



Williamstown Local Port Area: Piers and Jetties

Heritage background review

Final Report
Prepared for
Parks Victoria
August 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML's Quality Management System.

Project	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
3174	1	Preliminary Draft Report	21 December 2022
3174	2	Draft Report	3 March 2023
3174	3	Final Report	28 April 2023
3174	4	Final Report (minor revisions)	26 May 2023
3174	5	Final Report (minor revisions)	17 August 2023

Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality management policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

Copyright

© GML Heritage Pty Ltd 2023

This report has been produced for the client as an internal document. Except as allowed under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), no part may be copied, transmitted, published, or otherwise dealt with in any form without permission in writing from GML Heritage and the owners of copyright in images or other matter in that part of the document.

Pre-existing copyright in images and other matter is acknowledged where appropriate. Although a reasonable effort has been made to obtain permission to reproduce copyright material, GML Heritage does not warrant that permission has been obtained in all cases.

Source of images is GML unless otherwise stated.

Cover image

Ferguson Street Pier, 2022. (Source: © GML Heritage)

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Location.....	1
1.3	Methodology.....	5
1.4	Limitations	5
1.5	Stakeholder consultation.....	5
1.6	Authorship	6
1.7	Acknowledgements	6
2	Planning context	7
2.1	Victorian Heritage Register	7
2.2	Victorian Heritage Inventory.....	7
2.3	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register	8
2.4	Heritage Overlay, Port of Melbourne Planning Scheme	9
2.5	National Trust of Australia (Victoria)	10
3	History overview	11
3.1	Development of piers in Victoria	11
3.2	Development of jetties and piers in Williamstown.....	12
3.3	Historical timeline	14
3.3.1	Gem Pier	24
3.3.2	Boyd Street Pier	25
3.3.3	Ferguson Street Pier	25
3.3.4	Workshops Pier	26
3.3.5	Commissioners Jetty.....	26
3.4	Historical development maps.....	27
4	Statutory heritage listings significance.....	29
4.1	Existing assessment	29
4.1.1	Gem Pier	29
4.1.2	Boyd Street Pier	29
4.1.3	Ferguson Street Pier	30

4.1.4	The Former Melbourne Harbor Trust Workshops	30
5	Site description	32
5.1	Williamstown Maritime Precinct	32
5.2	Piers and jetties.....	36
5.2.1	Gem Pier	36
5.2.2	Ferguson Street Pier	38
5.2.3	Seaworks site	41
6	Existing use	48
6.1	Gem Pier	48
6.2	Ferguson Street Pier.....	48
6.3	Seaworks site.....	49
6.3.1	Boyd Street Pier	49
6.3.2	Workshop Pier.....	49
6.3.3	Commissioners Jetty.....	49
7	Overview of heritage value	50
7.1	Gem Pier	50
7.2	Ferguson Street Pier.....	50
7.3	Seaworks site.....	51
7.3.1	Boyd Street Pier	51
7.3.2	Workshops Pier	51
7.3.3	Commissioners Jetty.....	52
7.4	Archaeological potential.....	52
7.4.1	Maritime heritage infrastructure	52
7.4.2	Shipwrecks and associated deposits	53
7.4.3	Discard from vessels and pedestrians	53
	References.....	55
	Appendix 1: Historical images	57

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

With a proud and vibrant history as one of Victoria’s focal maritime hubs, the Williamstown local port area has long been home to a wide range of recreational, community and commercial boating activities. Offering scenic views towards the Melbourne central business district and the Port of Melbourne, the area supports a high volume of water-based pursuits and maritime traffic and is an important visitor destination within Williamstown more broadly. The Williamstown local port area includes the Seaworks maritime museum which, with its prime waterfront location and collection of artefacts, models, photographs and books, celebrates Victoria’s maritime history.

Parks Victoria has engaged GML Heritage to prepare this heritage background review for five pier and jetty structures within the Williamstown local port area. The structures include the Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier (all included in the Seaworks maritime museum lease area) and Gem Pier and Ferguson Street Pier to the west.

Parks Victoria is the port manager for the local port of Port Phillip (under the *Port Management Act 1995*) and the Committee of Management for Gem Pier, Ferguson Street Pier, Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier (under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1975*).

Parks Victoria has commenced the development of the Williamstown Local Port Area Plan (LPAP), which includes the five structures that are the focus of this report. The LPAP will improve the function and sustainability of the Williamstown local port area while protecting its values as a regional maritime and boating destination.

Understanding the heritage values and significance of the assets is a key consideration in planning for their future. The development of options for the future of the Williamstown piers and jetties contained within the LPAP will be partially informed by this report.

1.2 Location

The Williamstown Local Port Area is located close to the town centre of Williamstown, approximately 13km southwest of the Melbourne CBD within the Hobsons Bay City Council local government area (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Location of Williamstown pier and jetty sites (red arrow) in the context of the Melbourne city centre (green arrow) (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

The Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework is north and east of Nelson Place and east of The Strand in Williamstown and extends from Point Gellibrand in the east to the Anchorage Marina, between Stanley Street and Mariner Street, to the northwest (Figure 2).

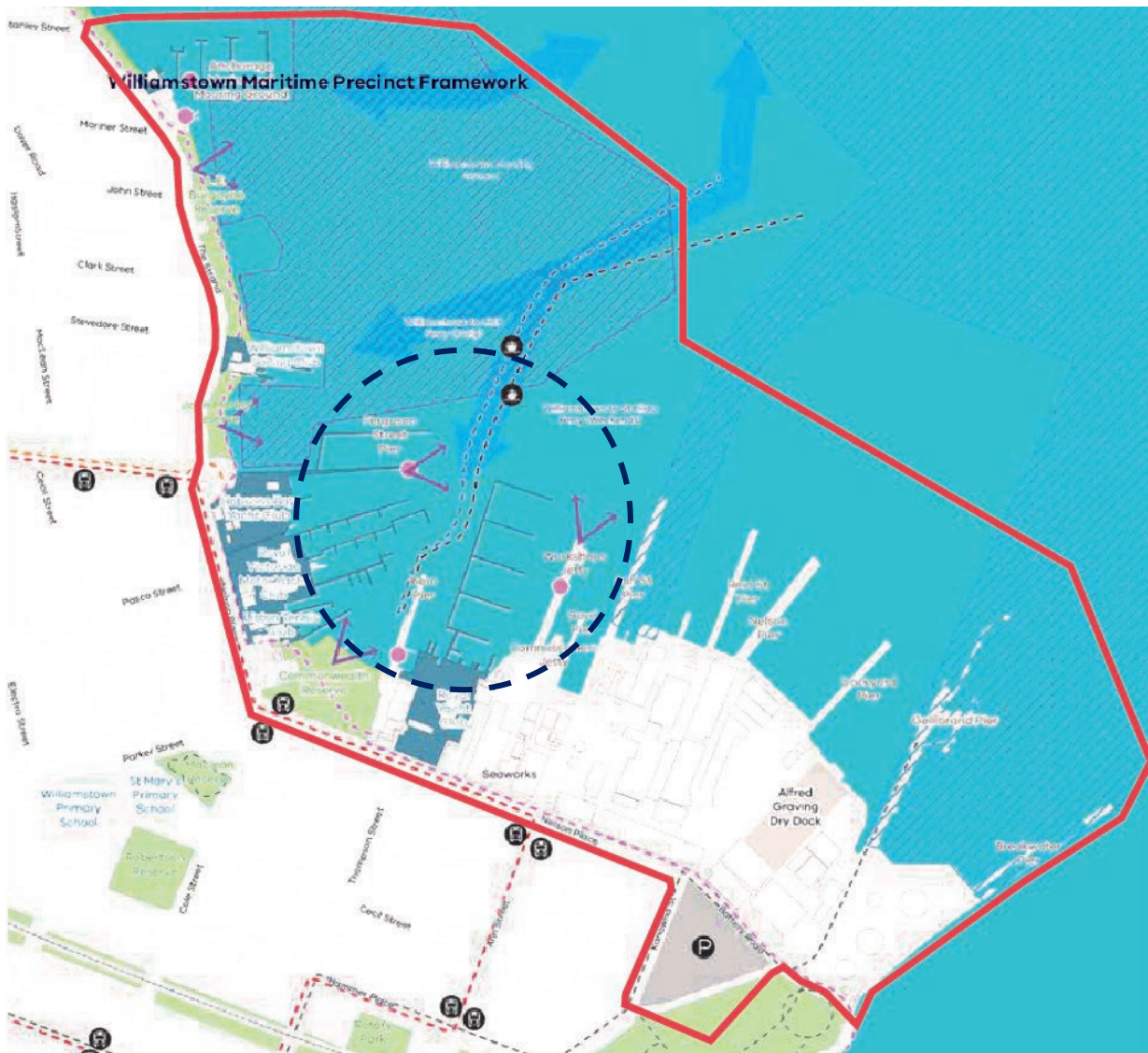


Figure 2. Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework outlined in red with the Williamstown Local Port Area highlighted by the dark blue dashed line. (Source: Parks Victoria)

The focus area of the Williamstown Local Port Area Plan is physically and functionally central to the Williamstown Maritime Precinct and contains the Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier, Gem Pier and Ferguson Street Pier (Figure 3 and Figure 4). The focus area is confined to the on-water area managed by Parks Victoria, between and including Ferguson Street Pier to Boyd Street Pier.



