
WILLIAMSTOWN DOCKYARDS

Location

ANNE STREET AND NELSON PLACE WILLIAMSTOWN, HOBSONS BAY CITY

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0554

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site	Many of the original piers have survived, or been incorporated into the existing pier structures. The graving dock is still used by Tenix Shipbuilders. Large archaeological deposits may exist beneath landfill or under the current pier structures. The area has been used for major shipbuilding and as a dockyard since at least 1873. It has strong ties to the development of the port of Melbourne as a major shipping destination, and for harbour maintenance around Port Phillip and Hobsons Bays
Other Names	WESTERN PIER, SLIP PIER, REID ST PIER, GOVERNMENT PATENT SLIP, NEW RAILWAY PIER, NELSON PIER, ALFRED GRAVING DOCK (Included in VHR listing H0697), DOCKYARD PIER,
Hermes Number	13660
Property Number	

History

The land between the Anne St Pier and Kanowna St was reclaimed between 1871 and 1873 to extend the acreage of the dock yard reserve (Molesworth, 1873). A dockyard reserve in Coode's 1879 plan shows what appears to be an excavated quarry with a section of wharf frontage added. The dockyard is shown again in 1894 (Cox).

Prior to WWI, the government added two shipbuilding berths and a number of workshops to the government dockyard area to enable operations to be expanded to include shipbuilding, not just repairs. The State Shipbuilding Yard had a short life, opening in 1913, before being taken over in 1918 by the Commonwealth Government to replace vessels lost during the war. Several ships were constructed here, until the Commonwealth withdrew from local shipbuilding and the site was sold to the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1924 who used it for vessel maintenance and dredging activities (Meredith Gould, 1998: 6). During WWII, the Commonwealth again took possession of the dockyard, and the Harbour trust established separate workshops at another site near the corner of Francis and Nelson Place (H7822-0552). The site was sold to the Australian Marine Engineering Corporation (AMECON) in 1986, which continued frigate construction, and is now owned by Tenix (Butler, 2000: 34-35).

Booth Pier: This pier was named after a lost engineer from the tug Melbourne, and was completed in 1981 in an effort to provide extra tugboat docking space. The pier is now part of the dockyard (BLC#19).

Reid St Pier: This pier was constructed for the Melbourne Harbour Trust for exclusive use with its own floating plant in September 1891. It was later used to house the tug fleet, and was rebuilt in 1949. The cross wharf and tug piers became part of the Dockyard area in 1993.

Western Pier/ New Railway Pier/ Nelson Pier: The railway department contracted for the construction of a new pier to meet increased demand imposed by wool and later grain handling. When completed in 1878, it was initially referred to as the Western Pier, but was later renamed (New) Railway Pier (Coode, 1879; Cox, 1894; BLC#19). After it was rebuilt in 1915 and 1927, it was renamed Nelson Pier in 1923. The pier and surrounding land was purchased by the Commonwealth in 1967, and use of the facility declined. Demolition work began in 1979 due to its poor condition (BLC#19).

Nelsons Pier West: This pier was constructed in 1978 to replace the nearby Nelson Pier. It provided two cranes and two berths for the refitting and outfitting of warships.

Slip Pier/ Government Patent Slip: Slip Pier was built in 1858 and was used in conjunction with the Government Patent Slip. It was later known as the Lady Loch Jetty after the similarly named Government steamer. The pier and Government Patent Slipway were demolished in 1919 to make way for the construction of number 1 and 2 building ways.

Dockyard Pier/ Alfred Graving Dock (H697): In 1858, the Victorian Government recommended that a reserve be set aside for a graving dock and dockyard. Construction commenced in 1868, and was completed in 1874 (Kinhill Stearns, 1993: 261). The dock was designed by William Wardell for the Public Works Department (Vines, 1989), and was the largest structure of its type in the southern hemisphere. The Dockyard Pier was originally known as Dock Pier (Cox, 1894), and was constructed in 1874 for use with vessels engaged in pre/post docking in the Alfred Graving Dock (BLC#19). The Alfred Graving Dock is already listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (H697).

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>