

---

# YARRA SWINGING BASIN

---

## Location

KING STREET AND QUEENS BRIDGE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0594

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 9, 2005

This place is included on the Victorian Heritage Inventory, for its potential to contain historical archaeological remains associated with the settlement and growth of early Melbourne. Under the terms of the Heritage Act 2017 there is protection for all historical archaeology sites and objects in the state.

Please visit the [Heritage Victoria website](https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/) to find out more about the Heritage Inventory.

Lying between King and Queens St, it was bordered by Queen's Wharf on Northern Side in 1855 (Jones). The basin was built and is shown as the furthest accessible point for sailing ships in 1910 (Reed). The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission recommended filling in the basin in 1929.

The Yarra Swinging Basin is still evident, although its NE corner has been reclaimed. The level of dredging in the river here, along with the annual river floods are likely to have removed most of the deposits associated with the wharf usage, but piles from the original wharves may still exist under the embankment walls on either side. Possible capstan for turning vessels.

Interpretation  
of Site

Part of the original swing basin has been reclaimed and now lies under Batman Park (east end). There is a high potential for relics in the basin post dating the construction of the Spencer Street Bridge, when dredging had ceased. The stone walls surrounding the swing basin are later additions, from when the basin was widened. The basin is still evident, although its NE corner has been reclaimed. The level of dredging in the river here, along with the annual river floods are likely to have removed most of the deposits associated with the wharf usage, but piles from the original wharves may still exist under the embankment walls on either side.

This was the first swing basin built in the Yarra River, which utilised the previous natural basin feature. It is a significant feature of the current and past Melbourne waterfront.

Hermes  
Number

13852

Property  
Number

---

## History

A natural wide pool once existed at the base of the Yarra falls, which was used to turn and moor ships in 1836. During the 1840s, the natural basin was deepened when the government contracted a dredging machine to make the Yarra River navigable for larger vessels. In 1851, Blackburn proposed that the pool be widened to form a large trapezoidal dock, and that it be connected to the proposed Straight Cut Canal. Lying between King and Queens St, it was bordered by Queens Wharf on Northern Side in 1855 (Jones). The basin was built and is shown as the furthest accessible point for sailing ships in 1910 (Reed). The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission recommended filling in the basin in 1929.

*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/>*