

Observation  
Point

Fisherman's  
Point

# Heritage Review

Rhyll Jetty

Updated November 2023

Long Point

# Contents

1.0 Introduction .....2

2.0 Study Area .....2

3.0 Sources of Information .....3

4.0 Heritage Listings .....4

5.0 History .....6

6.0 Description ..... 18

7.0 Previous Heritage Assessments ..... 24

8.0 Policy & Legislation ..... 29

9.0 Conclusion .....31



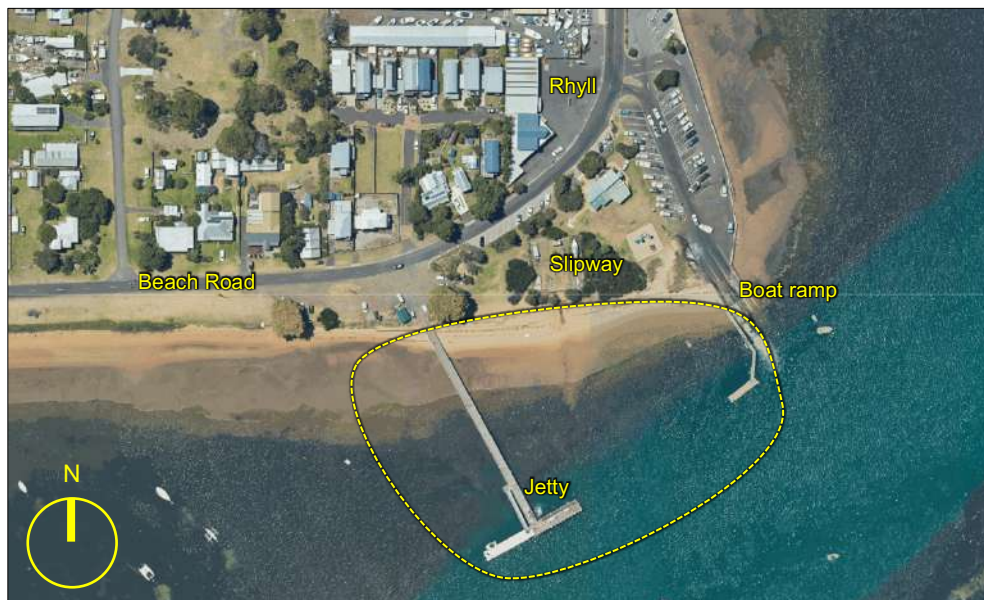
## 1.0 Introduction

This report was prepared for Parks Victoria. It provides an overview of the heritage values of Rhyll Jetty with the purpose of informing the development of a Local Port Area Plan. The brief for this report called for the following:

- Review the existing cultural heritage values as defined in Victorian Heritage Register, Heritage Inventory listings and heritage overlay;
- Provide a summary history of the development and use of the place;
- Investigate if there are any Heritage studies yet to be implemented, outstanding VHR nominations, confirm that Heritage Victoria is satisfied that the VHIs are mapped correctly, and investigate if any reviews are underway or planned;
- Review and summarise policies in existing reports & surveys;
- Summarise any permit policies and exemptions declared under the Heritage Act; and
- Consult with key heritage groups to build on and synthesise the cultural heritage values associated with the place.

## 2.0 Study Area

Rhyll Jetty is situated adjacent to Rhyll township, on Phillip Island in the Bass Coast Shire. The study area is limited to areas that are managed by Parks Victoria with a primary focus on Rhyll Jetty (as shown in figure 1 below).



**Figure 1** Aerial photograph of Rhyll Jetty and its environs. The study area is broadly indicated by the dashed yellow line. Note this photograph pre-dates the recent boat ramp upgrade.

## 3.0 Sources of Information

This report was informed by a site inspection and a review of the following documents and historical sources:

### Primary Sources

- ☐ *Argus*
- ☐ *Herald*
- ☐ *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*
- ☐ State Library of Victoria picture collection (online)
- ☐ Historical aerial photographs (sourced from Landata)
- ☐ *Public Works Department (Ports and Harbors [sic] Division) Drawing Register* (held by Parks Victoria).
- ☐ Historic Plans (held by Parks Victoria).

### Secondary Sources

- ☐ Victorian Heritage Database
- ☐ *Bass Coast Planning Scheme* (Clause 43.01 - Heritage Overlay, and Clause 15.03 – Heritage).
- ☐ *Phillip Island to Wilsons Prom : A Photographic Tour by Old Postcards* (Ron Blum, 2021).
- ☐ *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Gaps Review and Prioritisation Framework Stage 1* (Context, October 2020)
- ☐ *Rhyll Jetty Archaeological Investigations – Report to Bass Coast Shire on archaeological investigations to locate the remains of the historic shipwreck Ventnor and Genista* (Harvey Maritime, January 2020)
- ☐ *Rhyll Boat Ramp Upgrade Maritime Archaeological Component of the Heritage Impact Statement* (Cosmos Archaeology Pty Ltd, July 2020)
- ☐ *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 Volume: Introduction and Recommendations* (Allom Lovell & Associates, 2004)
- ☐ *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 Volume 2: Revised Thematic Environmental History* (Allom Lovell & Associates, 2004)
- ☐ *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 1* (Allom Lovell & Associates, 2002)
- ☐ *Within the Plains of Paradise: A Brief Social History of Rhyll, Phillip Island* (Edited by David and Jocelyn Bradley, 1997)
- ☐ *Historic Phillip Island* (Mary Karney, 1994)
- ☐ *Phillip Island in Picture and Story* (compiled by Joshua Wickett Gliddon, 1958)
- ☐ *One Hundred Years of History* (Joseph White, 1974)

## 4.0 Heritage Listings

### *Victorian Heritage Register*

The study area contains two shipwreck sites listed on the Victorian Heritage Register: *Ventnor* (VHR S690) and *Genista* (S1017). The study area does not otherwise include any buildings or structures on the Victorian Heritage Register, nor are there any Registered sites within its immediate environs. Heritage Victoria do not have any record of Rhyll Jetty having been nominated for entry in the Register.



Figure 2 Aerial photograph showing estimated location of the wreck of the *Ventnor*.  
Source: Harvey Maritime.



Figure 3 Aerial photograph showing estimated location of the wreck of the *Genista* (red line).  
Source: Harvey Maritime.



### *Victorian Heritage Inventory*

The Rhyll Jetty is included in the Rhyll Foreshore Archaeological Precinct is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (No. H7921-0125). The extent of the listing is described as follows:

*The precinct includes crown land extending from Beach Road to between 80 and 100 metres to seaward. It is enclosed by and encompasses the boat ramp pier to the west and the Rhyll pier to the east. The land includes prograded shoreline and because of its relatively undisturbed nature is likely to contain archaeological deposits associated with a range of maritime activities including fishing, oyster, farming, boat building and repair, and cargo and ferry operations. The precinct is known to contain the fragmentary remains of the passenger ferry Genista (VHR S1017) and the cargo ferry Ventnor (VHR S690). The precinct is also known to contain artefacts associated with the former Dorwards Slipway and a former mooring dolphin used the passenger ferry Genista. Currently the land is used as a public recreation reserve and contains car parking for the Rhyll boat ramp, a children's playground, buildings housing the Rhyll Angling Club, a small vessel slipway and boat maintenance yard and the Rhyll Pier which is used to accommodate fishing vessels and a passenger ferry.*



**Figure 4** Aerial photograph showing indicative extent of the Heritage Inventory listing for the Rhyll Foreshore Archaeological Precinct (shaded blue). Note this does not reflect the extent of listing described above (which includes the jetty).  
Source: Mapshare.

As noted in figure 4, the mapped curtilage for the Rhyll Foreshore Archaeological Precinct does not correspond to described extent of the Heritage Inventory listing. Heritage Victoria have confirmed the map is inaccurate and will be corrected 'within the coming weeks'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Email from Liam Phillips (Maritime Archaeologist, Heritage Victoria), dated 5 September 2023.

