

# NOWRA SAILING CLUB

## Heritage Assessment Report



PREPARED FOR  
Shoalhaven City Council

BY  
SIMPSON DAWBIN Associates Architects and Heritage Consultants

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
Robyn Florance Historian

February 2000

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Cover photograph:

View from southern approach  
to Bridge, ca 1915, showing  
1904 cargo shed, double  
pitched roof structure

*Robyn Florance collection*

## Introduction

This Report was commissioned in May 1999 by Shoalhaven City Council. A Heritage Assessment Report was required by Council to ensure that appropriate long term decisions are made with respect to the conservation, ongoing maintenance, and use of the Nowra Sailing Club and its curtilage.

The assessment of significance is based on the **State Heritage Inventory** criteria of the NSW Heritage Office.

## Scope of this Report

This report seeks to investigate the available documentary and physical evidence of the place sufficient to determine cultural heritage significance.

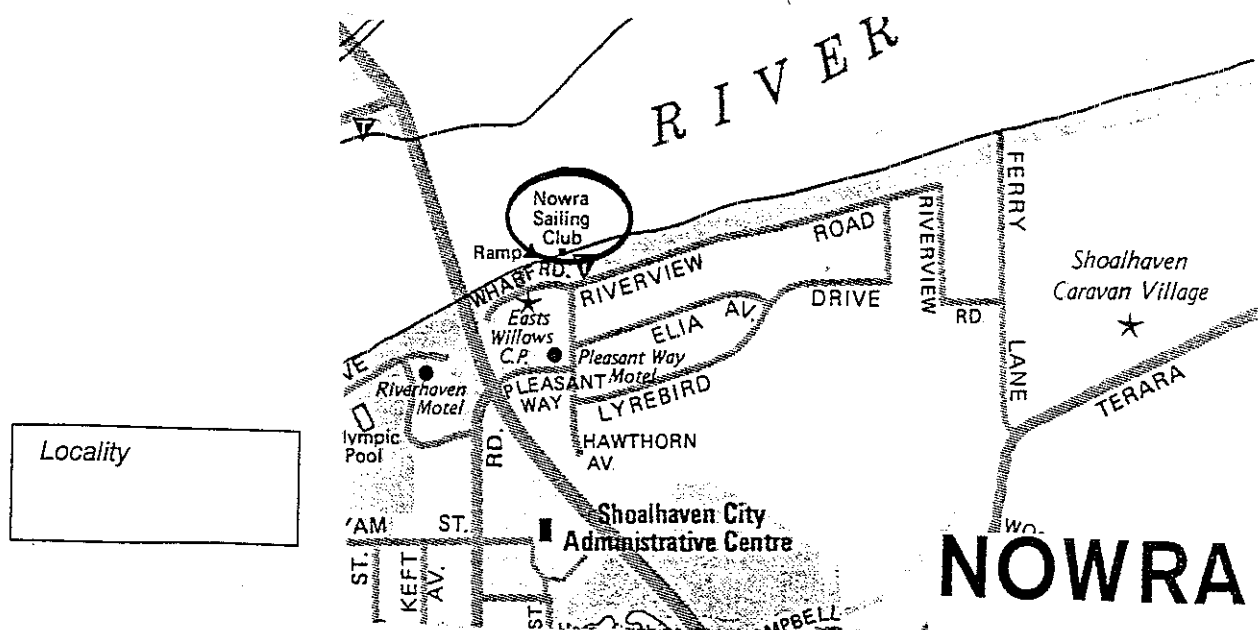
Conservation policies are proposed to an adequate level to provide Council with a set of initial guidelines for the heritage management of the property. Implementation strategies are focussed on maintenance of the fabric, recommendations for future use of the site, and adaptive reuse of the structures.

It is emphasised that Conservation Policy and Implementation Strategies should be developed in considerably more detail should any redevelopment of the site or development in the vicinity be proposed.

## Objectives of this Conservation Management Plan

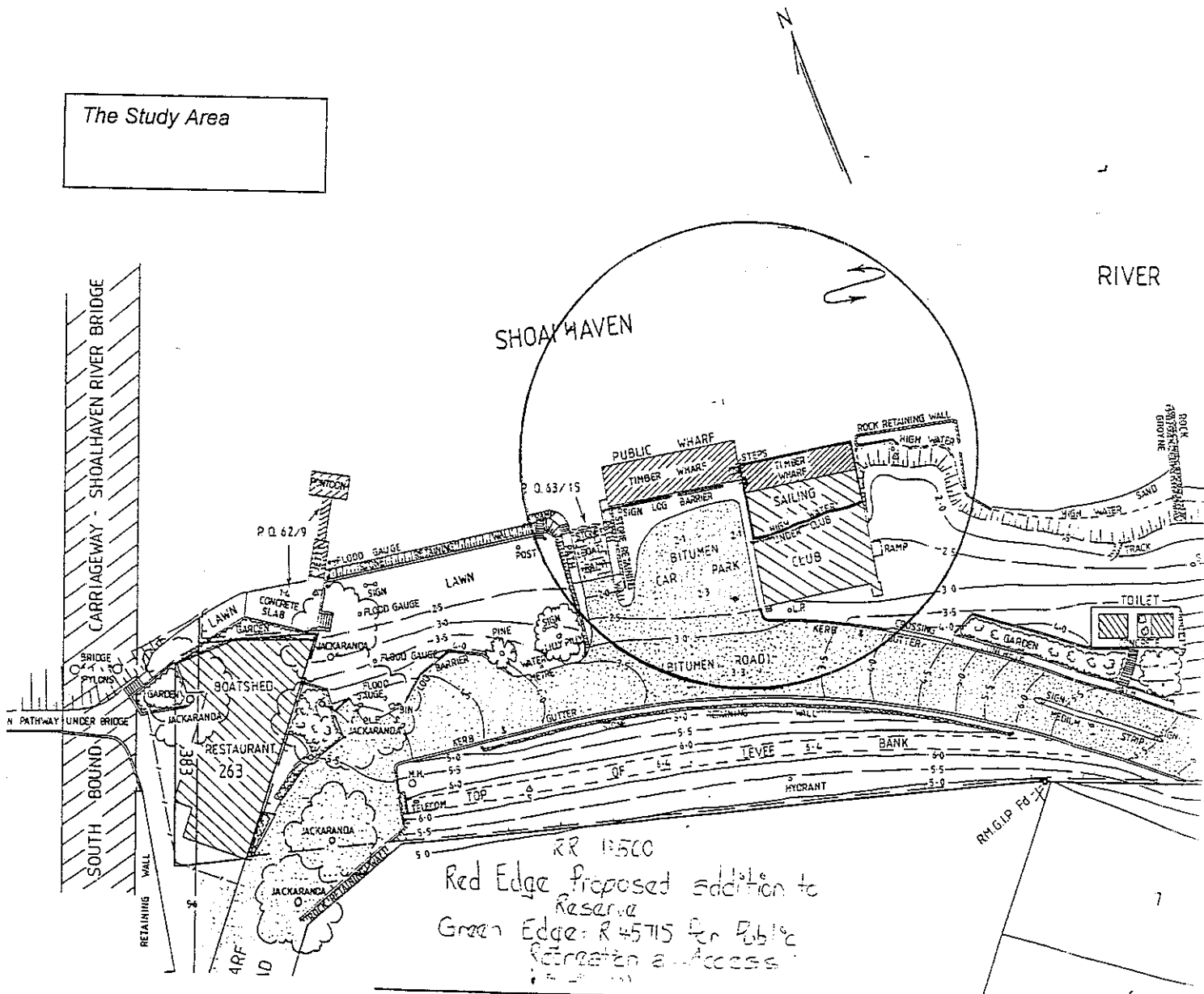
In summary the objectives of the report are to:

- Establish the cultural significance of the Nowra Sailing Club
- Formulate appropriate policies for the conservation and ongoing maintenance
- Determine guidelines or constraints for appropriate development of the building, and site whilst acknowledging the significance of the building, its immediate curtilage and its contribution to the riverfront reserve.
- Relate the proposals to objectives of Council in relation to usage of the site



The study area is located on part Lot 7012 DP 1002643 Wharf Road, Nowra being Crown land Reserve No R45715, for Public Recreation and Access under the control of the Nowra Reserve Trust, managed by Shoalhaven City Council

### The Study Area



## Study Team

### The study team comprises:

Bruce Dawbin of SIMPSON DAWBIN, Architects and Heritage Consultants

Consultant Historian: Robyn Florance

### Client Representatives:

John Drummond, Manager Property Services Group and  
Lorraine McCarthy, Property Services Group, Shoalhaven City Council

### Acknowledgements:

The assistance of the following in the preparation of this report is gratefully acknowledged:

Shoalhaven Historical Society

John Flett, Planner, Shoalhaven City Council

## Summary of Recommendations

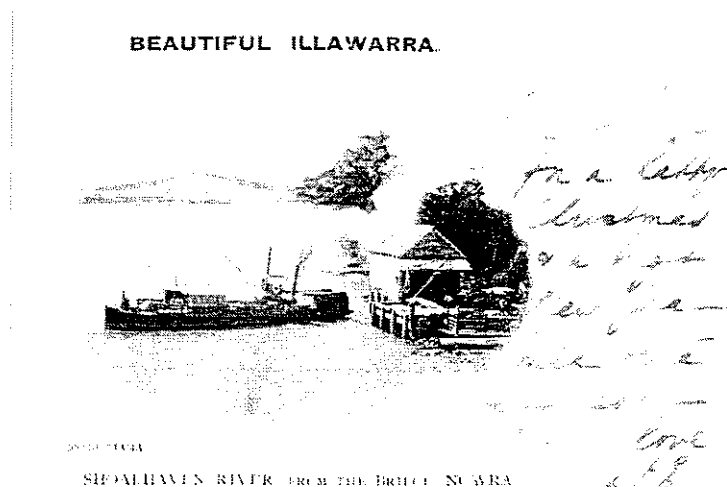
The Assessment of Significance has determined that the building has a high level of Historical, Social and Aesthetic significance. This report generally recommends that the Nowra Sailing Club should be appropriately conserved and maintained, and continue in its role as clubhouse and boat storage facility for the Nowra Sailing Club following the vacating of the premises by the Rowing Club.

