

# ST KILDA MARINA

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



Prepared for  
**City of Port Phillip**

**FINAL REPORT: 12 April 2018**



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# 1.0: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND BRIEF

In October 2017, the City of Port Phillip commissioned a preliminary heritage assessment of the St Kilda Marina complex, on Marine Parade, St Kilda, which is owned by the council but subject to a long-term lease. The potential heritage significance of the complex had been flagged due to the fact that the original fifty-year lease on the property, which was signed by the current lessees in 1969, is due to expire in 2019.

The preliminary heritage assessment, completed by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, concluded that the marina site was very likely to meet the threshold for cultural significance at the local level. A number of recommendations were made, in regard to undertaking more detailed research and comparative analysis to demonstrate conclusively that the threshold had been reached.

In February 2018, the City of St Kilda commissioned the same consultants to undertake a full heritage assessment of the site that would include the additional investigation recommended in the preliminary report.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was adopted:

### 1.2.1 Research

For the preliminary assessment, limited research was undertaken, with a reliance on readily-available published secondary sources, notably Anne Longmire's 1989 book, *St Kilda: The Show Goes On*. Reference was made to the consultant's in-house database of post-war Australian architecture, which included several references to the marina. The City of Port Phillip provided some archival material from its own files, a copy of an illustrated booklet on the marina (recently self-published by the Spooner family) and some historical notes made by heritage advisor David Helms during a tour of the complex, led by Greg Spooner.

For this more detailed assessment, additional primary research was undertaken, including a literature review of contemporary newspapers and magazines, and telephone interviews with two key members of the original project team: Peter Horman, former managing director of the International Group, and Don Fulton, the marina's architect.

For a complete list of references consulted for this assessment, see Appendix.

### 1.2.2 Site visit

For the preliminary assessment, a brief site visit was undertaken to gain familiarity with the general layout of the marina and to get an idea of the number of individual components located within the complex. This survey was undertaken from the public domain, without gaining access to restricted areas of the marina site. Numerous photographs and notes were taken, which underpinned the completion of a written description of the site and its components.

### 1.2.3 Comparative analysis

To investigate the various claims that had been made about the significance of the marina and its buildings, comparative analysis was undertaken, initially by reference to readily-available online sources, and, for the more detailed assessment, by reference to contemporary published accounts in newspapers and magazines, and to the aforementioned oral history sources.

## 1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.3.1 Heritage Significance

The more intensive research and comparative analysis that was undertaken for this detailed assessment confirmed that the St Kilda Marina does meet the threshold for cultural heritage significance at the local level.

As such, the application of heritage overlay to the site is considered appropriate. It is further recommended that the extent of heritage overlay should correspond to the boundaries of the entire 20-acre site. It is acknowledged such a curtilage would encapsulate a number of varied buildings and structures from various eras that, individually, may be of greater or lesser significance in the context of the marina's history and development. Those elements deemed to be of primary, contributory and little or no significance have been shown on an indicative map (see Figure 15).

The complex, and/or some of its individual components, may also meet the threshold for significance at a broader statewide or even national level.

### 1.3.2 Future management

The preliminary heritage assessment recommended that the final assessment should include some recommendations for the management of the cultural significance of the marina, which could be developed into a set of guiding principles for the future use of the site.

- The marina should continue to be used for a purpose that is compatible to its original use. Ideally, it should continue to function as a marina, or for similar boat-related purposes
- The dry boat storage buildings, which derive significance from their innovatory function, should similarly continue to be used in a way that allows this to be interpreted
- Any further development of the site should respect the scale, prominence, distinctive forms and landmark qualities of the most prominent structures: namely, the dry boat storage buildings and the pilot beacon. Key views and vistas of these structures should be retained, not only from within the marina but also from Marine Parade, from further along the foreshore in both directions, and from the bay itself.
- Any new works undertaken to the dry boat storage buildings (whether it be renovation, refurbishment or adaptation) should not obscure nor detract from the iconic zigzag roofline, which contributes to its landmark qualities.
- Consideration could be given to the removal or sympathetic re-design of any fabric (eg later additions) that may detract from, or confuse the interpretation of, those elements identified as being of primary significance;
- The history and significance of the marina complex should be interpreted;

## 2.0: SITE HISTORY

### 2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINA

#### 2.1.1 Early agitations, 1959-65

First mooted in 1961 and developed in stages from 1966 to 1970, the St Kilda Marina grew out of the post-war boom of recreational boating in Victoria. The seeds of the project can be traced back to the late 1950s, when several Melbourne businessmen simultaneously formed companies to exploit the rising popularity of boating. In July 1958, entrepreneur Arch Spooner (1910-1986), best known as founder of the Tom Piper canned food empire, formed a company, International Plastics (Australia) Pty Ltd, to manufacture fibreglass boats. A joint venture with an existing British firm, the company built a factory on a 15-acre site at Scoresby and commenced production in mid-1959.

