

CAWB

Community Action for Windsor Bridge

MEDIA RELEASE

October 19, 2014



OLDEST WHARF IN AUSTRALIA TO BE DESTROYED

Concern is again mounting around a State Government plan for what locals and experts alike describe as a bridge in 'the wrong place'.

For well over a year protestors have been 'manning the fort' - a small black tent in the oldest public square in the nation. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for 456 days, members of CAWB have watched over Thompson Square, Windsor. Now they have real reason to be worried about the survival of another local heritage icon.

Local historian and CAWB heritage walking tour leader, Helen Mackay has been looking a bit more closely at what will happen below the proposed new bridge.

"When we started poking around, it was Macquarie's brick barrel drains and the possibility of old smugglers' tunnels we were looking for," she says. But the task quickly took on a more serious objective when Helen spotted the remains of the wharf.

What followed was a lot of research and investigation, and Helen would be the first to admit the RMS working papers acknowledge the importance of the remains. What has angered her is the lack of recognition of that importance when then Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard gave the RMS approval to build a bridge that will obliterate this remarkable remnant of Australia's maritime history.

The Minister's failure to protect this heritage site from such vandalism is, she says "incomprehensible and completely unforgiveable."

Ms. Mackay says a wharf was first constructed in 1795, supplying the early store and military garrison, later providing transportation for crops from the surrounding farms.

"A second wharf, present on the site until at least the early 1940s, was started in 1814, repaired in 1816 and completed in 1820 under the direction of Governor Macquarie," she says, adding, "In November 1816, due to the original works being damaged by floods, Macquarie wrote that he had commissioned the government civil architect, Francis Greenway to draw up a new plan for the contractors to follow. Macquarie then provided the contractors with "iron and spike nails as can be spared from the stores, plus the assistance of some carpenters".

Ms. Mackay says the wharf, the oldest remaining in Australia, marks Windsor, the third oldest European settlement, as also being the second oldest port in the country. "This was a bustling mercantile area from its very beginnings; Square and wharves together tell a major story", she says.

In fact, Governor Macquarie described the 1816 structure as:

"a large substantial wooden wharf or quay constructed in the centre of town on the right bank of the Hawkesbury River for the convenience of vessels and boats, trading to Windsor, at which quay vessels of 100 ton burthen can load their cargoes."

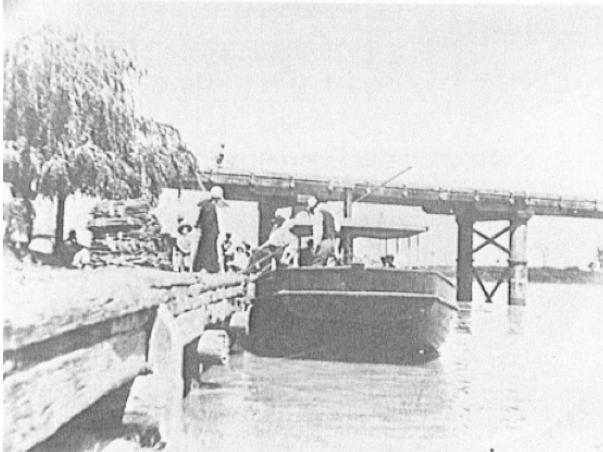
Locals are appalled by these recent revelations. “We have always known Thompson Square was special, CAWB Chair, Dail Miller says, “Now Helen has drawn our attention to a new and remarkable aspect of the story: another Francis Greenway-designed piece of public infrastructure. The Hawkesbury from the very beginning was the food-bowl of the colony, a place where rich, alluvial soils have produced corn, oranges, watermelons, vegetables and now prime quality turf, as well.

“Quite frankly the neglect and erosion of this major archaeological site is bad enough; to know the Government now wants to completely destroy this important part of our history is the last straw.

“The Minister for Roads is clearly unable to comprehend the seriousness of the situation. In the face of his refusal to find a real solution to the Hawkesbury’s traffic woes, one that doesn’t destroy the local heritage and tourism economy, we will, on behalf of all Australians, protect this place. We will not allow the destruction of the oldest public square, or the oldest wharf in Australia.

“The Premier must step in. Before the heritage value of Thompson Square is compromised. Before the Government wastes \$65 million on a non-solution. Before the economic base of this township is completely eroded. Before a significant engineering legacy and functional community asset is demolished. Before this community suffers any more from poor government planning, the Premier must step in and deliver the long-overdue transport infrastructure this community so desperately needs.

