
Former Lifeboat Station - Port Fairy - Historic Area



B5005 Former Boat Shed



Lifeboat House

Location

3 Griffith Street,, PORT FAIRY VIC 3284 - Property No B5005

Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1431

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 14, 2008

The Port Fairy lifeboat station has outstanding historic and demonstrative significance. It is a rare and remarkably intact reminder of the important role local oared lifeboats, with volunteer crews, played in the days of hazardous, sail-powered coastal shipping.

It has a strong historic association with the economic importance of coastal shipping to Port Fairy (and other regional ports) in the 19th century, before this trade was largely destroyed by the spread of railways.

The lifeboat (which is an integral part of the place) has outstanding rarity value. This boat and its twin at Portland are thought to be the oldest lifeboats surviving in the world. These boats also have considerable technological

interest, as they had innovative design features produced for an 1851 lifeboat design competition, and were recognised as a great advance at the time.

While other sites have comparable histories and some significant elements (eg Portland, Warrnambool, Queenscliff and Newcastle, where vessels of various ages survive), only at Port Fairy does the original lifeboat survive with its associated buildings and significant demonstrative significance.

The lifeboat, buildings and artefacts are a microcosm of nineteenth century maritime activity at a regional seaport and a memorial to the volunteer crews who risked death to help others.

Classified: 1/10/1981

Revised: 03/08/1998

Port Fairy Historic Area Statement of Significance: Port Fairy is a natural harbour where the Moyne River enters the sea, the fourth of Victoria's coastal settlements, and now the one with the greatest concentration of pre-Separation buildings. These include numbers of simple double-fronted cottages in the local limestone, imported timber, and some basalt from the nearby flows, and the earliest of them may contain material from the whaling and pastoral period which preceded the sale of the site by the Crown.

The bulk of development post-dates both the finalisation of Atkinson's acquisition by Special Survey in 1843 of eight square miles (20sq.km.) of land, and the establishment shortly afterwards of a rival government town on the foreshore.

The characteristic qualities of the town derive from the coastal atmosphere and especially the timber wharves and jetties on the Moyne River (despite some intrusion of concrete), and the simple cottages and early hotels and commercial buildings, principally in the local limestone, all of which invite comparison with the South Australian port of Robe.

A special flavour is given to Port Fairy by the Irish influence of its early inhabitants upon the architecture, by the importation of Tasmanian materials and complete prefabricated buildings, by the widespread planting at later dates of Norfolk Island Pines, by the fine tufa stone carvings of Walter McGill which adorn the church buildings, and by the major buildings of the distinguished local architect Nathaniel Billing. All of these features are to be seen not only inside but in a more dispersed manner outside the designated area: within the area by contrast it has been necessary to exclude a section of mediocre modern development, the future of which (and especially the scale of building) must be closely monitored to prevent it further impinging on the special character of the town.

Classified: 02/03/1981

2010 Note: Building conserved 1990-1996, slipway rebuilt 2004, good condition.

Hermes Number 69349

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/>