

Register of Historic Places and Objects

SHI Number
4671010

The PHA NSW Heritage Register

Item Name: **South Steyne (S.S.)**

Location: **Port Jackson**

Address:

Corner:

Suburb / Nearest Town: Port Jackson

State: NSW

Local Govt Area:

Property Identifier:

Boundary:

Item Type: Movable/Collection Group: Transport - Water Category: Vessel - harbour & rive

Owner: Private - Corporate

Owner Codes:

Code 2:

Code 3:

Current Use: Restaurant & Function Centre

Former Uses: Ferry

Assessed Significance: **State**

Endorsed Significance:

Statement of Significance: The SouthSteyne is significant because it is the largest surviving operating example of a reciprocating steam engine-powered ferry in the world today and demonstrates a uniquely Australian contribution to sea navigation technology - high speed double-ended navigation in deep sea conditions.

It is also significant as the best known of the Manly ferry line which played a major role in the process of suburbanisation in Sydney and in the development of recreational patterns.

It epitomised the Manly ferry as part of Sydney's image and popular urban culture and remains, like the Harbour Bridge, a powerful piece of Sydney imagery and is prominent in the collective memory of the nation (A. M. Prescott, NSW Heritage Office, State Heritage Inventory, 1999.).

Historical Notes or Provenance: The Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Co. Ltd. was the best-known of the Sydney ferry operators and was famous for the large and comfortable steamers which it ran to the seaside suburb and resort of Manly. The ferry service played a significant role in opening up settlement in that region from the 1850s. Patronage was growing steadily in the 1930s and the need to increase fleet capacity and the need for faster vessels led the Port Jackson Co. to order a new ferry boat.

In December 1936 the General Manager of the Port Jackson Co., Walter Leslie Dendy went to Britain to study sea transportation, propulsion techniques and to order a new ferry. By March 1937, seven shipbuilders had submitted tenders. The contract was awarded to the Scottish shipbuilder Henry Robb Ltd for a steam reciprocating ship. The engine was built by Harland & Wolff Ltd., Belfast. The keel of the vessel was laid at Robb's Leith yard in October 1937 and launching took place in April 1938. The name of the vessel came from the promenade behind the ocean beach at Manly.

Pedder and Mylchreest Ltd of London was entrusted the task of delivering the ship 12,000 miles to Sydney. Captain R.M Beedie was the master for the sixty-four day voyage. During the voyage the South Steyne performed well and found no difficulty in the monsoonal

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conditions.

The South Steyne arrived in Sydney on 9 September 1938 and for the next 36 years gave faithful service on the Manly ferry run. The ferry had a justified reputation as a fine sea-going boat. For some 20 years it also ran Sunday ocean cruises to Broken Bay, north of Sydney and followed the Boxing Day yacht races to sea. South Steyne was withdrawn from service in 1974 amid uncertainty about the future of the service. At that time it was the last steam ferry operating in Sydney. About a week after the last run a fire broke out in the fan engine room and severely damaged that area and the promenade deckhouse above.

The South Steyne passed through a number of ownerships with intermittent conservation and restoration work being undertaken. In 1988 it was refitted as a cruising vessel and entered service in Melbourne, its first function was as 'Royal Yacht' for the Queen in April 1988. In 1991 it was sold to a Newcastle owner and was returned to NSW, initially to Newcastle, then to Sydney where it is now moored in Darling Harbour (Prescott, 1999; A. Prescott, Branch Manager's Report to the Heritage Council, Former Manly Ferry South Steyne, Proposed Permanent Conservation Order, 1992; A. Prescott, R. Willson & P. Plowman, 'South Steyne' in Australian Sea Heritage, 1990.).

National Themes: Building settlements, towns and cities

State Themes: Leisure

Technology

Transport

Study Themes:

Designer: Walter Leslie Dendy and John Ashcroft

Maker / Builder: Henry Robb Ltd

Year Started: 1937 **Year Completed:** 1938 **Circa:** No

Physical Description: The South Steyne is a double-ended, double-screw steamship powered by a 3,250 IHP triple expansion steam engine (manufactured by Harland & Wolff, Belfast). It was the largest ferry to operate on Sydney Harbour, 1203 gross tons, 67 metres in length and a beam of 11 metres. It has a double-ended riveted steel hull, steel superstructure to sun deck level, steel bulwarks, teak decks and wheelhouses, 8 watertight bulk-heads, bar keel, double bottom under engine only and two funnels (one dummy containing water tank) (A. Prescott, State Heritage Inventory, NSW Heritage Office, 1999).