Figure 3. Williamstown Local Port Area Plan focus area including the Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier, Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier. (Source: Parks Victoria)

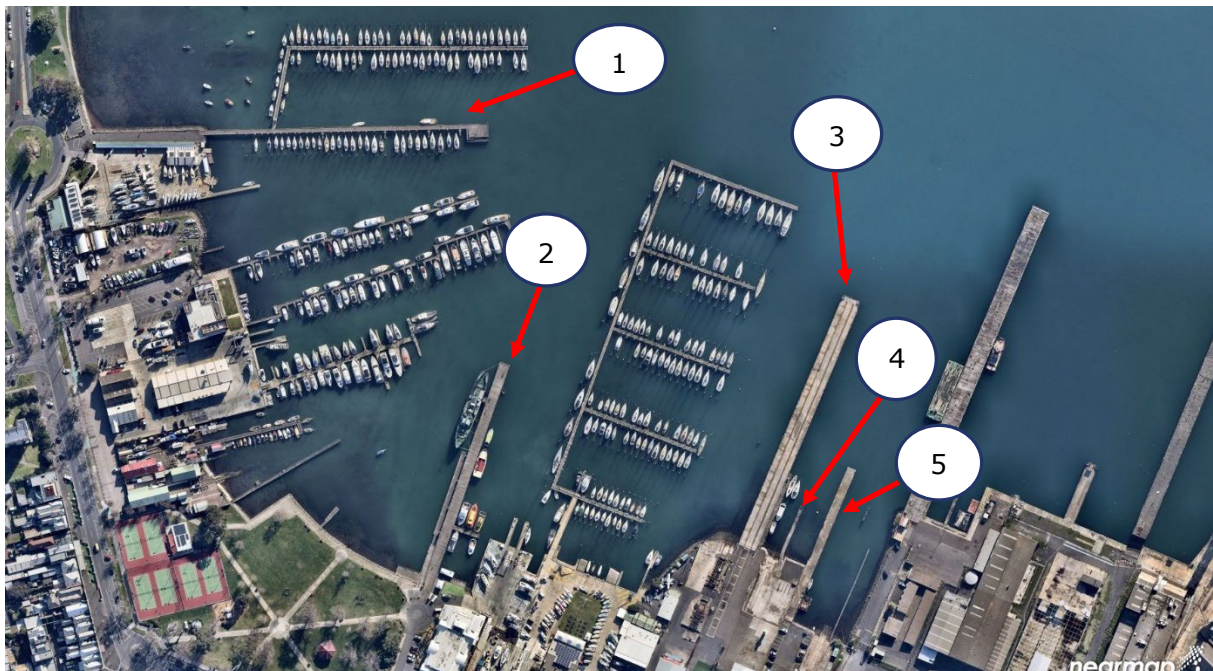


Figure 4. Detailed aerial view showing the five pier/jetty structures at Williamstown with Ferguson Street Pier (1), Gem Pier (2), Workshop Pier (3), Commissioners Jetty (4), and Boyd Street Pier (5) (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

1.3 Methodology

The key tasks associated with preparing this report included:

- site inspections to review the context and heritage values of the places were carried out by GML consultants Kim Roberts, Glenn Shaw, Leah Tepper, sub-consultant archaeologist Geoff Hewitt, and Parks Victoria on 22 November 2022;
- a detailed review of the relevant statutory context of the sites;
- review any permit policies and exemptions declared under the *Heritage Act 2017*;
- a review of the existing heritage significance within the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI);
- review of all background documents provided by Parks Victoria;
- desktop historical research on the development and use of the places; and
- review and research of additional background documents to identify any significant gaps which may better inform understanding of the place.

1.4 Limitations

Inspections of the Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier were restricted as no access is permitted to these structures due to their poor condition.

A detailed heritage significance assessment for each of the subject piers and jetties was outside the scope of this project. Further in-depth assessments would be required to confirm potential heritage significance at the local or state level. This should be undertaken in accordance with the Department of Transport and Planning's, *Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay* or the Heritage Council of Victoria's *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria Threshold Guidelines*, respectively. Further consultation and surveying would also be required to determine the strength of any potential social attachments or associations.

1.5 Stakeholder consultation

In December 2022, GML and Parks Victoria held an online consultation meeting with the Seaworks Executive Officer who provided verbal input into the draft report.

In January 2023, GML facilitated an additional online consultation meeting with other key heritage groups including Hobsons Bay City Council, Heritage Victoria, Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN), National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Inner West Branch (NTAV) and Offshore and Specialists Ships Australia (OSSA).

1.6 Authorship

This report has been prepared by Dr Kim Roberts, Freya Keam and Leah Tepper of GML Heritage, with input from Geoff Hewitt, sub-consultant archaeologist.

1.7 Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of the following organisations:

- Parks Victoria
- Seaworks
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Heritage Victoria
- Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Inner West Branch (NTAV)
- Offshore and Specialists Ships Australia (OSSA)

2 Planning context

2.1 Victorian Heritage Register

Places and objects identified as being of state level significance are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). Items registered on the VHR are provided automatic protection against harm to their heritage significance.

Boyd Street Pier is listed in the Victorian Heritage Register as part of the 'Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshops' (VHR H1790). It is also listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (see below). The other subject piers/jetties are not included in the VHR.

The permit policy for H1790 is outlined below:

Policy

Permit Exemptions are given below which do not affect the overall significance of the structure or historic place. The exemptions generally are for maintenance and minor works to the buildings.

General Conditions

- All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
- Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
- If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
- Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

2.2 Victorian Heritage Inventory

The Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) is a listing of all known historical archaeological sites and relics in Victoria. The *Victorian Heritage Act 2017* defines 'archaeological sites' as any place that:

- (a) contains an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 or more years old; and
- (b) provides information of past activity in the State; and
- (c) requires archaeological methods to reveal information about the settlement, development or use of the place; and
- (d) is not associated only with Aboriginal occupation of the place.

The following subject piers/jetties are included in the VHI:

- Ferguson Street Pier (H7822-0544)
- Gem Pier (H7822-0383)
- Workshops Pier (H7822-0552)
- Commissioners Jetty (H7822-0552)
- Boyd Street Pier (H7822-0552)

Under the *Victorian Heritage Act 2017*, all underwater cultural heritage (including shipwrecks and parts of shipwrecks) that wrecked in Victorian state waters 75 or more years ago are protected. Underwater cultural heritage items are protected whether their location is known or not.

The *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* also protects all of Australia's shipwrecks, sunken aircraft and other types of underwater cultural heritage including Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Underwater Cultural Heritage in Commonwealth waters.

2.3 Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Aboriginal Heritage Act). Aboriginal cultural heritage is defined as Aboriginal places, Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal Ancestral remains. An Aboriginal place is defined as an area in Victoria or the coastal waters of Victoria that is of cultural heritage significance to Aboriginal people generally, or to a particular community or group of Aboriginal people in Victoria. Aboriginal places can include buildings or structures.

Known Aboriginal places are recorded on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR). All Aboriginal places, whether recorded on the register or not, are protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Although none of the subject structures are listed on the VAHR, it is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity (specifically coastal Crown Land) as defined by the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The subject piers/jetties are within a formally recognised area of the Bunurong People. The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) that represents the Bunurong People are the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. RAPs have legislative responsibility under the Aboriginal Heritage Act for the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in their area.

2.4 Heritage Overlay, Port of Melbourne Planning Scheme

The subject piers and jetties are included within the Port of Melbourne Planning Scheme, which is administered by the Minister for Planning.

The Port of Melbourne (the Port) is located at the centre of a logistics triangle joining southern New South Wales, Adelaide and Tasmania that encompasses the nation's trade and commercial centre. As a city port, the Port of Melbourne is surrounded by land uses including residential, industrial, commercial, recreation, the Melbourne Central Business District and the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area.

The Port includes land in the City of Melbourne, City of Port Phillip, Hobsons Bay City Council and Maribyrnong City Council. Each of these municipalities are subject to different long-term development challenges and strategic priorities that require diverse approaches to management of the Port's interface with them.

Port of Melbourne Planning Scheme covers a range of heritage assets, including Boyd Street Pier, which is included in HO2: Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshops.

Clause 02.03–3 of the Port of Melbourne Planning Scheme notes the following regarding the management of heritage assets:

The balance of heritage sites within the Port tends to be fully or partly archaeological in nature, reflecting the Port's rapid and dynamic development. The historical focus of the Port is interwoven with development phases of Melbourne. The Port exists in a highly-modified environment, with past development involving significant land reclamation, realignment of the Yarra River and Moonee Ponds Creek and filling of swampland.

Strategic directions for heritage are to:

- Manage existing heritage sites within the control of the Port.
- Conserve and enhance heritage places of significance within the Port area that support ongoing Port operations and do not compromise safe and efficient port operations.
- Provide opportunities to celebrate the heritage significance of the port in the context of the development and growth of Melbourne.

2.5 National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register is a non-statutory register, including all types of cultural and natural heritage, including buildings, trees, landscapes, gardens, public art, and pipe organs.

Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Stores & Workshops is classified by the National Trust at the state level (B6834) however this does not include the subject piers/jetties. None of the sites are listed with the National Trust.

3 History overview

3.1 Development of piers in Victoria

European settlement of Melbourne began in the mid-1830s. Captain William Lonsdale was asked by Governor Richard Bourke of Sydney in 1836 to survey the Port Phillip district, allowing settlement to extend beyond the then permitted boundaries.¹ Sea transportation was vital to support the development of the infant settlement, bringing livestock for aspirational squatters and pastoralists, and facilitated the import and export of essential materials and resources.²

In 1851, when Victoria was declared a separate colony from New South Wales, with its own regulations and customs department for trade and immigration, there was a pressing need to establish improved maritime infrastructure. The development of maritime infrastructure, including piers and jetties, was essential in the establishment of a number of coastal towns that relied heavily on sea transportation.³ In Port Phillip Bay, this included Sandridge (Port Melbourne), Point Gellibrand (Williamstown) and St Kilda, and Schnapper Point (Mornington) further south.

Piers and jetties at these towns were constructed to facilitate the transportation of people and goods from further afield. They also provided a vital connection to the rapidly growing centre of Melbourne. The infrastructure to assist overland travel in many parts of Victoria was non-existent, and sea-based transport was the quickest, cheapest and fastest way to transport products and resources from these settlements. Early shipping in Melbourne was concentrated in Sandridge and Williamstown, and the Yarra River at Queens Wharf.⁴

Pressure to improve maritime infrastructure in Victoria was compounded by the great influx of immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s, which put a further strain on the existing port facilities that had proven to be inadequate. As a result, resources were channelled into improvement works at Victoria's major ports, including Williamstown, Port Melbourne, Geelong, Port Albert and Portland.⁵

¹ Victorian Places, 'Williamstown', 2015.

² Jill Barnard 2008, 'Jetties and Piers: a background history of maritime infrastructure in Victoria', Heritage Council of Victoria: 11.

³ Barnard 2008:12.

⁴ Barnard 2008, pp. 12–14.

⁵ Barnard 2008, pp. 17–18.

3.2 Development of jetties and piers in Williamstown

Williamstown occupies the traditional land and water of the Bunurong people of the East Kulin, who continue to have an ongoing connection to Country.

