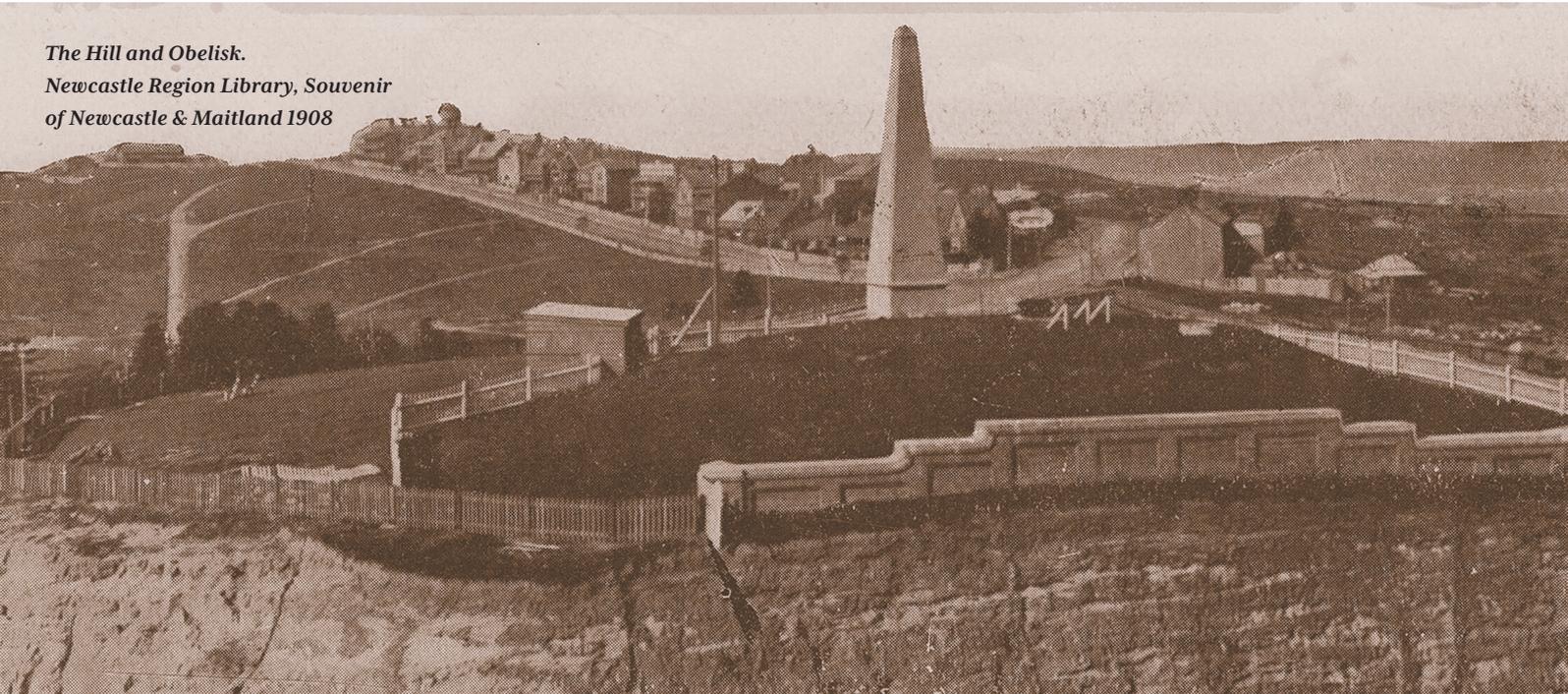


EXPLORE

The Obelisk & Surrounds

We acknowledge the Awabakal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, which are featured in this guide. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection to the land and waters, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

*The Hill and Obelisk.
Newcastle Region Library, Souvenir
of Newcastle & Maitland 1908*



THE OBELISK stands in an area known as the Newcastle Recreation Reserve, which was part of the traditional lands of the Awabakal people. They used the area for cultural gatherings and ceremonies and it was the site of early interactions with European settlers. The Awabakal people crafted stone from nearby cliffs and it is thought that The Obelisk Hill (Prospect Hill) may have been a place for duelling and corroborees.

The cliff face and cliff top are called Yi-ran-na-li and Shepherds Hill is referenced in Dreamtime Stories that are linked to volcanic eruptions and coal. The Awabakal people were the first people in the world to use Nikkin (coal) for fuel. The cliff formation here is part of Nobby's Tuff, a layer of cream and grey volcanic ash that sits above coal seams, the reason for Newcastle's existence. The tuff once extended along the coast but millions of years of weathering have left only a few remnants such as those at Nobbys, Shepherds Hill, Merewether and Glenrock Lagoon.