The major outcomes include the following:

- The wharf and warehouse structures should be retained and conserved, and the setting preserved.
- Guidelines are proposed for appropriate ongoing conservation, and maintenance of the precinct.
- Guidelines are proposed for appropriate ongoing alternative uses of the site, adaptive reuse of the building, and appropriate redevelopment of the site.

Contemporary postcard of  
wharf and single cargo  
shed in original 1883  
configuration,  
dated 1916

Shoalhaven Historical  
Society



## PART 1: INVESTIGATE SIGNIFICANCE

The first step in the process of assessing the heritage significance of the Nowra Sailing Club is to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the history of the site. This involves the assembly of all relevant available documentary material, including photographs, surveys and drawings

The physical fabric of the building and existing configuration of the site were inspected providing confirmation of the available documentary evidence.

### 1.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE:

#### Historical Background

Robyn Florance

##### Coastal shipping

Coastal shipping grew in importance along the south coast of New South Wales from the 1840s onwards. The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company was incorporated in 1853 and gradually steam replaced sailing boats. A major facility for the coastal steamers and sailing vessels was developed at Greenwell Point, where Alexander Berry had built a wharf in 1829. The breaking chain which lay underwater in the channel beside Greenwell Point Wharf to assist sailing ships is still visible at low tide south of the present day wharf.<sup>1</sup>

Although steamers did enter the Shoalhaven River in the 1850s and 1860s, tying up at Numbaa, Terrara, Bomaderry and Broughton Creek Wharves, Nowra was inaccessible to sea going ships until the rock outcrop at Bomaderry Creek was broken up in 1904. The Illawarra Steam Navigation Co. established an office at Nowra which still exists as the Sailing Club's clubhouse.

The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company had three different wharves at the site of the Nowra Sailing Club. The first was erected in 1884 and was almost destroyed by the flood of 1898. A new wharf and store was built about 1902-1904. The third store and wharf are thought to have been built about 1930-1935. It was taken over by the Nowra District Fishermen's Co-operative in 1948 and by the Nowra Sailing Club in 1964.

##### Historical Background

Despite the problems that the Shoalhaven River caused the district in times of flood, it was still vitally important as a highway to Sydney and the rest of the world. Roads out of the district were little more than bridle tracks, and they too could be badly effected by the weather.

Prior to 1850 there was little traffic on the coast, apart from the ships controlled by Alexander Berry, and Ben Boyd further south. By the middle of the century other shipbuilders were working on the Shoalhaven River and in Jervis Bay, mainly providing small vessels for local property owners and business people.

In this era the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company was formed to transport local produce to Sydney and in 1857 it amalgamated with keen rival, the Kiama Steam Navigation Company the Twofold Bay Pastoral Company, and the interest of Edye Manning.<sup>2</sup> A man with a wide

<sup>1</sup> Walliss R. J. *Greenwell Point, An Early Shoalhaven Port*, Greenwell Point, 1988, p. 18

<sup>2</sup> A meeting organised in David Hyam's Commercial Hotel formed the Shoalhaven Co-operative Navigation Co. with capital of £1000 in shares of £1 each, and a provisional committee of 11 local men.

experience in shipping Manning was appointed Manager. The new company was to be known as the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, but a special Act of Parliament was needed before it became official in 1858.

At first steamers for Sydney were loaded at Greenwell Point with produce collected at wharves at Numba and Terara on the Shoalhaven and up Broughton Creek by the s.s. *Coolangatta*, a flat bottomed boat locally called 'the Wheelbarrow'. Dredging began on the river in the fifties.

In 1860 Maclean's of Crookhaven had vessels plying to Sydney from Shoalhaven whilst the s.s. *Hunter* of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Co. plied from Sydney to Terara wharf weekly.

The I.S.N.C. timetable at the start of 1870, saw the steamers depart from Shoalhaven to Sydney on Monday at 6 a.m. and Thursday at 7 a.m., while on the return journey the departure time was 11 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday. Fares for a cabin passage were £1 single and £1/10/- return, while in steerage the fare was 15/-.<sup>3</sup> Passengers could also take a horse for 15/-. At that time Captain Archibald Fletcher had the company agency which operated from its Terara wharf, and he was also captain of the '*Coolangatta*'.

The two most regular visitors to the area were the paddle steamers '*Illalong*' and '*Kembla*'. They were similar vessels, the 350 ton '*Kembla*' being 183 feet long and built in 1860, while the slightly smaller 300 ton '*Illalong*' at 175 feet, was built in 1854. They were supported by the local steamer '*Coolangatta*' which stayed on the river, visiting countless wharves to collect and deliver goods.

Cargo was principally farm produce, as revealed in the 'shipping intelligence' published each week in the *Shoalhaven News*. Invariably the list would start with a large quantity of corn, ranging from 100 to 400 bags; potatoes were also sent in large quantities. Livestock such as pigs, horses, cattle and poultry travelled on deck, while the variety of locally produced food for export was seen with eggs, cheese, bacon, onions, oysters and fish. Occasionally a steamer would be loaded with timber, in lots of around 16,000 feet to be sold in Sydney. Imports were mainly processed foodstuffs such as flour and rice, often in lots of 100 bags.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the weekly trips to Shoalhaven by the large steamers, the district sometimes received visits from smaller schooners and ketches of about 40 tons. Although the ships were basically used for practical purposes, at times they doubled as pleasure crafts, being loaned for fishing trips outside the heads, and at Christmas time, holiday makers were taken on picnic excursions to venues such as Crookhaven Heads and Bowen Island.

Navigation was improved when the Crookhaven was snagged in 1879, the huge tree trunks embedded in slime from time immemorial being hauled out by bullock teams. By the 1880s the boats of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company loaded at Greenwell Point, cargoes being taken to and from up river ports by droghers or shallow draught vessels, to assist which dredges were continually employed on the river.<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1880s, David Berry owned two steamers which travelled weekly to Sydney. He had the 147 ton steel screw steamer

<sup>3</sup> Clark Alan, *Shipping*, found in *Living Echoes*, Shoalhaven City Council, Nowra, 1996, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Clark Alan, *Shipping* op cit. p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Bayley William A., *Diamond Jubilee Nowra Co-op Dairy Co. Ltd. 1902-1962*, Nowra Co-operative Dairy Company Limited, Nowra, 1962.

"Coomonderry": built in Scotland and despite its length of 110 feet, it negotiated Broughton Creek to the township then bearing the name Its sister vessel was the 217 ton "Meeinderry" which called at Broughton Creek, Bomaderry, Back Forest and Greenwell Point before leaving for Sydney. Fares had increased little in the previous 20 years and passengers were assured of free coaches to and from Greenwell Point, Nowra, Terara and Numbaa.<sup>6</sup>

The rocks which prevented ships from coming to Nowra were removed by explosives in 1904, but ironically the railway lines to Bomaderry had been opened a decade earlier and the trains were used to transport many of the goods previously carried by ships.

The arrival of the I.S.N Co's *Allowrie* at Nowra wharf after removal of the rocks from the river in December 1903 at last eliminated trans-shipment at Greenwell Point and allowed direct shipping from Sydney to Nowra until the I.S.N Co ceased operations after the Second World War. The largest ship to come as far as Nowra was the 522 ton paddle steamer "Illawarra" which was 190 feet long

With the increased use of road and rail transport, the dependence on shipping and the river was not as marked as the twentieth century wore on. Although the passenger service had ended, cargo was brought to Shoalhaven by ship until World War II. Building materials and heavy hardware items arrived regularly at the Nowra Wharf. Unloading would proceed through the night, so that the steamer could depart early next morning. At first light, local firms such as Woodhills and P. Walsh & Sons had their vehicles ready to load merchandise for their stores.<sup>7</sup>

There were plenty of river cruises for tourists in the early part of this century, conducted by Walter Elyard and Captain Wilson, and they continued until the outbreak of war. The pattern at one time was to travel upstream to the picnic grounds at Bangalee one weekend and downstream to Crookhaven Heads the next.

This concept was re-introduced by Dick Hall in 1986 when he launched his 20 tonne aluminium catamaran "Jerry Bailey". It carried up to 120 passengers, charter cruising on the Shoalhaven and in Jervis Bay and was able to cater for special functions.

