



Figure A.28 The stacking out and reclaim coal conveyors. The lower, 'thin' conveyor is the stacking out coal conveyor, while the larger, upper conveyor is the incoming reclaimed coal conveyor. Note the concrete foundations for the conveyor stanchions (Source: Lockett 2004:371).

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NSW Heritage Branch, State Heritage Inventory

http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_04.cfm

NSW Department of Lands, Spatial Information Exchange

<http://imagery.maps.nsw.gov.au/>

Appendix B: Heritage Inventories

Heritage Branch Inventory – Hexham to Minmi Railway

Heritage Branch Inventory – Hexham Railway Station

Heritage Branch Inventory – Richmond Main Colliery


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Minmi To Hexham Railway

Item

Name of Item: Minmi To Hexham Railway

Type of Item: Built

Group/Collection: Transport - Rail

Category: Railway

Primary Address: Minmi, NSW 2287

Local Govt. Area: Newcastle

Property Description:

Lot/Volume Code	Lot/Volume Number	Section Number	Plan/Folio Code	Plan/Folio Number
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Boundary: Refer to curtilage diagram in Image 10

All Addresses

Street Address	Suburb/Town	LGA	Parish	County	Type
	Minmi	Newcastle	Hexham	Northumberland	Primary

Owner/s

Organisation Name	Owner Category	Date Ownership Updated
Newcastle City Council	Local Government	

Statement of Significance

The Minmi to Hexham Railway is of state historical significance as a rare example of a mid-nineteenth century private colliery railway whose route remains highly visible in the landscape today. Constructed by John Eales to transport coal from his Minmi Colliery to coal loading facilities at Hexham, the railway is associated with an important phase in Newcastle's and the state's economic history, particularly the growth of private satellite mining towns around Newcastle from the mid-nineteenth century, which made a significant contribution to the local, state and national economy via coal production and export. The Railway and mining operations were run from the late 1850s by James and Alexander Brown, founders of an empire – J & A Brown & Abermain Seaham Collieries Ltd - that became the state's largest coal producer and which continues, as Coal and Allied Industries Ltd, to be one of Australia's major mining and industrial enterprises. The Railway was an integral part of the Browns' Minmi Colliery and associated operations from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, facilitating the transport and export of coal and other products nationally and internationally via the port of Newcastle. The Railway, together with its immediate surrounds have research significance at a state level for their potential to yield information regarding the construction and operation of the railway and associated mining, industrial and coal

loading activities in one of NSW's most important coal producing regions.

Date Significance Updated: 10 Jun 08

Note: There are incomplete details for a number of items listed in NSW. The Heritage Branch intends to develop or upgrade statements of significance and other information for these items as resources become available.

Description

Designer/Maker: John Eales, John Higham

Builder/Maker: John Higham

Construction Years: 1854 - 1857

Physical Description: The line of the Minmi to Hexham Railway is marked on current maps (see images) and the raised embankment, tracing the line is visible (at least in part) on the outskirts of Minmi township, and when viewed from the air (Google Earth). It seems that much of the line is overgrown with grass, and that the embankments are the only physical remains of the railway, however it is possible that parts of the rail lines remain, or may be uncovered by archaeological examination. It appears that some of the railway cuttings also remain visible in Minmi township and are listed on the SHI as a separate item (2170139). A detailed physical inspection of the site was not possible within the current study.

The original railway route left Eales' mine at Minmi, travelled northwards, paralleling the Woodford Road for about half a mile, where it turned northeast and crossed Woodford Road. It then travelled in a straight line for some four miles, mainly across swamplands to Hexham. About half a mile from the Hunter River, the line turned to the east, ending at the banks of the Hunter River at Hexham, approximately six miles and five chains from Minmi. As most of the rail line travelled across low and swampy ground, embankments had to be built up with sand fill to elevate the railway. The rails were 65 lb per yard and double headed, while on inclined sections of the line, the rails were steel-faced. The sleepers were spaced two feet six inches apart. As the major part of the railway was on swamp lands, the foundations were provided using the same method as the road for teams - i.e. by laying bushes and logs on the swamp and covering with suitable material for formation of the railway. (Andrews, 2007, pp 18-20).

Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential: The embankments of the Railway are visible, and the line is distinguishable across the landscape, however no rail lines were present at the area examined in this study. However, further detailed investigation is required to determine the nature and condition of surviving relics. **Date Condition Updated:** 10 Jun 08

Modifications and Dates: The route of the railway was altered slightly in subsequent years at both the Hexham and Minmi ends. Originally, when the railway reached Minmi after crossing the swamp in a straight line, it turned southwards, climbed the small ridge separating Minmi and Back Creeks and followed the natural contours of the ground to reach Eales' Mine. Sometime after the introduction of steam locomotives, it was found that the grade to the ridge was too steep for locomotive haulage and the line was diverted around the side of the hill to the mine, providing a uniform grade into Minmi from the level section across the swamp (Andrews, 2007, pp 18-20). 1859 - Minmi to Hexham Railway connected to the Great Northern Railway about 300 yards on the Newcastle side of the right-angle crossing of the Great Northern Railway. 'Exchange Sidings' constructed at this location, on the Upside of the Minmi to Hexham Railway. Initially two sidings were constructed, consisting of a main line and run-around loop. 1860s, 1870s & 1890s - additional sidings constructed in association with

expansion and development of colliery and coke works at Minmi; and workshops and coal loading facilities at Hexham. By 1900, there were seven sidings and one loop had been constructed off the Minmi line proper on the northern side. 1944 - locomotive shed to house the locomotives required for the loading staithes, workshops and exchange sidings built near Hexham adjacent to the Minmi to Hexham main line near where it crossed the Department of Railways tracks. Rails between the loco shed and sidings were completed in June 1944. 1949 - Minmi Open Cut operations established. To coincide with this, the laying of another siding (number 9) commenced. (Andrews, 2007, pp 113-114, 139)

Further Information:

Detailed physical inspection & archaeological investigation required.

Former Use:

Colliery Railway; Passenger & Goods Railway

History

Historical Notes:

The Minmi-Hexham railway line was a private railway line constructed at the instigation of John Eales in 1853 to transport coal from mines in the Minmi area to Hexham, where it was shipped in small vessels to Sydney and elsewhere.

