The objectives of the National Trust as exemplified in its publication HUNTER 2000 are:

- to make conservation an integral part of planning in the Hunter Region
- to ensure that historic buildings and urban areas of special quality are conserved
- to ensure the provision of adequate open space in urban areas
- to protect distinctive landscapes
This supplement sets out in greater detail the principles as outlined in Hunter 2000 published 1972. The proposals based on the Historic, Scenic and Social potential of Newcastle East, should accommodate the wider regional interest of the people of New South Wales.

AREA UNDER CONSIDERATION

Newcastle East is the gateway to the Hunter Valley. The area includes, at the southern entrance to Newcastle Harbour, the elongated peninsular from Fort Scratchley to Nobby's Island, the land comprising the eastern extremity of Newcastle's central business district east of Perkins Street and the encompassing ocean and harbour foreshores.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

PAST

Newcastle East is intimately associated with the discovery of the Hunter River, the discovery of coal in the Hunter Valley and the founding of the city of Newcastle.

On 10th May, 1770, Captain James Cook recorded the first sighting of the island now known as Nobby's at the mouth of the Hunter River. Lieutenant John Shortland in 1797, named Hunter's River making his camp on the present Zara Street Power Station site. A settlement was first established in 1801. On 15th March, 1804 a permanent township was established by Lieutenant Menzies. Governor King named the township Newcastle and its surrounding district Northumberland. In 1826 Newcastle's first town plan, prepared by Mr. Henry Dangar, the Government Surveyor, recorded Newcastle East as an identifiable unit by designating the land to the east of Pacific Street and all the foreshore land for public purposes. During the past 150 years, that land has been alienated by piecemeal development for housing, commerce and industry.

PRESENT

Since 1960, the Northumberland County District Planning Scheme has determined the statutory control of land use in Newcastle East. Now a new opportunity exists to determine the best use for Newcastle East as the present Newcastle City Council is engaged in efforts to revise plans for the area.

FUTURE

As the major proportion of the land is owned and controlled by many governmental bodies with vastly differing interests and objectives, there will be little chance of successful implementation of any forthcoming planning scheme unless the New South Wales Government exercises determined co-ordinated control. If the Government attempts to satisfy the demands of the various bodies without regard for the Hunter Region's wider community interests, the opportunity to realise the full potential of Newcastle East will be lost.
NEWCASTLE EAST PRINCIPLES DIAGRAM

PROPOSALS OF THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) FOR THE FUTURE OF NEWCASTLE EAST

- That an historic site be proclaimed over the area of Nobby's Island, Macquarie's Breakwater, Lieutenant Shortland's landing and camp site and Fort Scratchley.
- That a network of parks and foreshore reserves be developed to link the central business district with ocean and harbour foreshores.
- That a public buildings precinct be established and that identified historic buildings be protected.
- That a transport terminal, connected to a system of pedestrian ways, malls and promenades, be constructed and a vehicular arterial traffic pattern be established.
- That the Newcastle East residential neighbourhood be revitalised and protected from unco-ordinated development.

*HISTORIC SITE*

All the following lands within the proposed historic site are currently held by New South Wales or Australian Government authorities.

**Nobby's Island**

Formerly an island, Nobby's was connected to the mainland by an immense breakwater built originally by convict labour in 1816, and completed in 1846. The island was named Coal Island in 1801 by Lieutenant Colonel Paterson, later called Hobby Island and is now known as Nobby's. When discovered in 1770 by Captain James Cook, the island was 203 feet high, more than twice its present height.

The Government, acting on the suggestion of Colonel Barney of the Royal Engineers, reduced the island to 90 feet, but demolition was stopped following a public protest meeting held in Newcastle on June 21st, 1854. Construction of a lighthouse on Nobby's was completed in 1858 when the light became operational. Nobby's stands out as a most historical landmark at the southern entrance to Newcastle Harbour.

**Lieutenant John Shortland's Landing Place and Camp Site**

On 5th September 1797, Lieutenant John Shortland, commanding a whaleboat in a search for runaway, convicts, sought shelter in a small cove about 65 sea miles north of Sydney and discovered a large river which he named Hunter's River. Landing, he made his camp at the foot of Flagstaff Hill on land now occupied by the old Zara Street Power House. He made a further discovery of a rich coal seam which was clearly visible in the cliffside of Flagstaff Hill and took samples back to Sydney.

Public identification of this historic site should include a memorial to the discovery of the Hunter River, and the discovery of coal and its importance in the development of the Hunter Valley.

