HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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)

- 3.10 Altering the environment for economic development
- 4.2 Supplying urban services
- 3.7.1 Shipping to and from Australian ports
- 3.7.4 Building and maintaining railways

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 305 Fishing and other maritime industry
- 106 Workers (including Aboriginal and convict)
- 202 Rail and light rail transport
- 201 River and sea transport

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Albany Fish Ponds, and its associated site, has landmark value in the context of the City of Albany as a well known site on the eastern outskirts of town which provides a continues landscape link from the coast to the south rising to Mt Melville to the north. (Criterion 1.3)

Albany Fish Ponds, comprising one large and two smaller ponds, the former barrow pit and various remnants of former structures enclosed within a timber and iron rail fence; extends up the hill from Festing St towards Mt Melville to provide a cultural environment that integrates with the surrounding picturesque landscape setting. (Criteria 1.3 and 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The establishment of *Albany Fish Ponds* was part of the international acclimatisation movement, which saw the exchange of plant and animal species between European countries and new colonies and resulted in the introduction of European species to Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

Albany Fish Ponds have historic significance as the first Western Australian example of the international salmonids acclimatisation movement. Fresh water fish from Europe were introduced to Australian waterways to provide both economic and gaming opportunities. (Criterion 2.1)

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* 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.

Albany Fish Ponds have historic significance for associations with Governor Weld who encouraged their establishment as the first attempt at pisciculture in Western Australia after seeing the practice in operation in Ballarat in 1874. (Criterion 2.3)

Albany Fish Ponds have historic significance because they were built by convict labour in the 1870s, under the direction of Resident Magistrate Hare, to provide a facility in which to hatch and nurse trout ova for release into Western Australian rivers. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

Albany Fish Ponds have historic significance because they have been associated with Albany's water supply since 1888, when they were leased to the Western Australian Land Company (who built the Great Southern Railway) for the purposes of railways and shipping. The land was subsequently purchased by the State government in 1897 and taken over by the WAGR. The largest of the three reservoirs was enlarged by the Public Works Department in 1907/8 to provide a better water supply for railways and shipping. In more recent years, *Albany Fish Ponds* have been used by the City of Albany to provide water to reticulate public gardens. (Criteria 2.1)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Albany Fish Ponds is the site of the first official pisciculture enterprise for the acclimatisation of trout and other fresh water fish in Western Australia and as such has some potential to yield information about this industry through archaeological investigation. (Criteria 3.2 & 3.3)

Albany Fish Ponds was used from 1888 to supplement the water supply for the City of Albany. The ponds were altered through a program of physical works in 1907 to increase their holding capacity. The ponds and site have the potential through archaeological investigation to yield information about the construction processes used at that time. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Albany Fish Ponds are valued by the local community for their historic associations with the first attempts to acclimatise fresh water fish into Western Australian waters. They are also valued for their role from 1888 in contributing to the Albany water supply. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Albany Fish Ponds were established as the first official pisciculture enterprise for the acclimatisation of trout and other fresh water fish in Western Australia. *Albany Fish Ponds* were built by convict labour under the direction of Resident Magistrate Hare. No other similar enterprises in Western Australia at the period have been identified and as such the scheme has rarity value. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Albany Fish Ponds is a representative example of the employment of convict labour on public works. (Criterion 6.2)

Albany Fish Ponds is representative of the international acclimatisation movement, which was prominent in the latter decades of the nineteenth century as plant and animal species were exchanged between parent

countries and their colonies for aesthetic, commercial and recreation purposes. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Albany Fish Ponds are generally in sound condition and capable of restoration for interpretive purposes. The site is generally overgrown with both indigenous and introduced trees and shrubs. The upper pond, which was enlarged in 1907, contains water, however the lower ponds are overgrown with various shrubs and water was not evident at the time of site inspections. The former barrow pit is similarly overgrown and difficult to distinguish for the surrounding area.

The timber and iron rail fence is in poor condition with deteriorating timbers. The remnants of the timber retaining wall are also in poor condition with burnt and rotten timbers evident. There is evidence of recent management by the City of Albany who are responsible for the place. This includes the construction of firebreaks, the recent introduction of some drainage pipes and an area of recent fill near the lower ponds.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Albany Fish Ponds have low integrity as they have been unable to sustain their original purpose for pisciculture since the 1880s. They have moderate to high integrity however for their supplementary use contributing to the City of Albany's water supply. Their long term sustainability depends upon their restoration for interpretive purposes as a component of any future development of the site.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Albany Fish Ponds have moderate authenticity. The original ponds developed in the 1870s were altered in 1907 with the enlargement of the top pond. The boundary fence probably dates from this period as do the other structural remnants identified on the site. The Fish Ponds remain substantially as completed in 1907.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Jacqui Sherriff, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Rosemary Rosario, Architectural Heritage Consultant.