Coal mining in Newcastle was first carried out by the government using convict labour, until the Australian Agricultural Company took over this enterprise in 1828 on a grant of 2,000 acres west of Newcastle. The A.A. Company's monopoly on coal mining continued until the 1840s, when this began to be challenged by enterprising miners, including Scottish immigrant, James Brown. From the 1840s onwards, mining in the Hunter region was opened up to private enterprise. (Hunter, 1997, p 2)

Land grants in the lower Hunter Valley began in the 1820s and the extensive Hexham Swamp area was first used for agricultural and pastoral activities. Minmi began as a cattle station in the 1830s, when John Eales took up large grants in the area. Eales was also a director of Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, established in 1839. While coal was not produced there on a large scale until the 1850s, a Mr William Coombes, an old resident of the Wallsend district, worked an outcrop there from the early 1830s, carting the coal from his small mine to Maitland to supply the blacksmiths operating there. During the late 1840s, Coombes met three miners - Jackson, Nixon and Tulip, who had been engaged with the Australian Agricultural Company for seven years. After leaving the Company, they had been working on tribute for about a year at a mine near Morpeth. Looking for a more lucrative opportunity, they collaborated with Coombes, sinking a shaft near the spot where he got his coal. However, desperately in need of capital to develop the mine to its full potential, the three decided to offer their mine to John Eales, who had been operating mines at Four Mile Creek during the 1840s. Eales purchased the parcel of Crown land on which Messrs Tulip, Jackson and Nixon's mine was located on 1 June 1853 and also bought them out. The shaft was situated on the western side of the ridge separating the Minmi and Back Creeks. (Suters Architects, 2007, p 28; Andrews, 2007, pp 16-17; Hunter, 1997, p 2).

Initially, the coal was carted from the mine to Maitland by bullock teams via Woodford, and to Hexham around the foothills of Blackhill where these joined the swamps. Where possible, short cuts were taken over the swamps, and a road of saplings and brush was formed over sections of the swamps to allow the teams to take the shortest route to Hexham. Carting coal by teams, however, was expensive, and too slow, and so shortly after the temporary road was built, Eales conceived the idea of constructing a railway line between Minmi and Hexham. (Andrews, 2007, p 17)

A route for the Minmi to Hexham railway was surveyed and construction of the line had begun by September 1853. The route ran across land owned by William Dougal Christie, William Charles Wentworth, John Malcolm, James Mitchell and a parcel of Crown land. The landowners conceded to the construction of the railway across their lands as they believed that it would generally enhance the value of their properties. Construction of the line started from Hexham as agreements to cross the lands were granted towards Minmi; however, once all approvals were obtained, construction took place from both ends, working towards the middle. In order to effect the route over John Malcolm's land it was necessary to implement an act of Parliament as the railway was beneficial to the Colony of NSW. A private bill entitled Minmi and Hexham Railway Bill (1854) requesting authorisation for continuation of the Minmi to Hexham Railway was presented to the Government for enactment. On 5 September 1854 the Bill was referred to a Select Committee. Petitioners to the Committee, included John Malcolm, James and Alexander Brown, who argued for sufficient compensation and that the whole Railway should be thrown open to public use upon payment of a reasonable toll. The Browns had 640 acres of coal land at Minmi and, together with Eales' land, Andrew Brown estimated that more than 9 million tons of coal was available. Mining 400 tons per day, he anticipated 70 years of coal production at Minmi. These estimates were not soundly based however. (Andrews, 2007, p 19)

A representative of the Hunter River Railway Company, whose planned line, which became the Great Northern Railway, was to be crossed by the Minmi-Hexham Railway, gave evidence that the Company would not oppose formation of the new line, on certain conditions. Those conditions included the requirement that promoters of the new railway should erect a station house upon their land for a signalman, who was to be kept permanently at that place. The Report of the Select Committee was presented to the Government on 6 October 1854, subject to a number of conditions. One of these conditions was that the land required for the railway was not to exceed 66 feet in width and was to be limited to surface alone. The Minmi and Hexham Railway Act (1854) was passed on 7 November 1854. (Andrews, 2007, pp 19-20)

The route of the Minmi to Hexham Railway left Eales' mine at Minmi, travelled northwards, paralleling the Woodford Road for about half a mile, where it turned northeast and crossed Woodford Road. It then travelled in a straight line for some four miles, mainly across swamplands to Hexham. About half a mile from the Hunter River, the line turned to the east, ending at the banks of the Hunter River at Hexham, approximately six miles and five chains from Minmi. John Eales stated that it was impossible to construct a railway to the Hunter River in any other direction than the one proposed, due to the cost of circumnavigating swamplands, and that a railway crossing the swamps had to be in a straight line. During construction of the line, large amounts of fill material were needed to make the embankments to take the railway across the swamp and low level ground on the outskirts of Minmi. Fill was obtained from the side of the hill about two miles from Minmi, at the location that became known later as the 'Sand Cutting'. The route of the railway was altered slightly in subsequent years at both the Hexham and Minmi ends. Originally, when the railway reached Minmi after crossing the swamp in a straight line, it turned southwards, climbed the small ridge separating Minmi and Back Creeks and followed the natural contours of the ground to reach Eales' Mine. Sometime after the introduction of steam locomotives, it was found that the grade to the ridge was too steep for locomotive haulage and the line was diverted around the side of the hill to the mine, providing a uniform grade into Minmi from the level section across the swamp (Andrews, 2007, pp 18-20).

John Higham, Surveyor and Civil Engineer, who had been involved with railway construction in England, and was also engaged in surveying the Hunter River Railway route, was responsible for constructing the Minmi to Hexham rail line. Due to the greater cost involved in moving minerals and coal compared to passenger traffic, the railway was constructed with iron, rather than the usual wooden rails. The rails were 65 lb per yard and double headed, while on inclined sections of the line, the rails were steel-faced. The sleepers were spaced two feet six inches apart. As the major part of the railway was on swamp lands, the foundations were provided using the same method as the road for teams - i.e. by laying bushes and logs on the swamp and covering with suitable material for formation of the railway. (Andrews, 2007, p 18)

Construction of the Minmi to Hexham Railway preceded the Hunter River Railway. The first stage of the great Northern Railway (Hunter River Railway) between Newcastle and East Maitland, was begun in 1854, however the contract for the section between Honeysuckle Point and Hexham was not awarded until October 1854. After the Hunter River Railway Company went bankrupt, the Government stepped in to complete the railway to Maitland. The railway was officially opened by Governor Sir William Denison on 30 March 1857 and as the line was gradually extended through the Hunter Valley and into northern New South Wales, taking 25 years to reach Tamworth, Newcastle served as the Port of an expanding region. Simultaneously, private railways facilitated the transport of coal to the port, permitting the opening of new mines. As well as Minmi, other collieries with private rail lines were established at Wallsend, Lambton, and Waratah within a decade, thereby laying the foundations of Newcastle's key role in the Australian economy. The network of private colliery steam railways and the Great Northern Railway permitted the rapid development of the Borehole mines and their associated townships in the following decade. Minmi (1856), Waratah (1856), Wallsend (1859), Plattsburg (1861), Lambton (1863) and New Lambton (1867) joined the older centres of Merewether (1849) and Hamilton (1849) to create Newcastle's first ring of colliery towns. (Suters Architects, 2007, pp 5, 28; Andrews, 2007, p 18).

