

VERITY FIRTH MP | State Member for Balmain

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Mort's Dock listed on Heritage Register

Monday 17 January 2011

Balmain's Mort's Dock has been officially listed on the State Heritage Register – **the highest form of heritage recognition and protection in NSW.**

Minister for Planning Tony Kelly, today joined Member for Balmain Verity Firth, and members of the Balmain Association to officially declare Mort's Dock a State heritage site.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the approx. 3 hectare site bounded by Thames, Mort, College, McKell, Cameron, and Yeend Streets, which contains the remains of Mort's Dock, "has been added to the State Heritage Register for both its social and cultural significance."

Mr Kelly said Mort's Dock was considered to be of State significance because of its historic, technical, and aesthetic values.

"It was the first dry dock of its size in Australia - opening one year before Cockatoo Island – and was the largest shipyard and engineering workshop in the colony in the latter half of the 19th century, and for many years the Colony's largest private enterprise.

"State heritage listing not only celebrates the values of Mort's Dock, but also further protects it because the Heritage Council of NSW must be consulted if any work is to occur," Ms Firth said.

Ms Firth welcomed the announcement.

"Local residents value the site because Mort's Dock was the birthplace of modern industry in Australia, and of Australia as a maritime nation.

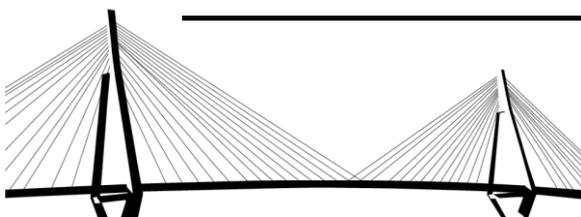
"It is important to celebrate and protect the history of Balmain's working harbour which continues to be active to this day," said Ms Firth.

The site has an historical association with Thomas Rowntree and Thomas Sutcliffe Mort who formed the Mort's Dock & Engineering Company in 1853.

The company was significant in the development of the union movement with the Ship Painters and Dockers Union established on site in 1872, and that the Balmain site was the birthplace of what was to become the Australian Labour Party in 1891.

The site is further associated with former NSW Premier William McKell and former NSW Minister for Justice John Storey both completed apprenticeships on site.

Ms Firth said that the unique way the dry dock has been preserved *in situ* the structural remains have a high degree of integrity and intactness of fabric, rarely seen elsewhere.



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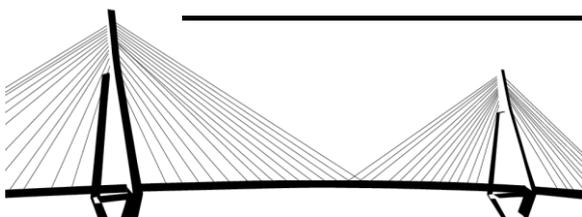
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“The site has the potential to yield scientific and archaeological information that will further contribute to an understanding of NSW cultural, industrial and maritime history, and should be protected for future generations” Mr Firth said.

If people are interested in learning more about Mort’s Dock, they should contact Heritage Branch Maritime Archaeologist, Sarah Ward on 02 9873 8533 or via email: sarah.ward@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Further details of the State Heritage listing can be found on the Department of Planning’s Heritage Branch website at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/listing.

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