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Hobart Tasmania 7001
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Name: Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway
Status: Provisionally Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 11995
Municipality: Hobart City Council

Location Addresses

2 DAVIES AVE, QUEENS DOMAIN 7000 TAS
, QUEENS DOMAIN 7000 TAS

Title References

135056/6

Property Id

3180545



Remnants of the
Aquatic Baths timber
piling
DPIPWE

Boatsheds 32, 30, 29,
28, 27, 26 & 24
DPIPWE

Boatsheds 29, 28, 27,
26, 24, 23, 22 & 21
DPIPWE

Boatsheds 15, 14, 12,
11 & 9
DPIPWE



Boatsheds 7, 6, 5, 4,
3, 2 & 1
DPIPWE

Boatsheds with
slipway in foreground
DPIPWE

Boatshed group
looking south-east
DPIPWE

Setting: The Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway are located in New Town on the northern edge of the Queens Domain, approximately 3 km to the north of Hobart's city centre. The boatsheds are located along the southern shore of Cornelian Bay over a distance of approximately 185 m east-to-west, and are backed by the vegetated slopes of the Queens Domain.

Description: The boatsheds are a group of thirty-three early-to-mid 20th-century boatsheds constructed on timber piling over the southern foreshore of Cornelian Bay. Access to the boatsheds is by a crushed-stone footpath which runs parallel to the shore on their landward side along a narrow bench supported in part by stone-rubble retaining walls. The boatsheds are of timber-framed construction with gabled corrugated iron roofs, decorative timber barge boards, and open or partially-roofed water-facing timber deck areas. Cladding is generally horizontal weatherboards, although two boatsheds (No.19, and the c.1950-60s No.36) are clad with fibre cement sheets. Small, simple awnings are located over the land-facing doors of eleven of the boatsheds. The land-facing gable ends of boatshed Nos. 23 and 24 feature painted pressed metal sheeting. Numerous additions and alterations have been made to each of the boatsheds since their original construction, including small decks of timber on their land-facing sides and larger decks and jetties extending into Cornelian Bay from their water-facing sides.

The boatsheds have been personalised with a wide range of painted colour schemes. Historically they were constructed for sheltering and storing small boats, but in the present day the boatsheds are also utilised for

recreational day use, and as studio and storage spaces.

All but two (those designated Nos. 1A and 36) of the boatsheds have numbers affixed, with the numbering beginning at the eastern end, and some have painted nameboards attached. Gaps in the collection and numbering of the boatsheds are due to the past removal of four – those which were formerly numbered 25, 31, 33 and 35.

The structures associated with the former Aquatic Club baths that was located at the eastern end of the group of boatsheds were destroyed in a fire on 28 December 2009. The remnants of several timber piles from the baths buildings' sub-floor structure are visible during low tides.

The remnants of a slipway associated with the former Aquatic Club baths are located on the northwest-facing side of Pipe Clay Point, just to the east of the former baths site. The slipway's remaining structures include a partially-intact timber and steel frame approximately 3 m wide, and timber sleeper-mounted steel rails which descend from the shore into the river. The component parts of a steel-framed and wheeled open cradle platform – of dimensions which appear to suit the steel rails – and remnants of a steel geared hand-winch and cable are located in the vegetated area further onshore from the remnant slip structures. The slipway is no longer operational, and its remnant steel components are all highly corroded.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Water-based recreation figures prominently in Tasmania's historic and contemporary cultural activities and sense of identity (Hudspeth 2005, p.332). It includes a range of different activities such as swimming, fishing and sailing, and various place types such as river or estuary-sited baths (most no longer extant); jetties; boathouses and boatsheds; yacht, sailing and rowing clubs; and bathing pavilions (for example the Long Beach Bathing Pavilion THR#7480). It also includes a number of longstanding cultural events such as regattas and yacht races.

