
Alma Doepel - Sailing Ship



B4951 Alma Doepel 2
Victoria Harbour Docklands



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Location

2 Victoria Harbour,, DOCKLANDS VIC 3008 - Property No B4951

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

National

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 30, 2005

The Alma Doepel is historically significant as the only vessel of her class and type still afloat in Australia. She is typical of the early costal trading vessels that were the only link with the outside world for literally hundreds of little

ports dotted around the Australian coastline in the latter half of last century and the first few decades of the present century. These vessels were usually purpose-built to carry local products to market in the capital cities or the larger regional centres and return with essential goods for the maintenance of life and industry in the home port.

Alma Doepel was built with this role in mind, with all her timbers being hewn from local forests and dragged to her building site by bullock teams. Here it was mostly shaped by hands using methods with adze and axe, that have been lost with the passage of time and the technological advances of recent years. No doubt her planks were sawn by mechanical means in her owner/builder's sawmill, but a few remaining adze and axe marks on her timbers give ample testimony of the skill of the early Australian timber worker. Her design and construction conform to the proven principles of half a century earlier and today she stands alone as the only working example of her build and rig anywhere in the world. The ship was purpose-built to meet local demands that were unique to the township of Billingen, N.S.W. Her shallow draught and flat bottom were designed to enable her to negotiate the bar at the mouth of the Bellinger River, while centre-boards enabled her to carry sufficient sail at sea and still maintain stability. Her beam (width) and ample deck space were especially designed to allow a good cargo of timber to be carried both on deck and in her hold, thus servicing the rich timber industry of the Northern Rivers country.

For a small ship of this size to carry three masts was unusual, and was even more so when combined with a shallow draught (depth), flat bottom and centre-boards - today it makes the ship unique! The majority of small vessels that served the Australian coast carried two masts, and were either ketch rigged or schooner rigged, and usually without centre-boards.

Classified: 15/09/1993

Hermes Number 65793

Property Number

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/>