FLINDERS TELEGRAPH CABLE COMPLEX AND PIER

Flinders Pier from above 2018

Path from reserve to foreshore

Flinders pier 2022

Cable landing site 2

Pier boat ramp from above

South side pier

Cable landing site

Pier from path

Jetty head

Entrance to pier and shed

Flinders Jetty 1971

Norfolk Island Hibiscus Norfolk Island Pine and Cordyline

WWI and WW2 memorials

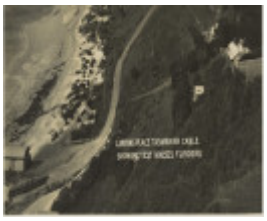
State Marine Animal Common Seadragon

Citizen science Seadragon

Extract SLV 1869

First cable station and PO

Happy Valley



Cable landing site cable test houses

Pier staff quarters cable station 1890 1910

Extract tourist map 1914

DIAGRAM 2413

Location

THE ESPLANADE FLINDERS, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2413

VHR Registration

October 20, 2022

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 15, 2023

What is significant?

Flinders Telegraph Cable Complex and Pier was established in the 1860s and provided an essential telegraphic link between mainland Australia and Tasmania for seven decades. Evidence of the Telegraph Complex survives in the Pier and exotic plantings and in archaeological remains from between 1869 and the 1940s including the first of three cable station buildings at Flinders, staff residences and workshops (known as Happy Valley); three cable test houses and one repeater station as well as buried telegraph cables and cable trenches under the land and the seabed surrounding the pier and associated archaeological deposits. Also significant is Flinders Pier, constructed in timber from 1864, including the submerged remains of a now demolished breakwater, the fishing shed (which may be a relocated goods shed/kiosk) and the cargo shed (VHR H0906).

How is it significant?

The Flinders Telegraph Cable Complex and Pier is of historical, archaeological and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:
Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion G Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Why is it significant?

The Flinders Telegraph Cable Complex and Pier is historically significant for its association with the installation and first successful operation of submarine telegraphic communications in Victoria and the site where telegraphic communications between Victoria and Tasmania were installed, operated and expanded for seven decades until the introduction of telephonic communications in the 1930s. This connected trading partners Victoria and Tasmania and enabled rapid communication between Tasmania and the rest of Australia and the world. (Criterion A)

The Flinders Telegraph Cable Complex and Pier is archaeologically significant for its potential to contain archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that relate to the use of the place as a substantial and early submarine telegraph complex. These features and deposits have the potential to reveal information about the construction and location of buildings and other structures. Investigations could reveal information about the establishment, human occupation and development of the place over time, as well as its subsequent abandonment.
(Criterion C)

The Flinders Pier is socially significant to the community that has grown around the scientific study and popular observation of the Victorian Common or Weedy Seadragon, *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*. The pier has been a focus of accelerating levels of activity related to the study and observation of seadragons since at least the 1970s. There is a resonance to this attachment, both because of the high profile and popular appeal of the seadragon and because of the widespread attachment of the community who are drawn to this location.
(Criterion G)

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions here.

Specific Exemptions:

The following permit exemptions are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Flinders Cable Complex and Pier.

General

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like.
- Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of significant fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.

- Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing external services such as public lighting, public furniture, handrails, light poles, mooring fixtures on the pier, plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale, or additional trenching.
- Repair to, or removal of items such as antennae; aerials; and air conditioners and associated pipe work, ducting and wiring.
- Works or activities, including emergency stabilisation, safety fencing, and warning signs necessary to secure safety in an emergency where a structure or part of a structure has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and poses a safety risk to its users or the public. All works must minimise any impact on the timber component of the pier and the marine environment. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.
- Painting of previously painted external surfaces in the same colour, finish and product type provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or schemes.
- Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits by the use of low-pressure water (to maximum of 300 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing with plastic (not wire) brushes.
- Works to the walls and roof of the winch shed providing these do not damage the potentially historic floor
- Off-site removal of surface paint and finishes from steel with high pressure water if required
- Works to the walls and roof of the winch shed providing these do not damage the potentially historic floor
- Use and installation of timber splicing using untreated timber replacing like with like to repair and maintain the timber pier operation and safe access.
- Repairs, maintenance and replacement to timber decking, cross heads, beams, walers, using suitable untreated timber and fastenings replacing like with like, as well as to soft fenders and other superstructure elements ·

Moorings

- Repairs and maintenance to existing swing mooring tackle and anchors
- Replacement of existing swing mooring tackle and anchors with Environmentally Friendly Moorings.

