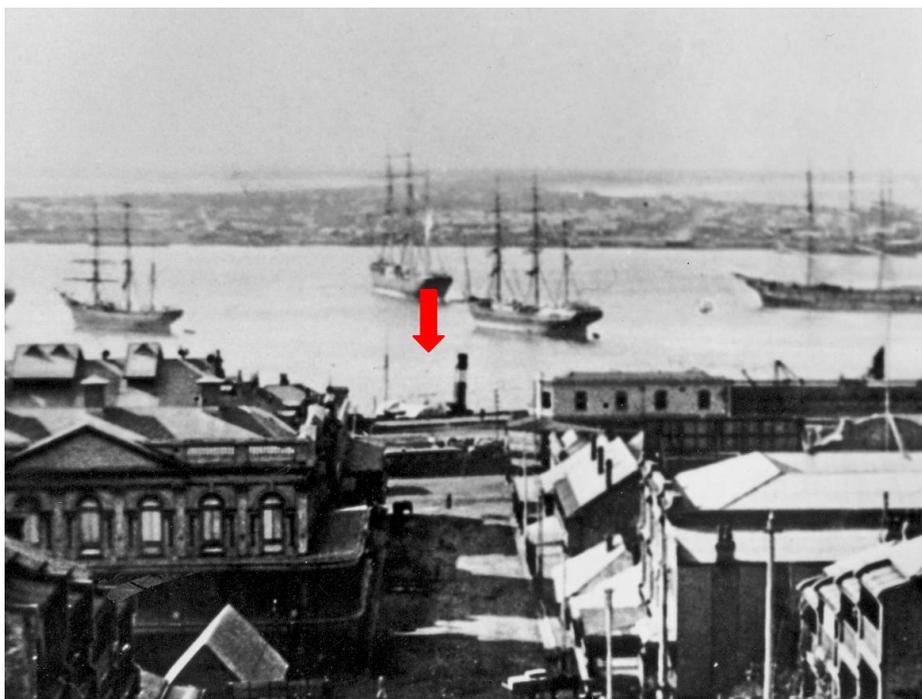


Figure 16. *Perkins Street, Newcastle, NSW. 1905.* The site is indicated by the red arrow. A tugboat can be seen berthed on the timber wharf.

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Figure 17. *Map of the Country around Newcastle NSW, 1910.* Lc Cpl A. Barrett, Royal Engineers. The saw-toothed pattern of the timber wharfs on the site is shown. The text in the area of the site reads "Dyke Ferry L.S." and "Derrick". No further information could be found about the "Dyke Ferry". A "derrick" is a type of simple crane.

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Figure 18. *Blue Bell*. c.1930. This photograph, looking towards the Custom's House tower, is taken from the timber wharf that sat on the subject site. The passenger ferry *Blue Bell* sits in the middle of the frame. The *Blue Bell* sank in Newcastle harbour in 1934 after a collision with a freighter.

Newcastle Fishing - Shipwrecks



Figure 19. *Newcastle aerial, rail*. Milton Kent Airplane Photographs. 1935. The site is indicated by the red arrow. The size of the saw tooth timber wharves and the boat harbour is shown. A boat, perhaps a passenger ferry, leaves the Queen's Wharf terminal at the top left of the image.

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Figure 20. *View of Newcastle Harbour, towards Stockton, NSW, Australia c.1940's.* The site at the end of Perkins St, indicated by the red arrow, is relatively clear of structures by this time.

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Figure 21. *Wharf Road Newcastle c1950s.* The site is indicated by the red arrow. The saw tooth timber wharfs in the background of the image appear severely decayed or possibly demolished. A tower structure (perhaps a shipping navigational marker) has been built on the shoreline next to the site.

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Figure 22. *Stockton passenger ferry approaching wharf city side. 1951.* The site is indicated by the red arrow. The saw tooth timber wharfs in the background of the image appear severely decayed or possibly demolished.

Newcastle Morning Herald in: *History of Ferries in Newcastle.*



Figure 23. *Northumberland County District Scheme map, City of Newcastle, sheet 2.* Northumberland County. 1960. The area of the site, indicated by the red circle, is described to be "wharfage".