Boatsheds are designed to provide secure storage facilities for small boats and associated equipment. They are generally small, privately-owned or leased vernacular structures located on the coast or river shore and constructed from lightweight materials (timber, corrugated iron or fibre cement sheet). A number of such boatsheds are located in Tasmania's coastal areas. The only other boatsheds currently included in the Tasmanian Heritage Register are the group of eight sheds at Melinga Place (THR#10967) in Taroona, constructed during the mid-to-late 20th century. Other examples of large groups of boatsheds include the 48 at Red Ochre Beach, Dodges Ferry; 10 at the southern end of Tiger Head Beach, Dodges Ferry; 25 at Coningham (in three separate sub-groupings); 34 at Primrose Sands, and 14 at Carlton River, in the local government area of Sorell; 13 at Doo Town, Tasman Peninsula; 12 at Greens Beach, West Tamar; and 10 at Prince of Wales Bay, Derwent Park.

The structures within these groups are of two broad types. The first – typified by the boatsheds at Cornelian Bay, Carlton River and Prince of Wales Bay – is of buildings supported by timber piles extending over the water, and accessed from their land-facing sides via narrow gangways. The second – typified by the boatsheds at Taroona, Coningham and Doo Town – features buildings sited on the landward side of the high-tide line, with large doors for boat access opening to a beach area between the shed and the adjacent body of water.

The Cornelian Bay boatsheds are one of the larger groups of such structures in Tasmania. Some of them are also likely to be amongst the oldest surviving boatsheds in the State. Although their scale, construction materials and roof forms share some characteristics with other groups of boatsheds, boathouses and shacks elsewhere in Tasmania, the boatsheds at Cornelian Bay combine these characteristics in an uncommon and rare way with strong visual appeal.

History:

Cornelian Bay has long been a place of recreation – including boating, fishing and swimming. The first boatshed at Cornelian Bay is believed to have been built in 1892 by Chief Justice Sir John Stokell Dodds as a place to securely store his boat and associated equipment. It is unlikely that this boatshed survives. An application to the Minister of Lands by the Rev I H Palfreyman in 1895 to construct a boatshed failed to gain approval (*Tasmanian News*, 8 January 1896, p.2) and it was not until 1901 that agreement was reached between local and State authorities for regulating the construction of future boatsheds. In 1901 the then Lands Department issued the first two occupational licenses, with other applications which followed the granting of these licences referred to the Marine Board for their consent (Scripps 2006, p.72).

Six boatsheds had been completed by 1913, and in an effort to regulate further development, the Marine Board adopted a standard design for these structures, prepared by their architect Robert Hutchison (Scripps 2006, p.73). The design was for a small rectangular building approximately 3 x 3.6m supported on timber piles, with pitched gable roof clad in corrugated galvanised iron, exposed rafter ends, timber finial and bargeboards, and a half-timbered gable. Access was via a gangway from the landward side, with double doors over the water on the opposite side (TAHO, AE865/1/125). Licenses to construct the boatsheds were required, and by 1917, seventeen had been completed, with the group at Cornelian Bay expanding to about

thirty by 1928. Despite requirements that the boatsheds be built according to the specified plan, considerable variation developed in what was constructed, its materials and details. The Marine Board was particularly concerned with boatsheds that were being constructed larger than the regulation size. Some attempts were made to enforce building regulations but these were not uniformly applied (Scripps 2006, pp.74-75).

Hobart City Council was responsible for regulating the boatsheds between 1922 and 1978, and it was during this period that the buildings were assigned their current numbers. Many of the boatsheds were used by subsequent generations of the same families. Licensees also began organising and petitioning Council as a group from the 1920s in order to provide a collective voice to press their concerns over security of tenure. In 1932, a committee was formed to represent the interests of the boatshed licensees and a variation of this committee continues to exist. The most vexed issue for Council during the early decades of the 20th century was people living permanently in the boatsheds, which was contrary to their license requirements. It became a more pressing need during the Great Depression, when many of the boatsheds were used for long-term accommodation. At this time and in the following decades the amenity of many boatsheds was improved, with fireplaces and chimneys added to some to provide heating, and connections made to Hobart's city water supply. Inspections by Council officers were intended to prevent people using the boatsheds as dwellings, but enforcement was difficult. The condition of some structures also declined, and boatsheds 31, 33 and 35 were demolished during the 1970s. In his *Cornelian Bay Planning Study* (1999) Julian Barraclough suggested that there was for some years an unofficial policy to encourage the boatsheds to fall into disrepair and hasten their removal (Scripps 2006, pp.75-77; *Mercury*, 6 March 1995, p.19, and 20 October 1997, p.19).