The consultants recommend that the registered area comprise the area of the Fish Ponds enclosed within the timber, iron rail and woven wire fence together with an extended curtilage on the western side to include the remnant of the timber retaining wall extant on the south western side of the upper pond and extending to the west of the fence line.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Albany Fish Ponds, a series of three reservoirs constructed in the 1870s for the acclimatisation of introduced fish species, are located on Albany Lot 1454. The Lot, which is owned by the Crown and vested in Westrail, is zoned 'Parks and Recreation Reserve' under the City of Albany Town Planning Scheme 1A. Comprising approximately two hectares, the reserve is bounded by Gray Street to the north, Festing Street to the south, Castle Street (unconstructed) to the west and residential land to the east. The portion of the Lot that

contains the Fish Ponds is leased to the City of Albany on six-monthly options for the purpose of water supply.

Although the ancient Romans and Chinese had practiced pisciculture, the artificial breeding and rearing of fish, it was not until the 1840s and 1850s that the hatching and rearing of salmon and trout in the Western world was first accomplished. Following refinement of the technique of stripping and fertilising ova by two Frenchmen in 1843, a number of piscicultural enterprises were established in France, Scotland, England and Ireland.[1]

The pisciculturalists formed part of the wider acclimatisation movement, which involved all manner of flora and fauna. In the mid-nineteenth century, the movement became international, as old and familiar species were introduced from parent European countries into new colonies, while young and strange species were sent back to Europe. To some extent, the urge to acclimatise familiar birds and animals in the new colonies was based on aesthetic reasons, but some introductions had the economic incentive of creating new industries. The English in particular also had a background of field sports in the countryside, which created a desire for familiar game species for sporting and gaming purposes.[2]

The transportation of fertilised trout and salmon ova from England to the Australian colonies posed a major scientific and technical challenge for the time, as the hatching time depended on water temperature.[3] After several failed attempts by the Australian Society[4] in the 1860s, it was discovered that ova placed in moss and ice travelled best over long sea voyages.[5] The first successful hatching in Australia was from a shipment of salmon ova that arrived in Tasmania in 1863.[6] Successful acclimatisation was also achieved in Victoria, with the first Brown Trout ova arriving in August 1886. By 1870/1, the Australian Society was able to distribute trout fly into several Victorian waterways.[7]

Following the success of the Australian Society, regional specialised fish acclimatisation societies were formed throughout Victoria and New Zealand. The first was the Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society, founded in August 1870. Here, the Learmonth brothers were successful in breeding Brown Trout from ova imported from Tasmania (1871) and from Rainbow and Lochleven ova imported from New Zealand (c. 1900).[8]

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1 Ritchie, J, *The Australian Trout: Its Introduction and Acclimatisation in Victorian Waters*, the Fly-Fishers' Association, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 9-14. The depletion of European salmon fisheries was causing concern at the time. [The first efficient artificial spawning of salmonids was carried out in 1854 by a Russian named Vrasski. The so-called Russian or dry method was much more efficient that the earlier wet method. Information supplied by Noel Morrissey, correspondence dated 23 March 2000, HCWA File P0109.]

2 ibid., pp. 13-17.

3 ibid., p. 20.

4 The Australian Society was formed in England c. 1860 by Tasmanian James Youl (who had been studying pisciculture in England) and Victorian Edward Wilson. Youl and Wilson were successful in gaining the financial support of their respective colonial governments in assisting their acclimatisation efforts. The Salmon Commissioners, a committee established by both houses of Parliament to promote the acclimatisation of trout and salmon into Tasmanian waterways, supported the Tasmanian experiments.

5 Ritchie, op. cit., p. 44.

6 ibid., pp. 25-29. Other sources cite the date as 1864.

7 ibid., pp. 44-75.

8 ibid., pp. 17,. 88-9. The hatchery was still in operation in 1988.