Transporting goods and passengers

In September 1837, a township was surveyed and named 'William's Town' after King William IV.⁶ Williamstown, known as 'the landing place', provided port facilities for the growing settlement of Port Phillip, particularly for pastoralists transporting stock.⁷

Williamstown had the advantage of being close to the deep-water anchorages in Hobsons Bay and was sheltered from heavy winds by the curve of Point Gellibrand. Vessels drawing deep water could anchor off Williamstown and transferred stock by boat to the shore.⁸ As a result, Williamstown served as Melbourne's port, and steamboat services were established in 1838 to transfer passengers and cargo up the Yarra River to Melbourne.⁹ In 1839, a jetty constructed of local bluestone (later Gem Pier) was erected to support the movement of goods and passengers to and from Williamstown.¹⁰

Prior to the establishment of the Melbourne–Williamstown railway line in the 1850s, it was difficult to transfer passengers and cargo overland from Williamstown. As a result, Williamstown took on the role of being a 'transfer' station, where lighters and other vessels were based to unload larger vessels, and ferry people and products up the Yarra or across to the beach at Sandridge.¹¹

In 1854, Ann Street Pier was completed, and became the preferred landing place for goods and cargo.¹² Gem Pier continued to be used for steamboat and ferry services, and in 1924, a pier was erected at Ferguson Street to service the ferry, the *SS Rosny*, which connected passengers to Port Melbourne.

Gem Pier continues to be used for commercial ferry services, and the HMAS *Castlemaine* is permanently berthed at the pier. Ferguson Street Pier is used for recreational fishing, public berthing, and the vessels of the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club (est. 1888), which have been moored on the north side of the pier since 1965.

⁶ Victorian Places, 'Williamstown', 2015.

⁷ Barnard 2008:11.

⁸ Barnard 2008:11, 14.

⁹ HLCD, 2014. 'Seaworks Maritime Precinct Conservation Management Plan'. Prepared for Seaworks Foundation:18.

¹⁰ Victorian Places 2015.

¹¹ Barnard 2008:14

¹² Brad Duncan 2003, 'Maritime Infrastructure Heritage Project Stage One: Melbourne', prepared for Heritage Victoria:230.

Shipbuilding and the ship maintenance industry

Williamstown's role as a dock declined following the improvement of dock facilities along the Yarra, including the completion of Coode Canal (1886) and Victoria Dock (1893). However, Williamstown remained an important site for shipbuilding and repair. From the mid-1850s, Williamstown had been developed for the shipbuilding and shipwright industry. In c1854, a government dockyard or 'Marine Yard' was established at the corner of Ann Street and Nelson Street and was operated by the Harbor Master's Department.¹³ Adjacent to this site was a government patent slip constructed by William Isbister in 1856–1858. It was subsequently leased to various boatbuilders, namely Robert Wright and his son Robert Alexander Wright from 1859–1902, when it was commonly known as Wright's Slip. From the 1850s, several boat builders had set up workshops in Williamstown.¹⁴

From 1864–1873, the Alfred Graving Dock was completed. Located southeast from the Williamstown Marine Yard off Battery Road, it was incorporated into a new dockyard owned by the Victorian Government and known as the State Shipbuilding Yard. At the time, it was the largest works undertaken by the Victorian Government and was of international importance both as a facility for shipping and as a work of engineering.¹⁵

Following an Act of Parliament in 1876, the Melbourne Harbour Trust (the Trust) was established in 1877 to improve and operate port facilities. Prior to this time, there had been very little coordinated management or development of Melbourne's ports facilities.¹⁶ To enable Melbourne's ports to accommodate increasingly large vessels, the Trust had the ongoing task of widening, dredging and deepening waterways. For this they required a fleet of dredging and other floating machinery, all of which required maintenance. In 1878, the Trust established its first maintenance workshop at the Williamstown Marine Yard (originally established in c1855).¹⁷

From 1913, the Trust moved their workshops from Coode Island, consolidating their workshops at the Williamstown Marine Yard. In 1920, the Trust undertook land reclamation work to increase the site by two acres and constructed a wharf (Boyd Street Pier). However, these consolidation works were paused in 1922 after the Trust purchased the Williamstown Dockyards, located southeast of the Williamstown Marine Yard (encompassing the Alfred Graving Dock). It had previously been operated by the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government. The Williamstown Dockyards became the main site for the Trust's maintenance operations, and the Williamstown

¹³ HLCD 2014:19.

¹⁴ HLCD 2014:19.

¹⁵ Victorian Heritage Database 2015, 'Alfred Graving Dock', <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/1231>

¹⁶ *Age*, 6 December 1876: 2; *Herald*, 10 November 1927:10.

¹⁷ HLCD 2014:23.

Marine Yard was taken over by the Ports and Harbours Department of the Public Works Department.¹⁸ In 1942, the Department of Navy took over the Williamstown Dockyards, and the Trust establish new workshops, located between their former Williamstown Marine Yard at the south and the Royal Yacht Club at the north. Part of the Trust’s former Marine Yard was included in the new workshops site, and land reclamation work undertaken on the northwest side of the new site effectively covered the Wright’s Slip. A new 400ft jetty was constructed over the site of Wright’s Slip and named Workshops Pier in 1944.¹⁹ In the postwar period, the Trust made further additions and improvements, including the construction of the Commissioners Jetty, a small timber pile and deck structure. In this period, the Trust also offered services to private organisations, and was an approved inspection and testing authority under the *Navigation Act*.²⁰

The Trust was reconstituted as the Port of Melbourne Authority in 1978, and in 1986 took over the Ports and Harbours Department Marine Yard following the dismantling of the Public Works Department. Marine works ceased at the Williamstown Workshops in January 1991.²¹

3.3 Historical timeline

Date	Event	Source
April 1837	Township was surveyed and named ‘William’s Town’ after King William IV. It was established at the direction of Governor Richard Bourke to provide port facilities for the embryotic settlement of Port Phillip Bay.	Victorian Places, 2015
1839	A 110ft convict constructed bluestone pier is erected at the current site of Gem Pier. It is known as The Jetty until 1854.	Duncan 2006:214
1839	Shipping of sheep from the site of The Jetty to Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) recorded.	Crocker and Associates 2004:25

¹⁸ HLCD 2014:26.

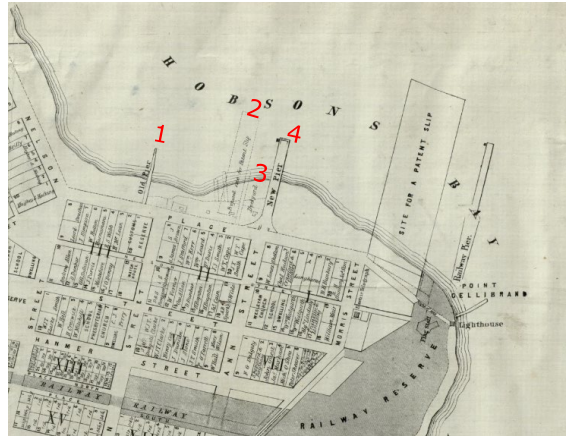
¹⁹ HLCD 2014:27–28.


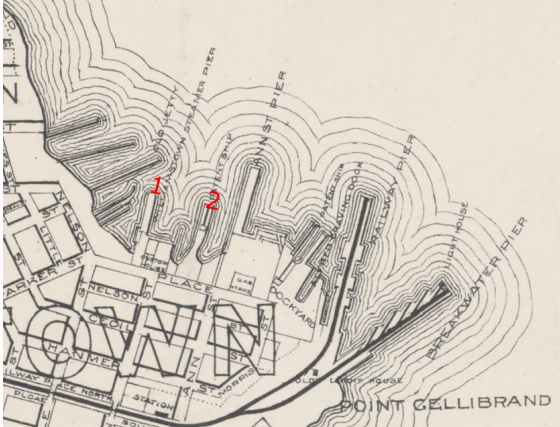
²⁰ HLCD 2014:29.

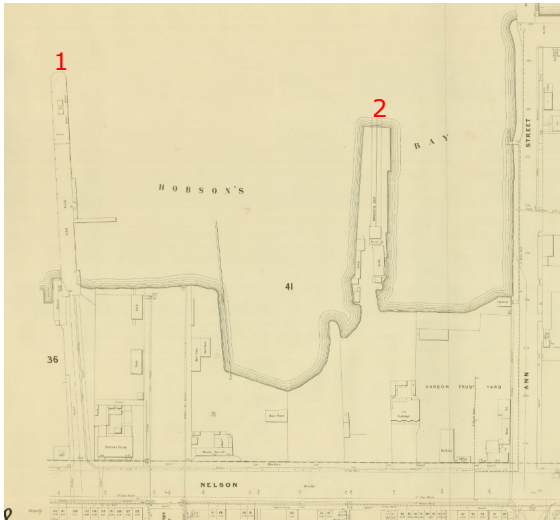
²¹ HLCD 2014:30.

Date	Event	Source
1849 and 1854	The Jetty is lengthened with timber extensions.	<i>Melbourne Daily</i> , 29 December 1848:2 <i>Colonial Times</i> , 3 September 1850:2 <i>Argus</i> , 5 March 1851:4 <i>Banner</i> , 10 March 1854:6 Crocker and Associates 2004:25
1854	<p>The Ann Street Pier (not included in the study area) is completed, and The Jetty is now known as the Old Pier. Ann Street Pier becomes the preferred landing place for goods and cargo. Gem Pier continues to be used for steamboat and ferry services.</p> <p>An 1854 plan of Williamstown (below) illustrates the two structures, with the Old Pier to the left and the New Pier (Ann Street Pier) to the right.</p>	<i>Argus</i> , 13 September 1854:3 Part of Williamstown 1854. (State Library Victoria, with GML overlay) (See Appendix A) Key: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Old Pier • 2: New Pier