In 1936 Hobart City Council also constructed a hall which was built out over the shoreline to the west of the boatsheds. The hall was leased to the Cornelian Bay Welfare Association, whose first function was a dance. On opening night, a gang of drunken troublemakers arrived and started fighting with the locals, and a riot ensued. Over time, a lack of public support for and use of the hall left it unable to compete with nearby facilities. The building was moved in 1948 to Creek Road in Lenah Valley for use as a community hall there (Scripps 2006, pp.64-65; *Mercury*, 6 March 1995, p.19). The hall's sub-floor structure and timber piles remained in place at Cornelian Bay and are thought to have subsequently been repurposed when Boatshed No. 36 was constructed at the same location in the c.1950-60s.

Anomalies emerged over the boatsheds' tenure in 1972 with regard to Hobart City Council's ability to lease Crown land. In response, Council notified the occupants of the boatsheds that the structures would require removal. The licensees petitioned and an agreement was reached. The Crown became responsible for the administration of licenses for the boatsheds in 1978, with rates to be paid to Council. This management arrangement remains in place in 2019, although concerns about security, certainty of tenure and illegal works have been contentious for the City of Hobart and for licensees throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Scripps 2006, p.77-78).

Former Baths (Aquatic Club) and Slipway

In addition to the boatsheds, other recreational facilities developed at Cornelian Bay. Public baths had first been erected at Cornelian Bay in the nineteenth century, and were considerably expanded in 1925. Located at the eastern end of the boatsheds, this baths complex included a jetty, changing rooms, caretaker's residence, and diving platform. A slipway was installed in c.1927 to the east of the baths, allowing for the launching and landing of boats (*Mercury*, 20 July 1927, p.10). Patronage by swimmers declined with the completion of the Hobart Olympic Pool in 1958. By the 1960s, the baths buildings were considered antiquated but the complex was still in use and well maintained. Following the 1966 resignation of the baths' caretaker Mr V Webb, the Cornelian Bay Aquatic Club was established by swimmers and boat owners to take over care of the facilities. Ownership was transferred from Hobart City Council to the Club in 1978, and the slipway continued to be included as part of the Aquatic Club licence (Scripps 2006, pp.60-62). In December 2009 the clubhouse and caretaker's cottage were destroyed in a fire, causing an estimated \$400,000 in damages and the loss of members' equipment ('ABC News' website). The remnants of the Aquatic Club baths structures were subsequently demolished, except for a few timber piles which remain visible in the Bay.

REFERENCES

'ABC News' website: *Fire destroys the historic boatshed in Hobart's Cornelian Bay*, accessed 23 Aug 2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-12-29/fire-destroys-historic-boatshed/1191764>

Barraclough, Julian 1999, *Cornelian Bay Planning Study*, Hobart City Council.

Cornelian Bay Management Plan 2007, Hobart City Council.

Hudspeth, Audrey 2005, 'Shipping and Ports', in Alison Alexander (ed), *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania: Hobart, pp 332-334.

the Mercury: Wednesday 20 July 1927, p 10; 6 March 1995, p 19; and 20 October 1997, p 19.

Scripps, Lindy 2006, *A tranquil haven: a history of Cornelian Bay*, Hobart City Council.

TAHO, AE865/1/125, Plan – Hobart - Regulation Type Boat Shed.

TAHO, MCC16/2/1/588, General Correspondence – Hobart City Council (TA114), EA99/4 Cornelian Bay Baths, Two Vols, General Correspondence file.

