

Tasmanian Heritage Register Datasheet



134 Macquarie Street (GPO Box 618)
Hobart Tasmania 7001
Phone: 1300 850 332 (local call cost)
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Name: Franklin Square and the site of Old Government House

Status: Provisionally Registered

Tier: State

THR ID Number: 12148

Municipality: Hobart City Council

Boundary: CPR11651

Location Addresses

70 MACQUARIE ST, HOBART 7001 TAS

Title References

157664/1000

Property Id

5668878



View from eastern boundary, Franklin memorial (centre)
NRE 2025



Entrance steps from Davey/Elizabeth Street corner
NRE 2025



Macquarie Street entrance
NRE 2025



View toward the Treasury Complex & Public Buildings
NRE 2025



Franklin memorial and fountain
NRE 2025



Old Government House
State Library & Archives of Tasmania PH30/1/1069



Franklin Square c.1863
State Library & Archives of Tas NS1013/1/1808



Franklin Square with Crimean Cannon, c.1870
State Library & Archives of Tasmania NS526/1/12



View of GPO showing Elizabeth/Macquarie
Street corner c.1900
State Library & Archives of Tasmania NS1013/1/253



Aerial view of Franklin Square and surrounds,
c.1930s
State Library & Archives of Tasmania NS3305/1/3



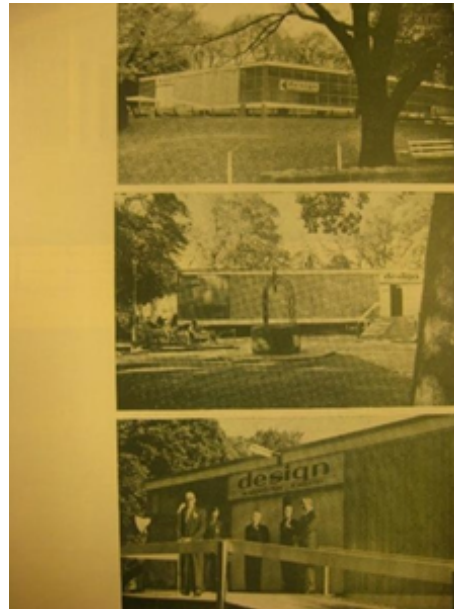
Air raid shelters at Franklin Square, c.1942
State Library & Archives of Tasmania PH30/1/7074



Franklin Square, c.1960s
State Library & Archives of Tasmania AA193/1/1205



Society of Friends, silent witness for peace at Franklin Square, 1962
State Library & Archives of Tasmania PH30/1/3549



Temporary structure around Franklin's statue for the 10th Australian Architectural Convention
AIA Tasmanian Architect August 1960

Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)

Franklin Square demonstrates the pattern of early European settlement in Hobart Town, from the arrival of Collins' expedition in 1803, through to the construction and extension of Hobart's first Government House, the emergence of civil administration in Van Diemen's Land, and establishment of a civic precinct. Franklin Square is associated with the emergence of civic administration that replaced colonial rule in Tasmania during the 1850s and 1860s, demonstrated by using convict labour to establish a public square. The place demonstrates European forms of memorialisation used to recognise figures associated with administration of early Van Diemen's Land. Art installations and interpretation in the Square, however, demonstrate a recent reconsideration of colonial history, particularly the treatment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Franklin Square is integrally associated with Sir John Franklin, Governor of Tasmania from 1837 to 1843, and Lady Jane Franklin, who approved the details of the memorial statue, including the inscription, and was committed to memorialising her husband in both Tasmania and England. Franklin Square has high archaeological potential for subsurface archaeological features and deposits relating to British settlement in Van Diemen's Land, including the Old Government House and gardens. There is also potential for subsurface features and deposits to be found that may provide evidence of domestic, commercial, recreational and war time uses of the site. Franklin Square demonstrates the principal characteristics of a site of a public park with European origins. The naturalistic aesthetic of Franklin Square contrasts effectively with the surrounding built environment. The combination of mature plantings, lawns, and historic features express the evolution of garden design, display and embellishment influenced by a translation of British and European influences that have created a serene and verdant environment widely appreciated by Tasmanians and visitors to the city. Since the mid-20th century Franklin Square has been used for political rallies associated with conservation and peace activism.

Why is it significant?:

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.

