

# Esplanade Foreshore Heritage Precinct



Esplanade Foreshore  
Heritage Precinct, Hobsons  
Bay Heritage Study 2006



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## Location

Esplanade WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO5

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Esplanade Foreshore Heritage Precinct, which comprises the foreshore land adjacent to the Esplanade extending from Thompson Street to Bayview Street in Williamstown.

How is it Significant?

The Esplanade Foreshore Heritage Precinct is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically and socially, the Esplanade foreshore is significant as an illustration of the importance of Williamstown as a place of recreation for over 140 years. It was the earliest public bathing beach developed in the western suburbs of Melbourne and the surviving pre-World War 2 buildings and landscaping illustrate the importance and of the 'Back Beach' whose popularity between the late 1890s and the 1930s rivalled St Kilda on the opposite side of the Bay. (AHC criteria A4, D2 and G1)

Aesthetically, the Esplanade foreshore is significant for surviving buildings and landscape elements that still evoke the Edwardian and Interwar origins of this area and contribute to its historic character.

On this basis, the following buildings and elements contribute to the significance of the precinct:

The former Williamstown Dressing Pavilion, former Band Rotunda, shelter shed, Williamstown Life Saving and Swimming club and pool and the remnant Edwardian and Interwar landscaping including Cypresses, lava rock beds planted with Mirror Bush and bluestone rubble wall.

*Please note that some heritage places within this precinct may also have an individual citation in this Study.*

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

Construction dates 1840,

Hermes Number 22432

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The precinct comprises the public foreshore reserve on southern side of the Esplanade between Thompson and Victoria Streets. This precinct is closely integrated with the residential precinct on the north side of the Esplanade between Thompson and Giffard Streets, the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and Fearon Reserve (q.v.). The original *City of Williamstown Conservation Study* (1993) found that:

The Edwardian flavour is still here, although it is much fainter than it was in Hal Porter's fine descriptions of the 30s.

Key surviving historic elements of the foreshore precinct include:

- *The former Williamstown Dressing Pavilion* (q.v.).
- *The former Band Rotunda*. This has been converted to a cafe and restaurant.
- *The former shelter shed*. This building, situated to one side of the Rotunda, is an open-sided weatherboard structure with a gable roof.
- *The Williamstown Life Saving and Swimming Clubhouse*. This is an interwar building of somewhat domestic appearance. Asymmetrical in plan, there is a viewing tower situated slightly off centre with a circular window inset with the logo of the club in leadlight. A hip and gable roof encloses a verandah set originally on two pairs of columns (one on the left has been removed) Typically for interwar buildings, the walls are constructed of a weatherboard dado with cement sheet above.
- *The remnant late nineteenth and early twentieth century landscaping*. This includes early garden beds with lava rock edging planted with Mirror Bush, bluestone rubble wall and low rendered brick walls, remnant conifers, particularly opposite the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, and the wide concrete promenade between the Dressing Pavilion and the Swimming and Lifesaving clubs.

## Integrity

Integrity

Moderate to Low

## Usage/Former Usage

Context

The Esplanade foreshore precinct is related to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, and Fearon Reserve

## Historical Australian Themes

*Principal Australian Historical Theme(s)*

Making Suburbs.

## Physical Description 2

*Associations*

Williamstown City Council, S. Thake, Hal Porter.

*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/>*