The first efforts at fish acclimatisation in Western Australia began in early 1874, when Governor Weld visited the Ballarat Fish Ponds during his tour of the eastern colonies:

> ...on Governor Weld's visit to Ballarat during his tour to the neighbouring colonies at the beginning of the present year, he visited the fishponds in that city, and took considerable interest in the process adopted in the acclimatization of trout and other descriptions of fish which the Victorians have introduced with remarkable success. His EXCELLENCY was accompanied by Mr T D WANLISS, who in many ways has evinced a lively interest in the welfare of this colony, and without the slightest solicitation that gentleman promised that a number of young trout or ova should be forwarded hence with a view to its being acclimatized in our waters.[9]

The ova were entrusted to Gustavus Edward Cockburn Hare, the Resident Magistrate of Albany. In October 1874, the *Inquirer and Commercial News* reported on progress of the enterprise:

> ...Mr. WANLISS dispatched a quantity of the spawn of this valuable fish by the mail-steamer to King George's Sound, where it arrived in a very healthy condition. Its care was entrusted to the Resident Magistrate at Albany, in conjunction with Mr. ERNEST HOWARD. The ova was carefully placed in a small freshwater rivulet known as 'Maley's Stream', which is situated in the western suburbs of the township, on the edge of Princess Royal Harbour. On the fifth of last month - September - the fish were hatched, and such has been the progress in their growth that a few days since many of them, fully 1 1/2 inch in length, were seen desporting themselves in their native element. We have not heard what is intended to do with the fish on their attaining a sufficient size to admit of their removal. The Murray River may probably be selected, but we much question whether any stream on this side of the Leeuwin is adapted for the propagation of any of the European species of the tinuy [sic] tribe. The King or the Kalgan - never failing, clear streams running into Oyster Harbour - will, we think, be found to be the most desirable of any of the numerous inlets on our southern coast for the reception of the young fish. And without doubt it will be here, too, where the acclimatization of salmon will be attempted, if it ever is, in this colony. The success of this our first effort in pisicultural [sic] acclimatization - carried out, it must be borne in mind, by persons who cannot possibly have had any practical knowledge of the work will, it is to be hoped, stimulate others to exertion not only in the culture of fish, but generally in the extensive classes of the animal kingdom.[10]

Hare was instructed to build a series of ponds on the side of Mt Melville in which to hatch and raise further shipments of trout ova. The site chosen was a natural catchment area, fed by springs. Convicts from the local depot[11] began the construction of three square pits in which to hatch fish fly. Although Governor Weld was transferred to Tasmania at the end of 1874, his replacement, William Cleaver Francis Robinson (later Sir), continued the experiment. In May 1875, Reserve 164A on the side of Mt Melville was set aside 'for the purpose of pisciculture'.[12] In August of that year, the Reserve was cancelled, only to be regazetted (again for the purpose of pisciculture) with amended boundaries in June 1876.[13]

The construction of the Fish Ponds took longer than envisaged. The continued employment of convict labour caused some concern amongst

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9 *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 28 October 1874, p. 2.

10 *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 28 October 1874, p. 2.

11 A convict depot had been established in Albany in 1851. Convicts not privately employed under the ticket-of-leave system were engaged on public works, such as roads, bridges and public buildings.

12 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 11 May 1875, p. 75.

13 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 17 August 1875, p. 139; 20 June 1876, p. 130.

Albany residents, who saw the construction of ponds as a folly which took convict labour away from important public works:

> Some years ago Governor Kennedy had sanctioned, and Governor Hampton approved, that the Municipal Council should have the benefit of all the labor of local prisoners undergoing punishment in Albany, and that for some years this labor was used for making streets and improving the appearance of the town; but that two years ago it was determined to introduce pisciculture, and Albany being chosen, all labor was used to make ponds and the necessary work for this, and the streets of the town had suffered accordingly. He [Mr. Clifton] was now given to understand that it would take at least three years to complete the proposed improvements, and he considered it very hard that during that time we should lose all this labor - particularly as the undertaking, if successful, would benefit the colony equally with Albany. Sir Thomas Campbell said that when Governor Weld first thought of introducing fresh water fish into the colony he had no idea that the necessary ponds would have taken so long to construct, and he had no doubt that when it was properly represented to the present Governor the prison labor would be again given to the council; but they must not look upon it as a right, as it was a matter which entirely rested with His Excellency.[14]

On 25 January 1878, Alfred James Hillman inspected the Fish Ponds while stopping at Albany en route to Adelaide and Melbourne from Perth:

> After dinner walked around with Fraser to look at what we christened "Hare's Folly", consisting of three good sized square pits, situated about half a mile west of Albany under Mount Melville, and which Hare fondly imagines are to become breeding places for fish, several trout were got up from New Zealand and struggled through a brief existence to succumb at last, a few perch, about half a dozen still remain. They are also clearing some ground here for a park. It is a pretty walk and drive to it skirting Mount Melville…[15]

Although few records reveal information about the construction and operation of the fish ponds, it would appear from the above quotes that it was intended that the fish were destined for commercial enterprise and the ponds themselves were to become the feature of a park for public use.

