

3.7.7 OTHER FEATURES

Several sections of the Northern Gasholder were cleaned and photographed during the test excavations on site. Most of the annulus seemed to be intact with the exception of a section at the south east where the top course of brick was missing.



Figure 38: Brick annulus of Northern Gasholder, detail of concrete base for upright stanchion



Figure 39: Southern curve of brick annulus for Northern Gasholder with Southern Gasholder in background, looking southwest, missing top course in foreground



Figure 40: Southern curve of the brick annulus for the Northern Gasholder, looking northeast, same section of the annulus as seen in Figure 38



Figure 41: Looking southwest, the site after backfilling of the test trenches

3.7.8 ARTEFACTS

Not many artefacts were encountered during the test excavation apart from bricks, metal objects relating to rail track construction such as metal plates, spikes and bolts and fragments of, and also complete, hardwood railway sleepers.

A small selection of finds, consisting of a metal bolt, a metal cupboard handle, the end of a small glass vial and some wire enforced (early safety) glass, are shown below. The only artefact possibly related directly to the Gasworks production is a polished metal 'collar' or flange, which looks like a cover plate found behind taps or door handles. This item bears the stamp 'Tylors' in what appears to be Art Nouveau style font, on one side. It is about $2\frac{5}{8}$ inch (67mm) in diameter with the central hole being $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch (32mm) in diameter and a height of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (19mm).

The stamped and dateable bricks are discussed overleaf.



Figure 42: A very small selection of artefacts, consisting of a metal bolt, a metal cupboard handle, the end of a small glass vial and some wire enforced glass window sherds.



Figure 43: Polished metal 'collar' or flange, stamped 'Tylors', possibly a cover plate found behind taps or door handles

3.7.9 FIREBRICKS¹³

GRITA, c.1908

Samuel Dive - 1876 to 1974, Brickworks at Beauchamp Road, Botany. Samuel Dive discovered extensive deposits of good clay at Matraville in 1876 and was soon supplying the area with bricks. He produced sand-lime dry press bricks at Matraville for use in the construction of Prince Henry Hospital. By 1908 Dive had begun to manufacture firebricks. He was offered a contract with the NSW Railways to supply the fire-boxes for their steam engines.

¹³ The information is from Gemmell, W. *And So We Graft From Six To Six: The Brickmakers of NSW*, 1986

Dive's original fire brick was the 'GRIT A' made from clay shale and grit. The clay and shale was initially dug from the Matraville site but was later brought in from French's Forest and Mudgee. The grit for the bricks was obtained from bricks which had been broken up by grinding. The original fire bricks were made by hand.



Figure 44: One of the GRIT A firebricks located in a line of bricks in Trench 3.

I F B, c.1907

Illawarra Fire Clay and Brick Company Limited – in 1907 the company was formed primarily for the purpose of carrying on the business of firebrick manufacture in Woonona. Thomas Pendlebury had begun brick firing in that area in 1901, making firebricks from the fireclay immediately under the No. 6 coal seam, which itself had become exposed by the removal of clay and shale above it for the making of building bricks. The Illawarra Fire Clay and Brick Company Limited factory was located between Woonona and Bellambi railway stations. They became a major producer of refractories and supplied the steelworks of Newcastle and Port Kembla. In 1946 Pendlebury's and the company merged under the Illawarra business name. Firebricks from the company were stamped I F B.



Figure 45: One of the I F B firebricks located in a line of bricks in Trench 3.

4.0 TEST TRENCH RESULTS

All the trenches revealed ground level remains under an average of about 250mm of local demolition material, coke residue and introduced fill spread over the entire area. The archival recording of the excavated trenches is included in this report at Appendix 3.

The trenches through the Purifying Shed, which was shown on a photo from c1917 (Figure 6) as an open structure, revealed coke ash surfacing, a small pit-like brick structure and a concrete path.

