Heritage Impact Statement

Surf City
Newcastle, NSW

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ac h i t e c t u r e

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report represents an assessment of heritage impact for proposed demolition of the building now known as Surf City, formerly the Tattersall's Club, and construction of a mixed use residential and commercial development. It was prepared by Linda Babic, B.Arch., M.Herit.Cons. in August 2003 for Suters Architects.

The building is not an individually listed heritage item, however it is situated within the Newcastle City Centre Heritage Conservation Area as defined by Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2003, and is located near several heritage items. This report considers the issues of the impact of the demolition, and the proposed construction on the significance of the area.

1.2 Methodology

This report has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (2000), and more specifically the guidelines for Statements of Heritage Impact as issued by the NSW Heritage Office (1996 & 2001). These guidelines note that a Statement of Heritage Impact should address the following issues:

- why the item is of heritage significance
- what impact the proposed work will have on that significance
- what measures are proposed to mitigate negative impacts

1.3 Limitations

The drawings used in the assessment of this Impact Statement are Development Application drawings only, and as such do not fully detail the proposal.

1.4 The Development Proposal

The current proposal is for the demolition of the existing Surf City Nightclub, and the erection of a new nine storey commercial/residential building.

The building is externally finished in rendered masonry, face brick and metal detailing, with powder-coated aluminium doors and windows. The ground level is proposed for commercial use, with the remaining floors as residential. Vehicle access to is via the rear laneway accessible from Pacific Street.
2 History

2.1 Introduction

The building now known as "Surf City" is situated in one of the earliest areas of Newcastle to be released for sale following the closure of the penal settlement in 1823. It is surrounded by a number of significant buildings, the closest being the adjacent Great Northern Hotel. Built in 1938, it is the third hotel of this name to have been built on the site and is a dominant feature of the streetscape. The interior of the hotel was lavishly decorated in the Art Deco style, and has been described as "one of the largest and most distinctive buildings dating from the inter-war years" in Newcastle.

Diagonally opposite, on the north-west corner of Hunter and Watt Streets, is the former Department of Public Works building, originally built as the Newcastle Post Office in 1873. This building is the most eastern member of a highly significant group of public buildings designed by a succession of distinguished Colonial and Government architects and constructed between 1861 and 1904. As well as the 1873 Post Office, the group includes the former Police Station and Lock-up (1861 with additions in 1891 and 1893) the former Telegraph Station, later used by the CIB followed by the Dept. of Corrective Services (1861 with additions in 1877) and the 1903 Newcastle Post Office.

Other significant surrounding buildings include Newcastle Railway Station (from 1878) extending west from the intersection of Hunter and Scott Streets, Newcastle Customs House (1877) and the former T & G Building (c.1923) on the south-eastern corner of Hunter and Watt Streets.

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1 The history of the Civic Playhouse has been researched and provided by Hunter History Consultants, Newcastle.
2.2 A.W. Scott's House: c1840

The first substantial building to be constructed on the site was the house of Alexander Walker Scott, an entrepreneur and natural scientist who settled in New South Wales after several visits to the Colony between 1827 and 1829. His two brothers, Robert and Helenus, had migrated in 1821 and established the Hunter Valley's first thoroughbred horse stud at "Glendon", near Singleton. A.W., who was generally known as "Walker" lived for a short time in Sydney but by 1833 he was living in Newcastle. More interested in industrial than rural pursuits, he bought 50 acres at Stockton in 1834 and within ten years had built a saltworks, a woollen textile mill and an iron foundry. It is possible that his brother-in-law Dr. James Mitchell, who purchased most of the remaining land on the Stockton peninsula, was also involved in these ventures.

Scott also owned a large amount of property in the Newcastle area, including Ash Island in the estuary of the Hunter River. In January 1833 he acquired two town lots (Lot Nos. 1 and 194) in Watt Street, then the main street of Newcastle. The original grantees were Isaac Elliot (Lot 1) and John Smith (Lot 194). The latter allotment was shown in an 1827 plan of the town as a reserve, as at that time there was a waterhole on the site. It is not known when Scott built his home (known as "Newcastle House") on Lot 194 but he was living there at the time of the 1848 Census. Newcastle House was one of several buildings which was used as a temporary Customs House during the early years of settlement. Unfortunately no records survive relating to the construction of Scott's house, which has been described as "a fine mansion". It was similar in form to "Claremont", built in Newcomen Street at about the same time. "Claremont" has been restored and is now part of the Newcastle Club complex.

