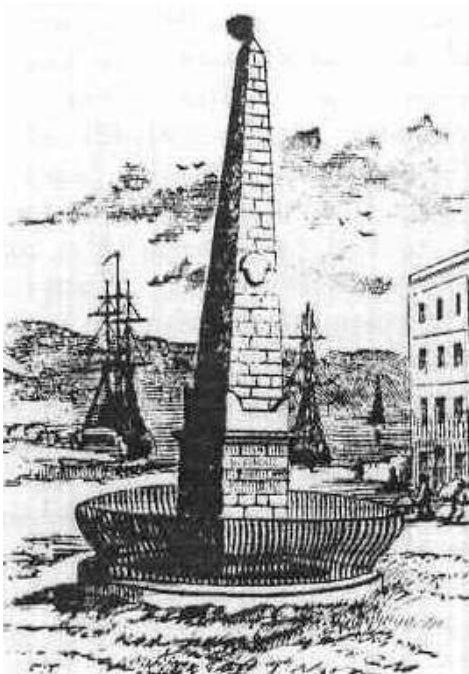


CONSERVATION ISSUES
THE OBELISK
MACQUARIE PLACE
SYDNEY



1840s



1890s



1930s

For
City of Sydney
August 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results

- The Obelisk, Macquarie Place has a State level of heritage significance.
- The obelisk's individual level of significance and its significance to the place warrants its conservation *in situ*.
- The obelisk is in a state of decay that involves the continuing loss of inscriptions and fabric. Drummy surfaces have exfoliated since last recorded in 1997.
- Research has shown that there has been replacement of the two base courses, recutting of the inscription, a stone indent replacing one section of an inscription and large drill holes.
- While many reports have been written in the last 30 years very little substantive conservation works have been undertaken on the monument.
- The long-term conservation of this monument of exceptional significance requires the Council of the City of Sydney to act speedily to implement a program of conservation.
- Council has a Conservation Plan endorsed by the NSW Heritage Council. The endorsed option is to conserve the obelisk *in situ*.

Recommendations

Recommended Option

1. This report recommends that the Obelisk, Macquarie Place should be conserved *in situ* and maintained (Option 3).
2. The obelisk's condition will need to be monitored and managed through a maintenance program.
3. The City of Sydney should adopt and endorse the recommended option of this report to conserve the obelisk *in situ* and maintain it into the future.
4. A program of works on the obelisk should commence as soon as possible so as to halt the continued disintegration of the monument.
5. The City of Sydney should request the NSW Heritage Council to endorse this report.

Consultation

There are now many stakeholders with a keen interest in ensuring the Obelisk is preserved by the most appropriate methods available to us today. These stakeholders will undoubtedly include the many multi-disciplinary specialists who have investigated and written reports on the monument over the last 30 years as well as interested members of the public.

It may be prudent for the City of Sydney to conduct a forum inviting all interested parties to discuss the specifics of how to approach the conservation work. It appears that previous attempts have stalled due to disagreement on the approach to treatment and a lack of available funds. To ensure that outcomes are achieved, the forum will need to be pose specific questions about the proposed treatment to enable the formulation of specifications to follow. Issues such as the possible replacement of the poorly executed 1960s indent, replacement/repair of the degraded cornice stones and how to resolve the inevitable loss of inscriptions as they continue to degrade and become illegible, may be appropriate starting points. This would encourage an open debate on the pros and cons of various theories and methods available for conserving the obelisk, which would enable Council to canvas the range of opinions and ultimately make an informed decision.

Further Investigations

Prior to preparing a specification, a thorough investigation of all surfaces of the sandstone will be required to determine the method and specific location of various treatments. This should be accompanied by measured drawings for the dual purposes of ensuring there are no misunderstandings about the level of treatment of each individual stone and to create a documented record of the proposed treatment for current and future reference.

Photographic Record

While the photogrammetry was undertaken to produce drawings (Appendix 6) the recommended detailed photographic record has not been undertaken.¹ This needs to be undertaken as part of the next stage of the project.

Existing Policies

The Conservation Plan (1996) has recommended a series of 80 policies for the future conservation and management of the obelisk. These policies have been endorsed by the Heritage Council but should be reviewed every five years. These need to be reviewed as part of the next stage of the project.

¹ Heritage Design Services, Dept of Public Works & Services 1996:80.

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Conservation Issues The Obelisk, Macquarie Place, Sydney

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Casey & Lowe were commissioned by the City of Sydney to review the conservation options for the Obelisk, Macquarie Place. The obelisk is located on the eastern edge of Macquarie Place (**Figs 1.1, 2.1**). As part of this project a new and more extensive history of the obelisk was written and a new statement of heritage significance developed based on existing statements, the new history and additional recent work. In addition the NSW Heritage Council have updated the heritage assessment criteria since the writing of the Conservation Plan (1996).

There are a series of previous reports and recordings addressing the conservation of the Obelisk, Macquarie Place. The main reports are:

- Insearch Ltd (1978) *Report on the Conservation of the Macquarie Place Obelisk*, by George Gibbons and J. Gordon.
- Cox, Tanner & Associates (1983) *A restoration report on the Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney for The Council of the City of Sydney*, National Estate Grants Program 79/80 Project No. 17, September 1981, for the City of Sydney.
- T.A. Taylor (1988) *Conservation report, 'The Obelisk', Macquarie Place, Sydney*, for Cox, Tanner & Associates on behalf of Sydney City Council.
- J.L. Heiman (1992) *Conservation report on Greenway Obelisk Macquarie Place for The Council of the City of Sydney*, CSIRO, August 1992.
- TAGMAC (1995) *Review of Conservation Options, The Obelisk, Macquarie Place, Sydney*, for NSW Heritage Council.²
- Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works (1996) *Final Draft Conservation Plan The Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW*, Heritage Group Report No. HG 96/02, January 1996.
- International Conservation Services for Heritage Group State Projects (1997) *Obelisk of distances. Investigation of condition and options for conservation*, for State Projects, DPWS on behalf of Council, September 1997.
- Detailed photographic and photogrammetry recording of Obelisk – CD-ROM files.³

Throughout this report we discuss Macquarie Place as well as the obelisk as they were conceived, designed and built together and therefore the obelisk is a significant and tangible part of the place. The typical name given to the obelisk in all Council files and other primary references is to the Obelisk, Macquarie Place or Macquarie Place Obelisk the name 'Obelisk of Distance' has not historical basis and appears to be a modern construction.

1.2 Methodology

The framework of this review process was to review all Council files, all existing reports, provide a overview of previous conservation practices, review statements of significance and a range of conservation options and identify the best option for the future management of the obelisk.

² Technical Advisory Group Materials Conservation, to the NSW Heritage Council.

³ Held in files in Council Archives record no. 48. (DPWS).

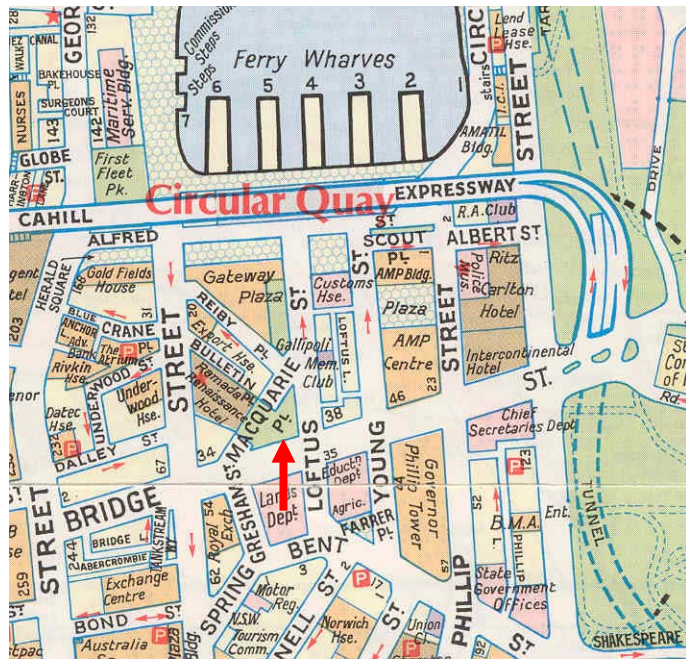


Figure 1.1: Location Plan.

1.3 Statutory Constraints and Heritage Lists

1.3.1 Central Sydney Heritage Local Environmental Plan 2000

Macquarie Place, Bridge and Loftus Streets, is a heritage landscape item (8001) listed on Schedule 3, HLEP 2000. This listing includes all of Macquarie Place except parts of the men's toilet. Therefore the obelisk is covered by this listing. Macquarie Place is also listed as part of the Bridge Street heritage streetscape.

Under Part 2, Section 7.1(b) development consent is required from Council for 'structural or non-structural alterations to the exterior or interior of a heritage item'. Section 7.2(c) is relevant if the 'proposed development is consistent with a plan of management, if it involves a heritage item identified in Schedule 3'. This is also applicable because of the endorsed Conservation Plan for the Obelisk.

1.3.2 Australian Heritage Commission Act and the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC)

The obelisk is registered on the Register of the National Estate as is Macquarie Place itself. This act affects items registered on the National Estate where Commonwealth Government decisions are involved. The AHC Act is likely to be repealed in the coming parliamentary year, 2003. The EPBC Act offers protection to registered heritage items through Sections 26 and 28. The nature and extent of this protection will change depending upon the nature of the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill which may go before the Senate in 2003. It is currently proposed that this bill will establish a new heritage regime for the Commonwealth. Under current legislation if there was to be a proposed impact on the obelisk or Macquarie Place resulting from a Commonwealth Government decision then the proponent would need to undertake a heritage assessment.

1.3.3 NSW Heritage Act 1977 (amended)

The obelisk and Macquarie Place are not listed on the State Heritage Register but because of their significance as an important item of State heritage they should be placed on this register.

1.3.4 National Trust of Australia (NSW)

The obelisk is listed by the National Trust.⁴ While this register provides no statutory protection the inclusion of a place on the register is usually seen as indicating its heritage significance. The National Trust will frequently be sought to give advice on a place listed on its register.

1.3.5 Survey Marker

The Obelisk, Macquarie Place is a designated survey mark and any proposal to relocate it would require consent from the Surveyor-General.⁵

1.4 Limitations

There was sufficient time and funding to adequately complete this report.

1.5 Author Identification

The project team consisted of:

Dr Rosemary Annable – historian

Dr Mary Casey – heritage specialist and archaeologist

Anne Cummins – materials conservation specialist

Sections 3 and 4 of this report were written by Dr Rosemary Annable, Sections 2 and 5 were written by Dr Mary Casey and Sections 6 and 8 were written by Anne Cummins. All contributed to the discussion, statement of significance and recommendations, Sections 7 and 9. Tony Lowe, Director of Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd, reviewed all sections of this report.

1.6 Acknowledgements

Brigette Leece – City of Sydney.

City of Sydney Archives – Ross, Renato, Angela and Dianna and were extremely helpful and efficient.

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Bill Evans, Heritage Survey Co-ordinator, Survey Services Section, RTA, Parramatta office.

Sue Rosen, historian.

Siobhan Lavelle, archaeologist.

Gunter Nerlich, German conservator.

Megan Jones and Scott MacArthur, Tanner Architects.

Margaret Betteridge, heritage specialist.

Tracy Ireland, heritage specialist.

1.7 Terminology⁶

Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites) is an internationally recognised charter for places of cultural significance and has been the basis of charters drawn up for other countries including the People's Republic of China.

Place means site, area, land, landscape, building or works, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

⁴ Inventory form included in Conservation Plan 1996, appendix 3.

⁵ Bill Evans, Heritage Survey Co-ordinator, Survey Services Section, RTA, Parramatta office.

⁶ The definitions used here are taken from the *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS (1999).

Fabric means all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects.

Conservation means all the process of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration and reconstruction.

Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state of retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Setting means the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment.

Related place means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a place.

Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

TAGMAC Technical Advisory Group Materials Conservation

1.8 Abbreviations

AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
EPBC	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
SRNSW	State Records of New South Wales
ML	Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
NL	National Library of Australia
SPF	Small pictures file, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

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2.0 Obelisk, Macquarie Place and its Setting

2.1 The Obelisk and the Setting

The obelisk is located on the eastern side of Macquarie Place Park on Loftus Street (Fig. 2.1). The obelisk is surrounded on three sides by a sandstone balustrade and steps. The park has a mixture of hard paved areas as well as grassed areas (Fig. 2.2, 2.3). The obelisk has a number of elements for which the terminology is illustrated in Figure 2.6. Two panels of the dado are inscribed (Figs 2.5, 2.8).

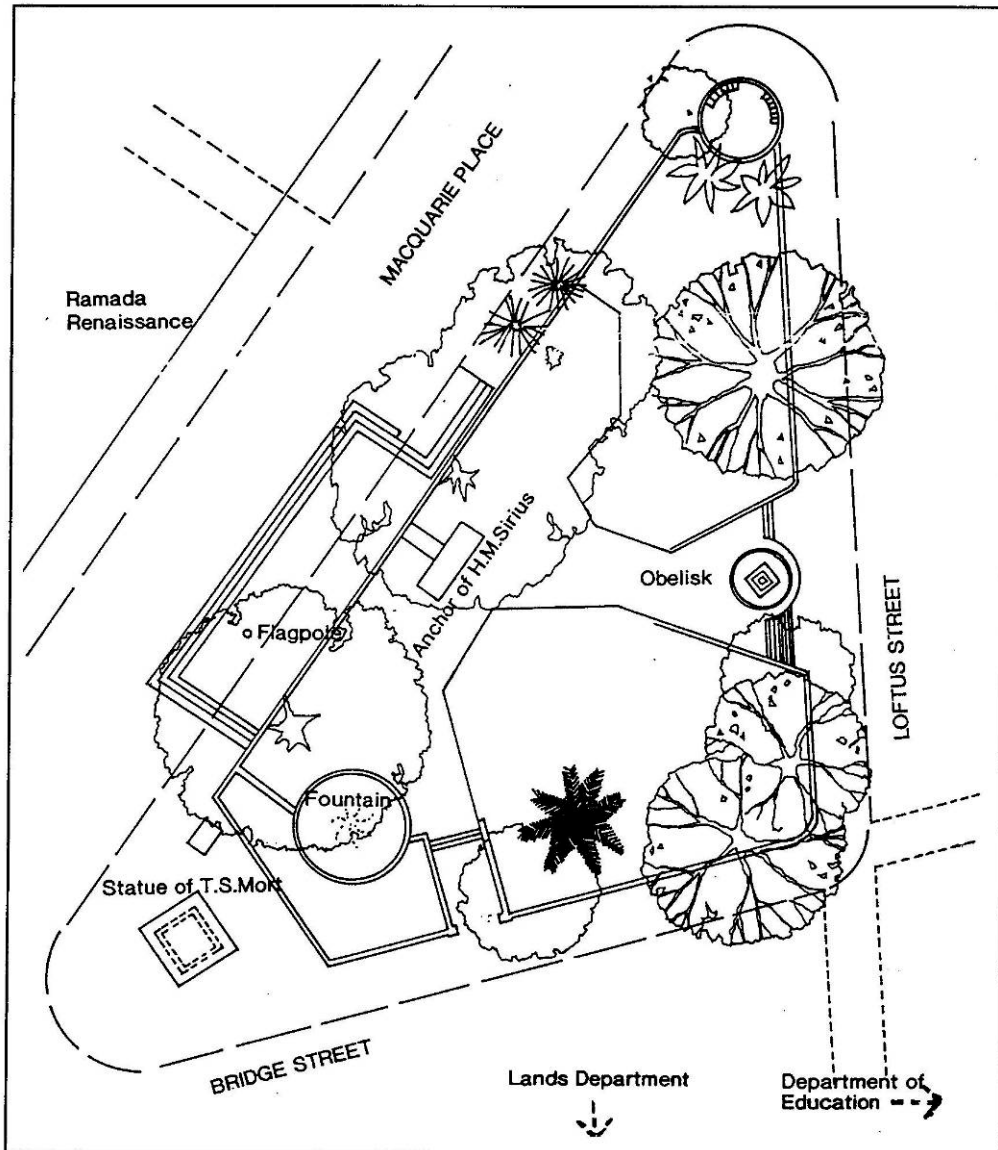


Figure 2.1: Plan of Macquarie Place showing the obelisk on the eastern edge. State Heritage Group, DPWS, 1996.

The obelisk is mounted on top of a pedestal, with a moulded base, dado and overhanging cornice (Fig. 2.6). At the base of the obelisk are eight fan-shaped acroteria, carved in relief. The obelisk tapers upwards ending with a pyramidal cap and has a blank cartouche on the southern face. One of the acroteria has been left blank. The inscription on the northern side of the dado



Figure 2.2: View to east showing the obelisk with the *Sirius* anchor on the left.



Figure 2.3: Obelisk looking east towards Loftus Street.



Figure 2.4: The obelisk looking southeast at the corner of Bridge and Loftus Streets.



Figure 2.5: Northern face with one of two panels of inscription. The pedestal base is exfoliating. Only one of the two visible acroteria has the carved fan decoration and the other is blank.

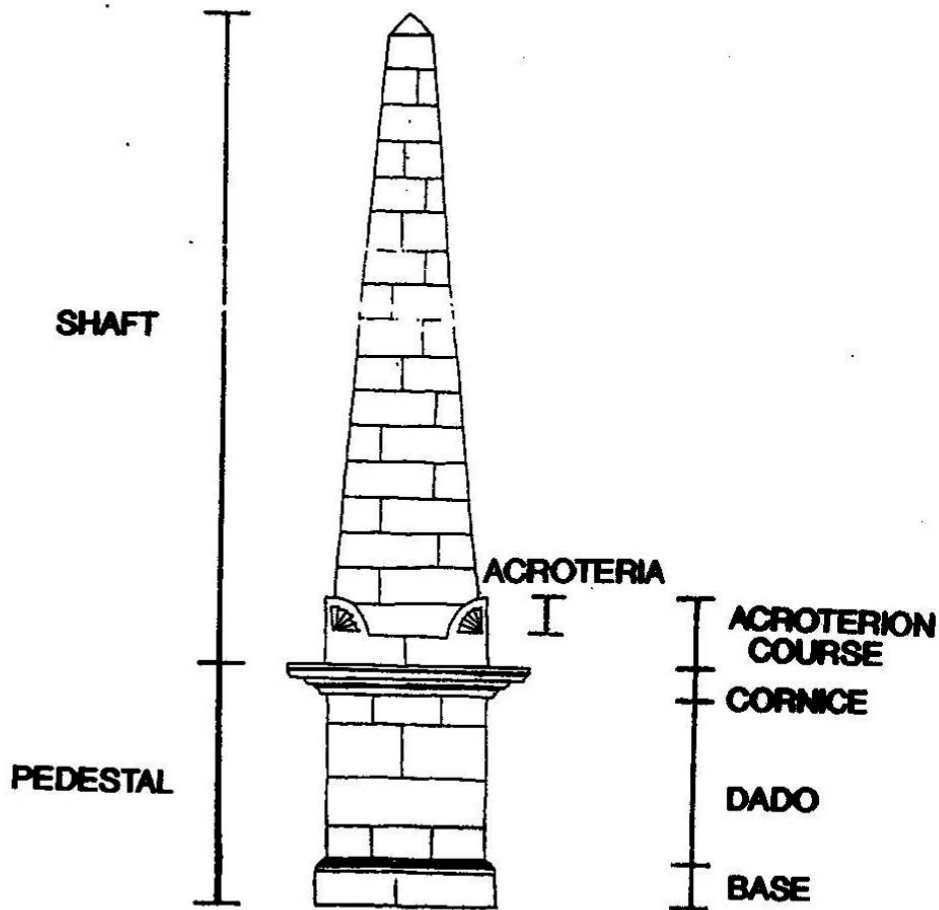


Figure 2.6:
Terminology
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Figure 2.7:
Western side
of Dado with
some
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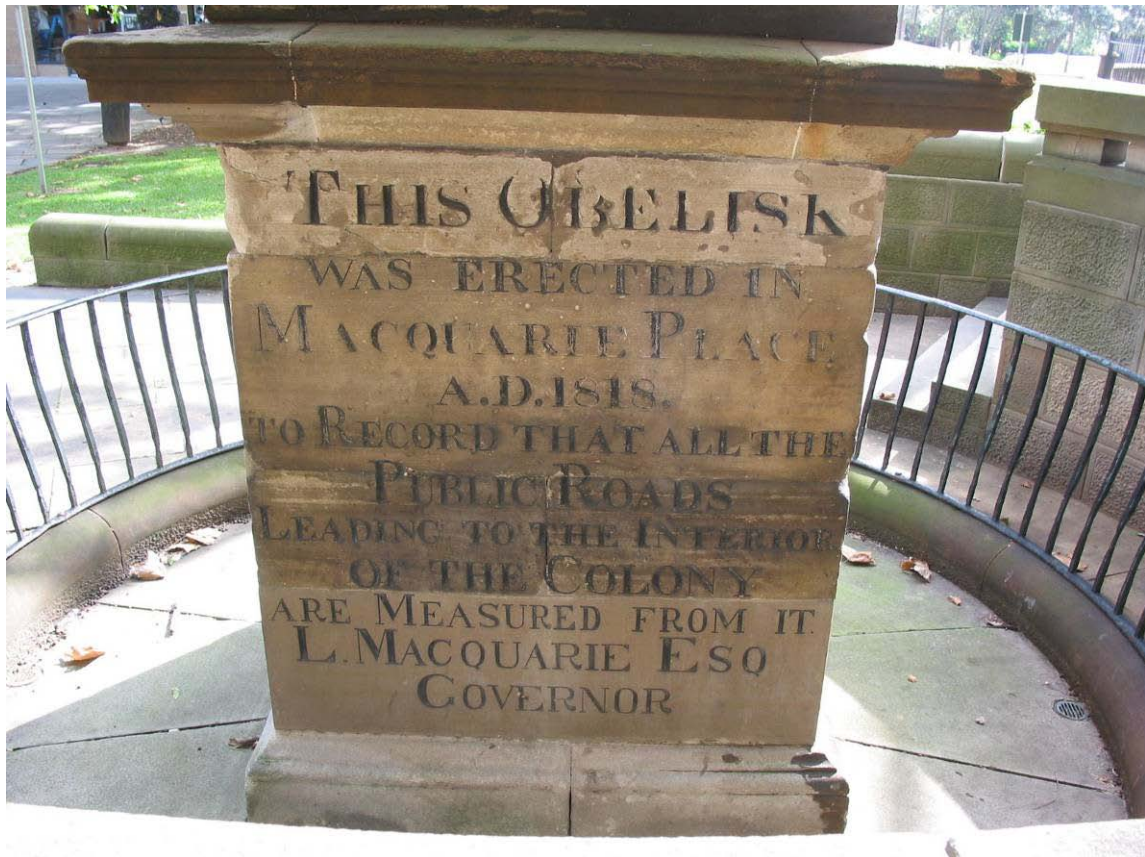


Figure 2.8: Text on southern side.

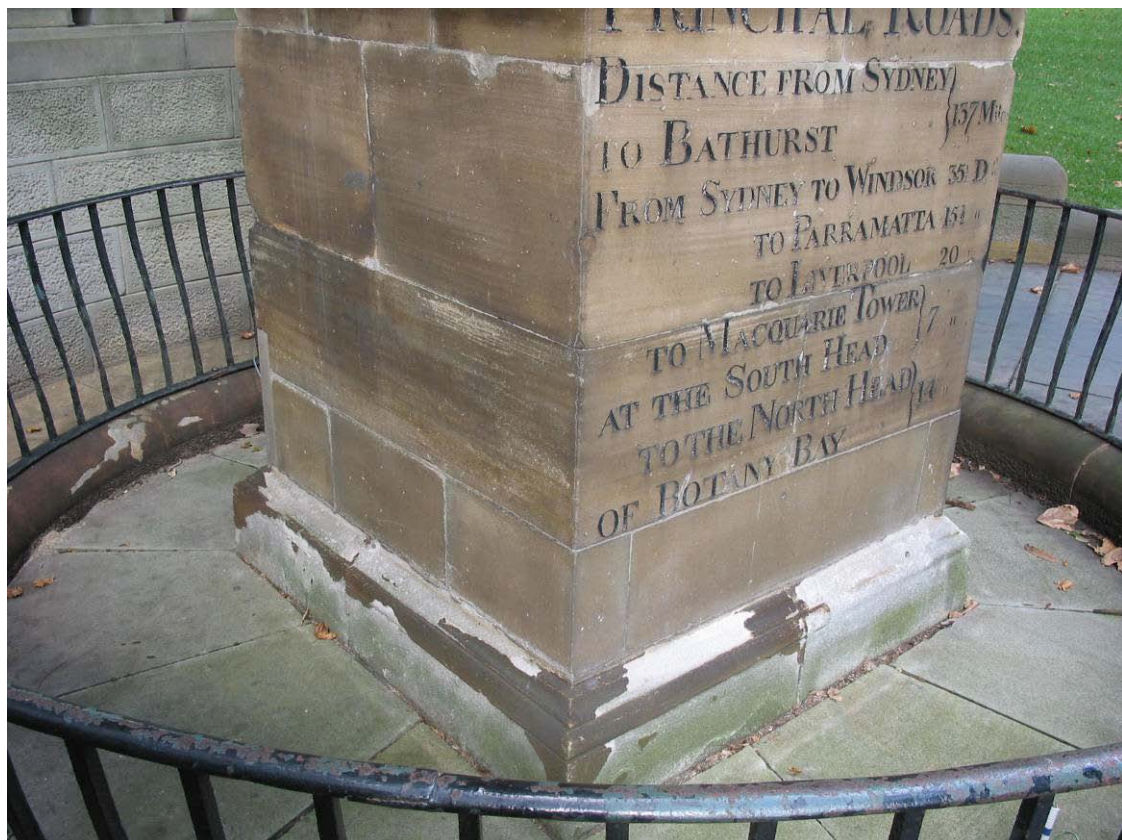


Figure 2.9: Northern and eastern faces of the dado and base.



Figure 2.10: View to south along Loftus Street.



Figure 2.11: View to north showing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

refers to the distances of the 'Principal Roads' from Sydney and the inscription on the southern face records that the roads were measured from the obelisk which was erected by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1818 A.D. The obelisk used to sit in the middle of a triangular square that was named Macquarie Place. The truncation of the park by subdividing the eastern side has reduced the size of Macquarie Place Park considerably.

The obelisk is a striking feature of the park from Loftus Street (**Figs 2.10, 2.11**) and from the western side of the park (**Figs 2.2, 2.3**). It presents a unusual contrast to the other monuments in the park, such as the *Sirius* anchor (**Fig. 2.2**) and Thomas Mort statute (**Fig. 2.1**).

3.0 Historical Background

3.1 Topography and settlement

For almost fifty years from its establishment in 1788, the form of the British settlement at Sydney Cove was largely determined by the topography of its harbour setting and by the exigencies of its role as a penal settlement. The dominant natural features of the cove were its spring of fresh water and good sheltered anchorage, which had determined Governor Phillip's choice of the place in preference to Botany Bay. The command structure of the settlement was its other major dynamic, expressed in physical form in the separation of its civil and military officers on either side of the stream and in the control of access to ships, stores and the waterfront. By December 1792 when Governor Phillip defined the boundaries of the settlement, the semblance of a plan had evolved. By 1802 it had extended and crystallised into a town plan, parts of which can still be recognised (**Fig. 2.1**). On the east side of the Tank Stream were Government House, a row of civil officers' houses to the west and three large government stores in close proximity to the Government Wharf. Running between these buildings three lines of road, from the bridge up to Government House, from the bridge along the shore line and from the side of Government House to the wharf, gave it a distinctive triangular form.⁷

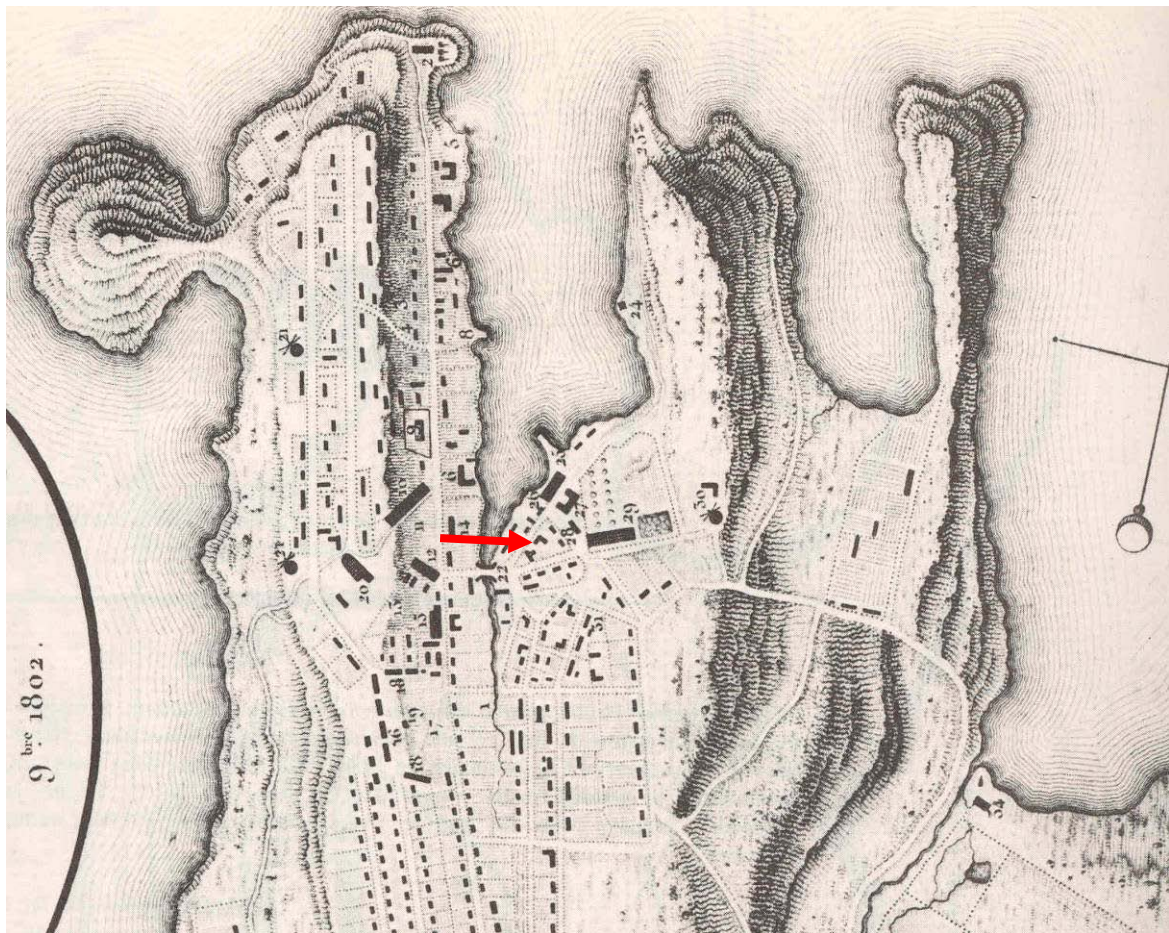


Figure 3.1: Sydney in 1802, drawn by Lesueur. The red arrow indicates the triangular space later called Macquarie Place. Kelly & Crocker (1978) *Sydney Takes Shape*.