### *Bass Coast Shire*

No part of the study area is subject to a Heritage Overlay Control. The nearest Heritage Overlay site is the house and stables at 15-18 Beach Road (HO130) – this being entirely outside of the area managed by Parks Victoria.

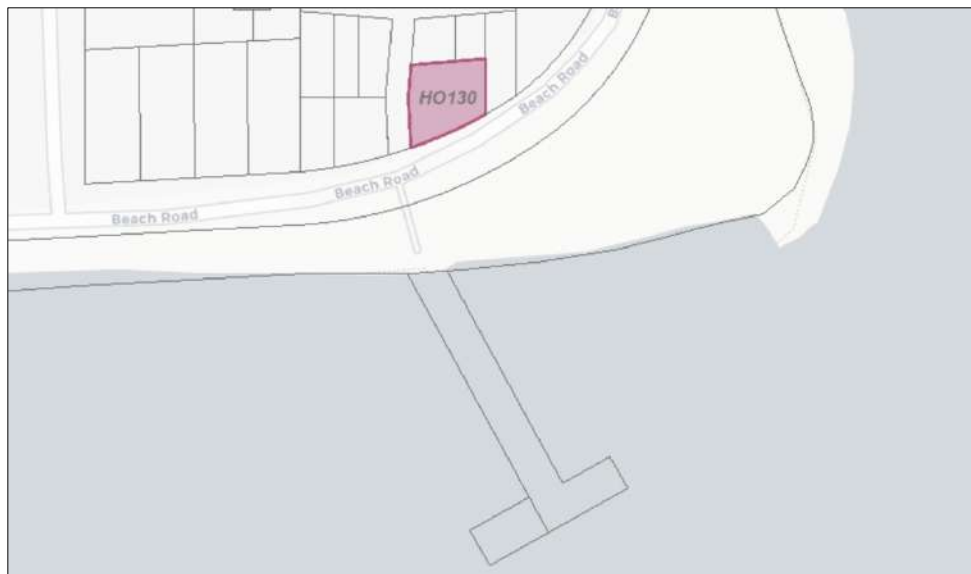


Figure 5 Heritage Overlay sites within the environs of Rhyll Jetty.  
Source: Mapshare.

### *National Trust of Australia (Victoria)*

Rhyll Jetty is not listed on the register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

## 5.0 History

Western Port Bay was the home of oyster fisheries from the 1850s. In the southern part of the bay, up to 30 boats dredged for oysters to sell in the Melbourne and Geelong markets. One of these vessels was the Gannet, owned by Captain John Barnard Lock, who transported his catch to Geelong for sale.<sup>2</sup>

From 1842, the whole of Phillip Island was held as a single pastoral run, leased by brothers John and William McHaffie. The early oyster fishers established a small village of cottages at Fisherman's Point (later Rhyll), at the north-east of the island. By 1862, however, the oyster grounds had been destroyed by marine borers and silt, and the village became deserted.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Per comms. John Jansson, as cited in Cosmos Archaeology, 'Rhyll Boat Ramp Upgrade', unpublished report.

<sup>3</sup> *Herald*, 28 July 1862, p. 5.

The first blocks of land at the eastern end of Phillip Island were opened for selection in 1868. As noted in the *Argus*, 'At Rhyll (Fisherman's Point) twenty-four lots...averaging from one to fourteen acres each, were set apart for persons who for three months previous, during the current year, had held licenses for sites for fishermen's residences, or drying nets on the shores of Western Port Bay.'<sup>4</sup>

In the decade following the land sales, Captain Lock appears to have been influential in the decision to construct a jetty at Rhyll, with one newspaper report noting:

*I see that tenders are called and accepted for a jetty at Rhyll. No doubt the master stroke of policy, which is to suit Captain Lock and his crafts, is due to parliamentary influence, gained by being partners in that affair at Corner Inlet, nee the Oyster Co.*

*How is it that Rhyll and Newhaven can have jetty accommodation and Queensferry laughed at when at the latter place shipping is coming in or going out always, whilst at Rhyll very few, if any, will use it but Capt. Lock. There is no traffic to that jetty but from the property of one semi-squatter.'*<sup>5</sup>

Plans for the jetty at Rhyll were prepared in 1876 and the contract for its construction was awarded in February the following year to John Hutcheon for £363.<sup>6</sup> In 1891, a subsequent contract for the extension to the head of the jetty was undertaken by WH Richardson for £123.<sup>7</sup> Early photographs show the timber jetty with rails on the deck, used by a trolley to assist with the loading and unloading of cargo (refer figures 7 and 10 below).

The steamer *Genista* provided a ferry service around Western Port Bay from 1889 to the early 1930s. When ferries were moored overnight at Phillip Island, they often utilised the pier at Rhyll, especially when a northerly wind made mooring at Cowes potentially hazardous.<sup>8</sup> Because of its small population, however, Rhyll was not a major port and was not always a stopping place. Until the bridge over the eastern passage was opened in 1940, Rhyll, like the rest of the island, was accessible only by sea. The town was also somewhat isolated from the island by such bad roads that it could take a horse and trap two to three hours to reach Cowes.<sup>9</sup> The pier thus provided a vital link to the wider world.

Fishing remained a mainstay of the town over the decades. Oyster dredging at Rhyll recommenced around 1910 and reached a peak of activity in the 1920s.<sup>10</sup> Crayfishing vessels also utilised the pier. Schnapper fishing from the pier was one of the attractions of the town, as noted by a 1940s tourist guide to Phillip Island.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Argus*, 3 November 1868, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 10 January 1877, p.3

<sup>6</sup> *Victorian Government Gazette*, Contract 1202 9 February 1877.

<sup>7</sup> *Victorian Government Gazette*, Contract 3171 17 July 1891.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Edgecombe, Phillip Island and Western Port, p.52.

<sup>9</sup> David and Jocelyn Bradley (eds), *Within the plains of paradise : a brief social history of Rhyll*, Phillip Island, p.1

<sup>10</sup> Context, *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Gaps Review and Prioritisation Framework*, October 2020, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Broadbent's Holiday Guide to Phillip Island and San Remo*.



The Rhyll Yacht Club was established in 1971. A boat rental business also commenced operation at much the same time, making Rhyll the centre for boating on the island. An angling club was formed in 1988, hosting regular competitions.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of the jetty facilities, it is known that a dolphin (timber piles driven into the seabed) was constructed in the late 1920s to enable larger ferries to be berthed.<sup>13</sup> Visible in mid-century photographs, this was a freestanding structure running parallel to the channel, at a right angle to the jetty. Drawings show that repairs to the jetty were undertaken in 1938. At this time the head of the jetty was T-shaped. Drawings prepared in 1947 indicate the jetty was fully reconstructed with a wider deck and longer T-head.<sup>14</sup> In July the same year, the Public Works Department advertised tenders for 'supply of sawn timber; for Rhyll Jetty'.<sup>15</sup> The jetty was again entirely rebuilt again in the 1980s, with a subsequent extension to the jetty head c.2015.

