

## FORMER FORT FRANKLIN (PORTSEA CAMP)



FORMER FORT FRANKLIN  
(PORTSEA CAMP) SOHE  
2008



h01090 1 fort franklin portsea  
gun emplacement 02 0903  
mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
commandants house 01 0604  
js



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
barracks 02 0903 mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
barracks and parade ground  
0903 mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
bunker observation post 01  
0604 js



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
bunker 01 0903 mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
engineers cottage 01 0903  
mz



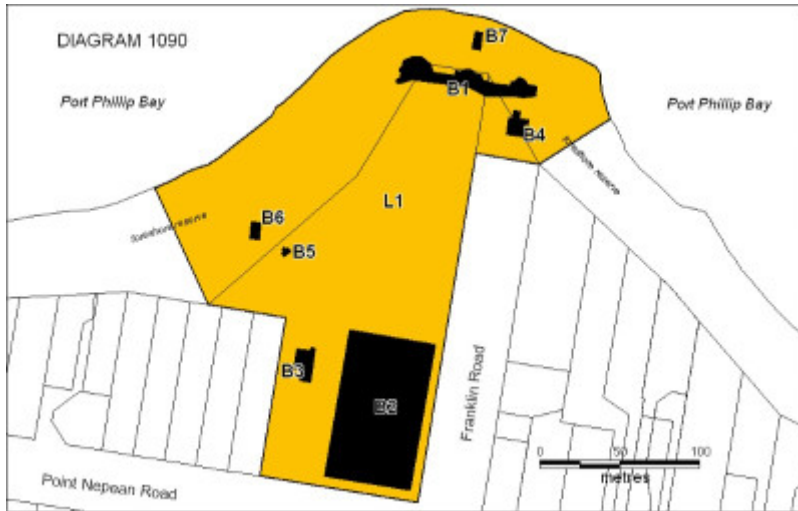
h01090 fort franklin portsea  
forward observation post  
0903 mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
gun emplacement 01 0903  
mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea  
gun emplacement jun1983  
mz



h01090 fort franklin portsea plan

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## Location

3704 POINT NEPEAN ROAD 2-10 FRANKLIN ROAD PORTSEA, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1090

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO198

## VHR Registration

July 27, 1995

## Amendment to Registration

July 22, 2004

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 5, 1999

What is significant?

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) consists of a series of gun emplacements, associated barracks and parade ground, commandant's house and timber staff cottage as well as underground bunkers and observation posts dating from c.1940. Buildings associated with the later use of the site by the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp from 1946/47 to 1995 are also on the site. The fort was operated by the Victorian colonial government until Federation when it was taken over by the Commonwealth. From 1946, the site was leased from the army and then the Department of the Interior before being purchased by the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp Fund in 1964. The children's camp is now known as the Portsea Camp.

The fort was sited on land formerly occupied in the 1850s by the Watson family who came to Australia from Scotland in 1856. John Watson occupied an area of land which now forms part of the Portsea Camp and built a six room limestone house there, as well as a hut on the foreshore. The limestone house now known as the Commandant's house may date from the Watson period, that is, prior to 1885. The land on which the fort stands was compulsorily acquired in 1885 from John Watson by the Victorian government at a cost of £1500.

The fort was constructed between 1885 and 1889 as part of the system of fortifications of Port Phillip Bay to protect Melbourne against invasion by Russian raiders. The outer defences in Port Phillip Bay consisted of forts at Queenscliff, and Point Nepean (Crow's Nest, Nepean and Eagle's Nest). A fort was required at Portsea to form part of the inner defences, together with South Channel Fort and Swan Island. In 1887 the form of the emplacements can be seen in a contemporary illustration. In 1887 the armament at the Fort consisted of three 80-pound muzzle-loading guns, but it was by then decided to substitute three breech loading guns on the disappearing principle. In 1892, Fort Franklin contained two 5 inch 3 ton guns, one 10 inch 25 ton gun, one 4.724 inch Quick Firing gun for sea defence and one 5 barrel Nordenfeldt field gun in case of land attack. (Michael Kitson) The task of Fort Franklin was to guard the South Channel, preventing enemy shipping using the South Channel and to provide a site for examination anchorage, where suspicious ships were ordered to drop anchor and be searched while under the surveillance of gunners.

The gun emplacements at Fort Franklin have been altered, for example the tunnels of the gun emplacement have been bricked up for safety reasons. Some of the joinery around the storage recesses and other details remain. Some evidence of original signage remains. The form of the three gun emplacements is intact and the mounds demonstrate the way the guns were mounted. The barracks building was probably constructed c.1885-89. The barracks, house and staff cottage have lost some detailing and require refurbishment, but the essential form of the buildings and much of the internal arrangement and fabric survives. The staff cottage was on its present site by 1887.

The fortifications at Fort Franklin represent part of an integrated coastal defence system dating from the late nineteenth century and demonstrate contemporary developments in military architecture and engineering, particularly to cater for the disappearing gun.

A small hospital ward was built, probably at the time of the construction of the barracks and it is believed that five soldiers who had returned from the Boer War died there in August 1902. The hospital building of that period is no longer extant and may have been replaced by the present medical centre.

Later military use during World War II necessitated the construction of underground bunkers and observation posts. The site was used as an ammunition dump by the United States Army during World War II. One of the bunkers is believed to be an underground munitions store. Another partly underground structure to the west of the site was an observation post. The forward searchlight emplacement on the cliff beyond the gun emplacement was also constructed for use during World War II. The camp was also used as a migrant camp for a short time in the immediate post-World War II period.