⁷ M. Kelly & R. Crocker: *Sydney Takes Shape. A collection of contemporary maps from Foundation to Federation* (1978) pp 8-10.

While control of the waterfront was an essential component of the penal function of the settlement, this was rapidly challenged by private enterprise and trade, early features of Sydney society that provided ‘the keys to economic wealth and social success’.⁸ From 1792 town allotments in Sydney were available for lease and by the early 1800s enterprising individuals were building substantial residences and business premises for mercantile pursuits. In the absence of any prescribed town plan, even the important water frontages of Sydney Cove and the mouth of the Tank Stream were available and private traders were to be found interspersed between government buildings at the heart of the settlement. Some leases were even granted on the east side of the Tank Stream in close proximity to Government House. In 1794 Shadrach Shaw was granted a lease with an 80 foot frontage ‘on the south east side of Sydney Cove’, within the area that was later to become Macquarie Place. During Governor King’s administration, leases on the water frontage on the east side of the Tank Stream, north of the bridge, were given to Simeon Lord, Thomas Randal, Thomas Reiby and William Chapman.⁹ When Lord and Reiby built substantial business houses on their properties, these had street frontages facing southeast towards Government House while at the rear, their premises backed onto the waterfront at the mouth of the Tank Stream.

3.2 Guarding the Governor

At about the same time as these wealthy private individuals were building on their allotments; changes were made to the arrangements for guarding the approaches to Government House. The old guard house by the bridge was pulled down and a new main guard house was built further up the hill and opposite the Commissary’s office which was immediately to the west of Government House.¹⁰ Completed in 1806, the new guard house was set at the corner of the road from the bridge and a new line of road down to the wharf, effectively marking the boundary of the grounds of Government House and guarding its main entrance.¹¹ It also marked the southeast corner of the triangular piece of land between the civil officers’ houses, the grounds of Government House and the merchants’ houses. The guard house and the private leases are shown in Meehan’s survey of Sydney drawn in October 1807 (**Fig. 3.2**).¹²

In July 1807 Governor Bligh reminded the public of the ‘two lines of demarcation’ that had been drawn by Governor Phillip on the map of Sydney in 1792 and in particular of the area of land around Government House. This, Governor Bligh’s notice stated, was ‘land particularly marked out as making part of The Domain of the Governor’s Residence’.¹³ It was, in fact, the first time that the term ‘Domain’ had been used to describe this land and in combination with the phrase ‘of the Governor’s Residence’, its purpose was made quite clear. This was the estate of Government House whose quiet enjoyment the Governor considered to be his. Landscaping work was carried out, the ditch marking Phillip’s old boundary was re-dug and the Domain began to be defined as the exclusive preserve of the occupant of Government House. The new guard house could not however protect Governor Bligh from the four hundred-strong party that marched up the hill to Government House on the evening of 26 January 1808 and it was left to his successor to continue his work in the Domain.

⁸ G. Aplin & G. Parsons: ‘Maritime trade: shipping and the early colonial economy’ in G Aplin (ed) : *A difficult infant: Sydney before Macquarie* (1988) p 161.

⁹ R.J. Ryan (ed): *Land Grants 1788-1809* (1974) pp 241, 242 & 244.

¹⁰ The location of the old guard house is identified in Thomson’s ‘A View of Sydney Cove, New South Wales’ c.1800 in T. McCormick (ed): *First Views of Australia 1788-1825* (1987) Plates 54 & 55.

¹¹ *Sydney Gazette* 10 February 1805 p 4 a-b and 9 March 1806 p 2a.

¹² M. Kelly & R. Crocker: *Sydney Takes Shape. A collection of contemporary maps from Foundation to Federation* (1978) p 12.

¹³ *Sydney Gazette* 26 July 1807 p 1a.



Figure 3.2: James Meehan's Plan of the Town of Sydney, 1807. Kelly & Crocker (1978) *Sydney Takes Shape*.

3.3 'The Ornament and Regularity of the Town'

In October 1810, nine months after taking up office as Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales, Governor Lachlan Macquarie issued a number of orders intended to 'contribute to the Ornament and Regularity of the Town of Sydney, as well as to the Convenience, Accommodation, and Safety of the Inhabitants thereof'. The town was to be divided into a number of districts each with its own watch house, new 'regular and permanent names' were given to existing streets and a number of new streets and lanes 'recently formed and named' were also defined.¹⁴ In the process of regularising and adding to the town's street plan, the Governor also provided for a number of public spaces. The existing common was re-named Hyde Park and was to be for the 'Recreation and Amusement of the Inhabitants of the Town, and as a Field of Exercise for the Troops'; the area near the church would be made into a handsome 'Charlotte Square'; and the market would be moved to a new Market Square with its own wharf.

Close to the Governor's own residence it was intended 'to remove all those old Buildings and Inclosures now on that space of Ground which is bounded by the Government Domain on the East, by the Judge-Advocate's, Secretary's, Chaplain's, and Commissary's Houses on the South, by the Spring of Water and Stream on the West, and by the Houses of Mr. Lord, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Reiby on the North'. This space was to become an open area, was named 'Macquarie Place' and 'is henceforth to be so denominated'.¹⁵ The intention to create an open space that would be an ornament to the town was one of many improvements that were to be made under the Governor's direction over the next ten years. In the meantime 'Soldiers, Sailors, and Inhabitants of the Town'

¹⁴ *Sydney Gazette* 6 October 1810 pp 1-2 & 27 October 1810 p 2

¹⁵ *Sydney Gazette* 6 October 1810 p 1c

who had formerly bathed at all hours of the day at the Government Wharf (within view of Government House) were ordered to stop this ‘very indecent and improper Custom’ on pain of incarceration.¹⁶

3.4 Macquarie Place

Between 1810 and 1819 substantial changes were made to the area named Macquarie Place, to the enclave of civil officers’ residences that lined its southern side and to the ‘Domain of the Governor’s Residence’ to the east. In the process Government House became much more private and its surrounds much less publicly accessible than had formerly been the case. The first move in this direction saw the removal of the guard house that had been built just four years previously at the corner of what was now Macquarie Place. Its replacement was built immediately to the west of Government House across what had been the road down to the wharf and effectively cut off any access from the back of Government House to the cove, the wharf and the stores.¹⁷ On the south side of Macquarie Place, set back from it at some distance, new accommodation was provided for the Judge-Advocate Ellis Bent (1810-1812) the Governor’s Secretary, J. T. Campbell (1813), the Reverend William Cowper (1815) and for Judge Barron Field (1817). These new residences, two of which were built to pattern book designs probably chosen by Mrs Macquarie, lined the road from the bridge to Government House and formed an effective backdrop to the nascent Macquarie Place.¹⁸

On the other side of Government House a gentleman’s estate was being perfected. The boundaries of the Domain were secured with stone walls and paling fences, shrubberies, avenues of trees and an ornamental arcade of vines were planted and a new garden was established on the site of the old government farm. In 1816 the Domain was encompassed by Mrs Macquarie’s Road and could be enjoyed by ‘the respectable Class of persons ... for innocent Recreation during the Day Time’.¹⁹

Two weeks after the completion of this not inconsiderable task, its work force moved on to the next ornamental priority, as the Governor recorded in his diary:²⁰

Monday 1 July!

This Day Nicholas Delaney’s Gang of Labourers commenced clearing and levelling that Piece of Ground in the Town of Sydney, adjoining the Government Domain called “Macquarie Place”, preparatory to its being enclosed by a Dwarf Stone Wall and Paling in the form of a Triangle.

3.5 The Obelisk

With work begun on Macquarie Place, the Governor entered into a contract on 19 September 1816 with Edward Cureton, a stonemason and government overseer, for what was to be its central feature:²¹

‘to erect a very handsome Stone Obelisk in the Center of Macquarie Place, as an Ornament to this Part of the Town, and also for the purpose of measuring the Miles from to [sic] all the interior parts of the Colony. – The Obelisk is to be feet [sic] High

¹⁶ *Sydney Gazette* 6 October 1810 p 2b.

¹⁷ The new guard house can be seen in a panorama by Eyre published in 1812.

¹⁸ James Broadbent: *The Australian Colonial House. Architecture and Society in New South Wales 1788-1842* (1977) pp 31-47 & 49-56.

¹⁹ *Sydney Gazette* 17 October 1812 & 6 July 1816 p 1a and ‘List of buildings and works undertaken, now in progress or completed in new South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land since 1 Feb. 1810’ in Bigge Appendix Vol 133 p 57216 ff, Bonwick Transcripts BT 12 p 338 ff (Mitchell Library).

²⁰ Lachlan Macquarie’s diary entry for 1 July 1816, CYA 773 p 28 (Mitchell Library).

²¹ Lachlan Macquarie’s diary entry for 19 September 1816, CYA 773 p 46 (Mitchell Library).

from the Surface of the ground, including the Pedestal but not the foundation. – It is to cost Eighty five Pounds Sterling – and to be Completed within Six months from this date, according to the Plan & Elevation delivered to the contractor. – L.M.’

The ‘plan and estimate’ for the obelisk were supplied by the Civil Architect, Francis Greenway who also superintended the work.²² The inspiration for such an ornament, close to the harbour, may have been the obelisks at Rio de Janeiro, seen by the Macquaries during their voyage to New South Wales. But such embellishments were also a feature of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century gardens in Britain and the Orange Garden in Greenway’s native area of Bath could have inspired the design.²³ Payments for Cureton’s work indicate that the Governor’s timetable was somewhat over optimistic and that the obelisk was begun in the latter part of 1817 and completed by the end of 1818.²⁴ The following year Macquarie Place was enclosed with a palisade or fence and a dwarf stone wall was built by Cureton and fellow government overseer Ambrose Bryan.²⁵

Several of the smaller works effected during Macquarie’s administration were contracted out to skilled individuals, rather than being carried out by government labour, with entries in the Governor’s private diary constituting the only official record, other than the contract documents themselves. As a government overseer, Edward Cureton’s working days were fully occupied with his official duties. Extra jobs such as this were carried out on Saturdays using the assistance of convict workers who were allowed out of barracks to work on their own behalf and who would be paid by Cureton for their work.²⁶ Greenway’s estimate of the value of the work ‘done by Government & Cureton’ as £120 suggests that government labourers may also have contributed to the construction and erection of the obelisk, perhaps in quarrying and transporting the stone.²⁷

One other substantial and ornamental addition to the area was a large stone public fountain, built at the southwest corner of Macquarie Place but in the street, outside its enclosed boundary. This too was built by contract by Edward Cureton but took two attempts when Mrs Macquarie disapproved of, and stopped work on, one structure which was then completely demolished and replaced with another, built ‘to Mr Greenway’s plan & Direction’.²⁸ The fountain was built and decorated with classicising detail similar to the obelisk.²⁹

3.6 Edward Cureton stone mason

Edward Cureton was a stone mason by trade who, according to his own testimony, had ‘served seven years as a stone mason in Shrewsbury’ before he was sentenced to transportation for life in

²² ‘Estimate of work done by contract under the superintendence and direction of F.H. Greenway, Civil Architect’, Appendix to the Bigge Report, Mr Greenway, Colonial Office papers, CO201/133 p 114, PRO Reel 120, CY Reel 1378 (Mitchell Library).

²³ James Broadbent & Joy Hughes: *Francis Greenway Architect* (1997) pp 53-54 and M H Ellis: *Francis Greenway* (Famous Australian Lives Edition, 1978) p 49.

²⁴ Payments were made for the quarter ended 31 December 1817, D’Arcy Wentworth Police Reports and Accounts CY D1 p 172; on 20 October 1818, Lachlan Macquarie’s diary CYA 774 p 12; and a final payment ‘for completing the obelisk in Macquarie Place’ in the quarter ended 31 December 1818, NSW Government & General Orders 20 February 1819, A 339 p 9, CY Reel 986 (Mitchell Library).

²⁵ Payments to Cureton and Bryan for the wall and Warton for the fence in 1819, D’Arcy Wentworth Police Reports and Accounts CY D1 pp 195, 199 & 205 (Mitchell Library).

²⁶ Cureton described this arrangement for work on the Macquarie Place fountain in his evidence to Commissioner Bigge in January 1821, Bonwick Transcripts BT 1 p 415 (Mitchell Library).

²⁷ ‘Estimate of work done by contract under the superintendence and direction of F.H. Greenway, Civil Architect’, Appendix to the Bigge Report, Mr Greenway, Colonial Office papers, CO201/133 p 114, PRO Reel 120, CY Reel 1378 (Mitchell Library).

²⁸ James Broadbent & Joy Hughes: *Francis Greenway Architect* (1997) pp 62-63 and evidence of Edward Cureton to Commissioner Bigge, Bonwick Transcripts BT 1 p 411ff (Mitchell Library).

²⁹ This will be discussed further below.

March 1801 at Suffolk Assizes, arriving in Sydney on board the *Glatton* in March 1803.³⁰ In 1806 he was employed at the battery, where Fort Phillip was under construction and in 1812 became an overseer of government stone masons.³¹ During Governor Macquarie's administration he was contracted to undertake a number of special works that required a high level of skill including: carving inscriptions; cutting and carving milestones; the construction of the ornamental water reservoir and pump in Bent Street; the obelisk, dwarf stone wall and fountain in Macquarie Place; and the wall around the Light Horse Barracks in Macquarie Street.³² The obelisk is the only one of these monuments still extant. By 1828 Cureton had been granted an Absolute Pardon. He died at Sydney in December 1838 aged sixty-eight.³³

3.7 The form and setting of the obelisk

The obelisk was constructed from individual blocks of ashlar sandstone and consisted of a pedestal (with base, dado and cornice) and shaft rising from a base course decorated at the corners with acroteria having a fan motif. The inscription on the northwest side of the pedestal listed the principal roads of the period giving the distances from Sydney to the towns of Bathurst, Windsor, Parramatta and Liverpool, as well as to the South Head and to the north side of Botany Bay. The inscription on the southeast side recorded the purpose of the monument, its date of construction and (inevitably) the name of the Governor, L Macquarie Esqr.

<p>South face</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THIS OBELISK WAS ERECTED IN MACQUARIE PLACE A.D. 1818. TO RECORD THAT ALL THE PUBLIC ROADS LEADING TO THE INTERIOR OF THE COLONY ARE MEASURED FROM IT L. MACQUARIE ESQR GOVERNOR</p>	<p>North face</p> <p>PRINCIPAL ROADS. DISTANCE FROM SYDNEY) TO BATHURST) 137 Miles FROM SYDNEY TO WINDSOR 35½ Do. TO PARRAMATTA 15½ “ TO LIVERPOOL 20 “ TO MACQUARIE TOWER) AT THE SOUTH HEAD) 7 “ TO THE NORTH HEAD) OF BOTANY BAY) 14 “</p>
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The lettering may, from the beginning, have been blackened, a technique commonly used on tombstones and monuments in the Georgian period. The fine grained white sandstone would appear to have been specially chosen for the obelisk as there are no other extant structures of this particular stone in Sydney. Its source is unknown.³⁴ One of the acroteria and the cartouche on the southeast side of the shaft were never completed.

The stone kerb and iron fence around the obelisk, shown in Joseph Fowles' illustration in the late 1840s, may not be original (**Fig. 3.7**).³⁵ The documentary and pictorial evidence is slight, but if

³⁰ Evidence of Edward Cureton to Commissioner Bigge, Bonwick Transcripts BT 1 p 411 (Mitchell Library) & Colonial Secretary Indent of Convict Ships 1801-1804, 4/4004, COD 138 p 133 (State Records NSW).

³¹ Carol J Baxter (ed): *Musters of New South Wales and Norfolk Island 1805-1806* (1989) p 24.

³² Entries for Edward Cureton in *Index to Colonial Secretary's Papers 1788-1821* (State Records NSW).

³³ M R Sainty & K A Johnson (eds): *Census of New South Wales November 1828* (1980) p 112 and Mutch Index, St Philip's Church, Sydney burials.

³⁴ Information from Mr George Proudman, master stone mason, 30 November 1994 quoted in Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works: 'Conservation Plan The Obelisk Macquarie Place Sydney, NSW' Report 95075, Final Draft January 1996 p 38.

³⁵ Joseph Fowles: *Sydney in 1848* (Facsimile edition 1962) Plate facing p 16.

such a fence had been made contemporary with the obelisk then payments for it should have appeared in the Police Fund accounts. The fact that there are no such records would tend to suggest that this might be a later addition. As Macquarie Place was enclosed immediately the obelisk was completed, there would not have been a need to protect the base of the monument from stray animals and the other hazards of open public spaces.

The obelisk was not aligned with the points of the compass, nor was it exactly aligned with any of the three roads forming the sides of Macquarie Place but seems instead to have been placed central to the area of Macquarie Place as a whole. Contemporary illustrations and maps show paths radiating from the obelisk to the east, northwest and south sides of Macquarie Place connected by a path running around the circumference inside the dwarf wall enclosure (**Figs 3.3, 3.4**).

Macquarie Place, its fenced enclosure, paths and the obelisk can be clearly seen in Major Taylor's panorama of Sydney (**Fig. 3.3**), published in 1823 and probably painted in 1821 and also, in less detail, in paintings by Lycett (1818-1819 and 1822) and by Lewin.³⁶

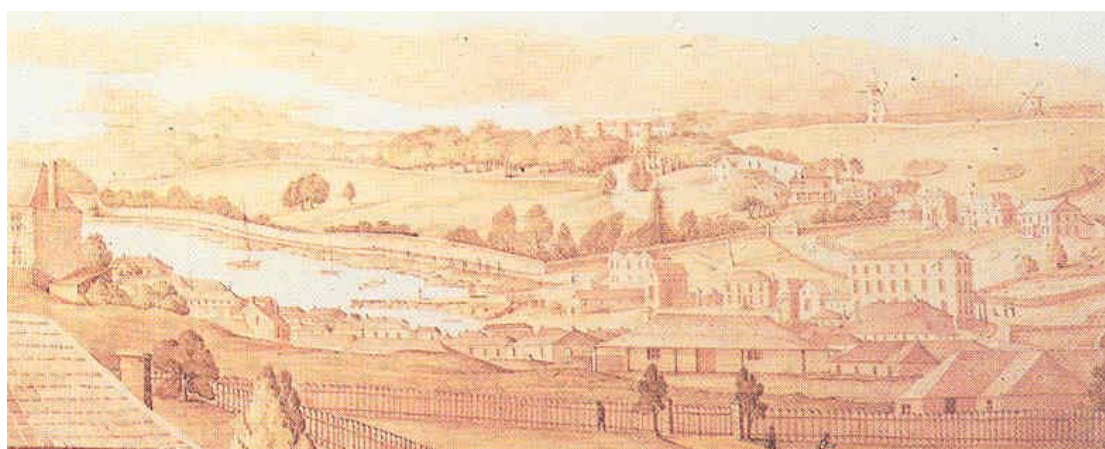


Figure 3.3: A detail of Taylor's panorama c. 1821 showing Macquarie Place with the obelisk in the centre. McCormick (ed.) (1987) *First Views of Australia 1788-1825*, pl. 164.

Harper's survey of Sydney, begun in 1823, also shows the paths in detail and the obelisk, central to the whole area (**Fig. 3.4**).³⁷ The Taylor panorama appears to show the obelisk at the centre of a cruciform arrangement of four paths, but Harper's survey show only three.

Whether the enclosed area was a public space when first established is not certain and the site of the entrance, or entrances, is unclear. The location of Macquarie Place in front of the residences of the Colony's principal civil officers and immediately outside the main entrance to Government House may have made it, like the Domain, a place for 'the respectable Class of persons' only. The road on the northwest side of Macquarie Place, lined with the residences of wealthy merchants, was however somewhat busier. It was this route that provided access to the walk along the east side of Sydney Cove and from thence, via Bennelong's Point, into the Domain.

³⁶ T. McCormick (ed): *First Views of Australia 1788-1825* (1987) Plates 162, 165 & 188.

³⁷ Harper's survey of Sydney c.1823, SZ 434 (State Records NSW).

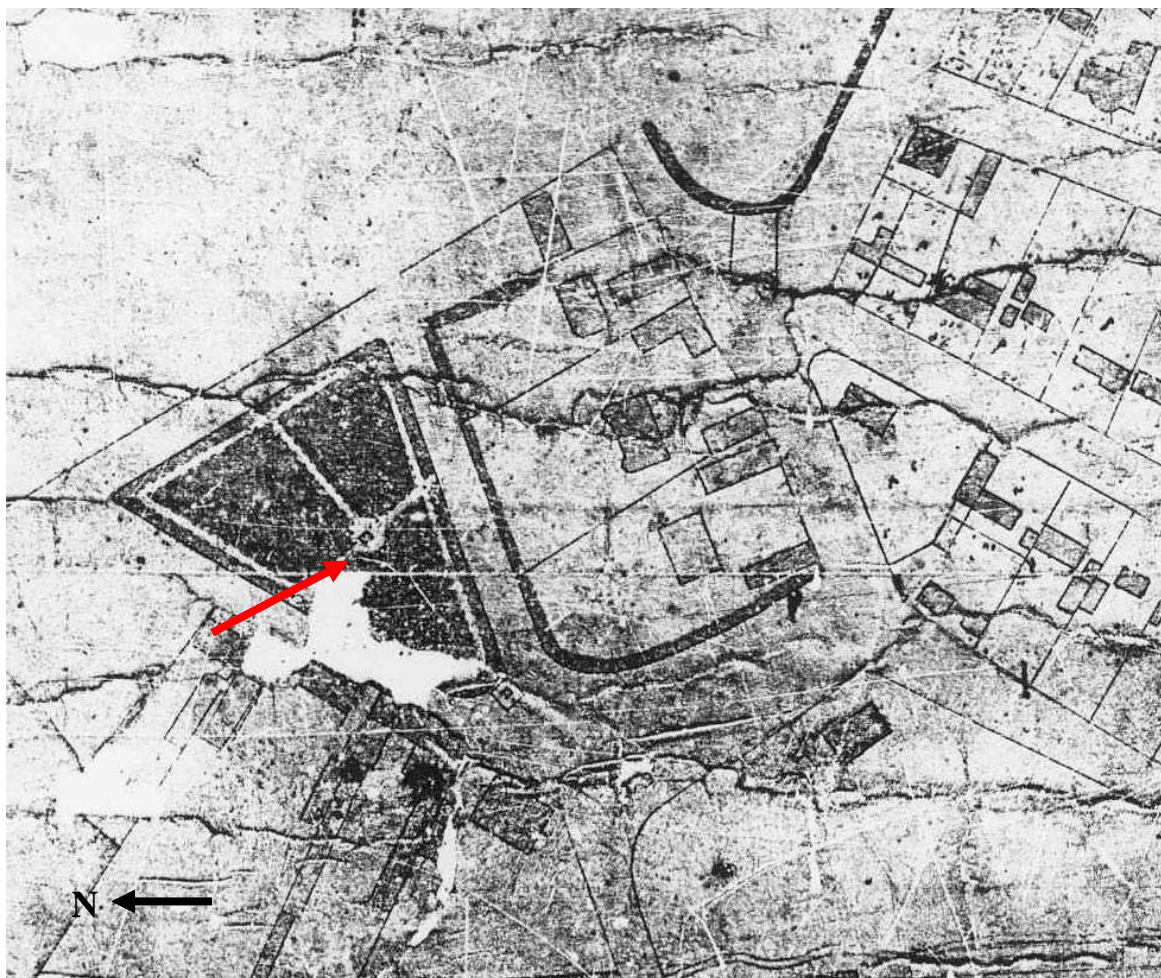


Figure 3.4: Harper's survey of Sydney c.1823 showing the obelisk in the centre with pathways leading to it. SZ 434 (State Records NSW).

3.8 Measuring the miles

Governor Macquarie's stated purpose for the construction of the obelisk, other than as an ornament to the town, was its function as the marker from which distances from Sydney to the interior were measured. Its location, in close proximity to Government House, the centre of administration of the Colony since 1788, was an appropriate choice. Some of the main roads already had distance markers. Edward Cureton had been paid in November 1814 for cutting fifty-four milestones and these were obviously in place in October 1816 when heavy penalties for defacing or damaging them were advertised.³⁸ As these milestones pre-dated the contract for the obelisk there must already have been some agreed place from which distances from Sydney were measured. Whether the vicinity of Government House for this purpose was an existing convention, or one of Governor Macquarie's own choosing, is unclear. Macquarie Place had been proclaimed in 1810, although work on landscaping the area did not begin for some years and so could have been used a general base point early in the Macquarie period, even without an obelisk.

A milestone that used to stand at the corner of George Street and Liverpool Street, the first on the route out of the town, bore the inscription 'One mile from Macquarie Place' on one side and on the other 'Parramatta XIV miles'.³⁹ The date of this particular milestone is not known, but its inscriptions do show that Macquarie Place was used as a Sydney base point, although the distance

³⁸ Entries for Edward Cureton in *Index to Colonial Secretary's Papers 1788-1821* (State Records NSW).

³⁹ *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* Vol 7 (19221) pp 73-74.

to Parramatta (14 miles) does not tally with the distance given on the obelisk. Cureton's milestones, cut in 1814, could not have included references to Macquarie Place unless this was already an accepted starting point. W.T. Pullen, writing in 1914 and who had lived in Liverpool Street in the late 1840s, suggested a date between 1838 and 1841 for the erection of this milestone.⁴⁰

3.9 A 'little unadorned Obelisk'

Like many aspects of Governor Macquarie's extensive building programme, the obelisk in Macquarie Place came in for some criticism from Commissioner Bigge during the course of his enquiry into the workings of the Colony, although only in general terms. The saga of building and rebuilding the fountain in Macquarie Place, by contrast, came in for detailed scrutiny. The Commissioner's general objections were financial, the expense of unnecessary and ornamental structures that were unsuitable for a penal settlement. The Governor disagreed. The Commissioner might think such things not necessary, 'but the Governor did not think them so.' Nor did the Governor think 'the little unadorned Obelisk, placed as it was, as a Point from where distances were to be measured, and rendered at a trifling expense, somewhat ornamental to the Town, meriting any censure'.⁴¹ Drawings of the fountain and the obelisk were among the architectural plans collected by Commissioner Bigge during the course of his enquiry, but do not survive.⁴²

3.10 An evening promenade

If the Taylor panorama of Sydney is an accurate depiction of Sydney at about the time when Sir Thomas Brisbane arrived to succeed Governor Macquarie, then Macquarie Place was an open space without any plantings (**Fig. 3.3**). By the later 1820s this had apparently changed and there was some vegetation. In January 1828 the *Sydney Gazette* reported that the enclosed area in Macquarie Place in which the obelisk was centrally situated had been 'lately cleared' of 'all extraneous trees and underbrush', to be converted into an evening promenade, where one of the regimental bands would play for the amusement of the public.⁴³ The venture was well patronised with the Governor's wife, Mrs Darling, honouring the promenade with her presence one evening in February. Like the Domain in Macquarie's time certain standards were enforced. Constables were stationed at each entrance with orders only to admit all classes of well-dressed persons.⁴⁴

Some trees may have survived the clearance for the promenade, to provide welcome shade. John Carmichael's view of 'Sydney from the Domain near Government House' shows the civil officers' residences and their gardens, adjacent to Government House looking west down Bridge Street. In this view there would appear to be some tree cover in the vicinity of Macquarie Place.⁴⁵ By now one central path crossed Macquarie Place, displaying the inscriptions on the monument to good advantage, with the path around the perimeter to promenade.⁴⁶ This arrangement continued into the 1830s (**Fig. 3.5**).⁴⁷

⁴⁰ W.T. Pullen: 'The Macquarie Obelisk. To the Editor of the Herald' *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 December 1914 p 11.

⁴¹ 'Points of colonial administration to be answered by Governor Macquarie', Bigge Appendix Vol. 142, Bonwick Transcripts BT 11, p 4471, CY 1522 (Mitchell Library).

⁴² Appendix to the Bigge Report, Mr Greenway, List of drawings of Government Buildings at Sydney, Colonial Office papers, CO201/133, PRO Reel 120, CY Reel 1378 (Mitchell Library).

⁴³ *Sydney Gazette* 18 January 1828 p 2c.

⁴⁴ *Sydney Gazette* 3 March 1828 p 2d.

⁴⁵ John Carmichael 'Sydney from the Domain near Government House' in *Select Views of Sydney* 1829 (National Library of Australia).

⁴⁶ 'Map of the Town of Sydney 1831' reproduced in M Kelly & R Crocker: *Sydney Takes Shape. A collection of contemporary maps from Foundation to Federation* (1978) p 16 and 'Sketch of Macquarie Place

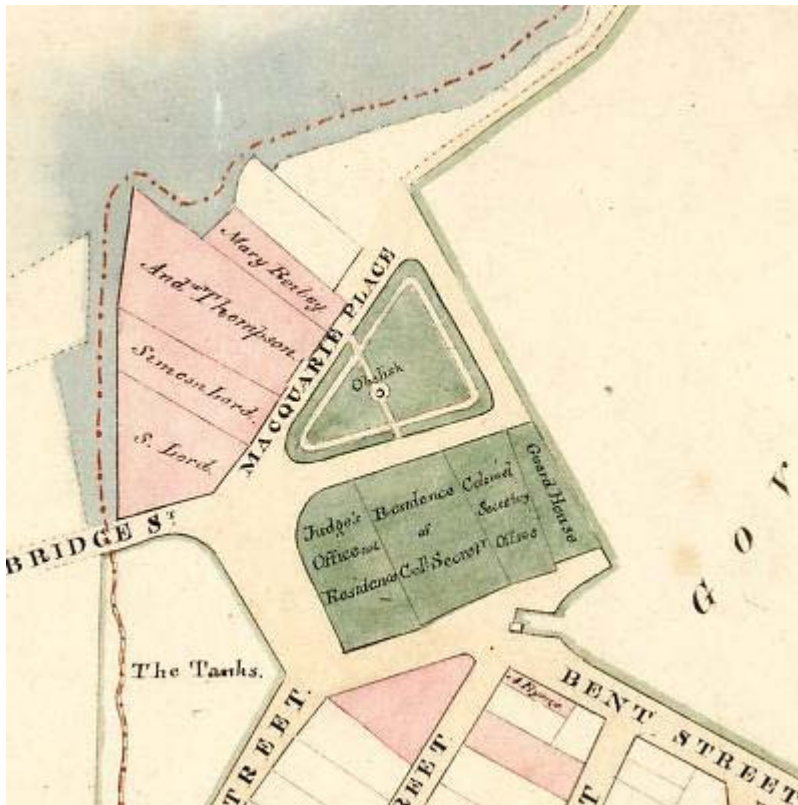


Figure 3.5: A detail of Macquarie Place from the earliest map of the Parish of St James c. 1835 (State Records NSW).

