

# Development Guidelines

## LETTES BAY

'Lettes Bay' is a diverse collection of rustic shacks that is an important part of the history of the Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company and Strahan.

It represents the determination of a remote community of workers to make their own recreational facilities in a form entirely suited to their own needs. It continues to have a strong meaning for the local community as a recreational place.

'Lettes Bay' is permanently entered in the Tasmanian Heritage Register. This ensures that the heritage significance of the place will be protected so that it will remain for current and future generations to enjoy.

These guidelines have been developed to provide property owners with an understanding of how to conserve and enhance the values of their shacks.

The guidelines reflect the importance of the buildings and seek to ensure and enhance the heritage values of 'Lettes Bay' while allowing the variety and informal character of the shacks to continue to evolve.



### HISTORY

The Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company was keen to provide a wide range of social opportunities for its employees. Leasing land at Lettes Bay for workers' holiday shacks was part of this agenda. It is uncertain whether the workers themselves constructed their own overnight shacks, carrying the building materials up from the line, or whether the Mt Lyell Company built the shacks for its employees to rent as holiday accommodation. Jetties were also built for recreational fishing, which is likely to have been a major pastime of the original occupants.

The earliest shack is thought to have been constructed around 1890, with the majority built between 1920 and 1950. 'Lettes Bay' was created and modified through desire and need, unfettered by planning processes but limited by the availability of materials. Since their construction, most shacks have been, and continue to be, modified.

## STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER

'Lettes Bay' is characterised by its *ad hoc* nature. Shacks are constructed close to one another and developed prior to any formal planning controls.

Traditionally, the shacks were made from lightweight and recycled materials – timber framing clad in corrugated iron – and modelled into basic dwellings for a purely male population.

The shacks have continued to change over time, but share many common elements. All shacks are simple, single storey structures of a similar scale and form. They have a light-weight appearance, elevated on timber stumps, with the external walls and roofs mostly clad in painted corrugated iron. Most roofs are a shallow pitch with gable ends, with additions commonly having shallow-pitch skillion roofs.

The character of the shacks derives, in part, from a process of continual evolution where modifications over time reflect people's needs and desires. It is not the intention of these guidelines to curb that process but rather to ensure that the process continues with regard to the character and aesthetic of the area, as well as with regard for the historical and social values of the place. It is important that the basic nature of the shacks, demonstrating the resourcefulness of the owners and occupiers, be continued.

In some cases, modifications have had a negative impact on the overall character of the place. Modern materials are not in keeping with the traditional use of recycled materials, and often give a highly finished and more permanent appearance.

To conserve the character and heritage significance of the place, future works must not be completed without approval from the West Coast Council and the Tasmanian Heritage Council (see box 'Works Approval Process').

Rather than relying on existing precedents, the following guidelines are to be used when considering future works in Lettes Bay.

Photographic records taken at the time of the provisional registration of the shacks (2008) will be used as the benchmark to assess any proposals for works.

## WORKS APPROVAL PROCESS

Under Part 6 of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*, approval from the Tasmanian Heritage Council is required for any works to a place entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. Approval may be in the form of a certificate of exemption or a permit.

Where your proposed works are minor and won't affect the significance of the place, the Heritage Council may provide you with a certificate of exemption so you do not need to submit a development application. Please contact Heritage Tasmania to check whether your works would be exempt.

If you do not have a certificate of exemption from the Heritage Council, you will need to lodge a development application with your local council. Your local council will forward your application to the Heritage Council to assess any impacts on the historic heritage values of the place.

### **How long before I receive a decision?**

The development application process may take up to 42 days from the date it is lodged with the local council. If you do not provide enough information with your application, it may take longer. Please contact Heritage Tasmania to check what information you need to lodge with your application.

### **Are there any penalties for not abiding by the Act?**

Yes. However the Heritage Council tries to work proactively with owners to resolve issues through discussion and mediation, rather than by conflict, objection and using penalties.

## DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES: SHACKS

There are a number of general rules for works to the shacks at Lettes Bay:

- Do as much as necessary but as little as possible.
- Works should be in keeping with the original character.
- The use of recycled materials including galvanised iron, timber windows and doors, is recommended as it is consistent with the character of the place.
- Any new works which goes beyond the footprint of the original shack may require an amendment to the existing strata title.
- Alterations to return a shack closer to its original form are encouraged.