That same year, a group of businessmen headed by Rex Carnegie formed Sports Marine Pty Ltd, a retail venture to sell boats, outboard motors and other equipment. Carnegie and associate Peter Horman travelled to the USA to secure the Australian franchise for Mercury outboards motors, but succeeded only in getting the rights to distribute the products in the eastern states. When Sports Marine opened for business in September 1959, from premises at 683-685 Elizabeth Street, they styled themselves as “Melbourne’s largest boating centre”.<sup>1</sup> Twelve months later, the thriving business was absorbed into the Stanhill group, overseen by prominent Polish-born entrepreneur Stan Korman. Backed by Korman, the company established a second outlet, in St Kilda, in a grand purpose-built showroom on the Lower Esplanade (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> When this opened in December 1960, it was reported that the company had also secured the rights to two acres of water, to be developed as “a large marina at the back of the centre”.<sup>3</sup> This, however, did not proceed.



Figure 1: The new premises of Sports Marine Pty Ltd on the Lower Esplanade at St Kilda (1960)  
Source: *Age*, 16 December 1960, p 17 (delineator uncredited)

1 ‘Opening September 9’, *Age*, 29 August 1959, p 45.

2 The building stood between the St Kilda Sea Baths and the St Kilda Pier. Occupied by Sports Marine for only a few years, the building has since been demolished, and its site is now occupied by a carpark.

3 ‘Vast marine centre opens tomorrow’, *Age*, 16 December 1960, p 17.

In the early 1960s, these two boating empires thrived in parallel as the pastime became more and more popular. Spooner expanded his activities by forming a new company, International Marine, to import outboard motors. Sports Marine hit a snag in 1962, when a consignment of imported Mercury outboards was not released to them due to concerns about Korman's financial stability, which had recently taken a turn for the worse.<sup>4</sup> When Korman withdrew, Horman approached Spooner to replace him. As a result, the respective business interests of these friendly rivals were brought together, under the umbrella of a new entity: the International Group. In 1963, this new group finally secured the Australia-wide franchise for Mercury outboards (for a ten-year period) and, the next year, obtained the rights to manufacture American-designed Bertram yachts under license. In February 1964, the group formed another subsidiary, Australian Marinas Pty Ltd, to develop American-style marinas in Victoria and elsewhere. In his capacity of managing director of the International Group, Peter Horman undertook an eight-week tour of the USA, visiting many marinas in many states (including not only the boating hotspots of California and Florida, but also Seattle and elsewhere) and making a particular study of dry boat storage facilities.<sup>5</sup>

At this time, most recreational boating facilities in Victoria were managed by private yachting clubs with limited memberships, typically offering limited equipment.<sup>6</sup> The potential for modern marinas also piqued the interest of Maurice Moran (1907-1988), St Kilda's City Engineer, who would have been well aware of what Sports Marine was doing on the Lower Esplanade. In 1961, Moran returned from a visit to the USA, full of enthusiasm for the modern boating facilities he saw over there, and began to push for the creation of a council-owned marina in his municipality.<sup>7</sup> At the time, the City of St Kilda and the MMBW were jointly engaged on a scheme to reclaim 40 acres along the foreshore. Begun in 1959, the reclamation was conceived to increase space for public recreation, with rock retaining walls to provide a safety shield from notoriously rough tides.<sup>8</sup> In late 1963, the Council sought permission from the Minister of Lands to include a small boat harbour as part of the reclamation project.<sup>9</sup> Initially, ministerial permission was refused due to opposition by local residents, but, after the passing of the *St Kilda Land Act* (1965), the City of St Kilda became empowered to "lease the said land to any person to be used only for the purposes of a marina". Ultimately, the Council opted to construct only the harbour and boat ramps under its own steam, and leave further development of the site to private enterprise, on a leasehold basis. In this way, as Moran told the press in 1965, income generated by the marina would offset Council's expenditure on the broader reclamation project.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.1.2 Design and documentation, 1966-67

