

# SPLIT POINT LIGHTSTATION COMPLEX



Lighthouse tower



Lighthouse and stable



Entrance room



Spiral staircase



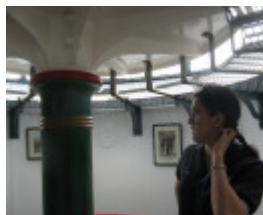
Staircase and column capital



Opening to signal station



Chance Bros plaque



Landing below light



Head keeper's quarters from tower



Split Point Lightstation assistant keepers' quarters & stable from tower



Split Point Lightstation lens array from below



Split Point Lightstation interior of lens array and lamp



Split Point Lightstation head keeper's quarters



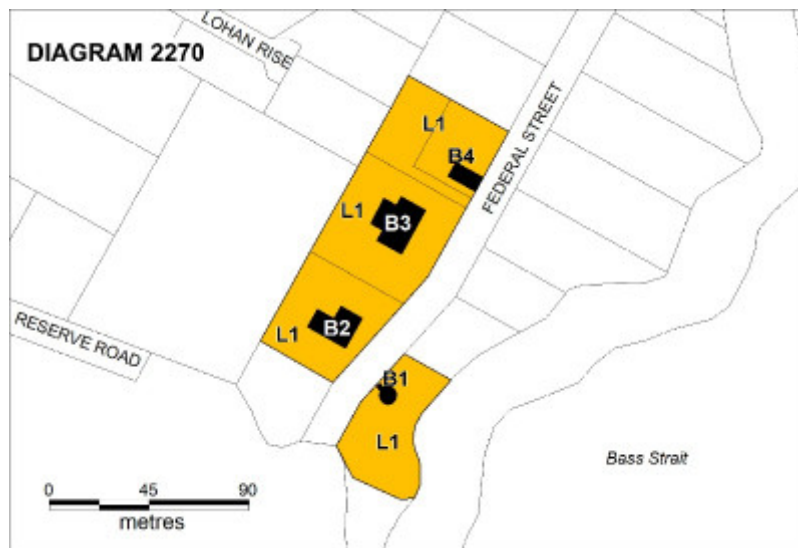
Split Point Lightstation water pump at keeper's house



Split Point Lightstation assistants quarters



Stable



split point plan.jpg

## Location

24 FEDERAL STREET and 7-13 FEDERAL STREET AIREYS INLET, SURF COAST SHIRE

## Municipality

SURF COAST SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2270

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1

HO2

## VHR Registration

March 10, 2011

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The Split Point Lightstation at Airey's Inlet includes a lighthouse, head keeper's quarters, two semi-detached assistant keepers' quarters and a stable building. Following numerous shipwrecks on the nearby coast, the 6.3 hectare lighthouse reserve was gazetted in 1890 and the complex was built in 1890-91 to designs by the Public Works Department and the lighthouse was constructed by the Richmond contractors R Anderson & Sons. Robert Anderson was one of the stonemasons who had led the 1856 Eight Hour Movement marches in Victoria, and a plaque commemorating him is attached to the base of the lighthouse. The lantern at the top of the lighthouse tower was supplied by Chance Brothers of Birmingham, the world's main makers of complex optical equipment, which supplied specialist lighthouse equipment to virtually all Australian lighthouses. The quarters for the keeper and two assistant keepers accommodated the three men needed to operate the lighthouse twenty-four hours a day. The lamp was originally powered by vapourised kerosene, was changed to acetylene in 1919, after which the light became automatic and unmanned, and was converted to mains electricity in 1972. The former keepers' quarters were sold in 2004 and are now private residences.

The Split Point lighthouse is a 33.5 metre high concrete tower with a lantern on top. The tower has an impressive cast iron spiral staircase and the landings at each level are supported by columns with unusually elaborate capitals. An unusual feature of the tower is the entrance room at its base. The lantern at the top of the tower is surmounted by a dome of copper sheets painted red and a ball-type ventilator with a simple arrow wind vane attached. The lantern glazing is of three tiers of flat glass sheets painted on the landward side and with red glass filters. The internal catwalks have cast iron lattice floor panels supported on openwork cast iron brackets. The balcony balustrade is of typical cast iron post and rail construction and the floor is concrete. The light source was a 1000W-120V tungsten halogen lamp but is now a small 100W globe. The lens assembly is a Chance Bros first order 920 mm focal radius fixed (non-rotating) lens assembly of glass and gunmetal, with an array of reflecting prisms on the landward side.

The head keeper's cottage is a weatherboard residence with a slate roof and with screened verandahs. The assistant keepers quarters are semi-detached cottages sharing a party wall and are of similar construction. Both quarters retain early water pumps at the rear, used to fill adjacent underground water tanks. The once clear views to the tower are now partly obscured by the growth of vegetation.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wathaurung people.

How is it significant?