Venues / public places / events

The installation and/or erection of temporary elements associated with short term events for a maximum period of one week and no more than six times a year provided these are not located within three metres of the canopy edge of the mature Norfolk Island Pine, the Norfolk Island Hibiscus and the Cordyline and any affected areas of the place made good to match the condition of the place prior to installation. These elements include:

- Temporary (lightweight) structures such as shelters, marquees and tents which are weighted down with sand bags or water tanks and minimise the requirement for driven metal stakes which could impact on archaeological deposits. Where pegging is not able to be avoided this is to be located to avoid archaeological deposits (i.e. not driven into if encountered).
- Marquees, tents, stages, and the like.
- Temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or to secure public safety.
- Temporary built or mobile structures, vendor and toilet vans which are located on existing hardstand and paved/asphalted areas and pathways or on turf areas with a protective surface (board or track mats).
- Temporary infrastructure, including wayfinding/directional signage, lighting, public address systems, furniture and the like in support of events and performances which do not require fixing into the ground.
- Non-structural alterations to all existing promotional elements including billboards and flagpoles
- Removal and replacement of information, directional and advertising signage within existing signage stands.

Landscape/ outdoor areas

- Hard landscaping and services
- Subsurface works to existing watering and drainage systems provided these and do not involve trenching in new locations.

- Like for like repair and maintenance of existing hard landscaping including carparks, paving, footpaths and driveways where the materials, scale, form and design is unchanged.
- Removal or replacement of external directional signage provided the size, location and material remains the same , or if they are installed within existing signage stands.
- Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of vermin such as rats, mice and possums.

Fire Suppression Duties

- Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected

Gardening, trees and plants

- The processes of gardening including mowing, pruning, mulching, fertilising, removal of dead or diseased plants, replanting of existing garden beds, disease and weed control and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- Removal of tree seedlings and suckers without the use of herbicides.
- Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood and pest and disease control. This should be completed by a qualified arborist for the early Norfolk Island Pine, Norfolk Island Hibiscus and Cordyline in the reserve area.
- Emergency tree works to maintain public safety provided the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria is notified within seven days of the removal or works occurring.
- Removal of environmental and noxious weeds.

Former Jetty Cargo Shed

Former Jetty Cargo Shed (VHR H0906) is included in the VHR as a Registered Place. Refer to Former Jetty Cargo Shed (VHR H0906) for full permit exemptions. Permit applications or exemptions approved under the registration for Former Jetty Cargo Shed (VHR H0906) are permit exempt under this registration.

Theme

1. Shaping Victoria's environment 3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications

Construction dates	1860,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered archaeological place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Other Names	FLINDERS PIER,
Hermes Number	208208
Property Number	

History

Flinders Pier

The Flinders Pier was constructed in 1864 to transport cargo between Flinders and Melbourne and for boat mooring and fishing. Until the construction of more roads, it was the main means of transport between Flinders and Melbourne and has been used for recreational and commercial boating and fishing throughout its life. It was also used to bring staff, materials and equipment to the Telegraph Cable Station. . A tramway was installed to transport cargo. When the first telegraph cable was installed, Kennon Cove was considered to be an ideal location for a submarine cable because it was sheltered and shallow with a sandy and gently sloping sea bed .

Many small sheds not related to the cable station have been constructed and removed from the site from 1864, including the cargo shed (VHR H0906) which was constructed in ca.1871. For many years there was a goods/refreshments shed at the landward end of the pier. More than one building appears to have performed this role. Fishermen's houses and sheds were also constructed all along the foreshore at various times.