### **The Nowra Wharf**

The Bomaderry Wharf which was located on the northern side of the river below the punt approaches was completed and ready for use in 1871.<sup>8</sup> Consideration was given for the construction of another wharf at Nowra in the mid 1870s. The *Shoalhaven Telegraph* of September 1879 reported that the Minister for Works has agreed that it would be inexpedient to construct a public wharf at Nowra, above the site of the bridge, and that steps would shortly be taken for its construction at a suitable place on the southern bank of the river below the bridge.<sup>9</sup>

The wharf was still not completed by May 1882 when Mr Roseby visited the district and the delay in its completion was brought to his attention. He promised to inquire into the matter on his return to Sydney.<sup>10</sup>

The *News* of 3rd April 1884 reported that the "... wharf at Nowra was soon to be finished."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Clark Alan, *Shipping* op cit p 74

<sup>7</sup> Clark Alan, *Shipping* op.cit. p 74

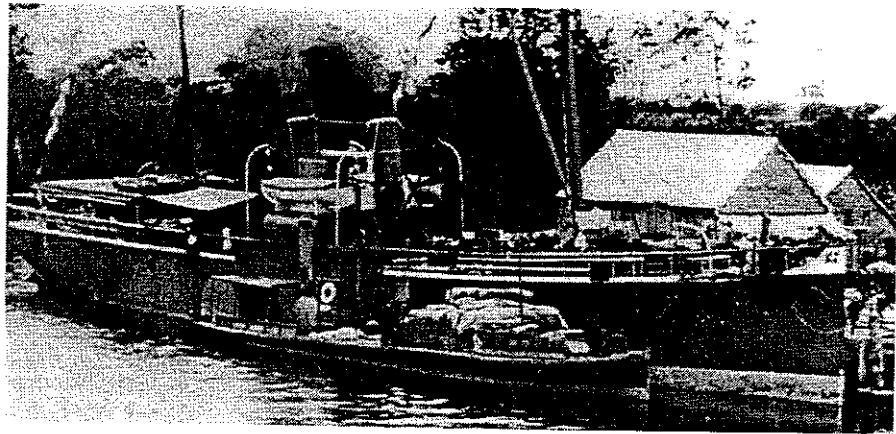
<sup>8</sup> Bayley William A. *Shoalhaven*, Shoalhaven Shire Council, 1975, p. 90

<sup>9</sup> *The Telegraph Thursday, September 4 1879*

<sup>10</sup> *The Shoalhaven Telegraph 7th September 1882*

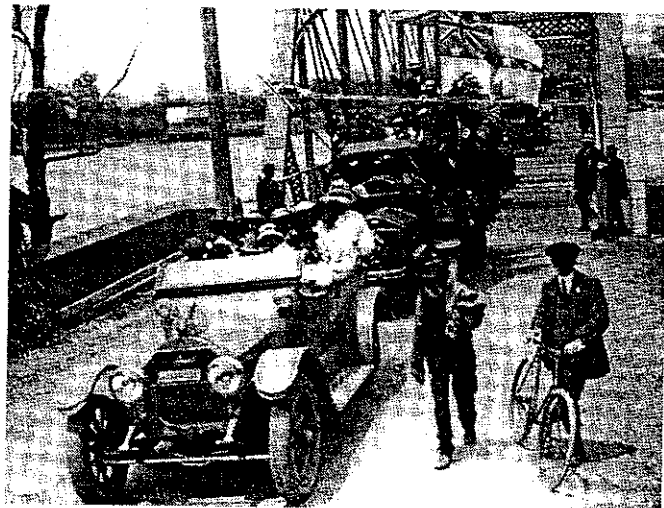
<sup>11</sup> *The News 3rd April 1884*





ISNCo coastal steamer, Allowrie at the wharf, December 1903

*Shoalhaven Historical Society, donated by Miss A Elyard*



Waratah March, November 1915, servicemen in procession from Nowra to Sydney approaching Bomaderry from the Bridge, ca 1930, Old Wharf in background

*Shoalhaven Historical Society*

In September 1885 Nowra Municipal Council met Mr Moriarty, of Wollongong, District Engineer, to arrange for the completion of the Nowra Public Wharf, and in conjunction erecting a suitable goods shed.<sup>12</sup> A search through local newspapers has failed to find reference to the wharf and goods shed being completed. Reference was found to the goods shed in reports of floods of the Shoalhaven River. In an article written for the flood of July 1899 it was reported that "...The river at Terara on Wednesday rose to the decking of the I.S.N. Co's. wharf or about six feet

<sup>12</sup> *Shoalhaven Telegraph* 24th September 1885

above ordinary high tide mark...<sup>13</sup> the I.S.N.Co removed its boat store from Terara to Nowra and Terara's shipping days were at an end.<sup>14</sup>

The flood of July 1900 was reported in the local press "...The river at Nowra rose to the top of the goods shed door..."<sup>15</sup> Another flood occurred in July 1904 and the "...Shoalhaven rose over Nowra Wharf, the floodwaters being several feet deep in the I.S.N. Company Store..."<sup>16</sup>

Among its many activities Nowra Council took over the wharf, which it extensively improved in 1913 making it 56 feet long to serve the steamers which at that time were regular visitors<sup>17</sup>

The flood of October 1916 again was "...nearly to the roof of I.S.N. Co. smaller store..."<sup>18</sup> In the Flood of December 1920 "...the waters did not reach to within 4 or 5 feet as high at Nowra Wharf as the previous flood. It was in the I.S.N.Co.'s goods shed to a depth of about 6 feet..."<sup>19</sup>

July 1922 saw "...the Shoalhaven flood on Tuesday afternoon and night was several feet below that of 1916...water was over the roof of Elyards boat sheds and some feet over the decking of the wharf jetty. The I.S.N.Co.'s store had 5 to 6 feet of water inside (flood marks reached the window of the store premises)..."<sup>20</sup>

The flood of the 11th May 1925 "...covered the Illawarra and South Coast S.N. Co.'s wharf, the water lapping the bottom of the sign board hanging over the store doors Mr Elyard, the agent who occupies the residence on the bank of the river, says the flood was 6 inches higher than the highest he had any recollection of. Elyards boatsheds were all underwater..."<sup>21</sup>

Flood of May 1948 "...river rose eight feet to be just over top of both I.S.N wharves..."<sup>22</sup>

The flood of June 1949 "...several feet deep in the fish co-op depot on the I.S.N wharf..."<sup>23</sup>

Flood of May 1955 "...5 inches deep in the fish co-op..."<sup>24</sup> Another flood the following February "water five feet deep in the fish co-op..."<sup>25</sup>

In July 1958 "...water completely covered the wharf near Nowra Bridge and lapped the doors of the District Fisherman's Co-operative Factory. However, water did not enter the factory and no damage was caused..."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Shoalhaven & Nowra News 15th July 1899

<sup>14</sup> Bayley William A, Diamond Jubilee Nowra Co-op Dairy Co. Ltd 1902-1962, Nowra Co-operative Dairy Company Limited, Nowra, 1962, p. 14

<sup>15</sup> Shoalhaven & Nowra News 7th July 1900

<sup>16</sup> Shoalhaven Telegraph 13th July 1904

<sup>17</sup> Bayley William A Shoalhaven, Shoalhaven Shire Council, Nowra, 1975, p. 164

<sup>18</sup> Shoalhaven News 7th October 1916

<sup>19</sup> Shoalhaven Telegraph 15th December 1920

<sup>20</sup> Shoalhaven & Nowra News 29th July 1922

<sup>21</sup> Shoalhaven Telegraph 13th May 1925

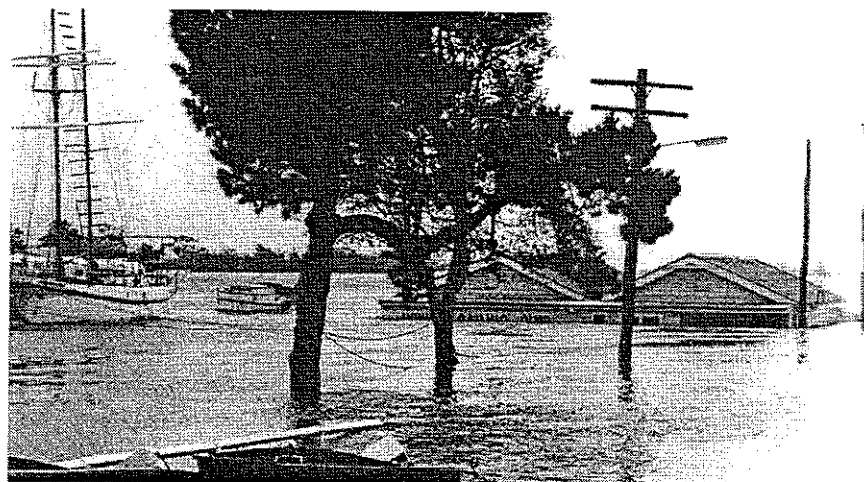
<sup>22</sup> Shoalhaven News 5th May 1948

<sup>23</sup> Shoalhaven and Nowra News 21st June 1949

<sup>24</sup> Shoalhaven and Nowra News 2nd May 1955

<sup>25</sup> Shoalhaven and Nowra News 21st February 1956

<sup>26</sup> Shoalhaven and Nowra News 1st July 1958



The Shoalhaven in flood

Top, 1916  
*Shoalhaven Historical Society*

Bottom:  
1974  
*Wayne Beckenham*

Flood of October 1959 "...reached to within 12 to 18 inches of the awning of the fish co-op depot..."<sup>27</sup> Flood of March 1961 "...water four feet deep into the fish co-op..."<sup>28</sup>

In 1964 new premises were built on the opposite side of the river, above flood level, on the former's site, since overgrown, of the first wharf at Bomaderry.<sup>29</sup> The new modern premises were officially opened by M.E Joseph, Chairman of the NSW Fish Authority in August 1964, by which time there were 105 suppliers.