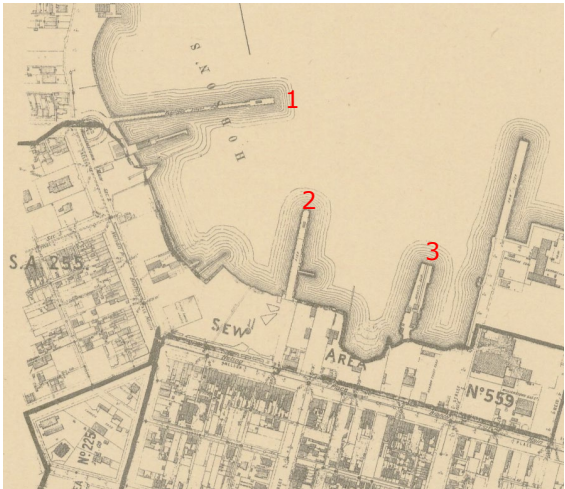



Date	Event	Source
1855–1858	<p>An 1855 plan of Williamstown (below) indicates the location of a government dockyard or Marine Yard adjacent to the New Pier.</p> <p>The plan indicates a proposed government slipway at what is now the site of Workshops Pier, between the Old Pier and the New Pier.</p> <p>The slipway was completed in 1858, and leased to William Isbister and was marked for development as a government patent slip to provide infrastructure for the repair of large steamers.</p>	<p><i>Shipping and Sydney General Trade List</i>, 20 October 1856:243</p> <p><i>Argus</i>, 26 June 1858:5</p> <p>Plan of Williamstown, County of Bourke, 1855, Surveyor Generals Office Melbourne, lithographed by J Jones. (State Library Victoria, with GML overlay) (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Old Pier (Gem Pier) • 2: Proposed site for slipway • 3: Government dockyard • 4: New Pier (Ann Street Pier)
	<p>1860s–1870s</p> <p>Throughout the 1860s–1870s the Old Pier was also variously known as Steamboat Pier and in the 1870s it was renamed Gem Pier after the paddle steamer <i>Gem</i>.</p> <p><i>Gem</i> provided a ferry service from Williamstown to Port Melbourne from 1846 and would go on to operate for 40 years until 1886.</p>	<p>Crocker and Associates 2004:25</p>
1859–1861	<p>William Isbister’s government patent slip is reconstructed and leased to the boatbuilder Mr Robert Wright. From this time, it is variously referred to as Wright’s Slip.</p>	<p><i>Age</i>, 28 May 1861:4</p>

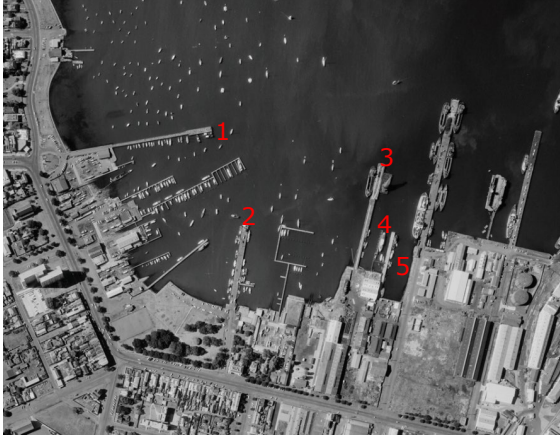

Date	Event	Source
<p>1864</p>	<p>An 1864 map of Hobsons Bay and the Yarra River indicates the Old Pier and Wright’s Slip.</p> 	<p>Map of Hobson Bay and Yarra River leading to Melbourne 1864, Henry L Cox (East Melbourne Historical Society, with GML overlay). (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Old Jetty • 2: Wright’s slip
<p>1876–1877</p>	<p>Following an Act of Parliament in 1876, the Melbourne Harbour Trust is established in 1877 to improve and operate port facilities. Prior to this time, there had been very little coordinated management or development of Melbourne’s ports facilities.</p>	<p><i>Age</i>, 6 December 1876: 2 <i>Herald</i>, 10 November 1927:10</p>
<p>1878</p>	<p>The Melbourne Harbor Trust established their first maintenance workshop at the Williamstown Marine Yard (originally established in c1855).</p>	<p>HLCD 2014:23</p>
<p>1879–1881</p>	<p>Approximately six acres of land on the Williamstown foreshore northwest of Gem Pier is reclaimed by the Melbourne Harbour Trust (now Commonwealth Reserve).</p>	<p><i>Australasian</i>, 20 August 1881:20 <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i>, 3 December 1948:10</p>
<p>1883</p>	<p>The 1883 Sands & McDougall plan of Melbourne and suburbs illustrates the Gem Pier and Wright’s Slip.</p> 	<p>Sands & McDougall Limited (1883) (National Library Australia, with GML overlay) (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Gem Pier • 2: Wright’s Slip


Date	Event	Source
1886	Gem Pier demolished and rebuilt 100ft longer.	Crocker and Associates 2004:25
c1898–1901	From 1896, the Melbourne Harbor Trust grant Williamstown Council an annual license to use an area of vacant reclaimed land near Gem Pier. From 1901, the area is referred to as the Commonwealth Reserve.	Gibson (date n.k) <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , Saturday 30 November 1901:2
1900	Following the death of Robert Alexander Wright (Robert Wright’s son) in November 1900, the Melbourne Harbor Trust take over the lease of Wright’s Slip, and lease to the Williamstown Slip Company.	HLCD 2014:24
1905	<p>The 1905 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) detail plan illustrates Gem Pier, Wright’s Slip and the Melbourne Harbour Trust Marine Yard.</p> 	<p>Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan, no. 41 & 48, 1908, Town of Williamstown (State Library Victoria, with GML overlay). (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Gem Pier • 2: Wright’s Slip
1913	Melbourne Harbor Trust upgrades Wrights Slip to safely take a 250-ton vessel.	HLCD 2014:24
1913	Melbourne Harbor Trust move their workshops from Coode Island and begin to consolidate their workshops at the Williamstown Marine Yard.	HLCD 2014:25–26
1920–1922	Melbourne Harbor Trust enlarge the Williamstown Marine Yard site by almost two acres through land reclamation and construct a new 250ft by 20ft wharf. This is presumed to be Boyd Street Pier as it is shown on the ‘Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners General Plan’ as being built after 1913.	HLCD 2014:25–26

Date	Event	Source
1922	Melbourne Harbor Trust purchase the Williamstown Dockyards, located southeast of the Williamstown Marine Yard (encompassing the Alfred Graving Dock), becoming the main site for the Trust's maintenance operations from 1924. The Williamstown Marine Yard is taken over by the Ports and Harbours Department of the Public Works Department.	HLCD 2014:26
1924	<p>Tenders are called for the erection of a pier at Ferguson Street, to service the ferry, the SS <i>Rosny</i>. The pier is both variously referred to as the Ferguson Street Pier and the Rosny Pier.</p> <p>The outer section was constructed for the Melbourne Harbour Trust with funding from Williamstown Council. Due to a dispute over jurisdiction, the shoreward bluestone section of the pier was built by the Williamstown City Council, and the seaward timber end was built by the Melbourne Harbour Trust.</p>	<p><i>Argus</i>, 14 February 1924:2 <i>Argus</i>, 14 November 1924:12 Crocker and Associates 2004:27 Heritage Victoria 2003</p>
1927–1928	A timber approach (440ft x 14ft) was added to Ferguson Street Pier, followed by a further 250ft long stone approach.	<p><i>Williamstown Chronicle</i>, 25 September 1926:2 <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i>, 18 June 1927:3 <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i>, 12 May 1928:2 Heritage Victoria 2003</p>
1927–1928	<p>Gem Pier demolished and rebuilt, 479ft long and 33ft wide.</p> <p>It is reported at the time that the Melbourne Harbour Trust would use recycled timber piles, some from the former Gem Pier which remained in good condition, and some from the recently demolished Lower South Wharf. The remaining timber would be sourced from New South Wales. Ironbark was to be used for the beams and brush box for the decking.</p>	<p><i>Age</i>, 19 October 1927:12 <i>Herald</i>, 10 November 1927:10 <i>Argus</i>, 17 November 1927:15</p>
1928	The Melbourne Harbour Trust erect a timber shelter shed at the end of Ferguson Street Pier for passengers awaiting the SS <i>Rosny</i> ferry service. Williamstown Council agree to pay half of the cost (£125).	<i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , 11 February 1928: 4

Date	Event	Source
c1930	Shelter shed built on outer end of Gem Pier.	<i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , 8 February 1930:2 Crocker and Associates 2004:25
1933	<p>The 1933 MMBW detail plan illustrates, Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier and Wright's Slip. Boyd Street Pier is not depicted.</p> 	<p>Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works 1933-1950, Town of Williamstown, Plan No.15. (State Library Victoria, with GML overlay). (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Ferguson Street Pier • 2: Gem Pier • 3: Wright's Slip
1936-1937	A low-level landing is built on the northern side of Ferguson Street Pier.	<i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , 24 October 1936:8 <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , 8 May 1937:6
1942	Boyd Street Pier formally named after JA Boyd, the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioner from 1913-1941.	HLCD 2014:181
1942-1944	<p>The Melbourne Harbour Trust sell the Williamstown Dockyard to the Commonwealth to use as a World War II shipbuilding facility, and establish a new site between Ann Street Pier and the Royal Yacht Club.</p> <p>Land reclamation is undertaken on the northwest side of the Melbourne Harbor Trust's new site, effectively covering Wright's Slip.</p> <p>Construction of the 400ft timber Workshops Pier commenced over the site of Wright's Slip. The jetty consisted of 85 timber piles, rails, cradle parts and winch all recycled from Town Pier at Port Melbourne and was formally named Workshops Pier in 1944.</p>	HLCD 2014:27:184

Date	Event	Source
1945	Aerial view of Williamstown 1945 	Landata 1945 (with GML Overlay) Key: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Ferguson Street Pier • 2: Gem Pier • 3: Workshops Pier • 4: Boyd Street Pier
1947–1948	Workshops Pier is extended by 200ft, enabling all of the Melbourne Harbor Trust’s floating machinery to be repaired onsite.	HLCD 2014:184 Crocker and Associates 2004:23
1951-1952	Commissioners Jetty was constructed. It was described as a small, 40m-long timber pile and deck structure and was constructed at height of deck of the <i>Commissioner</i> inspection vessel.	Crocker and Associates 2004:22
1953	Ferguson Street Pier posts replaced, following their removal by the Fire Brigade after a fire at the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club.	<i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> , 6 February 1953:6.
1957-1958	Boyd Street Pier reconstructed. Many components replaced and additional beams added to support new concrete deck.	Crocker and Associates 2004:20
1965	The Hobson's Bay Yacht Club (est. 1888) was granted permission to moor its vessels on the north side of the Ferguson Street Pier. Public berthing is now available on the south side of the pier.	Heritage Victoria 2003

Date	Event	Source
1968	Aerial view of Williamstown 1968	Landata 1968
		(See Appendix A) Key: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Ferguson Street Pier • 2: Gem Pier • 3: Workshops Pier • 4: Commissioners Pier • 5: Boyd Street Pier
1975	HMAS <i>Castlemaine</i> is permanently berthed at Gem Pier.	Parks Victoria 2010:39
1977-1979	Workshops Pier reconstructed measuring 610ft long and 30ft wide, including a rail track to accommodate a 6-ton travelling crane. All piles are replaced and the deck rebuilt with concrete.	HLCD 2014:184 Crocker and Associates 2004:23
1978	Melbourne Harbor Trust reconstituted as the Port Melbourne Authority.	HLCD 2014:35
1978	Aerial view of Williamstown 1978.	Landata 1978
		(See Appendix A) Key: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Ferguson Street Pier • 2: Gem Pier • 3: Workshops Pier • 4: Commissioners Pier • 5: Boyd Street Pier
c1982	Commissioners Jetty reconstructed to lower height to suit new <i>Commissioner</i> vessel.	Crocker and Associates 2004:22
1984	Gem Pier shelter shed demolished.	Crocker and Associates 2004:25

