



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Albany Town Jetty has landmark value on the Albany foreshore. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Albany Town Jetty was the gateway port to Australia for international passenger ships arriving from Europe via Cape Leeuwin between 1862 and 1900. During this period it was also the principal landing place in Western Australia for migrants, imports and exports, and international mail. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

Albany Town Jetty is historically important for its association with the former Cheynes Beach Whaling Station and as the jetty for the whale chasers. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The seabed under, and adjoining, *Albany Town Jetty* is of maritime archaeological importance because of deposits of artefact material dating from the early 1860s. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Albany Town Jetty contributes to the community's sense of place as a reminder of the importance of Albany in the development of mail and transport services in Australia. The place was a focal point in the early part of the twentieth century for social activities in Albany with tea rooms, bathing baths, the Princess Royal Yacht Club boatshed, and a building for the naval cadets. The place is now a popular location for fishing. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Albany Town Jetty has been in continuous use since 1862, and is believed to be the oldest jetty site in Western Australia that is operational. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The siting of *Albany Town Jetty*, is representative of the importance of shipping in communication and in the provision of commercial services in the mid and late nineteenth century. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Between October 1995 and May 1996, Landcorp project managed a substantial upgrade and refurbishment of the existing sound structure and the construction of new sections of the jetty. The new sections of the jetty were required to replace unsound original portions of the structure which were beyond any practical repair. *Albany Town Jetty* is in sound condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Albany Town Jetty has lost much of its original fabric; however, the original form of the place is discernible despite reclamation. The current use of the place, as a jetty to service the Port of Albany, and as a place for recreational purposes, is compatible with the cultural heritage significance of the place. *Albany Town Jetty* therefore retains a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The boatsheds on the east side of the jetty have been demolished, the sea baths, the south-east arm and the jetty neck have been removed. The only surviving remains of the 1893 section and the original mail and passenger landing are the broken ends of a few upright piles and a number of collapsed piles and assorted pieces of waterlogged timber which lie on the seabed. Whilst substantially reduced from that of the original, the remaining fabric of *Albany Town Jetty* has high authenticity as a remnant of the original extensive structure.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The following is based on extracts from 'The Albany Town Foreshore Heritage Study, Stage 1' prepared for LandCorp, by Wolf & Associates, October 1994.

Albany Town Jetty was built in 1862-64, as a timber finger jetty to service the Port of Albany. It is located on the alignment of Spencer Street below the Old Albany Post Office on the north shore of Princess Royal Harbour.

Albany's first town jetty was built between 1837 and 1838. It was a low cost solution to the lack of harbour facilities in Princess Royal Harbour, but it quickly became obsolete. The community requested that the Western Australian Government build a new jetty closer to York Street and the centre of Town. With the renewal of the steam mail contracts, following the end of the Crimean War in 1856, and the increase in traffic through the Port, the need for a new jetty became imperative.

In 1860, the Government selected a site at the end of Spencer Street. In December of that year, Mr James Covert won the tender for design and construction of *Albany Town Jetty*. On 6 September 1861, Covert's tender was confirmed at the rate of 1 pound 8 shillings and 1 penny per foot to be paid monthly. Work did not start immediately. Timber had to be cut and transported to Albany; workmen and iron fittings had to be procured. It was not until 1 July 1862, that Covert had completed 25 feet of the jetty and Sergeant Nelson, RE Clerk of Works at Albany inspected the work.

Work progressed slowly, and for some unknown reason, Covert ceased work. The site was abandoned and the jetty remained incomplete. In 1864, tenders were called for the completion of the jetty. The contract was awarded to Alexander Moir of Albany who completed the construction.

The jetty was built as a platform to load cargoes, for the delivery of mail from steamers, and for official purposes such as the measurement and licensing of boats for commercial use on the Harbours and Sound.