Franklin Square demonstrates the pattern of early European settlement in Hobart Town, from the arrival of Collins' expedition in 1803; through to the construction and extension of Hobart's first Government House; the emergence of civil administration in Van Diemen's Land; and the establishment of a civic precinct. Franklin Square is associated with the emergence of the civic administration that replaced colonial rule in Tasmania during the 1850s and 1860s, demonstrated by the use of convict labour to establish a public square. The place demonstrates European forms of memorialisation used to recognise figures associated with administration of early Van Diemen's Land. Art installations and interpretation in the Square, however, demonstrate a recent reconsideration of colonial history, particularly the treatment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Since the mid-20th century Franklin Square has been used for political rallies associated with conservation and peace activism.

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

No Data Recorded

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

Franklin Square has high archaeological potential. There is potential for subsurface archaeological features and deposits relating to British settlement in Van Diemen's Land, including the Old Government House and gardens, to be found beneath Franklin Square. This may also apply to surrounding footpaths and sections of Elizabeth Street and Davey Street. There is also potential for subsurface features and deposits to be found that may provide evidence of domestic, commercial, recreational and war time uses of the site.

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

Franklin Square demonstrates the principal characteristics of a public park with European origins. Franklin Square is one of two Victorian era pleasure gardens in Tasmania created on land made available following the vacation of colonial government, the other being City Park in Launceston. The formal layout, fountain, memorials and plantings demonstrate the features of the gardenesque style of Victorian era pleasure gardens, and has continued its role as a place of public recreation, social and political gathering since its establishment.

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.

Franklin Square is of historic cultural heritage significance because it has strong and special meaning to the Hobart community and the Tasmanian community for its natural, social, aesthetic and recreational values. Franklin Square is a public space and an essential part of the character of Hobart, as a centrally located green space, utilised for leisure, events and demonstrations.

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.

Franklin Square is integrally associated with Sir John Franklin, Governor of Tasmania from 1837 to 1843. The Square was established as a memorial to Sir John Franklin and was primarily selected because it was the site from where he governed from during his tenure. Franklin Square is also associated with Lady Jane Franklin, who approved the details of the memorial statue, including the inscription, and was committed to memorialising her husband in both Tasmania and England. In her own right Lady Franklin was also an influential and formidable figure in Van Diemen's Land during her husband's tenure as Governor.

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

Franklin Square sits to the south of Hobart's CBD, within the wider landscape of Sullivan's Cove and the River Derwent. The naturalistic aesthetic of Franklin Square contrasts effectively with the surrounding built environment. The combination of mature plantings, lawns, and historic features express the evolution of garden design, display and embellishment influenced by a translation of British and European influences that have created a serene and verdant environment widely appreciated by Tasmanians and visitors to the city.

Heritage approval is required for work that will result in changes to the nature or appearance of the fabric of a Heritage place, both internal and external.

Please refer to the Heritage Council's Works Guidelines (www.heritage.tas.gov.au) for information about the level of approval required and appropriate outcomes.

Heritage Advisors are also available to answer questions and provide guidance on enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au or Tel 1300850332

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.

Setting:

Franklin Square is located on a large site in the Hobart CBD. It occupies half a city block, bounded by the major thoroughfares of Macquarie, Davey and Elizabeth Streets on three sides, and the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings (THR #11734) to the south-west. Franklin Square is a prominent green space in the Hobart streetscape and is surrounded by several civic and commercial buildings and public spaces, including Hobart Town Hall (THR #12039), and the General Post Office (GPO) (THR #165).

Description:

Franklin Square

In plan, Franklin Square is a skewed rectangle bounding 0.63 hectares of open space. Topographically, the land rises steeply, gaining approximately 8 metres from the corner of Davey and Elizabeth Streets, diagonally across the Square to a relatively flat area adjacent to the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings on the Macquarie Street corner. The Square is characterised by a perimeter of mature trees (mostly European species), patches of manicured lawns, garden beds planted with shrubbery, textured concrete pathways and hard surfacing, including stairs and ramps. Low sandstone walls mark the boundaries to Macquarie and Elizabeth Streets, and a sandstone retaining wall forms the southern boundary in the centre Davey Street; marking the original boundary of Franklin Square prior to road widening (1959-1960). Pedestrian access to the square is from each corner, a centrally placed entrance on Macquarie Street, and central pathway from the asphalt-paved open space between the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings and Franklin Square (used for car parking). The entrance on the Elizabeth/ Davey Street corner has multiple sets of wide steps and landings, with c.1960 sandstone retaining walls.