“I look forward to hearing from the Premier as a matter of urgency.”



Cover Image: Maritime Archaeology Statement of Heritage Impact. Final Working Paper report October 2012 by Cosmos Archaeology Pty Ltd
“Wharf at Windsor on the Hawkesbury River near Windsor Bridge” (ca.1890 to ca.1900).

The photograph shows the wharf, including the closely spaced piles.



The Wharf circa 1875

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RELEVANT QUOTES FROM RMS DOCUMENTS

Existence of wharf:

Cosmos Report pg ii:

“A maritime archaeological survey on the site of the former wharf identified above and below water structural remains present on the site in situ.”

Cosmos Report pg 21:

“I have this day agreed on an estimate made out and submitted to me by Mr. Greenway the Govt. Civil Architect of the additional Expense of repairing and Completing the same in solid and durable material (agreeably to a Plan thereof made out by Mr. Greenway)...”
(Diary Entry, Lachlan Macquarie 14 November, 1816)

Cosmos Report pg ii

*“Heritage significance...The archaeological remains associated with the former ca.1814 wharf have been assessed as being of **State Significance**.” (See notes below and at Attachment 1 regarding State Significance)*

Cosmos Report pg 78

*“Both of the wharves built at Windsor (1795 and ca.1814) are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion on the basis they formed part of critical transport and trade infrastructure for one of the earliest European settlements in Australia, a settlement which was important for the survival of Sydney as a viable colony.*

Cosmos Report pg 78

*“The second wharf at Windsor has a strong association with Governor Macquarie, who is an important figure in the history of NSW, and as such the wharves built at Windsor are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion.*

Cosmos Report pg 79

“The archaeological site associated with the former Windsor wharves is considered to be a rare and endangered archaeological resource...The physical and archaeological remains of

the former wharves built at Windsor are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion.

Cosmos Report pg 78

“The archaeological resource present on the site is considered to be a rare and endangered resource that can provide new information into the design and construction types of wharves in the early settlement of NSW, and Australia.

Destruction:

Cosmos Report pg ii “Impact Assessment “*The project would have both a direct and indirect impact on known and potential archaeological remains associated with the former wharves and punt crossing from the placement of in water piers and retaining walls.*”

Cosmos Report pg 95 “Impact to the archaeological remains cannot be avoided.”

Value:

Statement of Cultural Significance (Page 80, Windsor Bridge Maritime Archaeological Statement of Heritage Impact, Cosmos Archaeology Pty Ltd.)

“...is considered to be a rare and endangered resource...”

Cosmos Report pg 73:

*“The potential for structural remains associated with the former wharves built in this location is considered to be **high**. The potential for nonstructural maritime archaeological deposits to be present within this ballasted area is also considered **high**”*

Cosmos Report pg 74:

*“The archaeological potential for structural remains relating to the former wharves built in this area, particularly of the ca. 1816 wharf, immediately behind the current bank of the river is considered to be **high**”*

Minister Fails - No Conditions of Consent

Cosmos Report pg iii and Cosmos Report pg 99

“Recommendation 1

An above and below water maritime archaeological salvage excavation should be undertaken within the area assessed to have high archaeological potential relating to the remains associated with the former ca.1814 wharf. This includes the area immediately

behind the southern bank of the river that may contain land ties (also known as deadman anchors) and other structural remains..."

However, while the DG's Environmental Assessment Report does mention maritime archaeology,

pg 34: *"the wharf site is considered to have high maritime archaeological potential."*

Pg 36: *"The project would have...Potential direct and indirect damage to land and maritime archaeological items;"*

Pg 42: *"According to the Applicant's Submissions Report, submissions regarding heritage raised concerns included but not limited to impacts on the following items:*

- *the heritage value of the existing Windsor Bridge;*
- *the heritage buildings within Thompson Square Conservation Area;*
- *archaeological records;*
- *Aboriginal heritage; and*
- *maritime heritage."*

A search of the Ministerial Conditions of Approval show the only references to "Maritime" or "Marine" archaeology are in respect of the experience of the Heritage Consultants (CoA B1 and C4).

No specific conditions regarding Marine or Maritime Archaeology were included in the Minister's approval.