No information has been found on the success of the fish ponds and it is assumed that further supplies of ova were transported from the eastern colonies and New Zealand. While construction of the ponds was completed c. 1878, it is not known when they were abandoned and for what reasons. While Hare's personal interest and enthusiasm for the Fish Ponds is not known, it is most likely that they were abandoned following Hare's death in 1881. According to Garden,

> [t]he most important mark which Hare left on Albany's landscape was the construction of a series of fish-ponds at the western end of the town in 1874-7. When Governor Weld decided to introduce freshwater fish to the rivers and streams of the colony Albany was chosen as the site to acclimatise them, and Hare was given the responsibility. With the use of convict labour he constructed a series of three ponds as a fish hatchery for trout and perch. Paths were laid between them, and trees and shrubs planted, but the experiment was not a success and eventually petered out.[16]

The acclimatisation of fish continued several years later, with the formation of the Western Australian Acclimatisation Committee in July 1896. A trout

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14 Supplement to the *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 9 August 1876, reporting on interview with Sir Thomas Cockburn Campbell MLC.

15 Hillman, A J, *The Hillman Diaries 1887-1884: The personal diaries of Alfred James Hillman from 21st December 1877 to 24 April 1884 with a foreword by Bentley Hillman*, pp. 15-6.

16 Garden, D S, *Albany: A Panorama of the Sound from 1927*, Thomas Nelson (Australia), West Melbourne, 1977, p. 131 quoting CSO 895 / 10.1.77; 895 / 26.3.78 and *Inquirer* 9 August 1876.

hatchery and fish holding ponds were soon established downstream from Whitby Falls, where brown trout ova from Ballarat were hatched under the management of W C Doncaster, who had been brought over from Victoria by the Society.[17] A small number of the 1896 hatch were released into the Serpentine River.[18] In 1900, the Committee reported that trout ova were being successfully hatched and distributed to Western Australian waters.[19] For example, Lake Leschenaultia was successfully stocked with Redfin Perch in 1907.[20] However, it was not until the 1930s that widespread interest in pisciculture emerged in the State, with efforts concentrated in the Pemberton and Manjimup districts.

In 1888, the Town of Albany resolved to apply to the Colonial Government 'for the reserve near the Fish Ponds on behalf of the town, for the purpose of supplying the town with water'.[21] At the same time, the Western Australian Land Company, who were nearing completion of the Great Southern Railway between Beverley and Albany, had applied for a 21-year lease over the Reserve to supply water to the railways. Despite pleas on behalf of the Town by Sir Thomas Cockburn Campbell MLA, the Colonial Secretary advised that:

> In reply to your letter of the 8th instant, protesting, on behalf of the Municipality of Albany, against the Fish Ponds Reserve being leased to the West Australian Land Company, I am directed by His Excellency the Governor to inform you that the Ponds, in question - which would not - the Governor is advised - have been of use as a source of town water supply, have been leased to the West Australian Land Company, for twenty one (21) years, at a nominal rate, as it was necessary in the public interests, that water should be secured for the use of the railway.[22]

By the time the Great Southern Railway came into operation on 1 June 1889, a 3" water pipe, which relied on gravity to provide the necessary pressure, had been laid between the Fish Ponds and the WA Land Company's Deepwater Jetty and Workshops.[23] In November 1889, Lots 569 and 633 (Reserves 164A and 5148 respectively) were set aside as 'Public Reserves for water purposes'.[24]

The provision of an improved water supply had become a priority for the Albany Town Council by the early 1890s. The increase in the number of ships calling at Albany, the expanding local population and Albany's rising popularity as a health resort, particularly with people from the Eastern

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17 A hatchery at Bunbury, establishedc. 1894, preceded the Whitby Falls hatchery. Information supplied by Noel Morrisy, correspondence dated 23 March 2000, HCWA File P0109.

18 Coy, N, *The Serpentine: A History of the Shire of Serpentine*, Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Mundijong, 1984, p. 86.

19 WA Acclimatisation Committee, Fourth Annual Report, 1900. The Acclimatisation Committee also dealt with salt water fish, eels, ostriches, deer, birds (such as the Laughing Jackass and the Californian Quail), white and black swans, doves and Angora goats.

20 Elliot, I, *Mundaring: A History of the Shire*, Shire of Mundaring, 1983, p. 73. Redfin perch had also been successfully established throughout the South West by Kent in the 1890s. Information supplied by Noel Morrissey, correspondence dated 23 March 2000, HCWA File P0109.

21 *Albany Mail and King George's Sound Advertiser*, 31 October 1888, p. 3.