The bronze statue of Franklin sits centrally in the Square atop a granite pedestal and stepped sandstone plinth within a simple two-tier water basin within an oval shaped paved area. The statue faces towards Macquarie Street, and the principal elevation of the pedestal has a tooled inscription.

The c.1960 public conveniences and store are located on the sloped Elizabeth Street boundary; the individual entrances are accessed via the adjacent footpath. The building is clad with sandstone blockwork and punctuated by aluminium framed glazing. The stepped flat concrete roof has railings around the perimeter and is utilised for public seating.

The bus shelters on Macquarie and Elizabeth Streets are of no heritage significance.

Memorials, plaques and public art

Sculpture, *Two Islands* (2018) by Nigel Helyer sits in the southern corner of the Square. It is a large steel boat frame clad with stringybark, Aboriginal canoe made from steel, with alternating soundscapes. The artist statement notes 'The Two Islands sculpture presents a metaphor that draws together histories of Tasmanian Aboriginal and European settler cultures in the form of two symbolic vessels. The skeleton of Sir John Franklin's ship the HMS Erebus lies wrecked alongside a contemporary representation of a traditional Aboriginal canoe, creating a tension that resonates with the complex histories of Tasmania' (Hobart City Council, 'Two Islands – Franklin Square');

A small stone plinth sits underneath the canopy of one of two surviving oak trees located directly inside the central Macquarie Street entrance, left. The bronze shield fixed to the plinth records that the tree was planted on 21 May 1863 by Col. T Gore Brown to commemorate the marriage of HRH the Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra;

A pink granite plaque, inset in the sandstone fence capping near the Macquarie/ Elizabeth Street entry marks the site of Old Government House – unveiled by Premier Ogilvie (1936);

A sandstone plinth, formerly the location of the statue of Dr William Crowther (1889), is located in the western corner

of the Square. The bronze statue has been removed and is in the collections of Hobart City Council; An octagonal wishing well, constructed c.1955 from a sandstone base with decorative wrought iron arbour, sits close to the path from the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings surrounded by irregular sandstone paving. The northern face has a white marble block with carving that depicts a disabled child, the southern side a white marble carving of a wreath and flame. The eastern side has a bronze plaque acknowledging APEX. A small bronze plaque in the paving records that National Trust Battery Point Walkers have started at that location since 1972; A bronze Statue of King Edward VII (1922) faces Macquarie Street, sitting atop a sandstone plinth with inscriptions on two faces. The widening of Macquarie Street during the 1950s has diminished the position of the statue (HCC 2014, p.19); A large terrazzo chess board is set into the hard surface paving on the Davey Street side of the Square; the feature was attributed to the Sandy Bay Lions Club (1960).

Archaeological Potential - Old Government House (1804–1858)

Franklin Square has high archaeological potential. There is potential for subsurface archaeological features and deposits relating to British settlement in Van Diemen's Land, including the Old Government House and gardens, to be found beneath Franklin Square. The potential for sub-surface archaeological features and deposits also applies to surrounding footpaths and sections of Elizabeth Street and Davey Street.

There is also potential for subsurface features and deposits to be found that may provide evidence of domestic, commercial, recreational and war time uses of the site.

Archaeological management guidelines and plans of areas of archaeological sensitivity are outlined in Appendix 3 of Gulson, L. 'Franklin Square Conservation Plan', Unpublished Report, March 2007.

Disturbance history and overlay are outlined in Appendix 2 of Gulson, L. 'Franklin Square Conservation Plan', Unpublished Report, March 2007.

Significant trees and plantings

There are several large and significant trees which contribute to the character and significance of the park and the central city. However, as noted by Gulson in the 'Franklin Square Master Plan', most of the significant large trees from the original planting are approaching the end of their life. There are areas of replacement planting, notably towards the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings.

Hobart City Council's 'Franklin Square Master Plan' (unpublished report from May 2014) identifies tree species and locations (p.26) and outlines recommendations for existing and replacement plantings (pp.27–28).

History:

The history of Franklin Square is largely taken from Gulson, L. 'Franklin Square Conservation Plan', Unpublished Report, March 2007 – Appendix 1, L. Scripps, 'Historic Development'.

Franklin Square sits within the country of the Muwunina people.