Work on the small boat harbour neared completion in late 1966, when it was reported that "the concrete sea walls surrounding the 12-acre stretch of water are in place, and work is going ahead on the three large slipways".<sup>11</sup> At the mouth of the harbour, special equipment was installed to keep the water free from debris, and, further north, hundreds of tons of sand were laid to form a gentle curve in the coastline, to address local concerns that the marina might disturb currents and cause stagnation of water to adjacent beaches. Moran remained enthusiastic about how the project would further unfold, telling the press that the marina might include a restaurant, petrol station, dining kiosk, telephone and toilet facilities for boat owners, retail and maintenance services, and a jetty for the water police. He concluded that, whatever facilities the marina might ultimately provide, "it would probably set a precedent for foreshore authorities throughout Australia".

4 Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

5 Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

6 David Helms, 'Historic notes on St Kilda Marina', 2pp typescript, dated 11 October 2017.

7 'Marina lease is let, \$2m project', *Southern Cross*, 17 January 1968, p 1.

8 'Reclamation will beautify St Kilda', *Age*, 25 February 1959, p 14.

9 'Marina project included in St Kilda plan', *Age*, 22 November 1963, p 5.

10 'New boat harbor [sic] for St Kilda', *Age*, 18 November 1965, p 5.

11 'That's service: how the new marina will work', *Age*, 2 December 1966, p 15.

Six months later, on 3 June 1967, the Council called tenders for "leasing (fifty years) of approximately twenty acres of Marine Parade foreshore including 7.62 acres defined boat harbour area . . . for the purpose of developing the area into a power boat marina and associated amenities including petrol filling station, service kiosks, etc".<sup>12</sup> The tender period was slated to close three months later, on 7 September.

Australian Marinas Pty Ltd wasted no time in preparing a scheme for "the largest and best facility of its type yet projected in Australia".<sup>13</sup> Almost immediately, Spooner left on an extended tour of marinas in the USA. These included the Long Beach Marina in California, which was later cited as the principal inspiration for the development at St Kilda.<sup>14</sup> To design it, Spooner engaged leading Melbourne architect Don Fulton, evidently on the strength of his recent work on master-planning mining townships in Queensland. While he had no prior experience in marina design, Fulton had seen examples in California (at San Diego and Marin County, San Francisco) whilst completing post-graduate study there in the early 1950s.<sup>15</sup> Fulton recalls that, with just a few months to prepare the tender, he had limited opportunity to research the typology.<sup>16</sup> Too busy to accompany Spooner on the American tour, Fulton relied on publications that Spooner brought back with him. These presumably included a book entitled *Marinas: Recommendations for Design, Construction & Maintenance*, published in 1961 by the National Association of Engineer & Boat Manufacturers, a New York-based group that Spooner is known to have contacted during his trip.

Moran's brief reflected his desire for a modern marina along American lines: a boating complex providing wet berths and dry stack storage facilities for the repair, servicing and refueling of boats, and a wide range of other amenities for the welfare, comfort and amusement of visitors. With the directors of Australian Marinas already well versed in such facilities, the company's proposal for St Kilda was ambitious to say the least, not merely in terms of its size and scope, but also the sheer extent and variety of amenities to be included. The harbour was to have seven finger-piers with floating berths for 200 vessels, plus dry boat storage for over one hundred other vessels, in two elongated three-level buildings, carefully sited between harbour and bay to form a barrier from harsh winds. One of these buildings would include a service workshop, and the other a 'marina centre' (with boat showroom, provender shop, kiosk and bulk store at ground level, and a 150-seat restaurant and administrative offices above). There would also be refuelling points for boats, an amenities block (with locker rooms, toilets and showers) for visiting mariners, a petrol station for cars and, at entry to the harbor, "an elevated beacon that, with identifiable signal flash, locates the point of entry to the basin".

The company's tender also included further facilities that, while not directly related to boating, would provide commercial, retail and recreational opportunities for mariners and visitors alike, thus ensuring ongoing financial viability. To be developed on vacant land south of the marina proper, these included a sports centre (with gymnasium, squash courts and sauna), convention centre and 50-room motel with glass-walled observation deck and swimming pool. An even more ambitious list of "possible added developments" for that area included a heliport, "seaquarium", wading pond for model boats, museum of Australiana, and a full-scale replica of the *Lady of St Kilda*, the long-lost colonial-era schooner (shipwrecked in 1844) that gave the city its name. According to Don Fulton, these "added developments" were only fleshed out sufficiently for a model to be built (Figure 2); full working drawings were not prepared for the tender.<sup>17</sup>

12 'Tenders', *Age*, 3 June 1967, p 58.