The Split Point Lightstation is of historical, aesthetic, architectural and scientific (technical) significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Split Point Lightstation is historically significant as a major component of the system of lightstations built by the Victorian Government along the Victorian coast during the nineteenth century, which was vital for ensuring the safety of shipping. The keepers' quarters demonstrate the importance of the lighthouse keepers, once essential to operate the light continuously, but made obsolete by new technology which has, since 1919, enabled the light to operate automatically. The lighthouse is historically significant for its association with the stonemason Robert Anderson, one of the leaders of the Eight Hour Movement in Victoria.

Split Point is architecturally significant as a fine example of a nineteenth century lightstation complex. The lighthouse is notable for its elaborate cast-iron spiral staircase.

The Split Point Lighthouse is aesthetically significant for its classic tall white form and its location on a bold headland, which make it a notable landmark for travellers on the Great Ocean Road, and it features in tourist information for that popular route. It has been given the popular name 'the white queen'.

The Split Point lighthouse is of scientific (technical) significance for its intact 1886 Chance Brothers lantern, which has its original first order lens assembly still in use.

## Permit Exemptions

<span class="c1">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.</span> <span class="c1">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 Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.</span> <span class="c1">General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed 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 the Executive Director, 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.</span> <span class="c1">General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.</span> <span class="c1">General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.</span> <span class="c1">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 must 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.</span>

## Theme

### 3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications

Construction dates	1889,
Architect/Designer	Hynes, Frederick M.,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	SPLIT POINT LIGHTHOUSE, SPLIT POINT LIGHTHOUSE COMPLEX,
Hermes Number	4943
Property Number	

## History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The first lighthouse to be established in Australia was the Macquarie Light in Sydney in 1817. A select committee of the Legislative Council of NSW set up during September 1845, recommended the erection of lights on King Island (Cape Wickham) and Cape Otway to mark the Western entrance to Bass Strait and on the Island at the extreme point of Cape Howe (Gabo Island) and on the Kents Group (Deal Island) to mark the Eastern entrance.

The first lighthouse in Victoria was at Cape Otway (1848), followed by four in 1859: Griffith Island (Port Fairy), Lady Bay (Warrnambool), Cape Schank (entrance to Port Phillip) and Wilsons Promontory, then in 1862 Gabo Island. Following these were Cliffy Island/ & Cape Nelson (1884) and Point Hicks (1890), both in Gippsland, and Split Point (1890).

Lighthouses were the responsibility of the various colonies until the passing of the Lighthouses Act in 1911. On July 1 1915 the Commonwealth took over from the States responsibility for lightstations and other marine marks and navigational aids.

### General features of Victorian Lightstations

Whilst most of the lightstations conform to an overall standard layout and similarity of plan in light-tower, headkeepers quarters and assistants' quarters, some differences peculiar to the locality or to the date and type of construction do occur.

The 1979 Report on Victorian Lighthouses divided lighthouse towers and their related structures broadly into four types, related to the date of construction:

Type 1: L Cape Otway (1848), Cape Schank (1859), Wilsons Promontory (1859)

Type 2: Gabo Island (1862)

Type 3: Cliffy Island (1884), Cape Nelson (1884), Point Hicks (1890), Split Point (1891).

Type 4: Citadel Island (1913, rebuilt 1940), Cape Liptrap (1913, rebuilt 1950).

All of the lighthouse towers have been altered to a greater or lesser extent to meet changed navigational requirements or to overcome maintenance problems.

### Residence and subsidiary buildings

Throughout the years during which lighthouses were built with residential quarters attached (i.e. from 1848-1891) the plans of headkeeper's and assistant's quarters buildings remained basically the same with only minor variations.

Considerable changes have been made to all the residential quarters, with new kitchens and bathrooms installed, as well as heating, electricity, telephones, water tanks and garages. Original roofs and gutters have often been replaced with asbestos cement. However generally the external appearance has altered little.

### Robert Anderson and the Eight Hour Movement

Robert Anderson, with James Galloway, James Stephen and T W Vine is credited with being a key organizer of the eight hour movement, and of the strike on 21 April 1856 when stonemasons working at Melbourne University downed tools and marched to parliament House with other members of the building trade. This eventually led to an agreement with the government that workers employed on public building sites would be able to work an eight-hour day with no loss of pay. Although the eight-hour day was not achieved nationally until 1920 the 1856 beginnings in Victoria have been described thus:

One of the great successes of the Australian working class during the nineteenth century demonstrating to Australian workers that it was possible to successfully organise, mobilise, agitate and exercise significant control over working conditions and quality of life. The Australian trade union movement grew out of eight-hour campaigning and the movement that developed to promote the principle.

### Chance Brothers of Birmingham

Chance Brothers & Co was for decades the main makers of complex lighthouse optical equipment. The company exported worldwide for about a century. It was founded in 1824 and was a family business for six generations. In 1850 Chance Brothers started a Lighthouse department. A year later, their powerful First Order Lens was shown at the London Great Exhibition. A first order lens is the largest, most powerful and expensive type of lens. The order is based on the focal length of the lens. A first order lens has the longest focal length, with the sixth being the shortest. Coastal lighthouses generally use first, second or third order lenses. The firm glazed the Crystal Palace and Houses of Parliament, made the white glass for the four faces of Big Ben, and created ornamental windows for the White House in America.

