



Botany Water Pumping Station pumped water from the Botany Bay Swamps to Crown St Reservoir.



Sewage Pumping Station No. 38.

Sydney's third water supply

The Botany Wetlands is valuable to Sydney and NSW, because it retains substantial parts of the original layout and infrastructure of the Botany Swamps water supply system.

In July 1855, the City of Sydney Council began acquiring land in and around the Botany Wetlands for the city's third official water supply. This included 75 acres of Simeon Lord's estate, including his house, flour mill and the mill dams.

Lord, a well-known merchant of the times, had already constructed two dams to run his mill. The southern end of the wetlands retains archaeological evidence of his industrial complex, which may still provide new information about this significant early colonial character.

City Engineer, Edward Bell designed a new water supply including a sand-cast iron main, to pipe water from the engine house at the Botany Wetlands to the Crown St Reservoir. This was completed in 1859 and is the oldest water main in the state.

Between 1866 and the mid-1870s, six dams were constructed. The present wetland layout corresponds closely to these dam forms.

By November 1888, most of Sydney's water supply was coming from the Nepean system, although Botany Swamps topped up water supplies during water shortages, until 1893.

As Sydney's third water supply, it supported Sydney's expansion for most of the latter 19th century. As with its predecessors, it relied upon aquifers to supply water, but was gradually replaced by the Upper Nepean Scheme and dams.

It represents the first stage of water supply technology and is also historically significant because of the involvement of the Sydney City Council and City Commissioners, showing how major water infrastructure was developed before the Board of Water Supply was established.

The southern end of the wetlands also contains significant elements of the Southern and Western Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer System (SWSOOS Nos. 1 and 2), including:

- the former engine house chimney as a sewer vent
- the viaduct to carry the vent pipe
- Sewage Pumping Station No. 38 (1916) near the engine house ruins
- part of the SWSOOS Nos. 1 and 2 mains.

The importance of the Botany Swamps stretches beyond its historical significance as part of the water supply. While much of its 58 hectares of natural wetlands is now taken up by Sydney Airport and Sydney's premier golf clubs, the area retains special interest as a landmark cultural, historical, environmental and recreational landscape.