SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Address: Planning: Hunter & Central Coast

Suburb/nearest town: Cooks Hill 2300

Local govt area: Newcastle Parish:

State: NSW County:

Other/former names:

Area/group/complex: **Group ID:**

Aboriginal area:

Curtilage/boundary: Shown by red hatching and labelled "C1—Cooks Hill"

Item type: Complex / Group Group: Urban Area Category: Streetscape

Owner: Multiple Owners

Admin codes: Code 2: Code 3:

Current use:

Former uses:

Assessed significance: Local **Endorsed significance:** Local

Statement of Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area is culturally significant on a number of levels. As a residential and significance: commercial precinct it is regarded for its special historical character, liveable streetscapes, diverse range of historic residential and commercial buildings and several tree lined streets. The age of the suburb, relative to other suburbs of Newcastle, is apparent in the style and form of buildings and eclectic street layout.

> It has a significant visual character comprising buildings which represent all of the common architectural styles including mid 19th century workers' houses and terraces, Federation bungalows, Inter-war cottages and post-war residential flat buildings. A critical mass of contributory buildings, traditional streetscapes, significant trees, sandstone kerb and gutters, artefacts, heritage listed hotels, shops and parklands, gives the suburb a strong sense of place and a distinctive historic identity valued by local residents and visitors.

> Cooks Hill is closely associated with the Australian Agricultural Company as part of the original 2000 acre grant owned by the Company. The Company began to sell off parts of Cooks Hill in the 1850s. However even before that the Company built huts for its workmen and so the area began its life as a mining village in the midst of the Company's' railways and mines. When the first land sales did occur, development was rapid along Lake Macquarie Road (Darby Street) and eventually Blane Street (Hunter Street), becoming an extension of the main laid out streets towards the City Centre. The early houses were single and two storey terraces and miners' cottages, both brick and timber. Retailing and hotel keeping flourished as did the population. The area is significant as it reflects the land uses and activities of the AA Company. Its mines, its railways, and the Colliery railway serving the Merewether district, exercise a strong physical presence over Cooks Hill to this day.

- Key Period of Significance - circa 1850 to 1940.

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Historical notes Settlement in Cooks Hill was initiated in response to demand for housing for the coal miners who worked the of provenance: Australian Agricultural Company's pits east of Darby Street. The AA Company's first mine, the A Pit, was established in 1831 near the corner of Church and Brown Streets, followed shortly after by the opening of the B Pit in 1835 at the eastern end of Pitt Street (now Queen Street). It was the B Pit, together with the C, F and Sea pits that led to the urban development of Cooks Hill. The most prolific of these pits, the Sea pit, opened in 1888 to the east of Darby Street (near Nesca Park) and it operated until 1916. At its peak, the Sea pit employed 790 men under ground and 160 above. Railway lines in Brooks Street transported the coal from these pits to the harbour.

> The demand for housing and the increase in population in Cooks Hill led the AA Company to start to divide up their land holdings to sell to their workers. The chief surveyor of the AA Company, George Elder Darby, was handed the task of laying out town allotments of the company's estate. The first auction was held in April 1853 and comprised thirty-two quarter acre lots in Darby Street which sold for £30 each. Many of the purchasers were miners employed in the nearby mines.

> Early residential development in Cooks Hill was situated east of Bruce Street and north of Bull Street. West of Bruce Street development was prevented by swampy land and the presence of the Newcastle Coal and Copper Company's railway, which brought coal from mines in the Burwood estate (Merewether). Built in 1851 the railway cut a swathe through the AA Company's lands, and was a significant catalyst in the breaking of the AA Company's monopoly on the mining and sale of coal. Coal continued to be hauled to the port along this railway until the mid-twentieth century.

The historical and associative significance of the railway should not be underestimated. The line was the Burwood Coal and Copper Company Railway built by Sir Thomas Mitchell.

What is most interesting is that the AA Company's monopoly ended with the first ever Private Act of Parliament in NSW in 1850. What also happened was a change in thrust of the company who began to hedge their bets by benefiting from land sales in hiving off parcels on Lake Macquarie Road (now Darby Street).

Still, the AA Company remained capitalised in Newcastle's inner area until the early 20th century. The AA Company provided land and money for the building of St John's Anglican Church in 1857, together with a rectory and a school. With the employment provided by the mines by 1861, there were 22 houses in the area, which were a mix of brick and timber miners' cottages. Many of the streets started to be formally named after men connected to the AA Company including Darby, Dawson, Bruce, Corlette, Parry and Bull Streets. As the population continued to grow it came to be dominated by small cottages and closely built terrace houses that were said to resemble the workers' housing of English industrial cities.