A long trench of about 37m through the Retort House showed a fractured concrete surface within the whole building footprint, as well as remains of a roughly north-south running wall or paving of dry set clay bricks with manufacturer's marks and a small section of dry pressed brick wall. There were also metal posts within the concrete slab, cut at ground level, which were most likely supports for a roof structure. The trench was continued to the south where the sleepers of a train line which ran through the site and next to the standing Gasholder, and also visible on the c1917 photo, were discovered still in situ.

Trench 4 contained dry pressed brick walls, concrete surfaces, a tiled shower recess in what seems to be a bathroom connected to the Tea Room, as well as extensive brick paving under more recent concrete and bitumen surfaces. A cut sandstone block was also present within a roughly east west running dry pressed brick wall.

Trench 5 also contained remains of dry pressed brick walls in alignment with the layout of the expected buildings. A short segment of a clay brick wall diagonal to the general layout was also located. There was also some evidence of possible coal tar surfacing.

From the findings within these test excavations it can be concluded that the buildings were, as expected, razed to ground level when they were demolished in the 1950s or 1960s. Therefore the ground level remains such as floor surfaces, yard surfaces, footings and possible below ground level remains such as cellars and pits should still be present on the site.

The buildings used to house the retorts and the purifiers are shown on the c1917 photo and do not appear to be substantial. This was confirmed by the results of the test excavation. They were shed like structures and would not have represented innovative design in their own right. The purifiers were relatively small structures, described as "*four great cast iron boxes, 9ft square and 4-¹/₂ ft deep*,"¹⁴ which were most likely removed in their entirety.

¹⁴ 'Railway Gasworks', *The New South Wales Railway Budget*, October 1898, p43

The exact design of the retorts is not known and given the fact that they would have been substantial features in need of solid foundations their location should be further investigated. The 1898 Railway Gasworks article 'mentions the Retort House as being *"a building 80 feet by 60 feet, containing two benches of retorts. Each bench has 5 ovens, and each oven contains 5 retorts, built in fire bricks over a furnace from which they were heated."* In the same article the retorts are also described as - *'made of fire clay'* and further *"D shaped and measure 14 by 22 inches by 9ft. long."*¹⁵

The other buildings that would have been located to either side of the Retort House, such as the lunch rooms, offices and the store rooms, are unlikely to reveal information which would enrich our general knowledge of the site or of the coal gas manufacturing processes.

The general layout of the superintendent's residence should be investigated to see if there are comparable buildings within the general area of the Eveleigh complex and it is also possible that the residence, if constructed here, was to a standard, Railways design.

The standing southern gasholder is already protected by heritage status and will be retained on the site.¹⁶ Measures for its protection during the remediation stage have been recommended (see recommendations).

The annulus of the northern gasholder is still present and apart from the missing rounded top course in the south east curve it appears to be complete. RailCorp have advised that the interior is filled with dumped material, such as asbestos and other contaminated building waste and it is suspected that the bricks at the lower levels are affected by the coal tar. As the interior fill will need to be excavated and removed and the exterior fill and soil around the annulus will need to be removed as part of the remediation of the site, measures for careful removal, retention or interpretation of the brick surface ring have been recommended (see recommendations) and agreed with RailCorp.

The only other standing structure on the site is the disused signalling shed, a small fibro structure located on the western boundary of the site behind the standing Gasholder. It appears to be constructed of concrete cast slabs and fibro and sited on the same line as the cable conduit, to which it may be related functionally. The (derelict) shed contains remnant connection boards and associated wiring. It is not a current item of infrastructure and is not regarded as having archaeological significance.

The rail siding, which ran elevated along the north boundary of the site after the demolition of the Gasworks, appears to be connected to the features described in the 2004 report as Nos. 7, 8 and 9 in the western corner of the site. These features were constructed of concrete and

¹⁵ Loc cit

¹⁶ Eveleigh Railway Workshops, SHI Database No. 5045103

concrete blocks with upright rails in order to retain the fill behind them, and are on the same level as the (now removed) rail siding would have been. These features should therefore be regarded as having no archaeological significance.

