

**Submission
No 160**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker

Date received: 25 January 2018

SUBMISSION

To:

Portfolio Committee No.5 – Industry And Transport
Inquiry into the Windsor Bridge replacement project

Submitted by:

Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker

25 January 2018

BACKGROUND

The author of this submission is a professional historian in private practice with nearly twenty years' experience in heritage history consulting. She has a doctorate of philosophy from Macquarie University and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (UK) and the Royal Australian Historical Society. She has written ten books and numerous scholarly journal articles, and specialises in early Australian colonial history among other topics. She is a member of the Professional Historians Association (NSW), the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, the Society of Australian Genealogists, the National Trust (NSW) and the Australian Garden History Society.

In addition since 2011 she has been Convener of the William Cox Fellowship which brings together descendants of pioneer roadbuilder William Cox who built the first road over the Blue Mountains. Cox lived in the Hawkesbury district from 1804 until his death in 1837, and served as a magistrate from 1810 until he retired due to ill-health in 1828. He also received Government commissions to build the Windsor Courthouse and St Matthew's rectory.

INTRODUCTION

This submission principally relates to the Inquiry's term b iii economic, social and heritage impacts.

The construction of a new bridge with traffic continuing to flow through Thompson Square would have a serious negative impact on the town's heritage values and economy both during construction and subsequently. This would be caused by, inter alia, noise, dust, vibration, traffic disruption both during and after construction.

Thompson Square is the heart of Windsor's tourist area; a place for quiet enjoyment of a heritage streetscape and visitor facilities such as outdoor cafes. The revitalisation of towns in the Southern Highlands due to the Hume Highway bypasses shows the importance of reducing traffic to enhance heritage tourism. [Roads and Maritime Services, *The Old Hume Highway: History Begins with a Road*, 2013]

PRINCIPAL ISSUES

1. Origin of Thompson Square
2. NSW Heritage Council opinion on the Bridge Replacement's Impact on Heritage

3. Statutory Heritage Listings
4. Visitor Attractions in Thompson Square
5. Heritage Tourism's Economic Benefits
6. NSW Government and Community Sector Heritage Tourism Promotion

COMMENT ON ISSUES

1. Origin of Thompson Square

The first Europeans settled in Windsor in 1794. By 1795 they had established a hill-top gathering place in the area now known as Thompson Square, and erected some houses. On the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1810 the existing premises were demolished and the township was surveyed and roads marked out including George Street. As noted by historian Ian Jack, 'Thompson Square quickly became a real public space, with government buildings to the north-east and private houses and Fitzgerald's inn on the south-west side of the square.' [Ian Jack, *Macquarie's Towns*, NSW Heritage Council, 2010, pp 37-42]

The land for Fitzgerald's inn (the Macquarie Arms) was granted by Governor Macquarie in 1811 and the inn was completed and opened in 1815. [State Heritage Register item 00041]. Richard Fitzgerald was a former convict who arrived in 1791 and the following year was appointed superintendent of convicts at Toongabbie. He continued to hold various posts and in 1810 Macquarie appointed him storekeeper at the Hawkesbury settlement (now Windsor). Andrew Thompson, after whom Thompson Square is named, was also a former convict. He arrived in 1792 and joined the police force the following year. In 1796 he was appointed to the Hawkesbury settlement, eventually rising to the rank of chief constable while accumulating substantial property holdings. Thompson was rapidly accepted as a friend and adviser by Governor Macquarie, but died in October 1810. Macquarie named Thompson Square in his honour. [Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au>]

2. NSW Heritage Council opinion on the Bridge Replacement's Impact on Heritage

NSW Heritage Council, an independent statutory body, stated in 2012:

Thompson Square is one of the oldest public squares in Australia and notable for the large number of Colonial Georgian buildings which surround it. It is the only public space remaining from the original town and has played an important part in the history of the town. It is the only remaining civic space as laid out by Governor Macquarie and is a vital precinct in the preservation of the early Colonial character of Windsor. The Square reflects Macquarie's visionary schemes for town planning excellence in the infant colony...

The serious and irrevocable heritage impacts of a new Windsor Bridge through Thompson Square mean that the Heritage Council recommends to the Minister for Planning that project SSI - 4951 WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT should be refused on heritage grounds.

This submission is available on the Department of Planning website.

3. Statutory Heritage Listings

The following statutory heritage listings apply to Thompson Square and vicinity:

The NSW State Heritage Register is a list which contains places, items and areas of State heritage value to New South Wales. These places are protected under the New South Wales *Heritage Act 1977*.