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Figure 3
Plan of Town Allotments at Newcastle, c1848 showing A.W. Scott's allotments.
source: Newcastle Region Library

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3 A.W. Scott was generally known by his second name, "Walker".
7 Archivist, Westpac Banking Corporation to Assoc. Prof. J.W. Turner, 25 May 1995. Although Bank records show that Scott acquired the land in 1833, the conveyance was not finalised until 1843.
11 W.J. Goold, *The Growth of Newcastle*, p.20
While living in Newcastle, Scott managed his varied business interests which included a contract for supplying rations for the convicts building the breakwater to Nobbys Island. He was also active in civic affairs, serving as a magistrate and playing a leading role in the formation of the Newcastle Mechanics' Institute, Library and Museum in 1835. Scott represented the district in the Legislative Assembly between 1856 and 1860. Scott Street was named in his recognition of his contribution to the early development of Newcastle.

The economic depression of the early 1840s impacted heavily on Scott's finances, which never recovered. The Newcastle residence had been mortgaged to his brother, Robert but in 1845 that mortgage was transferred to John Wedderburn and the family moved to their small cottage on Ash Island. There, Scott became immersed in his passion for natural history, and entertained visitors such as John Goold and Ludwig Leichhardt. It was from this base that Scott's daughters, Harriet and Helena, produced highly praised engravings of butterflies and plants. The family enjoyed a relatively frugal but intellectually stimulating life on Ash Island until Scott's bankruptcy forced their departure in 1866.

2.3 The Bank of NSW: 1853

Watt Street at this time was described as "the leading business thoroughfare" of Newcastle so Scott's house, close to the Steam Packet Wharf, was well situated. Two local shipowners, Dr. R.S. Bowker and George Tully, bought the property from John Wedderburn in April 1853. Within a month the building was again on the market, and on 17 May the Board of the Bank of New South Wales resolved "that Mr. W. Scott's House offered to the Bank by Messrs. Tully & Bowker be purchased for £2,500 for the use of the Branch."

Rather than occupying its newly acquired premises, the Bank operated from a house which was leased for £120 per annum, while leasing Scott's former house to local shipping identity John Bingle for £220 per annum. Following Bingle's notification in January 1856 that he planned to move out of the building, the Bank decided to relocate from the rented premises into the Watt Street building.

Figure 4
A.W. Scott's house shortly after its purchase by the Bank of NSW.

source: Westpac Banking Corporation, Group Archives and Records

14 ibid.
15 The Empire, 18 October 1855.
When inspected in September, Scott's house was found to be "in a very bad state of repair" and the Bank explored the possibility of purchasing land on which to build new premises. Unwilling to pay the asking price for an allotment on the corner of Hunter and Watt Streets, the Board authorised expenditure for repairs on the Watt Street building which was subsequently occupied by the Bank.

Following fire damage to the building in 1862 the Bank considered selling the property and building new premises. This did not eventuate, and in 1869 the poor condition of the Watt Street building was once again brought to the attention of the Board. Architectural advice was sought on the possibility of "repairing same or pulling down the old and erecting a new Banking house", with the result that plans prepared by G.A. Mansfield "for a new banking premises" were adopted in February 1870. In June 1870, tenders were called for the erection of the new building, of brick construction, cement faced, on stone foundations and with a slate roof.

The term "new banking premises" may have been misleading, as records held by the Bank of New South Wales archives indicate that parts of the original building were incorporated into the new. A letter written in 1919 from the Bank's Relieving Manager in Newcastle to the Inspector in Sydney cites the declaration of a local resident that:

he has known our present site since 1852, in fact he says his brother and sister were born in the building, and that most of the present structure was standing in 1853, that is to say, the back portion and side walls are practically the same now as then, but the front of the building originally stood about 14 ft. further back, and in the early seventies this portion was remodelled and brought out to the present line.\(^\text{17}\)

\[\text{Figure 6}\]
Plan of the site in 1886 by Mahlsteed & Gee, Surveyors.\[\text{source: Newcastle Region Library}\]
Internal alterations were made to the building in 1900, and a large wood and iron structure for functions associated with the payment of Old Age Pensions was built on the site at an unknown date.