The initiative for opening up Macquarie Place as a public promenade could have come directly from the Governor, supported by the interests of his wife. Darling took a particular interest in the condition of Sydney, its buildings, public health and law and order. He ordered reports on the condition of its public buildings and appointed Edward Hallen as Town Surveyor, implementing proper building controls. Street lighting was installed as a means of ‘checking irregularity and promoting good order’ and on 7 April 1826 ‘the first street lamp post that we ever had in Australia’ was lighted in Macquarie Place.⁴⁸ Much more of the Domain was made available for public use than had been the case in the Macquarie period, with the differentiation of an Inner and Outer Domain and new paths for carriages, as well as for those on foot.⁴⁹ In this context it is possible that Macquarie Place too was improved for public use on the Governor’s orders. In 1829 Macquarie Place was included in a list of ‘Parcels of Land in the town of Sydney, which have been heretofore reserved for Public Purposes’ published by the Governor ‘for general information’.⁵⁰

3.11 A changing society: the late 1820s-1830s

While Governor Macquarie’s vision, combined with a lack of appreciation of the importance of financial accountability, had left the Colony well equipped with substantial building stock, the form of society and administration for which he had planned were soon to undergo enormous changes. New South Wales remained an important convict depot throughout the 1820s and much of the 1830s but its population now had a substantial component of emancipists and free settlers. The

[May 1828]’, originally enclosed in Darling to Huskisson Despatch No. 74 dated 14 May 1828, Colonial Office papers CO201/193, Plan 57, PRO Reel 161 (Mitchell Library).

⁴⁷ As shown in the earliest map of the Parish of St James c.1835 (State Records NSW).

⁴⁸ *Sydney Gazette* 8 April 1826 p 2d.

⁴⁹ Brian Fletcher: *Ralph Darling: a Governor maligned* (1984) pp 175-178.

⁵⁰ *Sydney Gazette* 11 June 1829 p 1, No 43.

extension of the assignment system, the expansion of commerce, the importance of wool to the economy and the beginnings of representative government all meant that New South Wales was no longer an enclosed settlement administered by an autonomous Governor, but was rapidly becoming a free society.

The successful establishment and growth of Sydney had a detrimental effect upon the natural features which had first encouraged Governor Phillip to choose Sydney Cove as the place of settlement. By the 1820s the Tank Stream, the settlement's source of fresh water, had become an open sewer and Sydney Cove, once a fine deep water anchorage, was beginning to silt up. Clearance of native vegetation, cultivation, building, poor drainage and no sewerage meant that the Tank Stream now deposited silt, mud and filth into the mouth of the Cove, reducing the clearance for vessels. Sewage could be both seen and smelt. Allotments that had once had valuable water frontages at the mouth of the Tank Stream were now becoming land locked.

Macquarie's neat town, with its bucolic vision of Government House as a gentleman's estate, now needed more space for commercial development and wharfage, a proper water supply, sewerage and drainage. Government House, variously patched up and extended over forty years, could no longer be considered adequate. Replanning Sydney became an important and immediate issue. Macquarie's enclosure of the Domain excluded the Colony's new entrepreneurs from the whole of the east side of Sydney Cove. As Macquarie departed, little space remained for the expansion of the commercial life of the Colony.

3.12 Planning changes: 1820s-1830s

From the mid-1820s various plans were mooted to provide more wharfage at Sydney Cove. The ability to plan, or re-plan Sydney was already compromised by the number of private leases that had been granted in and around public institutions and government buildings. While legal title to these leases was yet to be properly sorted out, compensation would inevitably be payable should they be required for public purposes. On this basis alone, land still in public ownership was always the preferred option for government works. Another major item on the town planning agenda was the question of a new Government House. As the existing house and its domain occupied a prime piece of waterfront, the two issues were inevitably interlinked.

In May 1825 Governor Brisbane recommended the sale of the Domain land on the east side of Sydney Cove to finance the conversion of the Government Stables into a new residence. His successor, Governor Darling, arrived with permission from the home government either to convert the stables or to build a new house, if the existing residence proved uninhabitable. With these ideas in the air, plans for new wharfage and suggestions for the site for a new Government House began to appear. Variations on this theme included the use of the whole of Bennelong's Point for wharfage with a new Government House; a crescent shaped wharf development, incorporating Macquarie Place and extending round to Mrs Macquarie's Point, retaining the existing residence; and the use of much of the east side of Sydney Cove for wharfage, remaking Macquarie Place as a formal square.⁵¹ The breakthrough came in 1836 when separate Committees of the Legislative Council addressed the two questions of the site for a new Government House and the preservation of Sydney Cove for mercantile and shipping purposes.

The Committees' recommendations formed the bases of the first major replanning scheme to be implemented in Sydney, affecting the heart of the early settlement, Sydney Cove and the Government Domain. Largely influenced by the evidence of the newly arrived Captain George Barney of the Royal Engineers, it was agreed that the new wharf would be a curve, from shore to

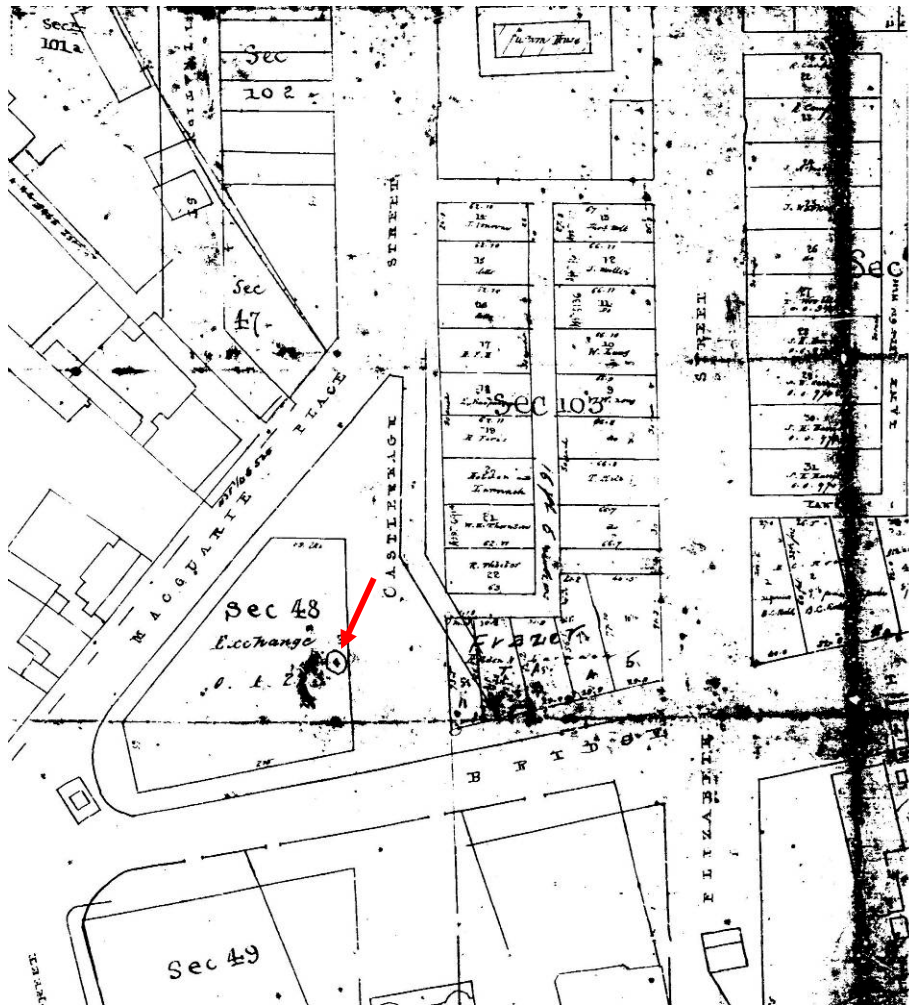
⁵¹ Larmer 'Plan of the improvement of that part of Sydney towards Bennelong Point, 1829' (State Records NSW), 'Colonial Architecture' [by F.H. Greenway] in the *Australian Almanac* 1835, p 220 & 'Plan of Sydney with Pyrmont, New South Wales' 1836 reproduced in M. Kelly & R. Crocker: *Sydney Takes Shape. A collection of contemporary maps from Foundation to Federation* (1978) p 18 .

shore at the head of Sydney Cove, with associated infilling and reclamation work. The new Government House would be built to the east of the existing residence and to the north of the stables, allowing the prolongation of Macquarie, Phillip and Castlereagh Streets through part of the Domain, which would be surrendered to the public. These new streets would terminate at the quay giving access to the cove from important parts of the city. The sale of the new town allotments resulting from the extension of these streets would then fund the cost of the new government house. The plan would give the Governor a much needed new residence, the town new wharfage and the Tank Stream drain cum sewer would be buried.⁵²

Work began on the site of the new Government House in 1836 and preparations for the construction of the new Semicircular Quay in 1838. Work on the quay was slow, frustrated by a convict work force of variable size and skills.⁵³ There were also problems in assessing the compensation to be paid to those whose land, water frontages and business premises would be swallowed up by the new project. By 1844 the circular wharf extended for 843 feet along the east side of Sydney Cove to the mouth of the Tank Stream, an area which was by now almost dry at low water.⁵⁴ During the early 1850s work continued around the west side of Sydney Cove and reached the dockyard by 1854. Progress on the new Government House was steady but slow and it was not until the mid-1840s that the full effect of these new works began to come to fruition.

3.13 Macquarie Place in the 1830s and 1840s

The Governor continued in residence in the old Government House but in the 1830s, following the discontinuance of the provision of residences as part of their remuneration, his principal civil servants moved to their own new residences and estates, some on specially provided grants, outside the town.⁵⁵ Their former homes continued in use as government offices, usually for the departments they had once headed. In 1838 in anticipation of the new quay, the west end of the Government House guard house was demolished to provide a narrow roadway down to the waterfront, the area that had been closed off by Governor Macquarie in 1810-1812.⁵⁶ Macquarie Place was still intact and sported oak trees, an ornament to the place, but sometimes the subject of attack by grooms and jockeys riding down to Sydney Cove, an unforeseen consequence perhaps of improved access to the waterfront.⁵⁷

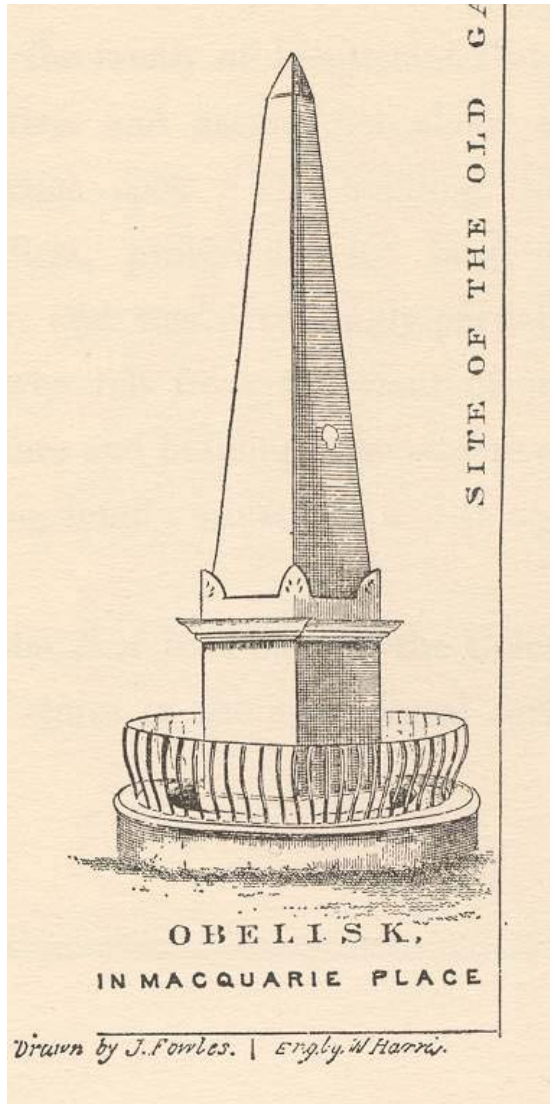


of Evidence'. Votes &
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 legislative Council Votes
 NSW Legislative Council
 espatch No. 74 dated 14
 1839.9 (State Records
 Conservation Issues
 belisk, Macquarie Place

Figure 3.6: The extension of the streets down to the new Quay in the 1840s. Section 103 occupies much of the original Macquarie Place. Obelisk is arrowed. North is at the top. (Mitchell Library M2 811.1722/1842?/1)

In January 1845 anticipating the move to the new Government House, the plan for the continuation of the main streets down to the quay was advertised. Macquarie Street, Elizabeth Street and Phillip Street would all be continued from Bent Street down to the Quay and Bridge Street would be extended eastwards from Macquarie Place up the hill to Macquarie Street. The line of Phillip Street would pass 'through the eastern end of the present Government House'. The extension of Elizabeth Street would obliterate the guard house. Further to the west Pitt Street

and Castlereagh Street would be continued from Hunter Street to the Quay.⁵⁸ The northward extension of Elizabeth Street was roughly along the line of the old road to the Government Wharf, along the east side of Macquarie Place. The proposed continuation of Castlereagh Street was another matter. This would cut straight through Macquarie Place reducing it to less than half of its original area, with the eastern half incorporated in a new city block, subdivided for sale to help to finance the new Government House.



The continuation of Castlereagh Street was however problematic. The old Colonial Secretary's residence, used since December 1839 by the Treasury,⁵⁹ stood in the way of any connection between Bent Street and Bridge Street and the government did not guarantee that this would be moved in 'under five years', or until funds were provided for a new building.⁶⁰ The extension of Castlereagh Street from Bridge Street down to the Quay was planned nevertheless and was called Castlereagh Street North, in anticipation of the completed street plan.

In June 1845 Governor Gipps and his wife moved to the new Government House and the materials of the old house were removed, albeit rather slowly.⁶¹ New boundary walls were built around the remaining government offices⁶² and in 1847 Bridge Street was being extended up to Macquarie Street.⁶³ In the same year, the guard moved to a new guard house and the old one was dismantled and the materials sold.⁶⁴ The new streets were marked out but were largely unformed. Some of the trees from the old Domain were left in the line of Bridge Street, as were some of the oak trees in Macquarie Place. The obelisk, which had once marked the centre of Macquarie Place, was left on the eastern edge of the remnant open space beside the line of the new Castlereagh Street North.

Figure 3.7: The obelisk as depicted by Joseph Fowles (*Sydney in 1848*, facsimile edition 1962).

⁵⁸ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 7 January 1845.

⁵⁹ New South Wales Treasury, Office of Financial Management: *Golden Heritage. A joint exhibition to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the New South Wales Treasury 1824-1999* (1999) p 12.

⁶⁰ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 7 January 1845.

⁶¹ Helen Proudfoot et al: *Australia's First Government House* (1991) pp 131-132.

⁶² NSW Blue Book for 1845 Public Works p 133.

⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald* 16 June 1847 for discovery of tombstone in extending Bridge Street.

⁶⁴ Colonial Secretary Copies of letters to Engineering and Public Works Officers Letter Nos 47/8359 & 47/8628, 4/3887 pp 98 & 109-110 (State Records NSW) & *NSW Government Gazette* 26 November 1847 fol 1293.

In the face of all of these changes, the future of the obelisk seemed uncertain. Joseph Fowles thought that it ‘will doubtless be soon swept away by the tide of improvement, which in this as in every other part of the city is beginning to make great alterations. Its very site will soon be a matter for conjecture’.⁶⁵ The monument ‘in a small grass plot’ and surrounded by a stone kerb and iron railing was illustrated in his publication *Sydney in 1848* (**Fig. 3.7**). Not included were the former residences, that now served as government offices in Bridge Street or any of the merchants’ houses facing Macquarie Place. The ‘principal object’ of Fowles’ work was ‘to remove the erroneous and discreditable notions current in England concerning this city’.⁶⁶ Only Sydney’s best and most recent buildings were depicted. Macquarie Place and the homes of the old administration were part of the past.

Although the surrender of part of the Domain was intended to help pay for the new Government House and to provide easy access down to the Quay, it was some years before this area developed its full potential. In the late 1840s and early 1850s the east end of Bridge Street was still more like a park than city building blocks. The City Corporation, incorporated in July 1842, had insufficient revenue for the ‘formidable array of challenges’ that it faced to provide basic services such as roads, drains, sewers and an adequate water supply. The Colonial government remained reluctant to hand over many of the powers, and sources of revenue, which would have facilitated the task.⁶⁷ Discussions were still taking place about suitable sites for new government buildings and for the Exchange in the area around Semicircular Quay and Bridge Street. The remnant of Macquarie Place was suggested but was spared when another site on the opposite side of Bridge Street was chosen.

With the completion of the first part of Semicircular Quay along the east side of Sydney Cove to the mouth of the Tank Stream, Macquarie Place became an important thoroughfare down to the new waterfront and the Customs House. In the remaining part of the park, progress took the form of tree felling for road widening. The oak trees ‘one of the few ornaments to our city’ and ‘the only redeeming exception to the charge of want of trees, or shade in this dusty windy city’ had been cut down, protested ‘A Colonist’ to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1852. Sacrificed for one or two feet of road width, ‘this defacement of a part of the city, the most historical and classic within its bounds, deserves the hearty and earnest reprobation of the citizens.’ The dwarf wall and railing that had formerly enclosed the area and made it a safe haven for children to play in had also been removed.⁶⁸ Conrad Martens’ 1853 sketch and watercolour of Louis Barber & Company’s new stores on Castlereagh Street North show the obelisk in the now open setting of Macquarie Place (**Fig. 3.8**).⁶⁹ Clearance for new streets was one thing, but road making was another. In 1856 ‘A Merchant’ complained to the Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the ‘disgraceful state’ in which the Commissioners had left ‘that part of the road leading towards Circular Quay called Macquarie-place’, a principal thoroughfare.⁷⁰ Like the Council they had replaced, the City Commissioners came in for their own share of criticism.

⁶⁵ Joseph Fowles: *Sydney in 1848* (Facsimile edition 1962) pp 15-16 & Plate facing p 16.

⁶⁶ Joseph Fowles: *Sydney in 1848* (Facsimile edition 1962) Frontispiece.

⁶⁷ Shirley Fitzgerald: *Sydney 1842-1992* (1992) pp 39-46.

⁶⁸ ‘What has become of the oaks in Macquarie Place? To Editors of the Sydney Morning Herald’ *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 August 1852 p 3e-f.

⁶⁹ Marten’s sketch for this watercolour is dated 4 February 1853, Z PXC 295 ‘Sketches in Australia’ f. 24 (Mitchell Library). The watercolour is held by the National Library of Australia.

⁷⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 July 1856 p 5e.



Figure 3.8: Looking east across Macquarie Place with Government House in the background. Conrad Martens 'Louis Barber & Co.' 1853 (National Library of Australia).



Figure 3.9: The obelisk in 1859 looking northwest from Bridge Street across Macquarie Place. Trees are notably absent from the area (Edwin Dalton stereophotographs ON 235 No. 3 Mitchell Library).

Despite the improvements at the Quay, new building was slow in the 1850s and 1860s at the east end of Bridge Street which was somewhat remote from the commercial heart of the city. Further down the street the new Exchange opened in 1857, with the advantage of a site close to George Street and the wharves at the corner of Gresham Street. The shade of the old oak trees in Macquarie Place would have been a boon to those who had business there, as ‘A Colonist’ had pointed out when protesting against their loss. In 1861 the surroundings of the obelisk were still bare, open and ‘accessible where the inscriptions may easily be read’.

The purpose of the obelisk was still apparent, being stated in the inscription, but in describing the monument for the readers of his *Stranger’s Guide to Sydney*, J.W. Waugh added another piece of history. The obelisk in Macquarie Place was, according to tradition, ‘the spot where Governor Phillip hoisted the British flag on his taking possession of the country’.⁷¹

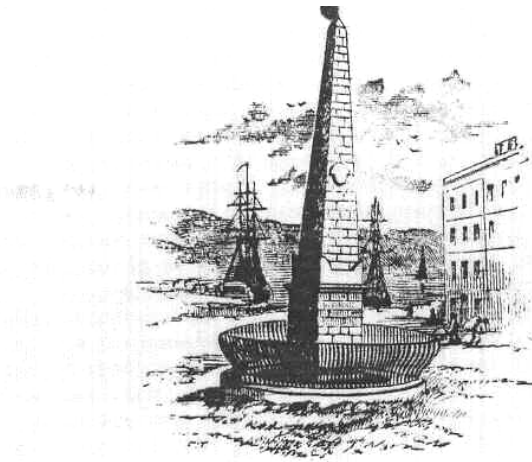


Figure 3.10: The obelisk as depicted in 1861 by J.W. Waugh in his *Stranger’s Guide to Sydney* (Facsimile reprint 1978)

Obelisk in Macquarie Street, from whence all the Distances are measured.

3.14 For ‘health and recreation’: the Macquarie Place Reserve

Although the site of the old Government House had been given up in the 1840s, the government retained ownership of various buildings and allotments in and around Bridge Street. Among these was what remained of Macquarie Place. In the early 1860s it decided to transfer ownership to the Corporation. The land was surveyed in 1864 and on 5 October 1866 the Macquarie Place Reserve was dedicated for the purposes of ‘health and recreation’. The obelisk was just within the eastern edge of the reserve.⁷² New street kerbing was laid but plans to enclose the area with a dwarf wall and iron railing were deferred by the reserve’s new owners on the grounds of cost and a wooden paling was erected instead.⁷³ Council’s Improvement Committee thought that the area would benefit from the removal of Greenway’s ‘Old Pump’, which had been converted into a urinal and public drinking fountain in 1862, but local residents asked that it be retained on the grounds of ‘its great service, as an old relic, and of its ornamental appearance’ and the Committee concurred.⁷⁴ In

⁷¹ J.W. Waugh: *The Stranger’s Guide to Sydney* (1861) 1978 facsimile reprint p 6 (illus) & pp 2 & 29.

⁷² Crown Plan S 289.858 Surveyor J Debenham 31 October 1864 (Land & Water Conservation, Plan Room).

⁷³ City Council Letters Received 1866 Nos 550 & 760, CRS 26/79 & 26/80 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁷⁴ Contract No 229 Alterations, additions and repairs to the old Building at the corner of Macquarie Place and Bridge Street known as the “Old Pump” dated 29 October 1862, CRS 65/295 and City Council Letters Received 1866 Nos 924 & 927 (memorial) CRS 26/81 (Sydney City Council Archives).

the meantime the reserve was planted with fig trees.⁷⁵ Street sweepings were the usual method of building up the ground surface.⁷⁶ In 1869 sufficient funds were found to provide a more permanent form of enclosure and the reserve was surrounded with a dwarf stone wall and iron palisade, with a single entrance on the Bridge Street side. John Ferguson made the stone gate piers and dwarf wall and the wrought iron palisade and carriage entrance gates were made by William Howitt.⁷⁷ Mayor Walter Renny had his name inscribed on the gate piers. The Macquarie Place Reserve was safely enclosed and planted. A photograph looking north along Castlereagh Street North in about 1871 shows the reserve in its newly improved form. The obelisk is visible above the young trees.⁷⁸



Figure 3.11:
Castlereagh
Street North
looking north
in about 1871.
The reserve
had been
recently
planted and
enclosed
(American &
Australasian
Photographic
Co., PXA 933
No 189,
Mitchell
Library).

3.15 Changes on Bridge Street: the 1870s

In the 1870s Bridge Street was transformed when two new large government offices were built to replace the old residences and other scattered accommodation that had done service for so long. The Colonial Secretary's and Public Works offices at the corner of Macquarie Street and Bridge Street and the Lands Department opposite Macquarie Place, both largely complete by 1880, confirmed Bridge Street as the main locus of government administration and totally transformed the scale and quality of the city's official architecture. Out-sized only by the Garden Palace Exhibition building they were the most impressive new offices in the city and a significant part of its transformation from Georgian town to Victorian metropolis.

With the Exchange, the Quay and large government departments nearby, Macquarie Place was a hub of activity and an important connection in the city's transport networks. The horse buses to the eastern suburbs started at Macquarie Place where there was also a licensed cab stand. Other new buildings in the vicinity, still focused on mercantile interests, shipping and wool, were impressive additions to the city's business premises and also served to mark the importance of the area.

⁷⁵ Mentioned in 'Reserve at Macquarie Place' *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 June 1866 p 4e. Ferguson's contract in 1869 for the dwarf wall stated that the contractor was responsible for any trespass or damage to the plantation indicating that it was there by that date, CRS 65/579 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁷⁶ Mentioned in 'Reserve at Macquarie Place' *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 June 1866 p 4e.

⁷⁷ Contracts CRS 65/597 & 65/579 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁷⁸ American & Australasian Photographic Co., Cartes-de-visite, Album of photographs of Sydney and country New South Wales PXA 933 No 189 (Mitchell Library).

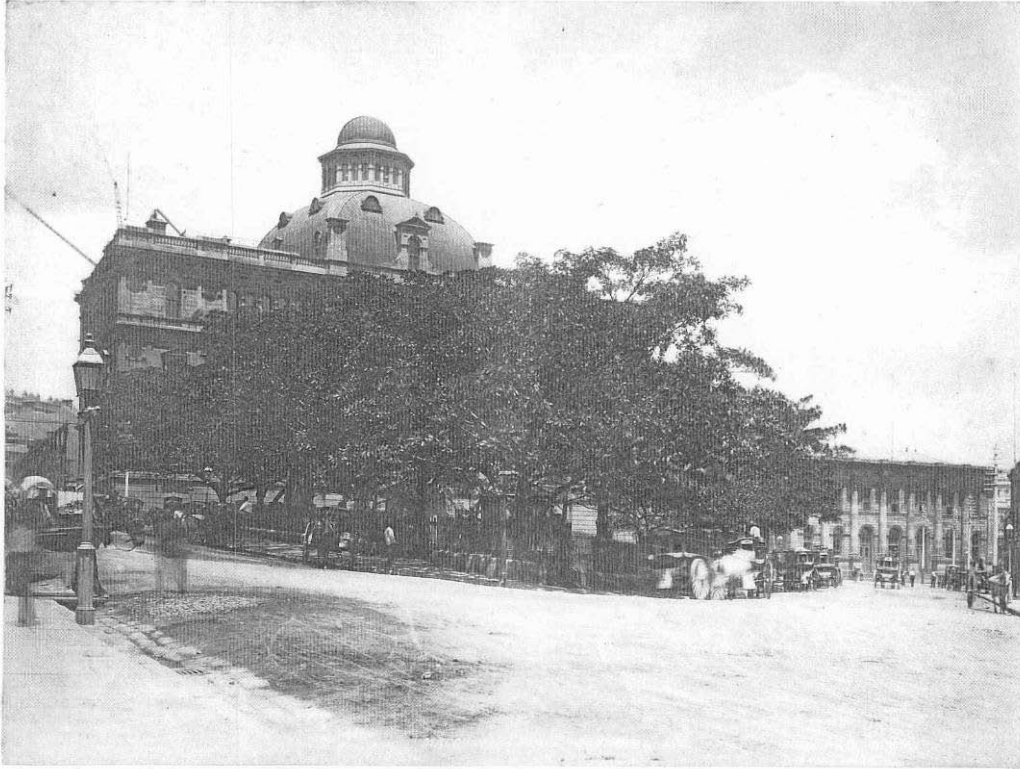


Figure 3.12: Photographs show cabs and buses along all three sides of the reserve with the trees providing some welcome shade (Mitchell Library).

In 1882 the *Illustrated Guide to Sydney* described Macquarie Place and the numerous streets leading thereto as ‘the commercial centre of the metropolis. Numerous free and bonded stores, wool sale rooms and receiving stores, custom-house agencies, and general export and import offices crowd the neighbourhood.’

‘From the Obelisk in a small enclosed reserve all distances in the colony are measured, the first mile within the city of Sydney being marked at the corner of George and Liverpool Streets, and the second at Newtown Road.

Here is the omnibus stand for lines running to Randwick, Waverley, Bondi, Coogee, and that district’.⁷⁹

3.16 Mort’s statue and additions to the Reserve

In June 1883 the statue of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort was unveiled at the corner of Macquarie Place and Bridge Street, where Greenway’s fountain had stood. Facing the Exchange and in close proximity to Mort’s own wool stores, it paid homage to ‘a simple life spent in work which meant the diffusion of public benefits’.⁸⁰ Having finally got rid of the ‘Old Pump’, the Council’s Improvement Committee sought advice from the City Surveyor about the cost of removing the dwarf wall and iron railings around the reserve and installing seats under the trees. No action was taken to proceed with these civic improvements but the Council moved swiftly to replace the

⁷⁹ *Gibbs, Shallard, & Co.’s Illustrated Guide to Sydney and its suburbs, and to favourite places of resort.* Revised edition [1882], Facsimile edition 1981, p 48.

⁸⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted in Alan Barnard: *Visions and profits. Studies in the business career of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort* (1961) p 1.

facilities displaced by Mort's statue. A new urinal was erected at the north end of reserve within the enclosed area, with an entrance from Loftus Street.⁸¹ In 1895 permission was given for a weatherboard cabman's shelter to be placed in the reserve and this was also sited on Loftus Street, between the obelisk and the urinal.⁸²

3.17 Repairs to the obelisk and its surrounds in the late 1890s

By the 1890s the trees that had been planted in the mid-1860s had begun to dominate the reserve. The obelisk was lost from view amongst the foliage and the base of the monument became buried. Between 1895 and 1901 this problem was rectified and various repairs were carried out to the obelisk and its surrounds (**Figs 3.14, 3.15**). Writing many years later the City Building Surveyor described the extent of the works:

'Some few years ago renovations were undertaken by the Government, portions of the Stone were redressed, the lettering of the inscriptions were more deeply cut, the old railing which had been partially below ground was raised and a concrete flooring was placed at the foot of the monument and a new stone kerb laid and the old railing refixed thereon'.⁸³

Two photographs taken by the Government Printing Office show this work (**Figs 3.13, 3.14**).⁸⁴

The area around the obelisk is obviously newly excavated and the depth to which the base of the monument had been buried can be seen identified in the colour difference visible on the stonework of the dwarf wall surrounding the reserve. The new stone kerb and 'concrete flooring' around the obelisk are clearly evident. The fig trees had also been pruned, under the direction of J.H. Maiden, the Director of the Botanic Garden and Domains.⁸⁵ The date when this work was carried out has not been determined but internal evidence in these photographs (the cabman's shelter and tree pruning) together with detailed surveys of the city, place it in the period 1895 to 1901. The circular stone kerb around the obelisk (shown in Fowles' and Waugh's illustrations in 1848 and 1861) was still visible when the 1865 survey was drawn but had disappeared by the early 1880s when the next detailed survey was made.⁸⁶ Amendments to the early 1880s survey were made in 1888 and 1895 but these did not include the addition of the circular surround, suggesting that it was still buried. When the area was resurveyed in 1901 the kerb was added to the detailed plans.⁸⁷ The City Building Surveyor's account indicates that the early iron railing was retained in the late nineteenth-century work although it is noticeable that this does not appear to be as splayed as the 1848 and 1861 illustrations would suggest.