Early Hobart

Hobart Town was established by British settlers in February 1804. The small settlement centred around Sullivan's Cove, developing as the capital and the administrative centre of Van Diemen's Land during the early 19th century. At the time of European settlement, the area now occupied by Franklin Square was 'an impervious growth of the thickest brushwood, surmounted with some of the largest gum trees that the island can produce' (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1 p.3).

Old Government House and grounds

Within weeks of the settlement's establishment, Government House, a two or three roomed house was constructed for Lieutenant-Governor David Collins on the elevated escarpment facing the Cove, near the current entrance to the Town Hall. By 1807 a three-roomed brick house was constructed adjacent to the earlier structure, however by 1811 Governor Macquarie denounced Government House as '...much too small, incommensurate and in a state of decay'.

Macquarie selected a site for a new Government House at Macquarie Point and set aside the site in Macquarie Street as part of a public space he named 'George's Square' in honour of the King. When surveyor James Meehan laid out the streets of Hobart Town according to Macquarie's instructions in 1811, his plan showed gardens and two existing buildings on the proposed George's Square (where the Public Buildings and Franklin Square are now located). During Macquarie's tenure as Governor of New South Wales and dependency of Van Diemen's Land he toured much of the colony and directed the establishment of several new towns across New South Wales (NSW) and Van Diemen's Land; plans for these towns included the provision of squares (see Jack 2010 for more information).

The concept of George's Square prevailed for some years, but was not formalised (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, pp.3–4).

Several Governors and their families lived at Old Government House, including Lt-Gov David Collins (1804-1810), Lt-Gov Thomas Davey (1813-1817), Lt-Gov William Sorell (1817-1824), Lt-Gov George Arthur (1824-1836), Lt-Gov John

Franklin (1837-1843), Lt-Gov John Eardley-Wilmot (1843-1846), Lt-Gov William Denison (1847-1855), and Sir Henry Fox Young (1855-1861). Repairs, rebuilds, alterations and additions were made to the makeshift Government House over the subsequent years, and by 1831 fourteen extra rooms had been added. A ballroom, designed by Colonial Architect William Porden Kay, was completed in 1850. The surrounding ground extended down to Sullivans Cove, containing large eucalypts, garden beds, carriageways and paths, shown in several contemporary sketches and paintings (Freeman 2016, p.9, 12). Plans for a new Government House (THR #2926), adjacent to the Colonial Gardens (Botanical Gardens THR#11999) on the Queens Domain, were not realised until 1858.

The Franklins lived on the site for seven years. Their legacy in Van Diemen's Land is broadly tied to promoting the arts, science and education. They founded the Tasmanian Natural History Society (later the Royal Society), encouraged education, both government and a short-lived Anglican secondary school, and founded the Hobart Regatta. Lady Franklin, well-travelled and independent, did not fit the conservative picture of a governor's wife, she discussed politics and government, established a settlement in the Huon, and built Ancanthe (THR#2610), a small classical temple within a native plant garden. Lady Franklin's interest in the Tasmanian Aboriginal people led her to adopt an Aboriginal girl, Mathinna, in 1839. Mathinna lived at Government House and was educated with Sir John Franklin's daughter, Eleanor. Following their recall to England in 1843 the Franklin's abandoned Mathinna, who was sent to the Orphan School (THR#11000 St Johns Park) and later died at Oyster Cove in 1851 (Parrott, Felton).

Described as 'a large rambling pile', surviving plans show that the section of old Government House on the site of the present Franklin Square was occupied as offices, meeting rooms, outbuildings and stables. By 1859 most of the old Government House and gardens were demolished, leaving only the ballroom standing, but allowing the lines of Davey Street and Elizabeth Street to be extended to provide more direct access to Franklin Wharf. The extension of Elizabeth Street cut the former Government House ground in two blocks; the block on the northern side was granted to the Hobart Corporation for a Town Hall and the remaining area was subdivided into vacant lots (Freeman 2016, p.2-25; Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, p.3)