Convicts mined coal in this area and transported it down Watt Street to the harbour. In 1820 the Military Commandant, Major Morisset, had a mill erected to crush grain. Known as the Government Flour Mill, it was the first windmill built in Newcastle. A miller's house and grain store were also constructed nearby. After prisoners were transferred to Port Macquarie the windmill was leased to private individuals.

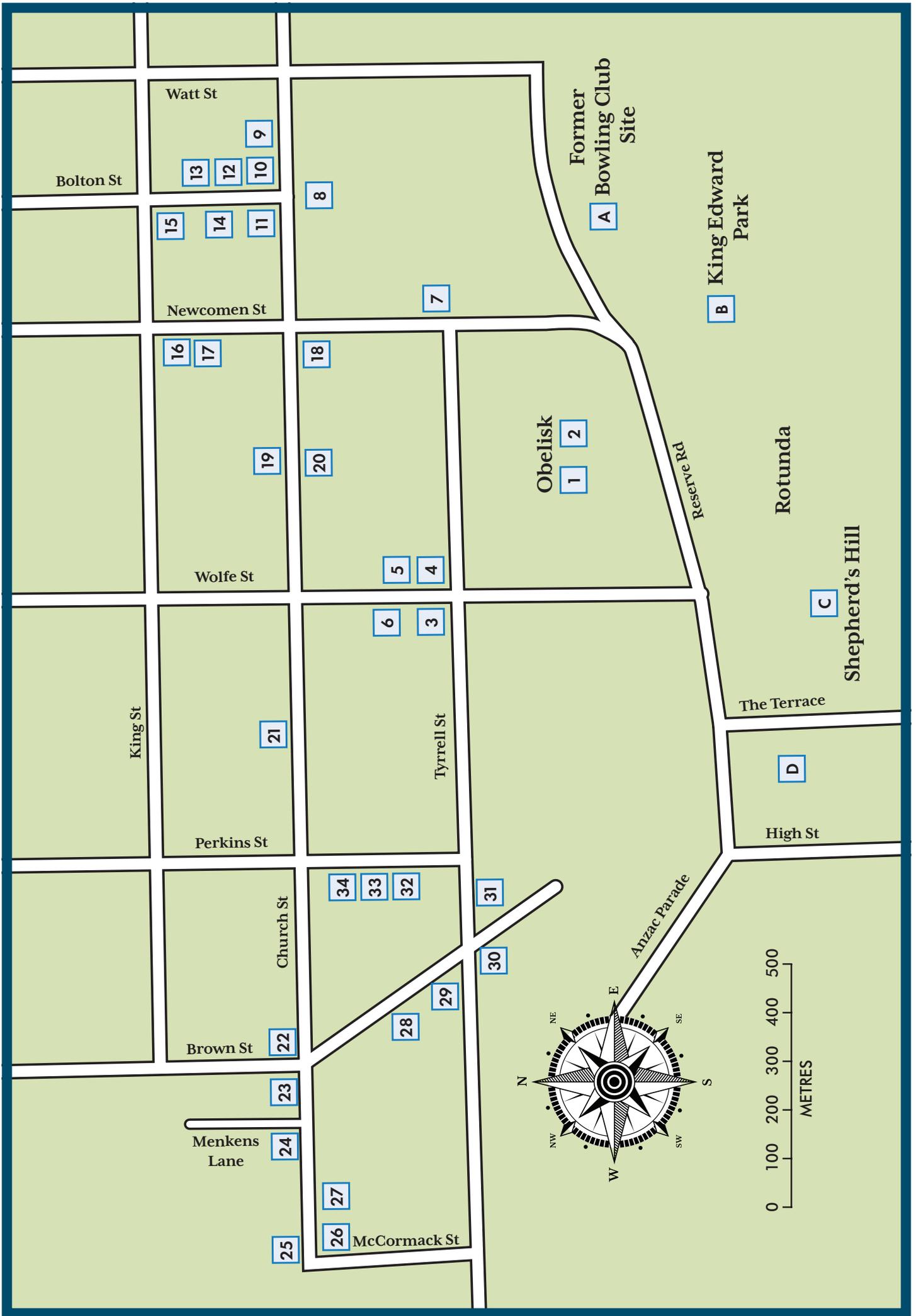
It was a distinctive structure on a high vantage point at the northern end of King Edward Park, and became a navigational marker for mariners entering the harbour. When it was demolished in 1847 there were protests and the government then built The Obelisk.