13 Don Hendry Fulton Pty Ltd, 'Report... illustrating and describing the development proposed by the tenderer for the purpose of a marina in conformity with the conditions prescribed by the Council of the City of St Kilda', typescript report, dated September 1967, p 4. Copy held by City of Port Phillip.

14 'Timber by the sea', *Wood World*, August 1969, p 13

15 *Ibid*, p 16.

16 Interviews with Don Fulton, 19 December 2017 and 29 January 2018.

17 Interview with Don Fulton, 19 December 2017 and 29 January 2018.

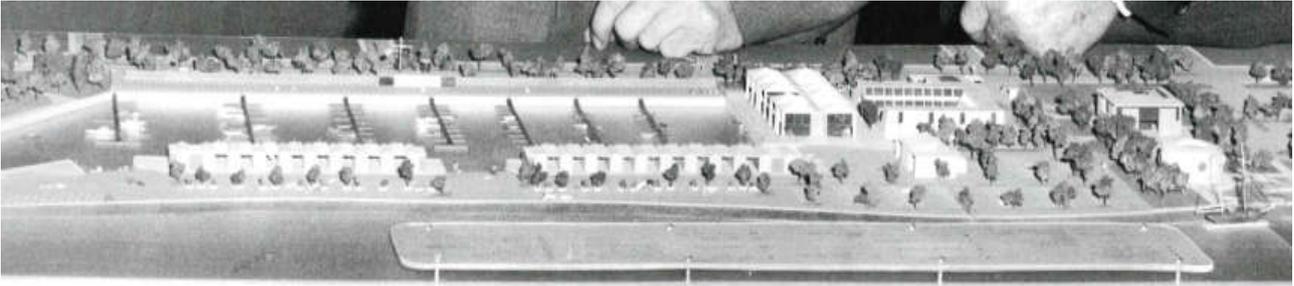


Figure 2: Architect's model of proposed scheme; note "added developments" proposed for area south of marina harbour, including full-scale replica of the *Lady of St Kilda* moored at far right  
 Source: Greg Spooner (compiler), *St Kilda Marina, 1968 to 2009* (photographer uncredited)

Of his marina masterplan, Fulton stated that "the fundamental design approach has been to create a series of buildings, each of which, while having an architectural identity expressing its particular function, relates to the other in character, giving a unity to the whole development".<sup>18</sup> Fulton also noted that the buildings would "convey a sense of shelter" as well as "introducing a decorative or festive note" that was deemed appropriate to the recreational nature of the complex. The latter quality was perhaps most clearly expressed in the distinctive zigzag rooflines of the dry boat storage buildings and petrol station, which, as Fulton pointed out, were intended to symbolize ocean waves.<sup>19</sup> More prosaically, all buildings and structures were designed "to embrace adequate means to modify the impact of climactic extremes ... and for protection against the added effects liable from a seaside site".

### 2.1.3 Construction and completion, 1968-69

In January 1968, it was reported that the City of St Kilda had accepted the tender of Australian Marinas Pty Ltd. The project, reportedly worth almost \$2million, was to be realised in three stages. Stage One, for the wet and dry pens, service station, locker rooms and pilot beacon, was to be finished by August of that year. Stage Two (marina centre, boat display area and sports centre) was slated for completion by June 1969, and Stage Three (convention centre and motel) by September 1970. At that early stage, there was no official word on when (or indeed if) those additional tourist-oriented facilities might be realised.

Work soon commenced on wet pens in the harbour, which consisted of timber-decked floating berths attached to timber poles. Their design, with diagonal decking and canted U-shaped berths, with triangular dock-boxes in each corner, closely echoed American precedents. Pontoons, collars and dock-boxes, were done in fibreglass, manufactured at the International Plastics boat-building factory in Scoresby.<sup>20</sup> Despite being designed to resemble a traditional masonry lighthouse, even the marina's pilot beacon was fabricated in fibreglass at Scoresby.

Construction of the buildings, undertaken by contractors Van Driel Pty Ltd, continued in parallel. In September 1968, it was reported that the marina would be operation before Christmas.<sup>21</sup> A photograph published in November showed that all but two of the finger-piers were finished, and the amenities block and petrol station on Marine Parade were reportedly "nearing completion".<sup>22</sup> An undated photograph held by the National Archives (Figure 3) shows the north dry boat storage building complete, and the south one at framing stage.