SHR 00126 Thompson Square Conservation Area including the following items:

- The Doctor's House – 1-3 Thompson Square
- House & outbuildings – 5 Thompson Square (also listed as SHR 00005)
- Hawkesbury Museum – 7 Thompson Square
- Macquarie Arms Hotel – cnr Thompson and George Streets (also listed as SHR 00041)
- Cottage – 62 George Street
- Shops – 64,66,68 George Street
- 70,72 George Street
- 74 George Street (A.C Stearn Building)
- 82 George Street
- House & outbuildings – 6 Bridge Street
- House & outbuildings – 10 Bridge Street
- House – 17 Bridge Street
- Former School of Arts – cnr Bridge Street and George Street

SHR 00804 Windsor Court House – corner Court and Pitt Streets

SHR 01018 Stables at rear of police station – 32-34 Bridge Street

SHR 01843 Government Cottage Archaeological Site – 41 George Street

The State Heritage Inventory is a list of all heritage items in NSW which have statutory heritage listing, whether State or local. The extent of these listings demonstrates that the heritage experts who compiled the listing, and the elected Councillors who voted to adopt their recommendations, valued all these items as contributing to the ambience and streetscape of the Thompson Square area.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Barrack Wall (Former) | 32 Bridge Street | I157 |
| Hawkesbury River Bridge | RMS S170 Register | |
| House | 4 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| House | 6 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| House | 17 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| House | 8 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| House - Lilburndale | 10 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| House and Outbuildings | 5 Thompson Square | I00005 |
| Houses | 62 & 68 George Street | Part of I00126 |
| Lock Up Ruins | 32 Bridge Street | I148 |
| Macquarie Arms Hotel | 81 George Street | I00041 |
| Public Reserve | 3 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| School of Arts (Former) | 14 Bridge Street | Part of I00126 |
| Shop | 74 George Street | Part of I00126 |
| Shop | 82 George Street | Part of I00126 |
| Shop | 70 George Street | Part of I00126 |
| Thompson Square Conservation Area | | I00126 |

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Windsor Court House | 34 Court Street | I00804 |
| Windsor Tavern, The | 25-27 Bridge Street | I151 |

4. Visitor Attractions in Thompson Square

There are numerous high quality food outlets on the south side of Thompson Square (George Street), including the award winning Windsor Seafoods and the Macquarie Arms Hotel, both of which attract patrons from across the Sydney basin. In the nearby George Street Mall there are a variety of cafes, an ice cream parlour, and restaurants offering international cuisine such as Chinese and Lebanese. There are also shops selling books, souvenirs, craft and other merchandise which caters to the tourist market.

The Hawkesbury Regional Museum, located at 8 Baker Street, also includes the building known as Howe House at 7 Thompson Square. This purpose-built museum was opened in 2008 and has received a number of awards, including: Local Government award for best Cultural Infrastructure (2009), Greater Sydney Tourism Award for best cultural and heritage attraction, (2010 and 2011) and highly commended (2012), and IMAGEine Award for Collection Management (2011) and Best Exhibition (Exhibition Projects - Museums; 3-10 Paid Staff) in 2015.

The impact of the new bridge construction on this precinct could best be compared to the light rail construction in Sydney which has continued for over two years and has caused enormous financial distress to small businesses especially in Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. It is very hard to retain customers at small cafes adjacent to a building site. In the case of Windsor this could deter day trippers who might instead go to other places on the Sydney fringe such as Wisemans Ferry or the Blue Mountains.

5. Heritage Tourism's Economic Benefits

It is important to recognise that history and heritage are not just hobbies for housewives and retirees, they are significant elements in the state's economy. The information compiled by Destination NSW shows that in 2016 NSW welcomed 12.3 million cultural and heritage visitors – up by nearly 30 per cent on 2012. That includes both international and domestic tourists, and they spent an estimated \$12 billion. This is only visitors who engaged in cultural and heritage pursuits, of which the two most popular were visiting historical and heritage buildings, sites or monuments (71.8% of international visitors and 34.9% of domestic daytrip visitors) and visiting museums and galleries (55.7% of international visitors and 29.9% of domestic daytrip visitors). [Source: Destination NSW, *Cultural and Heritage Tourism to NSW Year Ended December 2016*]

This data confirms the importance of history and heritage for regional tourism. It is the museum, or festival, or heritage streetscape which acts as the magnet to pull the traveller or day tripper into the town to buy their petrol and other supplies, as well as patronising an historic hotel or visiting a main street cafe. For many people, travel is about experiencing the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past. That applies whether they are flying overseas to see the Tower of London, the Acropolis or the Taj Mahal, or driving around Australia on a retirement trip, or heading out for a weekend day trip.

6. NSW Government and Community Sector Heritage Tourism Promotion

The NSW Government's Office of Environment and Heritage has a website devoted to heritage tourism. Based on the places listed on the State Heritage Register, it identifies over 500 items of special significance throughout New South Wales where people can visit, stay in overnight or use as a base to explore the history of NSW.
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/visit/home.aspx>

The NSW Government's Destination NSW also has the Visit NSW website which lists hundreds of historical sites and heritage locations for travellers to visit.
<http://www.visitnsw.com/things-to-do/attractions-historical-sites-and-heritage-locations>

The non-government organisation Museums and Galleries NSW has its own website which is a 'one stop shop' that brings together over 470 properties across the state, including museums, galleries and Aboriginal keeping places. It includes a special feature enabling visitors to plan trips, build trails, read articles and explore exciting experiences available in museums and galleries.
<https://mgnswn.org.au/organisations/>

CONCLUSION

The continuation with Option 1, the replacement of the current Windsor Bridge would be a disaster for the heritage of Windsor and therefore of the regional economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That all further funding for this project be directed to allowing through traffic to by-pass the town of Windsor.

Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker
25 January 2018