#### **The Nowra Sailing Club**

In September 1963 Shoalhaven Shire Council considered an application from the recently formed Nowra Sailing Club to lease the Nowra Wharf & Shed once the Nowra Fisherman's Co-operative had vacated the premises, for use as a Club House. The Club Commodore, James Dallaway, in a letter to Council wrote that the club would use the club house for storage of boats and headquarters for club activities and visiting crews. *The regular appearance of sailing craft on the river will provide an attractive sight to residents and tourists to the district.*

Council agreed to the request and the Sailing Club was informed that the Nowra Wharf would be made available for a clubhouse and boathouse at an annual rent of £1 00.

Once the co-operative had moved out of the premises and the cool rooms removed the Sailing Club took over. By the end of September 1964 the 'old shed' had been renovated in time for the opening of the 1964 sailing season.

#### **YACHTS BRAVE GALE FORCE WINDS OVER WEEKEND**

Sailing conditions on the Shoalhaven River on Saturday afternoon were anything but ideal for the official opening of the Nowra Sailing Club, with gusts of westerly winds blowing at an estimated 50-60 mph. Nevertheless following the official ceremony, eight Heron class yachts endeavoured to take to the water, three of which were overturned soon after, five actually crossed the starting line, and only one finished the shortened course after the others had capsized or swamped.

Councillor Gordon Ritchie in his speech officially welcomed the visiting boat owners on behalf of the Shire of Shoalhaven and complimented the Committee, Committeemen, Ladies Auxiliary and members of the Nowra Sailing Club on the fine job they had done in renovating the old wharf shed in such a fine building, which he said was now a credit to the whole Shoalhaven district. He then declared the meeting officially open and later entered the race for Herons.

After the race which was won by Mr Jim Dallaway afternoon tea was then enjoyed by all in the Club House.

*The Nowra News 7th October 1964*

#### **Shoalhaven Rowing Club**

In the early days the river was a scene for regattas organised by the local people, forerunners of the great races held on the river 50 years later. Typical of them were the five races held on Anniversary Day 1869. David Hyam acted as starter and the s.s. *Coolangatta* took sightseers to watch the races.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Illawarra Mercury 27th October 1959

<sup>28</sup> Shoalhaven and Nowra News 28th March 1961

<sup>29</sup> Bayley Shoalhaven op cit p 226

<sup>30</sup> Bayley Shoalhaven op.cit. p 65

The Shoalhaven Regatta Club conducted events in this decade at Numbaa - sailing as well as rowing and sculling, the venue still being known as "Regatta Point". Closer to Nowra, the Greenhills Boating Club was formed in 1879 with Mayor Jeremiah Green as president.

Big regattas were staged at Numbaa, Gray's Beach and Greenwell Point through the 1920s and 1930s often in conjunction with other sporting events.

In 1977 the Shoalhaven Rowing Club was established to promote a once popular sport in Shoalhaven. Historically the Shoalhaven has produced world rowing champions.

#### World Sculling Champion

The Shoalhaven Regatta Club on Anniversary day in 1888 held an event at Numbaa. The star of the regatta was young sculler James Stanbury from Saltwater Creek, up the Shoalhaven, near Burrier. Stanbury's first race had been in the Nowra regatta in 1885, and he was soon dominating these events on the Shoalhaven. In 1888 he challenged the well performed W Hughes to a race for a £100 a side. He went on to win the world title in 1891, beating Canadian William O'Connor over two miles and 1560 yards on the Parramatta River. While holding the world crown for five years, Stanbury went to London where he covered four miles and two furlongs on the Thames River between Putney and Mortlake, to defeat C R Harding. He regained the title in 1905-1906 at the age of 37 years.<sup>31</sup>

The Rowing Club shared the Sailing Club Premises and paid annual paid fees to the sailing club.

#### NOWRA WHARF

NOWRA WHARF - At length plans and specifications are in the Mayor's hands, and by the present issue it will be seen that tenders are invited for the goods shed at Nowra Public Wharf. The structure will render the wharf of some service to shippers and importers of goods.

#### Tenders

##### NOWRA WHARF GOODS SHED

Tenders are invited for the erection of a GOODS SHED at Nowra Wharf, according to plan and specification.

Tenders to be sent to the undersigned not later than MONDAY 1st MARCH, to be endorsed, "Tender for Shed".

Full particulars from Council Clerk

The lowest tender not necessarily accepted.

H. MOSS,  
Mayor

*The Shoalhaven Telegraph* 18th February 1886

<sup>3131</sup> Clark Alan, James Stanbury, World Champion Sculler

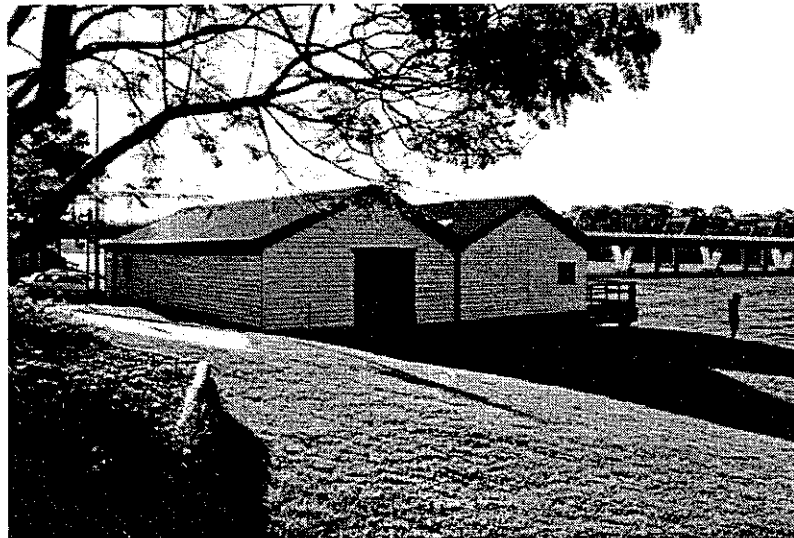
## 1.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE,

### Intactness of the Building

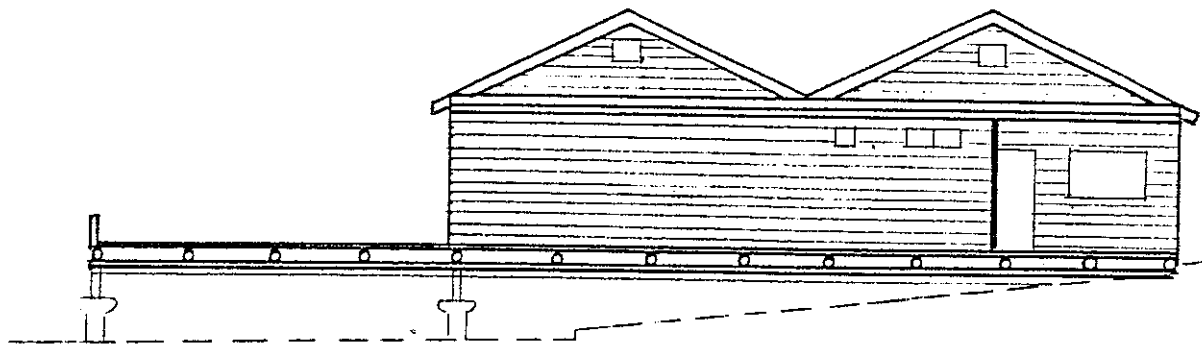
The building as it exists in 1999 remains structurally intact in its original 1930's configuration, however internally and externally the building has undergone some alteration