This location provides expansive views over the city and ocean. Such views also figured in the establishment of prestigious homes for wealthy residents in The Terrace. Most properties here are substantial two-storey residences, built around the 1890s in the Victorian Style.

These homes also overlook King Edward Park, a recreation reserve which was first proclaimed in 1863. It has been known as Newcastle Recreation Reserve, the Upper Reserve and since 1911 as King Edward Park. The Park is roughly triangular in shape – the eastern border includes the cliffs and shoreline to the Pacific Ocean, the northern border is along Ordnance and Pit streets and the western and southern borders meet near Shepherd's Hill

Below the cliffs is an ocean swimming pool. In the 1820s Major Morisset, who was fond of swimming, had convicts dig out a hole in the rock shelf. The pool was first called Morisset's or the Commandant's Bath, but later the name Bogey Hole was used. It is thought this is related to the Aboriginal term 'to bathe'. With swimming gaining in popularity, council enlarged the Bogey Hole in 1884.

The geography of the park varies from steep hills to deep gullies. In addition, the soil was poor and plants had to withstand the harsh, salt-laden southerly winds. In 1890 Newcastle Council allocated funds to improve the appearance of the park. It awarded Alfred Sharp a contract to design the Upper Reserve, and while many gardeners have altered the design of the park, his basic ideas have been maintained.



Watt St

Bolton St

Newcomen St

Wolfe St

Perkins St

Church St

Brown St

Menkens Lane

McCormack St

Tyrrell St

King St

Former Bowling Club Site

Obelisk

King Edward Park

Rotunda

Shepherd's Hill

The Terrace

High St

Anzac Parade

Reserve Rd

13 12 10 9

15 14 11

16 17

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16 17

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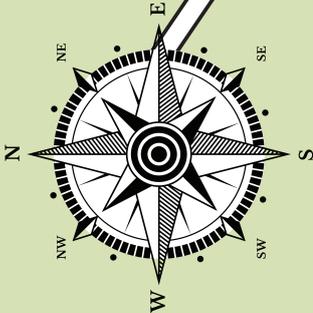
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B

C

D



1 The Obelisk

The government flour mill previously sat on the site now occupied by the Obelisk. The mill was driven by four huge Dutch arms and was used for grinding wheat, maize and barley for the early settlers. It was used as a navigation aid by mariners, who protested when it was demolished in 1847. The government then constructed a stone navigational marker in the form of an Egyptian Obelisk.

2 Obelisk Reservoir

In front of the Obelisk is a masonry and iron-built reservoir, which was commissioned in 1885. It supplied drinking water, which was obtained from the Hunter River at Maitland, treated at Walka Water Works and then pumped to a number of reservoirs. It was in use until 1985 when it was taken out of service.

3 Jesmond House

Henry Rouse, owner of Rouse's Hotel, moved to his new home in 1875 and it was later purchased by John Wood of Wood Bros and Castlemaine Brewers. The house has an elaborate staircase, overlooked by an Italianate tower, which leads to the second-floor main entrance. Major extensions, including the addition of kitchen and servants' quarters at the rear, were built in 1894.



Jesmond House. Newcastle Region Library, K G Edwards Collection.

4 Captain Allen's Home

Built in the early 1880s for Captain Allen, who was Newcastle's harbour master from 1858-1884. His memory is commemorated on the Port Corporation's dredge, "David Allen", which works continuously to remove material from the channel thereby ensuring safe access into the harbour.

5 Former Coach House

This was part of the Jesmond House estate and built around 1880. When offered for sale in 1906 it was described as being "substantial brick-built stabling, consisting of coach house, man's room, harness room, 2 stalls and feed room with large yard." After being sold, the building was converted to a residence and a second storey added.

6 Hall Villa

This was the largest residence designed by prolific Newcastle architect Frederick Menkens and was built in 1906 for John Hall, a produce merchant. The main features are the elaborately carved timber detail on the verandahs and stained-glass windows. Now known as Shalamar, it was used as a nursing home from 1963 until 1984.