By late December 1856, although the safe working facilities at the crossing of the Great Northern Railway had not been constructed, the 'Maitland Mercury' reported that 'Mr Eales' coal railway, which comes on the river close by the Hexham Hotel, is so nearly finished that the coal trucks are being placed on it, ready for use. Two fine wharves are in course of construction, and will, with the railway, afford great facilities for the loading of vessels from Minmi coal works.' Eales had been moving his coal from Minmi to Hexham along the railway formation after completion of the line across Malcolm's land during early 1855. Coal wagons were assembled in workshops, consisting of a carpenter's shop and engineer's shop, which Eales had constructed at Hexham adjacent to the two coal staithes. Eales' wagon fleet consisted of ten Chaldron (fixed hopper) type wagons. In the early years of the railway's operation, bullocks moved the wagons to and from Hexham until two steam locomotives built by R. W. Hawthorn were placed in service. Following the arrival of the steam locomotives, Eales built a loco shed at the western side of the Minmi line proper, serviced by a short siding facing trains to Hexham. Once the railway line was completed, shoots were erected at the wharves and the mine put into thorough working order. (Andrews, 2007, pp 20-21).

Coke was more valuable than coal, and so Eales established a coke works adjacent to his mine at Minmi, comprising seven 'beehive' type coke ovens, serviced by a short siding from the main line proper to

Hexham. Coal was loaded at the screens and transported to the coke ovens, where it was fed into the ovens for baking into coke. The coke ovens were located on the western side of the railway line below the loco shed. (Andrews, 2007, p 21)

Eales' operations were going smoothly until miners demanded an advance of 6 pence per ton above the old hewing price of 3 shillings per ton. Miners began a strike, but Eales gave in to their demands. However, at the expiration of a large contract, Eales notified miners that the rate would return to 3 shillings per ton after a certain date. A strike ensued, and Eales, who had built 25 houses for miners, gave them notice to leave their homes. Many left willingly, but some refused. The mine was closed and remained so for over twelve months. Grass grew over the railway line and Minmi appeared dissolute. (Andrews, 2007, p 21)

On 3 March 1859, James and Alexander Brown purchased Eales colliery and coal lands at Minmi, together with the Minmi Railway, engines and all plant and wharves; as well as 50 acres of adjoining land at Hexham, for 41,000 pounds. The Browns had purchased two parcels of Crown land at Minmi adjacent to and north-west of Eales' Mine in October 1853, with a view to exploiting the Minmi coal seams in that area. They intended to use Eales' Minmi to Hexham Railway to transport their coal, but when Eales demanded 6 pence per ton per mile to move their production, the Browns considered this unreasonable and were prevented from developing their Minmi lands and so they continued operations on their Burwood Estate. During May 1857 James Brown purchased another area of land at Minmi and intended to open a new pit, close to Eales' Minmi works. No major development of this land occurred, however, apart from sinking a shaft, until the 1870s. By purchasing Eales' operations, the Browns obtained an established coal mine which allowed them immediate access to coal. When the Browns took possession of Eales' Mine, it consisted of three shafts, located on the Minmi Creek side of the ridge separating Minmi and Back Creeks. The Browns further developed the mines that Eales had begun, including construction of additional rail sidings. (Andrews, 2007, pp 22-23).

Following their purchase of the Minmi Coal Works, the Browns applied for the necessary wharfage accommodation at Newcastle to enable them to load their coal there. Upon securing this accommodation, they applied for and were granted permission to connect their Minmi to Hexham Railway with the Great Northern Railway at Hexham. This connection was completed during early June 1859 and the first coal was despatched to Newcastle on 10 June 1859. The connection joined the Great Northern Railway about 300 yards on the Newcastle side of their right-angle crossing of the Great Northern Railway. To enable the exchange of traffic between the two systems, it was necessary to construct 'Exchange Sidings' at this location, on the Upside of the Minmi to Hexham Railway. Initially two sidings were constructed, consisting of a main line and run-around loop. By the turn of the century, there were seven sidings and one loop had been constructed off the Minmi line proper on the northern side. The Exchange Sidings were known as the Colliery Sidings. The Browns subsequently lobbied for improvements to coal loading facilities and to the condition of the Great Northern Railway, which, was considerably out of gauge and causing damage to their rolling stock. (Andrews, 2007, pp 24-25, 111)

J. & A. Brown opened another pit, known as 'C' Pit west of the existing 'A' and 'B' pits and the railway was extended by about 300 yards from 'B' Pit, to the new facilities, which were operating by July 1861. Increased production at the collieries meant higher demand for coke and so the Browns expanded the Coke Works at Minmi, which eventually consisted of 32 ovens, with a capacity of approximately

5,000 tons of coke per year. The ovens were serviced by rail sidings on each side of the ovens; the sidings joined into the main line to Hexham and faced trains destined for Minmi. As demand for coke increased, other companies built and operated coke works in the Wallsend area from the mid-1870s. By the mid-1890s, the Minmi Coke Works were ageing and in need of repair, however, with competition from other coke companies, rebuilding the ovens was not warranted and the works closed in June 1898. The ovens were demolished at the beginning of World War 1. (Andrews, 2007, pp 25-28)

As well as their mining operations, the Browns decided to branch out into the heavy engineering field to take advantage of the work required for the developing coal and shipping industries. A large workshop was established at Minmi adjacent to the C Pit facilities, commencing operations in May 1861 (Andrews, 2007, p 28). The Minmi to Hexham Railway was used for transporting machinery to and from the workshops.