Regulations for management of the jetty were drafted by Sir Campbell-Burt and published in 1864. The regulations were comprehensive and aimed to protect the jetty from excessive loading, the possible effects of fire and the silting of the adjoining seabed.¹

The jetty comprised a straight arm with two sets of rails laid on the deck and hand railings along both sides. Landings were towards the head of the jetty and hand operated trucks ran on the rails. By 1870, kerosene lamps were hoisted at the seaward end of the jetty as guides for boats landing from mail steamers.

In 1868-70, the Government built three-storeyed Government offices at the end of Spencer Street. The lower storey, a bonded store, adjoined the jetty. In the same year, *Albany Town Jetty* was declared an official landing for custom purposes. The decision provoked a critical response from the business community. The shallowness of the Harbour meant that watercraft had to

¹ See Wolfe, A., 'The Albany Town Foreshore Heritage Study, Stage 1' (Draft Report prepared for LandCorp, October 1994) pp. 19-20, for regulation details.

traverse a long distance before being able to reach water accessible to decent sized vessels, and the cargo handling technology of the period meant that all cargoes had to be handled several times before they arrived on dry land. As a consequence, the costs of operating and maintaining *Albany Town Jetty* were high.

With increased shipping traffic in the harbour, the business community again voiced concerns at proposed extensions that modified the jetty head to show a diamond shape instead of a conventional 'T' shaped head. In 1873, a contract to extend the jetty was awarded to Mr Josiah Harwood. The original 'T' shaped head was retained and an iron crane was fitted to the south-west corner of the jetty head. The work was completed by August of 1873. Truck rails and hand railing were completed by mid 1874.

By the early 1880s, the number of ships calling at the Port increased and *Albany Town Jetty* had a lack of berthing room.

In 1893, the jetty was extended, to accommodate increased traffic, with the construction of a curved arm toward the south east.

In January 1899, a Government application for funding recommended that 8000 pounds be set aside for the extension of the south east arm of the jetty and the construction of a railway viaduct along the east side of the jetty. The works included the construction of a railway and viaduct along the east side of the jetty and jetty head. A railed-in footway was built along the east side from the shore to the curve in the jetty with openings for access to the water. The works were completed in 1900.

In 1911, a timber boatshed and slip for the Princess Royal Yacht Club were erected on 25 piles on the east side of the jetty. The building remained in use until 1958-59 when the club relocated to Little Grove.

At a later date, a shed and slip were built approximately 22.9 metres south of the boatshed on the east side. The shed was made of timber and iron and fitted with a slip. A 1944 plan indicated that the shed was used for naval purposes, and at the time of its demolition (1961), the shed was being used by naval cadets.

By 1944, *Albany Town Jetty* was in a decayed state and was little used. In July of that year, the Town of Albany declined an offer from the Western Australian Government to take over the running of the jetty. The jetty was subsequently repaired and remained in operation.

In 1951-52, the base of the jetty was demolished and buried under landfill. In 1961, further work resulted in the removal of the sea baths and the demolition of the naval shed on the south-east arm of the jetty.

Further work was carried out in 1972 and 1973, when the remaining sheds on the east side of the jetty were demolished and south-east arm shortened and subsequently, other alterations have been made to the fabric.

The site continues to be used for a jetty to service the Port of Albany and for recreational purposes. Similar jetty sites and remains survive at Busselton, Esperance, Fremantle, Geraldton and Port Hedland, although *Albany Town Jetty* pre-dates them.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The following is based on extracts from 'The Albany Town Foreshore Heritage Study, Stage 1' prepared for LandCorp, by Wolf & Associates, October 1994.

Albany Town Jetty is a timber and iron finger jetty with a landing and steps on each side of the jetty head. The jetty was built by James Covert in 1862-64 and extended in 1873-74, by Alexander Moir. Further alterations were made by James Harwood in 1893 and, again by the Public Works Department in 1899-1900.

In 1862-64, timber davits for a boat were mounted on the east side of the jetty inshore of the landings. Hand rails lined both sides of the jetty and two sets of rails were laid on the deck.