7 Military Barracks

Built in 1841 as accommodation for soldiers who provided defence services in the colony. The site was vacated a few years later when responsibility for defence was transferred from the British government to the NSW authorities. The complex was then used for various purposes: accommodation for the Australian Agricultural Company until 1853, for Police and Public Works Departments, and a Girls Reformatory. Since 1871, a range of mental health services has operated on the site, which is now James Fletcher Hospital.

8 Court House

Designed by colonial architect James Barnet and opened in 1892. New wings were added in 1949 and 1966. The Court House moved in 2015 to a site in Hunter Street and the buildings were purchased by Nihon University, Japan for use as an offshore campus.

9 Buchanan's Terrace

A group of terrace houses built for Henry Buchanan in the early 1890s. His development covered nearly an acre and had frontages to Watt, Church and Bolton streets. Each terrace facing Church St has four floors including a basement, whilst those facing Watt St have three. The development also included a large boarding house on the corner of Watt and Church streets and the Grand Hotel, at the corner of Bolton and Church streets.

10 Grand Hotel

Opened in 1891 and is four stories high with a public bar and billiard room on the ground floor. The hotel provided accommodation and originally the building had a two-storey verandah fronting Church and Bolton streets. This was removed by 1938 and in more recent times has been reinstated.



Grand Hotel, 1891. University of Newcastle, Norm Barney Collection

11 Newcastle East Public School

Christ Church School opened in 1830s on this site and operated under that name until 1886. Newcastle East Public School then opened and it continued to operate until 1980. For some time, the building housed the Community Justice Centre. The property was sold in 2015 and redeveloped – the former school building is an annex of Newcastle Grammar School and a residential complex now occupies the former playground.

12 Rose Cottage

This structure is aka Toll Cottage (once owned by Toll Investment Ltd) and is located behind the Family Law Courts at 55 Bolton St. It is a symmetrical building consisting of four rooms and a loft in the colonial, Georgian style. It was built around 1857 and is believed to be one of Newcastle's oldest buildings.

13 Higgins Skating Palace

Built in 1888 to cater for the popular sport of roller skating. From the 1930s it was used as Steel's parking station and today it has been refitted to provide a number of professional office suites.

14 Cohen Warehouse

This five-storey storage facility for D C Cohen & Co was built in 1901. It was saved from demolition by a Permanent Conservation Order in 1981. The façade and one wall have been retained and now form part of Bolton Street Carpark.

15 Court Chambers

Built in 1898 in the Queen Anne Style, a feature being that no more than two window and door openings are of the same design. When opened, the building contained twelve offices at ground level and two flats above. Another two residences of two-storeys each face King Street. The names of the residences – Bolton, Cromier, Kobie and Knorit were located above their respective positions.

16 Newcastle Club

Established in 1885, this is a gentlemen's club based on the English model. Meetings were held in rented premises until purpose-built accommodation, designed by one of its members, F Castleden, was completed in 1911. This venue in Pacific Street, opposite the hospital, was offered to the government as accommodation for medical staff during World War 1. New premises were then established in Newcomen Street.

17 Claremont

Described as the oldest, intact, Victorian residence in Newcastle. Built in the British Colonial Style with dark brick and stone dressings, the home was built in 1840s for Mr Croasdill, an employee of the Australian Agricultural Company. Today it is an annex of the adjoining Newcastle Club.

18 Newcastle Boys Grammar School

Opened in Berkeley House in 1859 and continued to operate until 1902. In 1918 a Girls Grammar School opened on the site and in 1978 it became a co-ed school when boys were once again enrolled.

19 Christ Church Cathedral

The first church in Newcastle was established on this site, which was close to an established Aboriginal camp. Erected in 1816 this church served the community until the cathedral was built. Designed in 1869 by John Horbury Hunt, one of Australia's most important ecclesiastical architects, work did not commence on the cathedral until 1883 due to disagreements about design and cost. Two years later work ceased again and did not recommence until 1891. The building was dedicated in 1902 but the chancel was not completed until 1912, the nave in 1928 and the tower in 1979. Features of the cathedral include the wealth of adornment, mostly donated, the 72 stained-glass windows and expansive views from the tower.



Christ Church Cathedral & Cemetery Park, 1970. Greg & Sylvia Ray's www.phototimetunnel.com

The first known **European burial site** in Newcastle is on the northern side of the church. Church records date back to 1826 but the burial site had been proclaimed by Commandant Wallis in 1817. The land was acquired by Newcastle Council in 1966 and work was carried out to transform the site from graveyard to parkland. At this time more than 100 headstones were moved from their associated burial site to the eastern side of the park.