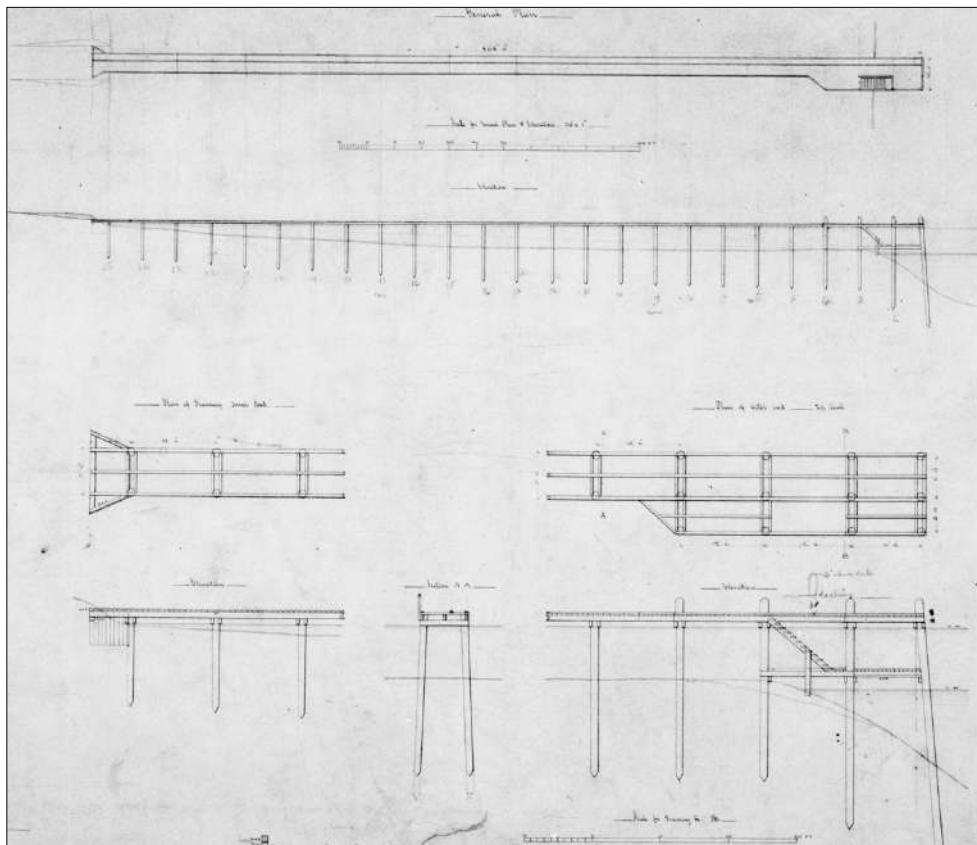


Figure 6 1876 drawing for the construction of Rhyll Jetty.  
Source: Parks Victoria.

<sup>12</sup> David and Jocelyn Bradley (eds), *Within the plains of paradise : a brief social history of Rhyll*, Phillip Island, pp.79-80

<sup>13</sup> David and Jocelyn Bradley (eds), *Within the plains of paradise : a brief social history of Rhyll*, Phillip Island, p.37.

<sup>14</sup> *Public Works Department Ports and Harbors [sic] Division Drawing Register 1936-1938*, Drawing no. 47/54.

<sup>15</sup> *Age*, 25 July 1947, p.10.



Figure 7 Looking along Rhyll Jetty with the ferry Genista, the schooner Stephen and the ketch Vision tied up at the end, unknown date.  
Source: Victorian Collections.

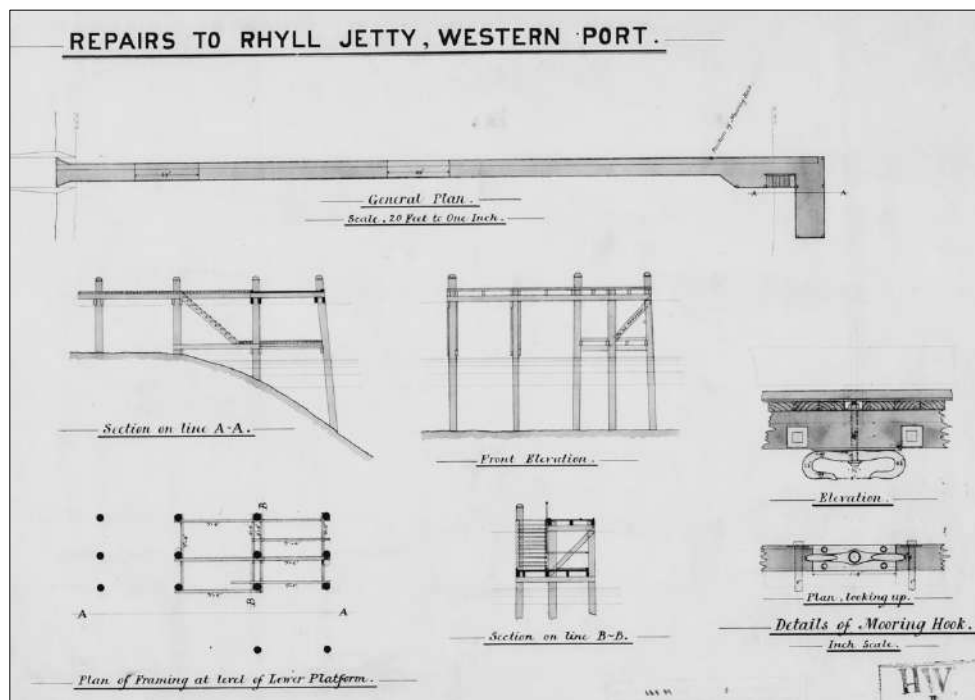


Figure 8 Drawing for repairs to Rhyll Jetty, 1895.  
Source: Parks Victoria.



Figure 9 View of the Genista at the jetty, c.1900.  
Source: Victorian Collections.



Figure 10 Rhyll locals outside the goods shed on the jetty, unknown date.  
Source: Within the Plains of Paradise.



Figure 11 Rhyll, 1945. Note the goods shed at left of image.



Figure 12 Oblique aerial view of Rhyll, 1945.  
Source: State Library of Victoria.



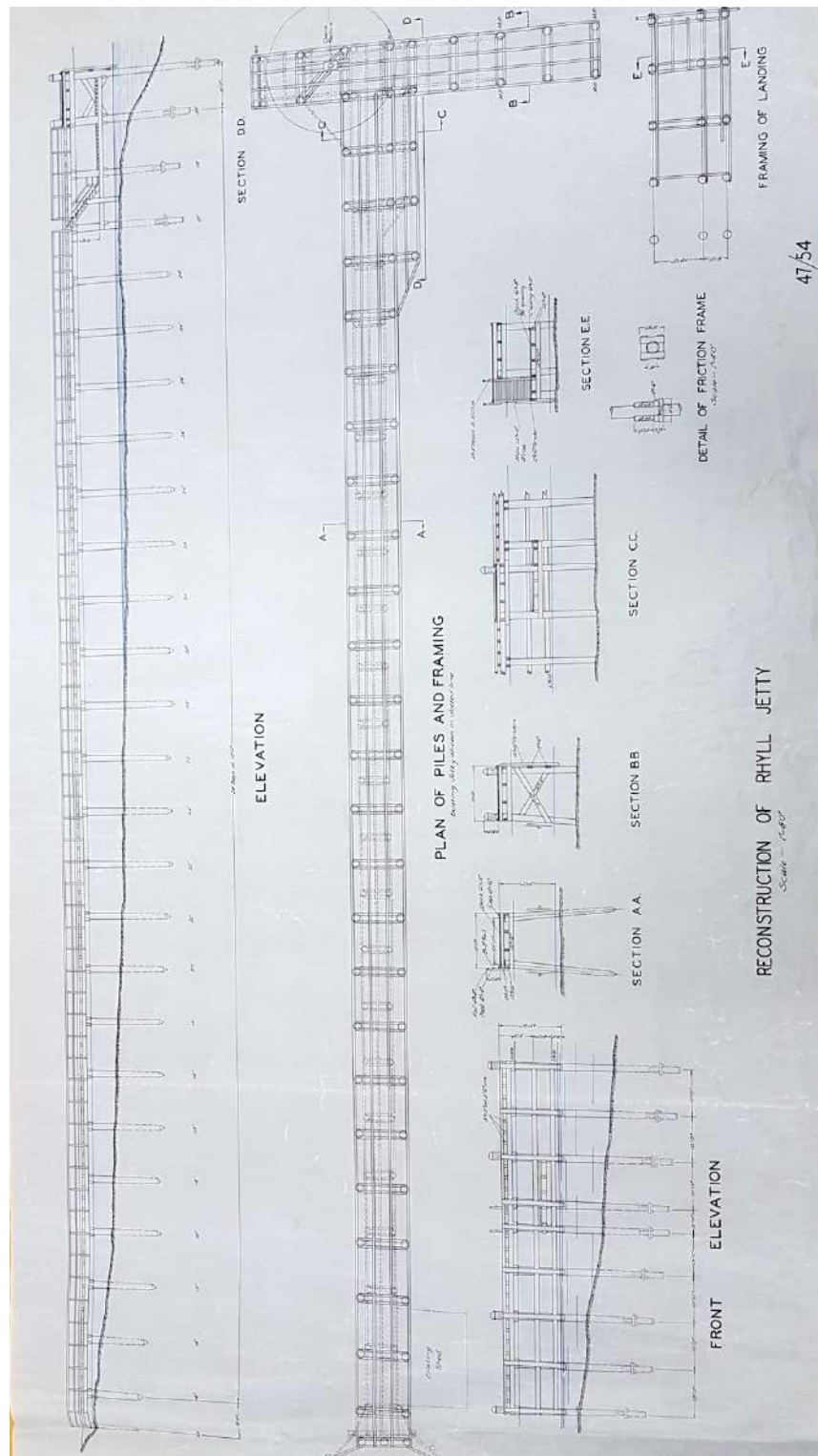


Figure 13 1947 drawing for the reconstruction of Rhyll Jetty.  
Source: Public Records Office of Victoria.