Date	Event	Source
1986	The Port Melbourne Authority take over the Ports and Harbours Department Marine Yard following the dismantling of the Public Works Department.	HLCD 2014:30
1986	<p>Aerial view of Williamstown in 1986. Commissioners Jetty is not clearly visible in this image.</p> 	<p>Landata 1986 (See Appendix A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Ferguson Street Pier • 2: Gem Pier • 3: Workshops Pier • 4: Boyd Street Pier
1991	Marine works ceased at the Williamstown Workshops in January 1991	HLCD 2014:30
1992	Gem Pier demolished and rebuilt 145m long by 7.3 m wide. Work by Port of Melbourne Authority. During works, some pier piles found to be in good condition and reused.	Crocker and Associates 2004:25
1970s–1980s	Boyd Street Pier substantially reconstructed.	Crocker and Associates 2004:20
1998–1999	Commissioners Jetty piles replaced, and fenders renewed.	Crocker and Associates 2004:22
1997	Ferguson Street Pier is closed to the public due to deteriorated condition.	Crocker and Associates 2004:27
1999–2000	<p>Pile replacement and capping works undertaken at Workshops Pier.</p> <p>Selective pile replacement undertaken at Boyd Street Pier.</p>	Crocker and Associates 2004: 20–23

Date	Event	Source
2003	Ferguson Street Pier is demolished by Parks Victoria. It is rebuilt at a slight angle (2.2 degrees) from the old alignment to allow for adequate clearances for vessel access, and extended by 26m. Some dredging worked undertaken.	Crocker and Associates 2004:27
2003–2004	Gem Pier extended 22m and a 60m floating low landing is added. Some dredging and improved visitor access works also undertaken. Ferry shelter constructed in 2004.	Crocker and Associates 2004:25
2020	Boyd Street Pier closed in February due to significant deterioration and the failure of a high number of piles.	AWM 2022c:1
2022	Commissioners Jetty is assessed to be in very poor condition with no structural support. Workshops Pier assessed to be in very poor condition with no structural support. Boyd Street Pier assessed to be in very poor condition with no structural support. Concrete deck had collapsed into the water.	AWM 2022b:12,28

3.3.1 Gem Pier

Year	Event
1839	A 110ft convict constructed bluestone pier is erected at the current site of Gem Pier. It is known as 'The Jetty'.
1849 and 1854	The Jetty is lengthened with timber extensions.
1854	Ann Street Pier becomes the preferred landing place for goods and cargo. Gem Pier continues to be used for steamboat and ferry services.
1860s–1870s	Throughout the 1860s–1870s the Old Pier was also variously known as Steamboat Pier and in the 1870s it was renamed Gem Pier after the paddle steamer <i>Gem</i> , which operated from 1846–1886.
1886	Gem Pier is demolished and rebuilt 100ft longer.
1927–1928	Gem Pier demolished and rebuilt, 479ft long and 33ft wide.
c1930	Shelter shed built on outer end of Gem Pier.
1975	HMAS <i>Castlemaine</i> permanently berthed at Gem Pier.
1984	Gem Pier shelter shed demolished.

1992	Gem Pier demolished and rebuilt 145m long by 7.3m wide. Work by Port of Melbourne Authority. During works, some pier piles found to be in good condition and reused.
2003–2004	Gem Pier extended 22m and a 60m floating low landing is added. Some dredging and improved visitor access works also undertaken. Ferry shelter constructed in 2004.

3.3.2 Boyd Street Pier

Year	Event
1920–1922	Melbourne Harbor Trust construct a new 250ft by 20ft wharf, presumed to be Boyd Street Pier.
1942	Boyd Street Pier formally named after JA Boyd, the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioner from 1913–1941.
1957–1958	Boyd Street Pier reconstructed. Many components replaced and additional beams added to support new concrete deck.
1970s–1980s	Boyd Street Pier substantially reconstructed.
1999–2000	Selective pile replacement undertaken at Boyd Street Pier.
2020	Boyd Street Pier closed in February due to significant deterioration and failure of a high number of piles.
2022	Boyd Street Pier assessed to be in very poor condition, with no structural support. Concrete deck had collapsed into the water.

3.3.3 Ferguson Street Pier

Year	Event
1924	Tenders are called for the erection of a pier at Ferguson Street, to service the ferry, <i>SS Rosny</i> .
1927–1928	Timber approach (440ft x 14ft) added to Ferguson Street Pier, followed by a further 250ft-long stone approach.
1928	The Melbourne Harbour Trust erect a timber shelter shed at the end of Ferguson Street Pier
1936–1937	A low-level landing built on the northern side of Ferguson Street Pier.
1953	Ferguson Street Pier posts replaced, following their removal by the Fire Brigade after a fire at the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club.
1965	The Hobson's Bay Yacht Club (est. 1888) was granted permission to moor its vessels on the south side of the Ferguson Street Pier and has since expanded to occupy both sides of the pier.

1997	Ferguson Street Pier is closed to the public due to deteriorated condition.
2003	Ferguson Street Pier is demolished by Parks Victoria. It is rebuilt at a slight angle (2.2 degrees) from the old alignment to allow for adequate clearances for vessel access, and extended by 26m. Some dredging works are undertaken.

3.3.4 Workshops Pier

Year	Event
1858	A government patent slipway is constructed adjacent to the Williamstown Marine Yard (est. 1855) and leased to William Isbister to provide infrastructure for the repair of large steamers.
1859-1961	William Isbister's government patent slip is reconstructed and leased to the boatbuilder Mr Robert Wright. From this time, it is variously referred to as Wright's Slip.
1900	The Melbourne Harbor Trust take over the lease of Wright's Slip.
1913	Melbourne Harbor Trust upgrades Wright's Slip to safely take a 250-ton vessel.
1942-1944	Wright's Slip is covered during a process of land reclamation and the Melbourne Harbor Trust's construct a 400ft timber jetty over the site of Wright's Slip. Formally named Workshops Pier in 1944.
1947	Workshops Pier extended by 200ft, enabling all of the Melbourne Harbor Trust's floating machinery to be repaired on the Workshops site.
1977-79	Workshops Pier reconstructed measuring 610 ft long and 30 ft wide, including a rail track to accommodate 6-ton travelling crane. All piles replaced and deck rebuilt with concrete.
1999-2000	Pile replacement and capping works undertaken at Workshops Pier.
2022	The Workshop Pier assessed to be in very poor condition, with no structural support.

3.3.5 Commissioners Jetty

Year	Event
1951-1952	Commissioners Jetty was constructed. It was described as a small, 40m long timber pile and deck structure and was constructed at height of deck of the <i>Commissioner</i> inspection vessel.
c1982	Commissioners Jetty reconstructed to a lower height to suit the new <i>Commissioner</i> vessel.
1998-1999	Commissioners Jetty piles replaced and fenders renewed.

2022

Commissioners Jetty assessed to be in very poor condition with no structural support.

3.4 Historical development maps



Figure 5. Contemporary aerial view of Williamstown with c1855 overlay. (Source State Library of Victoria; Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 6. Contemporary aerial view of Williamstown with c1933 map overlay. (Source State Library of Victoria; Nearmap with GML overlay)

4 Statutory heritage listings significance

4.1 Existing assessment

A summary of the statutory planning context for the five piers/jetties is provided in Table 1 below.

Place	Victorian Heritage Register	Victorian Heritage Inventory	Heritage Overlay
Gem Pier	N/A	H7822-0383	N/A
Ferguson Street Pier	N/A	H7822-0544	N/A
Workshops Pier	N/A	H7822-0552	N/A
Commissioners Jetty	N/A	H7822-0552	N/A
Boyd Street Pier	H1790	H7822-0552	HO2

Table 1. Subject statutory planning context.

4.1.1 Gem Pier

Gem Pier is included on the VHI (H7822-0383). An extract of the VHI citation is reproduced below:

Up to 20 pylons, which stand approx 1m out from the current pier and up to 1m off the seabed were identified. The eastern length of the stone foundations of the pier (from the foreshore) to the current ferry berthing was examined, up to a distance of 3 m off the pier. Six pylons were located alongside the current Vortex's berth extending northwards at various intervals. A large scour hole (up to 2.5m deep) was located directly behind the Vortex's berth, and the majority of the pylons were located behind this area. At the base of Gem Pier on the east side a new landing was made in 2003/4. Directly in front of this landing (about 3 m from Gem Pier), a stone mound is evident in the water protruding about 5 m out into the bay and approx 3 m wide. The mound consists of rough cut and dressed bluestone, about half a metre high.

4.1.2 Boyd Street Pier

Boyd Street Pier is included on the VHR (H1790) within the extent of the registration for the Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshops. An extract of the VHR citation is reproduced below:

The Melbourne Harbor Trust Stores and Workshops are of historical and architectural significance as rare examples of early port cargo sheds. Along with the remnant east end of Shed No.9 at South Wharf (1887-8) and Shed No.2 at South Wharf (1891), they are the remains of the oldest surviving cargo sheds in the Port of Melbourne and the most extensive, most intact and least altered. Although moved from their original location, they are set in a significant historical maritime precinct which includes the slipway, Boyd Jetty and nearby Ann Street Pier. The site remains the oldest Melbourne Harbor Trust stores and workshops complex.

The Melbourne Harbor Trust Stores and Workshops are of historical significance for their association with the great period of port development instigated by the establishment of the Melbourne Harbor Trust in 1877. They are evidence of the movement of the port downstream as the Yarra River was widened and realigned in response to rapidly increasing trade, shipping and technological developments. They also demonstrate the expansion and centralisation of the Trust's maintenance, repair and construction facilities at Williamstown and of its new policy of conducting maintenance internally in the early 20th century. They also played a major role in providing maritime services for the Australian and United States fleets during the Second World War.