In 1873-74, the jetty was extended and fitted with a 'T' shaped head and later fitted with gas lighting. The rails were also extended onto the jetty head where they divided into three. A hand operated crane was installed on the south-west corner of the jetty head. At a later date, one line of rails was extended across the shore to the customs house in the Government Offices below Stirling Terrace.

In 1889, sea baths were built on the west side of the jetty. In 1893, the jetty was extended to form the 'T' shaped head in a curve towards the south east.

In 1898, the mail and passenger landing was extended. In 1899-1900, the jetty was extended with a straight arm in a south-east direction and a railway viaduct was built on the east side of the jetty from the shore and out into the jetty head. The extension was 10.66 metres wide and about 162 metres in length. The viaduct allowed trains onto the jetty head to load cargoes. Part of the seabed under the base of the jetty was reclaimed.

In 1911, the Princess Royal Yacht Club boatshed was built on the east side of the jetty. In 1924-25, the sea baths on the west side of the jetty were rebuilt. In 1945, the first 91.44 metres of seabed under the jetty was reclaimed. In 1951-53, a further 45.72 metres of *Albany Town Jetty* was demolished and buried under landfill. The outer south-east end of the jetty was demolished together with the sea baths.

In 1972, a new jetty head was built 148.38 metres along the existing jetty alignment. The old south-east jetty head was shortened by 40.84 metres. The former Princess Royal Yacht Club boatshed and the naval shed were removed. Improvements were made for berthing the pilot boat and other craft.

In 1973, the curved section joining the old jetty head to the new jetty head was removed leaving an angled walkway joining the two.

At a later date, 221 metres of old Jetty neck extending from the shore was demolished and reclaimed under land fill. A concrete boat ramp was built on the south west side of the seaward end of the reclaimed land and car park facilities installed. In 1978, with the closure of the Cheynes Beach whaling

station the whale chasers left the jetty and the old jetty head was closed off and abandoned.²

A conceptual plan mooted for the redevelopment of the Albany Foreshore in 1988, involved the dredging of an area adjacent to *Albany Town Jetty*. This proved a potential threat to historical material known to lie on and under the seabed in the region of the Jetty. In 1994, plans for the development matured and the Museum received funds from the developing agency, LandCorp, to conduct a maritime archaeological assessment of the areas identified for dredging and future land reclamation.³ It has been ascertained that much of the earliest (pre 1870s) part of *Albany Town Jetty* and its associated artefact layers lie under existing land-fill. Unless excavation of the land adjacent to the present jetty is envisaged, these will remain well-preserved beneath the soil. Some heavy concentrations of artefacts remain under sea-bed around the Jetty.⁴

For further information concerning the findings of the report see : Garratt, D., McCarthy, M., Richards, V., Wolfe, A., 'An Assessment of the Submerged Archaeological Remains at the Albany Town Jetty' (prepared for LandCorp, August 1995)

The jetty is, currently, accessible to the general public although water access is restricted to the pilot boat and tugboat berths.

Between October 1995 and May 1996, Landcorp project managed a substantial upgrade and refurbishment of the existing sound structure and the construction of new sections of the jetty. The new sections of the jetty were required to replace unsound original portions of the structure which were beyond any practical repair.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Garratt, D., McCarthy, M., Richards, V., Wolfe, A., 'An Assessment of the Submerged Archaeological Remains at the Albany Town Jetty' (prepared for LandCorp, August 1995)

Wolfe, A., 'The Albany Town Foreshore Heritage Study, Stage 1' (Draft Report, prepared for LandCorp, October 1994).

² Garratt, D., McCarthy, M., Richards, V., Wolfe, A., 'An Assessment of the Submerged Archaeological Remains at the Albany Town Jetty' (prepared for LandCorp, August 1995) p. 18.

³ *ibid.*: abstract.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 1.