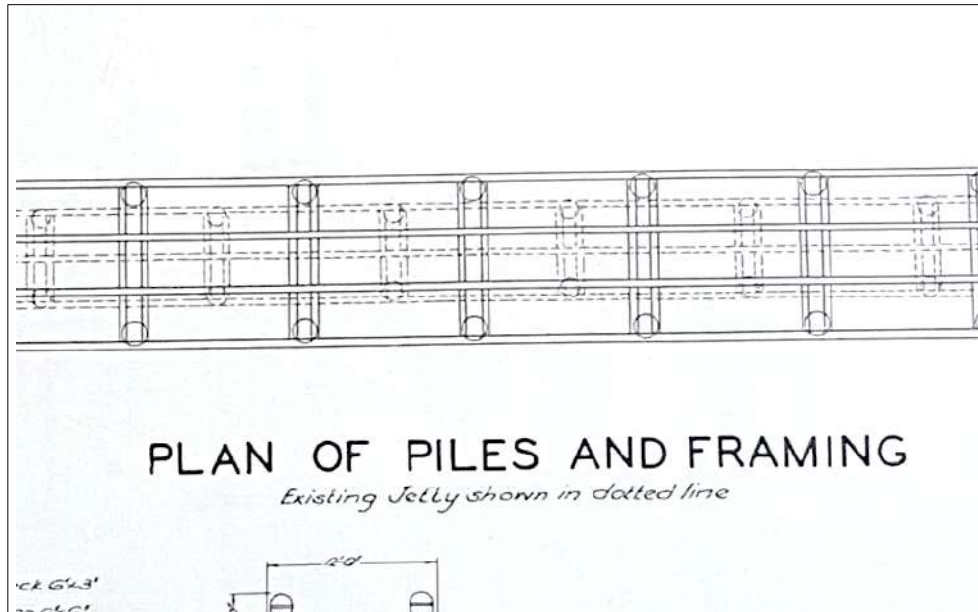


Figure 14 Extract from the 1947 drawing showing the width of the new jetty relative to the original, narrower jetty that it replaced.



Figure 15 Rhyll, c.1950s. Note that the goods shed had been moved by this time. The photograph also shows a timber seawall – subsequently replaced by a stone and concrete structure. Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 16      Overlooking Rhyll jetty, c1960s. Note the remnants of the dolphin alongside the jetty.  
Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 17      Aerial image, 1977.  
Source: [www.landata.vic.gov.au](http://www.landata.vic.gov.au)

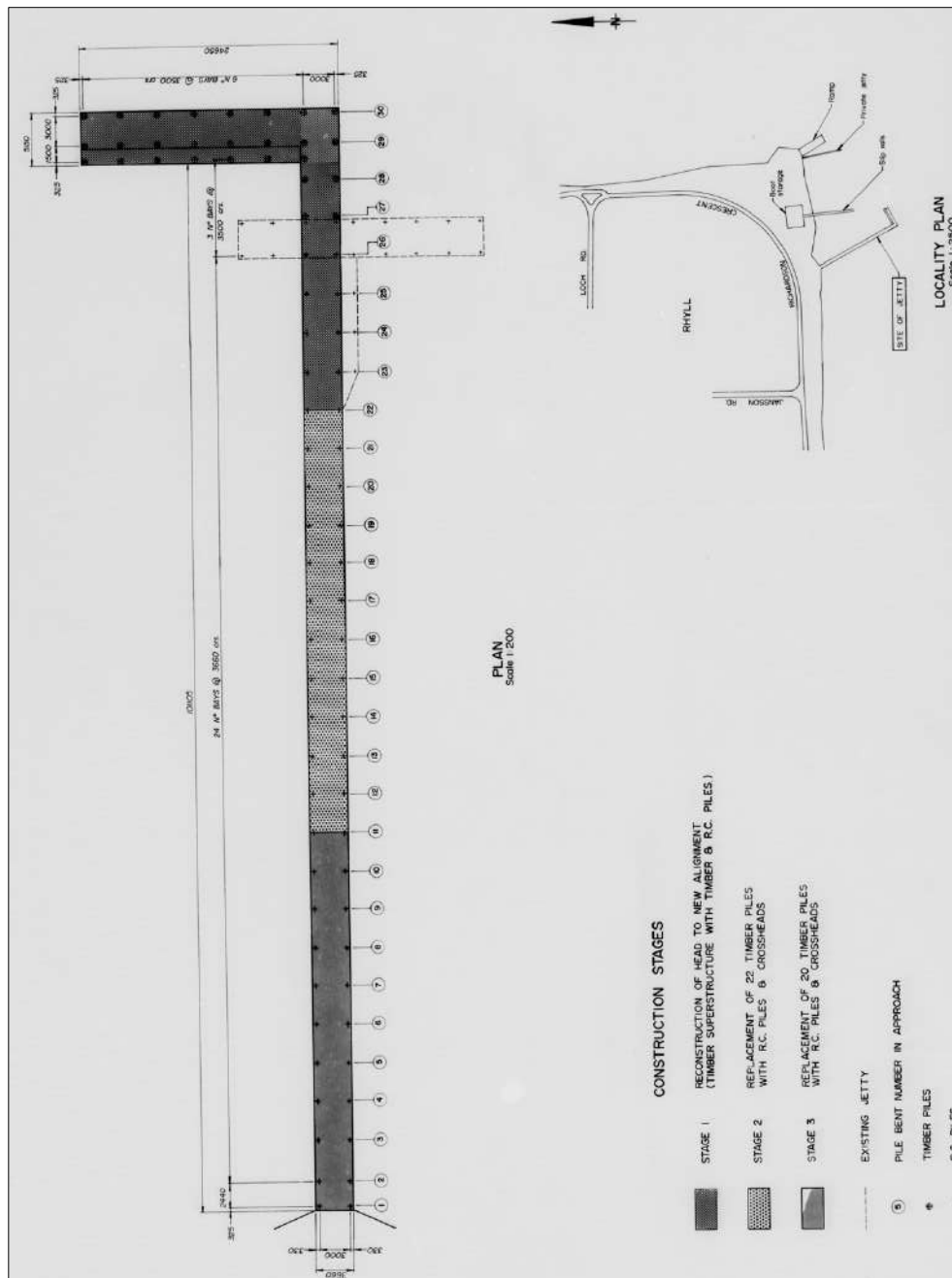


Figure 18 Drawing prepared by the Public Works Department in 1983 for the staged reconstruction of Rhyll jetty. Stage 1 comprised the rebuilding of the jetty head to a new alignment in timber. Stages 2 and 3 involved the replacement of timber piles and crossheads to the centre and eastern third of the jetty using reinforced concrete piles and crossheads. It is noted that timber crossheads were used in the reconstruction.  
Source: Parks Victoria.