22 As quoted in the *Albany Mail and King George's Sound Advertiser*, 21 November 1888, p. 3.

23 Wolfe, A, 'The Albany Maritime Heritage Survey 1627-1994', Wolfe & Associates, Albany 1994, p. 137.

24 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 11 November 1889, p. 2408. An undated plan (provided by DOLA) notes that a portion of Reserve 164A 'Pisciculture' was leased to the WA Land Company.

Goldfields, all combined to place pressure on existing water supplies.[25] In 1894, *The West Australian* reported that a water extension to the town had been completed; however, no mention is made of the water source.[26]

When the Western Australian Government purchased the WA Land Company's railway and unsold land in early 1897, the Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) took over the lease of part of Reserve 164A, as well as the Deepwater Jetty and the Land Company's other assets.[27] In 1900, WAGR listed a 120,000 gallon reservoir at Albany (the Fish Ponds) as one of five reservoirs on the Great Southern Railway used for the supply of water.[28] WAGR used the Fish Ponds water for railway engines and shipping as the WA Land Company had used them.

The problem of an adequate water supply continued to trouble Albany, and in 1897 the Government had a report prepared regarding the provision of water supplies for shipping, the railways and domestic consumption. Although surveys were made and gauging work carried out for the construction of two reservoirs near Mt Melville, the work was held in abeyance.[29] Alternative works were considered in 1901/2 when the Public Works Department (PWD) commenced plans for a reservoir and pipeline on Reserve 4655 (Limeburner's Creek). Again, work did not proceed.[30] It appears that the Government was not willing to expend on Albany's water supply as it wanted to promote the newly completed Fremantle Harbour as Western Australia's major port. However, the number of interstate and overseas vessels calling at Albany did not drop dramatically, and the town's geographic location made her the preferred port for troop, supply and commercial shipping to call for coal and water before or after crossing the Indian Ocean.[31]

The water issue continued to frustrate local residents, as expressed by the Editor of the *Albany Advertiser* in late 1901:

> After the heavy rains that have fallen recently it is an astounding fact that shipping should be hung up in Albany harbour for want of water. It is, however, none the less true...not a single order for the precious fluid has been extended in full...The supply is in the hands of the Government, and it is a crying shame that the officers of the department concerned should permit a condition of affairs so seriously injurious to the port and detrimental to the State at large...The water for shipping is mainly derived from the Fishponds, two small and primitive reservoirs

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25 Garden, op. cit., pp. 232-239.

26 *The West Australian*, 9 July 1894, p. 5. A main feeding tank (12' dia; 12' deep) was constructed in Frederick Street, with a 3" pipe leading from the tank to a 10,000 gallon tank erected near the Courthouse. The Courthouse tank was connected to the Town Jetty by a 4" pipe and five hydrants were built on the jetty for supplying ships. The Waroonga was the first steamer to take in water from the new extension. The pipes for the extension were provided by Mr John Danks of Melbourne and the hydrants by Messrs Stone & Co of London. Mr James was the contractor.

27 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 27 October 1896, p. 131.

28 Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR), Annual Report, 30 June 1900, p. 57.

29 Reynolds, W C, 'Albany Water Supply: Report on Sources of Supply', prepared for Mr T C Hodgson, Engineer for Sewerage and Water Supply for Towns, Perth, 28 July 1897; Public Works Department (PWD), Annual Report, 1899-1900, p. 51.

30 *Albany Advertiser*, 21 March 1902, p. 2; PWD, Annual Report, 1902, pp. 14, 45.

31 Garden, op. cit., pp. 240-256.

> served by an excellent catchment and a series of springs. This service is under the control of the railway department, which has first call on the water...[32]

In 1904/5, it was reported that although the Government had six reports on the Limeburner's Creek scheme and had set aside £10,500 in the loan estimates for 1904/5, still nothing had been done regarding a water supply for railway, shipping and domestic use.[33]

In September 1906, it was finally reported that Albany Harbour was to be dredged and that:

> The new reservoir at the Fishponds is to be got in hand as soon as possible. I expect the work to start in about six week's time. They are at the plans and specifications and will decide as soon as they are ready whether the work will be carried out by the Department or tenders called for it. The estimated cost of the works is £3,500…[34]

By July 1907, work had commenced on extending the holding capacity of the Fish Ponds reservoirs:

> The work of improving the Fishponds water supply is steadily improving. It was entered upon at the beginning of the year and all went well until the timber strike, when considerable delay occurred in getting supplies forward. The scheme is to take out excavations to construct a dam capable of holding 1,000,000 gallons of water. For this purpose a wooden wall 530ft in length is being built, the timber used being driven from 20ft to 35ft. down to the clay bed. To guard against leakage through this wooden wall a clay puddle about 5ft in thickness is placed, the clay then being banked back with an embankment. Now that the timber mills have commenced work and with a promise of an early and constant supply of timber, the construction of the weir will soon be finished. It is proposed to lay either 8in, or 6in pipes from the Fishponds in such a way as to take them along Frederick-street to the jetties. This arrangement will permit of the water being used for domestic and fire purposes in Stirling terrace. Mr. Cyril Carrington is supervising the work.[35]

