

**Item name:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area**Location:** Newcastle**Address:****Planning:** Hunter & Central Coast**Suburb/nearest town:** The Hill 2300**Local govt area:** Newcastle**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:** The Hill**Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:****Curtilage/boundary:** Shown by a heavy black line and marked 'The Hill Heritage Conservation Area'**Item type:** Complex / Group**Group:** Urban Area**Category:** Streetscape**Owner:** Multiple Owners**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** residential area, hospital, school, parklands**Former uses:** coal mining, residential area, hospital, school, parklands**Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:** Local

**Statement of significance:** The Hill is of outstanding heritage significance to the City of Newcastle on many levels. It is a significant historic landscape containing numerous heritage items, significant trees, views of the ocean and harbour, and a steep topography that gives it a distinctive character. Its history is multi-dimensional as one of the oldest settled areas and as a place of first European settlement.

There are many significant paintings by early colonial artists including Joseph Lycett, Sophia Campbell and others, depicting European use of the hill area during the first two decades of settlement, and that depict the traditional owners of the area, the Awabakal, living in this area. The Anglican Cathedral and burial ground is situated at the top of the hill. The first railway in Australia was located in this precinct, starting at the AA Coy's A Pit, just off Church Street. The flat bench created for the mine is still visible with the "The Boltions" heritage group now sitting over the site. The funicular railway is significant as the first in Australia, and it was manually powered by the convict labour force indentured to the Company.

The heritage conservation area is also significant historically for its three AA Coy coal pits, the three earliest private coal mines in Australia, the A Pit, off Church Street, the B Pit, off Swan Street, the C Pit, off Bingle Street, and their remains including the winding house at No 18 Bingle Street (see Item No. 2173981). These sites are of high heritage significance as they brought profound changes to the economic fortunes of the colony after 1828 because a coal export trade gained great momentum. The Cathedral and its burial ground have the potential to reveal through their archaeology information about the convict settlement, and despite the repositioning of the graves, the human remains survive in their original resting places.

The Hill Heritage Conservation Area has a strong sense of place and contains highly intact streetscapes with houses, terraces and villas dating from the mid 19th Century through to the late 20th century. There are several residences which date as far back as the 1850s and Claremont House in Newcomen Street which was built in the 1840s, and these are of particular importance. A remnant stone wall (the remains of the Parsonage at the corner of Newcomen and Church Street) dates between 1818-1820. The sandstone retaining walls are an important historical element in The Hill along with mature trees, gardens, and early roads formations.

**Item name:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area**Location:** Newcastle

**Historical notes of provenance:** The first mine shaft in the Hill was sunk beneath the present day James Fletcher Hospital, in 1814. There were two known shafts under the Hospital and a third under the present day Newcastle Bowling Club green. The government, under the colonial administration, continued to extract coal from beneath the Hill using a convict workforce, until it handed a monopoly to the Australian Agricultural Company in 1824. To provide this Company with adequate coal reserves it was granted 2000 acres to the immediate west of the penal settlement, commencing at present day Brown Street. "This had profound effects on the future development of Newcastle, for hereafter the Company's policies controlled the sale of land in the only area in which the town could expand." (Suters Busteed+Lester Firth, 1984:24). The entry of the AA Company into the industry transformed the coal mining industry and the economy, because the company brought new technology from England and Wales. Its first mine was equipped with two engines (A Pit), on the site of the present day Boltons residences, and these were the first steam engines to be used for mining purposes in the colony. They were used to raise coal and to pump water from the workings. The coal was then hauled to the Port via an incline plane, now considered by historians to be the first use of a railway in this country.