### Stages of development:

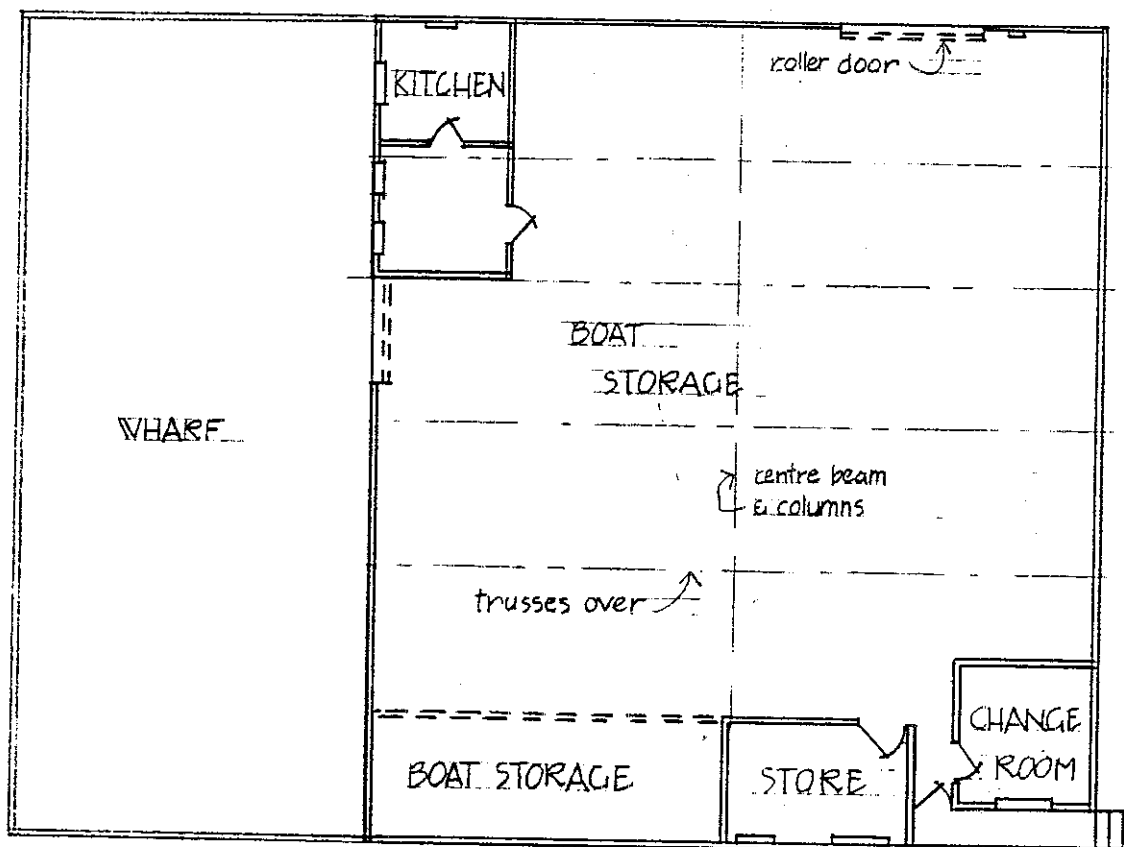
<i>Year</i>	<i>Physical development</i>
1885	Nowra Wharf #1      Original construction
1899	ISNC goods shed relocated from Terara to Nowra
1902-1904	Wharf # 2
1930-1935	Wharf # 3
1948	Nowra District Fishermen's Co-operative
1964	Nowra Sailing Club
1977	Premises shared by Nowra Rowing Club
1968	Alterations by Shoalhaven Shire Council



East view of Sailing Club, Bridge in background



WEST ELEVATION



PLAN

Key plan of the Building

**SCHEDULE of BUILDING ELEMENTS**

Area No	Element Name
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**External Areas**

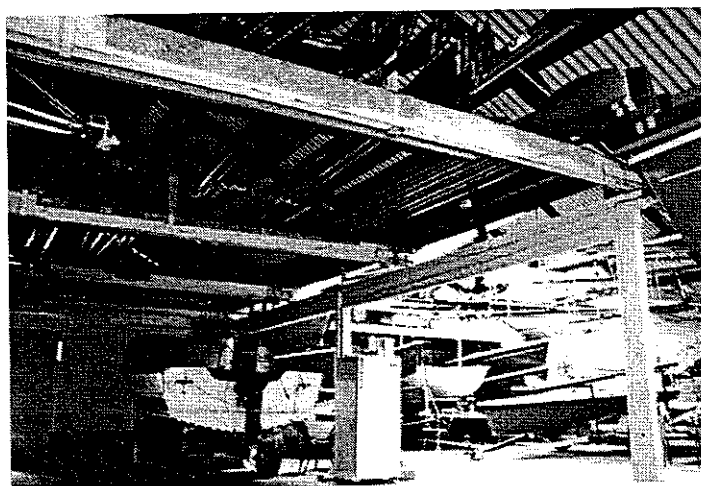
A1	ISNC Wharf
A2	Public Wharf
A3	Light poles
A4	Car Park
A5	Sandstone sea wall
A6	Sandstone launching ramp
A8	Open space grassed area

**Building, exterior**

B1	West Elevation
B2	South Elevation
B3	East Elevation
B4	North Elevation
B5	Log substructure

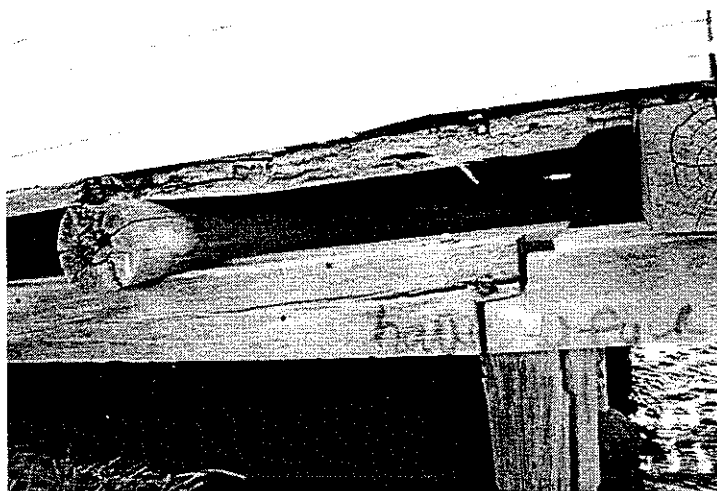
**Interior**

C1	King post truss roof structure
C2	Kitchen and lunch room
C3	Change room
C4	Boat storage lean-to
C5	Imprint of Cool Store in floor slab

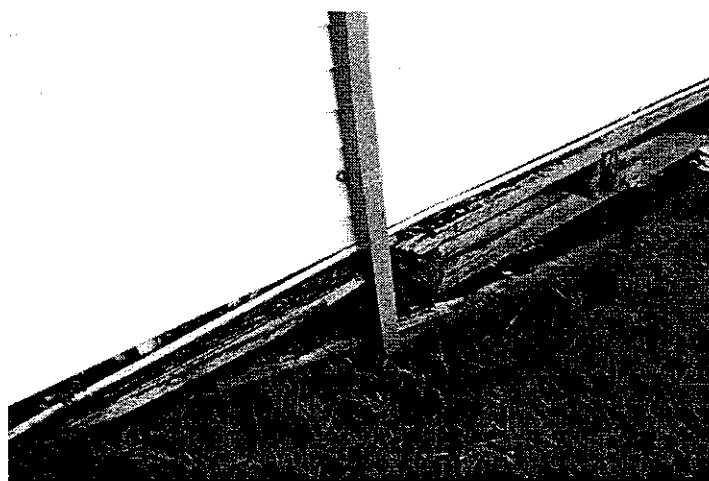


Interior views: Roller shutter to east wall  
Boat storage area, north west

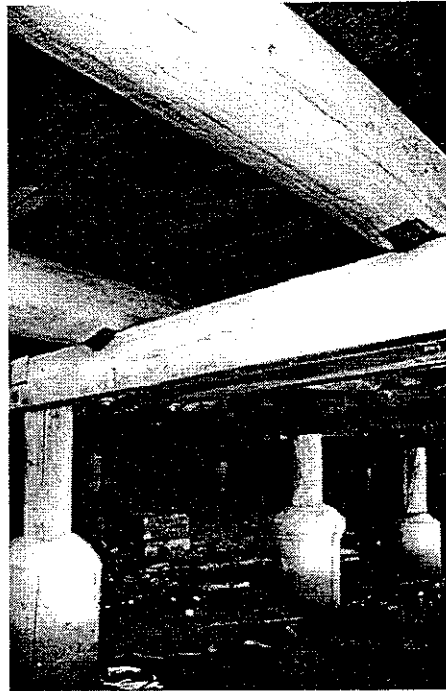




Deterioration in floor structure and posts, north east corner



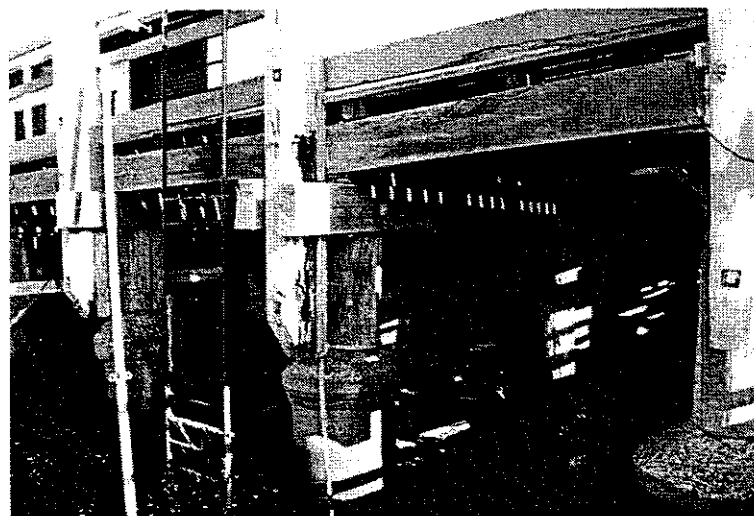
Substructure in proximity to soil, east elevation



Concrete footings to posts under warehouse



North elevation of warehouse facing wharf



Riverfront face to wharf

### 1.3 ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTARY AND PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

#### Documentary evidence

Photographs of the wharf and the three generations of warehouse building on the site have provided the most detailed documentary evidence of the development of the site

Contemporary newspaper reports have provided much information on the history of the wharf and the coastal shipping industry, and records of the ISNCo are readily accessible for research.