⁸¹ City Council Letters Received 1883 No 1746, CRS 26/193 (Sydney City Council Archives) & Metropolitan Detail Survey Sydney Sheet H4, 1897 ZM Ser 4 811.17/1 (Mitchell Library).

⁸² Council Minutes 977th meeting 30 April 1895, CRS 227, 7/22 p 234 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁸³ R.H. Broderick City Building Surveyor to Town Clerk 11 August 1914, Town Clerk files 3678/14 Restoration of monument Macquarie Place (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁸⁴ Government Printing Office 1-12582 & 1-12583 (Mitchell Library).

⁸⁵ In 1903 Maiden made reference to pruning the trees 'a few years ago', 'Report of Mr J.H. Maiden, Director of Botanic Gardens on the City Parks. Presented to Council 11 August 1903.' *Proceedings of the Municipal Council of the City of Sydney during the year 1903* pp 1051-1054.

⁸⁶ Trigonometric Survey of Sydney 1865, Sheet B2 (State Records NSW) and Detailed Survey PWD Sheet 2 and Field Book 114, 1881-1882 (Sydney Water).

⁸⁷ Field Books 114 (1881-1882), 1370 (April 1888) and 2587 (March 1895) (Sydney Water).



Figure 3.13: The back of the obelisk c.1895-1901. The area around the monument has been excavated to reduce ground level and the stone kerb is new (GPO 1-12583).



Figure 3.14: The front of the obelisk c.1895-1901 with the cabman's shelter and urinal in the background (GPO 1-12582).

Although the obelisk had been repaired and made more open to public view, the Macquarie Place Reserve was still enclosed with iron railings and had only one entrance, on Bridge Street. Here the cab stand in front of a partly open 'cart entrance' was, J.H. Maiden thought, a considerable deterrent to the park's use by 'the respectable portion of the community'.⁸⁸ From the early twentieth century this changed and the Macquarie Place Reserve became the subject of successive phases of improvement and remodelling as part of that fast diminishing resource, Sydney's parks.

3.18 A New History

Although Australian history did not become the subject of academic study until the twentieth century, the development and progress of the Colony of New South Wales had been actively chronicled since 1788.⁸⁹ Many of the First Fleet journals were written with an eye to eventual publication, the emancipist D.D. Mann had published his commentary *The Present Picture of New South Wales* in 1811 and by the 1830s semi-official publications such as the *Australian Almanack*, directories and guides for immigrants included chronicles of the history and progress of the Colony. By the later nineteenth century, with a growing consciousness that the generations who had direct experience of the earliest days of settlement were passing, personal reminiscences were actively collected as part of the historical record. Buildings and sites too provided a tangible link with the past. The obelisk and Macquarie Place, part of the legacy of the paternal Governor Macquarie whose belief in the future of the Colony was now fully vindicated, continued to be acknowledged parts of the historical landscape of the city throughout the nineteenth century.

At Federation and in the full flush of Australian Imperialism, the importance of some of Sydney's historic landmarks was considerably increased. Australia was now a nation, a part of the Empire and an equal partner in the spread of white supremacy and domination around the globe. The spot where Governor Phillip had first unfurled the British flag in 1788 was not just where New South Wales was founded, but was where the nation of Australia had been established as a British possession and part of the Empire. This place, so tradition had it, was in or near Macquarie Place.

In 1907 the tradition was confirmed in the shape of an anchor, recently recovered from the wreck of the *Sirius* off Norfolk Island on the initiative and at the expense of Sir Francis Suttor. According to the New South Wales Under Secretary for Finance and Trade, historical research had 'recently disclosed' that Captain Phillip had hoisted the British flag and formally taken possession of the territory 'at, or very near to, the site of the Macquarie Place Reserve'. This then made it a most suitable site on which to place Sir Francis Suttor's gift, together with a cannon also said to be from the *Sirius*.⁹⁰ On 26 January 1907 the Chief Secretary unveiled the new monument and offered a version of history that conflated the greatness of both Governor Phillip and Governor Macquarie. It was not generally known, he remarked 'that a permanent record remained of the exact spot where Phillip erected his flagpole on the evening of January 26, 1788. The site was marked by the Obelisk on the eastern side of the enclosure, which was built by Governor Macquarie in the year 1818, with the dual object of marking the place where Governor Phillip performed the ceremony of taking possession, and of forming a starting-point from which distances could be measured. Therefore it would be seen that the spot on which they now stood was historically one of the most interesting in the whole of Australia'.⁹¹

⁸⁸ 'Report of Mr J.H. Maiden, Director of Botanic Gardens on the City Parks. Presented to Council 11 August 1903.' *Proceedings of the Municipal Council of the City of Sydney during the year 1903* pp 1051-1054.

⁸⁹ Brian H. Fletcher: 'Australia's Oldest Historical Journal' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* Vol 80 Pts 1 & 2, June 1994, pp 2-3.

⁹⁰ Under Secretary for Finance and Trade to Town Clerk 19 December 1906, Macquarie Place files (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁹¹ 'Historical Gathering. The Sirius anchor and gun. Unveiling ceremony. *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 January 1907 pp 7-8.

On Empire Day the Women's Branch of the British Empire League continued the theme and presented the Lord Mayor with a Union Jack and a flagstaff in the Macquarie Place Reserve, with a plaque identifying the place as the spot where Australia was first proclaimed a British possession. Like the Chief Secretary before him Sir Francis Suttor took the opportunity to suggest that Governor Macquarie had used the obelisk to mark the place where Governor Phillip had called his men together and drunk a health to the Colony on 26 January 1788. As such it was 'the most historic part of all Australia'.⁹² In the exuberance of Empire, Macquarie Place now had renewed meaning.

The Empire League's claim was somewhat overstated as it was Captain James Cook who had claimed possession of the whole of the eastern side of the continent on 22 August 1770 on Possession Island long before Governor Phillip. The Council asked that the wording be corrected.⁹³



Figure 3.15: The flagstaff in the Macquarie Place Reserve in 1908 during the visit of the Great White Fleet. The area around the obelisk is roughly grassed (Sydney City Council Archives CRS 51/221).

⁹² News cutting from the *Telegraph* 25 May 1907, Newspaper Cuttings Vol 7 pp 118-9, Q991/N (Mitchell Library).

⁹³ Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee 8 May, 16 July & 27 August 1907, CRS 13/4 (Sydney City Council Archives).

3.19 Remodelling the Reserve 1910-1916

Changes to the reserve followed close upon the unveiling of the *Sirius* anchor and cannon. In 1908 the Parks and Recreation Committee recommended that the railings be removed⁹⁴ and a design competition was held to remodel the park when J.H. Maiden's suggestions for improvements were deferred.⁹⁵ The Council ultimately devised its own scheme, attributed by the *Sunday Times* to W G Layton, the Deputy Town Clerk, 'an enthusiastic devotee of horticulture' who had been influenced by improvement schemes in America, Great Britain and the Continent.⁹⁶ The fig trees were removed from the Bridge Street and Loftus Street frontages to make way for flower beds, built up level with the pavement, with rough rubble retaining walls made of old sandstone flagging and kerbing from the City Surveyor's department. Plants were to be trained over the walls to hide the bare stonework, like similar features in Boomerang Street and Hyde Park. The area under the trees on the Macquarie Place side was tar paved for seats and the centre grassed. Local occupants asked for all of the old flagging to be removed and replaced by trees and flower beds.⁹⁷ The work was largely completed by the end of 1910.⁹⁸



Figure 3.16: The obelisk after the railings had been removed from around the Macquarie Place reserve c. 1909 (R T Baker (1909) *Building and Ornamental Stones of New South Wales*, 2nd edition).

⁹⁴ Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee 2 January 1908, CRS 13/4 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁹⁵ Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee July 1908-February 1909, CRS 13/5 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁹⁶ 'City parks and green spots, and the man who makes them' *The Sunday Times* 25 December 1910 p 13.

⁹⁷ Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee 1 June & 13 July 1910, CRS 13/5 (Sydney City Council Archives).

⁹⁸ 'City parks and green spots, and the man who makes them' *The Sunday Times* 25 December 1910 p 13.



Figure 3.17: Raised flower beds at the corner of Bridge Street and Loftus Street May 1915, GPO 1-16214 (Mitchell Library).

Further improvements were effected a few years later in 1914 at the instigation of Alderman Griffin who asked that the best means of preserving the obelisk, making it to be seen to proper advantage and restoring or replacing the iron hand-railings 'now much worn and corroded' be investigated.⁹⁹ The City Building Surveyor recommended that the railing be painted and that the stonework receive two coats of preservative liquid, but the matter was left to stand over until the following year.¹⁰⁰ Work then began on a new wall along Loftus Street and two flights of steps with ornamental balustrades flanking the obelisk, with a connecting gravel path around the stone kerb of the monument.¹⁰¹ The Town Clerk refused to sanction the extra funds needed to complete the work, some Councillors called it 'another example of wholly un-necessary expenditure in war-time' but the funds were eventually voted.¹⁰² Whether any work was carried out on the obelisk itself, as recommended by the City Building Surveyor, is not known.

⁹⁹ Extract from Council Minutes 14 July 1914 in Town Clerk's file 3678/14 Restoration of monument Macquarie Place (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁰⁰ City Building Surveyor to Town Clerk 14 February 1916, Town Clerk's file 3678/14 Restoration of monument Macquarie Place (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁰¹ City Building Surveyor to Town Clerk 11 August 1914, Town Clerk's file 3678/14 Restoration of monument Macquarie Place (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁰² Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee 21 February 1916, CRS 13/8 (Sydney City Council Archives) and *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 January 1916 p 6.



Figure 3.18: The new steps, balustrades and wall on the Loftus Street side of the obelisk in June 1917, GPO 1-18512 (Mitchell Library).

3.20 The 1920s and 1930s

By the late 1920s the tree cover in Macquarie Place was much reduced and the emphasis in the park was upon more ornamental plantings. The streets around the reserve still served as cab stands, now for motorised transport. The gravel path around the obelisk was fenced off from the rest of the park and could only be approached from the two flights of steps on the Loftus Street side.¹⁰³

As prestigious modern buildings replaced their nineteenth-century counterparts, the area around the Macquarie Place Reserve remained a good address into the twentieth century. For much of the first half of the new century the area was still a busy mercantile and government precinct, where firms and departments continued the activities of their nineteenth-century predecessors. The Macquarie Place Reserve, ‘a little green intimate oasis’ and ‘the heart of Sydney’ was a microcosm of the development of the Colony.¹⁰⁴ Its history embraced the foundation of the Colony; the earliest Governors and their Government House; successful emancipists such as Simeon Lord and Mary Reiby; the foundations of commerce at the Bank of New South Wales and the achievements of self-made men like Thomas Sutcliffe Mort. Equally important, it was a place where the past lived in the context of the future, a civic space that espoused the values and virtues of the white civilisation that flourished around it. Roderick Quinn’s poem ‘The Obelisk’ first published in 1925 expressed some of these feelings.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Commonwealth Home* 1 August 1927 p 33 photograph.

¹⁰⁴ Adrian Ashton: ‘The heart of Sydney Macquarie Place’ *The BP Magazine* [Burns, Philp & Co Ltd] Vol VIII No. 4, 1 September 1936 pp 44-45, 92, 95 & 97.

¹⁰⁵ Reproduced in B.N. Fryer: *The Obelisk, Macquarie Place* (1937).



Figure 3.19: Macquarie Place in April 1928, GPO 1-13115 (Mitchell Library).

THE OBELISK

From here the roads take measurement
That journey north and south;
From here o'er leagues and gleaming leagues
The Western Road sets forth.

Who stands beside this Obelisk
And dreams a quiet while,
Shall see them moving, marching on
Mile after shining mile.

He shall behold them scarfing heights
And ribboning wide plains;
Now carpeted with summer dust,
Now wet with winter rains.

And he shall see, and thrill to see,
With mind and heart aglow,
Long wool-teams moving down their length,
Long grain-teams crawling slow.

Dream-gazing, he may glimpse dim shapes –
Stern, resolute, sublime –
The men who trode them ere they knew

The wearing wheels of time.

And moving still, he may discern,
Unaltered by the years,
The footprints left by them of old –
Our deathless pioneers.

Who stands beside the Obelisk
And dreams awhile may see
Australia radiant on the road
Of her bright destiny.

Progress was the watch word and even after the experience of the 1929 depression was the major theme of the celebrations that marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of the nation in 1938.

In the 1920s and early 1930s as the Harbour Bridge and its associated rail system, the city circle, were under construction, a renewal in importance was envisaged for Macquarie Place, the ‘Umbilicus Terrae Australis’ as it was called in one 1937 publication.¹⁰⁶ The planned new railway station at Circular Quay would see a resurgence of activity in this part of the city. By the 1930s the needs of city workers were being recognised. While permission had frequently been given in the past for the use of the Macquarie Place Reserve as a venue for public meetings and for individual speakers, by the early 1930s the right of citizens to the ‘quiet enjoyment’ of the area was being recognised.¹⁰⁷

3.21 More repairs and improvements 1934-1935

In 1934 another scheme of beautification was proposed for the Macquarie Place reserve, which had been officially proclaimed a public park in 1931. Two more fig trees were to be removed and a new path laid connecting the path around the obelisk and the area by the *Sirius* anchor.¹⁰⁸ The City Engineer reported that the base of the obelisk and mouldings of the steps showed ‘signs of considerable fretting’ and required weather-proofing. The paving surrounds were also dangerous and needed to be raised with new concrete or crazy stone paving. Approved for the work was given on 1 April 1935.¹⁰⁹

The repair of the obelisk proved controversial with complaints that the ‘antiquarian appearance of the monument is being seriously impaired’. The stonework was fretted and worn but there were concerns that it was being cut away so drastically that the stone underneath was being left “as white as the day it was quarried, thus completely spoiling the colour harmony of the obelisk”. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s reporter who inspected the site in June, the stone at the base of the obelisk was being ‘replaced where necessary by new stone of similar appearance’. One section with lettering showed bad fretting and, according to the City Engineer, would need to be replaced but this would not be done ‘unless this was unavoidable’. The new stone would weather to harmonise with the existing and the new stonework at the base was not visible from the roadway or the reserve ‘except at close range’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ B.N. Fryer: *The Obelisk, Macquarie Place* (1937).

¹⁰⁷ Minutes of Parks and Recreation Committee 22 October 1934, CRS 13/15 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁰⁸ Plan in Town Clerk’s file 4919/33 Beautification of Macquarie Place Reserve (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁰⁹ Town Clerk’s file 5049/34 repairs to obelisk (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹¹⁰ ‘Historic Obelisk. Renovation by Council. Reply to complaints. *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 June 1935 p 11e.

Four photographs of the pedestal of the obelisk dated 28 May 1935 show some fretting around the base and may be of the monument before any work was undertaken.¹¹¹ They have not been reproduced here because they would not reproduce well. Photographs taken after the work was completed show a marked colour differentiation between the shaft and pedestal that was obviously the cause of concern. Some of the joints on the shaft show up clearly as white lines indicating that they had been re-pointed. Frank Hurley's view of Macquarie Place in the late 1930s shows the path constructed across the park in 1935 (**Fig. 3.20**). The park with its three monuments has shade, seating and grassed areas for the enjoyment of city workers.¹¹²



Figure 3.20: The Macquarie Place park and the obelisk in the late 1930s. On the skyline the AWA tower, completed in 1939, in under construction (Frank Hurley negative collection PIC FH/8, National Library of Australia).

¹¹¹ Macquarie Place Photographs file 57/978-57/981 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹¹² Frank Hurley negative collection PIC FH/8 (National Library of Australia).



Figure 3.21: The obelisk in the late 1930s (Frank Hurley negative collection, National Library of Australia).

3.22 The Remembrance Drive – a ‘Royal Highway’ 1954

In the early 1950s the historical significance of Macquarie Place was once again in the news. Australian Imperialism had been severely shaken by the events of the First World War and the Empire itself had now gone, but the enthusiasm shown for the monarchy in the person of the new young Queen, Elizabeth II on her first visit to Australia was staggering. As a part of their hectic schedule the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were to plant two trees in Macquarie Place to inaugurate the Remembrance Drive between Sydney and Canberra where they would later plant a tree near the War Memorial. The event prompted M H Ellis, the biographer of Governor Macquarie and his architect Francis Greenway to contribute an article to the *Bulletin* on the history of Macquarie Place and the significance of this royal occasion.

The Remembrance Drive, suggested in 1952 by Margaret Davis, the founding president of the Garden Club of New South Wales was to consist of a series of informal plantations bordering the highway to Canberra, as a memorial to the Australians who died in World War II and in Korea. This ‘Royal Highway’ Ellis wrote ‘will begin at the obelisk in Macquarie-place, which is the cradle of Australian history and civilisation, and end in Canberra, the capital city, the establishment of which in 1927 set the coping-stone on Australian nationality.’ The road would ‘symbolically lead

from the place of the very beginnings of Australian history to the place of the achievement of its maturity'. Australia and Macquarie Place were unique, 'no other country can pin-point so clearly and definitely the exact piece of earth on which its civilisation secured a foothold as Australia's can be pin-pointed in Macquarie-place and its environs'.¹¹³ What Ellis did not comment on was the original purpose of the obelisk, 'that all the public roads leading to the interior of the Colony are measured from it'. This purpose and the fortuitous preservation of Macquarie Place as a park made it doubly appropriate as the place from which a road of trees would stretch to the national capital.

The three-minute ceremony took place on 5 February 1954. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh planted two plane trees at the newly cleared southeast corner of Macquarie Place as some 30,000 people tried to see the event.¹¹⁴ Interest in the Remembrance Drive was revived in the 'Australia Remembers 1945-1999' celebrations and there are currently more than fifty plantations with total of 50,000 trees as a living war memorial, of which Macquarie Place was the first.¹¹⁵

Popular histories such as Frank Clune's *Saga of Sydney* (1961) and Isadore Brodsky's *The Streets of Sydney* (1962) continued to tell the stories of Macquarie Place and in 1962 the park and its relics were among the earliest items to be officially recognised as 'historic' in listings compiled by the Cumberland County Council.¹¹⁶

3.23 Special events 1960s-2000

From the 1960s the design of Macquarie Place and the condition of the obelisk and its other historic relics came under review at regular intervals, on the occasion of national anniversaries and special events, as outdoor public celebrations became the norm. In 1963 the obelisk was 'under observation' and was steam cleaned in honour of the 175th anniversary of the foundation of the Colony. 'It had been generally accepted that historic monuments and the like should not be derived of their appearance of age' the Director of Parks acknowledged.¹¹⁷ Despite this observation somewhat more drastic treatment was to follow.

In 1964 'imperfect stones' were replaced and the relevant parts of the inscription re-incised. The surface was then treated with a clear silicon preparation 'to retard future deterioration of the stone'.¹¹⁸ The replacement stones were in the form of stone indents of Wonderbyne stone.¹¹⁹ These paid little attention to the original jointing nor, in the case of the inscriptions, to the exact form of the existing lettering. The original lettering was much finer than its replacement, despite its somewhat erratic centering.¹²⁰ In the new work the Esqr after the Governor's name lost the 'r' at the end of the abbreviation. Photographs of the work show the new blocks at the base of the monument.¹²¹ Some cement patching was also undertaken at this time.

¹¹³ M H Ellis: 'The Cradle of Australia. Macquarie-place and A Royal Occasion' *Bulletin* 20 January 1954 pp 24-25.

¹¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 February 1954 p 6. Some trees had been removed at the end of November 1953, Macquarie Place Photographs file, Eight photographs dated 30/11/53 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹¹⁵ Richard Aitken & Michael Looker (eds): *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (2002) p 151.

¹¹⁶ Cumberland County Council: *Historic Buildings Central Area of Sydney Vol. II* (1962) pp 24-25.

¹¹⁷ Director of Parks to Town Clerk, Minute 20 April 1964, Town Clerk's files 1514/64 Condition of Macquarie Place Park (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹¹⁸ Director of Parks to Town Clerk, Minute 20 April 1964, Town Clerk's files 1514/64 Condition of Macquarie Place Park (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹¹⁹ Personal communication by George Proudman quoted in Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works: 'Final Draft Conservation Plan The Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW', Heritage Group Report No. HG 96/02, January 1996, pp 31 & 46.

¹²⁰ T Spooner: 'The Obelisk, Sydney' photographs and drawings, University of New South Wales, School of Architecture and Building PX *D 49/3 (Mitchell Library).

¹²¹ Macquarie Place Photographs file, photographs dated 1964 (Sydney City Council Archives).

The work was only just completed when on 2 November 1964 a car owned and driven by Dr D Gibson ran across the footpath of Loftus Street, demolished part of the 1915 wall and severely damaged the stone balustrade of the steps on the south side of the obelisk.¹²² Council approached the Department of Public Works for advice and a plan for remodelling the area around the obelisk and for the park generally was prepared by the Government Architect. In May 1966 the work around the obelisk was approved but the remainder of the plan was deferred pending submission of a report to Council about a range of suggestions for the area including its development as out-door museum.¹²³ The following year some changes were made. The Hague-Smith fountain by sculptor Gerald Lewers, which had been donated and installed in 1960 as a result of the work of the Sydney Fountains Committee, was relocated from the corner of Bridge and Loftus Streets to the southwest corner of the park. A 'Colonial' air was given to the place when three gas lamps were donated by AGL 'to add to the tranquility and charm of the area'.¹²⁴

The most substantial change eventuated from the festivities associated with the opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973. The temporary closure of the Macquarie Place roadway and its use as public open space, as a part of these celebrations, was such a success that it was decided to make this permanent. In 1976 the street was closed to traffic, steps were built along the edge of the park and seats and planter boxes were placed in the former roadway.¹²⁵ The additional land was then dedicated for public recreation as an extension of the existing park.¹²⁶

From the late 1970s attention again turned to the condition of the obelisk. Work under the National Estate Grants Program included a restoration report by Cox, Tanner & Associates with specialist advice from by Dr George S. Gibbons. Following the recommendations of these reports the obelisk was photographed; casts of the inscriptions and ornamental features were made from latex moulds; the surface grime was removed; and the concrete surround at the base of the obelisk was removed and replaced with sandstone blocks tightly bedded in sand to improve drainage.¹²⁷

Some years later with a view to further repair work, the firm of T.A. Taylor conducted tests for salts and moisture content and found a high level of chlorides in the stonework. Their report also confirmed the presence of organic resins below the cornice level, possibly silicone or acrylic, the residue of earlier attempts to waterproof the stone.¹²⁸ A more detailed report prepared by J.L. Heiman of CSIRO followed in 1992 but there were no funds to carry out its recommendations.¹²⁹ In 1994 following discussions with the Department of Public Works, funding for a Conservation Plan, to be prepared by State Projects Heritage Group, was obtained through the department's Public Buildings Stone Program.¹³⁰ In the meantime urgent subsoil drainage work, recommended

¹²² City Engineers photographic negatives September 1965, CRS 48/5259 & 48/5260 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²³ Town Clerk's files 1514/64 Condition of Macquarie Place Park (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²⁴ Secretary of AGL Co. to Director of Parks, Town Clerk's files 1514/64 Condition of Macquarie Place Park (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²⁵ Town Clerk's file 3523/74 Streetscape improvements (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²⁶ *NSW Government Gazette* 15 October 1976 fols 4474-5 & 25 November 1977.

¹²⁷ Cox, Tanner & Associates: 'A restoration report on the Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney for The Council of the City of Sydney', National Estate Grants Program 79/80 Project No. 17, September 1981, File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²⁸ T A Taylor: 'Conservation Report 'The Obelisk' Macquarie Place' 22 January 1988, File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹²⁹ J L Heiman: 'Conservation report on Greenway Obelisk Macquarie Place for The Council of the City of Sydney', CSIRO, August 1992.

¹³⁰ D Coleman, Public Works to Assistant General Manager 3 August 1994, File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

in the 1992 CSIRO report was carried out by Council's Urban Services Division under the direction of its Senior Heritage Architect, Peter Romey, with assistance from State Projects.¹³¹

Funding was a significant issue and in preparation for the Olympic Games in 2000 Council sought private and corporate sponsorship for the proposed restoration of Bridge Street, Macquarie Place and other historic and significant civic spaces. In April 1995 Mrs Caroline Simpson had made an offer of private sponsorship for the conservation of the obelisk 'subject to her approval of the conservation plan'.¹³² Early in 1996, after reviewing a copy of the document, Mrs Simpson commissioned Sue Rosen to undertake historical research on the obelisk on her behalf.¹³³ In the light of this research and of the evidence of substantial repairs to the obelisk throughout its lifetime, Mrs Simpson did not proceed with her offer of funding.

3.24 The Conservation Plan 1996

As part of the Conservation Plan, State Project's Heritage Group sought the advice of a sub-committee of members of TAGMAC, the Heritage Council's technical advisory group on options for the future conservation of the obelisk. Four options were considered by the TAGMAC group:

- Option 1 - Do nothing
- Option 2 - Conserve the obelisk *in situ*
- Option 3 - Cover the monument
- Option 4 - Relocate the monument

Options 1, 3 and 4 were considered to be unacceptable in terms of current conservation philosophy and practice. With Option 1 - do nothing - the cultural significance of the obelisk would decline as deterioration continued. Option 3 - cover the monument - would seriously impair the original design intent of the monument, reduce the area of the park, limit vistas and would also alter the moisture content of the stone which could hasten deterioration. Option 4 - relocate the monument - was unacceptable because it would destroy the reason for the obelisk being there, would remove a monument that had been a feature of the place for over 175 years and could also cause further deterioration. Option 2, the conservation of the obelisk *in situ* was considered to be the most appropriate way of retaining the cultural significance of the monument. This was incorporated as the preferred option for the conservation of the obelisk in the Conservation Plan,¹³⁴ which was endorsed by the Heritage Council in February 1996.¹³⁵

The main recommendation of the Conservation Plan was a program of initial conservation work and monitoring including:

- site analysis including a photographic record and annotated record drawings
- documentation by a conservator of specific repairs required and the approach to be taken
- careful cleaning to remove mould and algae, to be undertaken by conservator
- remedial repairs including re-pointing, re-adhering loose and exfoliating stone and patching cornice, to be undertaken by conservator
- monitoring moisture content of the stonework before, during and after works

¹³¹ Peter Romey to Lord Mayor, Memo 17 November 1994 File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹³² Allen Robinson Pty Ltd to Lord Mayor 20 April 1995, File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹³³ Sue Rosen & Associates: 'A history of the Macquarie Obelisk Macquarie Place Sydney' Prepared for Mrs Caroline Simpson, April 1996.

¹³⁴ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works: 'Final Draft Conservation Plan The Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW', Heritage Group Report No. HG 96/02, January 1996.

¹³⁵ Heritage Council to General Manager 5 February 1996.

The Conservation Plan also recommended that a periodic maintenance manual should be prepared for the obelisk and that one officer of Council (or a consultant), with specialist conservation knowledge, should be responsible for the co-ordination of conservation works, the preparation of the maintenance manual and the supervision of periodic repairs.¹³⁶

The recommendations of the Conservation Plan were however very general and did not include any specific scope of works and specifications based upon a detailed physical analysis of the fabric. When funds were made available by Council in the Sydney Open Museum 1996-1997 budget allocation, a more detailed report was commissioned. In September 1997 ICS completed a condition report with options for conservation work, together with a photogrammetric record of the obelisk, measured drawings and condition drawings.¹³⁷ Site conditions that were contributing to the deterioration of the obelisk were identified as:

- the proximity of trees, contributing to biological growth and drainage problems;
- the proximity to traffic contributing to the deposition of surface pollution;
- proximity to the sea with resulting contamination from salts;
- the existing drainage system which was not working well enough and was contributing to rising damp.¹³⁸

With an estimated cost of some \$100,000 there were however no funds to proceed with the conservation works.¹³⁹ The project stalled as 'Sydney 2000' took over.

3.25 The Obelisk as Maker¹⁴⁰

An issue for the project was to determine if the obelisk is still used as the zero point for the measurement of roads in New South Wales. There is information to suggest there was a change of measuring point in the nineteenth century from the obelisk to the GPO.¹⁴¹

The 'Addendum' by B T Dowd puts together information about this change, explaining why the location of some of the milestones was further along the Parramatta Road than it should have been, if they had been measured from the obelisk.

On 11 September 1846, the Deputy Surveyor-General S. A. Perry wrote to the Colonial Secretary suggesting that the milestones on the Liverpool and Parramatta Roads needed replacing because they were so mutilated and asked from what point the measurement should commence - from Macquarie Place, the Post Office or the boundary stone of the city? The reply from the Colonial Secretary's office dated 23 September 1846 was that the Governor approved of the expense of new milestones 'the distance being measured from the General Post Office in George Street which appears to His Excellency to be a central and therefore eligible point of commencement'.¹⁴² Tenders were called for the new milestones in December 1846.

Dowd also makes reference to a letter dated 11 November 1839 from the Postmaster-General James Raymond to the Surveyor-General suggesting that the GPO be used as commencing point

¹³⁶ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works: 'Final Draft Conservation Plan The Obelisk Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW', Heritage Group Report No. HG 96/02, January 1996.

¹³⁷ These are held in the files of the Curator of the Open Museum CRS 950 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹³⁸ International Conservation Services for Heritage Group State Projects 'Obelisk of distances. Investigation of condition and options for conservation', September 1997.

¹³⁹ File L01-00025 (Sydney City Council Archives).

¹⁴⁰ Part of this section was written by Mary Casey.

¹⁴¹ W.A. Macdonald 'Old Milestones: Parramatta Road' in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol 26, pt 4, 1940 and an 'Addendum' by B.T. Dowd, *JRAHS* Vol 26, pt 4, 1940 pp355-359.

¹⁴² Dowd 1940:36.

for the measurement of the Penrith and Windsor Roads. In December 1839 the Surveyor-General 'issued instructions to one of the assistant surveyors to mark out the places for the milestones, with the zero point at the centre of the Post Office building in George Street'.¹⁴³ Dowd says that he has not been able to trace any record of the completion of this proposal. He suggests that because it was decided in 1846 to use the GPO, the earlier scheme probably did not eventuate.