Tasmanian News: 8 January 1896, p.2.

Statement of Significance:
(non-statutory summary)

The Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway is of historic cultural heritage significance as a rare surviving group of thirty-three boatsheds originally constructed during the years of the early to mid-twentieth century.

The structures are representative of the important role that water-based recreation continues to play in the cultural life and sense of identity of many Tasmanians. The boatsheds are significant as an uncommonly large group of structures of their type, with a degree of uniformity (despite some variety in detail and decoration) that remains a distinctive characteristic. The individual boatsheds and the group are significant for their aesthetic values and compositional qualities as demonstrated by their recurring representation in both painting and artistic photography.

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

The Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway is representative of the important role that water-based recreation has played historically and continues to play in the cultural life and sense of identity of many Tasmanians. The boatsheds' historical value is evident in their physical fabric and supported by a range of documentary resources. The place demonstrates important activity that has occurred over an extended period of time.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

As a large group of relatively intact boatsheds constructed during the early-to-mid twentieth century, the boatsheds at Cornelian Bay are rare. Although other groups of similar structures are located in Tasmania – for example the Melinga Place Boatsheds (THR#10967) at Taroona – the composition of the Cornelian Bay boatsheds' particular attributes is distinctive and uncommon in its occurrence both historically and in the present-day.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

The Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of groups of boatsheds, and is a particularly fine example within Tasmania. Key characteristics of this place-type evident at Cornelian Bay include the close spacing of individual buildings within the group, and their construction methods and use of materials. By their configuration, appearance and ongoing use as boatsheds these structures continue to demonstrate the historically important processes of boating, swimming and water-based recreation.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

No Data Recorded

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

No Data Recorded

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

The Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway exhibits aesthetic significance which is beyond the ordinary. The aesthetic qualities of the boatsheds have inspired the State-wide and popular use of images of this place in the celebration of Tasmania's cultural environment. It is a place possessing distinctive qualities recognised as being important to Tasmania, in which the structures demonstrate uncommonly attractive combinations of colour, massing and detail.