The Melbourne Harbor Trust Stores and Workshops are of architectural significance as rare examples of utilitarian corrugated iron sheds incorporating English Domestic Style timber detailing, dating from its relocation date of 1922. Although architectural detailing was applied to some late 19th and early 20th century industrial buildings, these workshops are now one of the last known examples of this type of industrial design in Victoria. The buildings are also architecturally significant for their retention of rare surviving examples of original roof trusses constructed of angle iron and tie-rods. The only other known examples are the few which survive at Shed No.9, South Wharf.

4.1.3 Ferguson Street Pier

Ferguson Street Pier is included on the VHI (H7822-0544). An extract of the VHI citation is reproduced below:

Sections of the original pier piles are still left onsite. There also appears to be a bluestone section of the jetty approach to the pier at the shoreward end.

4.1.4 The Former Melbourne Harbor Trust Workshops

The Former Melbourne Harbor Trust Workshops are included on the VHI (H7822-0552) and includes Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier. There is limited information pertaining to these structures within the VHI citation, and this is reproduced below:

The Melbourne Harbour Trust facilities are still evident on site but no traces of the earlier slips were located.

Slipway No. 2

Many of these buildings are still extant, and Wright's Slip has probably been incorporated into the modern major slipway and Workshop Pier that still exists on site. Between Boyd and Anne Street Piers lies a slipway (adjacent to Anne St Pier), and there is also evidence of what may be piled bluestone to the west of this slip, which may be the remains of an early jetty or slipway base.

Shipwright's Shop and Slipway No. 1

Shipwright's Shop and Slipway No. 1 is 240 ft long and capable of handling 30 ton vessels.

Williamstown Morgue still stands in the Melbourne Harbor Trust depot grounds, and until recently was used as a store.

5 Site description

5.1 Williamstown Maritime Precinct

The five subject piers and jetties are located within the Williamstown Maritime Precinct (Figure 7). The focus area is confined to the on-water area managed by Parks Victoria, including Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier, Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier.

The Williamstown Maritime Precinct is located north and east of Nelson Place and east of The Strand between Ferguson Street to the north and Ann Street to the southeast.

The area accommodates several clubs (Williamstown Sea Scouts, Williamstown Sailing Club, Hobsons Bay Yacht Club, Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club, Naval Cadets and Royal Yacht Club of Victoria) and water-based uses (slipways, boat building/repair, seaplane and the Water Police). Commonwealth Reserve, located on the north and east of Nelson Place between Ferguson Street and Syme Street, is a key area of open space located within a very popular activity centre in Williamstown for both land and water-based activities.

A mix of uses exists west of the precinct, including commercial, retail and residential.

At the southern end of the precinct is the Seaworks Maritime Precinct, which occupies approximately 2.74 hectares of Crown land with direct water frontage to Hobsons Bay. The site includes several buildings which are historically significant (as part of the former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshops and Former Morgue). Other notable buildings with the precinct include the former Customs House and Blunts boatyard and Slipway.



Figure 7. Williamstown Local Port Area Plan focus area including the Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier, Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier. (Source: Parks Victoria)



Figure 8. View from Gem Pier looking towards some of the historic boat building operators (right) and Commonwealth Reserve (left).



Figure 9. Front elevation of the historic C Blunt Boatbuilder between Gem and Ferguson Street.



Figure 10. Commonwealth Reserve located adjacent to Gem Pier.



Figure 11. Part of the current Seaworks site adjacent to Workshops Pier.



Figure 12. Part of the Seaworks site north of the museum.



Figure 13. Lighthouse and buildings adjacent to Seaworks viewed from the slipway near Workshops Pier and Commissioner’s Jetty.

5.2 Piers and jetties

5.2.1 Gem Pier

Gem Pier is located at the end of Syme Street, between Commonwealth Reserve to the west and the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria to the east.

It is constructed of untreated hardwood and measures 145 metres in length and 7.2 metres in width. A finger jetty is located to the west of Gem Pier. It runs parallel to the Pier and measures 18.5 metres in length and 2.6 metres in width.

Prominent gooseneck steel streetlamps are located along the length of the pier and steel bollards are located at the entrance to the pier.

The HMAS *Castlemaine* is berthed on the western side of the pier.



Figure 14. Gem Pier from the land side end. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 15. The HMAS *Castlemaine* moored alongside Gem Pier. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 16. From Gem Pier looking back towards the shoreline and Commonwealth Reserve. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 17. View of the bow of HMAS *Castlemaine* near the end of Gem Pier. (Source: GML 2022)

5.2.2 Ferguson Street Pier

Ferguson Street Pier is located east of the intersection of Ferguson Street and Nelson Place, between the Williamstown Sailing Club to the north and the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club to the south. The Ferguson Street Pier is linked to walking trails on the Williamstown foreshore, including the Bay Trail.

Ferguson Pier is constructed of stone and untreated hardwood timber decking and piles. The stone approach at the land end is approximately 75 metres in length and 7.5 metres in width. The timber pier is approximately 180 metres in length and 3 metres in width. The head of the pier is approximately 13.5 metres in length and 12 metres in width and includes an access ramp to a low landing.

Prominent gooseneck steel streetlamps are located along the length of the pier and steel bollards are located at the entrance to the pier.

The Hobsons Bay Yacht Club moor their boats on the northern side of Ferguson Street Pier, and there is public mooring available on the southern side.



Figure 18. View of Ferguson Pier from the entrance.



Figure 19. View along the timber deck section of Ferguson Street Pier with public moorings (right) and Hobson's Bay Yacht Club marina (left).



Figure 20. View from the end of Ferguson Street Pier looking towards Gem Pier and Sea Works.



Figure 21. At the end of Ferguson Street Pier looking back to Williamstown.

5.2.3 Seaworks site

Boyd Street Pier

Boyd Street Pier is located within the Seaworks Maritime Precinct between Commissioners Jetty to the west and Ann Street Pier to the east. Boyd Street Pier is approximately 114 metres in length and 6 metres wide. It is of timber pile construction with a reinforced concrete deck.

The condition of Boyd Street Pier was assessed in 2022 by AW Maritime Pty Ltd (AWM) as very poor, concluding that the structure has completely failed. A visual inspection by AWM found that most of the timber piles in the lower bents were no longer attached and thereby providing no structural support to the deck. As a result, a large section of the concrete deck has collapsed. Boyd Street Pier is closed to the public as a result.



Figure 22. Boyd Street Pier viewed from Workshops Pier.

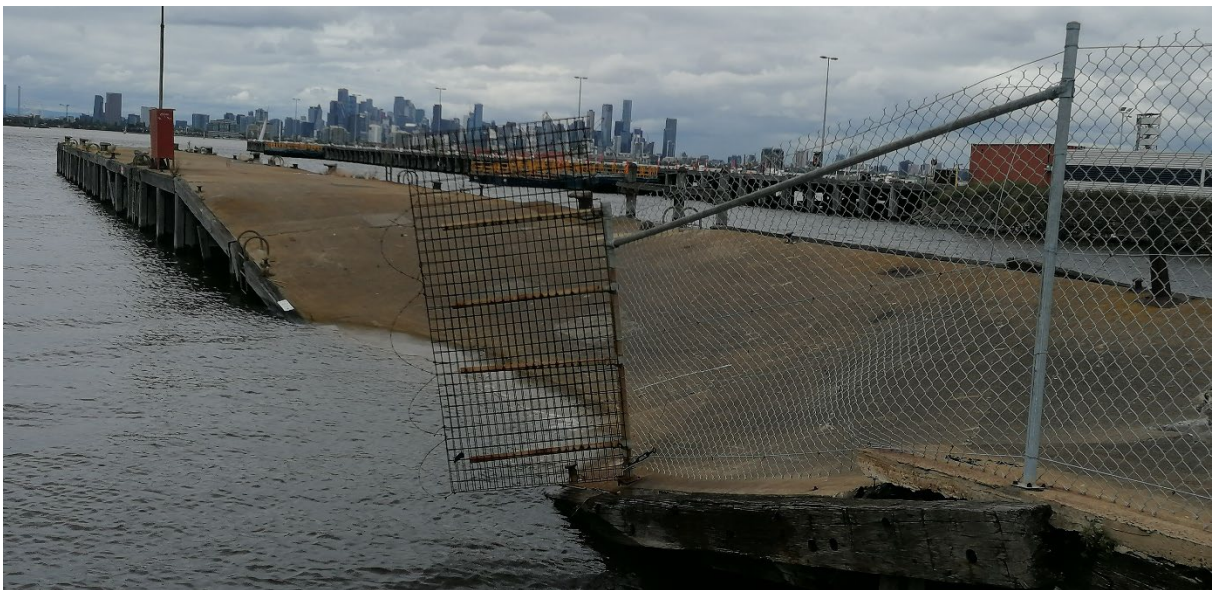


Figure 23. Boyd Street Pier showing a large area which has collapsed into the water.



Figure 24. Boyd Street Pier in the background with the Commissioner’s Jetty in the foreground, viewed from Workshops Pier.

Workshops Pier

The Workshops Pier is located within the Seaworks Maritime Precinct, between the Williamstown Police Station to the west and Ann Street to the east.

Workshops Pier is approximately 186 metres in length and 13 metres in width and is of timber and steel piles construction with a concrete deck. A low timber landing, accessed at the land end, is located on the eastern side of the pier and is approximately 58 metres in length and 2.5 metres in width.

At the centre of the pier are remnant railway tracks which extend its length.

An inspection of Workshops Pier completed by AWM in 2022 confirmed that several piles have deteriorated or completely failed and require remediation. Workshops Pier is closed to the public as a result.



Figure 25. Slipway at the Seaworks site with the Workshops Pier to the left, Commissioners Pier to the right and Boyd Street Pier to the far right. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 26. The main deck of Workshops Pier looking towards the city of Melbourne. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 27. Workshops Pier looking back towards the shore. (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 28. Timber elements below the low landing showing signs of deterioration. (Source: AWM 2022a)



Figure 29. View from Workshops Pier towards the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria’s marina.

Commissioners Jetty

Commissioners Jetty is located within the Seaworks Maritime Precinct between Workshops Pier and Boyd Street Pier. Commissioners Jetty is approximately 40 metres in length and around 2 metres in width. It is constructed entirely of timber elements (decking and piles) and includes a timber deck which ramps down to a lower level.

The overall condition of Commissioner’s Jetty was assessed by AWM in 2022 as very poor, concluding that the structure has failed.



Figure 30. View of Commissioners Jetty from the west side, which is currently closed to all access due to poor condition.



Figure 31. View of Commissioners Jetty from the eastern side with slipway in foreground.