Consultation with the RTA on this issue to understand current practice in relation to the obelisk has revealed that it is a designated survey mark and is still used as the zero point marker for major main roads as New South Wales including the Great Western, Princes and Pacific Highways. Minor roads are measured from the GPO. This marker has been an important point for the measurement for roads from 1818 to 2003 after 185 years.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Dowd 1940:385-389.

¹⁴⁴ Bill Evans, Heritage Survey Co-ordinator, Survey Services, RTA, Parramatta office and Graham Cosier, Project Delivery Manager, Survey Services, RTA.

4.0 Chronology

4.1 The Obelisk and Macquarie Place

1794	Shadrach Shaw granted a lease within the area that was to become Macquarie Place.
1803-1805	Simeon Lord, Thomas Randal, Thomas Reiby and William Chapman granted leases on the east side of the Tank Stream with water frontages.
1802	Area on the east side of the Tank Stream, in close proximity to Government House, defined by three roads (from the bridge to Government House; from the bridge along the shoreline; and from the west side of Government House to the wharf) giving it a triangular form.
1805-1806	Construction of new guard house at the south-east corner of the later Macquarie Place; new line of road from the west side of Government House to the Government Wharf.
March 1806	Guard takes possession of new guard house
1810	Macquarie Place defined and named by Government Macquarie. Intended 'to remove all those old Buildings and Inclosures now on that space of Ground which is bounded by the Government Domain on the East, by the Judge-Advocate's, Secretary's, Chaplain's, and Commissary's houses on the South, by the Spring of Water and Stream on the West, and by the Houses of Mr. Lord, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Reiby on the North.'
1810-1819	Substantial changes to Macquarie Place and its surrounds
1810-1812	Guard house removed from south-east corner of Macquarie Place
1810-1812	Construction of new guard house next to Government House, across the line of road to the wharf, cutting off access from the back of Government House to the waterfront
1810-1812	New residence built for Judge-Advocate Ellis Bent
1813	New residence built for the Governor's Secretary, J.T. Campbell
1815	New residence built for the Chaplain, the Rev W Cowper
July 1816	Nicholas Delany's gang begins clearing and levelling Macquarie Place
September 1816	Contract with Edward Cureton 'to erect a very handsome Stone Obelisk in the Center of Macquarie Place, as an Ornament to this Part of the Town' and also for the purpose of measuring the miles to all the interior parts of the Colony; plan and elevation supplied by Francis Greenway, Civil Architect
1817	New residence built for Judge Barron Field
1817-1818	Construction of the obelisk by Edward Cureton established as official zero point marker for the measurement of roads in the colony
1819	Macquarie Place enclosed and dwarf stone wall built by Edward Cureton and Ambrose Bryan
1819-1820	Construction of public fountain to design of Francis Greenway, at south-west corner of Macquarie Place (but outside enclosed area) by Edward Cureton
c.1821	Three paths across Macquarie Place converging at the base of the obelisk
1820s	Trees planted in Macquarie Place
1826	First street lamp in Australia erected in Macquarie Place
1828	Extraneous trees and underbrush cleared from Macquarie Place to form an 'evening promenade'
1830s	One central path across Macquarie Place with entrances at each end

Late 1820s-1830s	Plans for a new Government House and for new wharfage under discussion
1836	Site for new Government House chosen and form of Semi-Circular Quay determined
1836	Work begins on site of new Government House
1838	Removal of part of guard house adjacent to Government House, opening up a roadway down to Sydney Cove
1838	Work begins on construction of the Semi-Circular Quay
1845	Plan for extension of streets down to the quay advertised
1845	Governor Gipps moves to the new Government House
1845-1846	Removal of the old Government House and sale of materials
1847	Bridge Street extended east from Macquarie Place to Macquarie Street
1847	Removal of Government House guard house and sale of materials. New boundary walls built around remaining government offices in Bridge Street
1848	Fist evidence for presence of wrought iron balustrade around obelisk
c.1852	Oak trees in Macquarie Place felled and dwarf wall and railings removed
1865-1882	Circular railing around obelisk becomes buried
1866	Macquarie Place Reserve dedicated for 'health and recreation' and handed over to the City Corporation; Reserve enclosed with wooden paling
1866-1869	Fig trees planted in Macquarie Place Reserve
1869	Macquarie Place enclosed by dwarf stone wall with iron railings; name of Mayor Walter Renny inscribed on gate piers
1870s	Major government office buildings erected in Bridge Street
June 1883	Statue of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort unveiled at south-west corner of Macquarie Place where public fountain had stood
1883	Urinal erected at north end of Macquarie Place Reserve
1895	Cabman's shelter erected on Loftus Street frontage of the Macquarie Place Reserve between obelisk and urinal
1895-1901	Ground around obelisk excavated, concrete laid around foot of monument, old railing raised and refixed on new circular stone kerb, lettering of inscriptions re-cut; fig trees pruned
March 1902	Cabman's shelter removed from Loftus Street to Bridge Street frontage of Macquarie Place Reserve
January 1907	Sirius anchor and cannon unveiled in Macquarie Place
May 1907	Flagstaff in Macquarie Place presented to the City Council by the Women's Branch of the British Empire League
1907-1908	New public convenience for men built on north side of reserve, replacing earlier urinal
c.1908	Railings removed from around the Macquarie Place Reserve
1910	Beautification of the Reserve: fig trees removed from Bridge Street and Loftus Street frontages to make way for garden plots with stone rubble retaining walls, built up level with footpaths; area under trees on Macquarie Place side tar-paved for seats; centre of reserve grassed
1917	Area around obelisk remodelled. New wall built along Loftus Street with two flights of stairs from street level to path around base of monument. 'Two coats of preservative liquid' suggested for the obelisk – not known if this work was carried out.
1920s	Obelisk fenced off from the rest of Macquarie Place Park with access only from Loftus Street. Rest of park grassed
1931	Macquarie Place Park proclaimed under the Public Parks Act 1912
1934-1935	Two fig trees removed, path laid from base of obelisk to north-west side of the park. Obelisk repaired – stonework cut away and some sections replaced,

- including parts of inscription
- February 1954 Two plane trees planted by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh marking the beginning of the Remembrance Drive to Canberra, a memorial to Australians who died in World War II and in Korea
- 1958 Inaugural meeting of Sydney Fountains Committee: suggested locations for fountains include Macquarie Place
- 1960 Fountain in memory of John Christie Wright by Gerald Lewers presented by Mrs Jean Hague-Smith and located near corner of Loftus and Bridge Streets
- 1962 Macquarie Place and the obelisk included in Cumberland County Council listing of historic places
- 1963 Obelisk steam cleaned for 175th anniversary of foundation of the colony
- 1964 'Imperfect stones' of obelisk replaced with indents of Wonderbyrne stone and relevant parts of inscription re-incised; new work does not replicate original jointing or form of existing lettering. Some cement mortar patching. Surface of obelisk treated with clear silicon preparation.
- 1964 Edwardian steps and wall on Loftus Street damaged by car
- 1965 Plan for remodelling park prepared by Department of Public Works but deferred
- 1966 Work to repair damage around obelisk approved
- 1967 Hague-Smith fountain relocated to southwest corner of the park and placed within circular pond to deter vandalism
- 1967 Three gas lamps donated by AGL installed in Macquarie Place Park
- 1973 Temporary closure of Macquarie Place roadway for festivities associated with opening of the Sydney Opera House
- 1976 Macquarie Place roadway permanently closed to traffic; podium built along northwest side of park in former roadway and seats and planter boxes installed. Additional land dedicated for public recreation as extension to existing park
- 1981 Restoration report on obelisk by Cox, Tanner & Associates, funded through National Estate Grants Program, with specialist advice from Dr George Gibbons.
- 1981-1982 Obelisk photographed, casts made of inscriptions and ornamental features, surface grime removed, concrete surround at base of monument removed and replaced with sandstone blocks bedded in sand to improve drainage, new drainage installed.
- 1983 Test trenches excavated in Macquarie Place Park associated with archaeological investigation of the First Government House site
- 1988 Report on condition of obelisk by T.A. Taylor: moisture and chloride levels of stonework tested
- 1990 Masterplan and Plan of Management for Macquarie Place prepared by Lester Tropman & Associates for the Council of the City of Sydney
- 1992 Report on condition of obelisk by J.L. Heiman of CSIRO: core samples drilled
- 1993 Conservation Plan for Men's Lavatory, Macquarie Place prepared by State Projects, NSW Public Works
- 1994 Sub-soil drainage work around obelisk carried out by Urban Services Division of Sydney City Council with assistance of State Projects
- 1994 Funding for Conservation Plan obtained through Department of Public Works' Public Buildings Stone Program
- 1995 Historical and archaeological assessment report of Macquarie Place prepared by Edward Higginbotham for Sydney City Council
- 1995-1996 Conservation Plan for the obelisk prepared by State Projects, NSW Public Works with specialist advice from representatives of the Heritage Council's TAGMAC committee
- February 1996 Conservation Plan endorsed by the Heritage Council
- 1996 Historical research on the obelisk by Sue Rosen for Mrs Caroline Simpson
- 1997 Condition report with options for conservation work prepared by International

Conservation Services for Heritage Group, State Projects. Site conditions contributing to deterioration identified as: proximity of trees contributing to biological growth; traffic adding to surface pollution; proximity to sea giving contamination from salts; existing drainage system not working well enough and contributing to rising damp

February 1998 Return Brief, Stage 2, Macquarie Place Park prepared by OCULUS with City Projects

1998-1999 Estimated cost of conservation works for obelisk \$100,000 but no funds available

2000 Sydney 2000: the Olympics

5.0 Cultural and Social Context

5.1 Obelisk at South Head

The 1996 Conservation Plan addressed a number of issues associated with a comparative and historical analysis of obelisks. It noted the Obelisk, Macquarie Place was the second erected in the colony, the first being erected by Macquarie's own regiment in 1811 at Watsons Bay to mark their completion of the road to the South Head which was built by private subscription and was mostly for recreation.¹⁴⁵ This small, simple obelisk is still extant and is located in Robertson Park, Watsons Bay and is a scheduled item on the Woollahra Heritage LEP (**Fig. 5.1**).¹⁴⁶ Reportedly it has been moved from its original location.¹⁴⁷

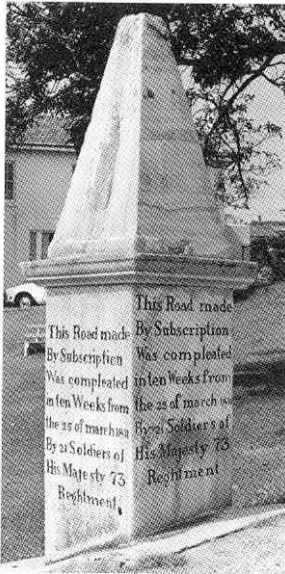


Figure 5.1: Obelisk at South Head erected by the 73rd Regiment in 1811 to mark the completion of South Head Road (modern Oxford Street and Old South Head Road).

5.2 Other Obelisks

The earliest known obelisks were made by the Egyptians and were associated with the worship of the sun god Amun-Re. Obelisks were typically found in religious centres and temples. The Egyptians also erected obelisks to celebrate victory over powerful enemies and they were often dedicated as pairs.¹⁴⁸ Egyptian obelisks arrived in the European world when Roman Emperors shipped them to Rome to erect in the centre of major public spaces such as in Nero's Circus. Modern day Rome reputedly has between 13 to 19 obelisks. Many were transported from Egypt, while others were made in both ancient and more recent times. Egyptian obelisks are also found in Istanbul, New York London and Paris. The shipping of these monuments was about the showing the strength of the empire and their ability to transport such large objects consisting of a single block of stone.

5.2.1 Obelisks in Rome

- Obelisk in Piazza San Giovanni, Laterano, Rome (**Figs 5.2, 5.3**). It is made of red granite and is 32 m tall with a 7 m base and weights 250 tons. It originally stood in front of the Temple of Amon, Thebes (near modern day Luxor). It was carved by the Pharaoh Thutmoses III in the 15th century BC. The Emperor Constans II, son of Constantine the Great, transported it to

¹⁴⁵ Rosemary Broomham 2001:37.

¹⁴⁶ NSW Heritage Office Website.

¹⁴⁷ B. Crossan, Survey of Memorial and Monuments in Woollahra for the Royal Australian Historical Society, 1987.

¹⁴⁸ Habachi 1977:3-11.

Rome to be placed in the Circus Maximus, a chariot racing stadium. A special ship was made to transport the obelisk from Egypt to Rome.¹⁴⁹

- Obelisk at Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt (**Fig. 5.4**). This was built during the period of the Middle Kingdom (2050-1786 B.C). An inscription on the obelisk records ‘The first occasion of the Jubilee, he made [it] to be given life forever’. Thought to be erected by Sesostri I in the 30th year of his reign, 1942 BC. It is thought that it was once part of a pair of obelisks.¹⁵⁰ The obelisks in their original locations did not have a pedestal base.
- The obelisk in the gardens on the Pincio Hill (**Fig. 5.5**). It was found in the sixteenth century outside Porta Maggiore, a large Roman gate in the old city walls. This obelisk was made by Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD. Pope Pius moved it to its present location in 1822. It has a relatively simple base with moulded cornice and some decoration on one side.
- This Egyptian obelisk was found in 1883 near the Baths of Diocletian, in front of the Roman National Museum (**Figs 5.6, 5.7**). The base of the monument is a memorial to Italian soldiers who were killed in the Battle of Dogali (Ethiopia, 1887). Inscriptions on the monument referring to Ramses II are probably 33 centuries old. It was placed in front of the gardens opposite the Termini Station, Rome. In 1925 due to alterations the obelisk and the memorial were moved 200 m to a less visible spot.¹⁵¹ It has a simple base with cornice detailing above the later war memorial.
- The obelisk in St Peters Square (**Figs 5.8, 5.9**) has no hieroglyphs. It is 25.5 m tall and the base and bronze top add another 15 m. The Emperor Caligula transported the obelisk from Heliopolis in 37 AD and placed it in what became known as Nero’s Circus (**Fig. 5.8**). St Peters was built near the remains of Nero’s Circus. The obelisk was previously placed closer to St Peters Basilica. It has a bronze base with cornice detailing and a bronze ball on top.
- The miniature obelisk in the Piazza della Minerva is borne on the back of an elephant by the sculptor Bernini (**Fig. 5.10**). It is one of a group of small obelisks which once decorated the Temple of Isis, an important Roman temple. It was found in the 1600s. The obelisk now stands behind the Pantheon, an ancient Roman building. The obelisk dates from the 6th century BC.¹⁵²
- Other ancient Egyptian obelisks in Rome are found in Rome.
- Some more recent examples have also been made for the streets of Rome. An obelisk was made in 1932 for Mussolini (**Fig. 5.11**). It was erected in front of a large sports centre built during the fascist regime. The sports centre, with its stadiums and avenues, was inspired by ancient Rome. The obelisk measures 17.5 metres with the base forming almost half the height of the monument.¹⁵³ It was engraved in Latin, ‘Mussolini Dux’ (leader).
- A modern concrete obelisk was erected to Italy’s famous inventor, Marconi (**Fig. 5.13**).

These obelisks illustrate the type of neo-classical influences that came from Rome in the mid to late eighteenth century to Britain. The neo-classical style produced significant changes in architecture and design, elements of which survive in Macquarie Place today in the form of the obelisk. The obelisk pedestal was a common element on the obelisks found in Rome and was a technique the Romans used to mount the obelisks. They were frequently simple and utilitarian but were also found with some additional detailing. This type of simple pedestal is found in the obelisk, Macquarie Place. Section 6 discusses milestones and similar monuments which take the simplified form of the obelisk and were the typical form of Sydney’s early milestones. Such milestones are on display at the Museum of Sydney, Camperdown Cemetery and various locations. Only a few of Sydney’s milestone remain *in situ* today. Obelisks were also used as funerary monuments and are common in cemeteries dating to the mid and late nineteenth century. An example is the one

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/5319/roma-col.htm>.





¹⁵⁰ <http://www.crystalinks.com/monolith.html>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/5319/roma-col.htm>.

¹⁵² <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/5319/roma-col.htm>.

¹⁵³ <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/5319/roma-col.htm>.

erected to Alan Cunningham in the Royal Botanic Gardens and illustrated in the Conservation Plan. This obelisk has been relocated within the gardens.¹⁵⁴

	
<p>Figure 5.2: Obelisk in Piazza San Giovanni, Laterano, Rome.</p>	<p>Figure 5.3: Base of obelisk in Laterano. The simplicity of the detailing, the use of the cornice moulding is similar to the Obelisk, Macquarie Place.</p>
	
<p>Figure 5.4: Obelisk at Heliopolis.</p>	<p>Figure 5.5: Obelisk in the gardens on Pincio Hill.</p>

¹⁵⁴ Conservation Plan 1996:45; 'Botanic Gardens Conservations Management Plan', Conybeare Morrison 2003.



Figure 5.6: Obelisk of Diocletian in its modern location.



Figure 5.7: The Diocletian Obelisk in front of the central Termini train station, Rome.



Figure 5.8: Obelisk in St Peter's Square. It has no hieroglyphs.

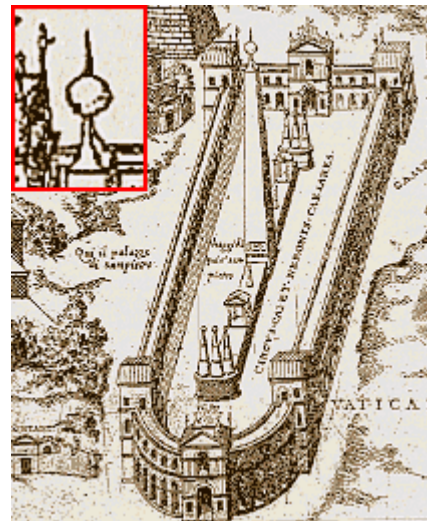


Figure 5.9: Nero's Circus with the obelisk located in the centre. The chariots raced around the central area.



Figure 5.10: Obelisk in the Piazza della Minerva. The curved form of the Pantheon is to the rear.



Figure 5.11: One of the two obelisks made for Duke Torlonia.



Figure 5.12: Obelisk built for Mussolini.



Figure 5.13: Marconi's spire dedicated to the inventor Marconi, made of concrete.

As noted in the Conservation Plan the obelisks in Roman gardens and squares inspired the British while on their grand tours. These in turn led to educated British people producing books illustrating the “archaeological” correct evidence of the classical ruins found in Rome. This was a source of inspiration for architects and artists in Britain as well as Europe. Obelisks were retranslated in the new townscape of empire as an element of public spaces. Reference have been made in the Conservation Plan to the obelisk in squares in Bath as well as by Broadbent and Hughes to ones in Rio di Janeiro (1997). Any of these may have been a general influence or a more specific influence on the choice of an obelisk for Macquarie Place. The Macquaries visited Rio on their way to NSW and Lachlan had been to Egypt during his active service in the British

army.¹⁵⁵ By the early nineteenth century obelisks were not such an unusual element in the townscapes and they in fact became more popular with the transportation and erection of “Cleopatra’s needle” in London in the 1870s.

5.3 Government Architect - Francis Howard Greenway¹⁵⁶

Francis Greenway arrived in New South Wales in February 1814, as a convicted forger on the *General Hewitt*. This was four years after the arrival of Governor and Mrs Macquarie. Greenway was a professional architect, reportedly the second to arrive in the colony. On his arrival Greenway had with him a letter of introduction from Admiral Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, and a copy of an architectural book by William Chambers.

On 7th March 1814 Greenway was issued with a ‘ticket-of-leave’. The issuing of a ‘ticket-of-leave’ meant Greenway could work for himself. In July 1814 the governor requested Greenway to copy a design of a courthouse. Greenway protested that his work was much better than the courthouse the governor was seeking to build. Greenway eventually copied the design as Macquarie requested.

Among early works by Greenway were additions to Dr John Harris’ house on his Ultimo Estate. He turned this house from a ‘single-ranged house into a double-piled house with an impressive, domed semicircular geometric staircase’. Greenway appears to have had a few other early commissions such as one for Sarah and George Howe, the government printer.

He was appointed Civil Architect in March 1816 and his first duty was to survey the newly completed general hospital. In July 1816 Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the new Macquarie Lighthouse at South Head. Greenway’s first design as civil architect was the lighthouse. During this period he designed and supervised many additions and repairs to existing buildings, such as, a new portico of Government House, Parramatta; additions to the military barracks; Parramatta Gaol; Colonial Secretary’s House and Judge Advocate’s House both in Macquarie Place; Female Orphan School, Rydalmere; Government House, Sydney and the Government Dockyard, Sydney. He designed and supervised the construction of a number of new buildings among which were Hyde Park Barracks, St Matthew’s Church, Windsor; Chief Justice’s House, Macquarie Place; Government Stables, Sydney Domain (Sydney Conservatorium of Music); Fort Macquarie, Bennelong Point; St Luke’s Church and the hospital at Liverpool; Dawes Point Battery, Sydney; Turnpike gate and Lodge, Sydney; and St James Church and Supreme Court House, Sydney.

As far as is known Greenway was only responsible for one monument, the Obelisk, Macquarie Place as well as the fountain in Macquarie Place. Other small works attributed to him include the Pigeon House, Governor’s Domain, Parramatta; the Governor’s bathhouse, Sydney Domain; and the tomb of George Howe, Devonshire Street. The majority of his works were government buildings or private houses. Very few items for placement in public spaces were built during the early colonial period.

The surviving architecture of Francis Greenway is some of Sydney and New South Wales’ most respected and cherished early colonial buildings. The affection and value placed on Greenway’s architecture were exhibited in the protests against the development (1998-2001) of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the former Government Stables (1817-1821), when there was much heated debate about the future and use of such a significant building. According to James Broadbent, Greenway ‘...had shown that noble building was possible, even with inferior materials, in the degradation of a desert-gaol. But inferior workmen and ignorant officials ruined his designs’.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ritchie, John 1986 *Lachlan Macquarie, a bibliography*, MUPress, Melbourne, pp. 48-51.

¹⁵⁶ This section is based on Broadbent & Hughes 1997:11ff.

¹⁵⁷ Broadbent & Hughes 1997:5.

Many of Greenway's designs employed the simplified language of classical architecture by using a '...simplicity of structure, defined by strengthening piers or pilasters plainly capped, by string-courses and relieving arches, and distinguished by fine proportion that has been the sponsor of twentieth century appreciation of Greenway's work'.¹⁵⁸ This use of simplified classical detailing is seen on the obelisk. With the simple detailing on the base which imitates those attributes of the obelisks located in Rome and the use of the fan motif on the acroteria. The cartouche is a reference back to the Egyptian origins of the obelisk and perhaps suggesting to the educated observer that the designer and/or patron were well aware of the derivation of obelisks and perhaps also served to emphasize the association of this place (Sydney and the colony) with a powerful empire - Britain.

5.4 Macquarie Place, the Obelisk and Georgian Town Planning

5.4.1 Macquarie Place

Macquarie Place, as mentioned in Section 3.4 above, had a series of houses flanking the southern side which were residences for the main civil officers of the colonial government (**Fig. 5.2**). The designs of two of these houses were based on ones in pattern books by Edward Gyfford and brought to New South Wales by Mrs Macquarie. The house for the Judge-Advocate and the Colonial Secretary were both based on Gyfford's books and their style was 'aspiring to Italianate Regency'.¹⁵⁹ It should be noted that Mary Reiby's house on the western side was neo-classical with a simple pediment (**Fig. 3.9**). It is this remaking of the landscape of Macquarie Place into an urban space with its 'high' architectural influences which was the locale for the original placement of the obelisk.

Another neo-classical structure was also erected near the western point of the triangle – a fountain for the provision of fresh water to the public (**Fig. 5.3**). This fountain was a 'square pavilion, with unadorned openings and tall niches (later remodelled) on alternative sides, and was built on a broad stone platform. Corner pilasters supported a full Doric entablature, with triglyphs to the frieze and bold, dentilled cornice'.¹⁶⁰ Cureton, in evidence to Commissioner Bigge, recalled how Mrs Macquarie provided the plan and drawing for the erection of the fountain in Macquarie Place. The fountain had to be rebuilt under orders from Mrs Macquarie, according to a new plan by Francis Greenway, as it would have been 24 feet (8 m) high. The final fountain was 14 feet (4.6 m) high.¹⁶¹ This fountain was variously criticised but was actually one of two water sources for government house and appears to have been built over a spring.¹⁶²

The layout of Macquarie Place has elsewhere been assumed to be associated with Francis Greenway because he was responsible for the design on the obelisk (Section 3.5).¹⁶³ As indicated by the evidence of Edward Cureton Mrs Macquarie took a hands-on approach to designing the water fountain but eventually had Greenway redesign it. This suggests that, as with her acknowledged role in the design of Mrs Macquarie's Road and her important contribution to the redesign of the Domain landscape, she had a larger role than previously

¹⁵⁸ Broadbent & Hughes 1997:32.

¹⁵⁹ Broadbent 1997:33-45, quote p. 45.

¹⁶⁰ Broadbent & Hughes 1997:62-63.

¹⁶¹ Bonwick Transcript 1:415.

¹⁶² Broadbent & Hughes 1997:63; Proudfoot *et al.* 1991:139-140.

¹⁶³ James Broadbent & Joy Hughes: *Francis Greenway Architect* (1997) pp 53-54 and M H Ellis: *Francis Greenway* (Famous Australian Lives Edition, 1978) p 49.

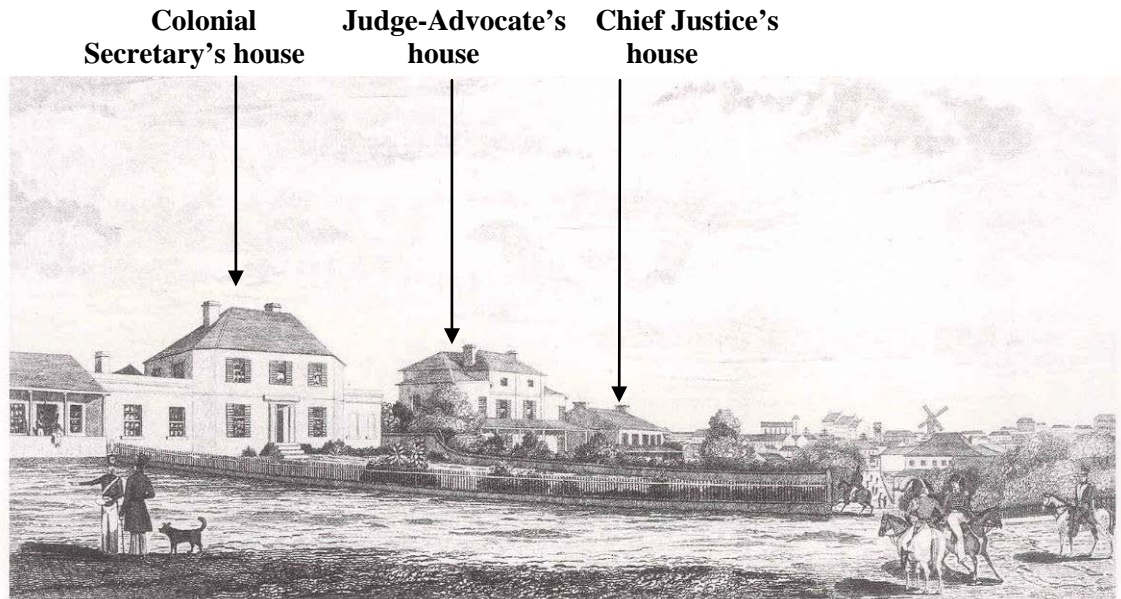


Figure 5.14: ‘Sydney from the Domain near government house’, J. Carmichael. From *Select View of New South Wales*, 1829. The viewer was standing just inside the grounds of government house, the picket fence delineating the boundary of the Domain. This illustration shows the edge of Macquarie Place with the two new buildings erected from Mrs Macquarie’s pattern books. The soldiers on horseback are probably returning from or going to take a ride along Mrs Macquarie’s Road. Broadbent 1997:45.

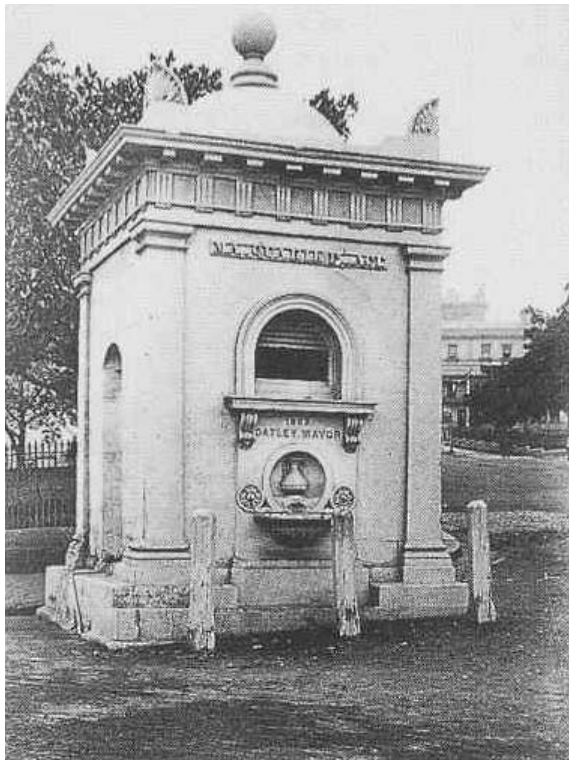


Figure 5.15: Macquarie Place fountain, c. 1857. Dixson Library, SLNSW. Broadbent & Hughes 1997:63

suggested in the making of Macquarie Place and the decision-making about its style and ornamentation.¹⁶⁴ The designing of a square with buildings erected in a uniform architectural style was a practice that had become common in provincial English towns, such as the triangular square at Bath which was an important public space.¹⁶⁵ Therefore it is likely that Mrs Macquarie had a hands-on role in the design and implementation of Macquarie Place, as it was important in providing public access for ‘respectable people’ to the Domain and Mrs Macquarie’s Road along the eastern foreshore of Sydney and Farm Coves. Macquarie Place was the forecourt of her home.

Changing practices in British town planning (below) influenced by the process of urbanisation and modernisation stimulated the making, design and style of the landscape of Macquarie Place by Mrs Macquarie, the governor and Francis Greenway. The Macquaries also built neo-classicising additions to First Government House designed by Francis Greenway.¹⁶⁶

5.4.2 Georgian Town Planning - Remaking the British Townscape¹⁶⁷

This section draws heavily on the work of Peter Borsay (1989) whose groundbreaking work on *The English Urban Renaissance* re-examined eighteenth-century provincial towns and their built environments. His interpretation of English townscapes is valuable because it provides a context for analysing the actions of the Macquarie in relation to changes to the form of Sydney’s early nineteenth-century streetscapes, include the creation of Macquarie Place.