#### The building fabric as evidence

The fabric of the building itself clearly differentiates between the 1880's sub floor and wharf structure and the 1930's superstructure which is relatively intact but altered in several areas

## PART 2: ASSESS SIGNIFICANCE

### Basis of Assessment

This study uses the NSW Heritage Assessment Criteria<sup>32</sup> to evaluate the nature and degree of significance of the site as a whole and key contributory components. The nature of cultural significance is assessed under four categories including *historic, aesthetic, technical/scientific and social significance*

The *degree* of significance takes into account the rarity or representative nature of the item or feature.

### Existing Listings

The Nowra Wharf and the Sailing Club (former ISNC offices) is listed on the Shoalhaven Heritage Study by Peter Freeman 1997

### Statement of Significance

The significance of the building exists through its physical link with commercial river traffic and the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, and the continuity of the form and character of the maritime vernacular character of three generations of structures which have occupied the site since 1884.

From the time of earliest settlement, the Shoalhaven River provided an important transport link for towns and pastoral areas in the area. The arrival of the railway to Bomaderry precipitated a decline in the importance of the river as the lifeline to the outside world. The 1930's warehouse structure remains largely intact and the integrity of the substructure and wharf from an earlier period reinforce the link with the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, an organisation vital to the early development of Nowra and the Shoalhaven Region

The building and its site display high significance within the three of the four major *heritage assessment criteria*:

<sup>32</sup> NSW Heritage Manual, (Heritage Office 1997)

**Historical Significance**

The prosperity of the Shoalhaven, and the siting and development of early townships including Nowra was a direct consequence of river transportation and the ISNC.

The function of the building after 1948 as the fishermen's co-operative was also significant to the commercial development of the district.

This intact structures of the wharf and the warehouse remain as physical evidence of a past era which was crucial to the economic development of the district.

**Aesthetic Significance**

The double pitched roof structure of the building reflects the character and form of the previous warehouse, which comprised a steeply pitched original riverside building with the adjacent shallower roof annexe adjacent. Although the Sailing Club occupies a 1930's structure, a visual link endures reflecting the earliest years of the ISNC and the days when the wharf was the transport centre of Nowra.

The heavy timber construction of the wharf itself and the substructure to the warehouse through the bold vernacular hardwood rough sawn beam floor structure contribute elements of considerable interest and unusual design.

The Sailing Club has landmark significance in its prominent position as the only structure on this section of the riverbank adjacent to and overlooked by the Princes Highway Bridge.

**Social Significance**

The river was the life blood of the Shoalhaven district for many years. Through its vital functions as a freight handling and passenger terminal for Nowra the wharf became a significant assembly and gathering place for the community.

The present use of the building as a facility for the Sailing Club and Rowing Club continue to serve a vital social and sporting role for the local community, and the wharf is an important facility for spectators of river sports.

**Levels of Significance****Local Significance**

The Nowra Sailing Club is highly significant at a local level through its cultural value to the community.



Ferry Wharf, old wharf and Sailing Club, launching ramp in foreground

### Degrees of Significance

The Statement of Significance describes the general nature of the significance of the building as a whole.

To enable decisions to be made regarding the long-term conservation and development of the place, the following assessments of the degree of significance of the various elements of the place has been made

The degree of significance of the various elements has been divided into four categories:

High significance	A
Some significance	B
Little significance	C
Intrusive elements	Int
Significant elements now compromised	Comp

### Schedule of Significant Items

#### External Areas

A1	ISNC Wharf	A
A2	Public Wharf	B
A3	Light poles	C
A4	Car Park	C
A5	Sandstone sea wall	A
A6	Sandstone launching ramp	A
A8	Open space grassed area	A

#### Building, exterior

B1	West Elevation	Comp
B2	South Elevation	B
B3	East Elevation	B
B4	North Elevation	B
B5	Log substructure	A

#### Interior

C1	King post truss roof structure	A
C2	Kitchen and lunch room	C
C3	Change room	C
C4	Boat storage lean-to	Comp
C5	Imprint of Cool Store in floor slab	C

## **PART 3 - MANAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Development of Conservation Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The previous section has established that the complex of Nowra Sailing Club building and the wharf structure has considerable historic, aesthetic, and social significance

The development of an appropriate set of Policies for the conservation, use and management of the site must take into account the opportunities and constraints arising from:

- 1. the Statement of Significance**
- 2. the requirements of the site owners and the community, the available resources and feasible options for future use of the place**
- 3. the physical condition of the place**
- 4. requirements imposed by external factors**

#### **Opportunities and Constraints arising from the Statement of Significance**

In order to protect the visual character of the Wharf/ Sailing Club precinct and to ensure that the integrity of the site is not lost through inappropriate alteration, certain constraints should apply to any future redevelopment in the vicinity:

- usage which may impact on the significance of the building and curtilage should be prohibited;
- alterations should be controlled to ensure that there is no further loss of visual character
- significant fabric should be appropriately conserved;
- views and vistas of the site should be preserved;
- specialist consultants and tradesmen should be used for the conservation and other work on the site;

Opportunities arising from the significance of the site should be considered in any redevelopment program, and include:

- The legibility of the fabric which enables interpretation of the evolution of the fabric and adaptability in the use of the spaces
- The warehouse building and wharf complex remains a tangible example of living history for the benefit of the local community, and a link to an industry that was crucial to the development and prosperity of the district

### **Opportunities and Constraints Arising from Ownership and Use**

The adaptability and flexibility of the site to provide new useful and valued facilities has been demonstrated since the cessation of its original function. Continued ownership by Shoalhaven City Council and leasing to a community group affords the optimum arrangement for protection and security of tenure of the site, balanced with accessibility by the community.

There are no plans at present for any redevelopment or change of use of the building.

### **Opportunities and Constraints Arising from Physical Condition**

Most of the building fabric is in good condition, or capable of readily being upgraded. Regular maintenance will be required to prevent deterioration of the log substructure, timber framing, trusses and cladding.

### **Constraints and Requirements Imposed by External Factors**

#### *Statutory Requirements*

Any conservation or development on the site must be cognisant of the regulations of relevant government agencies:

- Building Code of Australia re:
  - Controls for buildings, amenities, fire protection and egress
- Shoalhaven City Council requirements

### **Integrity of the Fabric**

The significance of the building exists through its physical link with commercial river traffic and the ISN Company, and the continuity of the form and character of the maritime vernacular character of a series of structures which have occupied the site since 1884. Therefore this report does not advocate detailed reconstruction of the fabric of the sailing club building to its 1930's configuration or before. The integrity of the building has been compromised through internal and external alterations since that time and no documentary evidence remains as to its original form and finishes, apart from photographs of the exterior.

## PART 4 CONSERVATION POLICY

### Introduction and Conservation Objectives

The purpose of the conservation policies set out in this section is to provide a set of mandatory principles relating to the conservation and usage of the building in a manner which retains its significance while allowing it to be effectively utilised as a community facility. Its use should recognise the value to the community, and future management should ensure this resource is enhanced to its full potential:

Management policy should recognise that the Nowra Sailing Club and wharf offer the following attributes:

- a specific community resource
- a significant contribution to the community's social historic awareness

In this section, policy statements are provided in italics and should be read with the associated text to aid interpretation.

### Terminology:

"Should" in the context of this report implies mandatory requirement for compliance

"May" implies suggested or optional compliance

Conservation terminology including terms such as 'place', 'conservation', 'restoration', 'reconstruction', 'adaptation' etc follow the definitions of the Burra Charter

### Conservation Work

*Policy (1.1): The future conservation and development of the site (hereinafter referred to as the place) should be directed towards maintaining and interpreting its heritage significance in accordance with the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter).*

*Policy (1.2): The significance of the place should be made clearly evident to the observer and the means of interpretation should be compatible with the retention of that significance*

*Policy (1.3): The Statement of Significance and the Schedule of Significant Elements as set out in Part 2, together with recommendations for specific items contained in this policy section, should be accepted as the basis for future conservation.*

*Policy (1.4): The conservation of all elements of high degree of significance should be a combination of preservation and restoration*

*Policy (1.5): The conservation of elements of some significance include preservation, restoration, reconstruction, and adaptation*

*Policy (1.7): In some instances, elements of compromised significance may be reinstated to their original form and condition*

*Policy (1.8): Intrusive elements should be removed.*



**Coordination and Advice**

The recommendations of this Report should be implemented via a co-ordinated decision-making process. Continuity of competent advice is also important for the successful long-term implementation of this plan.