Sales brochures of the 1860s reveal insights into the cost and nature of housing in Cooks Hill. In the early 1860s, a two storey wooden cottage on Bruce Street could be bought for £250, and were marketed to the workers of the area. As is now, affordability was inextricably connected to job security and hence house styles that survive reflect broader economic shifts.

In Cooks Hill we see a diverse mix of styles and building forms as a result of economic cycles and fashions what's cool. The national recession of 1890, the Edwardian spurt of 1900, the Inter-war era, the post war boom and later conservation movement in the 1970s instigated by the residents of Cooks Hill (including the late Anne Von Bertouch) have all made a stylistic mark on the built form of Cooks Hill and created a citizen culture that is pervasive and enduring.

Development accelerated in the 1870s when investors began to build rental accommodation, shops, hotels and factories. By 1870, Darby Street had five hotels, a foundry, nineteen shops with adjoining residences, two surgeries with residences and numerous houses. Referred to as the "drinking man's paradise", at one time there were ten hotels in Cooks Hill. By the 1880s, Cooks Hill was firmly established as a thriving village and was officially named Cooks Hill in 1885 following the opening of the Cooks Hill Public School in

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

> Laman Street. The name Cooks Hill is reputed to be derived from Thomas Cook, a wealthy owner of an impressive residence that stood at the rise of land at the intersection of Auckland and Laman Streets.

In 1864, five acres of AA Company land between Melville (Union) and Bruce Streets was leased to the Newcastle Cricket Club for the establishment of a cricket ground. The first match was played in 1867. Catering to the demand for after-match drinks between opposing teams, the Cricketer's Arms hotel was constructed in 1869 was constructed on the west side of Bruce Street just south of Bull Street (opposite the current day Cricketer's Arms). The Oriental Hotel was also erected at this time on the corner of Bull and Bruce Streets. In 1889, the Newcastle Cricket Club voted to provide members a lawn bowling facility, with the City Bowling Club established on the southern end of the cricket ground. In 1888 the AA Company set aside 5.5 acres of land for a park as a centennial gift and aptly named Centennial Park. Terrace houses, a benevolent asylum and a lying-in hospital were built on the north edge of the park along Parry Street.

The presence of Centennial Park brought increased property values in its vicinity. Although Cooks Hill had evolved as an essentially working class suburb, there were many middle class residents such as William Arnott the biscuit maker, whose own family home was built on Union Street and who lived in Cooks Hill. Many fine houses were also built throughout the Cooks Hill in the 1880s and beyond.

In 1880, St Andrews Presbyterian church was built at the corner of Laman and Auckland Streets to a design by the prominent architect Frederick Menkens followed by another of Menken's commissions in 1889 with the building of the Baptist Tabernacle.

The last of the AA Company's mines in the area closed in 1916 and this saw many of the miners move to other coal fields in the Hunter Valley. However, the proximity of Cooks Hill to the city and services meant that it remained popular with workers. The AA Company sold the last remaining parcels of land in the early decades of the 20th century, including the cricket ground with the exception of the cricket pitch which remains to this day as a pocket park on Corlette Street.

By the end of the 1920s, Cooks Hill was a suburb of mixed fortunes. Dilapidated old houses and 'tenements' were often adjoined by new and more modern buildings. Many tenements were demolished after the war and many lots were re-subdivided and redeveloped.

By the 1960s, Cooks Hill was becoming a desirable place for people wanting to live close to the city centre. Demographic change led to a property boom in the 1970s, and the battle to conserve the suburb began, led by Anne von Bertouch who restored her home and art gallery on Laman Street. The earthquake of 1989 destroyed many buildings and many more were damaged. In 1992, the suburb was heritage listed by its inclusion in the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan.

i iiciiics.	National theme	State theme	Local theme
	9. Phases of Life	Persons	
	3. Economy	Mining	
	4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and villages	
	3. Economy	Transport	
	5. Working	Labour	
	2. Peopling	Convict	
Designer:			

State theme

Builder:

Themes: National thoma

Year started: Year completed: Circa: No

I acal thama

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Physical description: There are a number of physical elements in Cooks Hill that date from the 19th and early 20th centuries and provide it with a distinctive historic character. These elements represent more than 160 years of residential development:

- The variety of building styles throughout Cooks Hill that date from the nineteenth and early twentieth century including attached terrace houses and semi detached cottages, Victorian period villas and early twentieth century detached bungalows in various styles
- Minimal street frontage setbacks that give the impression of a densely clustered neighbourhood
- Mature trees in gardens and streets including Council, Parry, Swan and Dawson Streets
- The former Burwood Coal and Copper Company rail line and bridge abutments under Laman Street
- Fences from the Inter-war and Federation periods and earlier
- Sandstone kerbs and gutters
- Victorian era post box on Corlette Street
- Pubs and shops on Darby and Bull Streets
- Parks, including Centennial Park, Corlette Street reserve (formerly the Newcastle Cricket Club pitch), National Park.

Cooks Hill contains comparatively dense residential development at the northern edge between Laman and Bull Streets and houses are generally aligned with the street boundary or have only a small setback from the front boundary. Smaller lots of land dominate the northern precinct whereas the southern section contains larger blocks of land where there are a higher number of free standing houses around Centennial Park and towards Young Street.

One of the most significant features of Cooks Hill is the evidence of the route of the Burwood Coal and Copper Company railway, which is evident in the layout of houses and the shape of streets and lanes. The route of the railway line has left an indelible impression on the suburb to the present day. Laman Street could not be constructed until after the Company built a bridge to support the extension of the road, allowing coal trains to pass underneath.

The Residential Precinct

Cooks Hill as a whole is essentially residential in character, typified by a mixture of single storey and two storey buildings providing residential, commercial and public uses. It has a dense quality bestowed by the fact the houses are generally not set back from the street or have small front gardens. Especially distinctive are the cantilevered balconies of Victorian Regency houses and the prevalence of timber weatherboard dwellings including free standing cottages and terrace houses. Also notable are the variety of architectural treatments that survive from the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the form of parapets, pediments, classical detailing and cast iron filigree decoration. The avenues of street trees within Cooks Hill are also significant and are valued by residents and visitors to the area.

Darby Street Commercial Precinct

Buildings in the commercial strip of Darby Street tend to be modestly scaled, almost entirely one or two storeys high with some multi level buildings of more recent construction.

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Railway Street Residential Precinct

Railway Street has a distinctive character of two storey houses, some single storey detached houses, which address each other across a narrow north-south street. The narrowness of the thoroughfare gives it a pleasant linear quality. There are few front gardens with most houses being built to the street line. Unity is bestowed by a general harmony of scale and by the use of traditional materials, corrugated iron roofs, terrace houses and some fine examples of buildings from the 1860s are particularly notable.

Public Buildings Precinct

This is dominated by the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, the splendid gothic landmark, and the Baptist Tabernacle. The Laman Street underpass visible with large brick buttressed retaining walls at the end of Glovers Lane and at the rear of the Signalman's cottage, is an important physical remnant of the former coal railway.

School Precinct

The Federation period buildings of the former Cooks Hill primary school group are a strong presence in the precinct and also have landmark qualities at the slight elevation of Laman Street.

Physical condition Good

level:

Physical condition:

Archaeological Moderate

potential level:

Archaeological potential Detail: **Modification dates:**

Recommended The character of the Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area is made up of a variety of building styles that date management: from the late 19th and early decades of the 20th century. The special character of Cooks Hill will be preserved, celebrated and maintained through the retention of contributory buildings, the existing subdivision pattern, and elements of visual interest. Elements that are to be preserved include:

- contributory buildings constructed prior to the Second World War
- mature trees in gardens and the public domain
- the former Burwood Coal and Copper Company rail line and bridge abutments at Laman Street
- heritage fences
- sandstone kerbing and guttering
- Victorian era post box on Corlette Street
- pubs and shops on Darby, Union and Bull Streets and
- parks, including Centennial Park, Corlette Street, National Park.

The eclectic character of Cooks Hill will continue to provide residents with a unique and valued sense of place into the future.

Management: Management category Management name

> Recommended Management Prepare or include in a Development Control Plan (DCP)

Further comments:

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Criteria a): [Historical significance]

Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area represents a pattern of urban settlement that typifies the history of Newcastle's development. Starting as a cluster of coal mines owned by the Australian Agricultural Company, the area gradually transitioned into a residential suburb from the mid-19th century onward, closely influenced by the decisions and activities of the Australian Agricultural Company. The AA Company began disposing their land holdings in the early 1850s, releasing parcels along Darby Street, Council Street and Railway Street. Examples of early residential and commercial buildings in these streets survive to the present day, representing the oldest development in the suburb of Cooks Hill. Other parts of the suburb were released later in the 19th century and into the 20th century. By the 1890s Cooks Hill was densely settled and had acquired the character of a worker's village with services and public buildings along Darby and Bull Streets and the suburb is demonstrative of this criterion at the local level.