By 1919 the premises were described as being "out-of-date, very badly provided with natural light, damp and decidedly shabby externally and internally, and by no means in keeping with the good name and traditions of the Institution." 18

Although the bank constructed a new building in Bolton Street in 1907 it also continued to use its Watt Street building until its sale in June 1934 to Newcastle Tattersall's Club. Prior to this sale, 20 ft of land had been sold in 1928, 19 and in the following year the virtually unimproved portion of the allotment facing Pacific Street was sold to Bushell's Limited. 20

2.4 Tattersall's Club: 1934

Newcastle Tattersall's Club was formed in 1896, following an application to Newcastle Jockey Club by a group of bookmakers who wished to stage hack races on the club's course on Saturdays when it was not in use for regular race meetings. Early meetings were held at the Hunt Club Hotel, until the club established its first premises in a building in King Street. In its first year of operation the club recorded a membership of almost 500 but this had dropped to 200 by 1898.

18 Relieving Manager to The Inspector, Sydney, 22 May 1919, NSW Bank Archives.
19 Archivist, Westpac Banking Corporation to Assoc. Prof. J.W. Turner, 25 May 1995. This land was most likely on the southern side of the property as photographic evidence suggests that the northern boundary of the bank building stood close to the Great Northern Hotel.
20 Caddell, "A Survey of Newcastle ...".

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In 1904 the club was relocated to part of the Central Hotel in Market Street but this move heralded a difficult era for Newcastle Tattersall's Club. By 1914 the combined impact of increasing rental costs and reduced membership which was further exacerbated by the outbreak of World War I, led the President to raise the possibility of closing the club. During this period, the club ceased to be involved in racing. However, by 1919 the tide had turned, and increased membership and enthusiasm was reflected in an improved financial state.

Under the leadership of one of Newcastle's most prominent businessmen, Bert Light, the club re-established its interest in racing. A tender to buy the Council owned premises it occupied was rejected by Newcastle City Council in 1924 but the club's committee continued to dream of the club occupying its own freehold premises. This was realised in 1934 with the purchase of the Bank of NSW building in Watt Street.

The former bank was reported to be "in excellent condition" at the time, with "a large area of land at the rear of the building [that] could readily be adapted as a bowling green". Reporting the purchase of the building, the local newspaper reported that

> It is the intention of the Club to transform the ground floor into one large room, suitable for general assembly, and to provide card rooms, a lounge, a board room, and a library on the upper floor. Modern kitchen facilities will be made available, and members believe that the premises, when completed, will comprise one of the most attractive of their kind outside the metropolitan area.

Within 12 months, £2,600 had been spent on alterations and extensions and £517 on new furniture and in 1937 tenders were called for extensive alterations and additions valued at £12,000. This work included the provision of a spacious bar lounge, billiard room, social hall, card room, visitors' room, kitchen and dining room. On the first floor, a buffet bar and lounge were planned.

When the club celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1946, membership had reached 1414 and plans were prepared by leading Sydney architect, Emil Sodersten, for a new seven-storied building proposed for the site. Significant works already undertaken by Sodersten in Newcastle included Segenhoe Apartments (1936) and NESCA House (1939). Unable to proceed with such an ambitious plan because of war-time building restrictions, the club closed its membership list in 1948 when it had reached 1600.

22 Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners Advocate, 7 March 1934.
2.5 Major Building Alterations: 1959

During the optimistic 1950s membership increased to 2,600, encouraging the committee to reconsider building extensions and a property at the rear of the club, facing Pacific Street, was purchased. Known as "Bushell's Court", it had been sold by the Bank of NSW to Bushell's Ltd. in 1929 (this property, or part thereof, was later sold by Tattersall's Club). However, the cost had escalated dramatically and a greatly modified scheme, which included a large addition at the rear of the building, was prepared by Emil Sodersten, who also designed the "colourful interiors". New facilities included bars, billiard room, reading and writing rooms, dining room, snack bar, social hall and lounges and an ultra modern kitchen. In the basement was ample cold storage as well as store rooms for other club requirements. On the first floor was a large lounge used for dinner dances, and a hall complete with stage and dressing rooms.

