

Researching historic heritage places



Tasmanian
Heritage
Council



Tasmania
Explore the possibilities



Researching heritage

Our historic heritage places reflect particular customs and beliefs for us as individuals or members of the community.



Researching these places helps us to better understand and appreciate our historic heritage. It also helps us to understand the role we play in a property's ongoing history. In the same way that understanding a family tree is important, often people are keen to better understand more about their home regardless of how old it is: when and why it was built, how it was furnished and who the past inhabitants were.

- Primary sources of information might include people, documents, objects, photos, or newspaper articles.
- Secondary information may be available through books, journals, reports or other materials, written and interpreted by another person, about a place's history.
- Talk to your neighbours, especially those who have lived in the area for a long time, to find out what they know about your place, the neighbourhood or local area.
- There may be a local historian, historical society or branch of the National Trust that can provide more details, and watch out for local history walks in your area.



Finding Information

There are a number of different sources you can use to help piece together the history of your home.



Some good places to continue with your search include:

- State Library of Tasmania
www.statelibrary.tas.gov.au
- Archives Office of Tasmania
www.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/collections/taho
- Land Titles Office
www.dpiw.tas.gov.au
- Heritage Registers (state and national)
www.heritage.tas.gov.au or
www.environment.gov.au/heritage
- Local Council records
- Local historical societies
- Local history rooms
- Local museums



Stepping through the process

Here are five steps to start your research.



Step 1: Search for old photos, pictures or plans. Draw or photograph your property, ensure that you have the correct name or a range of possible names and find out when the area was developed.

Step 2: Visit your local council to view old maps and plans of your property. Find out the title details, when the land was granted or subdivided, who the original owners were and what it was used for.

Step 3: Speak to previous owners or people who lived near the property, especially older residents. Consult the local historical society, museum or local branch of the National Trust. There may be groups that hold local history walks in the area.

Step 4: Read local or state history books, reports or newspaper articles to get a picture of what was happening during the period, as events of the day usually influenced material, design and architectural style. Compare the property's appearance today with old photos to see how it has changed or evolved over time.

Step 5: Build on your leads. If you find information about people who lived in the house, you could write to them or to the letters section of your community newspaper asking for more information.



Organising your information

Piecing together the information you've collected can be difficult.



Keep a filing system that best suits your style. To simplify the task, use a reliable note taking system, for example using:

- a notebook, an index card system, or a computer to record and organise your information;
- headings and sub-headings to group information or manila folders to catalogue information;
- plastic sleeves to file photos, including a tag attached to the plastic sleeve with details of the photo's subject.

Compile the story of your property, and don't forget to include your part in its history. If you move or sell your property, give a copy to your family. You could even leave a copy for the new owner. In this way, the history of the property is passed on to future owners and custodians.

For more information contact:

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