
Point Gellibrand Battery

Location

WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

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Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

D7822-0396

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 125741

Property Number

Veterans Description for Public

The Point Gellibrand Battery was built in 1854 and was the first major defence installation in colony and was constructed of convict quarried stone. Governor Bourke had recommended that a battery be built to protect the fledgling colony in 1837. The battery was made by filling in the area with rubble and clay to form a 2.1 m high embankment that was 5.5 m wide. It had a sloped exterior wall with vertical interior stonework, and was armed with six 32 lb guns plus three other guns. Initial reports stated that the fortifications could be seen at low tide in 1855, suggesting that the original site was built in the intertidal zone. A semicircular redoubt was built sometime after 1855 on reclaimed land, with a 300 ft radius, 9 guns, and a central magazine. The battery was later matched by a similar battery at Kerferd Rd (Port Melbourne), whose combined gunfire effectively restricted access into

Hobson's Bay. The redoubt is shown on Ross' 1858 plan, and nine principal gun emplacements and five secondary emplacements had been installed by 1859, and is shown in Chevaliers lithograph of Hobson's Bay of 1862.

By 1860, Scratchley had noted that the nine 32 lb guns at the battery were useless as they were open to enfilade from the sea and had no magazine. He recommended that four new batteries be established at Point Gellibrand, including a new battery in front of the lighthouse. In 1861, 68 lb guns replaced the previous artillery, and the previous battery was upgraded using convict labour. The existing guns were then replaced in 1870 with Armstrong Guns (2 x 300 lb, 4 x 80 lb) and 2 x 68 smooth bore guns. The expansion of the defence facilities at the Heads led to the redundancy and gradual dismantling of battery defences in Hobson's Bay by the end of the 1870s. Jervis recommended in 1877 against any further batteries at Williamstown, and specified that the current batteries here and at Sandridge should be used for drilling and practice. The Lighthouse battery, along with the Right and Pier batteries were removed in the late 1880's/early 1890's, leaving Fort Gellibrand as the only battery in Hobson's Bay.

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/>