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Media Briefing



Attachment 1: STATE SIGNIFICANCE

According to the European Cultural Heritage Significance Criteria (NSW Heritage Office Guidelines) the wharves built at Windsor (MAWP 2/6 pgs. 77-78) meet four of the seven criteria for State Significance:

6.2.1 Windsor Wharf (1795 – ca. 1800 and ca. 1814 –ca. 1940)

Criterion a) An item is important in the course or pattern of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

The construction of a wharf at Windsor was an integral part of the establishment and development of firstly dispersed frontier farming and then the township. The first wharf constructed in 1795 was used to supply the military garrison and first store built in the location of Thompson Square. By this time the surrounding area was being used for farming purposes, and the wharf was likely used to transport crops out to the settlement in Sydney. This mode of transport was likely faster than the overland route that was not formally established until 1816. The construction of both wharves at Windsor are associated with the survival of the early colony, providing a means of transporting agricultural crops out of the greater Windsor area back to the main settlement at Port Jackson. Both of the wharves built at Windsor (1795 and ca.1814) are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion on the basis they formed part of critical transport and trade infrastructure for one of the earliest European settlements in Australia, a settlement which was important for the survival of Sydney as a viable colony.

Criterion b) An item has strong or special associations with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW' cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

The second wharf at Windsor in ca.1814 was associated with Governor Macquarie who commissioned its construction in 1814. Three years earlier Macquarie developed a plan for formation of a township at Windsor, as well as four other townships on the Hawkesbury River. While it was not in the original plan for the establishment of a formal town, the need for adequate loading facilities on the river was later identified and endorsed by Governor Macquarie. The wharf was built by John Howe and James McGrath, both early land grantees at Mulgrave (Windsor), who also improved the road from Parramatta to Windsor and searched for an overland route to the Hunter River. After the wharf was damaged in a flood in 1816, Macquarie ensured the survival of the wharf by granting further funding to complete the wharf. The second wharf at Windsor has a strong association with Governor Macquarie, who is an important figure in the history of

NSW, and as such the wharves built at Windsor are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion.

Criterion e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Archaeological potential relating to the construction and use of both the 1795 and ca. 1814 wharf is expected to exist on site. Limited historical information exists to the construction of both wharves built at Windsor that can be answered from potential structural remains. Physical evidence that has survived in the archaeological record has the potential to provide new information relating to construction techniques and material that were used, specifically in relation to types of wood used, fastenings, bracing and pile information as well as quality of workmanship and materials. Information relating to repair work to the wharf can also be determined from the remains in the archaeological record on wharf sites, such as from the driving in of repair "sister" piles or the addition of extra bracing or fastenings. Artefacts discarded, accidentally or deliberately, from the wharf and vessels moored alongside can contribute towards knowledge of the variety of traffic and goods that passed through this portal between Windsor and Sydney over time. The archaeological site associated with the former wharves built at Windsor, both above and below the low water line has the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of settlement before and during the Macquarie era. As such, the archaeological site associated with both former wharves built at Windsor is considered to be **State significant** under this criterion.

Criterion f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

The archaeological site associated with the former Windsor wharves is considered to be a rare and endangered archaeological resource. Wharf redevelopment within major ports and harbours has occurred continuously as required to maintain the function of the port area. Through this process infrastructure is updated and wharves are demolished and rebuilt. Wharf sites along major rivers and secondary ports are likely to exist, both intact and as an archaeological resource, as redevelopment of these sites is less likely to occur over the development of other transportation advances, such as rail or road infrastructure. Aspects of the wharf that are present in and behind the riverbank at Windsor are likely to be intact, and relate to design and construction techniques that relate directly to the early settlement of NSW that have since evolved. The physical and archaeological remains of the former wharves built at Windsor are considered to be **State significant** under this criterion.

Attachment 2: OFFICE OF HERITAGE: STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Windsor Bridge Maritime Archaeological Statement of Heritage Impact

Based on the NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning publication for *Statements of Heritage Impact*, a Statement of Heritage Impact must address a number of questions relevant to the proposed works with regards to items of cultural significance identified to be within the study area. These questions help to ascertain whether all options have been explored prior to the proposed works or actions taking place, and to determine how the heritage value of an item can be conserved, or preferably enhanced, by the proposed development. The types of questions that are relevant to the project include:

- Have all options for retention and adaptive re-use been explored?
- Can all of the significant elements of the heritage item be kept and any new development be located elsewhere on the site?
- Is demolition essential at this time or can it be postponed in case future circumstances make its retention and conservation more feasible?
- Have the consultant's recommendations been implemented? If not, why not?