By the early 1860s, the Minmi coal works were considered equal to any in New South Wales at that time Messrs Brown were capable of supplying one half of the demand for the whole colony with the best coal and coke available. They were hampered, however, from delivering their products because of restrictions placed on steam cranes which were under construction at the Government wharves at Newcastle, which gave the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company sole operating rights for six months. For the Browns to be able to ship their increased production, they had to construct extra loading facilities at Hexham. They envisaged construction of another five shoots at Hexham, to the south of the existing facilities. This necessitated an act of parliament to obtain land on which to build the facilities adjacent to the loading staithes at Hexham. A Private Bill - the 'Minmi and Hexham Railway Act Amendment Act' - was passed in May 1861, allowing the Browns access to additional parcels of land at Hexham to construct the additional loading facilities on the northern side of those existing. After one staithe was completed, the Browns decided that it was more expedient to purchase a dropship in Newcastle Harbour and transport their coal by barge down the Hunter River from Hexham. (Andrews, 2007, pp 28-30).

The Browns increased the output of the Minmi Colliery from 44,000 tons in 1860 to 111,000 tons in 1862. This increase in sales was achieved by reducing prices and by shipping coal on their own account to New Zealand, China and North America as well as to colonial ports. (J. W. Turner, 'Brown, James (1816 - 1894)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Online Edition, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030240b.htm>) By the latter months of 1862, the Browns decided to form a company to take over the Minmi Colliery to broaden the scope of the undertaking. The newly formed Melbourne and Newcastle Minmi Coal Company took over the colliery, plant, rolling stock and stock in trade from James and Alexander Brown. The Company prospered until disaster struck in June 1864 when, during a heavy storm, the workings below Minmi Creek gave way and were inundated with water. All operations were suspended and workers moved onto the Australian Agricultural Company, the Waratah Coal Company and Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company. Financial difficulties resulted in the Melbourne & Newcastle Minmi Coal Company being wound up and the Colliery and associated works reverted to the Browns. By September 1869 many of the Minmi miners had transferred to J & A Brown's New Lambton Colliery and no coal was produced at Minmi after this year. While coal mining ceased at Minmi until the 1870s, the workshops remained in operation, as did the railway, moving the equipment manufactured or repaired in the workshops between Minmi and Hexham. (Andrews,

2007, pp 32-35)

James Brown returned to Minmi in 1873, reaching an agreement with John Eales Junior, who was pressing the Browns for settlement of debts owed to his father, following his death in 1871. For 10,000 pounds Eales cancelled the mortgage and transferred the Minmi properties to the Browns. They named their Minmi properties Duckenfield after John Eales' Senior's estate, Duckenfield Park, near Raymond Terrace. Following the Browns' return, an extra loading staithe was constructed adjacent to and north of the existing facilities on land obtained under the 'Minmi and Hexham Railway Act Amendment Act' in 1861. In the 1870s the Browns expanded the Hexham Workshops, to carry out repair works to ships which couldn't be handled by the Minmi Workshops. By 1895 the workshops at Hexham consisted of an Engineer's shop, Carpenter's shop and a timber storage shed. The rail sidings serving the workshop area consisted of a single track across the Main Northern Road forming two sidings on the wharf where a stationary crane was fitted. The workshops were further expanded throughout the early twentieth century, stimulating the growth of Hexham as a town. (Andrews, 2007, pp 35, 135, 136)

Messrs J & A Brown regularly provided excursions for the employees at the Duckenfield Colliery and their families and friends, transporting people between Minmi and Hexham on their own trains. By the early 1890s the people of Minmi had requested the New South Wales Railways to operate a goods and passenger service between Minmi and Newcastle. Their request was finally granted, and passenger trains began running between Minmi and Newcastle from 12 September 1892. These services were operated by the NSW Railways until 1897 when they were taken over and operated by J & A Brown. The Browns operated the services between Minmi and Hexham hiring carriages from the NSW Railways. The service terminated at Hexham and passengers had to complete their journey to Newcastle operated by the Government Railways. In November 1911 the Browns purchased five obsolete carriages for use on the service, eliminating the need to hire them. Sometime after this, however, the passenger service was terminated. By the early 1920s goods traffic was still being consigned to Minmi and in late 1920 the passenger service between Hexham and Minmi resumed on Pay Saturdays and public holidays only. J & A Brown provided the locomotive and guard, while the carriages were supplied by the Government. The service continued to operate until the closure of Brown's Colliery at Minmi in February 1924. Goods traffic to Minmi would also have ceased around this time (Andrews, 2007, pp 383-384).

In 1910, quadruplication of the main lines to Maitland meant further changes to the rail lines at Hexham. By this time, three extra loop sidings had been constructed along the northern side of the Minmi to Hexham Railway to store traffic destined for the Staithes. The facilities at Hexham serviced the Browns' other collieries in the area, including Abermain Seaham, Pelaw Main and Richmond Vale Collieries. The workshops also carried out repairs to locomotives belonging to other companies operating in the Newcastle area. (Andrews, 2007, pp 111-113, 139).

The last Minmi mine closed in 1925, and the workshop facilities also closed and transferred to Hexham, while the locomotive depot closed in 1934. A locomotive shed was built near Hexham adjacent to the Minmi to Hexham main line near where it crossed the Department of Railways tracks to house the locomotives required for the loading staithes, workshops and exchange sidings. Rails between the loco shed and sidings were completed in June 1944. In 1949, the Minmi Open Cut operations were established. To coincide with this, the laying of another siding (number 9) commenced in 1949. (Andrews,

2007, pp 113-114, 139)

Coal mining, the railway and associated operations had a strong impact on the development of the townships of Minmi and Hexham. After flourishing in the early 1860s, Minmi town had virtually closed between 1865 and 1870, then grew to about 5000 in 1895 before a rapid decline after 1913. According to the census of 1911 there were 1708 people living in Minmi and this figure was reduced to 832 at the next census in 1921. A decade later the police estimated that there were 472 residents in the district, a total very similar in 1950. The sharp decline between 1921 and 1931 may be attributed to the closure in 1925 of the last Minmi mine. (Suters Architects, 2007, p 29)

Between 1843 and 1886 James and Alexander Brown produced more than three million tons of coal and so well established their firm that by 1914 its total output exceeded sixteen million tons, about 8 per cent of the total production of New South Wales for the period. Following the death of James Brown in 1894, his son John managed J. & A. Brown until his death in 1930. After John's death, the J & A Brown firm merged with Abermain Seaham Collieries Ltd, and the company, J & A Brown & Abermain Seaham Collieries Ltd became the largest single producer of coal in New South Wales. In 1960 this company merged with Caledonian Collieries Ltd. to form Coal & Allied Industries Ltd. J & A Brown & Abermain Seaham Collieries Ltd continued as a subsidiary company of Coal & Allied Industries, operating as its mining division until 1980 when the name was changed to Coal & Allied Operations Pty. Ltd. The latter is now managed by Rio Tinto Coal Australia. (Turner, ADB Online, 2006; Andrews, 2007, p 12) Coal & Allied website: http://www.coalandallied.com.au/index_whoare.asp)