4.1 RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions which were raised in the Archaeological Research Design for the project are addressed in the table below.

<p><i>What is the extent and the condition of the below ground remains?</i></p>	<p>The extent of the remains are fairly extensive. The area was razed to ground level during demolition - meaning that the footprints of the buildings still remain. However the nature of the buildings, which appear to have been shed-like (especially regarding the Purifying Shed and the Retort House) rather than of solid masonry construction, mean that there is limited scope in terms of features such as wall footings marking the perimeters. So far, the main indicators for the edges of the buildings uncovered were changes in floor surfaces. The condition of these surfaces is generally poor. The areas where concrete was used are heavily worn and cracked and often patched up with coal tar. The parts where brick paving was found are generally in better condition but their contact with coke residue makes them unsuitable for preservation.</p>
<p>Which elements would require removal due to the presence of significant contamination?</p>	<p>All the elements except the State Heritage listed southern gasholder and if physically possible, the brick annulus of the northern gasholder will require removal due to the high levels of contamination of the site.</p>
<p>Do the below ground remains contribute new information about the use and development of this Gasworks site?</p>	<p>The below ground level remains offer only limited scope for new information. All standing items like the purifiers and the retorts appear to have been removed prior to demolition. There may be some evidence associated with the construction of the retorts like their base or footings within the Retort House. The footprint of the superintendent's residence, especially if it was constructed of brick, may provide</p>

	information of the general layout to compare with other such buildings still within the Eveleigh complex.
How do the remains of this site compare with the other Rail Gasworks sites identified in the history? That is, is this a representative site?	There is scope for a comparative study based mainly on archival research of the Eveleigh Workshop and other railway workshops.
What can it contribute for the relationship with the nearby Eveleigh railway sites?	There is scope for a study on this relationship from archival resources. The subject site needs to be viewed as part of the overall Eveleigh Railway Workshops. It is included within their State Heritage listing.
Is there evidence remaining of access and transport links to Eveleigh?	There is physical evidence of a rail connection to the Gasworks remaining on the site which was confirmed in one of the test trenches. The rail line is visible on historic plans and in historic photographs of the study area included in this report.
What evidence remains for the processing on the site? For example, the retorts, or purifiers?	There is little or no evidence remaining relating directly to the process of gas manufacturing.
What elements can be retained on site during / following the site remediation works?	In addition to the State Heritage listed southern gasholder, the brick annulus of the northern gasholder should be retained if contamination levels permit and if it is physically possible to do so. Otherwise, reinstatement of the top courses of brickwork following the remediation works, using original brickwork if contamination levels allow, or similar brickwork as appropriate is recommended.

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gasworks site at the Macdonaldtown triangle is recognised as an item of State significance within the heritage listings of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops on the State Heritage Register and the s170 Heritage and Conservation Register of the State Rail Authority. The following Statement of Significance has been quoted from the State Heritage Register listing of the Eveleigh Railway Yards, which includes the Macdonald Gasworks triangle (Listing No. 01140).

The Eveleigh Railway Yards are some of the finest historic railway engineering workshops in the world and Eveleigh contains one of the most complete late 19th century and early 20th century forge installations, collection of cranes and power systems, in particular the hydraulic system. The place is of international significance and is one of Australia's finest industrial heritage items. The value of the place is increased by the fact that it is comprised of assemblages, collections and operational systems rather than individual items. Conversely, the significance has been reduced by its closure, relocation of some machinery and its disassociation from the operating rail network. (State Projects 1995: 109)

The following Statement of Significance has been quoted from the s170 Heritage and Conservation Register of the State Rail Authority available on the State Heritage Inventory under the listing of the Eveleigh Workshops, which includes the gasometer (gasholder) at the Macdonaldtown triangle (SRA Listing No. 102).

Eveleigh workshops are the best collection of Victorian period railway workshops in Australia and are considered to have world heritage significance by curators of the Smithsonian Institute Washington DC, USA and to be of the highest significance in the development of the railway system and of the State. They represent the pinnacle of manufacturing achievement in NSW and the equipment was once (and remains) the best collection of heavy machinery from the period. The buildings are fine examples of workshop architecture and are an important part of the historic fabric of the inner city.