6 Existing use

The following provides an overview of the current use of the subject piers and jetties. This has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders.

6.1 Gem Pier

- Gem Pier hosts a number of commercial activities, including Yarra River ferry services and sightseeing and charter cruises to Southbank and St Kilda. It also hosts recreational boating and fishing and is used by anglers. It has on occasion hosted Tall Ships, including the *Enterprize* tall ship.
- The HMAS *Castlemaine* is currently berthed at Gem Pier. It hosts a maritime museum and is owned and operated by the volunteer-run Maritime Trust of Australia.
- Gem Pier is in a prominent location adjacent Commonwealth Reserve and is one of only a few publicly accessible piers in Williamstown, making it a popular destination for visitors.

6.2 Ferguson Street Pier

- Ferguson Street Pier provides the only public boating berths within the subject area and is a popular destination for recreational fishing and angling.
- Ferguson Street Pier is prominently located at the end of the Ferguson Street commercial strip and adjacent community touchstones such as the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club and Williamstown War Memorial.
- It is connected to pedestrian and cyclist foreshore trails developed by Hobsons Bay City Council to create a forecourt to the pier. As a result, it is a popular destination for recreation and leisure.
- Ferguson Street Pier also offers impressive views of Melbourne city and has become a popular spot for amateur photography.

6.3 Seaworks site

6.3.1 Boyd Street Pier

- Prior to its closure, Boyd Street Pier was used for a number of ongoing functions. It was the home port of the *Enterprize* tall ship, berthed commercial vessels, and supported the functions of the shipwright businesses that lease sheds from Seaworks.
- It was noted during targeted consultation that this previous use was highly compatible with Seaworks operationally. Given its location close to the carpark, Boyd Street Pier was the ideal location for berthing commercial vessels and did not interrupt the Seaworks event space. It was further noted that Boyd Street Pier has deep water access and was an ideal height and width for a variety of maritime activities.

6.3.2 Workshop Pier

- Prior to its closure, Workshops Pier was considered by many key stakeholders to be the ideal landing location (due to deep water) for visiting tall ships, including the Sydney Heritage Fleet, the Navy and other visiting boating groups.
- Workshops Pier was also used as a landing place for chartered river boats that were ferrying visitors to events at Seaworks.

6.3.3 Commissioners Jetty

- Prior to its closure, Commissioners Jetty was used largely for recreational fishing with some berthing for smaller vessels.

7 Overview of heritage value

The following overview of the heritage values of the subject piers and jetties has been informed by the close review of relevant background information, including any existing statements of significance, additional historical research, high-level comparative analysis, consultation with key stakeholders, and in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Burra Charter.

7.1 Gem Pier

- Originally constructed from local bluestone in 1839, Gem Pier is considered to be the first commercial pier constructed in Williamstown and is noteworthy as one of the earliest piers constructed in Port Phillip Bay.
- Gem Pier has undergone major reconstructions in 1886, 1927–1928 and 1992, but retains its original scale and setting, and has been rebuilt in the same location.
- Gem Pier compares well to other early piers in Port Phillip Bay, such as Station Pier (1854), Breakwater Pier (1854–1859), Gellibrand Pier (1859–1861), Kerferd Road Pier (1887–1889) and Princes Pier (1912–1915).
- Gem Pier provides evidence of the role of Williamstown as Melbourne’s first port, when it was known as ‘the landing place’. From 1839–1854, Gem Pier was used to transfer passengers and cargo up the Yarra River to Melbourne, until Ann Street Pier was constructed and became the preferred landing place for goods and cargo.
- Gem Pier is also noteworthy for its continued use since 1839, most notably for commercial ferry services from the late nineteenth century to the present day.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation revealed potential community interest, particularly for its ongoing use for maritime activities.
- See Section 7.4 regarding archaeological potential.

7.2 Ferguson Street Pier

- Originally constructed in 1924, Ferguson Street Pier is noteworthy for its association with the development of the ferry service which connected Williamstown and Port Melbourne.

- From the mid twentieth century, Ferguson Street Pier has been used for recreational boating and fishing, which continues to the present day.
- Ferguson Street Pier compares well with the development and use of other piers within Port Phillip Bay, such as Kerferd Road Pier (1887–1889) and Altona Pier (c1880s).
- Ferguson Street Pier was demolished and reconstructed (on a slightly different angle) in 2003 but retains its original scale and setting.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation revealed potential community interest, particularly for its ongoing use for maritime activities.
- See Section 7.4 regarding archaeological potential.

7.3 Seaworks site

7.3.1 Boyd Street Pier

- Originally constructed in 1920–1922, Boyd Street Pier is of historical significance at the state level and is included on the VHR (H1790—Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshops).
- Boyd Street Pier provides evidence of the development of the Melbourne Harbour Trust and the expansion and centralisation of the Trust's maintenance, repair and construction facilities at Williamstown.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation revealed potential community interest, particularly for its ongoing use for maritime activities.

7.3.2 Workshops Pier

- Originally constructed in 1944, Workshops Pier is noteworthy for its association with the development of the Melbourne Harbour Trust—and their relocation from the Williamstown Dockyards in 1942—following the sale of the site to the Department of Navy.
- Like Boyd Street Pier, which was constructed for the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1920–1922, Workshops Pier provides evidence of a major phase of development for the Melbourne Harbour Trust, which involved a program of land reclamation and building expansion.
- Workshops Pier is believed to have been constructed on the site of the former Wright's Slip, which had been used since 1858.

- Workshops Pier was demolished and reconstructed in 1977–1979 but retains its original scale and setting.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation revealed potential community interest, particularly for its ongoing use for maritime activities (prior to closure).

7.3.3 Commissioners Jetty

- Constructed in 1951–1952, Commissioners Jetty provides evidence of the work of the Melbourne Harbour Trust, and their expanding role as a vessel inspection and testing authority in the postwar period.
- Limited information is available regarding the historical use and development of Commissioners Jetty.
- In comparison to the other surviving Melbourne Harbour Trust structures, Boyd Street Pier and Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty is not associated with a major phase of development or expansion, although it does provide some insight into the many functions of the Melbourne Harbour Trust.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation revealed limited community interest in Commissioners Jetty.

7.4 Archaeological potential

All of the subject piers and jetty structures that are the focus of this report are listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI). These include Ferguson Street Pier (H7822-0544), Gem Pier (H7822-0383) and Boyd Street Pier, Workshops Pier and Commissioners Jetty, which form part of the Former Melbourne Harbour Trust Williamstown Workshop listing (H7822-0552). All subject piers and jetty sites have the potential for historical archaeological features, deposits and artefacts to be present.

7.4.1 Maritime heritage infrastructure

Although the piers have been subject to constant redevelopment and replacement of materials, the majority of piers have remnant infrastructure in and around their location.

Ferguson Street Pier has surviving timber piles dating to its construction in 1926. A remnant bluestone section of the pier is also present on the shoreward end.

Boyd Street Pier has been substantially reconstructed. However, an original 1920s concrete and timber slipway is located directly to the west of the pier. Piled bluestone

rubble is also located west of the slipway. This bluestone is potentially associated with an early jetty or slipway base.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that 20 timber pylons had previously been located at Gem Pier approximately a metre out from the current pier structure and a metre from the shoreline; however, it is not clear to which construction period these date to and if the pylons still remain. A rough cut and dressed bluestone mound that is also associated with Gem Pier protrudes approximately five metres into the bay and is approximately three metres high. The bluestone mound may be highly significant as it may relate to the original stone jetty which was built using convict labour in 1839.

Workshops Pier may have been constructed over the location of Wright's Slip. It is not clear what remains of the slipway. They may be remnant timber structures or rough cut bluestone.

Commissioners Jetty has surviving timber piles relating to its construction in 1951–1952.

7.4.2 Shipwrecks and associated deposits

There are no recorded shipwrecks in proximity to the piers according to the Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database. However, wooden ships were often deliberately sunk and left, so there remains some potential for non-recorded shipwrecks and debris to be present.

7.4.3 Discard from vessels and pedestrians

Under the *Heritage Act 2017*, all artefacts, deposits, or features which are 75 or more years old are protected, including those found underwater. Archaeological remains in the form of discard from pedestrians and vessels have high potential to be present beneath the piers.

If works are proposed that will disturb an archaeological site (such as dredging), a Consent under the *Heritage Act 2017* must be obtained from Heritage Victoria. On that basis, an archaeological assessment is required to establish the nature, extent and significance of any archaeological remains on the site. This assessment forms part of the support documentation for the Consent application. The support documentation also assesses the impacts that proposed work may have on archaeological deposits and provides measures to mitigate any potential impacts to archaeology from the works.

Potential archaeological deposits associated with Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier, Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier are likely to consist primarily of deposits and discard of maritime infrastructure which has built up around and beneath these structures.

Discarded items such as food and drink containers, personal objects, fishing and boating equipment, ship fittings and cargo are likely to be found on the seabed due to the highly utilised nature of the piers. These items would have been accidentally or purposefully discarded over the side of the pier or through gaps in the deck planking, as well as from the sides of vessels moored on the edge of the piers.

Additionally, given the maritime context of the site there is a high potential that artefacts recovered from the site have been brought in from elsewhere due to tidal currents. Due to the nature of tidal sedimentation and the lack of stratification on the seabed, artefacts located on the seabed are difficult to date. Any interpretation of archaeological assemblages, including potential dating and the determination of the function of artefacts, will rely heavily on artefacts that have any diagnostic features rather than using spatial information.

References

Age, as cited.

Argus, as cited.

Australasian, as cited.

AW Maritime 2022a. 'Workshops Pier Condition Inspection Report'. Prepared for Parks Victoria.

AW Maritime 2022b. 'Commissioner's Jetty Condition Inspection Report'. Prepared for Parks Victoria.

AW Maritime 2022c. 'Boyd St Pier Condition Inspection Report'. Prepared for Parks Victoria.

Banner, as cited.

Barnard, Jill 2008. *Jetties and Piers: A background history of maritime infrastructure in Victoria*. Heritage Council of Victoria.

Colonial Times, as cited.

Crocker, Robin & Associates 2004. 'Heritage information: Port Phillip piers and jetties heritage information'. Prepared for Parks Victoria.

Duncan, Brad 2003. 'Maritime Infrastructure Heritage Project Stage One: Melbourne'. Prepared for Heritage Victoria.

GHD 2021. 'Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework'. Prepared for the Department of Transport.

Herald, as cited.