A memorial to Franklin

Around the time that plans were being made for the disposal of the old Government House site, Parliament was also considering a memorial to Sir John Franklin, Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837 to 1843. Prior to his appointment to Van Diemen's Land, Franklin was a naval officer and an Arctic explorer. However, a concerted effort by an influential group of colonists, opposed to Franklin's progressive reforms and the perceived political influence of his wife, Lady Jane Franklin, resulted in their recall to England. In a bid to salvage his reputation, Franklin set off on another Arctic voyage in 1847 aboard the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, that ended in disaster. Following his disappearance Lady Franklin organised multiple search parties to discover his fate. Despite his lack of success, she elevated him to be seen as a successful hero (Alexander 2016). Lady Franklin erected a memorial to her husband in the St John the Evangelist chapel in Westminster Abbey, a white marble bust with a relief carving of a ship trapped in ice. The monument was created by portrait sculptor Matthew Noble with verse especially written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (Westminster Abbey). A national statue of Franklin at Waterloo Place, London was unveiled in 1866 (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, p.7). There are other memorials in London to the doomed expedition, including the Bellot obelisk and marble sculpture in the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul (Old Royal Naval College).

Discussions concerning a fitting memorial for Franklin in Tasmania started in 1860. It was TD Chapman, a merchant and politician, who suggested that a memorial should be located on the site of old Government House, where Franklin administered the colony. The resolution passed unanimously through Parliament, with only one dissenting voice in the Legislative Council. Funds were dedicated to the memorial, and a committee was formed in 1861. Surviving records are principally concerned with the purchase of a copy of the national statue of Sir John Franklin, by sculptor Matthew Noble for the British Government. In 1863 the site was levelled, the manual work being carried out by convict labour. A report in *The Mercury* dated 19 February 1863 records that the name 'Franklin Square' was already in use. The statue and pedestal arrived and were installed early in 1865 but remained covered by canvas for some time. The words of the inscription were provided by Lady Franklin and approved by the committee, but the statue was never officially unveiled (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, pp.7-8).

Work to complete the Square continued, including plumbing for the fountain, one thousand trees and shrubs were ordered from Port Arthur and the Royal Society's Gardens (now the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, as part of the program 'Plants Supplied for the Decoration of Public Places'), and construction of a timber picket fence.

However, progress was slow due to a shortage of convict labour. No plans showing the layout of the square prior to 1897 have been found, but a c.1866 photograph of the site shows the centrally placed statue of Franklin sitting atop a plinth with surrounding rockery and fountain, wide paths and newly planted trees and shrubs (see images); at that time the elevated site had unobstructed views of Sullivans Cove and Battery Point (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, pp.8-9).

At some time prior to 1875 one of a set of two cannons from the Crimean War was installed in the Square, directly in front of Franklin's statue (Gulson 2007, p.14).

For many years Franklin Square presented as a forecourt to the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings (THR

#11734), this complex of nine buildings was constructed between 1824 and 1940. Gulson notes that the garden was laid out with strong axial symmetry, achieved with the gardenesque style, using classical and picturesque techniques (Gulson 2007, p.31).

Victorian pleasure gardens - Gardenesque and Picturesque

By the mid-19th century, the gardenesque style of planting was increasing in popularity over the picturesque style, which applied a more formal design. Gardenesque was a style of garden design attributed to John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843), an English garden writer and publisher, who championed an emphasis on an artistic and eclectic planting and display of plants. Early photographs of Franklin Square show that plantings were quite dense, using the picturesque device of 'hide and reveal' view sequence when approaching the main feature of the garden, the statue of Franklin (Gulson 2007, p.12).

A statue of William Crowther was placed in the square in January 1889. Crowther was a member of both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council at various times, Premier from 1878 to 1879, a doctor and prominent businessman.

In 1890–1 the timber fence was replaced with a wrought iron fence made by Davidson & Brown of the Derwent Foundry, Barrack Street. A wide wrought iron gate was installed on the Macquarie Street side, adjacent to the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings (THR #11734). By c.1907 women's public conveniences had been built on the Davey Street side of the park. The men's were located underground in the centre of Elizabeth Street (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, p.12).

During World War I Franklin Square was used to host fundraising events and celebrations following the Armistice in 1919. In 1922 a statue of Edward VII, Edward the Peacemaker, by sculptor Leonard Jennings (1877–1956) was placed on Macquarie Street, outside the fence line of Franklin Square. Around this time controversy erupted surrounding the condition of the park and the lack of Government funding to maintain the space. Hobart City Council officially took control of the reserve in May 1923, the Government retaining control of the roadway between the square and the public buildings. The Council consequently undertook substantial improvements to the park, including replanting, resurfacing and the installation of a concrete draughts board. In 1939 the Ogilvie Government sought to regain control of Franklin Square, on the grounds that it had a similar relationship to the Public Buildings as the Parliamentary Gardens had to Parliament House. The Council retained control of the square on the grounds that in the event of war it would be Council's responsibility to build public bomb shelters, and Franklin Square would be the logical place (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, pp.13–14).