<b>Themes:</b>	<b>National theme</b>	<b>State theme</b>	<b>Local theme</b>
	4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and villages	
	2. Peopling	Convict	
	8. Culture	Domestic life	
	9. Phases of Life	Events	

**Designer:****Builder:****Year started:** **Year completed:** **Circa:** No

**Physical description:** The area is described as the area to the immediate south of the CBD, bounded by King Street, Church walk Park off Darby Street, Bingle Street, Swan and Tyrrell Streets, The Hill. A map of the gazetted boundaries in Newcastle LEP 2003 is available from the Customer Enquiry Counter, King Street Newcastle. In terms of the defining features of the Hill, views from public areas over the harbour and ocean are an important part of the urban character of the Hill. Fine panoramic views are available from the Obelisk, filtered views from the Cathedral park, and many channelled street views or vistas of Stockton can be obtained, especially notable is Wolfe Street. Steep topography is a defining feature as are the mature Norfolk Pines in the grounds of Bishops Court which can be seen in photographs dating back to the 1870s. When viewed from Stockton, with the Cathedral at the top of the Hill, the area is characterised by the street structure which acts as a setting to the built form. There are multiple private and public buildings of heritage significance including the Cathedral and Horbury Hunt Hall, Jesmond House, Marlborough House, Woodlands, Newcastle East Public School, the water reservoir and Lead Light Tower, King Edward Park and Shepherds Hill military fortifications, the Obelisk and the James Fletcher Hospital. There are also significant historic sites of archaeological value including the site of the A Pit, off Church Street, the site of the C Pit, off Bingle Street, and avenues of significant plantings including Hills figs in Tyrrell Street. The streetscapes are interesting and comprise terrace houses, detached villas, apartments, and sandstone retaining walls.

**Physical condition level:****Physical condition: Archaeological potential level:****Archaeological potential Detail:****Modification dates:**

**Item name:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area

**Location:** Newcastle

**Recommended management:** The character of the Hill Heritage Conservation Area is made up of a variety of building styles that date from the late 19th and early decades of the 20th century. The special character of The Hill will be preserved and maintained through the retention of contributory buildings, open space, the existing subdivision pattern, street trees and elements of visual interest and heritage significance such as the many iconic buildings located in The Hill, parks and open space, views and vistas, the unique steep topography and street layout, and the character of the streetscapes including street trees, buildings and the relationship of built elements. Elements that are to be preserved include:

- the range of contributory and historic buildings, particularly intact or historically significant groupings, heritage items, iconic structures, and the appearance and layout of streets
- sandstone retaining walls, street features such as sandstone kerbing and guttering, and other features of historical interest such as coal shutes, public stairs, lanes, parks, views and vistas
- the eclectic and organic nature of the urban pattern and varying ages of the building stock that demonstrates the gradual urbanisation during the 19th and 20th century of a once indigenous landscape
- the existing appearance of the Hill, views outwards to the coastline and harbour and views into the area from the City, foreshore and Stockton which reveal a tree-lined suburb with a steep topography
- gardens, street trees and public open space and
- existing subdivision pattern and street layout.

<b>Management:</b>	<b>Management category</b>	<b>Management name</b>
	Recommended Management	Prepare or include in a Development Control Plan (DCP)

**Further comments:**

**Criteria a):** The Hill HCA is significant for its role in the course of the history of New South Wales, including being a place of documented first contact between Aboriginal people and the British. It is significant as the location of the first attempt at coal extraction in 1801. It is also important in the course of NSW's history as the site of the Colonial government's attempt to control and punish recidivist convicts, through the proclamation by Governor King of the penal settlement in 1804, which continued for an 18 year period until 1822. The penal period would create the hallmarks of the city layout and character that defines it today, including the site of the first church and burial ground (now Christ Church Cathedral and Park), the site of the parsonage (1818, corner of Church and Newcomen Street), and the gradual transition from an altered landscape to a modern city. It is also a place that is important in course of NSW's cultural history as the site of the establishment of the first private coal mining venture in Australia, the archaeological evidence of which survives in the site of the A Pit off Church Street.

The Hill HCA is important for its ongoing existence as a modern urban settlement which can demonstrate through the rich archaeological heritage the pre contact traditions and life ways of Aboriginal people, who through the ongoing connections of the Awabakal people maintain an attachment to area today. Following the arrival of the British, Awabakal associations are recorded in paintings and records of the penal period and the decades that followed.