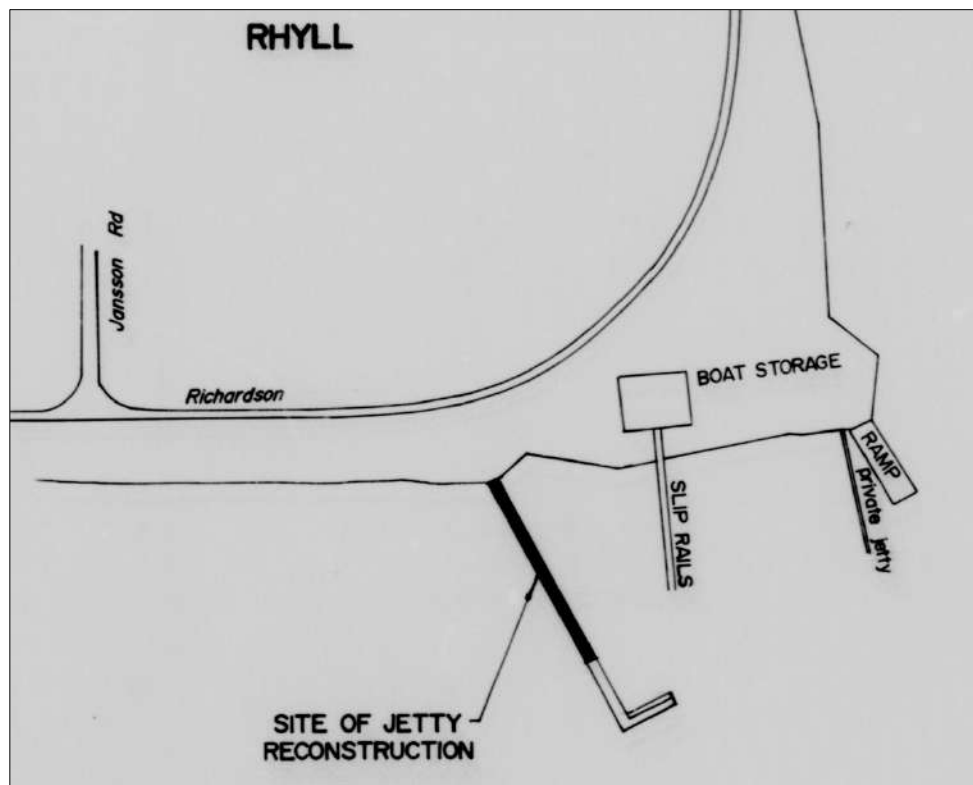


Figure 19 Site plan, extracted from a 1985 Public Works Department drawing for the reconstruction of Rhyll jetty.  
Source: Parks Victoria.

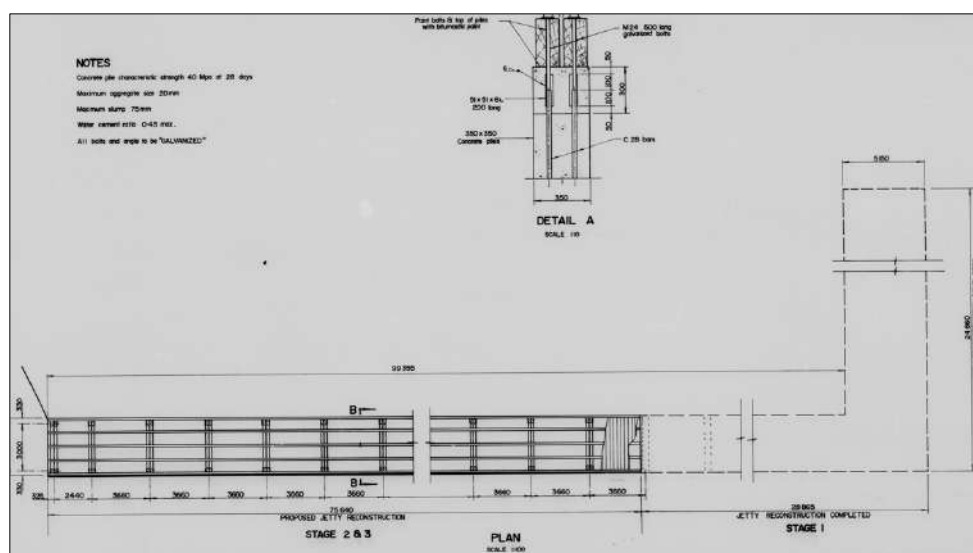


Figure 20 Plan and detail for the reconstruction of the jetty, extracted from the 1985 drawing. Note that the reconstruction of the jetty head had been completed by this time.  
Source: Parks Victoria.





Figure 21      Aerial image, January 2014.  
Source: Google Earth.

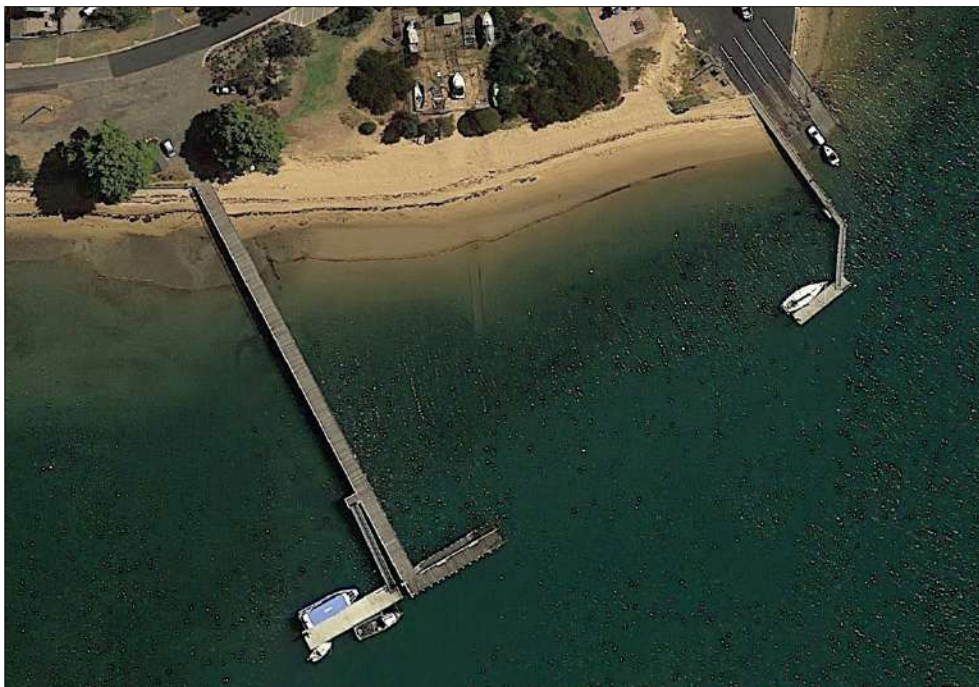


Figure 22      Aerial image, October 2015. Note the western arm extension to the jetty head.  
Source: Google Earth.



## 6.0 Description

Rhyll Jetty is located on the foreshore to the south of Rhyll township. It extends out into Western Port Bay for a distance of approximately 105 metres and has 23 metre long head with a low-landing. The jetty is supported on square section concrete piles for most of its length with circular timber piles used for the head. The crossheads, beams, deck and handrails are of timber construction. As noted in section 5 of this report, the original 1876 jetty was fully rebuilt in 1947, and this was in turn replaced in the 1980s. Remnant timber piles from the 1947 jetty are embedded in the mud flats under the existing structure. A pontoon was fixed to the west end of the jetty head c2014-15, accessed by a metal gangway. The low-landing has modern plastic mesh decking.

The former goods shed, located on the foreshore near the jetty entrance, is a small timber framed building with a gable roof. The weatherboard wall cladding appears to be relatively recent and the roof has been reclad in Colorbond. Gutters and downpipes are also modern. The stone faced seawall flanking the jetty entrance was constructed after the 1950s (photographs from that period show a timber seawall with a timber handrail). North of the jetty (and outside of the study area) is a stone cairn erected in 1923 to commemorate the discovery of Western Port Bay by George Bass in 1798.



Figure 23 Rhyll Jetty viewed from the foreshore reserve.