*Policy (2.1): Persons with relevant conservation expertise should be engaged for the consistent interpretation of this Plan and the resolution of conservation issues as well as for the design, documentation and supervision of on site works.*

*Policy (2.2): The policies outlined in this document should be endorsed as a guide to future planning and work.*

*Policy (2.3): This document should be reviewed as the need arises but at a minimum of five year intervals.*

**Community Consultation and Management**

Members of the local community should have means of contributing to the ongoing use and management of the site within the constraints of this Report

*Policy (3.1): The community should be able to contribute to decisions regarding the use and management of the site.*

**The Setting, Boundaries and Curtilage**

*Policy (4.1) Prohibit or restrict development in the immediate surrounding area that may adversely impact on the significance of the site, including the adjoining park, launching ramp, public wharf and the car park.*

**Compatible Uses**

*Policy (5.1) Future uses of should be compatible with the original function of the building and the wharf*

**Alterations to Significant Items**

*(Policy 7.1): Any alterations or additions proposed affecting significant items or within the significant precinct should be designed to ensure that the new work is sympathetic with the existing. Alteration and new work should respect the form, fabric and detailing of the heritage structures.*

**Public Access,**

*Policy (8.1): The building should be as accessible as possible to the general public within the constraints of safety, security and retention of significance of the site*

*Policy (8.2):*

*Should the wharf and warehouse be required to fulfil a broader community facility, open to the general public rather than and able bodied sporting group, disabled access should be provided, via a reinstated door at ground level in the vicinity of the earlier female toilets*

## PART 5: IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Maintenance strategy

#### General principles for the Implementation of Upgrading and Conservation Program

With certain qualifications affecting exterior fabric and the substructure, the building remains generally in good condition and has been consistently maintained

Design, documentation and site supervision of all work should be carried out by specialist conservation consultants, and site work by specialist tradesmen

#### Definitions

This section utilises definitions from the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (the Burra Charter) as follows:

**Fabric** means all the physical material of the place

**Conservation** means all the 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 a combination of more than one of these

**Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.

**Preservation** means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and 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.

**Reconstruction** means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric

**Adaptation** means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses

**Compatible use** means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact

#### Maintenance of the Asset

The building is currently cared for to a high standard,

**Maintenance and Conservation Priorities:****External****Sub floor structure**

All timber piers, concrete piles rectangular timber bearers and log floor joists should be inspected by a structural engineer to ensure stability and durability of structure:

*Specific points of potential concern:*

- Splitting piers
- Crushed timber bottom plate under concrete slab at North east corner
- Splitting of bearers at bolted connections
- Exposure of end grain of log joists
- Contact between ground and timber structure, causing incipient rot in the structure.

**Wharf Structure**

- Check stability of concrete piles and timber piers as above
- Refix uneven areas of decking and eliminate hazardous gaps between boards
- Ensure safety of handrail, of varying height and spacing of posts

**Wall structure**

A major potential problem exists along the south elevation where the ground level rises above floor level burying several courses of weatherboards.

- The ground level must be excavated to clear all timber fabric of the building, and a damp proof course inserted behind and below the bottom weatherboard
- Patching and partial replacement of weatherboards will be required at localised areas of rot and split timber at joint and fastenings and at end grain locations

**Roof**

Council has recently completed a program of reroofing. Replacement of cappings and flashings has eliminated the problem of leaks in the roof and improved the performance of the centre box gutter.

- A gutter and downpipe should be installed to the skillion to the west side

**Generally, on completion of all other work:**

- Reputty all glazing
- Repainting: Strip all existing painted surfaces  
Patch, prime & paint windows, walls, fascia, barges, gables

**Internal**

- Repaint internally
- Make good floor, level uneven section with sand/ cement screed
- Replace steel lined entry door with braced and ledged framed door with t&g vertical lining boards

## 5.2 Alternative Options for Adaptive Reuse

The present use of the wharf and warehouse for the Sailing Club as boat storage and Club premises is appropriate and compatible with retaining the heritage significance of the structures. The Rowing Club's use at present for boat storage is temporary, which may make further space available for the sailing club to expand their facilities

Any future use of the site should be concerned with promoting the significance of the site and exploiting the unquestionable tourist potential of the facilities and the position on the river which is readily accessible and visible from the Bridge. The heritage significance of the wharf is compatible with vast opportunities which must exist for river cruises (expanding on the existing services offered from the adjacent wharf), and the magnificent setting on the river for tourist facilities such as a café, restaurant or open air tavern.

Such proposals for adaptive reuse must ensure creative design is a means to an end of enhancing the vernacular maritime character of the setting and the existing buildings. The historic fabric of the wharf and substructure of the building and other significant elements must be preserved.

Since the warehouse is not original, some flexibility should be allowed to take advantage of imaginative and sensitively conceived redevelopment of the site. Opportunities for suitably designed compatible new development or infill construction should be allowed or even encouraged, within the constraints above, as the architectural resolution of the existing warehouse is inferior. Such proposals would require that river access is maintained and the riverfront setting is not compromised

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**NEWSPAPERS**

Illawarra Mercury  
Kiama Independent  
The Shoalhaven and Nowra News  
The Shoalhaven Telegraph  
The South Coast Register  
The Nowra Leader

## APPENDIX 1

Citation:

***Shoalhaven Heritage Study Listing 1997***

NAME Nowra Wharf, Nowra Sailing Club & Boatshed Restaurant  
ADDRESS Nowra Wharf  
Nowra NSW 2540

REFERENCE NO.  
NB028

OTHER NAMES Illawarra Steamship Company, Fisherman's Co-operative  
GROUP

RELATED ITEMS

CATEGORY Ar Ot

SUB CATEGORY 0762

REAL PROPERTY  
DESCRIPTION

OWNER

ZONING

MAP Berry 9028-3-N 1:25 000

GRID 280700 6139100

DATE OF SURVEY 24/8/95 PG

PROPERTY NO.

HERITAGE LISTINGS

- ☐ Register of the National Estate (AHC) - Register
- ☐ Register of the National Estate (AHC) - Interim
- ☐ Register of National Trust (NSW)
- ☐ Within National Trust Conservation Area
- ☐ Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture (RAIA)
- ☐ Heritage Council Register - Section 130 Order
- ☐ Heritage Council Register - Permanent Conservation Order
- ☐ Heritage Council - Interim Conservation Order
- ☐ Heritage Council Register - Nomination
- ☐ NSW Government Department Heritage Register (S170 Heritage Act)
- ☐ Institute of Engineers (NSW) Heritage Register
- ☐ Regional Environmental Plan Heritage Schedule
- ☐ Local Environmental Plan Heritage Schedule
- ☐ Local Environmental Plan Heritage Schedule - Conservation Area
- ☐ Draft Listings
- ☐ Heritage Study Listings
- ☐ Other Listings :

PHOTOGRAPH / PLAN



FILM ROLL 22

NEGATIVE NO. 20-24

NAME Nowra Wharf, Nowra Sailing Club & Boatshed Restaurant  
 ADDRESS Nowra Wharf  
 Nowra NSW 2540  
 OTHER NAMES Illawarra Steamship Company, Fisherman's Co-operative

REFERENCE NO.  
 NB028

#### DESCRIPTION

##### Description:

Nowra Sailing Club- a typical Inter-War Federation style timber framed building of the 1920s (similar in style to the Mason's Lodge at Milton) located directly above the Shoalhaven River. Simple gabled roof structure clad with galvanised iron. The building is supported on a brick sub-floor structure with entrance from the upslope side. External walls are painted pink. The wharf, in common with many early timber piled forms, has progressively been replaced by the present combination of piles and fill.

Boatshed Restaurant- more information required

Modifications: not seen internally. An uncovered deck has been added on the north side of the Sailing Club building overlooking the river.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES

I.S.N. Wharf, Fisherman's Co-op, Nowra sailing Club. - The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company had three different wharves at the site of the Nowra Sailing Club. The first was erected sometime last century. It was almost destroyed by the flood of 1898. A new wharf and store was built about 1902 to 1904. The third wharf and store are thought to have been built about 1930 to 1935. It was taken over by the Nowra District Fisherman's Co-operative in 1948. When the new premises for the fisherman's Co-op were built on the opposite side of the Shoalhaven River at Bomaderry Wharf, the store became the Nowra Sailing Club in 1964.

Boatshed Restaurant - The boatshed structure has been in existence since 1925, perhaps earlier. The Bureau of Meteorology have on their files a photograph, thought to have been taken in 1905. It shows the boatshed on its present site. The shipbuilder was Elyard.

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nowra Wharf, Nowra Sailing Club & Boatshed Restaurant are locally significant for their ability to illustrate the historical relationship between Nowra and the Shoalhaven River and its dependence on coastal shipping and river transport well into the twentieth century. The close juxtaposition of the wharf and road bridge of 1881 reinforces this dependence. Historic, aesthetic and social value. Local significance (Shoalhaven)

#### HISTORICAL THEMES - STATE

8 (Fishing) 13 (Transport) 27 (Sport)

#### HISTORICAL THEMES - REGIONAL

#### EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE - SUMMARY

	RARE	REPRESENTATIVE
EVOLUTION - ASSOCIATION (Historical)	L	L
CREATIVE - TECHNICAL (Aesthetic)		L
COMMUNITY ESTEEM (Social)		L
RESEARCH POTENTIAL (Scientific)		
OTHER		

#### HISTORICAL THEMES - LOCAL

8 1 (Fishing) 13 4 (River boats) 13 4 1 (River wharves) 27 1 (Sailing)



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ADDRESS Nowra Wharf  
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REFERENCE NO.  
NB028