Ten days later, it was reported that the Under-Secretary for Public Works had written to the Albany Council, advising that:

> …the relative elevations of the Fishponds and the town rendered it impossible to reticulate more than a small portion near the water frontage. Regarding the route of the pipe line between the Fishponds and Parade-street it was not expected that a decision would be arrived at until the weir was finished, but from that point it would be possible to carry the pipes, if found desirable, along Stirling-terrace. Referring to the contour levels, the area below the 50 contour, shown on litho enclosed, was approximately that which could be served under natural head.[36]

With the works almost in hand, Lot 633 was gazetted as Reserve 11251 on 14 February 1908 for the purposes of Railway Water Supply.[37]

In March 1908, the Albany Town Council tested the utility of the new Fish Ponds water scheme for fire purposes and 'found it sadly wanting'. The press labelled the scheme 'an engineering failure and a reflection on the Public Works Department'.[38] A public debate between the Albany Town Council

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32 *Albany Advertiser*, 31 December 1901, pp. 2-3. See also *Albany Advertiser*, 13 February 1902, p. 2 in which the Editor reiterates the need for an improved water supply.

33 *Albany Advertiser*, 8 October 1904, p. 3; 17 May 1905, p. 2.

34 ibid., 12 September 1906, p. 3.

35 ibid., 3 July 1907, p. 3.

36 *Albany Advertiser*, 13 July 1907, p. 4.

37 Government Gazette, 14 February 1980, p. 330.

38 *Albany Advertiser*, 28 March 1908, p. 2. See also *Albany Advertiser*, 11 September 1907, p. 3 in which disappointment at the extent of the Fishponds scheme is expressed.

and the State Government over the adequacy of the improvements ensued, with Mr H Oldham, Engineer for Water Supply and Sewerage, travelling to Albany to meet his critics. Mr Oldham advised that the original capacity planned for the Fish Ponds redevelopment was 1,000,000 gallons and that the reservoir had been constructed to 500,000 gallons as it had been ascertained that there was a better supply of water than first thought. To catch the subterranean supply, sheath piling had been laid under the sand to a clay bed.[39]

At the time, the reservoir was 'making 10,000 gallons day', but 'more could be obtained at the lower ponds'.[40] The scheme was handed over to the Railway Department, who had first call on the water to supply shipping.[41]

At the conclusion of the works, the PWD reported on the new reservoir:

> Albany - Impounding Reservoir
> The timber weir at the Fish Ponds was completed and excavation carried out to give a storage of 500,000 gallons, the balance of the excavation will be continued later to bring the storage up to 1,000,000 gallons, which is the storage originally provided for…Owing to the great consumption of water in this town, it will be necessary to complete the excavations at the impounding reservoir to bring the storage up to 1,000,000 gallons. The present situation is that the railways, shipping, and then the town obtain a full supply in the order of preference named.[42]

At the same time, a 1,000-gallon storage tank was excavated near the Deep Sea Jetty and a new 4" main was laid from the storage tank to the town jetty, with the 'provision for the supply of water to the shipping now being complete'.[43] In the 1909 WAGR Annual Report, it was reported that there was a 620,000 gallon reservoir (the Fish Ponds reservoir) at Albany, which continued to operate via gravitation.[44]

As the additional works to the Fish Ponds did not eventuate, the issue of the town water supply did not abate. In November 1909, the Town Council held a referendum on the question of whether 'the Council should take the necessary steps to provide the town and port with an adequate water supply'. The vote was returned 2:1 in the affirmative.[45] After much lobbying, the Scadden Government announced that it would build a scheme for Albany in 1912. The scheme consisted of two weirs at Two Peoples Bay on the Angove River, from where water was pumped to a 300,000-gallon reservoir at the top of a nearby hill. The water gravitated to a 250,000-gallon reservoir constructed on the side of Mt Melville. The first water was available on 1 January 1914.[46] The water was advertised as being of good quality and suitable for the use of shipping.[47]

Water from the Fish Ponds was used by the Railway Department for water supply for railway purposes until the mid-1970s when train service to Albany

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39 *Albany Advertiser*, 20 May 1908, p. 2; 30 May 1908, p. 2.

40 ibid.

41 ibid.

