
SEAFORTH TOWNSHIP SITE

Location

SINGAPORE PENINSULA, WILSONS PROMONTORY NATIONAL PARK WILSONS PROMONTORY, SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Municipality

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8120-0026

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The location of the seaforth Township has now been confirmed with the identification of the township and the seaforth Inn archaeological sites. The cleared areas of this site are interpreted as representing the Proposed Township of Seaforth, as their location matches the known location of the surveyed township.

The site has medium archaeological significance due to the absence of archaeological features or artefacts at the site, but it does retain the potential for evidence of structures, roads or other features associated with the township to be found in the course of further investigations. In addition, as the township itself occupied a much larger area along the coast than is indicated by this particular site, there is the potential for archaeological material to be found elsewhere in the area in the form of evidence of roads and structures and additional artefact scatters.

The Seaforth Township is an important area initially known only from historical records, with the location of the proposed township now confirmed with the identification of two archaeological sites. The township has high historical significance as it is the only town to have been located on Wilsons Promontory, as it reflects the brief town planning belief and settlement phase of the Prom, as well as representing a visionary stage of Victoria's town planning.

Interpretation of Site	The areas of cleared vegetation and the occurrence of a different species of tree may reflect the location of this site as the selected area for former Seaforth township (gazetted 1889).
Archaeological Significance	Low archaeological significance, based on no notable archaeological features currently visible on site. Some potential for sub-surface deposits. Only one structure was known to have been built at Seaforth (the Seaforth Inn - see H8120-0027).
Hermes Number	124430
Property Number	

History

Wilson's promontory has been used by many groups since it was first charted by George Bass in 1798, including sealers and whalers, timber millers, fishers and pastoralists. The land boom of the mid to late 1880s saw an increase in land sub-division and sales of Crown land, and in 1887 Albert James Smith of Port Albert took up three leases in the northern end of Wilson's Promontory, one to be used as a hotel site. In 1888 it was decided that this area was suitable for a new tourist town and in 1889 the area was gazetted as the Township of Mount Singapore, later renamed Seaforth, and Smith's leases were cancelled (McKellar 1993:3).

The town was located around a mile south of Mt Singapore, near Freshwater Cove on the northwest coast of the promontory. The town was surveyed and 316 allotments were marked out, but of the 38 put up for sale, only 20 were sold and it does not appear that any of the purchasers, who all resided in Melbourne, actually took up residence in the town, although a post office may have operated in the town for a short time (McKellar 1993: 3,5).

Streets were laid out in a grid pattern and named after local landmarks and important historical and contemporary figures, including Singapore Street, which ran south to north towards Mt Singapore, La Trobe Street, which ran parallel to the west of Singapore Street, and Hunter Street parallel to Singapore Street to the east. The east-west streets included Hill, View and Mason Streets, the last named after a former House of Representatives Speaker and member for the district of Yarram. The Esplanade ran along the beach, and was the location of the Seaforth Inn. The township was reached from the northwest by Beach Road. It is unclear how many buildings or structures existed at the township and what happened to any that did, other than the Seaforth (Smith's) Hotel, which was removed and relocated to Port Welshpool (Garnet 2009: 31).

Much of the town was included in the Wilson Promontory National Park when it opened in 1905, and all but the two allotments were re-purchased by the Crown in 1910. In 1928 the remaining 144 acres of Seaforth were absorbed into the National Park (McKellar 1993: 5-6).

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>