The workshops at Hexham continued to expand in the mid-1970s. However, with the downturn in underground coal mining from the mid-1980s, the workshops' business declined and they closed in November 1989. (Andrews, 2007, p 143)

The line of the Minmi to Hexham Railway remains readable in the landscape today. Parts of its raised embankments are visible from ground level on the outskirts of Minmi; the line is marked on some road maps; and aerial shots of the area, available on Google Earth show clearly the line running across the Hexham Swamp area from Minmi to Hexham. While remains of other colliery railways exist in the Newcastle region - for example, the Waratah Railway at Lambton; the Scottish Australian Co. Railway at Broadmeadow; and Duckenfield Colliery Railway relics - the Minmi to Hexham Railway is rare in that much of its route is so intact and visible. Further physical and archaeological investigations are recommended for this site, which potentially, could yield rich material relating to the operations of the railway and associated mining and industrial activities.

Historic Themes

Australian Theme (abbrev)	New South Wales Theme	Local Theme
1. Environment - Tracing the evolution of a continent's special environments	Environment - naturally evolved - Activities associated with the physical surroundings that support human life and influence or shape human cultures.	(none) -
3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Commerce - Activities relating to buying, selling and exchanging goods and services	(none) -
3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Environment - cultural landscape - Activities associated with the interactions between humans, human societies and the shaping of their physical surroundings	(none) -

3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Industry - Activities associated with the manufacture, production and distribution of goods	(none) -
3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Mining - Activities associated with the identification, extraction, processing and distribution of mineral ores, precious stones and other such inorganic substances.	(none) -
3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Transport - Activities associated with the moving of people and goods from one place to another, and systems for the provision of such movements	(none) -
4. Settlement - Building settlements, towns and cities	Towns, suburbs and villages - Activities associated with creating, planning and managing urban functions, landscapes and lifestyles in towns, suburbs and villages	(none) -
8. Culture - Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Leisure - Activities associated with recreation and relaxation	(none) -
9. Phases of Life - Marking the phases of life	Persons - Activities of, and associations with, identifiable individuals, families and communal groups	(none) -

Assessment of Significance

SHR Criteria a)

[Historical Significance]

The Minmi to Hexham Railway is historically significant at a state level for its association with a key phase in Newcastle's and New South Wales' economic history. As an item of transport infrastructure the railway contributed to the development of the townships of Minmi and Hexham, which, with other satellite coal producing and industrial regions around Newcastle, had an enormous impact on the region's contribution to the state and national economy. In the mid and late nineteenth century, and early twentieth century, Minmi mines produced a substantial proportion of the state's coal and coke output and the railway facilitated the transport of these products for export in NSW, Australia and overseas. The Railway was also instrumental in the operations of associated industrial activities, particularly the Minmi and Hexham workshops, servicing rail and shipping infrastructure. The Railway thus represents the historic themes of mining, industry and transport at a state level.

The Railway is also historically significant at a local level having functioned as a passenger and goods railway from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. It played an important role in the social and leisure activities of local residents of Minmi, connecting them with transport links to Newcastle and beyond.

SHR Criteria b)

[Associative Significance]

The Minmi to Hexham Railway has associative significance at a state level for its association with prominent individuals, including John Eales, who founded the railway and was instrumental in establishing the Minmi coal fields and the resulting settlement. John Higham, who was responsible for the railway's design and construction, was an accomplished railway engineer, who was also involved with the design of the Great Northern Railway. The Minmi to Hexham Railway was owned and operated from the late 1850s by James and Alexander Brown, whose coal mining and associated operations at Minmi made a substantial contribution to the local, state and national economy. The Browns were highly significant figures in the coal industry, founding an empire which evolved to become J & A Brown & Abermain Seaham Collieries Ltd, which became the largest single producer of coal in New South Wales. A more recent incarnation of this empire, Coal & Allied Industries Ltd., remains one of Australia's major mining and industrial enterprises, now managed by Rio Tinto Coal Australia.

SHR Criteria c)

[Aesthetic Significance]

The Minmi to Hexham Railway is of aesthetic and technical significance at a local level, with its route and construction demonstrating adaptation to the natural environment in which it is set. Its construction on raised embankments due to the swampy and low-lying terrain it traversed, has contributed to the continued

SHR Criteria d) [Social Significance]	survival of the line's route from the mid-nineteenth century as a visible part of the landscape and hence, its rarity. While this aspect of significance has not been investigated within the limited scope of this study, it is likely that the Minmi to Hexham Railway has social significance among locals as a distinctive feature of the landscape and history of the Minmi and Hexham area; for those with knowledge and interest in railway history; and for descendants of those who lived and worked in the locality during the heyday of the mining era when the railway was in operation.
SHR Criteria e) [Research Potential]	The Minmi to Hexham Railway site and its immediate surrounds are of research significance at a state level due to their archaeological potential. There is a high probability that remains of the railway and the associated mining and industrial structures that existed close to the line exist and would be capable of yielding information regarding nineteenth and early twentieth century coal mining and industrial technology and processes, as well as transportation networks.
SHR Criteria f) [Rarity]	The Minmi to Hexham Railway is rare as one of few remnants of a private colliery rail line in NSW associated with one of the earliest coal mining operations that established one of a number of satellite mining towns around Newcastle from the 1850s, and which contributed significantly to the local, state and national economy. It is extremely rare in the state as much of its route is still capable of being read in the landscape today.
SHR Criteria g) [Representativeness]	The Minmi to Hexham Railway is representative of private colliery railways established in mining regions across the state from the mid nineteenth century.
Integrity/Intactness: Assessment Criteria	High Items are assessed against the  State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

Recommended Management

A detailed physical inspection of the site and, ideally, an archaeological investigation of the site and surrounds should be carried out in order to determine precisely the extent of any surviving physical evidence of the railway and associated works.

The Railway should be considered with other relics associated with mining activities at Minmi, including the former railway cuttings in Woodford Street, Minmi (SHI Item 2170139) and the Duckenfield colliery relics, also listed on the Newcastle LEP.