The urban renaissance did not happen to all towns but mainly to major provincial centres.¹⁶⁸ The impetus in some cases for a major urban reorganisation had been the devastation of cities by fire, such as, Northampton (1675), Warwick (1694), Buckingham (1792), Stony Stratford (1742) and Wareham (1762). The most well known and influential of these rebuildings was the spa-town of Bath where by the 1770s it emerged ‘as the jewel in the crown of an urban architectural renaissance whose influence spread the length and breadth of the country’.¹⁶⁹

Among the major changes to these large towns was the decline of vernacular building and its replacement with classical architecture; the ‘emergence of a more convenient and comfortable physical environment’; and ‘parts of the townscape acquired a more ordered, integrated, and therefore “urban” appearance’.¹⁷⁰ This latter characteristic resulted from the ‘stress which classical architecture placed on uniformity’, producing a greater emphasis on uniformity within a square or street.¹⁷¹ The changes to the streets were to facilitate the movement of vehicles and animals for purposes of trade, especially on market days. Fences were built along streets to protect houses from damage on busy market days when the streets were crowded.¹⁷²

Rebuilding of houses was the basic step in the rebuilding of towns. House rebuilding involved two phases: the alteration of the internal structure, then at a later date the reconstruction of the façade in accordance with classical architecture. Various classical elements were utilised: the five orders, cornices, pediments, keystones, quoins, aprons, stringing-courses and decorative details. Choices of the decorative features employed in a façade were decided by those defining criteria, ‘fashion and status’.¹⁷³ An element of the new façade often associated with higher status was the use of bricks rather than stone or timber. As late as the end of the eighteenth century bricks were seen as

¹⁶⁴ Casey 2002: ch. 5, pp. 223-228.

¹⁶⁵ Borsay 1989:42, 75-77, 165.

¹⁶⁶ Casey 2002: ch. 14, pp. 255-256.

¹⁶⁷ The following section is an extract from Casey 2002:Ch 5, pp. 66-69.

¹⁶⁸ Borsay 1989:43.

¹⁶⁹ Borsay 1989:45-46.

¹⁷⁰ Borsay 1989:42.

¹⁷¹ Borsay 1989:42.

¹⁷² Borsay 1989:43.

¹⁷³ Borsay 1989:54.

an 'architectural and economic marker'.¹⁷⁴ The new house had a flush façade, rigorous use of proportion and symmetry, classical ornamentation, and used new building materials.¹⁷⁵

The redesigning of houses created an awareness of the relationship between buildings. The influence of classical designs modified earlier approaches where structures were seen as discrete. 'Individual properties were now to be perceived and treated (where possible) as part of a wider fabric, with their specific identities subsumed beneath a larger architectural form, such as a street or square'.¹⁷⁶ Streets were reorganised by integrating the separate buildings flanking a thoroughfare and improving the nature of the street space. Traditionally, roads were often criticised as being irregularly shaped, narrow and uneven. With the new architecture the new street was developed and, 'a broad, straight and open thoroughfare became the model', focusing on line and width.¹⁷⁷

The creation of these more pleasing and efficient streets frequently required 'the acquisition of relatively unencumbered land, such as a garden, in others, the demolition of a building and its reconstruction on a smaller portion of the same plot'.¹⁷⁸ These changes were frequently made difficult by the issues of landownership and by leaseholders who were resistant to change. Major impetuses for these changes were increasing travel and inland trade.¹⁷⁹ In the main the modifications were for practical purposes, such as removing bottlenecks at corners. Aesthetic considerations were included where possible.¹⁸⁰ Because of the issues of land ownership and leasehold occupation of buildings the passing of local acts of Parliament became an essential component of the urban improvement process.¹⁸¹ A local act of Parliament provided the improving body with legislated authority where the changes threatened 'the sensitive domain of private property'.¹⁸²

Aside from streets other spaces were improved, such as the square. Squares first began to appear in the urban planning of English provincial towns by 1700. 'The aesthetic success of a square depended upon its architectural homogeneity'.¹⁸³ In some cases uniform façades were imposed upon houses around a square, or the whole side of a square was made to appear as a single building by creating a grand façade for all the houses lining the square.¹⁸⁴ One of the finer examples of a new square was Queen's Square, Bath. It had elaborate horticultural arrangements, being enclosed with 'espaliers of elm and lime trees', and had 'flower shrubs' and 'intersecting footpaths' which formed 'a striking geometric pattern'.¹⁸⁵ In the 1760s the inside of the square had 'a garden with fine gravel walks, confined by a handsome balustrade of stone, with four Nobel iron gates opening into it, and in the midst of all is a large circular piece of water, in whose centre is an obelisk...seventy foot high, which looks beautiful'.¹⁸⁶ Churches were often associated with town squares and the development of market places.¹⁸⁷ 'The development of the street and square contributed much to the emerging elegance and amenity of the town's built environment'.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁴ Borsay 1989:55-56.

¹⁷⁵ Borsay 1989:57.

¹⁷⁶ Borsay 1989:60-61.

¹⁷⁷ Borsay 1989:60, 62-63.

¹⁷⁸ Borsay 1989:65.

¹⁷⁹ Borsay 1989:65.

¹⁸⁰ Borsay 1989:66.

¹⁸¹ Borsay 1989:70-72.

¹⁸² Borsay 1989:71, 88.

¹⁸³ Borsay 1989:74-75.

¹⁸⁴ Borsay 1989:75-77.

¹⁸⁵ Borsay 1989:77, quoting John Wood.

¹⁸⁶ Borsay 1989:78, quoting John Wood.

¹⁸⁷ Borsay 1989:78.

¹⁸⁸ Borsay 1989:80.

Borsay suggests that maps and landscape images or prospects indicated a 'growing public interest in the townscape' and awareness of the urban form; this 'transformation in visual perception laid the foundations for a new commitment to town planning'.¹⁸⁹ The mapping of towns provided a valuable tool for creating an understanding of how towns fitted together and which areas required reorganisation. Large-scale town planning was unlikely to occur in most towns, and if it did happen took considerable time and affected only limited areas.¹⁹⁰ England had no tradition of town planning on which to draw and models were frequently sought from the Continent. An example of major planning was Louis XIV's Versailles. This 'scheme involved a huge programme of building works that linked together town, house, and park on a dramatic scale to form an awesome expression of the crown's authority'.¹⁹¹ 'A properly arranged landscape, like a well-ordered society, was one that reflected the importance of hierarchy as well as uniformity'.¹⁹² Borsay also proposes that there were 'implicit pressures of architectural tradition and social convention' which led to the imposition of regularity in the streetscape and the adoption of fashionable adjacent styles in the desire to make places look ordered and uniform.¹⁹³

Another aspect of Borsay's thesis was the development of 'arenas for display', which provided opportunities for 'socializing and personal display'.¹⁹⁴ These included organisations for running assemblies and constructing buildings to hold assemblies and the making of gardens and walks.¹⁹⁵ For those of the middle class or elite the formal promenade was an important daily ritual.¹⁹⁶ In Bath one of the famous walks was around St James Triangle, a triangular "square" with a series of parades and walks. Many of the walks were laid out with gravel or stone and brick to provide a secure and unmuddied footing.¹⁹⁷

The development of the urban renaissance was dependent on the existence of thriving economic communities, the presence or rise of the middle class and their intermingling with the town or rural gentry which produced the need to create anew or remake the urban environment. The urban renaissance had some 'nobler, uplifting aspects, seeking to foster man's finer qualities'.¹⁹⁸ In this way it was part of the Enlightenment, where reason and rationality sought to 'rescue the nation from barbarity and ignorance...to *civilize* it'.¹⁹⁹

Conclusions

These practices were associated with the Enlightenment and the reordering of many provincial towns and cities where the houses, public buildings, streets and squares were influenced by classical architecture. Among these influences were the development of public spaces as part of the rise in civility and sociability. Peter Borsay's (1989) analysis of the reconstruction of British townscapes during the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries is extremely useful for providing historical, social and cultural context for the modification of Sydney's early townscape. Borsay's main premise was that following the end of the civil unrest during the Tudors and Stuarts the civil calm of England following the Restoration allowed for the development of provincial wealth and the construction of new places for social interaction for the English middle class. Borsay's analysis focuses on the built landscape of house, street and square and areas of display which includes gardens and walks. He also examines the motives of status, civility and sociability in the

¹⁸⁹ Borsay 1989:85.

¹⁹⁰ Borsay 1989:85, 88.

¹⁹¹ Borsay 1989:89.

¹⁹² Borsay 1989:93.

¹⁹³ Borsay 1989:99.

¹⁹⁴ Borsay 1989:150.

¹⁹⁵ Borsay 1989:150-172.

¹⁹⁶ Borsay 1989:162.

¹⁹⁷ Borsay 1989:165, fig. 17; 168.

¹⁹⁸ Borsay 1989:257, 199, 230.

¹⁹⁹ Borsay 1989:257.

development of the newly built environments.²⁰⁰ All of the above issues inform the ideology present in the remaking of the Macquarie Place, as well as the Domain landscape, and the built environment generally by the various governors, especially Bligh and Macquarie, as well as Mrs Macquarie.

²⁰⁰ Borsay 1989:viii-ix.

6.0 Review of Conservation Issues

6.1 Physical Assessment

6.1.1 Introduction

A plethora of condition and conservation reports has been prepared on the Obelisk over the past 25 years,²⁰¹ as degradation of the sandstone has become increasingly alarming. Some of the more comprehensive reports have involved taking samples from the sandstone obelisk²⁰² and wrought iron balustrade for chemical analysis²⁰³ to determine the specific causes of its progressive deterioration. However, none of the previous reports have taken a scientific approach to the identification of the type of Sydney sandstone and its characteristics.

The purpose of this assessment is to review the current condition of the sandstone obelisk and iron balustrade, in light of previous reports, and to determine the extent of deterioration, since the most recent report by ICS of September 1997, as well as other assessments.

It is worth noting that Sydney Sandstone generally has a serviceable life of 100-125 years.²⁰⁴ The obelisk has been continually exposed to the outdoor environment for 185 years, with little maintenance, and will continue to decay at an immeasurable rate unless some measures are taken to preserve it.

The monument was inspected by the writer on several occasions during March and April 2003 from ground level. Close inspection of the upper surfaces was not undertaken, therefore conclusive comments regarding the soundness of stones which comprise the shaft could not be determined. It is possible that stones which *prima facie* are in good condition may have poor internal adhesion (drummy) and be prone to spalling. Recommendations (Section 9) suggests a more thorough assessment of individual stones prior to treatment of the Obelisk.

6.1.2 Sandstone

Summary of Physical Condition

The form of the obelisk remains complete, however many of its Sydney sandstone elements are in poor condition and are actively degrading, giving the overall appearance of the monument being neglected.

The integrity and significance of the fabric comprising the monument has been diminished due to lack of maintenance and inappropriate repairs throughout its history. The most notable repairs are the replacement of the moulded base course with new sandstone in 1935 and the replacement of the lower course of the dado on the southern face, which was poorly executed and re-inscribed. There is some debate as to whether the lower course on the other faces was also replaced at this time (Appendix 3).

²⁰¹ G.S. Gibbons & J. Gordon. 'Report on the Conservation of the Macquarie Place Obelisk.' Insearch Ltd, September 1978; Cox, Tanner & Associates 1981; G.S. Gibbons, 'Report on Greenway Obelisk, Sydney', Insearch Ltd, report prepared for Cox Tanner Pty Ltd, June 1981; Museums Association of Australia Inc. New South Wales Branch. 'Conservation Report on Greenway Obelisk, Macquarie Place, report prepared for Howard Tanner & Associates, August 1987; Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works (1996).

²⁰² J.L. Heiman 1992; T.A. Taylor 1988.

²⁰³ International Conservation Services 1997.

²⁰⁴ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996:5.

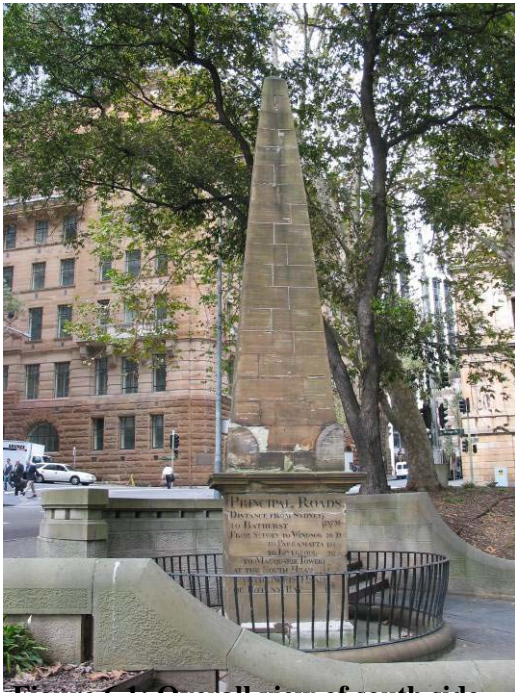


Figure 6.1: Overall view of south side of Obelisk, April 2003.



Figure 6.2: Overall view of north side of Obelisk, April 2003

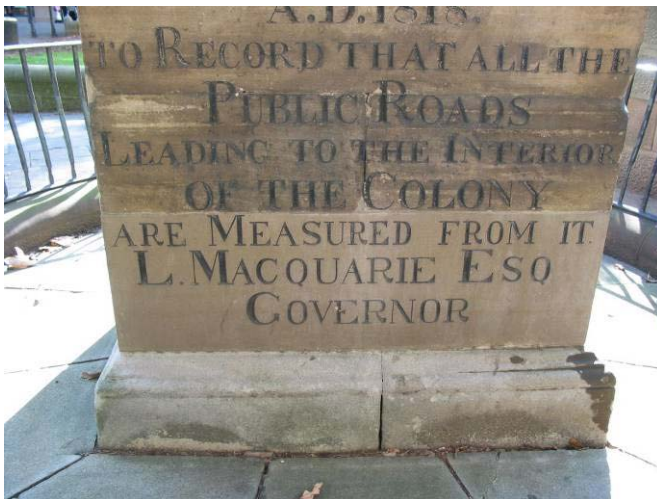


Figure 6.3: Southern pedestal, showing re-inscribed biscuit indent and fretting of the base from rising damp, April 2003

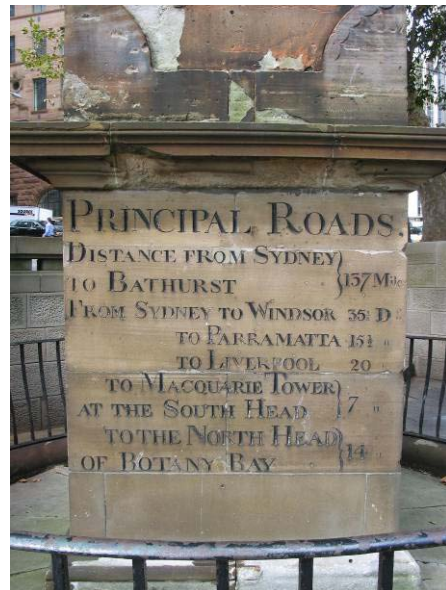


Figure 6.4: Northern pedestal, April 2003.

The 'white' sandstone comprising the Obelisk is very weathered. Oxidation of the surface has resulted in the development of a brown weathering skin. Areas where this skin has exfoliated reveals the underlying white/grey sandstone (Figs 6.3, 6.5, 6.6).

Fretting of the stone has occurred in varying degrees, at all levels due to soluble salt attack. The decay has been exacerbated by water ingress into the stone due to rising damp, saturation by rain and penetration through open joints, followed by wetting and drying cycles which enable the salts to crystallize.

Green and black biological growths, the latter in a horizontal pattern following the lines of the worked stone, are evident. Although the growths are visually unsightly, they are not believed to be degrading the sandstone.²⁰⁵

The circular sandstone dwarf wall supporting the balustrade also suffers from exfoliation of the oxidized surface on the southern and eastern sides, due to rising damp, revealing the white coloured stone underneath (**Fig. 6.5**). The pointing between the blocks is missing and allows water ingress.

Previous pointing of the joints is hard and possibly cementitious. This limits water movement through the joints and forces moisture to pass through the stone, which has resulted in decay immediately adjacent to hard pointed areas.



Figure 6.5: Circular perimeter fence and dwarf wall, April 2003.



Figure 6.6: West cornice and acroterion course, April 2003.

Mechanisms of Decay

The primary causes of deterioration to the stonework have been attributed to “*moisture penetration and associated salt attack*”²⁰⁶ as a result of rising damp and falling damp²⁰⁷, which creates ongoing erosion of the original surface details, chiselled lettering and mouldings.

Soluble salt crystallisation is the most troublesome and destructive form of decay to stone. The damage is caused by water containing salts moving through the stone matrix. When the moisture evaporates, the salts crystallise and their growth over time can be powerful enough to rupture the pores and cause the stone to fret leaving the surface friable and sandy.

Rising damp has been exacerbated over the years, initially by the absence of a damp proof course at the time of construction, and later by a rise in surrounding ground levels and inadequacies of the 1983 sub-surface drainage system due to frequent blockages.²⁰⁸ All of these conditions have meant that ground water is retained below the Obelisk and is wicked up by capillary action through the porous sandstone.

²⁰⁵ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996:21.

²⁰⁶ JL Heiman 1992, p. 6.

²⁰⁷ International Conservation Services 1997, p. 13.

²⁰⁸ JL Heiman 1992, p.1.

A core drill taken in the base course below the northern inscription in 1992 by CSIRO identified chloride and nitrate salts.²⁰⁹ The chloride salts can be attributed to airborne seawater from the close proximity of the monument to Sydney Harbour, while the nitrates are likely to be by-products from urban pollution. The ensuing damage has meant almost complete loss of 30-40 mm of the weathering skin from all faces of the base course, and structural loss of the carved moulding (**Figs 6.3, 6.4**).



Figure 6.7: Southern pedestal showing fretting and variation of colour in courses, April 2003.



Figure 6.8: Northern cornice showing salt damage, April 2003.

One of the most damaging salts to stone is sulphate salts resulting from urban pollution, notably the burning of fossil fuels. Core drilling by CSIRO identified a significant concentration of sulphate salts in the very decayed cornice stones. These salts can be considerably larger in size than say chlorides, and are capable of exerting an enormous bursting pressure inside the pore structure of the stone, resulting in spalling of the stone (**Figs 6.6, 6.8**).

Salt attack is exacerbated by penetrating damp resulting from rainfall, ingress behind the face through incomplete mortar joints and retention of moisture on the surface by the overhanging branches of the adjacent trees.

The degradation of cornices (which are designed to protect the ashlar faces below) by salt attack, has transferred the salts and resulted in fretting of the top edge of the upper most ashlar stone on all faces of the dado (**Fig. 6.8**).

6.1.3 Review Of Condition 2003

The condition of the stonework appears to be similar to that described in the 1997 report. However, some areas identified as being drummy or cracked in 1997 have now exfoliated revealing a white sandstone surface below. New losses of the stone surface have been identified as highlighted overlays on the Structural Condition drawings provided in the 1997 ICS report and are reproduced in Appendix 4 with recent annotations showing changes in the condition of the obelisk. In summary, 95 per cent of the weathered skin has exfoliated from the vertical surface of base stones below the southern inscription and new cracks have developed in the ashlar blocks on the east face of the pedestal.

As most of the previous reports cited, especially the 1970s and 1980s reports, are copies, the definition of photographs illustrating damage are poor and difficult to use for comparative assessment. Since a fibreglass replica was made of the northern and southern inscription panel

²⁰⁹ JL Heiman 1992, p.10.

(**Fig.6.9**) and the four fan shaped elements from the acroteria (**Fig. 6.10**) in 1982, a comparison of the current condition with these elements was thought to be useful. However due to the replicas being painted and the inscriptions blackened, it is difficult to make a direct comparison. In addition the southern inscription panel was not located in Council archives and its location was unknown. A photograph of this the replica of the southern inscription panel was in the Heiman report²¹⁰. Some localised loss of the stone surface is evident around the carved detail on the south facing fan details, above the inscription panel.

The joins between the sandstone pavers radiating from the obelisk to the fence are unpointed and open to water ingress. The sponge backings are evident in some joins. All four outlet drains around the base of the Obelisk are blocked with leaves from the overhanging deciduous trees.

Electrical wires are protruding from the pavers in front of the northern and southern faces and are visually obtrusive. They appear to have previously been the wiring for lights to illuminate the inscriptions.

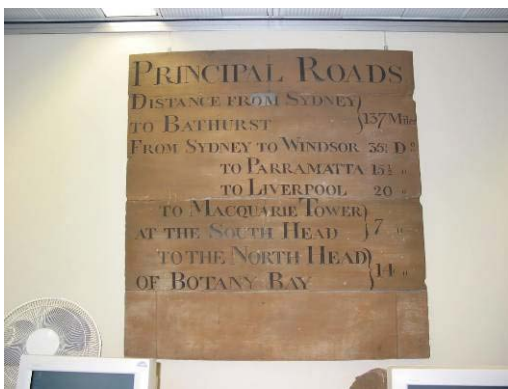


Figure 6.9: Fibreglass replica of northern inscription in City of Sydney Archives, Town Hall.



Figure 6.10: Fibreglass replicas of fan details from acroterion course in City of Sydney Archives, Town Hall.

6.1.2 Wrought Iron

Little emphasis has previously been placed on documenting the condition of the balustrade as previous reports have concentrated on the condition of the sandstone. Although the balustrade does not appear to date to the erection of the obelisk, the writer believes it is a significant part of the obelisk. Historical research indicates the earliest pictorial evidence is in images by Joseph Fowles dated 1848²¹¹ showing the wrought iron fence installed in a flat topped stone wall (**Fig. 3.7**).

Description

The balustrade is constructed from wrought iron and consists of an upper rail with a slightly curved profile, a lower rail of rectangular section, joined by 22mm square sectioned stringers at regular intervals (approx. 150mm apart) (**Fig. 6.11**). The stringers are curved in an elongated S-shape. The upper and lower rail consists of six sections which are lap joined and riveted. The lower rail is attached to a bull nose, dwarf sandstone wall with six ferrous hold down bolts secured to the stone with lead packing.

²¹⁰ 1992:fig 24.

²¹¹ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996, p.32.



Figure 6.11: Southwestern detail of wrought iron balustrade, April 2003.

2003 Condition

Thorough documentation of the balustrade has not been conducted in the previous reports, therefore there is no benchmark to compare with, making it difficult to ascertain any change in its condition over the last two decades. For this reason, a more comprehensive condition assessment is provided for the metalwork.

Maintenance of the balustrade has not been well documented, apart from Council files which record that a new dwarf stone wall was built, the old railing was re-fixed to it and a concrete floor was laid around the base of the monument in the late 1890s. It is unclear whether corroded components were replaced during this work, however it is likely that the rails were repainted.

It is assumed that maintenance of the ironwork followed the usual pattern of successive painting regimes. The current paint system consists of a zinc rich primer and a thin top coat of black paint.²¹² It appears to be the result of a past restoration project where the previously failed paint system has been totally removed and replaced with an anti-corrosive zinc rich paint system. The date of this restoration is not known. It is clear that the paint was applied over stringers that were already in an advanced state of corrosion as necking corrosion which results in metal loss is clearly evident near the base of some stringers and has altered the original square profile (**Figs 6.12, 6.13**).

The paint system has now failed. The black top coat and green primer have peeled off in localised areas, which is allowing moisture to contact the metal and initiate corrosion. Bright orange corrosion products of iron oxide are evident in areas where the paint layer has recently flaked off indicating active and ongoing corrosion. Localised pitting corrosion, both current and previous is visible in these areas. Loss of paint is especially evident on the lower rail where water is able to pool and permeate the coating, causing corrosion of the iron and further loss of paint. A photograph taken in 1994 shows the loss of the black top coat revealing the green primer below, however corrosion spots are not evident.²¹³

²¹² International Conservation Services 1997, p. 46.

²¹³ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996, Figure 65, p.39.



Figure 6.12: Dwarf wall of perimeter fence showing fretting from rising damp, April 2003.



Figure 6.13: Detail of wrought iron balustrade showing loss of paintwork and corrosion, April 2003.

Delamination of the wrought iron is evident in the lower rail at the lap join of two sections, where the northeastern bolt is located (**Fig. 6.14**). This corrosion showing the expansion of the corrosion products in layers is characteristic of wrought iron corrosion. It appears to have resulted due to a lack of paint covering the lapped join and allowing moisture to penetrate between the join of the metal sections.

The lead packing surrounding the hold down bolts which attach the balustrade to the dwarf sandstone wall, have successfully protected the steel bolts from corroding, expanding and damaging the stone as is common in other ferrous railing fences (**Fig. 6.14**). However, all six pieces of lead packing are starting to pull out of the bolt holes, leaving gaps for water to enter the holes and possibly undermine the stability of the hold down bolts.



Figure 6.14: Detail of lap join in balustrade showing lead packing at base of bolt and delamination corrosion, April 2003.

6.2 Precedents for similar treatments

Previous treatments to the obelisk

Despite the urging of specialists not to replace stone or consider piecemeal replacement of individual elements for the obelisk, unfortunately precedents for stone replacement were set in 1934 when stones from the moulded base and lower dado were replaced, and later in 1964 when an ill-executed stone indent was installed in the southern inscription panel. The repercussions of these decisions have already been costly to the preservation of the obelisk; in 1995 Mrs Caroline Simpson considered providing private sponsorship for conservation of the obelisk. However after reviewing the 1996 Conservation Plan, then commissioning independent historical research, she did not provide funding. Part of the reason she did not sponsor its conservation was due to the substantial repairs to the monument over the years which were perceived to have compromised its integrity. To this end, conservation or even maintenance has still not been carried out on the Obelisk since 1995, and it continues to actively degrade.

The lack of a regular and structured maintenance regime on the obelisk over its 185-year history appears to have been a major contributing factor to its ongoing deterioration. It has to some degree encouraged ill-planned, one off big treatments such as steam cleaning, replacement of stones and part of the inscription and re-pointing with cement-based mortars, in attempts to make the monument appear maintained and valued. Although salt contamination was identified by George Gibbons in a 1981 report, and a form of desalination recommended, 22 years on no attempts at limiting the concentration of destructive salts has been attempted. Consequently, a considerable amount of the original surface is now drummy and fretting and will be lost.

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Conservation of Sydney Sandstone

As mentioned in Section 6.1, Sydney Sandstone generally has a serviceable life of 100-125 years and will require conservation during and beyond this time span to ensure it remains in good condition.

Although there are few sandstone monuments that pre-date the Macquarie Place obelisk, many later monuments and buildings of Sydney Sandstone have required conservation treatment. The

Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens is a copy of an ancient Greek monument. It was erected in 1870 from Sydney Yellowblock²¹⁴ sandstone and underwent conservation treatment in 1998. The cornice was very badly eroded and it was decided to replace it with new carved stone of similar appearance, and, to protect the cornice from future erosion it was capped with lead sheeting. Other areas which had suffered delamination such as the architrave section were repaired with plastic repairs, which consist of epoxy resin with sands selected to match the surrounding stone colour. Figures 6.15 and 6.16 shows the monument five years after conservation treatment. The replaced stones of the cornice are not quite as yellow as the original oxidized Yellowblock sandstone, however they are less obvious than the light coloured epoxy patches (**Fig. 6.15**) which are matched to the dry stone, so that when the monument is wet and the stone darkens, the patches tend to stand out. Some exfoliating areas of the stone were rubbed back to sound stone and reveal a lighter colour underneath, some of these areas are still apparent after five years (**Fig. 6.16**) as it will take a considerable length of time for these areas to darken up through exposure. The base of the monument, which suffered loss of stone but was stable, was retained in this state. It was not deemed necessary to recreate all arrises and moulded details, as some loss of surface due to its age and outdoor exposure was considered acceptable, and in many cases is preferred as a good conservation approach to display the historical surfaces.



Figure 6.15: Choragic Monument in Royal Botanic Gardens showing sandstone repairs five years after conservation treatment. Stone was replaced in the cornice, while light coloured epoxy patching is evident at the centre of the architrave, April 2003.



showing rubbed stone at centre, epoxy patch at top right and minimal treatment of base stones, April 2003.

The Case for Appropriate Treatments and Presentation.

The cultural significance of a monument can be greatly compromised if it is treated inappropriately in attempts to preserve and present it for interpretation. Some alarming examples of such treatments are evident in the Blue Mountains of NSW. The Explorers Marked Tree shown in Fig. 6.17 was allegedly marked by the early explorers of the rugged Blue Mountains during the 'First Crossing' in 1813. By the early 1900s the living memorial had died, choked by a wall built to protect it. The top was cut off and a stump left which continued to decay. The stump was 'restored' during the 1930s by filling it with concrete. The addition of concrete would make it extremely

²¹⁴ Heritage Group State Projects, Dept. of Public Works and Services 1996b *The Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, February 1996.*

difficult to successfully conserve what remains of the original tree and may in fact have exacerbated its continued degradation. Today the memorial can be mistaken for a bar-b-que hut by the side of the freeway, as an unsympathetic shelter and railings have been placed around the tree to protect it from rain. Lavelle states that the “truncated relic is both a dismembered and disremembered remnant of its former self.”²¹⁵

An example of an inappropriate treatment of an historic inscription is the relocation of the Mitchell’s Pass inscription beside the Great Western Highway at Mitchell’s Pass, west of Mount Victoria. The 1832 inscription was cut from the sandstone cliff face during the 1970s when the road was widened and mounted nearby by the side of the freeway (Fig. 6.18). This treatment assumes that the information provided by the inscription alone is of primary importance, without any regard for its integrity and significance being the context in which it was inscribed in its original location on the cliff face.

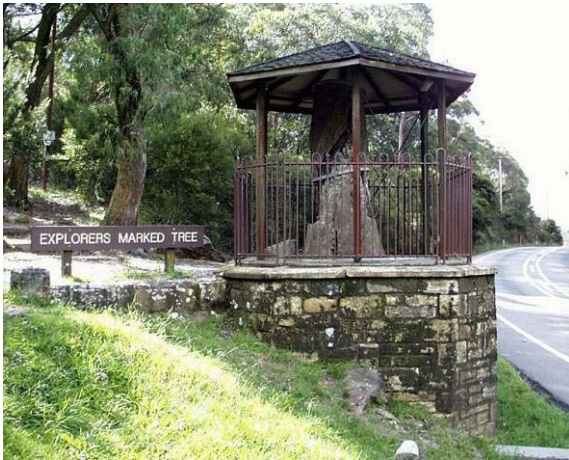


Figure 6.17: Remains of the Explorers Marked Tree located on the Great Western Highway, near Katoomba, NSW.



Figure 6.18: “Mitchells Pass 1932” inscription cut from cliff face during road widening in the 1970s and re-mounted at the side of the road.