Below is a statement answering the relevant questions required for this statement of heritage impact statement for the proposed bridge crossing.

7.2 New Bridge Crossing

Options for retention and adaptive re-use

The design of the project has been undertaken in consultation with the maritime archaeological consultants (Cosmos Archaeology). There are no options that will allow for retention of the maritime archaeological remains present within the study area, particularly within the vicinity of the ca.1814 wharf remains. This is due to engineering design requirements for the bridge and the site. A bridge designed with piers immediately behind the southern bank of the river behind the known and potential archaeological remains would require scour stabilisation work along the front of the southern bank of the river. A pier placed further out into the river in front of the known and potential archaeological remains would not have a direct impact to the known archaeological remains, however, the pier and riverbank would create a funnel that would result in an increase in water velocity and create localised scouring in the vicinity of the archaeological remains. As a result this area would also require scour protection through the installation of rock armour.

The creation of a protective barrier over the top of the known and potential archaeological remains associated with the ca.1814 second wharf is also not possible. A protective rock armour layer, as required for the scour protection works, over the top of the site, comprising of large sandstone boulders, would likely damage or destroy the site as soft silts are present below the rubble ballast remains associated with the former ca.1814 wharf.

Retention of significant elements through relocation of new bridge⁶⁵

The current alignment for the new bridge crossing was chosen from 10 options that included the 'do nothing' option, refurbishment of the existing bridge, bypass of Windsor and replacement of the existing bridge. Ten alternate options were proposed and a feasibility study was undertaken in July 2009. Project objectives were developed that allowed for the assessment of each option. This included location, performance,

⁶⁵ Cosmos Archaeology was not directly involved with the selection process or final design decision, however, the results of the maritime archaeological survey completed in 2008-9 were used in the reporting process.

potential environment impacts and cost/benefit analysis of each option. Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from the consultation process on each option, RMS shortlisted three options for further assessment, these were:

1. Option 1 - Replacement high-level bridge via Old Bridge Street, Windsor.
2. Option 2 - Replacement low-level bridge via Old Bridge Street, Windsor.
3. Option 6 - Bypass of Windsor via a new bridge parallel to Palmer Street, Windsor and new bridge over South Creek.

The selection of the preferred option by RMS was based on consideration of transport needs, heritage impacts, environmental impacts, safety and engineering and cost constraints. Each of the 10 options was identified to have varying levels of impact to known and potential heritage and archaeological items. The decision on the preferred option was made by considering:

- The performance of each option against the project objectives.
- The relative advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Information on the potential impact of each option, including biophysical, heritage, community and socio-economic impacts.
- Community and government agency issues, as identified in community and agency consultation.

RMS identified Option 1 (new high-level downstream bridge) as the preferred option for the project. This option was found to perform best in terms of value for money and would perform well in relation to most of the project objectives.

Once this decision was made, RMS engaged consultants to prepare specialist studies required for this stage of the project. The potential to relocate the bridge after completing the earlier investigation is now not an option.

Is demolition essential or can it be postponed?

Impact to the archaeological remains cannot be avoided. The alternate designs for the bridge along the current alignment has attempted to relocate piers, both in-water and immediately behind the southern bank of the river, in an attempt not to impact known and potential archaeological remains. Choosing the option with the least impact to the known archaeological remains associated with the former wharf would still have a substantial impact on archaeological remains. As such, the significance and archaeological research potential for the site would likely be removed from the remainder of the site.

Have the consultant's recommendations been implemented?

Consultation regarding the maritime archaeological potential on the site began in February 2012 and has been included in all design meetings and strategies since. This consultation included discussing options and constraints for the location of piers and associated infrastructure for the new bridge. These meetings have been based on the desire to preserve the known archaeological remains present within the maritime study area as the first priority, which lead to looking at possible design modifications. At the final stage, when it was clear that impacts could not be entirely

avoided, it was recommended that an archaeological salvage excavation of the site would be required as the only alternative to a complete engineered redesign that ensured the archaeological site would not be impacted. Archaeological Recording and salvage of the maritime archaeological sites is considered the only appropriate mitigation measure for the level of impact the project will have to the former wharf remains within the study area.

The recommendations presented in this report have been formulated over the course of this project, including the consultation process with RMS, and have been agreed on by RMS.

ENDS