Recommendations

Management Category	Description	Date Updated
Recommended Management	Carry out an Archaeological Assessment	10 Jun 08

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Local Environmental Plan			08 Aug 03	124	7679
Heritage study					

Study Details

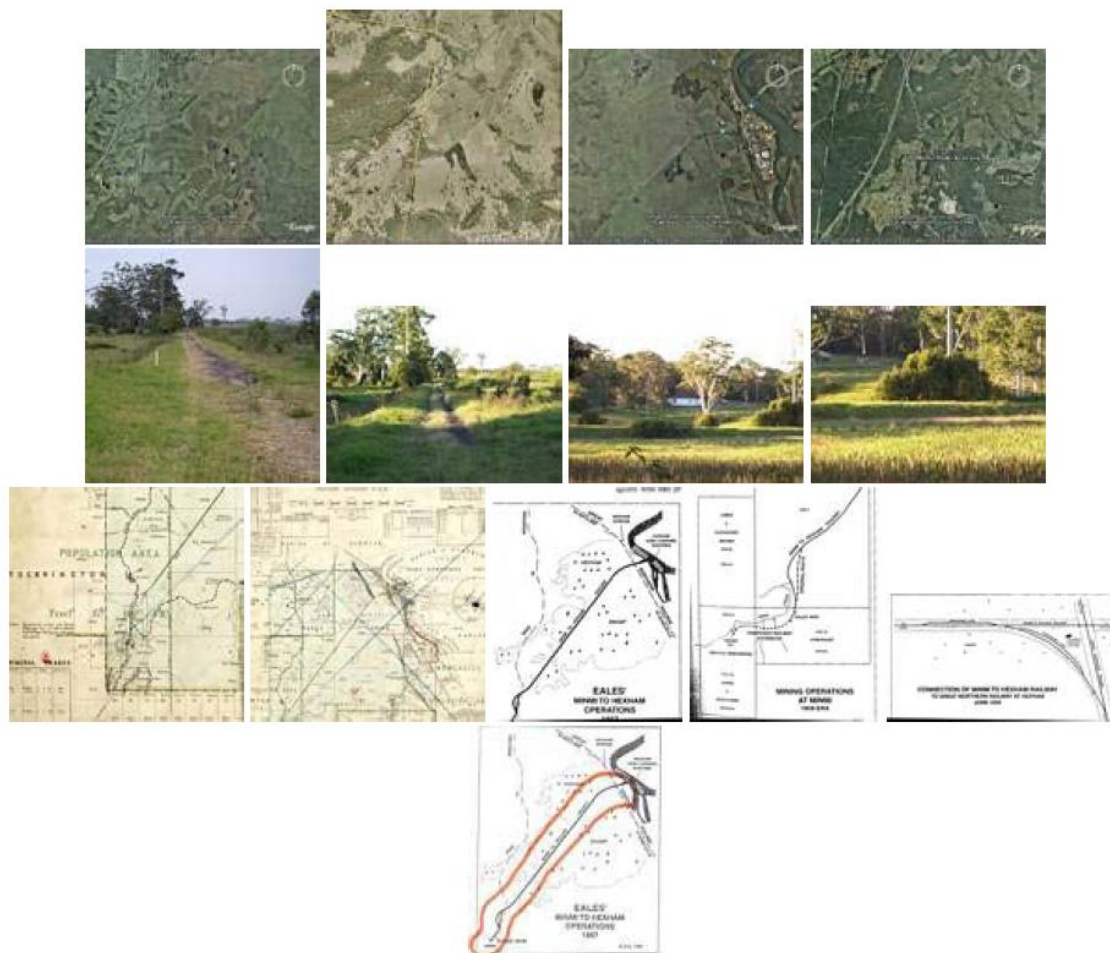
Title	Year Number	Author	Inspected	Guidelines
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				by	Used
Review of Items of Potential State Significance in the Newcastle City Area	2008		Sue Rosen and Associates Heritage Assessment And History (HAAH)		Yes

References, Internet links & Images

Type	Author	Year	Title	Internet Links
Written	Suters Architects	2007	Newcastle City Wide Heritage Study Thematic History	
Written	Andrews, Brian Robert	2007	Coal, Railways and Mines: The Story of the Railways and Collieries of J & A Brown	
Written	Turner, J. W.	2006	'Brown, James (1816 - 1894)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Online Edition	
Written	Hunter, Cynthia	1997	Minmi Cemetery History Context Report	
Written			Coal & Allied website	

Note: Internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.



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Railway Station

Item

Name of Item: Railway Station
Type of Item: Built
Group/Collection: Transport - Rail
Category: Railway
Primary Address: Maitland Road, Hexham, NSW 2322
Local Govt. Area: Newcastle

Property Description:

Lot/Volume Code	Lot/Volume Number	Section Number	Plan/Folio Code	Plan/Folio Number
Boundary: HEXH.002 Field survey number 0576				

All Addresses

Street Address	Suburb/Town	LGA	Parish	County	Type
Maitland Road	Hexham	Newcastle			Primary

Owner/s

Organisation Name	Owner Category	Date Ownership Updated
Newcastle City Council	Local Government	

Statement of Significance

Characteristic of the technology available to local industry. Associated with the development of the railway

Note: There are incomplete details for a number of items listed in NSW. The Heritage Branch intends to develop or upgrade statements of significance and other information for these items as resources become available.

Description

Physical Description: Single storey buildings in drop-slab construction with precast concrete posts and slabs. The building sits high off natural ground on a masonry wall construction with trap door leading to basement, presumably to avoid flood inundation. Another similar building is sited a few metres away with wide eaves overhang and corrugated metal sheets over a simple hipped structure.

Further Information: Action - further research required.

Current Use: Signal Box?

Historic Themes

Australian Theme (abbrev)	New South Wales Theme	Local Theme

3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Transport - Activities associated with the moving of people and goods from one place to another, and systems for the provision of such movements	(none) -
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Assessment of Significance

SHR Criteria a) Local representative
[Historical Significance]

SHR Criteria e) Local representative
[Research Potential]

SHR Criteria g) This item is assessed as historically representatively locally. This item is assessed as scientifically representatively locally.
[Representativeness]

Assessment Criteria Items are assessed against the  **State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria** to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Local Environmental Plan			08 Aug 03	124	7679
Heritage study					

Study Details

Title	Year	Number	Author	Inspected by	Guidelines Used
Newcastle City Wide Heritage Study	1996	HEXH.002	Suters Architects Snell	SA	Yes

References, Internet links & Images

None

Note: Internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.