The buildings which date from the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp include dormitories, staff quarters, and medical centre. In the 1970s the medical centre was a seven-bed hospital staffed by the Alfred Hospital. The original idea for the camp was to provide seaside holidays to underprivileged children from remote areas. The first groups of children came from the Mallee. Health checks and medical and dental treatment for the children were for many years an integral part of the camp, but this became less necessary in the 1960s when better health care became available. The barrack building in particular demonstrates changing patterns of occupancy from use by the army

to use by the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp.

There has been a long association between the community and the children's camp occupation of the site, in particular, involvement by medical and allied professionals, members of the fire, police and surf lifesaving services and other volunteers, who have been involved in the camp since the 1940s. The community holds strong shared memories of experiences and social life, which have created a strong connection to the place.

How is it significant?

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) is of, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) is architecturally important as a rare and essentially intact example of nineteenth century fortifications and military barracks in Victoria and as part of the larger system of fortifications around Port Phillip Bay. The barracks is the only surviving intact example of nineteenth century military barracks around Port Phillip Bay

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) is historically important as part of the extensive system of fortifications set up in the 1880s to defend Victoria against possible attack by Russian raiders. Changes to the fort in World War II are also of historical significance, as are changes reflecting the later use of the site as a camp for underprivileged children.

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) is of scientific significance in demonstrating technical advances in gunnery and defence construction in the late nineteenth century, particularly to cater for the newly invented disappearing gun.

The Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) is of social significance for its association with the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp from the 1940s to 1995, and with the similar activities carried on by the Portsea Camp, in the provision of holidays and health care for disadvantaged children with strong community involvement by volunteers.

## 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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

### Interior

All internal painting works of previously painted surfaces in the former barracks buildings B-2, not including the ceiling boards which are currently stained. Preparation work for painting shall not remove evidence of the building's original paint schemes.

### Non-registered buildings

No permit is required for any works, other than major external works or demolition, to buildings not specifically listed in the extent of registration.

### Landscape Permit Exemptions

\* Repairs, conservation, and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings and structures, fountains and monuments, steps, paths, paths and gutters, drainage and irrigation systems, edging, fences and gates.

\* The process of gardening; mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety garden works

\* New or replacement planting which conserves the historic landscape character including specimen trees, avenues, rows, shrubberies flower beds, and lawns.

\* In the event of loss of any tree or palm specified in the Extent of Registration, replanting with the same species of tree as that removed.

\* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems outside the canopy edge of significant trees. .s

\* Vegetation protection and management of the possum and rabbit population.

\* Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

\*Maintenance and replacement of play equipment to meet Australian Standards: Playground

equipment for parks, schools and domestic use AS 1924; Playground installation and maintenance of equipment AS 2155 and Playground surfacing- Specifications, requirements and test method AS 4422.

### Regular Site Maintenance

The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the *Heritage Act 1995*,

\* Regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

\* the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials;

\* cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing;

\* repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation.

\* The replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric.

#### Fire Suppression Duties

The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the *Heritage Act 1995*,

\* Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

\* 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;

Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

#### Landscape Maintenance

The following landscape maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the *Heritage Act 1995*,

\* Landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

#### Public Safety and Security

The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the *Heritage Act 1995*,

\* Public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

\* The erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features;

\* Development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public.

#### Signage and Site Interpretation

The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the *Heritage Act 1995*,

\* Signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

\* The erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items;

\* Signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place;

\* Signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place;

Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials.

Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation.

### Minor Works

Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the *Heritage Act*. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit.

If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Construction dates      | 1870,  |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place,  |
| Other Names             | PORTSEA CAMP, LORD MAYOR'S CHILDREN'S CAMP, FORT FRANKLIN, |
| Hermes Number           | 2322   |
| Property Number         |  |

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## History

Associated People: Tenant MILITARY USE;

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The fortifications at Fort Franklin represent part of an integrated coastal defence system dating from the late nineteenth century and demonstrate contemporary developments in military architecture and engineering, particularly to cater for the 'disappearing gun'.

A small hospital ward was built, probably at the time of the construction of the barracks and it is believed that five soldiers who had returned from the Boer War died there in August 1902. (Shire of Flinders Study, Moorhead p. 36) The hospital building of that period is no longer extant and may have been replaced by the present medical centre.

Later military use during World War II necessitated the construction of underground bunkers and observation posts. The site was used as an ammunition dump by the United States Army during World War II. One of the bunkers is believed to be an underground munitions store. Another partly underground structure to the west of the site was an observation post. The forward searchlight emplacement on the cliff beyond the gun emplacement was also constructed for use during World War II. The camp was also used as a migrant camp for a short time in the immediate post-World War II period.

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## **Extent of Registration**

Notice of Registration

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1090 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Former Fort Franklin (Portsea Camp) 3704 Point Nepean Road 2D10 Franklin Road Portsea

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

EXTENT:

1. All the buildings marked B1DB7 as follows on Diagram 1090 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Gun Emplacements (3)
- B2 Barracks and parade ground (but excluding Connelly Hall)
- B3 Commandants House
- B4 Staff House
- B5 Bunker
- B6 Bunker/Observation Post
- B7 Forward Observation Post



2. All the land marked L1 as follows on Diagram 1090 held by the Executive Director, being the land described in Certificate of Title, Vol. 4328, Folio 593 and part of the foreshore reserve and part of the Franklin Road reserve.

Dated 13 July 2004

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 30 22 July 2004 2084]

*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/>*