**Criteria b):** The Hill HCA has special associations with the convict history of Australia, being a place of secondary punishment for reoffending convicts between 1804-1822. The first administrators of the colony and some of the first European navigators are associated with the area, including Lieutenant Shortland, Governors King and Hunter, and numerous others of importance in the history of early colonial Australia, including Commandant Wallis and Commandant Morisset. The area is also associated with the Australian Agricultural Company, being the eastern most extent of their 2000 acre grant of land in inner Newcastle. The AA Company established the first private coal mine in Australia at the A Pit, just off Church Street, in 1828. The AA Company, through its modern system of coal extraction and its coal export monopoly, made an important contribution to the origins of the Australian economy.

**Item name:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area

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**Criteria c):** The Hill HCA is important urban cultural landscape that demonstrates aesthetic characteristics that define the evolution of an early Australian city established during the penal period. It has evolved a rich urban fabric that represents 210 years of urban development. These aesthetic features include:

- [Aesthetic/ Technical significance]**
1. Buildings that represent architectural styles and construction technologies from all periods of Australia's development including buildings of the Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian, Federation, Inter War and post war periods of urban development.
  2. Suburb layout and its reflection of the Dangar plan of 1823, as well as the boundary of the Australian Agricultural Company's 2000 acre grant of coal bearing land in inner Newcastle.
  3. Streetscapes and vistas outwards and inwards which strongly contribute to the character of the suburb.
  4. The areas of park and green space designed to be an integral element of the Hill including King Edward Park, Fletcher Park, Arcadia Par and Cathedral Park.
  5. The location of the Hill adjacent to the Newcastle City Centre, is a defining visual marker of the urban geography of Newcastle.

**Criteria d):** A survey of residents in 2015 revealed that the residents value the character and physical elements of The Hill and they agree with its protection as a heritage conservation area. On the whole there is a high degree of esteem held by the resident community and strong attachment to the character of the area, the streetscape, buildings and public open space. The area meets this criterion on cultural grounds at the local level.

**Criteria e):** Given the rate of survival of key elements of the early urban settlement of Newcastle, including its ability to demonstrate elements of the work of Henry Dangar as well as the behaviour and strategies of the system of land subdivision and crown grants following the cessation of the penal colony mining, the area has the potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding aspects of Newcastle's cultural history, and more broadly to the state of NSW for the capacity to yield information about the cessation of a penal settlement and its evolution to a modern city.

**Criteria f):** The area does not demonstrate this criterion to any notable degree.  
**[Rarity]**

**Criteria g):** The Hill contains many surviving elements of the early 19th and 20th centuries and the processes of urbanisation. It demonstrates these characteristics in its key elements including street layout and the evidence of the Dangar town plan, housing stock and historic iconic elements and green space.

**Intactness/Integrity:**

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Suters Busteed + L:ester Firth	Newcastle Inner Areas Conservation Planning Study	1984

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Suters Busteed Corner Cl	Newcastle Central Businees District Heritage Study		1988
	Godden Mackay Pty Ltd	Urban Conservation Area Guidelines for Inner Newcastle		1996
	Suters Busteed + Lester F	Newcastle Inner Areas Conservation Planning Study		1984
	Newcastle City Council	Review of Heritage Conservation Areas Report	Chapter 5	2016

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
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**Latitude:** **Longitude:**

**Location validity:** **Spatial accuracy:**

**Map name:** **Map scale:**

**AMG zone:** **Easting:** **Northing:**

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<b>Listing:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>ListingDate</b>
	Newcastle LEP 2012	Local Environmental Plan Within a conservation area on an LEP Heritage study	C6	15/06/2012

**Data entry:** Data first entered: 11/09/2003

Data updated: 07/12/2018

Status: Completed

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**Image:**



**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Church Street

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**Image by:** S Cameron

**Image date:** 23/11/2006

**Image number:**

**Image url:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/2173906b13.jpg>

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**Image:**

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Ordnance Street, Jesmond House

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**Image:**

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Tyrrell Street

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street

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**Image:**

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - The Terrace

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**Image:**



**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Church Street terraces

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**Image by:** S Cameron

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street, Segenhoe and terraces

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Terrace group, Wolfe Street

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**Image:**

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street retaining wall and Cathedral in background

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Church Street

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**Image:**



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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - fence detail Church Street

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**Image:**

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street retaining wall and steps

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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Wolfe Street

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**Image:**



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**Caption:** The Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Church Street Woodlands and Marlborough House

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