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Richmond Main Colliery

Item

Name of Item: Richmond Main Colliery
Other Name/s: Richmond Vale Colliery; South Maitland Railway (SMR)
Type of Item: Complex / Group
Group/Collection: Mining and Mineral Processing
Category: Other - Mining & Mineral Processing
Location: Lat:151.47908454 Long:-32.85805712
Primary Address: South Maitland Coalfields, Kurri Kurri, NSW 2327
Local Govt. Area: Cessnock

Property Description:

Lot/Volume Code	Lot/Volume Number	Section Number	Plan/Folio Code	Plan/Folio Number
LOT	31	-	DP	594396

All Addresses

Street Address	Suburb/Town	LGA	Parish	County	Type
South Maitland Coalfields	Kurri Kurri	Cessnock	Stanford	Northumberland	Primary
	Cessnock	Cessnock	Stanford	Northumberland	Alternate

Owner/s

Organisation Name	Owner Category	Date Ownership Updated
Cessnock City Council	Local Government	24 Mar 99

Statement of Significance

The cultural significance of the former Richmond Main Colliery in its surviving condition relies more on the complex as an expression of a particular era of region, industrial and social history than on the integrity of the remaining empty structures. That era is the rapid and shortlived heyday of the establishment and development of the South Maitland coalfields in the first half of the twentieth century and of the mining communities and transportation networks that evolved to support that industry. While Richmond Main can claim some degree of cultural significance in its own right, primarily through its links to John Brown and his intentions for it, its real strength lies in its ability to become that expression to present and future generations. (Civic & Civic 1983: 104)

Note: There are incomplete details for a number of items listed in NSW. The Heritage Branch intends to develop or upgrade statements of significance and other information for these items as resources become available.

Description

Designer/Maker: John Brown
Builder/Maker: The J & A Brown Company

Construction Years:	1908 - 1913
Physical Description:	ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - Free standing, two storey building of late Victorian residential design. The building has a simple rectangular plan form with a long central corridor on each floor. External materials consisted of face brick with some detailing in the form of window arches and sills. The main roof is slate and the timber framed verandah is a bull-nosed, corrugated, galvanised iron roof. PASSENGER RAIL PLATFORM - simple brick retaining wall and earth filled platform. COOLING TOWER DAM - Set into the ground with a brick perimeter wall and sloped wall concrete lining below ground. SOUTHERN COOLING TOWERS - no description EASTERN COOLING TOWERS - Freestanding steel framed structures with lower members encased in concrete and supported on concrete foundation piers. A concrete lined pool is at the base of the towers. The walls are timber lined with the lower section lining in the form of timber louvres. A series of timber racks and slats are constructed inside the towers for the lower third of the height. UNDER MANAGERS OFFICE - Small, freestanding single storey structure of rectangular plan and simple pitched roof. External walls are in Richmond Main red face bricks. There are no internal fittings and fixtures remaining from its original use. MAIN SHAFT BUILDING - A two storey concrete construction with arched openings at ground level and arched windows. Internal and external walls are made of mass concrete with some steel reinforcement. Architectural details include pilasters, gables and arched windows. A metal stairway leads to the first floor which is primarily timber planks on steel. The roof is of light angle steel trusses with timber purlins and corrugated iron sheeting. SCREENS & BINS AREA - Pillars of reinforced concrete MAIN POWER HOUSE COMPLEX TURBINE & GENERATOR ROOM - truncated 'T' shaped plan, two storeys with steel trussed roof. This building set the trend for the architectural elements of later buildings with the use of faced brick with expressed plinth and pilasters, arched windows, gable ends with bulls eye windows and general detailing. A gable end porch extension extends to the west with a double stairway. It is tiled with ceramic, imported tiles. BOILER ROOM - A steel framed, corrugated iron sheeted structure with basement adjacent to, and north east of, the turbine room. The internal spaces are filled with the furnace, boiler equipment and controls, ladders, platforms and walkways. There is an additional group of buildings to the southeast of the turbine room, previously the location of the southern bank of original boilers. These buildings have spaced columns and a later east wall with loading dock and canopy and workshop accommodation. LOCO SHED & STORE - The shed is a two single storey Richmond main red face brick buildings with gable end walls joined by an infill section. There are two large arched doors in each gabled wall. The store has a north elevation. Both have steel trussed roofs with slate covering. WORKSHOPS - These are a long , low single storey building constructed of brick. The roof is pitched with several cross gables indicating staging and gabled end walls. The original centre section has large member timber trusses. TRANSFORMER BUILDING - It is two storeys with face brick detailing in Richmond main red and a gabled roof. Adjacent to the building is the later external transformer compound. FAN COMPRESSOR BUILDING - Original portion is on the northern end and is

constructed with Richmond main red face brick with typical detailing but not the gabled end walls. The roof is made of timber trusses and slate tiles. The southern, later section is tiled with imported ceramic tiles and has an annex on the southern elevation.

EMERGENCY FAN WINDER - A free standing single volume building constructed of red face bricks with typical detailing, including gabled end walls.

FAN VENTILATION BUILDING & SHAFT - A tall, free standing concrete framed structure with red face brick infill panels and glazed walls on the eastern elevation. The main winding machine floor is at first floor level. The ventilation duct connection to the shaft is located underground in the form of a gentle sweeping curve. The building is built over the ventilation shaft for the mine. The drift entry is open and the walls are brick lined. A steel tube column supports the tunnel roof.

GRAIN SILOS - Of concrete construction
(Civic & Civic 1983: 67-75)

**Physical Condition
and/or
Archaeological
Potential:**

Condition is fair Archaeological potential at carriage shed site- low

**Modifications and
Dates:**

1908-1913 - initial construction stage - Power House complex and main shaft built.
1914-21 - increase of ancillary buildings on site, including main ventilation machinery over old shaft
1921-25 - expansion of several buildings, including Fan Building.
Passenger rail platform constructed. 1926-28 - replacement of boiler installation and the sinking of a third shaft with the attendant pit top structures (Civic & Civic 1982)
1980s - rail line relaid

Current Use:

Open air museum

Former Use:

Coal mining

History

Historical Notes:

The Richmond Main Colliery was one of the largest and most important shaft mines of the early twentieth century. It is situated in what was formerly known as the Richmond Vale area because of the large estate 'Richmond Vale'. This area has become more widely known as the South Maitland coal field. It straddles the land owned by Charles William Roemer, one of the first German immigrant settlers, and Arthur Mackenzie whose land included that granted to Lieutenant John Palmer, a purser on the 'Sirius', in 1823.