Figure 24      *The jetty entrance with the former goods shed to the right.*



Figure 25      *The west side of the jetty.*





Figure 26      *Remnants of earlier timber piles below the jetty. Note the current piles are concrete.*



Figure 27      *The east side of the jetty viewed from the jetty head.*



Figure 28      *The jetty head.*

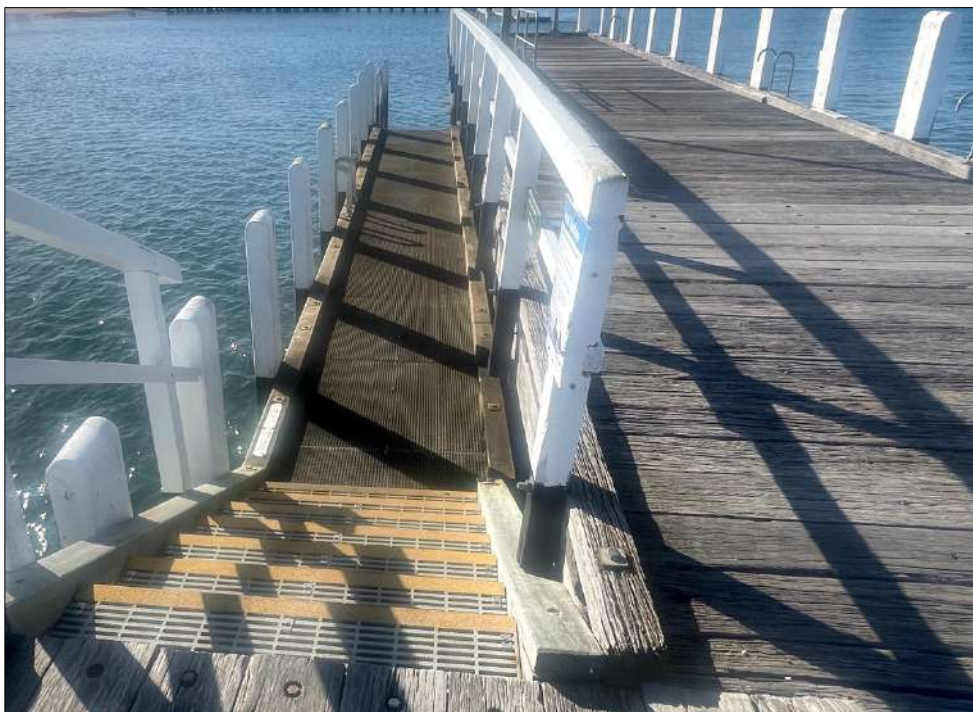


Figure 29      *The inner low-landing to the jetty head.*





Figure 30      Modern gangway providing access to the jetty pontoon.



Figure 31      The former goods shed.





Figure 32      *The stone faced seawall flanking the jetty entrance.*



Figure 33      *The memorial cairn on the foreshore, north of the jetty.*

## 7.0 Previous Heritage Assessments

### Municipal Heritage Studies

The *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 1* was undertaken in 2002 by Allom Lovell & Associates. The Rhyll Jetty and former goods shed were identified in that study but not recommended for planning scheme protection. The citation for the jetty and goods shed provided the following information on their history and historical context

*The first Rhyll jetty was constructed in 1876, the piers of which are visible beneath the current structure. The present jetty was reconstructed in early 1980s. The goods shed dates from 1876, however it has been relocated from its position over the water to its present site. The original timber piers are evident in the water beside the jetty.*

Accepting that the above is not an assessment of significance per se, it can be inferred that the jetty was not recommended for a Heritage Overlay control because it had been entirely reconstructed in the 1980s.

Bass Coast Shire have more recently initiated a municipal wide review with the aim of identifying places and precincts of potential heritage significance. The results of this review are set out in the *Heritage Gaps Review and Prioritisation Framework Stage 1 Final Report* (Context Pty Ltd, October 2020). The Review identified various gaps—including geographic and typological/thematic—in current heritage protection across the municipality, as well as the need for a re-evaluation of existing heritage study documentation. A total of 311 individual places, two potential new precincts and two potential serial listings were recommended for detailed assessment. Further to this, the Review provides a framework for future investigation of identified places, ranked in order of priority as follows:

#### 1.1 Very high priority

- *Prepare an updated and more comprehensive Thematic Environmental History, based on the draft framework of themes provided in Section 2.2.1, to enhance understanding of the historical themes and sub-themes in the municipality. This should precede any Stage 2 detailed assessments/studies.*
- *Assess 'very high priority' potential places and precincts (see Appendix A).*

#### 1.2 High priority

- *Develop a Heritage Strategy to guide future heritage work.*
- *Prepare a Significant Tree study, building on existing work undertaken in Phillip Island by Phillip Island Conservation Society in collaboration with Bass Coast branch of National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and Council, and from this work consider developing a Bass Coast Shire Significant Tree Register.*
- *Assess 'high priority' potential places (see Appendix A).*

#### 1.3 Medium priority and longer-term tasks

- *Assess 'medium priority' potential places (see Appendix A). Assess 'low priority' potential places (see Appendix A).*

Noting that the Appendix A list of potential heritage places hasn't been made public at this stage, Bass Coast Shire have provided the authors of this report with the following information:

*The wider "Rhyll Foreshore" precinct between Walton Street and Lady Nelson Point was nominated by the community as a potential heritage place, the appendix identifies this as a "high" priority for investigation (one step below "very high").*

*The entry notes:*

*Potential listing for this site could include various built and landscape elements that contribute to its significance as a cultural landscape. The Rhyll foreshore is unique for its diversity of historic uses and very long-term historical significance. Detailed site visit and further historical research is required to determine the exact extent of the listing but generally elements such as indigenous and mature vegetation, various monuments/memorials, slipway, boat ramp and pontoon, Yacht Club, sea walls etc should be included. Potential to meet criteria A, E.<sup>16</sup>*

### **Bass Coast Shire Thematic Environmental History**

In July 2021 Bass Coast Shire Council engaged GML Heritage (formerly trading as Context) to complete a comprehensive and updated Thematic Environmental History of the municipality. This work built on the *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Gaps Review and Prioritisation Framework*, as discussed above, which recommended the preparation of a Thematic Environmental History as a very high priority action that should precede any Stage 2 detailed heritage assessments and studies. The Thematic Environmental History was prepared as an initial step in a strategic process to review the post-contact history of Bass Coast Shire with the aim of ensuring that the land use and settlement patterns of the area were captured and set within a broad framework, which is to be used to better compare, understand and substantiate the heritage values of individual places, areas and themes within the municipality.<sup>17</sup>

The final version of the GML Heritage *Bass Coast Thematic Environmental History* was issued in January 2022. It includes the following reference to Rhyll Jetty under the theme 3.7 Building Towns and Settlements:

*Rhyll is a small fishing village on Phillip Island situated on a bluff with coastal mudflats to its north and south and a swamp to its west. It was the site of the landing of George Bass during his exploratory visit to Western Port in 1798 and of a temporary British settlement (Fort Dumaresq) in 1826. Rhyll is believed to have been the site of sealers' camps in the 1820s. A small settlement (Flagstaff Point) was established at Rhyll to take advantage of the booming oyster dredging industry in the 1850s.*

*The village of Rhyll was surveyed in 1868 and 24 allotments were set aside for those who had held a license for a fishermen's residence or drying nets on the shores of Western Port Bay and been engaged in the activity for the previous three months.<sup>220</sup> A jetty was constructed 1876–77. In 1889, a post office opened at the home of Captain John Lock, a prominent maritime trader based at Rhyll, and in 1891 a mechanics institute and state school were opened. In 1940 Rhyll was described as an 'old world fishing village'.<sup>18</sup>*

<sup>16</sup> Email from Austin Cram (Principal Strategic Planner) Bass Coast Shire, dated 18 July 2023.

<sup>17</sup> GML Heritage, *Bass Coast Thematic Environmental History*, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> GML Heritage, *Bass Coast Thematic Environmental History*, p. 55.