### HISTORY OF PLACE

Following the wreck of the Hereford in 1881 just east of Split Point and numerous wrecks west of Point Lonsdale, the government was finally convinced of the need for another lighthouse between Cape Otway and Point Lonsdale. At that time lighthouses were still the responsibility of the states, with Commonwealth not assuming control over coastal lights until 1915.

The 6.3 hectare lighthouse reserve was gazetted in 1890 and on 2 May 1890 tenders were called for the building of a lighthouse and residences designed by the architects of the Public Works Department. The tender was let to R Anderson & Sons, Building Contractors of Richmond. A family connection appears to exist between this Richmond contracting company and the large Anderson family who were pioneers in the Anglesea district. W Anderson & Sons was founded in 1870 and amongst other

general building activities they also ran a brass foundry and supplied spiral staircases. Robert Anderson followed his father into the building business.

The lantern dome was ordered from Chance Brothers of Birmingham, which supplied specialist lighthouse equipment to virtually all Australian lighthouses. The order included the copper dome, iron railing, pressure lamp, dioptric mirrors, shades, a constant level lamp to be used as the auxiliary light, together with all the ancillary equipment required for a functioning lighthouse. The total cost of this was approximately one-third of the cost of construction of the lighthouse. The lamp was a mantle lamp using vaporised kerosene. In 1919 the colours and character of the lights were changed with the replacement lamp fuelled by acetylene. In 1972 the lamp was converted to mains electricity with a diesel generator backup housed in the entrance room at the base of the tower.

Three people were the minimum required to operate a manned lighthouse 24 hours a day. The lighthouse keepers lived in the adjacent cottages, which were erected from designs prepared by Public Works Department Architects.

The nights tending lights were long for the keepers, and Gordon Reid tells of one keeper's solution to the problem in his book, *From Dusk Till Dawn*.

The keeper at Split Point at Airey's Inlet in Victoria did not exactly sleep on the job but he did not see why he should be deprived of his social life at night. He scratched a small hole in the black paint on the back of the lantern, which prevents the light shining inland and annoying residents. This keeper, Richard Joy Baker, scratched the hole to line up with the Airey's Inlet Hotel. Each time the lenses rotated, the light winked through the hole, assuring the keeper (who had retired to the hotel) that all was well.

The Split Point Lightstation is part of the important system of Australian coastal navigational aids. Split Point, named for the distinctive large freestanding rock just off the headland, was known as Eagles Nest Point until 1913. The Lighthouse tower is a prominent landmark on the rugged southern coastline. It stands on a bold headland and is a prominent feature of the landscape for many miles along the Great Ocean road.

The former keepers' cottages were sold in 2004.

**References**

A S Bennett & G B Loader, 'Report on Victorian Lighthouses', September 1979, Produced by Technical Services Division, Dept of Construction, Victoria & Tasmania Region.

David Nash, 'A Report on Historical Classifications of Lightstations', May 1979, for the Department of Transport Navigational Aids Branch Planning and Development Section.

Third Ecology Architects, 'Split Point Lightstation Federal Street Aireys Inlet and Monuments 64-66 Great Ocean Road Aireys Inlet' for Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (no date).

## Assessment Against Criteria

### a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The Split Point Lightstation is historically significant as a major component of the system of lightstations built by the Victorian Government along the Victorian coast during the nineteenth century, which was vital for ensuring the safety of shipping. The keepers' quarters demonstrate the importance of the lighthouse keepers, once essential to operate the light continuously but made obsolete by new technology which enables the lighthouses to operate automatically.

### b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

### c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

### d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

Split Point is architecturally significant as a fine example of a nineteenth century lightstation complex. The lighthouse is notable for its elaborate cast-iron spiral staircase.

### e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

The Split Point Lighthouse is aesthetically significant for its classic tall white form and its location on a bold headland, which make it a notable landmark for travellers on the Great Ocean Road, and features in tourist information for that popular route. It has been given the popular name 'the white queen'.

### f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

The Split Point lighthouse is technically significant for its intact 1886 Chance Brothers lantern, which has its original first order lens assembly still in use.

g. Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

The Split Point lighthouse is associated with Robert Anderson, one of the stonemasons who led the 1856 Eight Hour Movement marches in Victoria. A plaque commemorating him is attached to the base of the lighthouse.

## **Plaque Citation**

Built in 1890-1, this was a major component of the system of lightstations built by the Victorian Government in the nineteenth century. Its original 1886 lens assembly by Chance Bros of Birmingham is still in use.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2270 held by the Executive Director, being all of the Crown land described as Allotments 15D and 15E Parish of Angahook (Lighthouse); Lot 2 on Title Plan LP14034 (Keeper's Quarters); Lot 1 on Title Plan TP841575 (Assistant Keepers' Quarters); and Lots 1 & 3 on Title Plan PS517585 (stables)
2. All the buildings marked B1-4 on Diagram 2270 held by the Executive Director.

B1 Lighthouse

B2 Head keeper's quarters

B3 Assistant keepers' quarters

B4 Stables

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*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/>*