Fencing and air raid shelters

The cast iron fence was a matter of debate in 1940 when the City Engineer was asked to report on methods to dismantle it. Community groups protested its removal, and the *Mercury* published images of the park 'With or without a fence?' (*Mercury* 15 Nov 1940, p.5). A motion put to Council in November 1940 to remove the fence was lost.

However, following the bombing of Darwin in February 1942 the Council began to dig air raid shelters on the Elizabeth Street side of the park, necessitating the removal of sections of the wrought iron fencing to improve public access to the shelters. An Australian Comforts Fund (ACF) hut, which provided items such as cigarettes, chocolate and socks to serving soldiers, was located on the Macquarie Street side of the park (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1 pp.15–16).

Following the removal of the shelters at the end of hostilities, steps were taken to rehabilitate the square. The remaining cast-iron fence, including gates and gateposts, were removed in October 1944, leaving the stone base and one pillar next to the Treasury Complex and Public Buildings. The removed cast iron was given to the Red Cross for use at the Lady Clark Convalescent Home at Claremont (THR #1593 Claremont House). A gate post remains at 14 Main Road, Claremont, and two either side of the two entrances to Claremont House. It is not known if any other sections of the fence or gates survive. Following the removal of the fence, the basic layout of the park was altered with the rearrangement of paths and the creation of new entrances, centrally placed on Elizabeth and Macquarie Streets. The Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects criticised several aspects of the new design, noting that the square 'is considered of such picturesque importance and occupies so central a position, it is felt too much thought and care cannot be given to its reconditioning'. Despite these comments the Council adhered to their new design (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1 p.18).

Other changes made during this period of 'renovations', include relocation of the Crimean War cannon, that sat in front of Franklin's statue for over half a century, to the reserve outside Anglesea Barracks; the removal of the rockery surrounding Franklin's statue; the installation of a small, raised pool with jets and lights; and the construction of a rusticated stone and timber pergola style entry structure on Macquarie Street (since demolished) (Gulson 2007, p.20; Appendix 1, p.18)

20th century and beyond

Following the war, Franklin Square was used for a variety of purposes and events. Between 1949 and 1952 there was

a Recruiting Kiosk/Rotunda for the armed forces at the Public Buildings end of the park. During the 1950s the square was the venue for several Festivals of Art held by the Adult Education Board. In 1960 a large temporary exhibition building was constructed surrounding Franklin's statue for the 10th Australian Architectural Convention (see images); the Society of Friends was given permission to hold a 'Silent Witness for Peace' in the Square in 1962 (see images); the Overseas Telecommunication Commission displayed the Gemini space capsule in the Square in 1973; and for 50 years, until 1966, a coin operated scale sat in the Square (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1 p.18). Demonstrations and protests were held in Franklin Square due to the proximity of the Premier's office in the adjacent Treasury Complex and Public Buildings. However, the relocation of the Premier's office to the Executive Building, Murray Street, refocused many of Hobart's civil protests to Parliament Lawns (HCC 2014, p.13).

During the late 20th century Franklin Square continued to be modified and altered. In 1959–1960 Davey Street was widened to include an extra lane, removing a strip of land on the southern side of Franklin Square. During this time the women's public conveniences were removed and replaced with a paved area. This followed the construction of the present conveniences fronting onto Elizabeth Street. In 1985 Hobart City Council upgraded facilities in the square, including the repaving and reinstatement of former pathways and the creation of the Elizabeth Street corner entrance (Gulson 2007, Appendix 1, pp.20–1).

An emerging awareness of the treatment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, particularly during the colonial period, has led to a reinterpretation and rethinking of the history of Tasmania, particularly surrounding the statue of Dr William Crowther. He is a controversial figure due to the alleged part he played in the mutilation of the corpse of William Lanney, described at the time as the last 'full-blood' male Tasmanian Aboriginal. Since 2020 Hobart City Council has run 'Crowther Reinterpreted', a public art and community engagement project that responds to the continued requests from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community for action regarding the statue, including temporary public art works. The project intends to allow multiple voices to comment on and discuss this issue which is widely contested in Hobart (Hobart City Council, 'Crowther Reinterpreted'). In 2023, it led to a proposal to remove the bronze statue of Crowther, to be kept in the City of Hobart's collection, while retaining the plinth for further interpretation.

