
FORMER BATHS COMPANY SEA BATHS

Location

1 ARTILLERY CRESCENT AND 2 GILLIES STREET WARRNAMBOOL, WARRNAMBOOL CITY

Municipality

WARRNAMBOOL CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7321-0059

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO128

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site	<p>The original buildings of the relocated baths are still present. The timber building seems to enclose an indoor bath as can be seen by the stone socle that forms the base perimeter of the building. A surface drain in the south west corner of the building feeds into an aperture beneath the ground level of the building. This indicates there was a basin or pool underneath the timber floor of this building. Between the shed and the timber building there are two stone circular features of unknown function. The stone oval ring of a maximum length of around 20 metres was an exterior pool which has been filled in. Although the area is grassed over patches of bitumen can be seen outside the stone ring. This was an exterior walking surface. To the east of the stone ring it appears that the slope has been cut into. Although heavily overgrown, stone wall features are discernable, although their function is not apparent. Below the stone ring the ground drops away steeply to the railway reserve. At the base of the slope is a drainage ditch, which may have been associated with the sea baths.</p> <p>The site of the original baths was examined but no features associated with the site were observed</p>
Archaeological Significance	<p>The archaeological significance of the remains of the sea baths lies in their ability to provide information on how the patrons of the baths at the end of the 19th century enjoyed the luxuries the facilities provided. Of particular interest would be to learn how the water was brought to the site, how it moved through the site, and how it was carried away. Cultural deposits formed by objects discarded deliberately or accidentally would provide some insight into the range of activities that took place on the site.</p>
Historical Significance	<p>Originally constructed in the 1860s and moved to its present location in the 1880s, the Warrnambool Sea Baths represent the interests of the citizens of the town had in procuring and utilising the therapeutic qualities of sea water for health and recreational reasons.</p>
Other Names	<p>WARRNAMBOOL SALT WATER BATHS, WARRNAMBOOL SEA BATHS,</p>
Hermes Number	<p>149831</p>
Property Number	

History

Throughout the 1860s, growing numbers of Warrnambool residents began petitioning the Borough Council for the provision of public baths in the townships. In early 1876, a private company was formed to build a public bathing house, established as a co-operative company with capital in shares. Close to 1000 pounds was raised by the Baths Company via the sale of shares of 1 pound each. A section of land at the base of Cannon Hill on the bank of Lake Pertobe was acquired and construction began.

The baths were opened in October 1877, but by 1878 were already in financial trouble, as less shares than hoped had been sold. Council was approached to purchase the Baths, but refused, and they were leased for the next five years. In 1883, Council purchased the facility and carried out improvements. They were completed and re-opened in 1884. A prominent advertisement campaign detailed the Baths as offering both fresh and salt water pools. The seawater was pumped up a mile and a half using an American windmill, and then passed through a filter bed to create clear pure water. The main concrete swimming bath was 100 feet long by 50 feet wide and was surrounded by dressing rooms. From 10am to 1pm daily the bath was set aside for the use of ladies. The hot water baths were particularly popular for their medical properties. By the end of 1884, the Baths were turning an 11% profit.

In 1886, the extension of the Warrnambool railway line meant that the facility had to be modified as the lower section of Cannon Hill was cut away. By the 1890s, the Baths were growing in popularity, and the facilities were

extended and upgraded. Advertisements stated that they "rival the miracles of Lourdes".

They continued to be popular into the 1930s, but by the mid 20th century they were closed down.

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/>