18 Don Hendry Fulton Pty Ltd, 'Report...', pp 29-30.

19 Interviews with Don Fulton, 19 December 2017 and 29 January 2018.

20 Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

21 'St Kilda plan', *Age*, 15 September 1968, p 3.

22 'Marina open soon', *Age*, 30 November 1968, p 3.

The zigzag rooflines of these two buildings (and petrol station) required considerable technical expertise, including the use of specially-made flashings, fascias, guttering and concealed downpipes.<sup>23</sup> Aluminium was used extensively, to prevent corrosion from salty spray blown from the bay. Fulton otherwise used a palette of hardwearing, low-maintenance and/or specially treated materials that would be appropriate for such harsh coastal conditions, eschewing painted and cement rendered finishes in favour of face brickwork, baked enamel and metal “subjected to industrial rust-prevention techniques”.<sup>24</sup> As work on the dry boat storage buildings continued, Peter Horman and his technical staff investigated the development of a special forklift with a ‘negative lift’ capacity (ie, extending below ground level) that would allow boats to be lowered into the water. Rather than importing such a vehicle from the USA, the company designed and built one of their own.<sup>25</sup> Horman confirms this was the first time this had been done in Australia.



*Figure 3: Marina site circa early 1968, showing moorings, one completed dry boat storage building (with another under construction). Note, on far side of harbour, the amenities block, substation and petrol station. Source: National Archives of Australia (Series A1200, control symbol L79971; photographer uncredited)*

<sup>23</sup> ‘Marina’s roof posed problems for contractors’, *Building*, March 1970, p 14.

<sup>24</sup> Don Hendry Fulton Pty Ltd, ‘Report...’, p 31.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.



Figure 4: Marina site circa mid-1968, showing both dry boat storage buildings in a completed state.  
Source: *Power Boat & Yachting*, May 1969 (photographer uncredited)

The marina officially commenced operation on 14 December 1968, when the first boats entered the harbor.<sup>26</sup> Newspaper advertisements promoting “the new St Kilda marina” appeared early the following year, although a Certificate of Completion was not formally issued until April 1969. Further unfolding of the three-stage masterplan was waylaid when attempts were made to revise the scheme. In July, it was reported that Spooner had applied to the City of St Kilda for a grant of a further four acres to the south, to allow the sites of the carpark and future motel to be swapped.<sup>27</sup> However, this proposal met with opposition from residents and councillors alike, and was overruled. While the marina centre had already been completed, the remaining components of Stage Two (ie, boat display area and sports centre) were abandoned, as was all of Stage Three (ie, motel and convention centre). According to Peter Horman, this was due to Spooner’s reluctance to deal with the complexities of multiple sub-lessees on a long-term leasehold property.<sup>28</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Occupation and adaptation 1969 to date

Before construction of the marina had even started, the City of St Kilda had received more than 700 applications from boat-owners wishing to lease space in either the floating berths or dry boat storage buildings.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> ‘Marina opens Saturday’, *Age*, 10 December 1968, p 4.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Marina is too popular’, *Age*, 22 July 1969, p 44.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

<sup>29</sup> ‘\$2million plan gets the go ahead’, *Age*, 19 January 1968, p

When the facility opened in December 1968, a spokesman for the International Group stated that “response from boating enthusiasts has been tremendous”, predicting that all 200 floating berth spaces, and 250 dry storage spaces, would be full by the following February.<sup>30</sup> In mid- 1969, Spooner told the press that the project “had been a success beyond expectation”.<sup>31</sup> By then, the marina was fully operational and a number of boat-related businesses (such as Parkview Marine) had already taken up tenancy there. In October, the marina became the headquarters of Australia’s first water ambulance service, run by the Elwood Lifesaving Club.<sup>32</sup>