The fishermen's permissive occupancies were progressively cancelled following the 1931 reservation for public purposes of the foreshore land between Dudley Street and the Flinders Pier. They were all gone by 1949. During World War II, the remaining structures were removed from the beach and pier area. The entrance to the pier was sandbagged and barbed wire was spread along the beach. After the war, the cargo shed was installed in its current position and the fishing shed (which may be the former 1913 goods and refreshments shed) was installed on the south side of the pier. A light was installed at the end of the pier to keep ships away from the cable.

The timbers of the pier would have been replaced throughout its life. A breakwater or wave screen, angled to the north, was installed at the end of the pier in 1955 and demolished in 1998. In 1971, the pier was reconstructed in timber slightly north of its original position retaining the same dimensions, orientation, and form. In 2011 a new concrete pier and platform on painted steel piles was constructed on the landward section of the north side of the pier.

Telegraphic communication in Victoria

Telegrams sent by morse code revolutionised communications in the nineteenth century. The first telegraphic line in Victoria was installed in Melbourne in 1854. Telegraph lines spread throughout the state and in 1858 Melbourne was connected to Adelaide and Sydney3 . Submarine telegraphy was needed to communicate with other countries but was more difficult technologically and the first overseas telegram was not received in Melbourne until 1872.

Although internationally the first submarine cables began to be laid from 1845, many early cables failed due to abrasion on rocks, being caught by fishermen or accidental cutting of cables by passing ships. The first successful transatlantic cable was laid in 1866. At this time there was an explosive growth of cable communications all over the world with ca.640 cables laid between 1860 and 1900 and another ca.520 laid between 1901 and 1950.

In the present day, submarine cables (now largely fibreoptic) carry more than 99 per cent of international data traffic (satellite accounts for less than one per cent). There are currently three submarine cables between Tasmania and Victoria with Victorian landing points at Sandy Point, McGaurans Beach and Yanakie. A new cable is proposed and will land at Venus Bay. It appears that Victoria's eastern coast is still the best place to install telecommunication cables between Victoria and Tasmania.

Telegraph cable companies

The rapid growth in cable communications all over the world was driven by profitable private companies led by enterprising individuals. Monopoly agreements were often negotiated with governments by these companies and governments paid subsidies to the companies to lay and operate cables. The Telegraph Construction & Maintenance Company (TC&MC) was formed in the UK in April 1864 and laid cables all over the world4 . The British Australian Telegraph Company (BATCo) operated many cables in Australia. In 1873 BATCo amalgamated with the British Indian Extension Telegraph Company Limited and the China Submarine Telegraph Company Limited to form the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company Limited (EEA&TCo). TC&MC and EEA&TCo were linked by UK entrepreneur and Cable King John Pender who was a major investor in TC&MC and a director of EEA&TCo.

Flinders cable installation

The first submarine cable connecting Tasmania to mainland Australia was installed in 1859 between Low Head in Tasmania and Cape Otway Lightstation (VHR H1222), via King Island. It was abandoned after less than two years due to frequent cable breakages. The Victorian and Tasmanian governments continued to work towards creating a submarine cable link between the two states, and in 1867 they contracted the TC&MC to install a new cable.

In 1869, the TC&MC6 ship SS Investigator assisted by the Navy Ship Pharos laid a submarine cable from Low Head in Tasmania to Flinders. The installers faced and overcame many difficulties while laying the cable. Around two hundred miles (322 km) of cable were laid between Tasmania and Flinders. The last 12 miles (19 km) of

cable at each shore end were more heavily armoured. The whole cable weighed 498 tons (453 tonnes). The cable was laid directly on the ocean floor. When it reached shallower water, deep trenches were dug in the sand to protect it from passing ships. Subsequently, concrete lined tunnels were used to bring the cable to the surface. The successful installation of the 1869 cable was greeted by a flurry of celebratory telegrams between the mayors of all Australian capital cities7 .

The cable was armoured to prevent breakage by being wrapped in layers of wire and was insulated with gutta-percha. This is a natural polymer somewhat similar to latex rubber but more rigid. Later technology included heavier armouring and innovations to strengthen the signal, but gutta-percha continued to be used to insulate submarine cables until it was replaced with polyethylene in the 1940s.