20 Cathedral Hall

Designed by J Horbury Hunt, the hall was built in 1883 as a venue for church services while the cathedral was being constructed. Services were held in the hall until 1902 when the cathedral opened. The hall is owned by the Cathedral but today is managed by Newcastle Grammar School and is now known as Horbury Hunt Hall.

21 Terrace Houses

Group of eight terrace houses, forming the Lance Villa group of properties between Wolfe and Perkins streets. Built in the 1890s, all have two storeys with cast-iron verandahs facing Church St and at the back a basement level.

22 Minimbah

Built for Clarence Hannell who was the port's shipping master for over 46 years. He was a major benefactor, as was his father James, of the Royal Newcastle Hospital and the Hannell Wing was named in their honour. Most of the hospital buildings have been demolished, but the name is retained in the redeveloped The Royal apartment complex.

23 Australian Agricultural Company mine site

A plaque acknowledges the existence of the first Australian Agricultural Company mine in Newcastle: *"The A Pit of AA Co was opened a little below this point in 1831 and functioned for about 20 years with free and convict labour. The colliery was the first in Australia to be privately owned. Its railway carrying coal to the harbour was also Australia's first"*.

24 Harbour View Manor

The original, single-storey property on the site was thought to have been an office for the nearby Australian Agricultural Company mine. Charles Bolton purchased the site in 1860s and extensions were undertaken. After his death, the property passed to his daughter, who together with her husband, Archdeacon Francis Bode, built "The Boltons" in front of their property in 1904. This is a group of four two-storey terraces, one for each of their four daughters.

25 Cliff Towers

A 13-unit complex designed in art deco style and built in 1935. Extensive work on the foundations had to be undertaken to ensure the stability of the complex which clings to the hillside between Church and King streets.



*Cliff Towers, Church St, 1935. Greg & Sylvia Ray's
www.phototimetunnel.com*

26 Woodlands

Built in 1877 for Joseph Wood, operator of Castlemaine Brewery. It is a rendered brick residence of Victorian Italianate design with brick and stone cellars underneath. It housed the Cathedral Hill Grammar School, was used as a convalescent home for soldiers returning from WW1, a hospital in WW2, then a boarding house for migrants, reverting to private hospital use for 24 years until 1979.

27 Marlborough House

Constructed in 1872 this two-storey, red brick house with arched windows and doors was built for Henry Augustus Smith, who was a Police Magistrate. The home sits on a 1000 sqm site, has large formal rooms with marble fireplaces and cedar fittings and enjoys expansive views over the city and harbour.

28 Bishopscourt

Built in 1929 as the residence for the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle. Set on a 4100sq metre lot with expansive views, the substantial home has seven bedrooms and four bathrooms. In 2015 the Anglican Diocese sold the house due to high maintenance costs.

29 Lead Light

Two lead lights were built in 1865 as a navigation aid for ships entering the harbour. When mariners had lights in both towers lined up, it indicated they were in the channel that would enable safe access into the harbour. The second lead light was in Perkins St near the Catholic Church, but was demolished in 1933.

30 Newcastle Public School

The school opened in 1878, and is the oldest continuing public school in Australia. Students have been enrolled every year since 1816 at various sites including premises at the corner of Bolton and Church streets. In 1911 the site was used as a high school until 1934 when some pupils were transferred to the new secondary school at Waratah. The Tyrrell St site became known as Newcastle Boys' Junior High School. In 1973 the junior high school was closed and nine years later the site reopened at Newcastle East Public School.



*Newcastle East Public School, 1886. University of Newcastle,
Ralph Snowball Collection*

31 Reservoirs

Two reservoirs were built side-by-side to supply water to Newcastle. The first was built in 1882 and was used until 1985 when it was drained and closed. In 1918 the second reservoir was built to the north and continues to be used as one of Newcastle's water storage facilities.

32 Wesleyan Church Parsonage

Wesleyan Methodists obtained the land bounded by Perkins, Tyrrell and Brown streets in 1860. A large church was built a few years later and the two-storey, brick parsonage around 1870. The church was demolished in 1903 and the former parsonage was converted for use as a boarding house. It has since been modified for use as residential apartments.

33 Residence of Lead Light's keeper

Two towers were built as navigational aids to ensure safe passage into the harbour. Mariners had to line up the light in both towers to enter the dredged channel and the keeper of the lead lights ensured the lights were operating. Two towers were built – one outside this residence, but demolished in 1933, and the other still stands at the corner of Brown and Tyrrell streets.