**Macquarie Pier (the breakwater)**

Governor Lachlan Macquarie laid the foundation stone for Macquarie Pier on May 5th, 1816 when the construction of the breakwater linking Nobby's Island to the mainland began. The breakwater was designed as a promenade to be constructed from stone quarried from Flagstaff Hill by convict labour. Completed in 1846 it was reconstructed in 1864 when a portion of the original pier was washed away by heavy seas. Much of the original stonework is still in place beneath the reconstructed breakwater.

**Fort Scratchley**

A signal station was erected there in 1822 by Lieutenant Close and at an early date gun emplacements were completed, seven guns being installed by 1840.

The first export of coal was mined from beneath the present fort and taken to Bengal in 1798. The Main Fort was built on the recommendation of Sir Peter Scratchley to defend Newcastle, the chief coal station for British Shipping in the southern hemisphere. Its construction commenced in 1880 and was completed in 1882 when the heavy armaments were finally placed in position.

The existing fortifications and barracks present one of only two examples of a closed work of the later 19th century stage of fortification in New South Wales (the other being at Bare Island, Botany Bay built 1885).
**FORESHORE RESERVES**

Newcastle East is a unique urban area being confined and encompassed on all but one side by ocean and harbour foreshores of great interest and scenic value. Any future planning should emphasize this valuable asset.

The National Trust’s proposals for parks and reserves at Newcastle East are of significance to the Hunter Region. They have been designed to create a unifying environment contiguous with the central business district and strongly linked with the ocean and harbour foreshores and the proposed Historic Site.

A major regional reserve is proposed on the land north east of Watt Street. This reserve would be linked with existing reserves and the Central Business District by pedestrian ways and to the waterfront by a harbourside promenade extending to Merewether Street Wharf.

The existing foreshore reserves, together with Pacific Park, should be developed along the lines envisaged in the Northumberland County District Planning Scheme 1980.

**TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT**

Two basic principles underlie the Trust’s Traffic and Transport proposals:

1. That public transport in the area should be concentrated and integrated with other modes of transport.
2. That the residential neighbourhood should be protected from commercial and through traffic.

The proposed transport terminal is the central pivot of the public transport and pedestrian system.

The Terminal could include the historic sections of the existing railway station with the land between the station and the Customs House being used for a bus marshalling area and taxi rank in landscaped loading areas.

A pedestrian overbridge should be constructed over Wharf Road and Scott Street to connect the Hunter Street Mall and the transport terminal with the harbourfront promenade and new ferry wharf which could also include a harbourfront restaurant.

The arterial roads, King Street, Scott Street, and Wharf Road would be linked by an extension of Pacific Street to form a loop system serving the Central Business District, Transport Terminal, Public Buildings Precinct and Recreational Zones. Tourist and recreation traffic visiting the historic site and foreshore reserves could be catered for by the construction of a one-way harbour and ocean front scenic drive and neighbourhood traffic could enter Newcastle East from Scott Street.

**PUBLIC BUILDING PRECINCT**

The Public Building Precinct is an integral part of the National Trust’s open space proposals for the area. It is envisaged that the buildings would be set in parkland and that the land between the historic Customs House and the old Bond Store in Telford Street would be used for Government office buildings for Education, Transport, Public Works. The State Government office block should be built here to preserve the historic Police Station and Public Works Buildings in Hunter Street. Carparking facilities could be provided in the area underneath the proposed new development.

The proposed precinct was part of the original railway reserve and is still in public ownership.

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

Among the buildings identified by the Trust for preservation in Newcastle East are the following:

- **CLASSIFIED listings**
  - Customs House
  - Old Bond Store
  - Fort Scratchley
  - Civic Group
  - Department of Public Works, Police Station, Post Office.

- **RECORDED listings**
  - Bebarnold’s warehouse
  - Coal memorial
  - Warehouse (Rundle’s)
  - Wornab Flat
  - Under Investigation
  - Boatmen’s Row
  - Newcastle Railway Station
  - Old Water Police Station

- **RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD**

The residential area of Newcastle East contains much small scale housing worthy of conservation, particularly in relation to its location adjoining the historic area. Notable buildings are in Nobby’s Road, running from the corner of Stevenson Place and those bounded by Telford Street, Stevenson Place, Parnell Place and Scott Street.

Selective infill should take place when necessary but this should retain the character and scale of the neighbourhood, as should other development.

Development should also ensure the retention of quiet streets shielded from through traffic, by closing Scott Street, east of Telford Street.

CUSTOMS HOUSE ARCHITECT
JAMES BARNET 1886-18.
Prepared by
The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)
Hunter Region Landscape and
Conservation Committee.

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Copies of HUNTER 2000 are available from the
National Trust Centre and P.O. Box 159
Maitland N.S.W. 2320 $2.00 per copy.

The National Trust REGISTER includes details of all
buildings listed throughout New South Wales.
$3.00 per copy.