In its initial phase of operation, the marina garnered much publicity, with reports in daily and local newspapers, and industry sources such as *Power Boat & Yachting* and *Modern Boating*.<sup>33</sup> In August 1969, it was written up in *Wood World*, journal of the Tasmanian Timber Association, which drew attention to the noted use of “180,000 feet of radiata pine, pressure treated with chrome arsenic salts” for the pier decking.<sup>34</sup> In early 1970, the technical innovations of the zigzag roofs were reported in the Sydney-based magazine, *Building*.<sup>35</sup> Later that year, the pilot beacon caught the attention of the editor of *Architect* journal, who affably mocked its traditional design as a “late bit of lunacy”.<sup>36</sup> Admittedly, the beacon had remained inoperative since the developers failed to secure permission for it to operate as a true navigation beacon.<sup>37</sup> Despite this, the beacon soon became something of a landmark in its own right, and was used as a visual marker by mariners who had hitherto relied on St Kilda’s high-rise flats as reference points along the coastline.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 5: View of the north dry boat storage building in operation (note special forklift truck)  
Source: *Building*, March 1970, p 14 (photographer uncredited)

30 ‘Marina opens Saturday’, *Age*, 10 December 1968, p 4.

31 ‘Marina is too popular’, *Age*, 22 July 1969, p 44.

32 ‘Marine ambulance on the bay’, *Age*, 24 October 1969, p 14

33 ‘Space-age marina: \$3m complex in Victoria’, *Power Boat & Yachting*, May 1969, pp 8-11; ‘Our first big-time marina’, *Modern Boating*, September 1969, p 90.

34 ‘Timber by the sea’, *Wood World*, August 1969, p 13

35 ‘Marina’s roof posed problems for contractor’, *Building*, March 1970, p 15.

36 ‘Horrorscape’, *Architect*, July/August 1970, p 13.

37 Interviews with Don Fulton, 19 December 2017 and 29 January 2018.

38 ‘Boating’, *Age*, 12 June 1970, p 24.



Figure 6: View of newly-completed marina, showing south dry boat storage building in background. Note floating berths, with diagonal timber decking, canted corners and triangular dock-boxes  
Source: *Wood World*, August 1969, p 13 (photographer uncredited)

A number of changes have been made to the marina complex over the past few decades. In the early 1980s, Canary Island date palms were added as part of a broader tree-planting scheme (designed for the City of St Kilda by Tract Consultants) to beautify the St Kilda foreshore along Lower Esplanade and Marine Parade.<sup>39</sup> A number of metal lampposts, in a traditional shepherd's crook design adopted by the City of St Kilda, were installed at the marina during the 1980s, reflecting a further stage of the foreshore beautification scheme.<sup>40</sup>

Around 1981, the bistro at the south end of the marina centre was taken over by new owners and renovated to create *La Marina*, a seafood restaurant with three dining areas spread across two levels. Two decades later, the premises were renovated and re-badged again, this time to create *Riva St Kilda*, styled as 'an exciting entertainment venue featuring a light-filled restaurant, lounge bar and unique event facility'.

In the 1990s, Don Fulton's original zigzag-roofed BP service station was razed and rebuilt to a less striking standard company design. By that time, the use of the amenities block further on Marine Parade (originally provided for visiting yacht owners, but never used as much as had been expected) had diminished considerably. In 1994, the building was remodelled as a private licensed restaurant for visitors, known as the Mariner's Club. In 2001, the Mariner's Club was taken over by restaurateurs Andrew "Rollo" Rolleston and Simon Schofield, who planned to operate it as a public restaurant and bar. The premises were 'renovated in a modernist manner' with new outdoor deck areas and partially-enclosed 'drinking gazebo', and re-opened in November 2001 as *The Great Provider*.<sup>41</sup> In more recent years, Rolleston has established a spin-off business, *Rollo's Kiosk*, which operates from a small building at the north end of the Marine Parade frontage.

39 'Giving a fig for St Kilda', *Age*, 30 July 1980, p 18.)

40 Information provided by David Helms (Heritage Advisor, City of Port Phillip), April 2018.

41 'On the waterfront', *Age*, 27 November 2001, p 2

## 3.0: DESCRIPTION & SIGNIFICANCE OF SITE ELEMENTS

### 3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1.1 Overall planning

Covering an area of twenty acres between Marine Parade and the foreshore, the St Kilda Marina comprises a number of detached buildings and other structures clustered around the marina harbour. The bulk of the complex remains publicly accessible, with security fences and gateways limiting access to the floating berths, to the drystand storage areas to the rear (west) of the dry boat storage buildings, and to a roadway that runs along the northern side of the harbor.

The principal public entrance to the complex is at the southern end of the site, where a crossover from Marine Parade (between the service station and the substation) provides vehicular access to a large carpark that extends westwards to the foreshore and provides direct access to one of the three boat ramps located around the harbour. A roadway, running along the eastern side of the harbor, leads to a secure gateway at the northern end of the complex. A number of buildings are aligned between this north-south roadway and the property's Marine Parade frontage, including the former amenities block (now *Great Provider* restaurant), an electrical substation, several prefabricated buildings, and *Rollo's Kiosk*.