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Figure 24. *Northumberland Project. Aerial view of the Royal Newcastle Hospital. 1965.* The site is indicated by the red circle. The saw toothed wharfs appear to have gone, and the site is apparently clear. A boat leaves the Queen's wharf terminal and heads for Stockton, perhaps the passenger ferry service.

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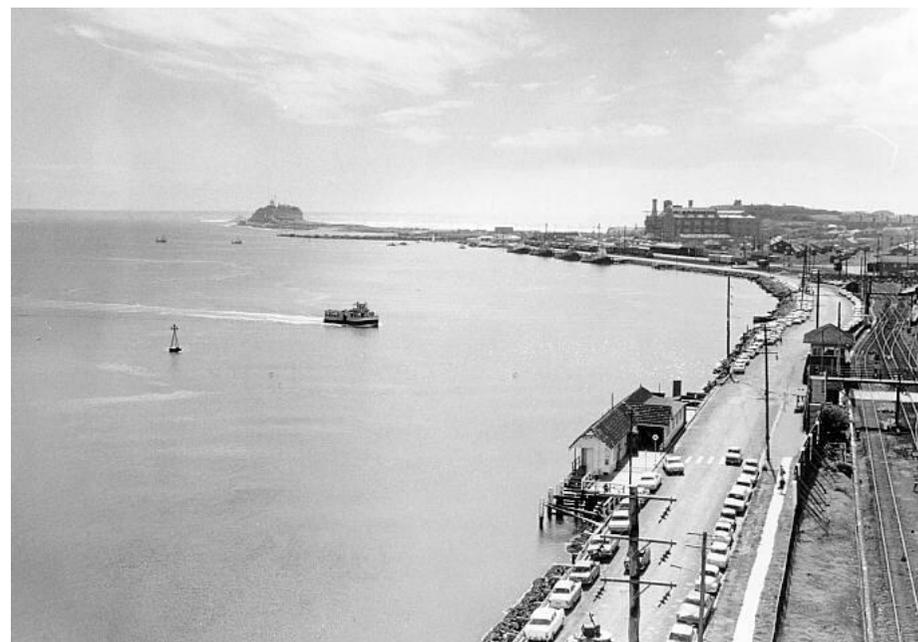


Figure 25. *Newcastle Harbour Wharf Road, Edwards, K G. 1972.* The photo shows the location of the harbour's edge at this time, hard against wharf road. The Stockton Ferry comes in to berth at the Queen's wharf in the centre of the image. The timber wharfs of the harbours edge have all but disappeared at this time. It is assumed that this photograph is taken from the tall steel tower in the background of Figure 22, hence the subject site is under the bottom left of the photo frame.

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Figure 26. *Newcastle Harbour with Stockton Ferry*. The presence of the Zaara St power station in the background of this photo dates it as pre-1978, as the building was demolished in this year. The Stockton Ferry is in the centre of the image. The cables in the left hand could be supporting the navigation tower visible in Figure 21 and Figure 22, hence this photograph is probably taken from the eastern edge of the subject site.

Australian 4WD Action: Forum – Old Photos of Newcastle

THE CONCRETE FERRY WHARF AND NEWCASTLE TO STOCKTON FERRY SERVICE

In 1980, a new concrete ferry wharf and brick building were built at the end of Perkins St on the site of the previous timber berths; this wharf forms the base structure of Scratchleys Restaurant as it sits today.

The passenger ferry service was shifted here from the Market St wharf. The *Edith Walter* was one of the ferry boats running the service between Newcastle to Stockton at this time. In July 1982, the Stockton to Newcastle ferry service was cancelled, but then recommenced in 1983 after vast public outcry. The ships that ran the service were the *Edith Walter* and the *West*

Head. In 1983 the NSW Urban Transport Authority placed an order for two catamaran ferries to take over the service, and the *Shortland* and the *Hunter* began operation from the wharf in 1986.¹⁰

THE FORESHORE CENTRAL PROMENADE

At the beginning of the 1980's, Newcastle City Council ran a national competition for the design and construction of a new public recreation precinct, to be built around the harbour's southern edge, from Nobby's beach to the Honeysuckle area. The objective of the project was to reclaim Newcastle community's engagement and ownership of the harbour for public use. As shown in Figure 28, the shoreline at this time was largely unused and extremely disconnected from the city.