Relocation of Monuments

Relocation of a monument from its original location is anathema to conservation principles. The ICOMOS Burra Charter states that it is only acceptable to move a heritage item if there are no alternatives for the preservation and survival of the monument. However, various pressures such as urban development, atmospheric pollution and design preferences, have been past reasons for monuments to be relocated. The 1903 granite Boer War Memorial in Queanbeyan, which is in the form of an obelisk, was relocated in the 1960s due to increased traffic density as it was sited in the town’s main intersection.²¹⁶ The bronze horses in San Marco’s Square, Venice were moved indoors for treatment and are now displayed in the cathedral museum near the original site, while replicas have been erected on the original site in Venice. A similar approach was taken for the marble statue of David in Florence which was moved indoors as the atmospheric pollution in Italy was considered to be a risk to its longevity.

²¹⁵ S. Lavelle. ‘A Tree and A Legend: The Making of Past and Place in the Blue Mountains, NSW.’ (forthcoming) JRAHS, Vol. 89, Pt. 1, June 2003.

²¹⁶ Australian Heritage Places Inventory. ‘Boer War Memorial’. No. 17387.

The sandstone and bronze, King George V Memorial in Canberra was relocated 60 metres from its original site on the main axis road to Mt Ainslie, as it blocked the vistas to and from the then, Old Parliament House. It was relocated in 1968 to a different design, without its podium and the monument was re-orientated.²¹⁷ Interestingly, it was anticipated that during relocation some long-term repairs could be effected, however problems of fabric deterioration continued, until it underwent a major conservation treatment in 1996.

Relocation of Milestones

Milestones are unique public monuments as they are not only aesthetic or commemorative, they serve a functional purpose as site specific place markers. Their significance is a combination of the physical distance marker and inscribed information at a specified mileage on a road. Once the monument is relocated, this relationship is lost and the marker is denigrated to an artifice.

A clear example of such a relocation is the Falkensee milestone obelisk near Berlin, Germany. The sandstone obelisk was erected c. 1800 by the Prussian state as a milestone for the postal service. It was originally located in the Kraemer Forest on the road to Hamburg (Fig. 6.19), marking 34 Prussian miles²¹⁸ to Hamburg and 4 Prussian miles from Berlin, which was measured from the Oranienburg Gate to Berlin and not a centrally located freestanding marker. The milestone was moved in 1981 due to the creation of a military zone. It was reassembled at the Museum of Falkensee shortly after and installed on a new base (Fig. 6.20). The change in setting from an unsealed track to Hamburg surrounded by forest to an urban environment in a village has a marked change on the context and viewers interaction with the monument. As a result a movement called the *Forschungsgruppe Meilenstein* (Milestones Research Group) has developed in Germany, lobbying to have the milestone reinstated in its original location as it is now the last surviving stone from this now, back road to Hamburg.²¹⁹ There is a growing awareness in Germany of the importance of preserving these utilitarian monuments which remind people of the pioneering existence and lives of their forebears, as opposed to more contrived monuments of high art. In Germany the term “Flurdenkmal” or monuments in landscape is used to describe these historical remnants of early settlement and reminders of daily life.

Interestingly, milestones become less relevant when societies convert to metric systems. Germany became metric in the 1870s, resulting in milestones being removed or relocated and re-inscribed with kilometre references.²²⁰

The sandstone Milestone Obelisk in Watsons Bay, which predates the Macquarie Place obelisk, was erected in 1811 by Macquarie’s own 73rd Regiment (Fig. 5.1). Built to mark the completion of a road (modern Oxford Street and Old South Head Road) to South Head, it is reputed to be the first recorded use of an obelisk in NSW.²²¹ It is now located in Robertson Place, Watsons Bay between Clovelly Street and Marine Parade and has clearly been moved from its original location. The date of its relocation is not known, however its relocation was mentioned in Jervis’ 1960 book, *The History of Woollahra*.²²² The inscription on its north face is ‘VIII Miles from Sydney’, however Crossan notes that is now in fact 8¼ miles from the obelisk in Macquarie Place. He suggests that its original location would appear to be on the corner of Bell and Old South Head Road, where a smaller less ornate stone marker was erected in its place. The historical significance of this first obelisk has undoubtedly been compromised by its re-location to a park which suggests that it is

²¹⁷ Freeman Collett & Partners. King George V Memorial, King George Terrace, Parkes, ACT, January 1994.

²¹⁸ A Prussian mile is approximately 7.5 kilometres.

²¹⁹ http://www.forschungsgruppe-meilensteine.de/info_mlst.htm

²²⁰ Gunter Nerlich. Personal Communication. May 2003.

²²¹ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996:45.

²²² B. Crossan. Survey of Memorial and Monuments in Woollahra for the Royal Australian Historical Society, 1987.

viewed more as an item of public art or a movable relic rather than a functioning milestone. This greatly supports the case for ensuring the Macquarie Place Obelisk remains in its original location so it can continue to fulfil its function as the zero marker from which all distances were measured.



Figure 6.19: Falkensee milestone shown in 1979 at Kraemer Forest, Germany. Erected c. 1800 to mark 4 Prussian miles from Berlin.



Figure 6.20: Falkensee milestone shown in 1992, relocated to the Museum of Falkensee, Germany. The sandstone obelisk was mounted on a new base.

7.0 Heritage Significance

The Statement of Heritage Significance written in 1996 for the Conservation Plan has been updated for this report.²²³ This is necessary so as to more fully explore and incorporate the heritage significance of the item in question into the review of options. Please note aspects of the 1996 Statement of Significance have been repeated here where considered to be relevant.

7.1 Discussion Heritage Significance

7.1.1 Basis of Assessment of Heritage Significance

To identify the heritage significance of an archaeological site it is necessary to discuss and assess the significance of the study area. This process will allow for the analysis of the site's varied values. These criteria are part of the system of assessment which is centred on the *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS (Appendix 2). The Burra Charter principles are important to the assessment, conservation and management of sites and relics. The assessment of heritage significance is enshrined through legislation in the NSW *Heritage Act* 1977 and implemented through the *NSW Heritage Manual* and the *Archaeological Assessment Guidelines*.²²⁴

The various nature of heritage values and the degree of this value will be appraised according to the following criteria:²²⁵

Criterion (a): Historic Significance - (evolution)

an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Macquarie Place and its obelisk were an integral part of the civic improvements planned and effected by Governor and Mrs Macquarie and have continued to be recognised as part of the Macquarie-period legacy to the city since that time. The obelisk was designed by Francis Greenway. The obelisk was an integral part of the design of Macquarie Place and derives meaning from this context. The stone was quarried, cut and laid by convict craftsmen.

The shape of Macquarie Place provides a reminder of the natural features and topography that determined the arrangement of the plan of Sydney in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the importance of these features in the choice of Sydney Cove as the first place of permanent European settlement in the Colony of New South Wales.

The obelisk provides an historical record of the extent of European exploration and settlement of the Colony at the time of its erection and of Sydney as the starting point of the process of discovery and expansion. Governor Macquarie was concerned to develop the road system as a way of supporting and maintaining the colony and rebuilt or made many of the roads listed on the obelisk. It still serves the purpose as a road marker today.

Macquarie Place has continued to serve its original function as a civic space since it was formed during the Macquarie period.

The truncation of Macquarie Place in the late 1840s was part of the first major replanning scheme for the city since its foundation in 1788, the necessity for which was indicative of the importance of mercantile and shipping interests in the life and growth of the city and the Colony.

²²³ Heritage Group, State Projects 1996:47-55.

²²⁴ NSW Heritage Office 1996:25-27.

²²⁵ NSW Heritage Office 2001.

Macquarie Place and the obelisk have long been acknowledged as important parts of the history of the city of Sydney, of the State and of the Nation. This significance has continued to be acknowledged and reinforced by the choice of Macquarie Place Park as the location for other historic items such as the *Sirius* anchor and cannon and the use of the Park for special ceremonies and events.

The interpretation of the history of Macquarie Place and of the purpose of the obelisk has reflected the changing values and historical perspectives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The importance of Macquarie Place as an historic public park and of the obelisk as the historic starting place for measuring the roads was reaffirmed in 1954 in the choice of Macquarie Place as the starting point for the Remembrance Drive.

The succession of plans for landscaping Macquarie Place and for the conservation and restoration of the fabric of the obelisk reflect changing fashions in landscape design, in the purpose of civic spaces and public parks and the development of conservation philosophy and expertise.

Criterion (b): Associative Significance – (association)

an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, or importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Macquarie Place and its obelisk have a special association with:

- the colonial administration of Governor Lachlan Macquarie and with the civic improvements, architectural and landscaping interests of both the Governor and Mrs Macquarie and their introduction of Georgian town planing and architecture, and Enlightenment ideals;
- the career of Francis Greenway, Civil Architect, the first professional architect to be employed by government in New South Wales and who designed many of Sydney’s early buildings, a number of which survive;
- the work of Edward Cureton, a qualified stone mason and one of a small group of professional craftsmen who helped to effect the buildings and civic improvements planned by Governor and Mrs Macquarie;
- zero point marker from measuring roads in New South Wales;
- Commissioner Bigge whose objections to the obelisk were financial - the expense of unnecessary and ornamental structures that were unsuitable for a penal settlement.

Criterion (c): Aesthetic Significance - (scenic qualities / creative accomplishments)

an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

The obelisk is one of a number of ‘structures’ erected under the Macquaries’ patronage, some to designs they commissioned from Francis Greenway. Included among these are Hyde Park Barracks, St James Church, the Supreme Court House, two houses along the southern side of Macquarie Place built for the judge-advocate and the colonial secretary and the fountain on the western corner of Macquarie Place. A number of neo-classical buildings designed by Greenway for Governor Macquarie survive in areas such as Liverpool, Parramatta, and Windsor. The obelisk is perhaps the simplest expression of the neo-classical form used by Greenway who was the most significant early professional architect in New South Wales.

The proportions of the obelisk are designed according to Georgian rules of style and taste and are more aesthetically pleasing than later Victorian examples.²²⁶ The construction of the obelisk, the carved decoration, and the tight jointing of the ashlar work indicate the stone masons, some of who were presumably convict, possessed a high level of skill.²²⁷

The obelisk was the central monument in Macquarie Place and was designed to be an important part of the expression of Georgian town planning introduced by the Macquaries and is an essential characteristic of this place.

As an early survey marker the obelisk is still in its original location and it has significance to surveying in New South Wales in terms of its continuing operation as zero point marker for 185 years.

Criterion (d): Social Significance - (contemporary community esteem)

an item has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Heritage items, places and monuments associated with the Macquaries and Francis Greenway are held in high esteem by many in the local community because they are tangible links with our colonial heritage and are eloquent expressions of a vision of a society expressed through building and road projects eventually terminated by the British interests of empire and attitudes to the penal colony of New South Wales. The listing of this item on the Register of the National Trust and National Estate are further expressions of this social significance. The obelisk has a special association with surveying in New South Wales and the Institution of Surveyors as a designated survey marker and as the only *in situ* marker of two of the two early obelisk markers. Many members of the public would value its role as the marker of road and measurements in NSW.

Criterion (e): Technical/Research Significance - (archaeological, educational, research potential and scientific values)

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

The surrounding fence is an early example of the use of wrought iron. Few examples of balustrading of this quality and period remain extant.²²⁸ The obelisk, through its interpretation, has the ability to educate the public about early surveying, roadmaking, town planning and design in Sydney.

Criterion (f): Rarity

an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Macquarie Place and the obelisk are rare surviving parts of the plan of Sydney devised by Governor and Mrs Macquarie in 1810 and effected by 1820. The obelisk is the only surviving small scale structure or monument designed by Francis Greenway known to survive in Sydney.

²²⁶ Heritage Design Services, *Conservation Plan* 1996:50.

²²⁷ Heritage Design Services, *Conservation Plan* 1996:51.

²²⁸ Heritage Design Services, *Conservation Plan* 1996:51.

Macquarie Place and the obelisk comprised the only formally ornamented, civic space in Sydney of the Macquarie period.

The obelisk is one of two surviving examples of an inscribed monument of the Macquarie period in Sydney. It is the only one specifically associated with the Macquaries and Francis Greenway. It is the oldest extant *in situ* marker known in New South Wales.

Macquarie Place is one of only a small number of formal, ornamented civic spaces in the City of Sydney and the only one surviving from the 1810s.

Criterion (g): Representativeness

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

This criterion is not relevant to the obelisk.

7.1.2 Integrity of the Monument and Does this affect Heritage Significance

The client has specifically requested the consultants to deal with how the previous management of the obelisk has affected its significance. As the history and summary of previous conservation works (Appendix 3) of the obelisk has shown there have been considerable alterations to the obelisk. The ones which have most affected the integrity of the fabric of the obelisk are:

- Recutting of inscriptions and redressing of some of the sandstone (1895-1901);
- Replacement of moulded base stone and base course of dado (1935);
- Cutting out, indenting and inscription of new sandstone on southern panel (1964);
- Five drill holes for testing the sandstone (1992).

This suggests there has been considerable alteration to the base course of the obelisk but it is this alteration which has probably allowed the obelisk to survive as well and as long as it has. The base course and cornices of buildings are frequently seen as being sacrificial as they are designed to protect other elements of the structure. This also means that those sections already replaced can be looked on as sacrificial as they have already been replaced once. In addition the indenting of a new text panel on the southern dado has created an ugly and incorrect repair of the monument. This is not a practice which should be repeated. The recutting of the inscription is also a practice which is of concern as this means that the inscription we see today is not the one made in 1818 but c. 1895. But the inscription may have been lost altogether and they are an important part of the story the obelisk tells and an important element of its role as the zero point of measurement. The recutting of an inscription on headstones or funerary monuments is not unusual.

How do these alterations affect the integrity of the obelisk? This all depends to some extent on how the obelisk is viewed – as a stand alone monument or as a built element in the landscape which serves the functions of a marker as well as creating and altering vistas and as a representation of the remnants of the Macquarie-period landscape. Many of the early maintenance approaches viewed the obelisk as an item in the landscape and as a road maker.

It is important to understand that approaches to conservation and heritage change. What was considered acceptable 20 or 30 years ago is now frequently viewed as poor conservation practice and what happened 50 or 100 years ago as appalling practice. What we choose to do in 2003 may be seen as short sighted in 2023.

Therefore how do we interpret the effect of these alterations and repairs on the heritage integrity of the obelisk? Some people will consider that the conservation of the monument has had a

detrimental effect on its significance and that it is no longer the monument erected by the Macquaries. Others will say we would not have the obelisk without these conservation works therefore many of them have been to assist its long-term survival. In the end the final decision will resolve around whether it is better to have a compromised obelisk or not to have one at all. In this report we have chosen to take the view that it is better to have a less than 100 per cent intact monument than not to have one. Therefore while we accept that the integrity of the fabric has been lessened by some of the previous repairs, especially the 1964 repair, we do not believe it has reached a point which completely undermines its significance. This interpretation is premised upon the perspective that the most significant elements of the obelisk are its role and evocation of the Macquaries and Greenway's design of Macquarie Place, its location as marker and zero point of road measurement, the information it records, and as a work by convict craftsmen rather than the absolute integrity of its fabric. An important aspect of future conservation approaches is to maintain a balance between the small scale of the monument and the type of repairs and conservation approaches that are appropriate to be undertaken. This is crucial for its future care and conservation and its heritage integrity.

7.2 Statement of Heritage Significance

The obelisk, Macquarie Place has historic, associative, aesthetic, social, technical and rarity heritage significance at a State level. It is significant because:

- The Obelisk, Macquarie Place is associated with Governor and Mrs Macquarie and the architect Francis Greenway and is a notable feature of their creative collaboration in using the built environment and landscape to create a civil society in colonial New South Wales.
- The obelisk has continuously occupied one site since its erection in 1818 and is associated with an important early civic space, Macquarie Place Park and the beginning of town planning in NSW.
- The obelisk marks the beginning point of measurement for early roads in colonial NSW; many of which were made under the direction of Governor Macquarie. It is both a symbol of Macquarie-period road making and a utilitarian marker of distances.
- Its location, as in its position on a specific place of measurement in Sydney and within the design of Macquarie Place, is a defining and central facet of its cultural meaning. It has operated as a survey marker and distance marker for 185 years.
- The obelisk, as part of Macquarie Place, has had a continuing role in the history of Sydney into the late twentieth century.
- The obelisk is a fine example of the stone mason's craft, in the tight fitting of the stone blocks, the carved elements, and the choice of quality white sandstone. It is a fine example of a convict-made craftsmanship.
- It is the only surviving aspect of the 'high' style Georgian design of Macquarie Place and the surrounding houses inspired by Mrs Macquarie's patterns books. It represents the way in which ideas about taste and fashion were introduced to the colony by the Macquaries as well as by Francis Greenway, the first professional architect to arrive in the colony.

8.0 Conservation Options

8.1 Conservation Options

The client has requested that all possible options for conservation of the obelisk be considered, regardless of how radical they may seem. Therefore it is pertinent to keep these options broad at present, as details of treatments, as required for a specification of works, can only follow once a broad approach has been decided upon.

The 1996 Conservation Plan, with assistance from the NSW Heritage Council's Technical Advisory Group (TAGMAC)²²⁹, considered four options for the conservation of the obelisk. However, the current brief seeks to expand the possible options to the following eight:

1. **Do nothing**
2. **Retain *in situ* and protect by some form of cover**
3. **Retain *in situ*, conserve and maintain**
4. **Retain *in situ*, conserve and protect by some form of cover**
5. **Remove to a controlled environment and replace with replica**
6. **Remove to a controlled environment and conserve and replace with replica**
7. **Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and return to Macquarie Place in original location**
8. **Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and store/exhibit in a controlled environment**

A comprehensive analysis of each option is provided in Section 8.2. This section outlines the methodology required to implement each option and the pros and cons for the longevity and significance of the monument.

Good conservation principles follow the edict that as much as possible of the original fabric should be retained. For such an early and significant monument as the obelisk, this principle is paramount, especially considering the obelisk is one of a small group of remaining convict-built structures and much information can be gained from its original fabric and form. This approach adheres to the ICOMOS *Burra Charter* which advocates 'the least possible physical intervention' during conservation works.

The preferred approach for ensuring the long term preservation of the obelisk is Option 3: retain *in situ*, conserve and maintain, as it addresses the remedial actions necessary to arrest deterioration of the fabric and demonstrates that *in situ* treatment is possible. This option will ensure the significance of the monument is upheld by retaining it in its original location in Macquarie Place.

It is crucial that the conservation treatment is not viewed alone as a one-off treatment that will preserve the monument for 50 years. The obelisk will remain exposed to the elements and urban pollution, so it is likely to continue to decay, albeit at a reduced rate. The development and implementation of a regular maintenance regime will be essential to ensure the ongoing preservation of the monument.

Four of the options suggest removal of the obelisk. The ICOMOS *Burra Charter* clearly states that 'a building or work should remain in its historical location. The moving of all or part of a building or work is unacceptable unless this is the sole means of ensuring its survival'. As demonstrated in Section 8.2 relocation of the obelisk is not the only available method to ensure its survival. As detailed in Sections 5 & 7 the cultural significance of the obelisk stems from many factors

²²⁹ Heritage Group State Projects NSW Public Works 1996, Section 13.0 which is reproduced in Section 3.24 of this report.

including its strong historical relationship with its location within Macquarie Place Park and relocating the obelisk even in the name of conservation, will substantially downgrade its cultural significance and negate its current function as a physical zero marker of distances.

Table 8.1 utilises and expands the method employed by TAGMAC to evaluate the relative merit of each option and its impact on the significance of the obelisk as a freestanding monument, and the significance of the monument in the context of its setting in Macquarie Place Park. Projections are made to estimate the condition of the obelisk in 50 years time if an option is implemented, as well as considering the opportunities or constraints of the chosen option in 50 years time.

8.2 Analysis of Conservation Options

Option 1: Do nothing

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No conservation of the stone or wrought iron 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council will save money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accelerated decay of the sandstone and wrought iron at the fastest rate of all options. ▪ The monument will appear neglected.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Severe loss of all original details including surfaces, moulded details and inscriptions, which will become illegible and eventually lost.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structural instability likely to develop.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decay so great that conservation will not be possible in the future and reconstruction with new materials, from photographs, will be the only alternative.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The rarity and significance of the monument is compromised and would lead to its downgrading.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent loss of original surfaces and inscriptions resulting in loss of technical/research potential.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downgrading of significance of Macquarie Place as the only surviving original element of the Macquarie-period design is destabilised.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council will be responsible for the loss of an acknowledged significant heritage asset.

Philosophy

While this is the option which has been operating since the last repairs to the monument in the 1960s it is a response of inaction rather than a thoughtful planned answer to the cultural significance of the monument and its degrading physical condition. It does not incorporate any elements of caring for the place as defined by the *Burra Charter* (Appendix 2), such as conservation, maintenance, preservation or restoration. This option maintains the *status quo* and is not a desirable outcome.

The Conservation Plan (1996) notes that this option ‘does not provide for the long term conservation of the monument’ and is therefore ‘unacceptable’.²³⁰ The TAGMAC report notes that ‘continuing rapid deterioration of the Obelisk can be expected’ (Appendix 5).

²³⁰ Heritage Group State Projects 1996:79.

Option 2: Retain *in situ* and protect by some form of cover

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design a cover over the obelisk, with minimal visual impact on Macquarie Place. ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some protection from saturation by direct rain afforded to the sandstone and wrought iron by the cover. ▪ Deterioration will be at a slightly slower rate than Option 1 Do Nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of a potentially obtrusive element that will interrupt the vistas across Macquarie Place and reduce the interpretative experience for visitors. ▪ There may be some debate about the advisability of this action by the National Trust or other community bodies or individuals with alternative suggestions offered.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have the cover pre-fabricated 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The simple design of the stand alone obelisk will be compromised.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dig footings in Macquarie Place to support the cover 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical intervention required by digging into surrounding path required to support the cover. ▪ Some disturbance to the Park during construction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erect the cover 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No drainage or conservation component, so the sandstone and wrought iron will continue to degrade due to rising damp and salt attack. ▪ Gradual decay of original surfaces and inscriptions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An open-sided cover will not afford protection from salt damage, pollution and environmental changes. ▪ Deterioration will continue at unknown rate.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even with a cover that encloses the obelisk deterioration would continue due to rising damp and existing salts in the stone. ▪ Some conservation options would need to be implemented such as desalination and improved sub-surface drainage.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the monument was enclosed, public access and its relationship to the park would be reduced. ▪ Its heritage significance would be reduced.

Philosophy

Many of the same issues as discussed in Option 1. The TAGMAC review considered that the covering of the obelisk would have an impact on Macquarie Place and possibly affect its significance by altering the visual setting. It considered covering the obelisk in tandem with its conservation (our Option and not as a stand alone option. The Conservation Plan (1996) identified many of the issues mentioned above.

This option offers no real solution to the continuing degradation of the monument and its conservation with the added outcome of complaints from the public about the option chosen with accusations of inaction over the long-term management of the monument. The implementation of this option would have little value in inhibiting the decay of the obelisk. This option should only be considered with conservation of the obelisk.

Option 3: Retain *in situ*, conserve and maintain

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<p><u>Associated Site Work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading the sub-surface drainage system to alleviate the rising damp problem. Paving stone surrounding the obelisk will need to be lifted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deterioration of the sandstone and wrought iron will be significantly retarded so the condition of the monument is stabilised. External decay mechanisms will be minimised and managed to reduce ongoing deterioration. Eg. drainage work will reduce water retention below the monument and internal humidity levels within the stone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued maintenance will be necessary to ensure the condition of the monument remains stable. Rising damp will continue in the stone, although the rate will be reduced by drainage works.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pruning the trees overhanging the obelisk 		
<p><u>Treatment of Wrought Iron</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove balustrade from site for treatment (coincide with drainage works) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing damage by salt attack will be minimised by desalination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible limited damage to iron during removal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove existing paint coatings and corrosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some original surfaces and details are able to be retained by consolidation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repaint with long wearing outdoor coating system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appearance of the sandstone and wrought iron will be improved and will no longer appear neglected. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstall in original bolt holes using lead packing. Some corroded elements and fasteners may need to be replaced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred option for the retention of the heritage significance of the monument as its relationship with Macquarie Place is maintained. 	
<p><u>Treatment of Sandstone</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to treatment a thorough survey of all stones should be made to determine the extent and location for application of various treatments. Then prepare a scope of works. Scaffolding will need to be erected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with the identification of appropriate levels of conservation works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some disturbance to the Park during conservation works. Views of the obelisk will be interrupted in the short-term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle surface cleaning to remove dirt, accretions and biological growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaner monument with no negative impact. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some areas of poorly adhered stone may be able to be consolidated to the sound stone to retain the original weathered skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some original surfaces and details are able to be retained by consolidation. The appearance of the sandstone and wrought iron will be improved and will no longer appear neglected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface stone may eventually erode.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In other areas it may be necessary to remove portions of loose and drummy stone by rubbing back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of original stone with minor change in colour which will return to original colour over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some minimal loss of original facing stone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desalination to remove salts from the base and lower areas of the shaft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve a major concern for the long-term maintenance of the monument and one of the main problems for its <i>in situ</i> 	

	<p>conservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential baseline action to inhibit further deterioration of monument. The salts are the major problem arising from the rising damp. 	
<p>A conservation approach for lost areas of stone needs to be decided. A combination of the following may be possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plastic repairs to exfoliated areas of the shaft and base including replication of the pyramidal capstone and moulded details of the base course and cornices. AND/OR ➤ Consider inserting compatible sandstone indents to the large areas of moulded detail loss such as the base course and cornices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term these patches will match the stone. Repairs to the cornice are essential for the maintenance of the re-carved inscription. Allows for the retention of more of the original fabric. This inserting of matching stone indents should assist with the long-term retention of the monument. The public is used to differences in the colour of stone because of repair works to Sydney's sandstone buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities in the future to treat by new (unknown) methods may be constrained by the conservation treatment. Fading of colour patches through time. May require replacement of patches in the medium and long-term. Finding compatible stone may be difficult. Will need to undertake tests on the stone to find a similar source of stone. The appearance of this stone will be different while it weathers but will eventually take on a similar appearance as the work undertaken in 1935.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove existing pointing and repoint the stone with lime-based mortar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is normal maintenance practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repointing will need to be part of the ongoing maintenance of the monument and will need to be repeated at intervals.
<p>Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive report detailing the materials and methods used to conserve all fabric to be prepared, supported by photographic documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as a baseline document for maintenance and further conservation works into the future. Normal conservation practice. 	
<p>Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a maintenance manual and implement a maintenance schedule to regularly monitor and maintain the monument and fence and its immediate environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a framework to manage the monument into the future with the aim of supplying a positive and stable environment with regular expert attention. Stops potentially serious issues arising which will impair the monument through simple neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing cost to Council and requires a long-term commitment by Council and staff to the maintenance of the obelisk.
<p>Overall Results of this Option</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserves the Obelisk in the short and medium term as well as maintains as much of the original fabric as is feasible. Accords with current heritage practices and the <i>Burra Charter</i>. Perceives the Obelisk as a structure in the landscape to be conserved not as a stand alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not conserve the monument in the long-term without more radical intervention with the fabric. Opportunities in the future to treat by new (unknown) methods may be constrained by the conservation treatment.

	<p>‘work of art’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retains its rarity as being one of the earliest functioning markers still in its original location. ▪ Retention of the heritage significance of the monument as its relationship with Macquarie Place is maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceives the Obelisk as a structure in the landscape to be conserved not as a stand alone ‘work of art’ which can be moved.
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Philosophy:

This option provides for the retention of the obelisk in its original location within the park for which it was designed. This option was recommended by the TAGMAC review (Appendix 5) and in the Conservation Plan (1996).²³¹ The NSW Heritage Council has endorsed this approach. The *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites) is an internationally recognised charter for places of cultural significance and has been the basis of charters drawn up for other countries including the People’s Republic of China. This charter notes in Article 11 that ‘the contribution which *related places* and *related objects* makes to the *cultural significance* of the *place* should be retained’. Option 3 is the conservation action which most fully accords with Burra Charter principles.

The heritage and materials conservation communities will have different opinions about the degree of interference to the fabric of the obelisk that is acceptable but many will at least see it as a positive step towards the retention of the obelisk in the longterm.

It is unclear how long this conservation procedure will last for - it may require some conservation at intervals of approximately ten years as part of regular maintenance. This option requires implementation of a maintenance manual and schedule to assure the maintenance of the obelisk for the medium term.

²³¹ Conservation Plan 1996:79

Option 4: Retain *in situ*, conserve and protect by some form of cover

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<p><u>Associated Site Work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrading the sub-surface drainage system to alleviate the rising damp problem. ▪ Paving stone surrounding the obelisk will need to be lifted. ▪ Pruning the trees overhanging the obelisk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deterioration of the sandstone and wrought iron will be significantly retarded so the condition of the monument is stabilised. ▪ The addition of the cover will afford some protection from saturation by direct rain of the sandstone and wrought iron so deterioration will be at a slightly slower rate than Option 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continued maintenance will be necessary to ensure the condition of the monument remains stable. ▪ Scheduling of some procedures may be less frequent than for Option 3. ▪ Rising damp will continue in the stone, although the rate will be reduced by drainage works.
<p><u>Treatment of Wrought Iron</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove balustrade from site for treatment (coincide with drainage works) ▪ Remove existing paint coatings and corrosion ▪ Repaint with long wearing outdoor coating system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External decay mechanisms will be minimised and managed to reduce ongoing deterioration. Eg. drainage work will reduce water retention below the monument and internal humidity levels within the stone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some limited damage to iron work during removal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinstall in original bolt holes using lead packing. Some corroded elements and fasteners may need to be replaced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing damage by salt attack will be minimised by desalination. 	
<p><u>Treatment of Sandstone</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prior to treatment a thorough survey of all stones should be made to determine the extent and location for application of various treatments. ▪ Then prepare a scope of works. ▪ Scaffolding will need to be erected. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some disturbance to the Park during conservation works. ▪ Views of the obelisk will be interrupted in the short term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gentle surface cleaning to remove dirt, accretions and biological growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cleaner monument with no negative impact. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some areas of poorly adhered stone may be able to be consolidated to the sound stone to retain the original weathered skin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some original surfaces and details are able to be retained by consolidation. ▪ The appearance of the sandstone and wrought iron will be improved and will no longer appear neglected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Surface stone may eventually erode.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In other areas it may be necessary to remove portions of loose and drummy stone by rubbing back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retention of original stone with minor change in colour which will return to original colour over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some minimal loss of original facing stone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desalination to remove salts from the base and lower areas of the shaft. - requires the application of poultice to draw out the salts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Essential baseline action to inhibit further deterioration of monument. The salts are the major problem arising from the rising damp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An open-sided cover will not afford protection from further salt damage, pollution and environmental changes.
<p>A conservation approach for lost areas of stone needs to be decided. A combination of the following may be possible:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities in the future to treat by new (unknown) methods may be constrained by the conservation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plastic repairs to exfoliated areas of the shaft and base including replication of the pyramidal capstone and moulded details of the base course and cornices. AND/OR ➤ Consider inserting compatible sandstone indents to the large areas of moulded detail loss such as the base course and cornices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the short term these patches will match the stone. ▪ Repairs to the cornice are essential for the maintenance of the re-carved inscription. ▪ Allows for the retention of more of the original fabric. ▪ This inserting of matching stone indents should assist with the long-term retention of the monument. ▪ The public is used to differences in the colour of stone because of repair works to Sydney's sandstone buildings. 	<p>treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fading of colour patches through time. ▪ May require replacement of patches in the medium and long-term. ▪ Finding compatible stone may be difficult. ▪ Will need to undertake tests on the stone to find a similar source of stone. ▪ The appearance of this stone will be different while it weathers but will eventually take on a similar appearance as the work undertaken in 1935.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove existing pointing and repoint the stone with lime-based mortar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is normal maintenance practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repointing will need to be part of the ongoing maintenance of the monument and will need to be repeated at intervals.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Erect a Cover</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design a cover over the obelisk, with minimal visual impact on Macquarie Place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the monument was enclosed, public access and its relationship to the park would be reduced. Its heritage significance would be reduced. ▪ An open-sided cover will not afford protection from salt damage, pollution and environmental changes. Deterioration will continue at unknown rate but lessened by the conservation of the monument. ▪ The simple design of the stand alone obelisk will be compromised. ▪ Places an outdoor monument inside a structure and changes the way it operates in the park and how the public interact with it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have the cover pre-fabricated 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dig footings in Macquarie Place to support the cover 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical intervention required by digging into surrounding path required to support the cover.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erect the cover 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some disturbance to the Park during construction.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive report detailing the materials and methods used to conserve all fabric to be prepared supported by photographic documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as a baseline document for maintenance and further conservation works into the future. ▪ Normal conservation practice. 	