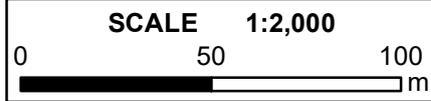
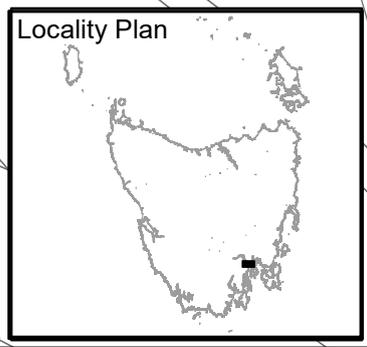
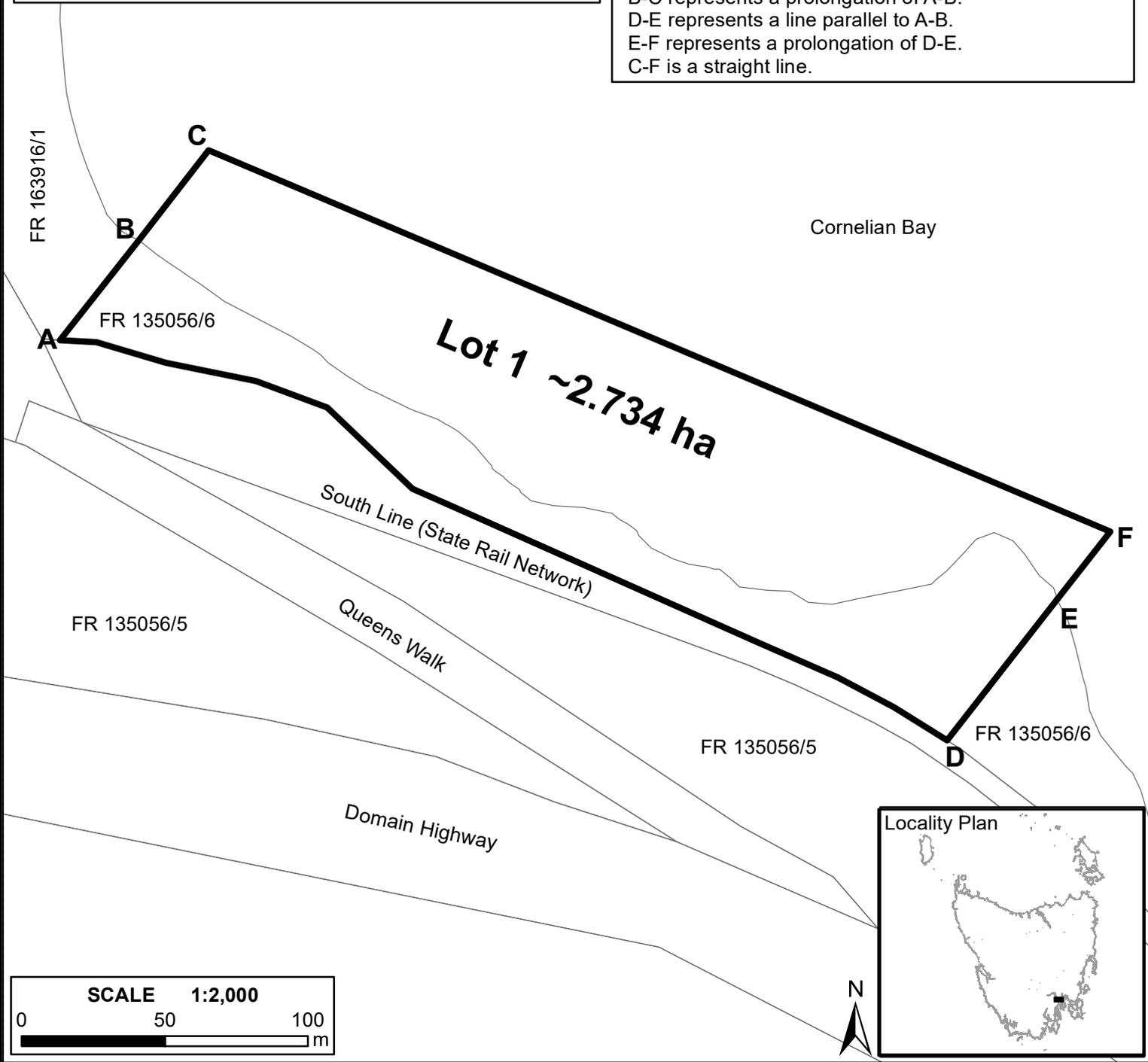
PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.

Notes

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for 'Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway', THR#TBC on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is part of FR 135056/6, extending in to Cornelian Bay, the boundary of which is marked by a thick black line and described at right.
3. Details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (the LIST).

Point and Boundary Description

- A. South-west corner of FR 135056/6.
 - B. North-west corner of FR 135056/6.
 - C. Point 40m along prolongation of A-B.
 - D. Intersection of cadastral boundary and 526420E.
 - E. Intersection of line parallel to A-B and the cadastral boundary.
 - F. Point 30m along a prolongation of D-E.
- A-B and A-D represent cadastral boundaries.
 B-C represents a prolongation of A-B.
 D-E represents a line parallel to A-B.
 E-F represents a prolongation of D-E.
 C-F is a straight line.



TASMAP: HOBART - 5225		GRID: MGA94 / ZONE 55		DATUM: AHD		CONTOUR INTERVAL: N/A	
No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE	 Tasmania
1	Production	THC	TBC	JS	DRAFT	DRAFT	

Cornelian Bay Boatsheds and Slipway
 2 Davies Avenue, Queens Domain
 PREPARED BY
 HERITAGE TASMANIA

CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER
 p.p. Surveyor General: _____
 Date Registered: _____

CPR DRAFT