![Figure 9](image)

The bar, with billiard room in the distance, after renovations.
source: Newcastle Tattersall's Club, 1959 Souvenir

Speaking at the official opening of the "greatly altered and vastly improved premises", the President commented that one of the concerns about the original scheme was that

the building would have to be razed to the ground, and of course, put the club almost entirely out of operations. So, a modified re-building scheme was prepared, and the alterations which have now been completed, will, I feel sure, meet all club requirements. I would like members to know that in this modified re-building scheme we have the nucleus of the original building planned, and it is in our hands whether it is eventually achieved, or whether the building remains as it is.

2.6 Subsequent Improvements

Air conditioning was installed in 1960, followed by further work in 1963 involving relocation of the stage in the social hall, modernisation of the ceiling and installation of a new floor and bar. Television was also installed and a library established for the use of members. Following the opening of the "new look" Social Hall, the club's magazine published a description of the improved facilities:

The repositioned stage, with its complex lighting system and modern audio equipment, the flattering wall length mirroring of the western wall and the elegant gold drapes of the eastern wall, and the convenient and attractive new servery drew lavish praise from members and their ladies.

Specially appreciated, too, was the magnificent parquet floor, which was not only highly decorative but also provided dancers with the finest surface they could hope to have. President Eric said it was hoped the new

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23 Information provided by Mr. M. Woolford, long-time member of Tattersall's Club.
24 Ibid.
25 Newcastle Tattersall's Club, 1959 Souvenir.
26 "Newcastle Tattersall's Club Magazine, September 1971."
appointments and greater elegance of the Social Hall would encourage members to make maximum use of it for celebrations.\textsuperscript{27}

Further renovations were completed in 1969 - resurfacing of the southern wall, installation of a suspended ceiling and new lighting, construction of a new visitors' room, carpeting of the foyer and machine room and re-carpeting of the stairway.\textsuperscript{28} It was during this phase of renovations that the mural which was painted as part of the Sodersten interior design scheme was replaced by wallpaper and timber paneling. In August the refurbished Members' Bar was opened, where members could enjoy new "comfortable, armchair-style seating, stylish tables, modern bar stools" and newly laid carpet. In the bar itself, the old roll-up shutters were removed and new shelving, fittings and counter top installed. For added comfort of patrons, a padded arm rest and stainless steel footrest-ash tray were also included.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{sodersten-mural.jpg}
\caption{The Sodersten mural.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{27}ibid, July 1964.
\textsuperscript{28}Newcastle Tattersall's Club Magazine, August 1969.
\textsuperscript{29}ibid.
\textsuperscript{30}Newcastle Morning Herald, 16 January 1917.
\textsuperscript{31}Newcastle Tattersalls Club Magazine, December 1970.

2.7 \textbf{Purchase of the John Reid Building: 1970}

In October 1970 the Club members agreed unanimously to a Committee recommendation to purchase the adjoining property of John Reid Pty. Ltd. for $57,000.

The John Reid building had been originally occupied by Messrs. Dalgety, W.S. Bacon, F.G. Croft and others, at which time only the front section had been built. When the firm of John Reid bought the building in 1917, it was extensively remodelled and a new two-storeyed structure built at the rear. Designed by architect T.J. Pepper, the new building was reported to have replaced a building used as a granary, dating from the convict era.\textsuperscript{30}

As well as authorising purchase of the John Reid building, members also approved the expenditure of up to $80,000 on alterations, additions and repairs to the newly acquired property. It was planned to convert the section of the building at the rear of the property, then occupied by Strelbuilt, into a games room, allowing the existing billiards room to be used for a cafeteria-style eating area. Also included in this stage of renovations was the construction of a "new look" façade, at an estimated cost of $20,000.\textsuperscript{31}
In 1984 this property was subdivided and the front section sold. The rear section was retained by the Club and used as a gymnasium. In recent years it has been used as office space by the present owner.