In 2024, on the eve of a Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT) decision on its planned removal, the statue and plinth were vandalised, the statue cut at the ankles (Holmes). Following the removal of the bronze statue of Crowther, the sandstone plinth remains, accompanied by a temporary interpretation panel.

Franklin Square remains a centrally located green public space, utilised for leisure, events and demonstrations.

Comparative Analysis:

Although designed as a memorial to Franklin, the Square was primarily a Victorian era pleasure garden, open to the public for recreation and entertainment. There are several Victorian era parks in Launceston and Hobart in various forms and sizes that used gardenesque and picturesque styles, including the following:

Established in 1828, the **Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens** (THR #11999) are approximately 14 hectares in size and incorporate lawns, plant collections, trees of national significance, the Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre (Seedbank), numerous built features and associated infrastructure. The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens are part of the wider Queens Domain. The Domain comprises memorials, built structures, several sport and recreation areas, and bushland. In 1860 the site was formally presented to the Hobart City Council by the Tasmanian Government for the recreation of citizens; the same year that Franklin Square was established.

Princes Park, Hobart (THR #1653), is located on the site of Mulgrave Battery established in 1817. Following the dismantling of the Derwent Defence Network, the site was offered to Hobart City Council for public recreation in 1881 which developed it following the European tradition of urban improvement for parks and gardens. The former Guard House and Signal Station (1818) sits within sloped lawns and mature trees.

Launceston's **Cataract Gorge** (THR #3955) was developed as a Victorian pleasure garden by the Launceston City and Suburbs Improvement Association in the 1880s. The Gorge features tracks, huts and cottages, exotic and native plant gardens, viewing areas and lookouts, a band rotunda, tea rooms, playground, swimming pool, suspension bridge over the river basin and mature plantings. The Gorge is a unique example of a Victorian pleasure garden and wild park area adjacent to a large city in Tasmania.

Like Franklin Square, **City Park** (THR #11799) in Launceston was founded in the early 19th century on the site of Government Cottage (c.1806) but was developed as a Victorian style park by Launceston City Council in the mid-19th century. City Park has exotic and mature plantings, memorials, and several structures and buildings, including a conservatory and Superintendent's cottage.

Although established much later than Franklin Square, **St David's Park** (THR #2288) is an example of a site repurposed as a public park in inner city Hobart. St David's Park was established in 1919 when ownership was

transferred to Hobart City Council. The site was the first burial ground in Tasmania (1804). At least 900 people were buried there, although some were later reinterred at Cornelian Bay Cemetery. Some substantial memorials remain in the Park and there are headstones installed in a memorial wall. A large rotunda sits on the grassed lawns surrounded by mature European trees.

