



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Albany Forts displays a particularly military aesthetic. The Parade Ground, Military Institute, Guard House, Barracks and Repository Store, all on relatively level ground, share a formal relationship with one another. The other buildings, located at different levels, are positioned in a semi-organic manner, and the Guns at the summit of Mount Adelaide are positioned to maximise strategic objectives. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Albany Forts has historic value as an example of a military base constructed to defend what was Western Australia's principal harbour. (Criterion 2.1)

Albany Forts formed part of the strategic defence of Australia from colonial times, being an early example of federal co-operation of the states, and through two World Wars. (Criterion 2.2)

During World War One, *Albany Forts* was the principal rendezvous for Australian and New Zealand troops departing on overseas service. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Albany Forts have scientific value in that it forms a research and teaching site, both in its original use and as its present use as a military heritage park. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Albany Forts is highly valued by the community as an indication of Albany's past importance to the nation and as a unique military heritage park reopened in conjunction with Australia's bicentennial celebrations. (Criterion 4.1)

Albany Forts contributes to the district's sense of history and place and has local landmark value. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Albany Forts include many uncommon structures such as the Guns, Water Tank and reconstructed buildings. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Changing military technology has largely meant that the notion of a fort is redundant. As such, *Albany Forts* represent a philosophy of warfare and of military design which is no longer in use. It has high significance.

12. 3 CONDITION

The condition of buildings in *Albany Forts* varies, but overall the condition of the place is good.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Constructed as a military base, *Albany Forts* now functions as a military heritage park. The original layout and intent of the place is still clearly evident. *Albany Forts* has a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Albany Forts has moderate authenticity. The buildings that have been reconstructed or transported to the site are sympathetic to the overall original building fabric with a generally consistent attempt, to match the original materials. The major exception is The Barracks in which the original lathe and plaster ceiling and walls have been replaced by pine boards.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Sarah Stephenson BA. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Albany Forts is situated on Mt Adelaide, overlooking King George Sound and the entrance to Princess Royal Harbour. *Albany Forts* was established in 1893 and played an important role in the strategic defence of the colonies.¹

In 1826, the British Government instructed Governor Darling of New South Wales to establish a military outpost at King George Sound.² On 25 December 1826, Major Edmund Lockyer, 24 convicts and Captain Wakefield arrived at the Sound in the brig *Amity*.³ In 1831, Albany was placed under the control of Governor Stirling by proclamation. Free settlement commenced.⁴

One of the factors leading up to proposals for the defense of the Australian colonies was the threat of Russian expansionism.⁵ Major General Sir Peter Scratchley visited Albany in 1881.⁶ He considered King George Sound to be of strategic importance in the security of the Australian colonies.⁷ A proposal to spend £13,000 on defence was considered.⁸

In 1888, the Federal Council of Australasia agreed to provide defence at Thursday Island and Albany.⁹ In 1889, the colonies agreed to jointly defray the cost of construction and maintenance of a garrison on Mt Adelaide. Defence consisted of three six-inch batteries and machine guns.¹⁰ John Blackburne of the Victorian Public Works, supervised construction of *Albany Forts* whilst the necessary equipment was supplied by the Imperial Government.¹¹

By 29 February 1892, the batteries were ready for three guns and the site was cleared for barracks and officers' quarters. Forty-four men were employed on the project. Jarrah timber was used to construct the barracks. This was transported from Jarrahdale mills.¹²

Albany Forts was completed on 20 February 1893, at a cost of £15,000.¹³ The first garrison was drawn from South Australia, under Captain J C Hanker

1 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8679, Battye.

2 Letter to Albany Town Clerk from Robert Stephens, re-naming Albany, 4 July 1960.

3 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8679, Battye.

4 Letter to Albany Town Clerk from Robert Stephens, re-naming Albany, 4 July 1960.

5 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8659, Battye.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Australian Coastal Defences King George Sound, Western Australia*, (Town of Albany, 1986).