2.8 Tatt's Tavern: 1972

To celebrate its 75th year of operations, the club opened "Tatt's Tavern", described as a "beautifully designed and luxuriously fitted cocktail room". Replacing the reading room and library and located off the ground floor foyer, it had a "cosy, intimate atmosphere":

Its low-key lighting, rich burgundy wall covering and thick woollen carpet, its semi-circular booths with plush vinyl seating and round, marble laminate topped tables, are the perfect accompaniment to an after-work drink or a pre-dinner cocktail.

Epitomising the design trends of their time, the entry doors from the foyer were described as "an attraction in themselves" - "arched in true tavern style and with hand beaten brass handles and vinyl upholstered panels.

2.9 Purchase of No.6 Pacific Street: 1973

This property was bought in 1973 and sold in 1982, but the Club retained ownership of the area at the back of the shop to provide parking space for committee members.

2.10 Earthquake: 1989

As a result of the 1989 earthquake, significant damage was sustained by the club building. Of particular concern was the concrete upper floor which had cracked, and engineers ordered that the building be scaffolded for 17 months, with drastic consequences for the club's finances. Repairs were carried out between April and November 1991, as well as modifications which involved the demolition of walls to open up the bar and bistro areas.

When the work was almost complete, the Club was informed that the building did not meet the requirements of the Theatre Hall and Entertainment Act. Unable to fund the required modifications, the Committee borrowed $130,000 to install additional fire doors within the building, a fire staircase from the auditorium and an enlarged front entrance. The new front façade and foyer were designed by Brent Rodd, of Rodd Hay Craig Architects.

2.11 The Club as a Social Venue

As well as fostering an interest in horse racing, Tattersall's Club was a significant social venue in Newcastle, particularly after 1959 when members were able to entertain their ladies. However, it was 1969 before female membership was approved. Social events at the club included dinner dances, an annual ball and regular smorgasbord lunches.

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33 Newcastle Tattersall Club Magazine, April 1972.
34 Ibid., 1982.
35 Newcastle Tattersall’s Club, Reports of the President and Secretary, 1992.
36 Newcastle Tattersalls Club Magazine, September 1971
During World War II the Club played a significant role in supporting district charities and patriotic activities, and contributed large amounts to War Loans.

In 1959 it was noted that the most important events conducted by the club were the Tattersall's Race Meetings at Broadmeadow Racecourse, which attracted crowds from many parts of the State. Other sporting activities were organised by the Tattersall's Bowling Club, with a membership of 80 active players and Tattersall's Golf Club, with 60 active members. Indoor bowls, billiards and snooker championships and social cricket matches were also arranged for members. In the 1960s a Racing Club was formed, as well as Photographic and Fishing Clubs.

Catering for weddings, balls and social events provided a valued source of income, and in 1969 the Committee introduced regular smorgasbord luncheons on Mondays and Fridays. These were well patronised by local office workers as well as the newly admitted lady members. In 1982 the Club catered for two large international seminars associated with the local coal and steel industries.37

2.12 Surf City Nightclub: 1997

The finances of Newcastle Tattersall's Club did not recover after the 1989 earthquake. In 1997 the building was sold, and took on a new role as a night club. Catering for the younger members of the community, it was known as "Surf City". Although the décor was changed to suit the building's new role, no structural alterations have been made to the building by the present owner.

2.13 Conclusion

The building now known as "Surf City" has links to the earliest days of settlement in Newcastle, first as a residence of one of Newcastle's most important pioneers and temporary Customs House, then as a bank. Its sale to Tattersall's Club in 1934 saw a change of function as the building became a popular entertainment venue with links to the racing industry. The association of noted architect Emil Sodersten is a significant element in the building's history. While the building has been altered and added to significantly over the years, at no stage in the available records is there mention of its complete demolition. This raises the strong possibility that remnants of Scott's house could remain on the site.

37 Secretary's Report, 1982.
3 Significance Assessment

Based on the available documentary and physical evidence, the significance of the Surf City Nightclub building is assessed as follows.

Historical Significance

Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's (or the local area's) cultural or natural history.
Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or work of a person, or group of persons, of important in NSW's (or the local area's) cultural or natural history.