Melbourne landscape architecture firm Tract Consultants won the competition with a design that featured an extended Queen's Wharf hospitality development, a signature tower structure on the harbour's edge, and a long pedestrian promenade and parkland running the length of the Foreshore. Construction commenced in 1985,¹¹ and the new *Foreshore* precinct was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988 as part of Australia's bicentenary celebrations.¹² The Stockton to Newcastle ferry service then moved back to the new Queen's Wharf development and the concrete and brick wharf became available for a new use.

¹⁰ Stockton Historical Society

¹¹ Lindsay Dynan Consulting Engineers

¹² Foreshore Plan of Management

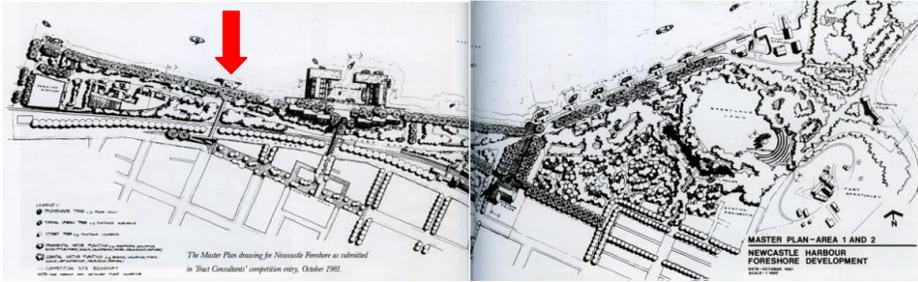


Figure 27. Tract Consultants 1986 plans for the Foreshore precinct. The site is indicated with the red arrow, the wharf is included within this plan as an existing structure.

Landscape Australia in: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.



Figure 28. The Foreshore, before the development of the promenade and parklands, 1986.

Landscape Australia in: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

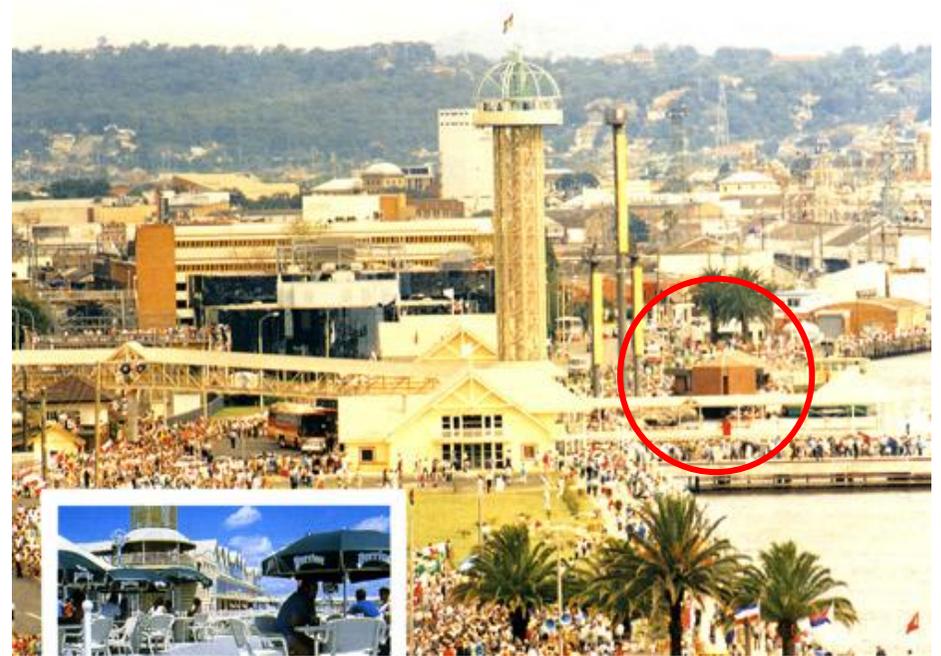


Figure 29. Queens Wharf on opening day. 1988. The concrete and brick ferry wharf is circled in red, it would have just become vacant at this time, with the ferry service having moved to the new berth at Queens Wharf.