Physical Condition: Physical condition is good but with a high level of maintenance required to maintain this condition.

Modification Dates: 1937 - keel laid
1 April 1938 - launched
9 Sep 1938 - arrived Sydney, registered
24 Oct 1938 - entered service
1944 - collision with Manly wharf
1953 - first ocean cruise
1964 - alterations to passenger accommodation

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1972 - last ocean cruise
Aug 1974 - withdrawn from service. Fire damaged.
1975 - sold out of service
1988 - refit as restaurant/cruising vessel (Prescott, 1999.).

Recommended Management: Needs conservation management plan (Prescott, 1999.).

Further Comments: Location movable. Located Port Jackson. Now an extremely rare item in international terms - largest surviving operating example of this significant maritime technology. Needs careful on-going management strategy, and ultimately probable state support or ownership. (Prescott, 1999.).

Historical Significance: (a) The South Steyne demonstrates the operation and auxiliary functions of marine steam power. It is one of three Manly ferries of the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company surviving afloat and the only one in operating condition and the only steam-powered example. It has the largest and most powerful operating marine reciprocating steam engine surviving in the world today (including original Scotch boilers and auxiliaries), providing rare international evidence of the machinery that powered the Industrial Revolution at sea (Prescott, 1999.).

It is representative of twentieth-century Manly ferries and is the optimal development of the steam-propelled Manly ferry. It represents the finest example of the most significant Australian contribution to sea navigation technology - the development of high speed double-ended operation in deep sea conditions (Prescott, 1999.).

The South Steyne epitomised the Manly ferry as part of Sydney's image and its popular urban culture and remains, like the Harbour Bridge, a powerful piece of Sydney imagery. It has featured in Sydney poster-art for over 50 years. It is held in high esteem by the local community and remains in the collective memory of the nation. (Prescott, 1999.).

The South Steyne is significant as the best-known of the Manly ferry line which played a major role in the suburbanisation of Sydney by opening up settlement in the Manly region from the 1850s by improving access from the city (Prescott, 1999.).

It is also associated with the development of recreational patterns in Sydney, providing access to the beachside resort of Manly in the 1930s when beach culture was emerging and the seaside was a popular destination for day trips or longer vacations. Its construction was necessitated by increased ferry patronage associated with these developments. The vessel's name, taken from the promenade behind Manly Beach, is indicative of the increasing popularity and fame of the area, made possible by ferry transport. (Prescott, 1999.)

It operated on the Manly ferry run for 36 years from 24 October 1938 and for some 20 years also ran Sunday Ocean cruises to Broken Bay, and is thereby associated with continuous use as a commuter ferry. When it was withdrawn from service in 1974 it was the last steam ferry operating in Sydney (Prescott, 1999.).

The ferry was built by a well-known Scottish shipbuilder, Henry Robb of Leith. More significantly, however, it symbolises the progressive approach of the Board of the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company and, in particular, the creative ingenuity of the

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General Manager, Walter Leslie Dendy, who assisted design of the vessel and created much of the image for which the Manly ferry was famous in the twentieth century (Prescott, 1999.).

Aesthetic Significance:

Social Significance:

Technical / Research:

Representativeness:

Rare Assessment:

Integrity / Intactness: This vessel was built to very high standards of structural strength and is in excellent condition, though requiring constant high level of maintenance to maintain that condition. Hull, machinery and exterior generally in original condition. The open shelters at the ends of the promenade deck were enclosed and the interiors were significantly altered in the 1980s. Both reversible at some expense. (Original detailed plans exist, held at vessel and other repositories.) (Prescott, 1999.)

References:	Author:	Title:	Year:
	Brady, I.	National Trust Classification Card - Manly Ferry SS South Steyne	1976
	Brouwer, N.	International Register of Historic Ships	1993
	Prescott, A.	Branch Managers Report to the Heritage Council - Former Manly Ferry South Steyne Proposed Permanent Conservation Order	1992
	Prescott, A., Willson, R., Plowman, P.	'South Steyne' in Australian Sea Heritage	1990
	Prescott, A.M.	Sydney Ferry Fleets	1984
	Prescott, A.M.	State Heritage Inventory	1999

Studies:

Listings:	Name:	Title:	Number:	Date:
	Heritage Act - State Heritage Register		00755	2/04/99
	Heritage Act - Permanent Conservation Order		00755	14/08/92
	National Trust of Australia register			31/05/76

Custom Field One:

Custom Field Two: Rosemary Kerr of Sue Rosen & Associates, Heritage Assessment And History

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