10 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8659, Battye

11 *West Australian*, 12 September 1892.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *West Australian*, 18 April 1893.

in March 1893.¹⁴ During the years 1896 and 1897, plans for Marine Drive and Ellen Jetty were proposed. In the same period the undergrowth on Mt Adelaide was cleared as a measure of military security.¹⁵

Following the Federation of Australian States in 1901, *Albany Forts* was taken over by the Australian Garrison Artillery.¹⁶

During World War One (1914-1918), *Albany Forts* was the principal rendezvous for Australian and New Zealand troops. For many service personnel this was their last view of Australia before sailing to Egypt.¹⁷ After World War One, *Albany Forts* was temporarily abandoned, owing to the Washington Disarmament Treaty.¹⁸

However, in 1925, *Albany Forts* was reformed, with the presence of the 24th Battery Australian Garrison Artillery. It was modernised in the years leading up to the Second World War.¹⁹ Between 1939 and 1942, two American submarines were based in King George Sound. Additions to *Albany Forts* in this period included a command post and naval signal lookout.²⁰

After World War Two, *Albany Forts* was abandoned. The guns were dismantled and buried.²¹

From 1959, *Albany Forts* was privately owned. The barracks was used as a temporary school and holiday units. The owner intended to convert the barracks into a multi-million dollar hotel and recreation complex. This proposal never eventuated and *Albany Forts* was subsequently vandalised.²²

On 17 October 1977, *Albany Forts* was declared a reserve for recreation and parkland under the Public Works Act.²³ In 1983, the site was vested in the Town of Albany for restoration and repair.²⁴ Conservation, renovation and development of *Albany Forts* commenced in 1987. This was funded by Federal and State Governments and Albany Town Council.²⁵ The final cost of *Albany Forts* was \$1.2 million .²⁶

14 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8659, Battye.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Wingies and Stumpies*, (Limbless Soldiers' Association of Western Australia, June 1994) p.9.

18 *Defence of the Sound*, PR8659, Battye.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *The Albany Experience*, (Strategic Asset Management Pty Ltd, Albany, Western Australia, 1991) p.8.

21 *Place Matters*, (The Newsletter of the Heritage Council of Western Australia, Issue No. 4, Dec 1993).

22 *Great South News*, 11 June 1986.

23 *Government Gazette*, 21 October 1977, p. 3762.

24 *Great South News*, 11 June 1986.

25 *The Great Southern Voice*, 16 November 1988.

26 *Ibid.*

The official opening of *Albany Forts* was performed by Western Australian Premier Peter Dowding, on 19 November 1988, in conjunction with Australia's bicentennial celebrations.²⁷

Albany Forts celebrated its centenary in October 1993.²⁸

In 1995, *Albany Forts* became a military heritage park.²⁹ It remains a popular tourist attraction in the Albany district, giving visitors an understanding of the strategic and military history of Albany and the forts and insights into the lives of the soldiers who were stationed there.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Albany Forts is situated on and west of the summit of Mount Adelaide, which is about six hundred metres south-west of the southern part of Middleton Beach. *Albany Forts* consists of two guns, an underground magazine, numerous transported buildings, ruins, a few substantially reconstructed buildings and a parade ground. After being derelict for some time, *Albany Forts* was renovated and redeveloped, opening to the public in 1988. It was declared a military heritage park in 1995.

The planning of the site appears to have been determined by the siting of the entrance at the lower level, the access road and parade ground in the middle and the positioning of the guns at the summit of Mount Adelaide. The Military Institute, Guard House, Barracks and Repository Store, bear a formal relationship to each other, and focus around the Parade Ground, whereas the siting of other buildings appears to be influenced by the natural topography of the site. *Albany Forts* is designed mainly in a Victorian Georgian style most of the buildings are rectangular in plan and symmetrical in form.