- The building is situated in one of the earliest areas of Newcastle to be released for sale following the closure of the penal settlement in 1823.
- The building and site is strongly associated with Alexander Walter Scott, prominent entrepreneur and natural scientist in Newcastle.
- Scott's house, believed to not have ever been fully demolished, was used as a temporary Customs House during the early years of settlement.
- Scott's house was used as a branch of the Bank of NSW in Newcastle. Historical records indicate that this building was likely the first branch of the Bank of NSW in Newcastle.
- The building, with various alterations and additions, served as the Newcastle Tattersall's Club for 63 years.
- The place is associated with noted architect Emil Sodersten, however the extent of his work to the building is now largely disguised or has been demolished or altered.
- The former Tattersall's board table is extant, and currently being used as an office desk. This piece of movable heritage is considered historically significant.

Aesthetic Significance

Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

- The building is not considered to have any aesthetic significance externally, and apart from it's scale, does not make on overly positive contribution aesthetically to the streetscape.
- Some of the internal fabric may be considered to have some aesthetic significance, such as the terrazzo columns on the first floor, and the mural of Newcastle (if in fact this still exists beneath later alterations).
- The extent of original internal fabric is unknown, as it is either disguised by numerous layers of alterations, or has been removed altogether. Hence, the assessment of this fabric, if it exists, is not possible at this stage.

Social Significance

Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for the social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

- Discussions with former Tattersall's club members indicate that the physical place of the club does not hold significance within the contemporary community.
Research/Technical Significance

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

- As detailed in the history of the place, it is believed that Scott's house (c1840) has never been fully demolished, but has been altered progressively to accommodate a temporary Customs House, the Bank of NSW, the Tattersall's Club, and most recently Surf City Nightclub. The site is also one of the earliest to be sold following the closure of the Newcastle penal settlement. Consequently, the place is likely to have very high archaeological significance. Although historical details are somewhat conflicting, this is confirmed by the listing of the place within the Newcastle Archaeological Management Plan (1997).

Rarity

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

- In consideration of the currently assessable physical evidence, the place is not considered to be rare. However the historical evidence indicates that, in light of possible archaeological material on the site and possible concealed physical fabric of earlier constructions, culturally significant fabric considered to be rare on a local level is highly probable.

Representativeness

Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's (or the local area's) cultural or natural places, or cultural or natural environments.

- The building is not considered to be of representative significance.
4 Statement of Significance

The site currently known as Surf City Nightclub in Watt Street, Newcastle has a history with origins to the early development of the city as a free settlement. The significance of the place is attributed to several values, including historical, aesthetic and research values.

The original building on the site, a large Georgian residence built c1840 by prominent local identity Alexander Walter Scott, was progressively altered for subsequent uses as a temporary Customs House, a branch of the Bank of NSW (likely the first in Newcastle), the local Tattersall’s club, and most recently a night club. It is believed that Scott’s house was never fully demolished. Some of the fabric from the Tattersall’s era is extant within the building. (Criterion a)

During the 63 years that the Tattersall’s club occupied the premises, the place was associated with prominent Sydney architect Emil Sodersten. Sodersten is responsible locally for notable Newcastle buildings the Segenhoe Apartments and the former Nesca House. (Criterion b)

Due to the multitude of layered fabric within the building, significance of internal fabric is difficult to assess. However some items remain, such as terrazzo columns. It is also possible that a mural completed as part of Sodersten’s work to the building remains extant under more recent alterations. (Criterion c)

The research suggests that the original residential construction of Scott’s house has never been fully demolished, but that subsequent uses simply altered the pre-existing building. The site is also located within one the earliest areas in Newcastle to be released for sale following the closure of the penal settlement in 1823. For these reasons, the place is considered to have high potential for archaeological significance. (Criterion e)

The place now known as Surf City Nightclub is assessed as having high local significance based on its historical and potential research values.
5 Statement of Heritage Impact

This is the statement of heritage impact for:

Proposed demolition of the building known as Surf City Nightclub, located at 9 Watt Street, Newcastle, with property description Lot 201, DP 748898; proposed construction of new nine-storey commercial/residential building.

Date:

Reference:
The subject buildings fall within the Newcastle City Centre Heritage Conservation Area, as defined in the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2003.

The material upon which this statement has been based is Suters Architects drawings 6717 A02-A08 inclusive, Issue D, dated June 2003.