**External cladding:** Recladding should only occur where the existing cladding has deteriorated beyond repair. Galvanised iron is the preferred material for external cladding for those shacks clad with painted mini-orb or custom-orb galvanised corrugated iron. Weatherboard shacks may be reclad with either weatherboard or corrugated iron, though owners are encouraged to make like-for-like replacement of materials. External cladding should be maintained as a painted finish.



**Roof and guttering:** Most of the shacks have painted corrugated iron roofs with d-mould guttering. Replacement with other roofing materials is considered inconsistent with the heritage values of the shacks.

**Carports:** Carports are not an historic feature of 'Lettes Bay' and are not encouraged.

**Extensions:** New extensions constructed of appropriate materials and an appropriate size in relation to the existing shack should:

- Be sympathetic to the roof form of the existing structure, with an appropriate pitch and style.
- Be of a smaller scale to the original shack.
- Follow the pattern of massing in the surrounding shacks.
- Remain single storey.

**New structures:** New structures should reflect the ad hoc nature, simple designs and common materials used throughout 'Lettes Bay'. New structures should:

- Not exceed the existing height or massing in the surrounding shacks.
- Not be a standardised or mass-produced, pre-fabricated building.
- If greater than 5m<sup>2</sup>, be raised on timber stumps with the floor level no more than 0.50 metres above the ground.

**Windows:** The traditional image of the shack is one of small windows within a wall rather than large areas of glazing (eg floor to ceiling windows or French doors). Large pane windows or large areas of glazing, and aluminium frames and shapes other than square or rectangular, are inappropriate.

**Doors:** Entrance doors should be of modest timber design, traditionally panelled or vertical board, or flush-finish construction and painted.

**Decks:** The construction of small decks will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Any deck should:

- Be in proportion to the footprint of the original shack.
- In general not be greater than 2.5x1.5 metres.
- Be constructed at ground level.

Decks should not be elevated higher than 100mm above the ground.

**Verandahs:** New verandahs often detract from the simple and modest shack form and are not encouraged.

**Porches and awnings:** Adding small porches and awnings in a similar style and material to existing structures, is consistent with shack culture. Door awnings are preferable to more substantial porches.

**External colours:** Approval for paint colour schemes is not required. The ongoing use of strong colour without uniformity is encouraged. All external surfaces should be painted.

**Downpipes:** The colour of downpipes should match the wall colour. They should be round, with a maximum diameter of 75mm, and of metal construction, rather than PVC.

**Chimneys:** There are a range of chimney styles within the place. Any new or replacement chimneys should be based on the examples traditionally used throughout 'Lettes Bay'.

**Satellite dishes and other external devices:** Satellite dishes, solar panels and aerials, while not encouraged, are consistent with the chaotic and ad hoc character of 'Lettes Bay'. The devices should be of an appropriate size and located discreetly. Solar panels should be aligned with the plane of the roof rather than propped up. Water tanks associated with solar panels should not be placed on the roof.



**Water tanks:** New tanks should be of a modest size and of galvanised iron and not PVC (plastic) or fibreglass. Tanks should be supported on a framed construction except where elevated less than 500mm above ground, in which case a solid masonry base may be acceptable.

**External fittings:** External fittings, such as lights, should be of a simple style and design to reflect the character of 'Lettes Bay'.

**Stumps:** Traditionally, some of the shacks were elevated on timber stumps. Any replacement stumps should be timber to closely match the original design.

**Maintenance:** Owners are encouraged to seek advice before carrying out any maintenance as to whether a certificate of exemption may be issued or a development application will need to be lodged.

**Demolition:** Demolishing or removing a shack would need to be justified. Where demolition is approved, a new structure should be built in its place, consistent with the original footprint, massing and character of the building.

**Fencing:** To maintain the feeling of openness amongst the shacks, no new fencing should occur.

**Open spaces:** Spaces between the shacks should remain as open, grassy areas. Concrete paths or other solid ground surfaces are inappropriate and inconsistent with the heritage values of the village.

## DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES: LOT 22

Lot 22 is an example of an atypical building type, being a more conventional residential building set apart and raised up from the main cluster of historic shacks.

Although Lot 22 falls within the area identified as the historic site, the guidelines that would be applied to this building take into account that it is a different building type.

Development proposals in Lettes Bay will be assessed on the merits of each particular place. While the use of lightweight cladding and materials and the retention of a single storey form are considered important, it is felt that it is not necessary for the building on Lot 22 to conform entirely to other sections of these guidelines.

### For further information contact

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