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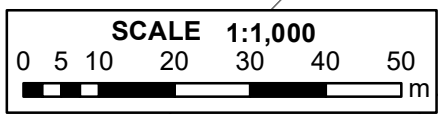
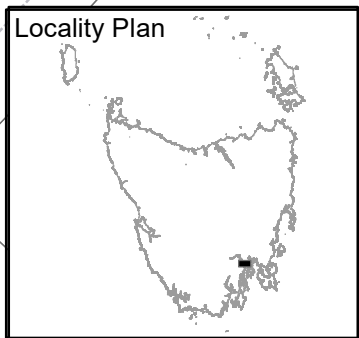
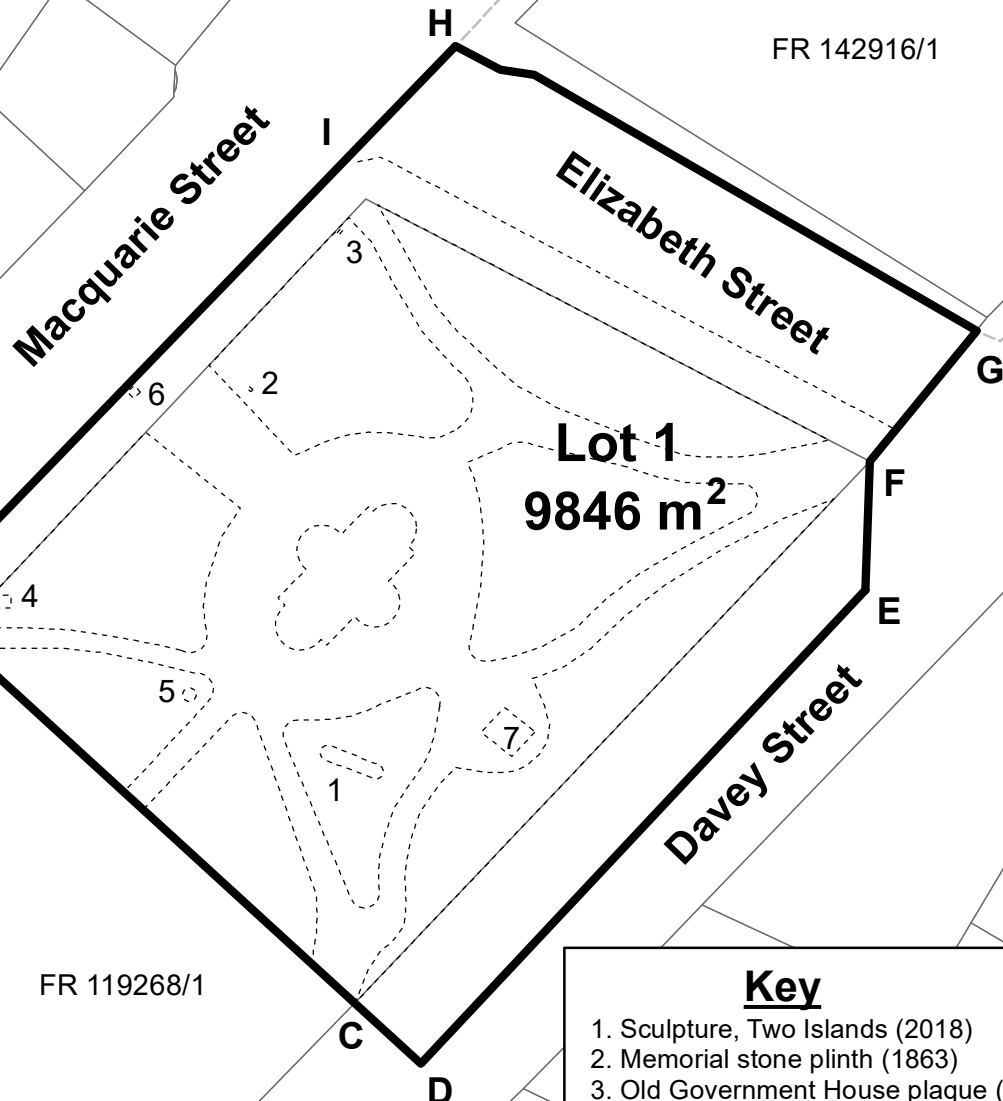
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Note

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for "Franklin Square & the site of Old Government House", #12148 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of parcel FR 157664/1000 and the partial parcel of road reserves covering Macquarie, Elizabeth & Davy streets, the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line, and described below.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise stated, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).
4. For the purpose of S15(4)(b) of the Historic Cultural Act 1995, this plan replaces the previous registration THR 2333 'Franklin Square'.

Point & Boundary Description

- A. Intersect of B-A & I-A.
- B. Corner node of 157664/1000.
- B-A. Prolongation of C-B.
- C. Corner node of 157664/1000.
- C-D. Prolongation of B-C.
- D. Intersect of prolongation & southern face of stone wall.
- D-E. Southern face of stone wall.
- E. Eastern end of stone wall.
- F. Corner node of 157664/1000.
- E-F. Straight line.
- G. Intersect of F-G & concrete curbing.
- G-H. Concrete curbing.
- H. Northern curb cut.
- I. Northern curb cut.
- H-I. Straight line.
- A-I. Concrete curbing



- ### Key
1. Sculpture, Two Islands (2018)
 2. Memorial stone plinth (1863)
 3. Old Government House plaque (1936)
 4. Dr William Crowther plinth (1889)
 5. Wishing well (1955)
 6. Statue of King Edward VII (1922)
 7. Chess board (1960)

TASMAP: HOBART - 5225 **GRID:** MGA94 / ZONE 55 **DATUM:** AHD **CONTOUR INTERVAL:** N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	12148	AW	S.PARRY	18.2.26




Franklin Square & the site of Old Government House

70 Macquarie St, Hobart

PREPARED BY
HERITAGE TASMANIA



CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General: 

Date Registered: 23.2.26

CPR 11651