TC&MC is most likely to have laid the next two cables at Flinders in 1885 and 1898 because they laid all the cables for EEA&TC. In 1909 Siemens Brothers of London was contracted by the Commonwealth Post Master General to lay two cables8 . These were known as the east and west cables and allowed cable traffic to move in two directions for the first time. All the cables appear to have been laid on the south side of the pier because historic images show cable test houses in this location; but this has not been confirmed.

Cable operations

The first Flinders cable station appears to have been initially operated by the Victorian Postmaster General because advertisements in the Government Gazette refer to works to the cable station9 . It was known as the Post and Telegraph Office. It appears that EEA&TCo took over the cable station operation in 1891 and moved the telegraph cable operations to its new building located on the northern side of Flinders. It continued to operate the cable station until 1909 when the Commonwealth Postmaster General took it over.

Meanwhile BATCo appears to have purchased the 1869 cable itself from TC&MC perhaps around 1871 (when TC&MC's cable ship was sold to BATCo). In 1873 BATCo sold the Tasmanian Submarine Telegraph Cable to EEA&TCo for £70,000 in shares. Contemporary newspaper reports expressed the hope that the new company's charges would be lower. It appears that the 1885 and 1898 cables were also owned by EEA&TCo. The 1909 cable appears to have been owned and operated by the Commonwealth Postmaster General.

In 1914 two German cruisers SMS Nürnberg and SMS Titania attacked EEA&TC's central Pacific telegraph cable relay station on Fanning Island in the Pacific. Later that year SMS Emden attacked EEA&TC's telegraph station in the Cocos Islands. Because of the strategic importance of cable communications and the dangers cable infrastructure faced during World War I, the pier and beach at Flinders were guarded by soldiers camped near the site of the present Flinders Golf Club.

The telegraph cable at Flinders appears to have operated until the late 1930s or early 1940s when the submarine telephone and telegraph cable installed at Apollo Bay in 1936 began operations. In 1943, the two 1909 cables were excavated and taken to New Guinea to provide war-time communications. Soldiers continued to guard the site even after removal of the cables in order to mislead any enemy surveillance.

Flinders Submarine Telegraph Complex buildings

Different types of infrastructure are commonly associated with cable stations. All of these were installed or constructed at Flinders at some point during its operational history:

• Armoured submarine and land-based telegraph cables.
• Cable hut on the beach. This is where the submarine cable landed and where messages were transcribed. They were replaced by test houses as the cable signals became more powerful.
• Test house on the foreshore. A test house is where the submarine cable landed and was joined to the land-based telegraph cable. In the test house the two cables can be disconnected, and each tested separately in order to identify if a problem was in the submarine or land section of the cable. Portable instruments were used in earlier test houses, and later test houses had instruments installed on the walls. In Queensland in 1901, test houses installed for the Pacific Cable were prefabricated in the UK. It has not been possible to determine if this was the case at Flinders.
• Repeater stations to amplify signals
• Cable stations where the morse code was received from the test house. These were generally substantial buildings with specialised equipment and rooms. They often provided postal services as well and were typically known as a Post and Telegraph Office. Messages transmitted via the submarine cable for local residents were transcribed and sent to the recipients as telegrams, typically delivered by boys on bikes. Messages for other

destinations were amplified and re-transmitted to the next cable station.
• Residences and workshops. Telegraph cable and its associated equipment was not reliable and frequent repairs were needed, much of which was done on site.
• Plantings from gardens associated with the cable station and residences
• Paths, fences and telegraph poles.
Between 1869 and ca.1940s, three different buildings operated as cable stations, each in a different part of Flinders. It appears that after being amplified at the cable station, the messages were transmitted along Cook Street to the cable station at Cape Schank and onto Melbourne and from there to the rest of Australia and the world.

First cable station 1869 - 1891.
A rendered masonry building at the top of the cliff where the memorials are located. In 1891 it was sold and converted to a guest house called Houghton House. Later it was used as tea rooms. It was demolished by the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department (PMG) in the early 1960s.

Second cable station 1891 - 1909.
A large, elaborate, timber building designed by Harold Desbrowe-Annear located on the corner of Wood Street and Cove Lane. This was constructed for EEA&TCo. After 1909 it operated as Flinders Guest House. This burnt down in the early 1960s and its location is outside the proposed extent of registration.