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a maintenance schedule to regularly monitor and maintain the monument and fence and its immediate environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a framework to manage the monument into the future with the aim of supplying a positive and stable environment with regular expert attention. ▪ Stops potentially serious issues arising which will impair the monument through simple neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing cost to Council and requires a long-term commitment by Council and staff to the maintenance of the monument.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall Results of this Option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conserves the Obelisk in the short and medium term as well as maintains as much of the original fabric as is feasible. ▪ Accords with current heritage practices. ▪ Perceives the Obelisk as a structure to be conserved not as a 'work of art'. ▪ Retain rarity as being one of the earliest functioning markers still in its original location. ▪ Retention of the heritage significance of the monument and its relationship with Macquarie Place is maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May not conserve the monument in the long-term without more radical intervention with the fabric. ▪ Opportunities in the future to treat by new (unknown) methods may be constrained by the conservation treatment. ▪ Perceives the Obelisk as a structure to be conserved not as a 'work of art'. ▪ Introduction of a potentially obtrusive element that will interrupt the vistas across Macquarie Place and reduce the interpretative experience for visitors. ▪ The cover is likely to arouse considerable public debate. ▪ The type of cover that may be publicly acceptable would probably have a limited conservation outcome.

Philosophy

This option provides for the retention of the obelisk in its original location within the park for which it was designed and used as the zero marker for measurement of roads. It is in line with the practices seen on sandstone buildings in Sydney, the Washington Monument - a building in the shape of an obelisk, and other obelisks and milestones.

The heritage and materials conservation communities will have different opinions about the degree of interference to the fabric of the obelisk that is acceptable but many will at least see it as a positive step towards the retention of the obelisk in the long term. It is unclear how long this conservation procedure will last for - it may require some conservation at intervals of approximately ten years as part of regular maintenance. This option requires implementation of a maintenance manual and schedule to assure the maintenance of the obelisk for the medium term.

The construction of a cover, the nature of the design and its intrusiveness are issues which affect how effective it would be as well as how it impacts on the visual elements of the park, how the obelisk sits in the park and how people interact with it.

Option 5: Remove to a controlled environment and replace with a replica

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<p><u>Decision to Relocate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make decision to relocate monument to a controlled environment after considering the range of issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Original components will deteriorate at a slower rate than if left exposed to the environment. ▪ Provides a long-term solution to the conservation of the obelisk. ▪ If new treatments became available it may be possible to conserve the original at a later date and reinstate back into Macquarie Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irreversible loss of significance to the monument as its function as both utilitarian and symbolic marker on a specific location within Macquarie Place will be negated if removed. ▪ Adverse affect on the nature of the setting and its heritage significance by removal of the last remaining tangible link to the Macquaries and Greenway in Macquarie Place. ▪ Treats the obelisk as a ‘work of art’ which can be detached from its place. ▪ This is a potentially an expensive option as the obelisk is also going to require conservation in its new location. ▪ Salt attack will continue as moisture and salts dry out in controlled environment. The change in environment and the associated drying out may cause more damage from salts. ▪ Stone replica would eventually suffer from decay and require conservation. Ongoing maintenance of replica will be necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake public consultation and produce a social significance analysis to fully understand the value this monument has to the public prior to implementing this proposal. ▪ Publish “Public Notices” informing the public of this proposed action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate public consultation in light of a major change to an important heritage item. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes the way in which the public interacts with the obelisk. ▪ This option is likely to attract considerable public debate and be fought by the heritage community and the public. ▪ Generally not seen as an option that complies with the cultural significance of the item in its place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek permission from the Heritage Council to undertake this step which is the equivalent of demolition and under the LEP such action should to be referred to the NSW Heritage Council. ▪ This action is contrary to the endorsed Conservation Plan (1996) and as such would require Heritage Council approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate action in light of the Heritage Council endorsing the Conservation Plan which recommends against this action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heritage Council approval would only be forthcoming if they considered this option was designed to maintain the heritage significance of the monument. ▪ Heritage Council consultation with the heritage community may lead to accusations that the proposed removal is the equivalent of vandalism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek permission from the Surveyor-General to remove a designated survey marker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Required for the removal of a designed survey marker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range of issues concerning the removal of this marker which is still the zero point for major

		<p>highways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval may not be easily forthcoming?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An appropriate permanent location with environmental control will need to be found to house the obelisk and balustrade. A constant relative humidity and temperature seven days a week are essential. Sufficient space for storage of elements prior to reassembly will be necessary. Interpretation will be necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate display and interpretation may help to increase awareness of the obelisk among the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptable places to locate the monument may not agree to house it if they perceive this action to be vandalism. Ongoing cost to Council of maintenance and interpretation of the monument in the new space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the removal. Locate appropriate skilled and qualified consultants to undertake the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed planing is required to ensure the appropriate removal and reconstruction of the monument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The removal of the monument will be an expensive exercise requiring careful planning.
<p><u>Planning the removal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cast of the inscription “This Obelisk...” should be found and if not found should be reproduced and kept with the other casts in City of Sydney Council Archives. If not found a new cast of the southern inscription should be made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed photographic documentation of all sides and inscriptions should be made of the obelisk and balustrade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measured drawings should be prepared, labelling every separate element of the stone and wrought iron so that it can be reassembled accurately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. Baseline data for reconstruction and conservation of the monument in the new location. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All separate elements of the stone and wrought iron will need to be labelled by a semi-permanent yet removable marker or tag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with rebuilding the monument in the proper order. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wrought iron balustrade should be removed first. It separates in six components. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect scaffold for access to the obelisk. 		
<p><u>Implementing the Removal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut out existing pointing by hand to enable stones to be moved. It is not clear whether the blocks of stone are solid or whether there is a (brick) core that the facing stones are adhered to. This will need to be determined and appropriate methods for lifting the heavy stone out and safely down to 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No conservation, so poorly adhered faces of stones are likely to spall off with handling required for relocation, resulting in loss of original surface. Some damage to stone blocks especially edges expected during relocation. May be greater loss of stone than initially thought because of removal.

ground level devised.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate all elements to new controlled environment location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original components will deteriorate at a slower rate than if left exposed to the environment. If new treatments became available it may be possible to conserve the original at a later date and reinstate back into Macquarie Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some damage to stone blocks especially edges expected during relocation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassemble block by block according to measured drawings. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salt attack will continue as moisture and salts dry out in controlled environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repoint joints between blocks with lime-based mortar. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure thermohygrograph or data loggers are set up next to reconstructed monument to monitor environmental conditions. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few positive outcomes for the original monument because it will not be conserved.
<u>Replica</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use measured drawings and previous casts of inscriptions to tender for construction of an accurate replica of the obelisk and balustrade. Type of stone and metal will need to be specified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstating the form of the monument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A replica will provide continuing evidence of poor heritage practice. A replica is always an “imitation” of the original and therefore has no heritage value. May suffer from vandalism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve sub-surface drainage or install a damp proof course in replica to avoid the problem of rising damp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with the long-term conservation of the replica. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone replica would eventually suffer from decay and require conservation. Ongoing maintenance of replica will be necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble replica obelisk and balustrade in exactly same orientation as original. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect interpretative signs to indicate that it is a replica and where original can be found. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing maintenance of interpretative signs.
<u>Reporting</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive report detailing the materials and methods used to relocate the original and erect a replica to be prepared, supported by photographic documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate conservation approach. 	

Philosophy

On first inspection the obelisk appears as a substantial structure with only the surface and more ornate areas such as the cornices and carved acroteria needing conservation. It presents an image of a solid structure. This then suggests to many heritage experts dealing with the monument that it is not yet an acceptable option to remove this monument to another place. Because heritage people are used to dealing with extensive conservation of Sydney’s sandstone buildings which require considerable replacement of stone and decorative details many will consider it appropriate to implement the same approach with the Obelisk, Macquarie Place.

Where other monuments or public sculptures have been removed, such as the horses at St Marks, Venice or Michelangelo’s David in Florence these have been highly significant artworks which

were essential to be conserved for their protection and posterity. This has led to the protection and conservation of their significance rather than their loss of significance.

As was seen in Section 5 a number of Egyptian obelisks were transported from Egypt to Rome, New York, Paris and London. They were the spoils of empire. They were also mostly single pieces of stone which did not have to be rebuilt, only relocated. We look on them today as major achievements of ancient skills, not only in their craftsmanship but also their transportation from Egypt. As actions of empire they translate to a behaviour that is against all appropriate modern heritage actions. It is now not acceptable to remove archaeological works from modern Egypt where once it was an accepted act of empire - like the Parthenon marbles in the British Museum. The museums of Europe and America are littered with acquisitions from Egypt, Iraq and other antiquities from ancient civilisations. It is not a practice which would be endorsed today.

How does this relate to the Obelisk, Macquarie Place? It is not an ancient artefact but a nineteenth-century stone monument erected in Macquarie Place Park as part of early town planning by the Macquaries and as a marker. Is it more important to save the obelisk irrespective of its location or to conserve the obelisk in its designed and intended location where it has sat for 185 years?

To answer this question it is necessary to consider if this is a “work of art” or an important element of a specifically designed landscape - the only substantively surviving above ground element.²³² Firstly what was the intention behind the design of the obelisk? It was to create a “typical” structural element in a newly planned public square and a marker or monument to the major achievement of early road building by Governor Macquarie. While designed by Greenway it was not hand-made and carved over by him, it was built by convict stonemasons over a period of two and half years. The obelisk is considered to be one element of Greenway’s works rather than something singled out as an outstanding piece of art. It was designed as a focal point in a landscape and as the zero point for roads, not as a “work of art”. This therefore negates the argument that it can or should be removed out of Macquarie Place Park into a controlled environment as a way of protecting it because it is more significant of itself rather than as part of the ‘place’.

The debate in TAGMAC review (Appendix 5) and the highlighting of the issue in the Conservation Plan, as to whether the obelisk should be managed as a work of art or as a building, is not that the obelisk is a work of art but that the conservation approaches for those types of works are different. It is acceptable to replace stone on a building as it decays but with a work of art it is highly important to retain as much of the fabric as possible. This is the crux of the debate for the obelisk - How much replacement of fabric is acceptable and how much is too much? The Conservation Plan recommended in Policy 8, ‘...that the Obelisk be managed as a work of art. The extant original fabric is of considerable significance. All future works should be aimed at conserving the fabric in situ’ (p. 65). The approaches taken by TAGMAC and endorsed by the Conservation Plan are based on Article 9 of the *Burra Charter* which states that the ‘physical location of a place is part of its *cultural significance*. A building, work or other component of a place should remain in its historical location. Relocation is generally unacceptable unless this is the sole practical means of ensuring its survival’.

²³² It should be remembered that buried parts of this landscape are likely to survive in the ground.

Option 6: Remove to a controlled environment and conserve and replace with replica

Only issues different to Options 3 and 5 are discussed here. See the other two options for detailed discussion of the issues associated with the removal and replacement with a replica (Option 5) and conservation (Option 3).

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combination of Options 3 & 5 with the following modifications: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deterioration of original components will be arrested through combined action of conservation and relocation to a controlled environment. ▪ If new treatments became available it may be possible to reinstate original back into Macquarie Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irreversible loss of significance to the monument as its function as both utilitarian and symbolic marker on a specific location within Macquarie Place will be negated if removed. ▪ Some damage to stone blocks especially edges expected during relocation. ▪ Stone replica would eventually suffer from decay and require conservation. Ongoing maintenance of replica will be necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prior to dismantling the obelisk, some consolidation of friable surfaces will be necessary to prevent loss of original surfaces during handling and relocation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By stabilising the fabric the move is likely to be more successful and there would be less damage. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation treatments for the sandstone and wrought iron are likely to be a little less interventionist than proposed in Option 3. For example stone replacement and extensive plastic repairs would not be necessary and the degraded paint coating on the wrought iron could remain with spot treatment to stabilise corrosion. 		

Philosophy

The major difference between Option 6 and Option 5 is the conservation of some of the fabric prior to the removal of the obelisk. If a decision is made which involved the removal of the obelisk it would be highly desirable to undertake such fabric stabilisation. This option is preferred to Option 5 but it has a high degree of intervention and removes the obelisk from Macquarie Place Park. See Option 5 for discussion of issues concerning the removal of the obelisk from Macquarie Place Park.

Option 7: Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and return to Macquarie Place in original location

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<p><u>Decision to Remove</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek permission from the Heritage Council to undertake the removal which is the equivalent of demolition and under the LEP such action should be referred to the NSW Heritage Council. ▪ This action is contrary to the endorsed Conservation Plan (1996) and as such would require Heritage Council approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate action in light of the Heritage Council endorsing the Conservation Plan which recommends against the removal option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heritage Council approval would only be forthcoming if they considered this option was designed to maintain the heritage significance of the monument. ▪ Movement of the monument is against the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i>, as it is possible to adequately conserve the monument <i>in situ</i> and movement is not a last resort option to conserve the significance of the obelisk.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek permission from the Surveyor-General to remove a designated survey marker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Required for the removal of a designed survey marker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range of issues concerning the removal of this marker which is still the zero point for major highways. ▪ Would need to ensure that highly accurate recording of the obelisk allowed for its accurate relocation.
<p><u>Prior to removal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A cast of the inscription “This Obelisk...” should be found and if not found should be reproduced and kept with the other casts in City of Sydney Council Archives. If not found a new cast of the southern inscription should be made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detailed photographic documentation of all sides and inscriptions should be made of the obelisk and balustrade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measured drawings should be prepared, labelling every separate element of the stone and wrought iron so that it can be reassembled accurately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a detailed set of information for future reference and conservation. ▪ Baseline data for reconstruction and conservation of the monument in the new location. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable undercover location with sufficient space to work on individual blocks will be required for the duration of the treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The appearance of the sandstone and wrought iron will be improved and will no longer appear neglected. 	
<p><u>Removing the monument</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All separate elements of the stone and wrought iron will need to be labelled by a semi-permanent yet removable marker or tag. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal and reassembly are not in accordance with <i>Burra Charter</i> principles and can be used to undermine the integrity of the monument and eventually lead to it being relocated elsewhere, anywhere. ▪ Some damage to stone blocks

		<p>especially edges expected during relocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undermine its significance as being one of the earliest functioning markers still in its original location as it will have been removed and then replaced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wrought iron balustrade should be removed first. It separates in six components. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential damage to balustrade during removal and shipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect scaffold for access to the obelisk. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term impact on the use of the park.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut out existing pointing by hand to enable stones to be moved. It is not clear whether the blocks of stone are solid or whether there is a (brick) core that the facing stones are adhered to, this will need to be determined and appropriate methods for lifting the heavy stone out and safely down to ground level devised. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal for conservation would involve loss of significance in terms of original craftsmen's construction techniques.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate all elements to workshop space for duration of treatment. 		
<p><u>Conservation treatment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same type of conservation treatments undertaken for Options 3 & 4. Care is required to ensure that individual elements remain labelled during treatment. For detailed discussion of pros and cons see Options 3 and 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External decay mechanisms will be minimised and managed to reduce ongoing deterioration. A thorough treatment of all elements would be possible enabling deteriorating agents to be removed from the fabric. Sandstone and wrought iron elements would be stabilised. Possibility of solving rising damp problems by rectification of surface and sub-drainage and possible installation of a damp proof course. Some original surfaces and details are able to be retained by consolidation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities in the future to treat by new (unknown) methods may be constrained by the conservation treatment.
<p><u>Reassemble in Macquarie Place</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect site fence around obelisk site. Transport stones from workshop as required to rebuild obelisk from ground up. Stones should not be stored on site for long periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the heritage significance of the monument and its relationship with Macquarie Place is maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential damage to stones during shipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassemble block by block according to measured drawings. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential damage to stones during reassembly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repoint joint between blocks with lime-based mortar. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect wrought iron balustrade. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited potential damage to balustrade during reassembly.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reporting</u></p> <p>A comprehensive report detailing the materials and methods used to relocate and conserve all fabric to be prepared, supported by photographic documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as a baseline document for maintenance and further conservation works into the future. ▪ Normal conservation practice. 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Maintenance</u></p> <p>Implement a maintenance schedule to regularly monitor and maintain the monument and fence and its immediate environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a framework to manage the monument into the future with the aim of supplying a positive and stable environment with regular expert attention. ▪ Stops potentially serious issues arising which will impair the monument through simple neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing cost to Council and requires a long-term commitment by Council and staff to the maintenance of the obelisk.

Philosophy

The removal of the monument for conservation purposes and its relocation in the same place would possibly be an acceptable option if it was to achieve substantially better conservation outcome than conservation *in situ*. It is our opinion that there is not such gain and this therefore is not a better option than Option 3.

Option 8: Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and store/exhibit in a controlled environment

Methodology	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As for option 7, with reassembly at new location rather than at Macquarie Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deterioration of original components will be arrested through combined action of conservation and relocation to a controlled environment. ▪ If new treatments became available it may be possible to reinstate original back into Macquarie Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some damage to stone blocks especially edges expected during relocation. ▪ Removal of the monument is against the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i>. ▪ Irreversible loss of significance to Macquarie Place as a site specific, permanent physical marker and the last remaining tangible link to the Macquaries and Greenway in Macquarie Place Park is removed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the monument is not reassembled in the new location, there is risk of loss of original elements.

Philosophy

Many of the same principles as discussed in Options 4, 5, 6, and 7 apply to this. As well there are essentially no new issues here as this option is a combination of other options. This option has few redeeming values other than the conservation of the obelisk which loses its integrity by being dismantled and loses its physical association with the place for which it was designed. If this option were implemented the obelisk would have little heritage or social significance for the general community.

Table 8-1: Options for the future conservation of the Obelisk, Macquarie Place.²³³

	Option	State after 50 years	Opportunities in 50 years time	Comments	Impact on Significance of Obelisk	Impact on Significance of Macquarie Place
1.	Do nothing	Accelerating decay – severe loss of detail, surfaces and outline and eventual loss of inscriptions.	Limited as decay too far advanced.	This option inevitably leads to the eventual decay of the obelisk and its removal as it becomes destabilised. More invasive and unsympathetic conservation would be required.	Ignores its significance and leads to its downgrading. Permanent loss of original surfaces and inscriptions resulting in loss of technical/research potential.	Will lead to the deterioration of the only surviving original element of the Macquarie-period design of the place.
2.	Retain <i>in situ</i> and protect by some form of cover	Continuing but reduced decay – loss of detail, sharpness of carving, exfoliation of surfaces. Decay of base will continue due to rising damp.	Could remove cover and possibly treat in some new (as yet unknown) way.	For this option to be viable the cover would need to enclose the obelisk. Would still need to implement some conservation options such as removal of the salts and improved sub-drainage to retain the monument. May not solve all of the conservation issues.	Enclosure of an outdoor monument creates a total new ambience. Totally changes the setting of the monument. Would reduce public access and understanding of the monument and the place.	Would adversely affect the nature of the setting and its heritage significance.
3.	Retain <i>in situ</i>, conserve and maintain	Decay retarded in medium term. Some loss expected in long term if not maintained.	Opportunities to treat in new (unknown) way possibly constrained by previous treatments.	Results of this treatment will depend upon the nature and extent of conservation undertaken. Regular maintenance will be essential to retain the conserved appearance in the long term.	Philosophically this is the best option for the retention of the existing cultural heritage of the monument.	Minimises any impact on the setting and assists with maintaining an important aspect of its significance.
4.	Retain <i>in situ</i>, conserve and protect by some form of minimal cover	May inhibit the development of salts from rising damp and atmospheric pollution, depending on the treatment.	Opportunities to treat in new (unknown) way possibly constrained by previous treatments.	Results of this treatment will depend upon the nature and extent of both the cover and conservation undertaken.	Philosophically this is a good option for the retention of the existing cultural heritage of the monument.	Some adverse impact on the nature of the setting by introducing new, visually obtrusive elements.
5.	Remove to a controlled environment and replace with replica	Decay minimised, though some damage anticipated during relocation. Salt attack will continue as moisture and salts dry out in controlled environment. A stone replica would eventually suffer from decay and require conservation.	If new treatments became available may be possible to reinstate back into the park. Removal of the relic a second time may cause more damage and loss of fabric.	This option does not involve conservation of the monument which would continue to decay as the accumulated salts and moisture in the stone dry out.	Irreversible loss of significance as its function as both utilitarian and symbolic marker on a specific location within Macquarie Place will be negated if removed. No positive outcomes for the monument because it would not be conserved.	Adverse affect on the nature of the setting and its heritage significance by removal of the last remaining tangible link to the Macquaries and Greenway in Macquarie Place. Because of the impact this option would have on the significance of the Macquarie Place it would arouse considerable public

²³³ This table is based on tables in the TAGMAC Review but we hold different opinions in some categories (Appendix 5).

						debate and be fought by the heritage community as well as the public. It is not recommended.
6.	Remove to a controlled environment and conserve and replace with replica	Decay minimised though some damage anticipated during relocation. A stone replica would eventually suffer from decay and require conservation.	If new treatments became available may be possible to reinstate back into the park.	The same type of conservation treatments undertaken for Options 3 and 4 would be required.	Irreversible loss of significance. An important element of the significance of the obelisk is its function as both utilitarian and symbolic marker on a specific location within Macquarie Place. Once removed it would lose an important aspect of its significance	As above
7.	Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and return to Macquarie Place in original location	Decay minimised, though some damage anticipated during relocation and reinstallation.	No real difference to Option 3.	Possibility of solving rising damp problems by rectification of surface and sub-drainage.	The movement of the obelisk is against the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i> . Removal for conservation would involve loss of significance, which has so far only been affected by the poor conservation practises in the 1960s.	Short-term affect on the place. Not really an issue.
8.	Remove to a controlled environment, conserve and store/exhibit in a controlled environment	Decay minimised though some damage anticipated during relocation.	If new treatments became available may be possible to reinstate back into the park.	The same type of conservation treatments undertaken for Options 3 and 4 would be required. No physical marker will be evident in the park.	See Option 6.	See Option 5 and 6. Permanent loss of a physical marker.

8.3 Approach to “Conserving” the Obelisk

8.3.1 Background

The 1995 review by TAGMAC highlighted the philosophical difference in approach to physically “conserving” the obelisk. Policy 8 of the Conservation Plan recommended ‘that the Obelisk be managed as a “work of art”’, while many heritage specialists on the TAGMAC committee suggested that building conservation techniques would be more suitable. Unfortunately, the philosophy behind these two schools of thought was not elucidated in the document.

There are ambivalent and contradictory views for the approach to manage the obelisk as a work of art. On the one hand a work of art may be revered because it is a one-off creation by a skilled practitioner whose work should be tampered with as little as possible by the conservator or restorer so as to retain as much original evidence as possible of the artists techniques. This has traditionally been possible as works of art were treated in cultural institutions and stored and displayed in controlled environments. The removal of the statue of David and the Horses of San Marco from an outdoor environment to the indoors, as mentioned in section 6.2 reflects this museum-based approach. However, conservation philosophy has been continually reviewed and upgraded to reflect changing attitudes, and charters such as the ICOMOS *Burra Charter* are seminal in this regard. The prominence of significance and the relationship of an item to its surroundings have become paramount. Strictly applying the *Burra Charter* principles to the obelisk means that it should never be moved. However, outdoor works of art require a more pragmatic approach as they remain exposed to deteriorating elements such as the weather and vandalism. As a result more interventive treatments such as stone replacement (which by its nature includes the removal of original fabric) for extremely degraded items which may pose safety risks to the stability of the item or the public, has become standard in the architectural and building conservation fields. This approach is being adopted to some degree in the conservation of moveable cultural heritage. In the ICOMOS *Burra Charter* terminology this would be considered *reconstruction*, which is considered to be an acceptable part of ICOMOS’ own definition of *conservation*.²³⁴

Considerations for implementation of options

Prior to any physical intervention to conserve the fabric of the obelisk, the Conservation Policies listed in the 1996 Conservation Plan should be reviewed and updated where necessary.

It must be noted that within the preferred option 3 there are specifics about the treatments which need to be addressed. These include the amount of stone replacement, if any, sourcing the type of stone which would be suitable as a replacement stone and the possibility of replacing the 1964 indent with new stone and re-lettering the inscription more accurately to the original font. The amount of patching should also be considered, as demonstrated in the Choragic Monument example in section 6.2 Precedents for Similar Treatments, it is not necessary to infill all losses in stonework on a heritage monument which could start to appear patchy if filled with plastic repairs. The main concern is the stability of the surface.

A crucial detail that needs to be considered is how to approach the decaying original inscriptions. Whether to accept the gradual loss of the lettering and provide interpretive signs of the inscriptions, or whether to re-black the lettering. Reinscribing the original lettering to improve legibility should be avoided, as the technical details provided by examining the early engraving will be lost.

Related issues regarding the wrought iron balustrade that need to be addressed include whether any of the stringers should be replaced as their integrity is lost through corrosion. Ideally, removal of the balustrade for treatment as advocated in option 3 would be concurrent with rectification work to the sub-surface drainage system.

²³⁴ Article 1.4 of the *Burra Charter* defines ‘Conservation’ as all processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstance, include *preservation, restoration, reconstruction* and *adaptation* and will be commonly be a combination of more than one of these’ (Appendix 2).

With the exception of option 8, all other options suggest the original monument or a replica remain in Macquarie Place Park. Regardless of which of the seven options is selected, it is likely that major work will be required to address the drainage issue so as to limit ongoing damage by rising damp caused by water retention under the monument. Due to the level of harmful salts identified, desalination of the entire monument would also be required.

9.0 **Results & Recommendations**

9.1 **Results**

- The Obelisk, Macquarie Place has a State level of heritage significance.
- The obelisk's individual level of significance and its significance to the place warrants its conservation *in situ*.
- The obelisk is in a state of decay that involves the continuing loss of inscriptions and fabric. Drummy surfaces have exfoliated since last recorded in 1997.
- Research has shown that there has been replacement of the two base courses, recutting of the inscription, a stone indent replacing one section of an inscription and large drill holes.
- While many reports have been written in the last 30 years very little substantive conservation works have been undertaken on the monument.
- The long-term conservation of this monument of exceptional significance requires the Council of the City of Sydney to act speedily to implement a program of conservation.
- Council has a Conservation Plan endorsed by the NSW Heritage Council. The endorsed option is to conserve the obelisk *in situ*.

9.2 **Recommendations**

Recommended Option

1. This report recommends that the Obelisk, Macquarie Place should be conserved *in situ* and maintained (Option 3).
2. The obelisk's condition will need to be monitored and managed through a maintenance program.
3. The City of Sydney should adopt and endorse the recommended option of this report to conserve the obelisk *in situ* and maintain it.
4. A program of works on the obelisk should commence as soon as possible so as to halt the continued disintegration of the monument.
5. The City of Sydney should request the NSW Heritage Council to endorse this report.

Consultation

There are now many stakeholders with a keen interest in ensuring the Obelisk is preserved by the most appropriate methods available to us today. These stakeholders will undoubtedly include the many multi-disciplinary specialists who have investigated and written reports on the monument over the last 30 years as well as interested members of the public.

It may be prudent for the City of Sydney to conduct a forum inviting all interested parties to discuss the specifics of how to approach the conservation work. It appears that previous attempts have stalled due to disagreement on the approach to treatment and a lack of available funds. To ensure that outcomes are achieved, the forum will need to be pose specific questions about the proposed treatment to enable the formulation of specifications to follow. Issues such as the possible replacement of the poorly executed 1960s indent, replacement/repair of the degraded cornice stones and how to resolve the inevitable loss of inscriptions as they continue to degrade and become illegible, may be appropriate starting points. This would encourage an open debate on the pros and cons of various theories and methods available for conserving the obelisk, which would enable Council to canvas the range of opinions and ultimately make an informed decision.

Further Investigations

Prior to preparing a specification, a thorough investigation of all surfaces of the sandstone will be required to determine the method and specific location of various treatments. This should be accompanied by measured drawings for the dual purposes of ensuring there are no misunderstandings about the level of treatment of each individual stone and to create a documented record of the proposed treatment for current and future reference.

Photographic Record

While the photogrammetry was undertaken to produce drawings (Appendix 6) the recommended detailed photographic record has not been undertaken.²³⁵ This needs to be undertaken as part of the next stage of the project.

Existing Policies

The Conservation Plan (1996) has recommended a series of 80 policies for the future conservation and management of the obelisk. These policies have been endorsed by the Heritage Council but should be reviewed every five years. These need to be reviewed as part of the next stage of the project.

²³⁵ Heritage Design Services, Dept of Public Works & Services 1996:80.

10.0 Bibliography

(NB: all references for Section 3 are in the footnotes)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Brief

Appendix 2: *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS

Appendix 3: Summary of Previous Conservation Practices

Appendix 4: Annotated Condition Plans Showing Current Condition

Appendix 5: TAGMAC Review

Appendix 6: Photogrammetry and Plans

Appendix 7: 1934 and 1954 Photographs

Appendix 8: Cox & Tanner Photographs, 1981

Appendix 9: Heiman drawings, 1992

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