Heritage Victoria 2003. 'Heritage Inventory: Archaeology Site Record Ferguson Street Pier'. Heritage Victoria.

HLCD, 2014. 'Seaworks Maritime Precinct Conservation Management Plan'. Prepared for Seaworks Foundation.

Public Records Office Victoria (PROV), as cited.

Melbourne Daily, as cited.

National Library of Australia, as cited.

Parks Victoria 2010. 'Williamstown Foreshore Strategic Plan'. Parks Victoria.

Shipping and Sydney General Trade List, as cited.

State Library Victoria, as cited.

Victorian Heritage Database, as cited.

Victorian Places 2015. 'Williamstown'. Accessed November 2022.
<https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/williamstown>.

Williamstown Chronicle, as cited.

Appendix 1: Historical images



Figure 32. Part of Williamstown in 1854. (State Library Victoria)

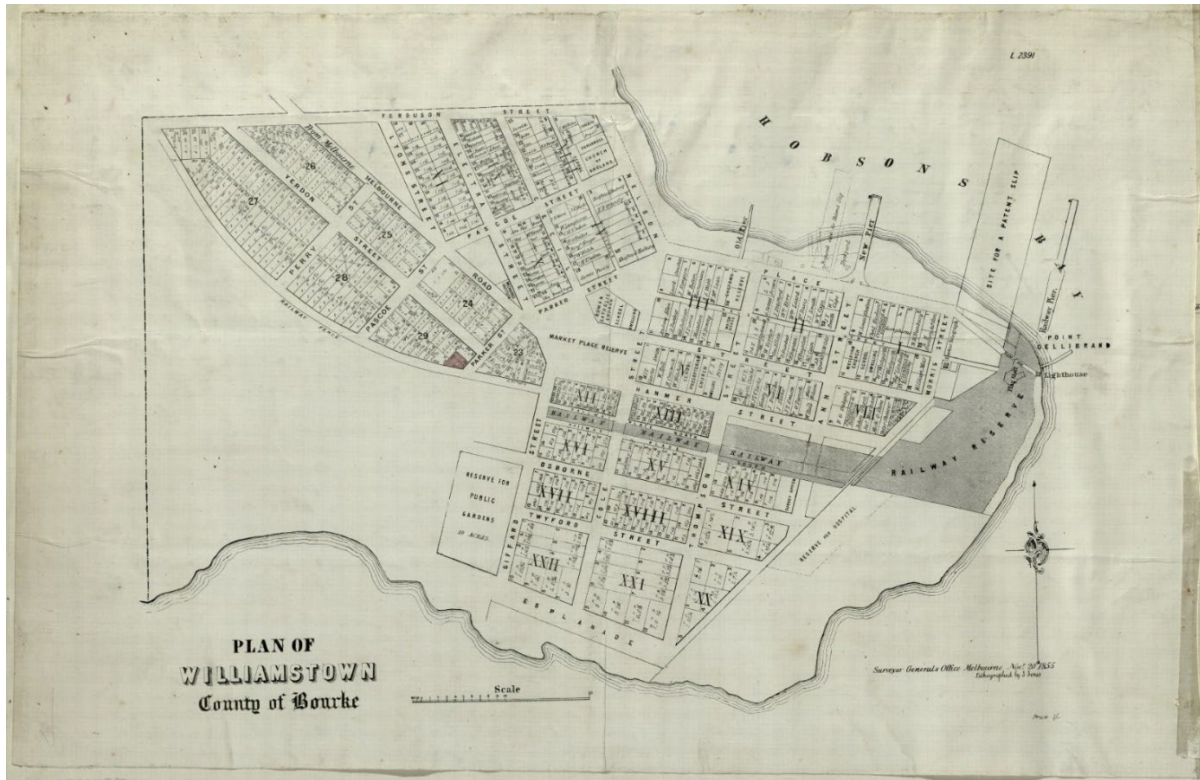


Figure 33. Plan of Williamstown, County of Bourke, 1855, Surveyor General's Office Melbourne, lithographed by J Jones. (State Library Victoria)



Figure 34. Map of Hobson Bay and Yarra River leading to Melbourne 1864, Henry L Cox. (East Melbourne Historical Society)



Figure 35. Sands & McDougall Limited (1883). (National Library Australia)

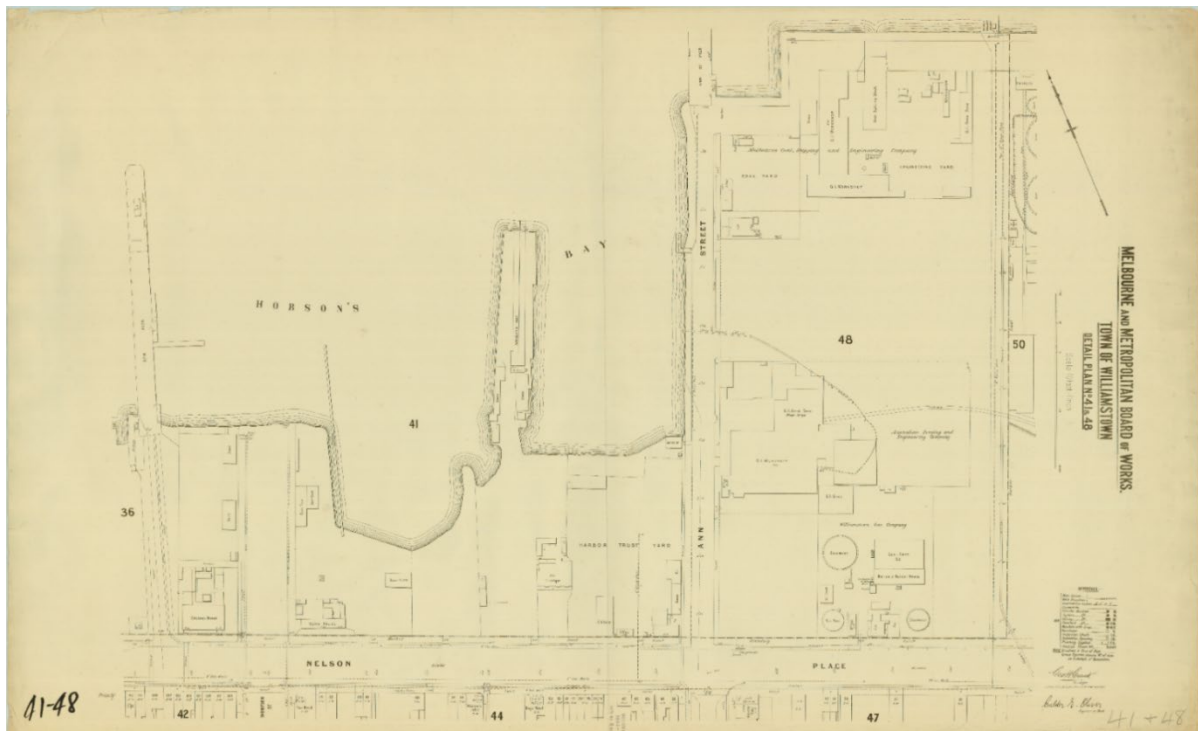


Figure 36. Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan, no. 41 & 48, 1908, Town of Williamstown. (State Library of Victoria)

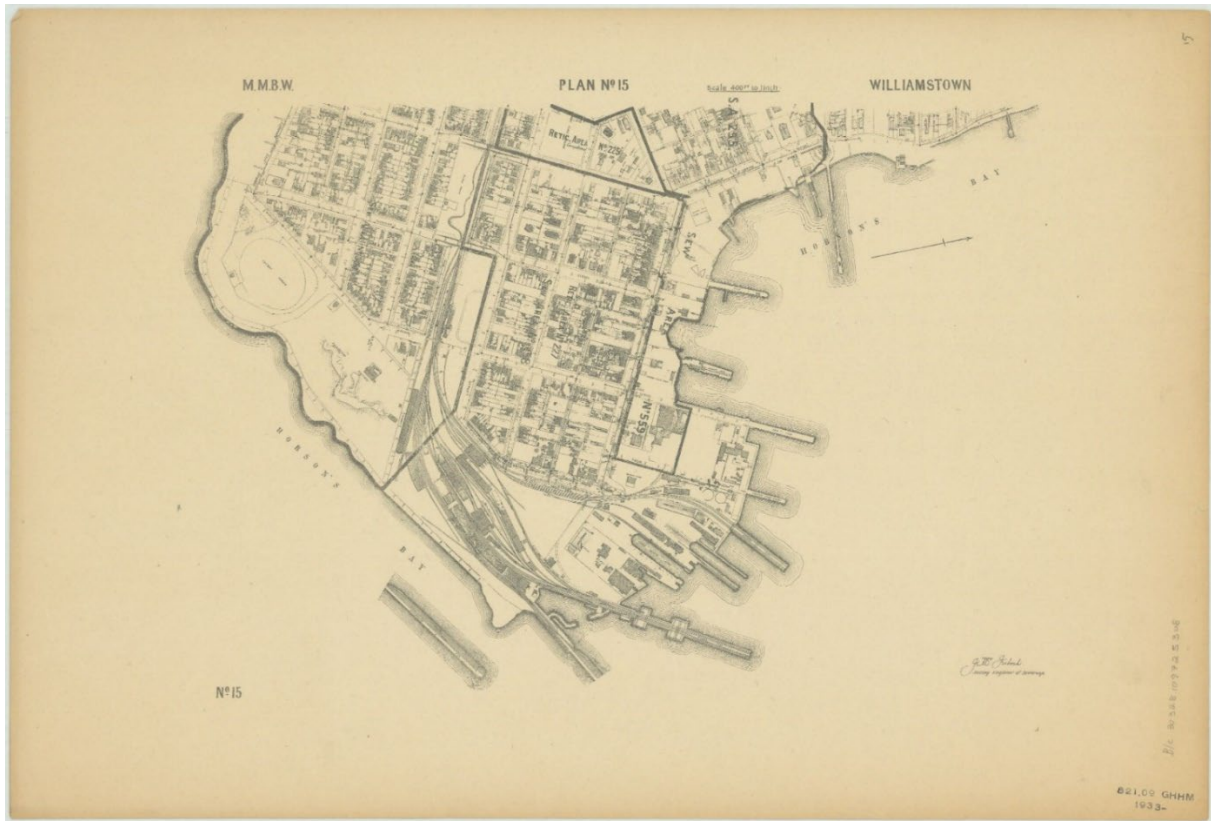


Figure 37. Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works 1933–1950, Town of Williamstown, Plan No.15. (State Library Victoria)