The internal street network in Cooks Hill was progressively dedicated to public use by the AA Company from the 1860s to the 1880s. Private housing would usually follow this dedication and as many of the buildings in Cooks Hill are the original buildings on the land the heritage conservation area is demonstrative of these times of dedication.

Criteria b):

Cooks Hill has been the birthplace and home of significant individuals who have contributed to the political and [Historical cultural life of Australia including the nation's first female Lord Mayor Joy Cummings, gallery owner Ann Von association Bertouch, and celebrated artists John Olsen and William Dobell. Historically Cooks Hill is strongly associated **significance**] with the Australian Agricultural Company.

[Aesthetic/ Technical significance|

Criteria c): Cooks Hill is a defining visual marker of the urban geography of Newcastle, containing a collection of buildings, trees, historical features and parks that visually establish a sense of place that is aesthetically linked to its history. The avenues of street trees provide an attractive green canopy that is a unifying visual element. Starting as a cluster of coal mines from the 1830s, the area gradually transitioned into a residential suburb from the mid 19th century onward, closely influenced by the decisions and activities of the Australian Agricultural Company. Aesthetically, Cooks Hill heritage conservation area contains an important collection of elements that share aesthetic characteristics that establish a strong historical character and sense of place. These elements are:

- Buildings that represent architectural styles and construction technologies predominantly from the mid19th century, as well as Victorian, Federation, and Inter War periods of urban development.
- Streetscapes in which there is a strong character of densely clustered buildings, with minimal setbacks and generally on small lots.
- Mature fig trees which deepen the sense of place and the historical character of Cooks Hill.
- The variety of building styles throughout Cooks Hill that date from the nineteenth and early twentieth century including attached terrace houses and semi detached cottages, Victorian period villas and early twentieth century detached bungalows in various styles
- Minimal street frontage setbacks that give the impression of a densely clustered neighbourhood
- Mature trees in gardens and streets including Council, Parry, Swan and Dawson Streets
- The former Burwood Coal and Copper Company rail line and bridge abutments under Laman Street
- Fences from the Inter-war and Federation periods and earlier
- Sandstone kerbs and gutters
- Victorian era post box on Corlette Street
- Pubs and shops on Darby and Bull Streets
- Parks, including Centennial Park, Corlette Street, National Park.

Criteria d): [Social/Cultural significance

Cooks Hill is highly regarded by the community for its interesting urban character, liveable streetscapes, and the diverse range of historic buildings that unify and provide the suburb with a special character. A 2014 community survey confirms that there is an established and distinctive 'Cooks Hill' character which is valued by residents and visitors to Cooks Hill. Cooks Hill meets this criterion as 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.

The conservation movement of the 1970s instigated by the residents of Cooks Hill (including the late Anne Von Bertouch) have all made a stylistic mark on the built form of Cooks Hill and created a citizen culture that is pervasive and enduring.

SHI number 2173901 Study number Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Criteria e): Research significance

demonstrate elements of the early development of Newcastle as well as the system of land subdivision by the Australian Agricultural Company from the 1860s onwards, the area has the potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding aspects of Newcastle's cultural history. There are numerous building styles ranging from early Victorian terraces through to post war residential flat buildings. A high number of contributory buildings help to establish the streetscapes of Cooks Hill, along with the hotels, shops, churches,

Given the rate of survival of key elements of the early urban settlement of Newcastle, including its ability to

schools and parks.

Criteria f): [Rarity]

The area has the capacity to demonstrate rare and uncommon aspects of local heritage as the first of the Australian Agricultural Company's land holdings to be released for urban development. Some of these aspects are quite unusual including the evidence of the route of the Burwood Coal and Copper Company railway, the

Signalman's cottage at Civic park, and many surviving small miners' cottages.

Criteria g):

Cooks Hill contains many surviving elements of the mid-late 19th and early 20th centuries and the processes of [Representative] urbanisation including land subdivision, street layout and varying building types that reflect a long period of urbanisation. It demonstrates these characteristics in its elements including building stock setting, scale and form

of buildings, street layout including laneways, and heritage items and parklands.

Intactness/Integrity: It cannot be said that the area is highly intact however it does have a sense of place that has integrity.