#### 3.1.2 Harbour and related infrastructure

**Harbour.** Covering an area of seven acres, the marina harbor is elongated and rectangular in form, with an angled and tapering waterway at its northern end to provide access to the bay. Three boat ramps are provided: two along the west side of the harbor, and one at the south end.

**Berths.** There are fixed berths on the north, west and south sides of the marina harbour, and, along the east side, seven finger-piers that provide floating berths. These floating berths, securely accessed via gates along a security fence, have polygonal concrete bollards, diagonal timber board decking, and fibreglass dock-boxes of truncated triangular form.

The floating berths are substantially intact to their original form, finishes and detailing. The four northernmost finger-piers appear virtually unaltered, still retaining their original configuration of canted pens. The three finger-piers to the south have all been slightly altered at their far (west) ends, in order to accommodate larger vessels. Most of the dock-boxes have been retained.

**Marine petrol station.** A small shed-like enclosure for petrol pumps, located on (and open to) the western side of the marina harbor, where it tapers towards the bay.

**Australian Coastguard headquarters.** A single-storey temporary building on the west side of the same tapered waterway, near the pilot beacon. While the Australian Coastguard has maintained a presence at the marina since the in late 1960s, the date of the current building is unknown. Aerial photographs confirm that it was built prior to 2000.

**Pilot Beacon.** Prominently sited at the northern tip of the promontory (and located within the secure part of the site, accessible only via the gates to the rear of the south dry boat storage building), the beacon is a fibreglass structure expressed as a small lighthouse of polygonal form, approximately 18 metres tall.

Although originally intended to function as a navigational beacon, the developers of the complex were reportedly unable to secure permission for this to happen. For many years, the beacon remained inoperative, although still served as a useful visual marker. Floodlights have since been installed to create the illusion of functionality and, more recently, a webcam has been added.



Figure 7: general view of the harbor (cf Figure 6)



Figure 8: The pilot beacon, seen from the north

### 3.1.3 Buildings

**Dry Boat Storage Buildings.** This pair of elongated three-storey steel-framed buildings runs along the man-man promontory parallel to the west side of the harbour. Distinguished by their unusual zigzag rooflines, the two buildings are mostly open to the marina side, with blank brick walls to the rear. Both buildings are enclosed at one end: the north end of the north building to form a boat maintenance area (now occupied by St Kilda Boat Sales), and the south end of the south building, formerly offices and a small restaurant, since altered and extended (c.2001) to form the much larger *Riva St Kilda* restaurant.

**“Great Provider” Restaurant.** Fronting Marine Parade, this single-storey building was originally a amenities block (toilets, showers and locker rooms) for yacht owners, but, since the mid-1990s, has been adapted as a restaurant. It presents a mostly blank façade to Marine Parade, with horizontal strip windows below the eaves, and has an unusual roofline of three low pyramidal hips. At its north end is a detached pavilion, with matching pyramidal roof, which now functions as a semi-enclosed dining area.

**Toilet block.** A detached toilet block stands between the *Riva* restaurant and the foreshore. Its architectural expression, with elongated horizontal strip windows, would suggest that it is contemporaneous with the former toilet block/change room on Marine Parade (ie, 1968-69). Aerial photographs reveal that it originally had a hipped roof, which was removed c.2009 to create the present flat roof with a fenced deck area, accessed by an open timber staircase.

**BP Service Station:** the BP service station at the south edge of the complex, addressed as 54 Marine Parade, is a relatively recent building, seemingly erected to a standard company design. It replaced the original BP service station on the site, designed by marina architect Don Fulton with a zigzag roof to match that of the dry boat storage buildings.

**Substation.** A small flat-roofed structure on the Marine Parade frontage, at the north corner of the carpark entry. It has blank walls of face brickwork, with louvred vents. Its expression and finishes suggest that the building dates from the marina’s original phase of development (ie, late 1960s)

**Skydive Melbourne office.** A temporary single-storey building located to the immediate north of the substation. It appears to have been erected on the site c.2011.

**St Kilda Boat Sales office.** Another temporary building on the Marine Parade frontage, adjacent to the one occupied by Skydive Melbourne. It appears to have been built prior to 2000.