The significance assessment of the site has also been made in the 2004 archaeological assessment of the site, by Banksia Heritage + Archaeology. An extract has been provided below:

The potential archaeological resource consists of a number of sites within the gas works complex at the southwestern end of the Eveleigh Workshops site. The surviving gasholder is already recognised as being of state heritage significance as part of the greater story of the Eveleigh Railway Yards. The gas required for lighting and the works was manufactured on site as with many operations that were all carried out within the works, rather than being outsourced. The surviving gasholder is therefore representative of the underlying philosophy of the Eveleigh Works and

major industrial development in late 19th century Australia where many functions were centralised and developed for specific purposes.

The surviving southern gasholder is also very significant as an archaeological item that has the ability to provide information about a type of railway and general industrial relic that is now extremely rare.

Another significance assessment of the site was made in the 2006 archaeological assessment of the site, by Heritage Concepts Pty Ltd, and has been quoted below:

The archaeological remains in these areas will contribute to our understanding of the construction, operation and subsequent modifications carried out at gaswork sites across the State. These remains may provide information regarding the changes in gas production technology over time as it relates to its use in the railway system. It may also provide information regarding the demolition techniques employed for gasworks sites, and hence have a broader application to former gaswork sites across the State.

The 2010 archaeological testing of the site carried out by City Plan Heritage confirms that the ground level surfaces of sheds, structures, paths and railway tracks relating to the Railway Gasworks are still retained on the site. The presence of these works does contribute to our understanding of the construction, operation and subsequent modifications carried out at gasworks sites.

The site was historically completely cleared above ground (with the one exception of the standing gasholder which retains its high level significance) and any remnant machinery removed. The remains within the areas where machinery was housed are in generally poor condition due to the simple construction of those buildings. Therefore, there are many limitations to what these archaeological remains can tell us. Comparison with standing buildings within the Eveleigh Railway Workshops would be useful to provide a picture of the demolished Gasworks sheds.

The Historical Significance and Social Significance of the site, as a part of the Eveleigh complex, are unquestionable. The physical remains, although present at ground level, are, apart from the southern gasholder and the annulus of the northern gasholder, not substantial. The contamination levels of the site also make in situ retention and archaeological investigation difficult.

The criterion of Aesthetic Significance is again only met by the southern gasholder and the annulus of the northern gasholder. The physical archaeological research potential is limited, due to the removal of all the installations and machinery from the site. It is doubtful that meaningful new information about the operation of the Gasworks and its connection with the Eveleigh Rail Yards could be retrieved. However there is scope on the site to further

investigate the location of the retorts and the superintendent's residence within the limitations posed by the contamination issues. There is also scope for further archival research and comparative study in regards to other Gasworks of this or similar kind. Gasworks for lighting were very common throughout Sydney during the 19th century and it is remarkable that they all seem to have been destroyed. The standing gasholder on the Macdonaldtown site is a rare remainder.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, City Plan Heritage confirms that the program of archaeological test trenching has been completed. The known history of the site was further explained by this program of test trenching and the excavation permitted identification and preliminary examination of significant features associated with the former Gasworks buildings and layout.

Based on this completed program, we make the following recommendations for the management of the archaeology of the site. These recommendations take the findings from the five test trenches, the site contamination and the significance of the site into consideration. They provide guidelines for the procedures to be taken regarding the works and relics as part of the remediation process.

