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# Shell Oil Complex



Shell Oil Complex, Hobsons  
Bay Heritage Study 2006

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## Location

39-81 Burleigh Street SPOTSWOOD, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO47

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Shell Oil complex, comprising Packaging Stores 20 and 26, riveted tanks Nos 4-7, 9 and 12, the alignment of the spur railway and the gatekeeper's house, all generally constructed between c.1916-40, at 39-81 Burleigh Street and Drake Street, Newport.

How is it Significant?

The Shell Oil complex at Newport is of local historic and technical significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

#### Why is it Significant?

Historically, the Shell Oil complex is significant for its strong associations with the early development of the oil industry in Australia as the oldest surviving complex associated with Shell in Victoria. They are an important element in the nationally important group of historic petrochemical complexes that were established in Spotswood and Altona during the Interwar period. (AHC criteria A4 and H1)

Technically, the Shell Oil complex is significant for its ability to illustrate on the one site the two major ways of dealing with refined petroleum; tank storage for oil and shed storage for tinned petroleum product. The riveted tanks are significant as early examples of this type of construction which is now rare for oil storage. (AHC criteria B2, D4 and F1)

Heritage Study/Consultant Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Construction dates 1914,

Hermes Number 14977

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The Shell Oil complex, on the site bounded by Burleigh, Hall, High and Drake Streets in Spotswood contains the following buildings and other infrastructure associated with the first phase of development of the complex between 1916 and 1937.

### Tanks

The 13 (assumed steel) pre-WW2 circular riveted tanks include 10 surviving large riveted tanks and three smaller ones that were built in the period 1916 to 1937, with 7 constructed by 1925. They are now situated within a group which includes later welded examples.

The pre-WW2 tanks are made up from curved steel sheets fixed at the edges by steel rivets and are sited in containment levees. The tanks built in 1920 (4-7) are similar in size but Tank 12 which was erected in 1930 is much larger has a different floating roof construction which has been replaced in a matching form. Of these tanks, Nos. 4 & 6 have original riveted roofs, while the riveted sheet roof on Tank 7 has been patched, and tanks 5-7 have original steel pipe handrails around the top of each. Tank 9 (built 1925) has a riveted steel roof which is thought to have been modified. Most of the tanks have been altered in detail, with new stair access in each case.

Associated with the tanks are some structures contemporary with the early development of the site, including a valve house, and boiler house. Red brick retaining walls form part of the containment bunds, and some pipe work may also be contemporary.

### Store 20 and 26 sheds

Store 20 is a large double gabled store (Refer image on cover), which has been reclad, on the north and west sides, but retains its riveted steel frame and trusses using an angle iron top cord and compression members, and flat iron tension members and bottom cord. The main uprights are rolled steel joists and were manufactured by Dorman & Long of Middlesbrough in England. The floor is generally steel tiles made by the Steel Company of Australia - stamped 'Steel Con, Australia'.

It was constructed in two principal stages. The original section dates from before 1920 and was used for the storage of lube oil and packed kerosene, while a small area was dedicated to filling kerosene tanks. Attached to the south east side of Store 20 is a small simple gabled steel framed structure, which also dates from prior to 1920 and is known as Store 26(Allom Lovell 1999:21)

Store 20 was extended in the mid-1930s when a formerly freestanding building to the north constructed in the late 1920s was linked to it by a structure on the eastern side. The two sheds appear subsequently to have been connected through the construction of a linking bay between them (Allom Lovell 1999:25)

#### Other buildings

Other corrugated iron clad buildings extend to the north east, with some surviving features including timber gable louvres and original ogee pattern guttering. However, they have generally been altered. A small brick house on High Street is evidently also related to the tank farm, possibly having been the on-site caretaker's or gate house.

#### Railway

The railway spur line reserve, located between the stores and the tanks, which served the tank farm and the stores en-route to the wharf, can still be interpreted.

#### *Wharf facilities*

The remains of the Newport oil wharves are still evident, and extend for some distance north from the Newport Power Station. These are situated outside the Burleigh Street site.

## Physical Conditions

#### External Condition

Fair to Good

## Integrity

#### External Integrity

Tanks - Moderate. Stores - Moderate to Low

## Physical Description 2

#### Context

This complex is situated on flat land near the bay, bounded by main roads and railway routes with the residential areas of Newport just to the south. The former COR (now BP Australia) Tank Farm is directly opposite. It is an important contributory part of the Spotswood Industrial heritage precinct.

## Historical Australian Themes

Utilising Mineral Resources, Extracting Oil & Gas

## Physical Description 3

#### *Associations*

British Imperial Oil Co., Shell Oil Company of Australia, Melbourne Harbour Trust

*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/>*