Commencing at the main entrance and proceeding east up to the summit of Mount Adelaide, *Albany Forts* comprises the following:

Repository Store. This building has been largely reconstructed and now serves as the Warden's residence. It is a simple shed-like structure with painted corrugated zincalume walls fixed horizontally and a corrugated zincalume roof.

Visitor's Education Centre. This was transported from elsewhere in the late 1980's. It is a corrugated zincalume Nissen hut with an access ramp.

Guard House. This building had been removed from *Albany Forts*, its original location, and used as a shed by a local farmer. Once the conservation work began, it was transported back to where it had originally stood. A new brick fireplace and chimney were added to replace the original. It is a simple rectangular weatherboard hut with a corrugated zincalume gabled roof, and

²⁷ *The Great Southern Voice*, 16 November 1988.

²⁸ *Place Matters*, (The Newsletter of the Heritage Council of Western Australia, Issue No. 4, Dec 1993).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

a porch facing the parade ground. Internally it consists of two cells and one office.

Military Institute. Built of granite walls, brick quoins and a corrugated zincalume roof, this building is symmetrically laid out with a central entrance that was originally a canteen. It has been substantially reconstructed. Beyond the entrance is another room of equal size that was originally a Sergeant's Mess. It is now a kitchen for the adjacent tea room, which was originally used as an enlisting, lecture and recreation room, as was the equal-sized room at the other end of the building. This now serves as the Australian Light Horse Museum.

World War II Ablution Block. Little remains of this structure apart from the concrete slab and a central low concrete wall against which a urinal probably stood.

Water Tank. Apart from some recent concrete footings which have been inserted under the original timber columns, this iron water tank has not been altered. It appears to date from when *Albany Forts* was completed in 1893.

Barracks. The barracks have been largely reconstructed. The original Barracks appear to have comprised of two long parallel buildings, with a common wall between and verandahs to the long sides. To one side is the remains of extensions; floor joists laid directly on stone footings with a rubble blinding in between the joists. Adjacent are the remains of an ablution block. Internally, the timber framed walls and ceilings have been lined with pine boarding. The original was probably lined with plaster on lathing.

Parade Ground. Now a bitumen carpark, the original surface was probably pea gravel.

Quartermaster's Store. This timber framed building now serves as the Military Heritage Centre. It consists of one room with a large double door at one end. The structure appears to be original, dating from World War II, with new corrugated zincalume cladding to the walls and roof. An access ramp has replaced the original steps.

Commanding Officer's Residence. Now used as a restaurant, the building has undergone a thorough renovation, including re-roofing, the creation of larger openings between rooms, the insertion of a modern kitchen and the building of a gabled pavilion adjoining the front verandah.

Stables Site. A modern skillion roofed replica of the original 1893 weatherboard stables has been built on the original site. Only the adjacent concrete manure pit is original.

Married Quarters. This pair of semi-detached brick and stone cottages are currently being substantially reconstructed, with new brickwork, stonework, flooring, the partial replacement of roof timbers, the complete replacement of

roof and roof plumbing, new doors and new windows.

Padre White National Memorial Centre. A re-located Nissen hut with an access ramp.

Ruins of Warrant Officers House. Only two chimneys with three fireplaces and a corner wall remain.

Concrete Pad of Artificer's Hut. Remains of World War II hut, which has been relocated in Albany.

Underground Magazine. The underground magazine consists of a brick and concrete tunnel through a granite outcrop near the summit of Mount

Adelaide. The floor consists of jarrah blocks and what appears to be graphite, used to minimise the likelihood of explosions. The walls are recessed to provide storage for explosives and lights, with shelves for ammunition and holes for ventilation.

Guns. There are two gun emplacements. The present guns are not original, having come from Leighton Beach. The concrete and granite embattlements are largely original. Access slits about two metres high and one metre wide provide access between the guns and to the underground magazine.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

'Final Report: Conservation, Development and Management Programme for the Albany Forts' (for the Town of Albany, January 1984).