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The following aspects of the proposal respect or enhance the heritage significance of the area/item for the following reasons:

- The proposed demolition of the existing building is considered to have a negligible impact on the streetscape, and conservation area.

- Heritage buildings of various character and history surround the site. The most notable of these include the Great Northern Hotel, the former National Bank, the former Public Works group, the T&G Building, the Newcastle Railway Station, and the Newcastle Customs House. The construction of the proposed development is not generally thought to have an adverse impact on these heritage buildings. The scale of the proposed development as interpreted from the street, will not overwhelm the large scale heritage buildings in the immediate area.

- The proposed fenestration of the Watt Street façade compliments the Great Northern Hotel, using tripartite material detailing. The awning above ground level also compliments the precinct.

- The material finishes of the proposed building (rendered masonry, face brick, metal detailing), although not largely detailed on the DA drawings, are considered acceptable.

- The setback upper storey will be obscured from pedestrian view.

- The most prominent view of the Great Northern Hotel is from the north/northwest. From this aspect, the pedestrian will see little of the proposed development.

- It is considered that the view of the rear of the development, from Pacific Street and Pacific Park, will blend into the background behind the existing heritage buildings facing Pacific Street.

- The owner proposes to incorporate a 'gallery' within the foyer of the new building devoted to the history of the site.
The following aspects of the proposal could detrimentally impact on the heritage significance of the area/item:

- Due to the unknown but presumed high archaeological value of the site, and the unknown extent of remnant early fabric, the demolition of the building may be detrimental to any relics contained within the existing building and/or within the site, and to any remnant fabric not currently assessable. However, the research potential of the site is considered high – research that may only be carried out with demolition of the building. It is therefore recommended that demolition only be granted with a condition of a watching brief by a qualified archaeologist, and a full photographic archival documentation of demolition in accordance with NSW Heritage Office guidelines.

- The dominance of the Great Northern Hotel may be more effectively retained with the alteration of the proposed pediment/pergola, either by a small reduction in the scale and/or recessing it slightly back from the building face. With the setback of the uppermost level, this will help to maintain the dominant parapet of the Great Northern Hotel both as a heritage item and as a corner streetscape element.

The following sympathetic solutions have been considered and discounted for the following reasons:

- None noted. The proposed use did not make the existing building feasible for re-use.

The following are not noted on the plans, however should be considered prior to consent:

- A colour scheme for the building has not been advised, however should be considered for its appropriateness within the conservation area prior to approval.

- Although the former Tattersall's board table is now in the ownership of Surf City, it should be acknowledged as an item of movable heritage that is significant to the history of the place. It is considered desirable that the table be included in the new development in some manner, possibly incorporated in the foyer of the building.

- The name of the development might more appropriately reflect the earlier history of the place.
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Newspapers

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Maps

1857 Plan of the City of Newcastle
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Ordinance Map of Newcastle 1909
1912 Parish Map of Newcastle

Secondary Sources

Douglas, Peter and Wilson, Graham, '700 Hunter Street Newcastle, NSW: Historical Archaeological & Impact Assessment of the West Newcastle Presbyterian & Roman Catholic Cemetery Site (c1844-1881)', prepared for ACCOR Asia Pacific to comply with the NSW Heritage Council & Newcastle City Council's request to archaeologically assess the site before redevelopment for the proposed ACCOR Ibis Hotel', Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty.Ltd., Sydney, March, 2001.
Newcastle City Council, Souvenir of Newcastle Civic Week, 1929.
Heritage Impact Statement


Internet

Australian Agricultural Company Papers, University of Newcastle, Archives,
The following photographs of the existing building were taken by Heritas in August 2003.

Surf City (blue building), eastern side of Watt Street, with Great Northern Hotel at left, and Customs House in left distance.

The eastern side of Watt Street, south of Surf City (at extreme left), showing the T&G building.

Context of Surf City, showing the former PWD building at left of photo.

The interior of Surf City, ground level bar.
The bar area on the first floor, showing blue terrazzo columns.

The first floor function room.

The first floor kitchen, formerly serving the bistro area.

The rear lane access to the building. Windows were bricked up during the Surf City period in order to lessen noise to adjacent residential areas.