



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 2.6.2 Displacing Indigenous people
- 3.1 Exploring the coastline
- 3.8.1 Shipping to and from Australian ports
- 3.11.1 Regulating waterways

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers (including Aboriginal, convict)
- 201 River and sea transport
- 209 Technology and technological change
- 507 Water, power, major transport routes
- 601 Aboriginal people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse, comprising the main off form concrete construction lighthouse (1926) with its automatic light, the three family brick and fibro roofed quarters (1926), together with associated outbuilding bases, generator shed, numerous concrete tanks and tank bases, an unidentified building base south west of the lighthouse, concrete pads, the landing on the south side of the island, the winch house and the trestle based light gauge railway with its cable towers, and helipad, form a complex of elements that are workmanlike well built pieces of inter-war architecture that have a pleasant and visually complex overall appearance. (Criterion 1.3)

With its group of buildings constructed over a very short period, the developed part of Eclipse Island makes up a small, but important inter-war lightstation precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

Eclipse Island has natural aesthetic value in its own right. (Criterion 1.3)

Eclipse Island is part of the complex of islands, bays and headlands that make up the harbour system to Albany. Eclipse Island is one of the harbour's natural landmarks and has value as part of a seascape. Viewed from up to a

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

kilometre or so distance, the remaining structures have landmark value. (Criterion 1.3)

Eclipse Island contributes to the important landforms that make up the noted scenery comprising the harbour, coast and offshore islands. Eclipse Island contains no evidence of significant plant species, unusual habitats or fauna. (Criterion 1.3)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of the *Eclipse Island and Lighthouse* at Eclipse Island indicates a reaffirmation of the importance of Albany as a harbour in the inter-war period, the navigational aids that were constructed to improve its safety for shipping and the principles of lightstation design in the inter-war period. (Criterion 2.1)

Eclipse Island, with its possible associations with the involuntary removal of Aboriginal people from the mainland by whalers and sealers, has significance as a reminder of the historic treatment of Aboriginal people by early European users of the south coast of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse at Eclipse Island is indicative of the importance retained by Princess Harbour, Albany, even after the completion of the development of Fremantle Harbour. (Criterion 2.2)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Due to the completeness of the complex as a whole, *Eclipse Island and Lighthouse* has some potential as a benchmark site value for lightstation development in the inter-war period in Western Australia. (Criterion 3.1)

Eclipse Island has considerable conservation value because of its diversity of habitats and could possibly support a wild or reintroduced population of the nationally endangered dibbler (*Parantechinus apicalis*). It is also an important breeding site for seabirds especially little, wedge tailed and flesh footed shearwaters, great winged petrels, Pacific gulls and Caspian terns. (Criterion 3.1)

The island has considerable conservation value because of its diversity of habitats (some unusual) and the possible presence (very unlikely) of *parantechinus apicalis*. (Criterion 3.1)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse is valued by some sections of the community for its former use as a manned lightstation and is the object of curiosity as a set of buildings located high on the top of Eclipse Island (Criterion 4.1)

The Island as a whole has social significance to Aboriginal people. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse has rarity value as a complete complex of structures illustrating the development of lightstations in Western Australia in the inter-war period. Although it followed a conventional pattern, the extent of surviving fabric illustrating all aspects of the operations of a manned island lighthouse is rare. (Criterion 5.1)

Eclipse Island has considerable conservation value because of its diversity of habitats and could possibly support a wild or reintroduced population of the nationally endangered dibbler (*Parantechinus apicalis*) (Criteria 5.1)

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse provides substantial evidence of the life and operations of a manned lightstation in the inter-war period and up to the time of automation of lightstations, in this case in 1976. (Criterion 5.2).

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Eclipse Island and Lighthouse is representative of lightstation architecture in the inter-war period with the use of insitu concrete replaced traditional masonry. (Criterion 6.1)

With its complex of functioning elements, structures, outbuildings, and the like, *Eclipse Island and Lighthouse* is representative of lightstation living conditions through time, from 1926 to the termination of manned lightstations, as a mode of operation. (Criterion 6.2))

12.3 CONDITION

With the exception of the 1926 lighthouse, which is in good condition, the remaining structures and elements are in fair to good condition. While maintenance to the 1926 lighthouse has been regular and effective, maintenance to the other buildings has been irregular, and they have suffered the consequences, with the loss of sections of the roof and the deterioration of pointing to the brickwork in the quarters.

The concrete rainwater tanks are in poor condition. There is no management programme for the structures, other than the 1926 lighthouse.

The natural environment is generally in good condition. There is no contamination from toxic waste. The rabbit population is large and control of rabbits is required. Destruction of the introduced Arum Lilly would be ideal, but is not vital.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The original intention of all components of the *Eclipse Island and Lighthouse* is legible. The buildings are either used for their intended purpose, or have been abandoned. The 1926 lighthouse is readily capable of future conservation, and all other structures are capable of effective conservation. The integrity of the site as whole is high.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

With minor exceptions, such as the removal of the original lighthouse enclosure and the present light system and the addition of solar power and batteries, the structures and elements of the *Eclipse Island and Lighthouse* remain authentic. The place retains a very high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, 'Eclipse Island, Albany, Western Australia: Lighthouse Conservation Assessment' for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, May 2000.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, 'Eclipse Island, Albany, Western Australia: Lighthouse Conservation Assessment' for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, May 2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, 'Eclipse Island, Albany, Western Australia: Lighthouse Conservation Assessment' for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, May 2000.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, 'Eclipse Island, Albany, Western Australia: Lighthouse Conservation Assessment' for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, May 2000.

13.4 REFERENCES

Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, 'Eclipse Island, Albany, Western Australia: Lighthouse Conservation Assessment' for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, May 2000.

Cumming, D. A., Glasson, M. & McCarthy, M. 'Lighthouses of the Western Australian coast and off-shore islands', Report: Department Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 100, 1995. (also see Working Files #1, #2 and #3 with identical title by the same authors.)

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The documentary evidence suggests that the Eclipse Island as a whole may have social significance to the Aboriginal community so that further works on the Island, including conservation works should include consultation with Aboriginal people as part of the process.

There were archaeological deposits on the island which suggest a possible Aboriginal presence on Eclipse Island, but further investigation would be required to substantiate these findings. Although access to the island would be difficult from a small craft, the island is visually accessible from the coast and may have spiritual value.