42 PWD, Annual Report, 1907/8, p. 39.

43 ibid.

44 WAGR, Annual Report, 1909, p. 43. The same report was made in 1916. Circa 1923, WAGR stopped reporting on railway water supplies derived from reservoirs and wells.

45 *Albany Advertiser*, 27 November 1909.

46 ibid., 21 November 1909; 23 July 1910; 8 April 1911; 3 February 1912; 16 March 1913; 3 January 1914.

47 'Albany Water Supply', pg. 74 - Local Studies Collection, Albany Public Library [ISR/142/5] as quoted in Wolfe, op.cit., p. 48.

ceased to operate. On 23 March 1978, the management category on Reserve 11251 (for railway water supply) was revoked and in September that year, the City of Albany entered a twenty-one year lease with the Western Australian Government Railways Commission for a portion of the reserve for the purposes of reticulation.[48]

Albany Fish Ponds were identified as a place of high cultural heritage value in the 1994 maritime heritage survey for Albany for its historic and scientific values as a significant water supply associated with Albany's maritime past. The study recommended that the place be considered for the Register of Heritage Places.[49]

In recent years, a number of reports have been commissioned by Landcorp to establish the cultural values of *Albany Fish Ponds.* An Aboriginal heritage survey found that an area to the north and uphill of the ponds was an Aboriginal camping ground and that the ponds themselves had been a water and food source. The report recommended that the camping area, including the ponds, be preserved.[50]

A natural heritage report undertaken to assess biological values recorded two species of native mammals of special significance in the Reserve area.[51] Botanical values were associated primarily with the central section of the Reserve and two significant habitats were identified in the lower half of the Reserve. The Fish Ponds themselves were one of these, being home to many aquatic and semi-aquatic species including frogs, waterbirds, native water rats and the Long Neck tortoise.[52] The Firetail Finch was also identified as living in the Reserve.[53]

In March 1999, the reserve was again reconfigured, with the cancellation of Reserve 11251 and the creation of Albany Town Lot 1454, an area of 1.9738 hectares.[54] In July 1999, *Albany Fish Ponds* were advertised as being surplus to Westrail requirements and expressions of interest sought for the site's purchase.[55] Following this, local residents have expressed some concern over the future of the site.[56]

The *Albany Fish Ponds* are currently used by the City of Albany to reticulate the public recreation areas adjacent. Since the twenty-year lease expired in September 1998 the City of Albany has an agreement with Westrail that they will be given six months notice of any proposed changes.

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48 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 28 September 1978. Reserve 11251, Albany Town Lot 633.

49 Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 137-138, 169-170.

50 Lock, R, K Edwards and A Murphy, 'Aboriginal Heritage: A Report of an Aboriginal Heritage Survey - Westrail Reserve 11251 [formerly Albany Fish Ponds] Albany, Western Australia', prepared for Landcorp, McDonald, Hales and Associates Pty Ltd, October 1997, passim, specifically p. 25.

51 Mattiske, E M, E Bennett and K Youngson, 'Review of flora, vegetation and vertebrae fauna values on Westrail Land - Reserve 11251 - Albany', prepared for Landcorp, Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd and Ninox Wildlife Consulting, January 1988, p. 1. The Western Ringtail Possum and the Southern Brown Bandicoot are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act (1950) as rare.

52 ibid., p. 7

53 ibid. The Firetail Finch is listed on CALM's priority list of species.

54 Certificate of Title Volume 3109 Folio 850, 19 March 1999.

55 *Albany Advertiser*, 22 July 1999.

56 See, for example, *Albany Advertiser*, 10 August 1999, p. 3; 12 August 1999, pp. 3, 6.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Albany Fish Ponds are located on Albany Lot 1454 comprising 1.9738 hectares within an irregular shaped area bounded by Carlisle Street to the north, Festing Street to the south, Castle Street (unsealed) to the east and Albany Lots 1288 and 1289 to the west. The site is located approximately 1.3 kilometres west of the Albany town centre on the western side of Mt Melville. The site slopes upwards to the north and east and from the northern side of the site there are clear views of Princess Royal Harbour and the Torndirrup Peninsular.[57]

The site is largely overgrown and somewhat inaccessible. The Fish Ponds are located on the south eastern portion of the site. The northern part of the site comprises a densely wooded area featuring indigenous trees including peppermint, and jarrah and other species. The understorey and southern areas of the site comprise introduced plant species including bracken, watsonia, taylorina, pampas grass and brambles. There are some mature tree ferns in the two lower ponds.