1. As the site is part of the State Heritage Listed Eveleigh Railway Works and the standing (southern) gasholder is reported to be the last one in the State, it is recommended that RailCorp commission a comprehensive archival study combined with a history of the Macdonaldtown Gasworks, including a comparative analysis of gasworks and with the Eveleigh Railway Workshops.
2. The remediation of the site, particularly machine excavation around the State heritage listed southern gasholder, is to be adequately planned and supervised by RailCorp in order to avoid any damage to the structure.
3. The contamination levels in and around the brick annulus of the northern gasholder will be assessed by separate assessments. The bricks themselves are not thought to be contaminated but this will need to be confirmed. The bricks may need to be removed because of the excavations inside the annulus and around the outside of the annulus. If so, the removal is to be undertaken with care, so that if possible, the bricks can be reused. Archaeological monitoring to record the removal, the depth of the annulus and its general construction details should be undertaken during excavation and removal of the annulus. Archival recording of the top of the annulus should be carried out prior to any removal - with minimal excavation recommended. If the bricks need to be removed and cannot be reused, the northern gasholder should be represented in some similar form. This recommendation is also discussed within the Heritage Interpretation Plan submitted by City Plan Heritage in August 2010.
4. An archaeological excavation in the area of the Retort House should be carried out to look specifically for the evidence of the retorts. This would entail machine stripping,

hand excavation and recording of the uncovered features to Heritage Branch standards.

5. An archaeological excavation in the area probably containing the footprint of the superintendent's residence should be carried out to record the structural layout of the building. This would entail machine stripping, some hand excavation and recording of the uncovered features to Heritage Branch standards.
6. Due to the high contamination of the area resulting from the nature of coal gas production and the limited original information associated with the ground level remains - no further physical archaeological investigation or monitoring, apart from the recommendations under points 3, 4 and 5 should be necessary.
7. Heritage interpretation of the history of the site and its connection to NSW Railways and the Eveleigh Railway Workshops should be undertaken as part of the remediation phase of the project. This aspect has been outlined in City Plan Heritage's Macdonaldtown Gasworks Heritage Interpretation Plan, August, 2010.

CITY PLAN HERITAGE

AUGUST 2010

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APPENDIX 1: S60 APPROVAL



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Mr John Dawson
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Level 1, 73 Miller Street
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Dear Mr Dawson

APPLICATION UNDER S60 OF THE NSW HERITAGE ACT, 1977

RE: Eveleigh Railway Workshops (Macdonaldtown Triangle) SHR No.1140

Proposal: Test excavation of the site of the former Macdonaldtown Gasworks

S60 Application no. 2010/S60/21

Information received with the s60 application:

Former Macdonaldtown Gasworks Archaeological Research Design, prepared by City Plan Heritage for Incoll Management on behalf of RailCorp, NSW, dated March 2010.

Additional information requested: None

Date additional information received: Not applicable

As delegate of the NSW Heritage Council, I have considered the above application. Pursuant to Section 63 of the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977*, the Heritage Council hereby informs Mr John Dawson that approval is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. All works shall be in accordance with the methodology outlined in the S60 Excavation Permit Application number 2010/S60/21 and in the supporting document: *Former Macdonaldtown Gasworks Archaeological Research Design*, March 2010, prepared by City Plan Heritage for Incoll Management on behalf of RailCorp, NSW,

EXCEPT AS AMENDED BY THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

2. This approval does not permit the removal of any State significant relics. This approval covers archaeological testing in the area of the former Macdonaldtown Gasworks, only. The approved testing is to assess archaeological potential of the site and provide an assessment of significance for the relics or deposits surviving in this area. Should further excavation works be undertaken in the area identified as being of high archaeological potential following completion of the archaeological testing programme new mitigation strategies must be addressed and discussed with the Heritage Council or its delegate.
3. No removal of State significant archaeological features or structural evidence is permitted under this permit without further consultation with the Heritage Branch, Department of Planning. If the removal of State significant elements is proposed additional approval under either S60 or S65A of the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977*, may be required.
4. The Applicant must ensure that the Heritage Branch is informed in writing of the start of the on site archaeological fieldwork at least five (5) days prior to its

commencement and, that the Heritage Branch is informed of the end of the on site fieldwork within five (5) days of its completion.