The *Bass Coast Thematic Environmental History* also recognises the importance of jetties and piers in the historical development of Bass Coast Shire at section ‘3.9 Transport and Communications’ (albeit that Rhyll Jetty is not specifically mentioned):

*Western Port was heavily reliant on sea transport prior to the extension of the railway to Wonthaggi in 1910 and, as a result, most coastal towns and hamlets required piers and jetties as part of their essential infrastructure ...*<sup>19</sup>

### Archaeological Reports

In July 2021 Cosmos Archaeology Pty Ltd prepared a heritage impact statement for maritime archaeology to inform plans for the Rhyll boat ramp upgrade. It was limited to an investigation of the boat ramp environs and did not include the jetty (as illustrated below).

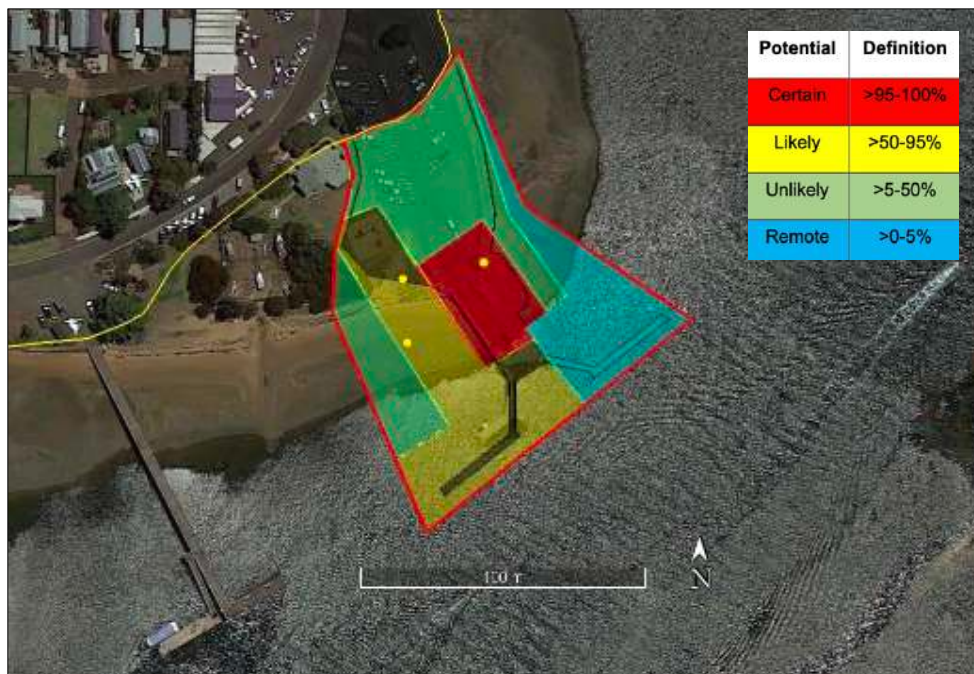


Figure 34 Extract from the Cosmos Archaeology report showing the potential of maritime archaeological remains in the area investigated for the Rhyll boat ramp upgrade.

The Cosmos report provides an assessment of significance of archaeological sites within the study area comprising the dolphin (ie timber moorings, to the east of the jetty head), the wreck of the ferry Genista (located to the north side of the dolphin), Dorward’s slipway and the wreck of the Ventnor (both originally adjacent to the new boat ramp).

<sup>19</sup> GML Heritage, *Bass Coast Thematic Environmental History*, p. 69.

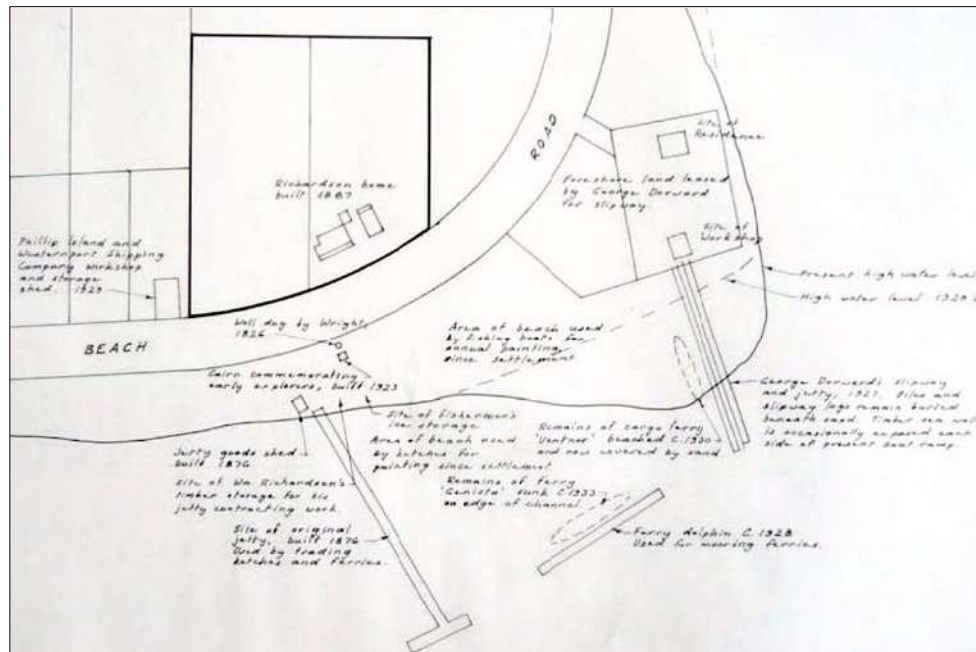


Figure 35 Undated sketch plan of historical features on the Rhyll foreshore, reproduced from the Cosmos Archaeology report.

Assessments of significance [reproduced from the Cosmos report]:

#### Dorwards Slipway

Archaeological	There is potential for further timber remains and artefact material associated with Dorwards slipway and jetty under the foreshore and current Boat Ramp. The place has been present on the foreshore from the 1920's, having undergone repairs and reconstruction. The place is of Low archaeological significance.
Aesthetic	Potential remains are fragmentary, consisting of one timber pile and possible timber sheathing that is buried in the sea bed or bank and/or underneath the current boat ramp as such the place has minimal aesthetic significance.
Historic	The place is one of a number boatbuilding and repair services on Phillip Island, and was only in operation for a short time. As such, the place has Low historic significance.
Scientific	The identified and potential remains within the extent of the place have Low scientific significance for the potential information that may be obtained .
Social or Spiritual	Once the slipway was decommissioned, local residents who still reside in the area today took over management of the jetty. A plaque (which is part of a historical tourism walking tour) is located on the foreshore, detailing the infrastructure that was once there. As such, the place has Moderate social significance for its associations with the local area.

#### Mooring/Dolphin

Archaeological	There is low potential for timber remains and artefact material associated with the timber dolphin structure to be present on or in the seabed. The place has been present on the foreshore from the 1920's, falling into disrepair in the 1950's and possibly removed. The place is of low archaeological significance at a local level.
----------------	---



<i>Aesthetic</i>	<i>Potential remains are fragmentary, either beneath the water line and/or buried in the sea bed or bank, as such the place has no aesthetic significance.</i>
<i>Historic</i>	<i>The place is the site of shipping interaction from the early 1930's – 1950', where many vessels moored to. The place has low historic significance.</i>
<i>Scientific</i>	<i>There is potential for archaeological deposits that were discarded from vessels to be present. Archaeological remains are potentially significant for their contribution to an understanding of the design and construction methods used for this large timber structure. The identified and potential remains within the extent of the place have Low scientific significance for the potential information that may be obtained .</i>
<i>Social or Spiritual</i>	<i>There are no visible extent remains of the timber dolphin. The dolphin was one of two places a vessel could anchor to in the Rhyll area, however fell into disrepair. As such, the remains have minimal social or spiritual significance.</i>