The site is enclosed by a cyclone wire fence. There is a gate at the south eastern corner of the site facing Festing Street with a timber sign board and faded sign with the words 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'. The area of the Fish Ponds is enclosed by an earlier fence constructed of railway line, timber rails, woven wire and barbed wire. There is a firebreak along the line of this fence.

Albany Fish Ponds comprises three ponds, a top pond and two lower overflow ponds. The top pond remains clearly evident and contains water. The lower ponds are overgrown and water was not visible at the time of site visits, although a pipe below the south east corner of the top pond discharges into the lower pond. The two lower ponds are difficult to distinguish and appear as a single depression in the ground. Water discharges from the southern end of the site into a drain which runs under Festing Street. The former barrow pit remains extant but in a very overgrown state on the south western side of the top pond within the earlier fence line.

Other physical remains of the former ponds include a large circular metal grate on the east side of the top pond and the remains of a low wooden retaining wall which extends some distance beyond the western fence line. This is probably a remnant of the timber retaining wall which was constructed in 1907 on the southern perimeter of the upper pond and comprises timber posts, rails and uprights which rise approximately 250mm above ground. The timber posts are 300mm x 270mm wide, some uprights are approximately 130mm x 380mm and rails are 150mm thick. Timbers show evidence of having been burnt and are in a deteriorated state. Fixings are iron bolts, nuts and washers.[58]

There is evidence of site works including levelling of ground in some areas resulting in the removal of the top of part of the timber retaining wall. Some recent site works have been carried out by the Albany Council in order to maintain the site.

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57 The consultants visited the site in April 1997. The physical evidence is drawn from that site visit and from notes by Wolfe and Associates who visited the site on 23.12.1996. The consultants' site visit verified the findings of Wolfe and Associates.

58 Recorded by Wolfe and Associates Albany, 23.12.1996.

Generally the site retains evidence of former uses, although it is extensively overgrown and therefore difficult to accurately survey. Physical evidence reflects changes to the configuration of the ponds and structures that have been constructed since their inception in the 1870s. Although there have been recent works carried out in relation to the ongoing use of the ponds for reticulation purposes, the site generally remains intact suggesting that further evidence of previous uses may be revealed through archaeological investigation.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Albany Fish Ponds was the first attempt in Western Australia (1870s) to establish an official pisciculture enterprise for the acclimatisation of trout and other fresh water fish. Earlier attempts were successful in Tasmania (1863/4) and Victoria. The Albany project was abandoned in the 1880s, and further attempts made by the Western Australian Acclimatisation Committee in the late 1890s and early 1900s were unsuccessful. While other species of fish were successfully introduced to Western Australia during this period, the practice of hatching and distributing trout in WA waters was not successful until the 1930s, primarily in the Manjimup and Pemberton area. The Pemberton trout hatchery remains the best known extant example in the State.

The use of the place for provision of water supplies for the WAGR and for the City of Albany is typical of reservoirs constructed throughout the State in the early twentieth century when rail relied heavily on local water supplies to provide steam power for locomotives.

13. 4 REFERENCES

Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'The Albany Fishponds [Reserve 11251]: Review site investigation and preliminary heritage report', prepared for Landcorp, April 1997.

Lock, R, K Edwards and A Murphy, 'Aboriginal Heritage: A Report of an Aboriginal Heritage Survey - Westrail Reserve 11251 [formerly Albany Fish Ponds) Albany, Western Australia', prepared for Landcorp, McDonald, Hales and Associates Pty Ltd, October 1997.

Mattiske, E M, E Bennett and K Youngson, 'Review of flora, vegetation and vertebrae fauna values on Westrail Land - Reserve 11251 - Albany', prepared for Landcorp, Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd and Ninox Wildlife Consulting, January 1988.

Wolfe, A, 'The Albany Fishponds: a cultural heritage study', prepared for Landcorp, Wolfe and Associates, Albany, December 1996.

For further reading, refer to:

Neil J Coy, *Freshwater Fishing in south-west Australia*, Jabiru, Perth, 1979.

John Clements, *Salmon at the Antipodies: A history and review of trout, salmon and char and introduced coarse fish in Australasia*, J Clements, Ballarat, c. 1988.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The Reserve Files, held by the Department of Land Administration, may provide additional information regarding the reserves.

Although the archaeological potential of the site has been identified, no work has yet been carried out in this regard.

If interpretation of the site is to be undertaken, the following contemporary books on pisciculture may be of use:

The Salmon and its Artificial Propagation, Robert Ramsbottom, London, 1854.

Frank Buckland, *Fish Hatching*, London, 1863.

Francis Francis, *Fish Culture*, London, 1863.

Arthur Nichols, *The Acclimatisation of Salmon at the Antipodes*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, London, 1882.