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# Commonwealth Oil Refinery Co Tank Farm (Former)



Commonwealth Oil Refinery  
Co Tank Farm (former),  
Hobsons Bay Heritage Study  
2006 - Tank No. NP6



Commonwealth Oil Refinery  
Co Tank Farm (former),  
Hobsons Bay Heritage Study  
2006 - Tank NP7

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## Location

39-81 Burleigh Street SPOTSWOOD, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO49

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The former Commonwealth Oil Refinery Co. tank farm, comprising storage tanks NP6 and NP7 constructed by Poole and Steele in 1922, at 39-81 Burleigh Street, Newport.

How is it Significant?

The former Commonwealth Oil Refinery Co. tank farm is of local historic and technical significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, they are significant for their associations with the early development of the oil industry in this area, specifically as part of the infrastructure developed by Commonwealth Oil Refineries Co. (COR), which was established specifically to develop Australia's first oil refinery at Laverton in 1922. Most of the buildings and infrastructure associated with COR have been demolished and the tanks are now rare surviving evidence of the earliest phase of development of this company and the oil industry in this country. (AHC criteria A4, B2 and D2)

Technically, they are significant as rare surviving examples of riveted tanks, which demonstrate the nineteenth technology that was used in the early development of this twentieth century industry. (AHC criteria B2 and F1)

*Note: Refer also to the related citations in this Study for the former Commonwealth Oil Refinery, 32-54 Toll Drive, Altona North and BP Australia complex, 431 Douglas Parade, Newport*

Heritage Study/Consultant Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Other Names NP6 and NP7 storage tanks,

Hermes Number 14978

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The former BP Australia Newport Terminal tank farm comprises a complex of ten tanks of various sizes as well as several related buildings. Tanks Nos. NP6 and NP7 were originally constructed in 1922 during the initial phase of development on the site soon after it was purchased by COR. The following description of the tanks is provided by Allom Lovell & Associates:

The larger of the two tanks is NP6, which is a riveted steel tank. The tank is 35.4m in diameter and 12.2m high, and sits on a sand pit with a concrete foundation ring. Its construction appears to be of a conventional nature employing curved steel sheets fixed at the sides and edges by closely spaced steel rivets. Wide splice plates have been used to join the longer sheets as opposed to the single row of rivets to lapped joints used on the smaller tank.

NP6 has a convex lap welded steel floor plate. This floor plate was introduced in 1957 in place of the original. The fixed welded steel roof has a welded pylon type central column supporting roof trusses, and is thought to date from 1934. The tank is painted externally.

Though smaller (12.2m diameter and 9.1m high), NP7 is of similar construction, although [there is a] single row of rivets to lapped joints used in place of the splice plates used on NP6. The roof of NP7 was replaced in 1967. Signage indicates that it has been used for leaded gasoline storage and that entry is restricted, requiring full protective clothing and breathing apparatus. The spiral access stairway appears to be original, though additional safety rails are thought to have been added in 1957.

New level gauges and new outlet/inlet points are thought to have been added to both tanks. The age of gate valves associated with the tanks is uncertain..[1]

As described in the history, the Newport tank farm formed part of the infrastructure constructed for COR as part of the establishment of the Altona North refinery in 1922. Most of the buildings and plant associated with the

Altona North refinery have been demolished and the Newport tank farm is now part of a small number of surviving buildings from the initial development phase during the 1920s. (Refer to the separate citation in this Study for the former COR Refinery complex at 32-54 Toll Drive, Altona North)

[1] Allom Lovell op cit pp. 9 +12

## **Physical Conditions**

External Condition

Good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

## **Integrity**

External Integrity

Moderate

## **Physical Description 2**

Context

Contributory part of an industrial precinct, which includes a number of other oil-related installations and plants within the Newport and Spotswood areas.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Developing local, regional and national economies, Utilising mineral resources, Extracting oil & gas

## **Physical Description 3**

*Associations* Commonwealth Oil Refineries Co., BP Australia Ltd.

*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/>*