Landscape Australia in: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.



Figure 30. The site in 1935. The subject site is indicated by the red arrow.

Citation as for Figure 19



Figure 31. Overlay of Figure 30 with 2014 Google Earth aerial imagery. It can be seen that the development of the Foreshore reserve evened out the shoreline and made some reclamation of the harbour edge.

Google Earth

SCRATCHLEYS ON THE WHARF AND THE SEAPLANE PONTOON 1989

Following the departure of the ferry service, a seaplane pontoon was built off the western end of the redundant wharf structure, and charter flights began operating from the site. Alongside this new use, the proponent gained tenancy of the brick building on the wharf and oversaw its conversion to a restaurant. Opening in 1989, the restaurant was operated within the existing brick structure of the previous ferry wharf.



Figure 32. The new seaplane pontoon operating off the end of the end of the wharf structure. The unpainted bricks suggest that the building has not yet begun operation as a restaurant.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 33. The newly opened Scratchleys, eastern end c. 1989.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 34. Scratchleys Restaurant, western end, c.1989.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 35. Scratchleys Restaurant, eastern end, c.1989.

Scratchleys Collection

1999 RENOVATIONS

Major renovations occurred in 1999 with a large expansion of the restaurant at the eastern end, and general remodelling. A new precast concrete floor was craned into place to form the footprint of the new dining area; this construction was by Civil Build. Steel portal frames formed the structure of the new restaurant enclosure, which focussed on passive environmental performance. The construction of the building itself was by F.H. Compton and Sons. The design for the renovations was produced by EJE architecture.



Figure 36. Restaurant Extension, 1999.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 37. Restaurant Extension, 1999.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 38. Restaurant Extension, 1999.

Scratchleys Collection



Figure 39. Scratchleys Restaurant after major renovations. A wind turbine was proposed on the site at this time, the pole structure can be seen in this image. Unfortunately the project was never completed due to regulatory restrictions.

EJE Architecture

RECENT YEARS

The restaurant has continued to successfully operate over the past 15 years, and has built a reputation as a destination for seafood dining in Newcastle. Smaller internal modifications have occurred over this period, resulting in the contemporary restaurant building that we see today. In 2015, Development Approval has been granted for a new extension of the building at its western end, raising the capacity of the venue to 250 seats. Construction is due to commence in 2016.

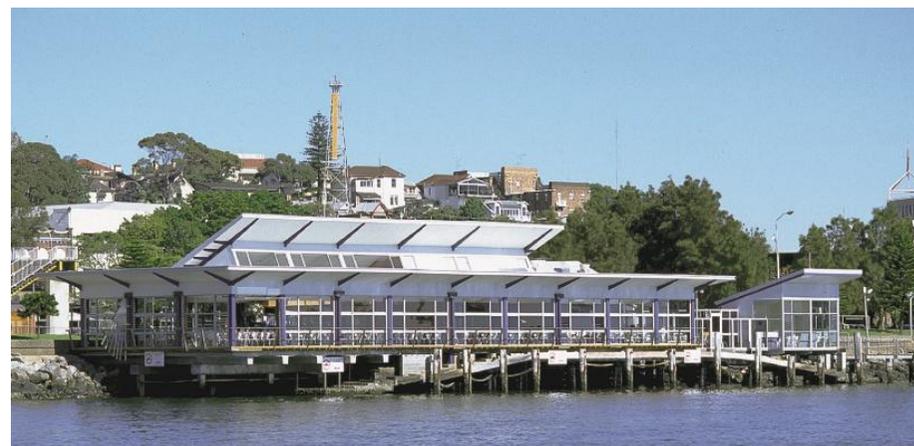


Figure 40. Scratchleys Restaurant form as seen today, eastern and northern facades from harbour.

EJE Architecture

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