The area was used for farming and grazing until the 1880s and the discovery of rich coal seams by the government geologist Tannat William Edgeworth David. The coal reserves became known as the Greta Measures. Reports on the seam were made public on the eve of a mining boom and entrepreneurs were quick to exploit his work. One of the first was John Scholey who proved the existence of two seams below the Richmond Vale Estate in 1888. He sold the property to a Melbourne syndicate, the Richmond Vale Coal Company, who began to sink the first shaft in 1890 but did not complete the job. This was probably due to the severe economic depression that was developing. The syndicate was unable to sell the property until 1897 when it was bought by John Brown, managing director and part owner of the firm J & A Brown. (Turner 1983: 8-9) Little is known of what took place at the Richmond site between this purchase and 1906. (Brooks 1983: 31) What is known is that despite being equal partners with his two brothers, he had sole control of the firm and more power than any other single person has ever had in the Australian coal industry. This placed him in a unique position to develop the Richmond site.

Construction on the Colliery commenced in 1908. John Brown spent large sums to ensure that his mining plant, colliery railways, steamships and engineering works were substantially built and in the forefront of technological development. He pioneered the mechanisation of coal cutting on the South Maitland field and persevered with the machines in the face of opposition.

In 1913 the first commercial coal production took place. The mine's main shaft was 22

feet in diameter and bricked from top to bottom and has been described as incomparable with any other in the country, even in its final days. (Turner 1983:8-9)

The Colliery reached peak annual production in 1928 with 507 000 tons of saleable coal. The 1929 Lockout followed by the Great Depression, the 1949 strike, a recession in the coal industry and the change to mechanisation in the 1950s and 1960s were major setbacks which the colliery, and the South Maitland field generally, would not recover from.

On 7 July 1967 the Richmond Colliery ceased operation leaving eighty mine workers unemployed. This was a far smaller number than the 1200 who had been employed at the site in the late 1920s. The colliery continued to supply power to the state grid until 1976. Maintenance problems and the salvage value of much of the equipment resulted in the stripping out of the machinery and the demolition of the main head frames. (Brooks 1983:27 & 51)

The Richmond Vale Preservation Co-op Society Ltd was formed in the 1980s. It has been instrumental in returning some of the buildings and structures to their operating function in order to restore and maintain steam rolling stock and carriages and the rail line has been relaid. (Fenwick 1995:1)

Historic Themes

Australian Theme (abbrev)	New South Wales Theme	Local Theme
3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies	Mining - Activities associated with the identification, extraction, processing and distribution of mineral ores, precious stones and other such inorganic substances.	(none) -
5. Working - Working	Labour - Activities associated with work practises and organised and unorganised labour	(none) -

Assessment of Significance

SHR Criteria a) [Historical Significance]	Richmond Main gains its historical significance from its strong associations with John Brown, its importance as a strong component within the South Maitland collieries and the resulting development of a large regional community in the coalfields area. Much of the surviving fabric pertains to the use of the buildings in the early decades of the twentieth century, maintaining the continuity of these links. While some evidence has been destroyed, sufficient remains to form a valuable interpretive backdrop to the strong documentary evidence of the period. (Civic & Civic 1983: 102)
SHR Criteria c) [Aesthetic Significance]	Richmond Main can claim some degree of aesthetic value from the scale of the buildings in the complex, the relative unity of materials and the subtle use of continuing architectural themes through various building types. However, with the exception of the scale and the cooling towers, the complex is not a unique example of industrial architecture of the period or region. The intention of John Brown to make Richmond Main his flagship and the showpiece of the industry can be seen to give the complex, a degree of representation for those other collieries, even in its partially ruined state. (Civic & Civic 1983: 102)
SHR Criteria d) [Social Significance]	The development of the South Maitland coal fields led to the establishment of an entire community based on the townships of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri. Within the space of a decade the region was transformed from a rural backwater to a vital element in the state's resources of steaming coal. The collieries in the area have thus become an emerging focus of community consciousness as to its source of being. By itself, Richmond Main is perhaps no more important than any other single colliery within this ethos, but the continuation of a representative link back to this era is of considerable importance to those communities. (Civic & Civic 1983: 103)
SHR Criteria e) [Research Potential]	Without the usual constraints of existing investment or partially outdated facilities, John Brown was able to create Richmond Main as a corporate showpiece displaying 'state of the art' coal mining technology and electric power generation. Old technology replaced new technology several times, with mechanisation occurring in the 1950s. Despite this, there is still sufficient physical evidence to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of extensive documentary sources. This will enable Richmond Main to

become a valuable resource for regional and industrial history. (Civic & Civic 1983: 102)

Assessment Criteria Items are assessed against the  **State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria** to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

Procedures / Exemptions

Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date
57(2)	Exemption to allow work	Standard Exemptions	SCHEDULE OF STANDARD EXEMPTIONS HERITAGE ACT 1977 Notice of Order Under Section 57 (2) of the Heritage Act 1977 I, the Minister for Planning, pursuant to subsection 57(2) of the Heritage Act 1977, on the recommendation of the Heritage Council of New South Wales, do by this Order: 1. revoke the Schedule of Exemptions to subsection 57(1) of the Heritage Act made under subsection 57(2) and published in the Government Gazette on 22 February 2008; and 2. grant standard exemptions from subsection 57(1) of the Heritage Act 1977, described in the Schedule attached. FRANK SARTOR Minister for Planning Sydney, 11 July 2008 To view the schedule click on the Standard Exemptions for Works Requiring Heritage Council Approval link below.	Sep 5 2008

 **Standard Exemptions** for Works Requiring Heritage Council Approval

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Heritage Act - State Heritage Register		00016	02 Apr 99	27	1546
Heritage Act - Permanent Conservation Order - former		00016	21 Dec 79	184	6401
Regional Environmental Plan	Hunter REP		03 Nov 89	107	9345
Local Environmental Plan			03 Nov 89		
Register of the National Estate		00016	02 Aug 81	184	6401

References, Internet links & Images

Type	Author	Year	Title	Internet Links
Tourism	Attraction Homepage	2007	Richmond Main Colliery	Click here
Tourism	Tourism NSW	2007	Richmond Vale Railway Museum	Click here
Written	Paul Rheinberger (for Umwelt Pty Ltd)	2005	Study and Research Design: The Historical and Industrial Archaeology of the South Maitland Railway, at the site of a Proposed Underpass for the F3 Freeway at Loxford near Kurri Kurri, NSW	

