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# GELLIBRAND PILE LIGHT

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## Location

SOUTH EAST OF GELLIBRAND POINT AND BATTERY ROAD AND NELSON PLACE WILLIAMSTOWN,  
HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0562

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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### Interpretation of Site

A navigational facility has existed continuously at or near this site since about 1860 until 1976, and was an important landmark and maritime service for the colony and state. The light was the entrance beacon for Hobsons Bay. A large mound of bluestone rocks 5m high and approximately 15 m diameter are extant to within 1 m of the surface, which are the remnants of bluestone placed to support the light when the piles started rocking in heavy seas (Taylor, pers comms). Large deposits of archaeological material are evident, including 19th and 20th century bottles, ceramics and wire cable.

The light is of local historical significance. The site has archaeological potential to provide information relating to the technological and structural components of the pile light.

Other Names GELLIBRAND LIGHT SHIP,

Hermes  
Number 13666

Property  
Number

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## History

In 1860, a lightship was anchored off Shelley Beach in the channel leading to Hobsons Bay when the Point Gellibrand Lighthouse was superseded (Butler, 2000; Allom Lovell, 1987: 10, 40). A circular vessel was later manufactured at the Maribyrnong Government Shipyards (H7822-0446). After the lightship kept breaking its moorings, the top section of the ship was mounted on piles in 1906. The structure was set alight by the Department of Works in 1976 after it was struck by the ship *Melbourne Trader* two days before, and the superstructure was taken to the Polly Woodside Museum.

The site was inspected by Duncan (2005) in 2002. A large mound of bluestone rocks 5m high and approximately 15 m diameter are extant to within 1 m of the surface, which are the remnants of bluestone placed to support the light when the piles started rocking in heavy seas (Taylor, pers comms). Numerous timber piles lie strewn around the site both on top of the mound and up to 5m off site. Large deposits of archaeological debitage are evident, including 19th and 20th century bottles, ceramics and wire cable. Bob Leak has undertaken extensive research on this site, which should at some stage be copied to enable further interpretation of the site.

A navigational facility has existed continuously at or near this site almost since 1860- 1976, and was an important landmark and maritime service for the colony and state.

*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/>*