References: Author Title Year

Suters Busteed + Lester Firth Newcastle Inner Areas Conservation Planning Study 1984

Studies: Author Title Number Year Suters, Lavelle, Doring, T Newcastle Archaelogical Management Plan 1997

1996 Godden Mackay Pty Ltd Urban Conservation Area Guidelines for Inner Newcastle Suters Busteed + Lester F Newcastle Inner Areas Conservation Planning Study 1984 Newcastle City Council Review of Heritage Conservation Areas Report Chapter 2 2016

Parcels: Parcel code Lot number Section number Plan code Plan number

Latitude: Longitude:

Location validity: Spatial accuracy:

Map name: Map scale:

AMG zone: Northing: **Easting:**

Title ListingDate Listing: Name Number Local Environmental Plan 15/06/2012 Newcastle LEP 2012 C1C1 Within a conservation area on an LEP 15/06/2012

Heritage study

Data entry: Data first entered: 11/09/2003 Data updated: 28/06/2019 Status: Completed

SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle

Image:



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Railway Street

Copy right:

Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 01/10/2006

Image number:

Image url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/217

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Union Street terraces

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Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 10/10/2006

Image number:

Image url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/217

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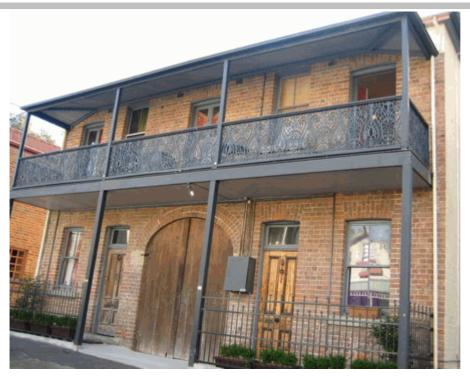
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Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Railway Street house

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Image number:

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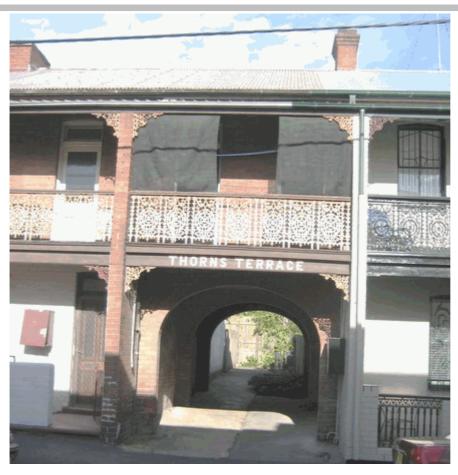
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2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Thorns Terrace

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Image url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/217/217

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Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Fire Stattion Union Street

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Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 10/10/2006

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Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - 61 Railway Street

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Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 10/10/2006

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2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Crickerters Arms Hotel

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Image by: Sarah Skillen Image date: 10/10/2006

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SHI number
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Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Cricketers Arms Hotel

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Council Street terrace houses

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Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 10/10/2006

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Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Bruce Street houses

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Image by: Sarah Skillen Image date: 10/10/2006

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Council Street

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Image by: Sarah Skillen **Image date:** 10/10/2006

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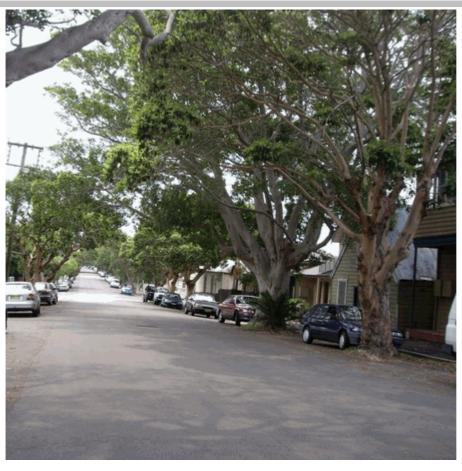
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Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Bull Street

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Image by: S Cameron **Image date:** 23/11/2006

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Bull Street shops

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Image by: S Cameron **Image date:** 23/11/2006

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Bull Street

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Image by: S Cameron **Image date:** 23/11/2006

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Bull Street shops

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Image by: S Cameron **Image date:** 23/11/2006

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SHI number
2173901
Study number
Chapter 2

Item name: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area

Location: Cooks Hill 2300 Newcastle



Caption: Cooks Hill Heritage Conservation Area - Parry Street

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Image by: S Cameron **Image date:** 23/11/2006

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