Post and Telegraph Office 1909 - ca.1940s.
After federation the Post Master General (PMG) took over the telegraph operations and appears to have moved the cable receiving and transmission equipment and functions to what became the Post and Telegraph Office on Cook Street, Flinders. A timber post office is still in existence on Cook Street in 2022 and its location is outside the proposed extent of registration.

Cable huts and test houses
The first cable hut constructed at Flinders was a small timber building. At least two test houses were present at Flinders later, probably installed to accommodate the later cables (installed in 1885, 1898 and 1909). It is not known if the Flinders test houses had instruments installed on the walls or if portable instruments were used. The last test house installed (perhaps in 1909) is visible in pre-World War II images. It appears to have been removed with all the other structures during the clearance of the beach during World War II. Its fate is unknown. Initially the signal received in the Flinders test house was so weak, it had to be transcribed in the cable hut and carried up the steep cliff to the cable station at the top of the hill where it was re-coded for transmission to Cape Schanck. Later, the signal was stronger and could travel along the land cable to the cable station where it was amplified. It is not known if the land telegraph cable at Flinders was carried on telegraph poles or installed underground. In 1891 EEA&TCo constructed a repeater station on the beach, probably to provide a stronger signal to its new, larger cable station on the corner of Wood Street and Cove Lane. This may have been located to the north of the pier.

Monuments
There are three monuments located at the western end of the cable station site at the top of the cliff.

1. George Bass & Matthew Flinders Monument
This monument commemorates George Bass and Matthew Flinders for their exploration of Western Port, Bass Strait and Tasmania and was . The marble plaque commemorates Bass and Flinders, and modern plaque commemorates a 1998 re-enactment of their journey. The monument was constructed by members of the Flinders community and unveiled by Governor Sir John Fuller during an elaborate ceremony before most of the community as well as members of the government on 26 April 1912. Many residents of Melbourne and Flinders were involved in the creation of the memorial. It appears to have been initiated by Dr James William Barrett. Barrett was an ophthalmologist who held positions with ca.26 organisations and at his death was said to have been one of the most, public-spirited citizens Victoria had ever known. He was the chairman of both the Victorian National Parks Association and the Victorian Historical Memorials Committee. These groups together with the Department of Public Instruction began a movement which led to the installation of simple, rustic stone cairns around Victoria commemorating explorers. The Flinders Memorial was one of the earliest memorials of this type.

2. Flinders War Memorial
This fine memorial was built in 1922 to commemorate those from the area who served in World War I. The names

of those who served are listed on a cast bronze plaque on the west side and a more modern plaque outlining the history of the war was installed on the east side by the Australian Government`s Your Community Heritage Program. The large smooth, evenly sized, waterworn stones were bought up from the cliffs below by the community.

The memorial was designed by noted Melbourne architect Christopher Alfred Cowper (1868-1954). He did not charge for the work, and it took place after he had largely moved from architectural design to real estate. The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture states that Cowper's *domestic work exhibits great refinement in detail and composition. His highly individual handling of joints and bracket details is especially skilful, and adds not only visual interest to the houses, but also imparts a craft-like quality to his architecture*. This *great refinement in detail and composition* also applies to this memorial.

3. Flinders & District World War Two Memorial
This memorial was dedicated in 2017 and holds the World War II plaque originally installed on the World War I memorial. It is smaller than the Flinders War Memorial but appears to have been thoughtfully designed to be sympathetic to it by being the same shape (without seats) and being made of similar materials.

There is a memorial to the cable station on the foreshore close to the location of one of the cable landing sites.

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Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act 2017, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2413
Category: Registered Place, Registered Objects Integral to a Registered Place; Registered Archaeological Place
Place: Flinders Telegraph Cable Complex and Pier
Location: The Esplanade, Flinders
Municipality: Mornington Peninsula Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2413 encompassing all of Allotment 16B Parish of Flinders, and the parts of Allotment 29A Section A Township of Flinders, Lot 16A Township of Flinders, and part of the road reserve of The Esplanade. All of the registered objects integral to the place are listed in the inventory held by the Executive Director.

Dated 20 October 2022
STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director

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/