#### **Ventnor**

<i>Archaeological</i>	<i>The Ventnor vessel was broken up on the western bank of the Rhyll foreshore. The deck and sides were dismantled leaving the bottom, stern post and rudder. Gradually, sand built up over the hull. The stern post and rudder were apparently removed in 1980. Supposedly, during construction of the sea wall west of the boat ramp, part of the keel was also removed. It is suspected that the rest of the vessel was buried beneath the sand dunes and playground.</i>  <i>The history of the vessel and its basic details are known. As the vessel was at least partially broken up with only the bow known to be remaining, most of the archaeological potential of the vessel has likely been removed. There is little more that can be learnt about the vessel from excavation and examination.</i>  <i>The Ventnor shipwreck has low archaeological significance.</i>
<i>Aesthetic</i>	<i>The remains of Ventnor are locally known, but not confirmed to be buried within the Rhyll. If made viewable, the remains would be limited due to the process undertaken already of dismantling and recycling parts of the vessel,. As the wreck is buried the Ventnor currently has no aesthetic significance.</i>
<i>Historic</i>	<i>The historical background of Ventnor is well known. Ventnor was a locally iconic vessel working in Port Phillip and was owned by local families in the area. As such, the Ventnor shipwreck has Low historical significance.</i>
<i>Scientific</i>	<i>The identified and potential remains within the extent of the place have no scientific significance for the potential information that may be obtained .</i>
<i>Social or Spiritual</i>	<i>There are no visible extent remains of the Ventnor. Local residents in Rhyll are descendants of the Captain and Deckhand of the vessel. A plaque( which is part of a historical tourism walking tour) is located on the foreshore, commemorating the vessel and as such there is a strong connection with the local community. Remains of the vessel have been salvaged and recycled into the township. As such, the remains have low social or spiritual significance.</i>

#### **Genista**

<i>Archaeological</i>	<i>The Genista sank at its moorings on the landward side of the dolphin at Rhyll while being dismantled and remained in situ until 1966, when Ports and Harbours removed the boiler and used explosives on the wreck to flatten the vessel.</i>  <i>The history of the vessel and its basic details are known. There is little known about the working life of this vessel. Due to the damage to the vessel after being blown up, it is likely that the remains would have low integrity. As there are gaps in the historical record of this vessel, archaeological remains may be able to shed light on Genista's working life.</i>  <i>The Genista shipwreck has low archaeological significance.</i>
-----------------------	---

<i>Aesthetic</i>	<i>Remains of the Genista shipwreck boiler have been located and were removed. It is possible that fragmentary remains are buried within the sea bed. The remains are likely to be scattered, of poor integrity and difficult to identify. As such, Genista currently has no aesthetic significance.</i>
<i>Historic</i>	<i>The working life of Genista is relatively unknown outside of it being the longest serving passenger vessel in the area. The events surrounding its loss are well documented. The Genista shipwreck has Moderate historical significance for its associations with the local area.</i>
<i>Scientific</i>	<i>Finding the remains of this vessel would be of scientific value as its current condition and integrity may provide information on unusual site formation processes as it was dismantled, and blown up by explosives, and elements towed from the water. This sequence of events may present new information. The Genista shipwreck, if located, may have Low scientific significance.</i>
<i>Social or Spiritual</i>	<i>A plaque (which is part of a historical tourism walking tour) is located on the foreshore, commemorating the vessel as the longest passenger vessel in the area and as such there is a strong connection with the local community. The wreck has Moderate social importance for its associations with the local area.</i>

The Cosmos report also identified a buried timber post in the sand to the west of the boat ramp. The report was inclusive in respect to the provenance of the timber post but it was described as giving an 'indication' of the presence and survival of maritime archaeological remains.<sup>20</sup>

#### Conservation Management Plans

No conservation management plans are known to have been prepared for Rhyll Pier.

## 8.0 Policy & Legislation

### Heritage Act

As noted in Section 3 of this report, Rhyll foreshore between the jetty and boat ramp is listed in the Victorian Heritage Inventory. The Inventory is established under the *Heritage Act 2017* and administered by Heritage Victoria. It is an inventory of known historical (non-indigenous) archaeological sites and elements, including above and below ground artefacts and ruins, and in some cases sites of archaeological potential.

No person can knowingly excavate or disturb a Heritage Inventory site or archaeological site without obtaining a consent from the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria, as set out in Sections 123 of the *Act*. Under Section 124(1) of the *Act*, the Executive Director may issue consent as follows:

- (a) *to excavate or uncover a site recorded in the Heritage Inventory or an archaeological site which is not recorded in the Heritage Inventory; or*

<sup>20</sup> Cosmos Archaeology, *Rhyll Boat Ramp Upgraded – Maritime Archaeological Component of the Heritage Impact Statement*, pp.25-27.

- (b) to damage or disturb a site recorded in the Heritage Inventory or an archaeological site which is not recorded in the Heritage Inventory; or*
- (c) to damage or disturb an archaeological artefact, including for the purposes of study, conservation or exhibition; or*
- (d) to possess an archaeological artefact for the purposes of sale; or*
- (e) to buy or sell an archaeological artefact.*

In determining whether to issue a consent to disturb a site on the Heritage Inventory, Section 124(3) of the *Act* states that the Executive Director must consider:

- (a) any relevant archaeological, historical or other research; and*
- (b) the potential of the site or archaeological artefact to contribute to such knowledge.*

As noted, the Rhyll foreshore contains two shipwreck sites - *Ventnor* (VHR S690) and *Genista* (S1017). A third shipwreck in the broader Rhyll environs - the *Minah* (VHR S468) – is located further out in Western Port Bay, well away from the Rhyll foreshore, and is not yet fifty years old (meaning that it is not protected under the *Heritage Act*).<sup>21</sup>

Under the *Heritage Act 2017*, all shipwrecks (or parts of shipwrecks), aircraft (or parts of aircraft) that wrecked in Victorian state waters 75 or more years ago are protected. These items are protected whether their location is known or not. Significant shipwrecks less than 75 years old can be specifically declared historic shipwrecks.

#### **Underwater Cultural Heritage Act**

The *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* protects shipwrecks, aircraft wreck sites, and artefacts in Australian coastal waters. The *Act* does not extend to bays, rivers and inland water within Victoria unless it is agreed by the Minister of the State. As noted in the Cosmos Archaeology report, Phillip Island is located within the inland waters of Victoria.

#### **Local Planning Policies**

The provisions of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme relevant to heritage overlay places are those at:

- ☐ Clause 15.03-1L - Heritage Conservation
- ☐ Clause 43.01 - Heritage Overlay

These clauses only apply too land affected by the Heritage Overlay – noting again that no part of the study area is at present listed on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

<sup>21</sup> Liam Phillips, Maritime Archaeologist, Heritage Victoria, email dated 5 September 2023.

## 9.0 Conclusion

A jetty has existed in one form or another at Rhyll since 1877 and remained a vital piece of infrastructure until the 1940s when improved roads lessened the reliance on water transport. To that end, the jetty has local historical interest as a demonstration of the importance of ferries and maritime activities to the development of Phillip Island. This is recognised in the inclusion of the Rhyll jetty in a local history walk (with a plaque explaining its history).

The above notwithstanding, it must also be recognised that the jetty has been entirely rebuilt twice, with the current structure dating to the 1980s. It does not resemble the earliest (1877) incarnation of the jetty and has an historical character only insofar as it was largely built using 'traditional' timber construction methods (other than the concrete piles). The goods shed has been relocated from the jetty to the foreshore, truncated in length and largely reclad in modern materials. Having regard for this, the fabric of the jetty and former goods shed are not considered to be inherently significant. The heritage interest of the jetty is historical/associational, arising from its longstanding use for berthing of ferries and for fishing and other recreational activities.

The jetty also has archaeological significance, noting again that it forms part of the Rhyll Foreshore Archaeological Precinct Heritage Inventory listing. This brings with it obligations under the *Heritage Act*, as summarised in section 8 of this report. Heritage Victoria have indicated that the mapped curtilage to the Heritage Inventory listing will be amended (to an extent unknown at the time of writing). Further to archaeological matters, the foreshore between Rhyll jetty and the boat ramp has already been subject to a detailed maritime surveys (as part of the boat ramp upgrade). It is unclear if Heritage Victoria would require an additional archaeological survey of the area.

Rhyll jetty presently has no other heritage listings that bring into effect statutory planning controls. That said, it is noted that the Rhyll foreshore (including the jetty) was recently nominated by the community for inclusion in Bass Coast Shire's heritage gap review as a potential heritage place worthy of further investigation. The timeframe in which this further investigation may occur is unknown.