34 St Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic Church

This is built of sandstone and is the oldest church in the Newcastle Parish, having opened in 1866. The basement level was used for St Mary's Primary School until it moved to the Dominican Convent in 1874. The church was remodelled in 1933 when many internal features were altered and extensive remedial work was undertaken in 1999 to restore the church to its former glory.



*View of St Mary's Star of the Sea 1906. Newcastle Region Library,
Harris Collection*



A Site of former Newcastle Bowling Club

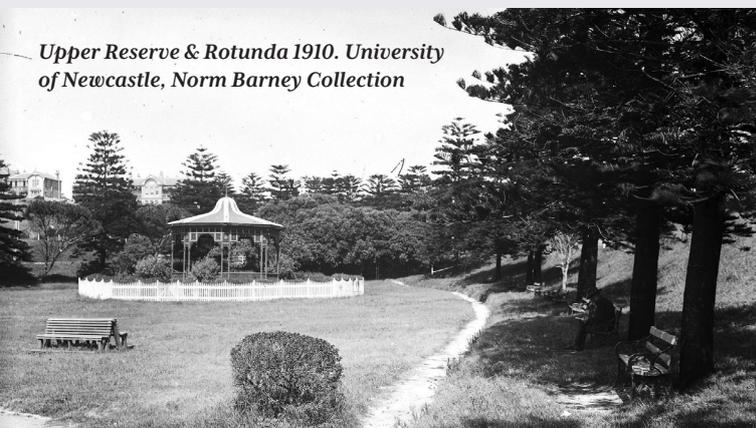
For over 115 years Newcastle City Bowling Club had a lease on this prime site. After the ground was levelled the club constructed three bowling greens and two tennis courts. In 2005 the government revoked the lease and new regulations meant that the headland could be used for commercial development.

A number of proposals have been put forward regarding the re-development of the site. In 2010 the site was leased to a local builder for a function centre but legal proceedings halted this project and the Land and Environment Court ruled the land must be used for public recreation rather than for private use. The only structure remaining on the land is part of the front fence. Since 2018 the site has been owned by the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council.

B King Edward Park

This area was dedicated for recreation in 1863 and named Newcastle Recreation Reserve. It was later known as the Upper Reserve and after 1911 was named King Edward Park to celebrate the life of King Edward VII. The Rotunda Lawn is a level area surrounded by steep banks and is the main ceremonial area of the park. It was developed about 1890 and was in use until the late 1930s when civic events were transferred to Civic Park.

In the centre is a rotunda built in 1898 and used for brass band concerts. Opposite the rotunda is a fountain, built in 1879 and originally located in Scott St outside Newcastle Railway Station. The fountain supplied water for dogs, cattle and horses but once Newcastle had a permanent water supply there was no need for such a facility and the animal troughs were removed. It was moved to this location in 1888.



Upper Reserve & Rotunda 1910. University of Newcastle, Norm Barney Collection

C Shepherd's Hill

The highest part of Shepherd's Hill holds special significance to the Awabakal people, who named the area Khanterin. It was used as a cultural meeting place and was the site of early interactions with European settlers.

Due to its high vantage point with extensive views the area became part of the recreational area for the area. In 1891 a cement fortress, including guard posts, underground rooms and a sunken gun emplacement, were constructed. The gun pit housed an 8-inch gun and was accessible through underground passages. The adjoining weatherboard cottage was used to accommodate the gunners who worked at the site. The building was severely damaged by storms in 2015 and has been undergoing conservation works.

The fortifications were built in response to increasing concerns about the security of Newcastle, and the need to bolster the capabilities of Fort Scratchley. They were again used during World War II when it was known as Park Battery. At various times the facility has been simultaneously manned by members of the Army, Navy and Air Force, possibly a unique occurrence in Australia's military history.



The Terrace opposite King Edward Park, 1935. Greg & Sylvia Ray's www.phototimetunnel.com

D The Terrace

This street contains a line of prestigious homes, built for prominent businessmen towards the end of the 1800s. The location provides outstanding views over the city and ocean. At the top end is the former home of Stewart Keightley, Manager of the Newcastle Coal Company for over 30 years, whilst at the bottom is the residence built for W K Lohead, an insurance agent.

Given the distance and hilly terrain covered in this guide, it is suited to a combination of walking and driving.