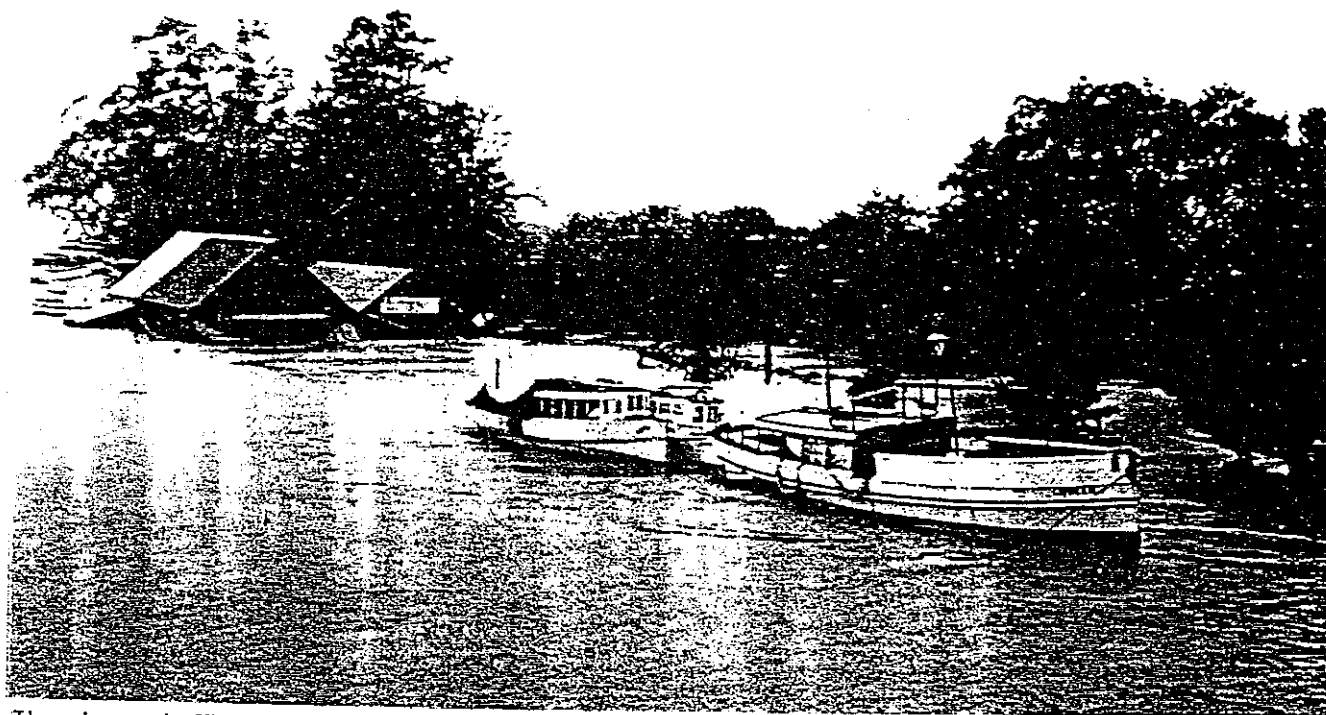
CONSERVATION ACTION RECOMMENDED

INFORMATION SOURCES - WRITTEN / ORAL / GRAPHIC

Written : R.Florance; PWD Lower Shoalhaven River Flood History at  
Nowra Bridge 1860-1980. NP Morrissey, A Pictorial History of the  
Shoalhaven.  
Oral :  
Graphic : NP Morrissey, A Pictorial History of the Shoalhaven p42  
Location:

FURTHER INFORMATION

Date: c 1930  
Historical Period: 1926-1950



The submerged office of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Co.,  
now the Sailing Club on the Shoalhaven River, Nowra. The  
vessel *Queen* was an Elyard boat moored during a period of  
high flood. C.1907

Photo courtesy of J. Anderson, Nowra.

NAME  
ADDRESS

Nowra Wharf, Nowra Sailing Club & Boatshed Restaurant  
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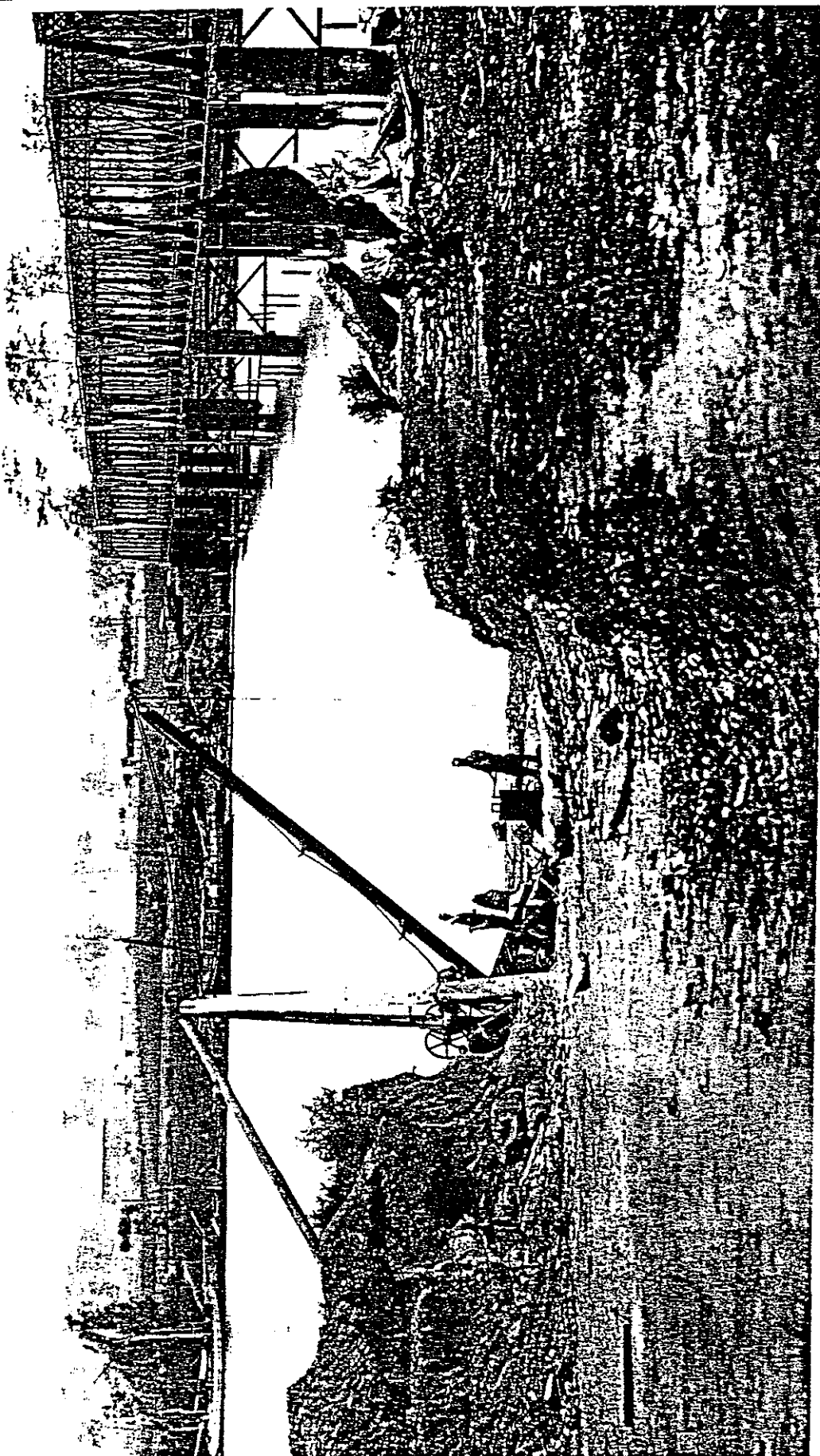
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The Shoalhaven River and it's bridge 1881. This superb photograph was taken by photographer Auguste Tronier from the north-eastern side of the Nowra bridge where the Fisherman's Co-op is today and looking across towards Nowra (Riverview Road). It is interesting to note that the bridge approaches are still incomplete and that the Shoalhaven River carries significant river traffic.  
*Photo courtesy of Berry Historical Society.*

**SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL  
HERITAGE ADVISORS REPORT**

**PROJECT: NOWRA SAILING CLUB AND BOATSHED**

**TO: JOHN DRUMMOND**

**FROM: Bruce Dawbin**

**DATE: 8 October 1997**

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Boatshed and wharf inspected on 8/10/97 with John Drummond and Lisa Burke, Shoalhaven Council. External condition was examined, interior access not available, and future options discussed.

The site was originally the Illawarra Steam Navigation Co's store and wharf, and the present structure built around 1930-1935 was the third facility on the same site. It was taken over by the Fisherman's Coop in 1948, then the store became the Nowra Sailing Club in 1964.

The store is in urgent need of maintenance and repair to prevent serious deterioration due to exposure to weather, and structural damage due to poor drainage. Priorities should include the following:

- Check roof and internal box gutter for deterioration and leaks
- Install effective gutters and downpipes
- Improve drainage to rear and sides
- Clear all weatherboards and floor structure of soil, and improve ventilation under floor, replace rotted weatherboards and bearers
- Replace rotted and deflecting joists and wall bottom plates
- Check timber piles for rot and damage

Before proceeding with major refurbishment and maintenance, a conservation management plan should be undertaken by a suitably qualified consultant to determine future options for the use of the site. Facilities for all related riverfront activities such as the Sea Scouts, Rowing Club and the Sailing Club should all be considered.

The building clearly has a high degree of heritage significance through the long association of the site with the district's early dependence on coastal shipping and river transport. (Refer attached inventory listing from Heritage Study) However full refurbishment of the Store building and wharf will require substantial funding, which must take account of long term planning for the site

Bruce Dawbin

11/11/97