5. The Heritage Council and the Heritage Branch reserve the right to inspect the site and records at all times and access any relics recovered from the site.
6. The Applicant must ensure that the nominated Excavation Director, Mr Franz Reidel, is present at the site supervising all activity which may expose historical archaeological relics of State or Local significance.
7. The Applicant must ensure that the Excavation Director takes adequate steps to record in detail relics, structures and features discovered on the site during the archaeological works in accordance with the approved methodology and current best practice guidelines. This work must be undertaken in accordance with the Heritage Council guidelines, 'How to Prepare Archival records of Heritage Items' and 'Guidelines for Photographic Recording of Heritage Sites, Buildings and Structures' (2004).
8. The Applicant must ensure that the Excavation Director briefs all personnel involved in the project about the requirements of the NSW 'Heritage Act 1977' in relation to the proposed archaeological programme. This briefing should be undertaken prior to the commencement of on-site demolition or excavation works.
9. The Applicant must ensure that the nominated Excavation Director is given adequate resources to allow full and detailed recording to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council.
10. The Applicant must ensure that the unexcavated artefacts, structures and features are not subject to deterioration, damage or destruction.
11. The Applicant must ensure that the nominated Excavation Director cleans, stabilises, identifies, labels, catalogues and stores any artefacts uncovered from the site in a way that allows them to be retrieved according to both type and provenance. In the event that site contamination precludes compliance with this condition, then the Applicant and Excavation Director must contact the Heritage Council or its delegate for advice about an alternate strategy for recording of artefacts.
12. The Applicant is responsible for the safe-keeping of all relics recovered from the site.
13. The Applicant must ensure that a summary of the results of the fieldwork, up to 500 words in length is submitted to the Heritage Council or its delegate within one (1) month of the completion of archaeological fieldwork.
14. The Applicant must ensure that the final report is prepared by the nominated Excavation Director, to publication standard, within one (1) year of the conclusion of the project unless an extension of time is approved by the Heritage Council of NSW. Two hard copies of this report must be submitted to the NSW Heritage Branch. One copy should also be submitted to the NSW Heritage Branch in CD-Rom format. A further copy must be lodged in the Local Council local library or another appropriate local repository.
15. The Heritage Council of NSW requires that the final report shall include:
 - a) An executive summary
 - b) Due credit to the client paying for the excavation on the title page
 - c) An accurate site location and site plan
 - d) Historical research, references, and bibliography
 - e) Detailed information on the excavation including the aim, the context for the excavation, procedures, analysis, treatment of artefacts (cleaning, conserving, sorting, cataloguing, labelling, scale drawings, photographs, repository)
 - f) Nominated repository for the items


- g) Detailed response to research questions
 - h) Details of how this information about this excavation has been publicly disseminated
16. Should any Aboriginal 'objects' be uncovered by the work, excavation or disturbance of the area is to stop immediately and the Environment Protection and Regulation Group of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water is to be informed in accordance with Section 91 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974. Aboriginal 'objects' must be managed in accordance with an approved permit under Section 87 or Section 90 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.
17. An Interpretation Plan for the area is to be updated following the completion of archaeological works at the site, and submitted for the approval of the Heritage Council or its delegate. The recommendations of the approved Interpretation Plan shall be implemented by the Applicant or by agreement, with the site owner, along with the decontamination and remediation works or within a period of one year whichever is earlier.
18. This approval shall be void if the activity to which it refers is not physically commenced within five years after the date of the approval or within the period of consent specified in the relevant development consent granted under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979, whichever occurs first.

The above conditions have been imposed to ensure compatibility of the proposed work with the existing heritage qualities of the item and to ensure consistency with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*. Your attention is drawn to the right of appeal against these conditions.

It should be noted that an approval under the Heritage Act is additional to that which may be required from other Local Government and State Government Authorities.

If you have any questions regarding the above matter please contact Siobhan Lavelle at the Heritage Branch, Department of Planning, using the contact details on this letter.

Yours sincerely



13/05/10

Vincent Sicari
Manager, Conservation Team
Heritage Branch
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AS DELEGATE OF THE NSW HERITAGE COUNCIL

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