**Rollo’s Kiosk.** This small skillion-roofed and timber-clad building stands along the Marine Parade frontage, at the northern edge of the complex. It is evidently of quite recent origin (circa 2015) and may also have been architect-designed.



Figure 9: The north dry boat storage building (with workshop incorporated at far end)



Figure 10: The south dry boat storage building, showing alterations made for restaurant fitout



Figure 11: former amenities block (now Great Provider), seen from the Marine Parade side



Figure 12: former amenities block (now Great Provider) from the marina side; note anchor

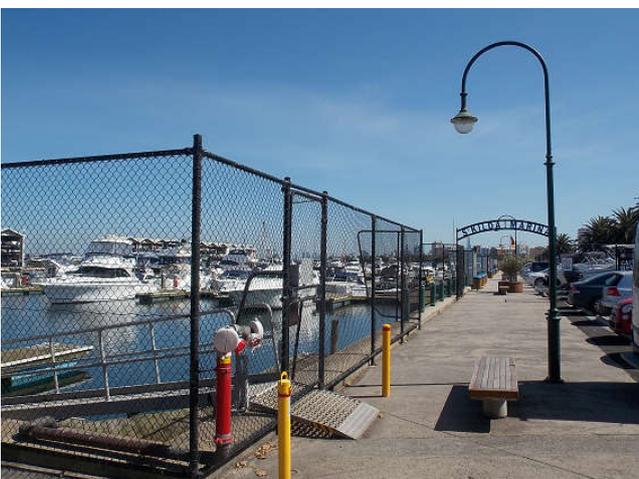


Figure 13: Looking north along marina harbour, showing fences, benches, lampposts and signage



Figure 14: Electrical substation, with temporary building (left) of more recent origin

### 3.1.4 Other elements

The site survey identified numerous other non-building components in public areas:

- Drinking fountain on south side of the harbour, of a standard and ubiquitous design by John Danks & Son (ie, tapering cast iron base and half-round bowl; perhaps original to late 1960s?)
- Canary Island date palm trees, located in rows along the property's Marine Parade frontage and in the open space between the *Riva* restaurant and the foreshore. These trees were planted in the early 1980s as part of a broader tree-planting scheme along the foreshore.
- Gateways with segmental-arched lintels emblazoned with the name ST KILDA MARINA. These were not mentioned or illustrated in any contemporary sources when the marina opened in 1968. They appear to be of relatively recent origin, and may date from the 1980s or later.
- Metal lampposts with curved bracket arms to evoke the traditional Shepherd's Crook form. These represent a standard design used by the City of St Kilda from the 1980s onwards.
- Timber bench seating with low concrete bases, in the public areas along the marina harbour
- A timber flagstaff, located between the *Great Provider* and the marina harbour
- A large white-painted iron ship's anchor, between the *Great Provider* and the harbour. Peter Horman recalls that the International Group obtained a number of these anchors, possibly from Williamstown. According to Horman, they were acquired simply as decorative artifacts and have no further significance. Two similar anchors can still be seen at the group's premises in Scoresby, flanking the driveway at 1278 Ferntree Gully Road.

## 3.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF SITE ELEMENTS

### 3.2.1 Primary significance

Elements of primary significance are those that are considered fundamental to an understanding of the history and cultural significance of the complex. They tend to be substantially intact to their original form, design, detailing and finishes. They include elements that may be of significance in their own right, aside from their significance as part of the broader marina complex. The retention of these elements is essential.

*Elements of primary significance: marina harbour (including boat ramps, finger piers, floating berths and dock-boxes), the two dry boat storage buildings, and the pilot beacon.*

### 3.2.2 Contributory significance

Elements of contributory significance are those that are considered to be make an important contribution to an understanding of the history and cultural significance of the complex. They include those original elements that had a secondary function, or may simply be less intact due to subsequent alterations and additions. The retention of these elements is desirable.

*Elements of contributory significance: the former amenities block (now Great Provider restaurant), the electrical substation, the toilet block, the low bench seating and the Canary Island date palm trees.*

### 3.2.3 Little or no significance

Elements considered to be of little or no significance do not make a notable contribution to an understanding of the history and cultural significance of the complex. They may include original elements of a generic nature or that have been substantially altered, as well as minor buildings, structures and street furniture of more recent origin.

*Elements of little or no significance: BP service station, marine refueling point, Rollo's Kiosk, the temporary buildings, and miscellaneous items of street furniture listed under Section 3.1.4.*

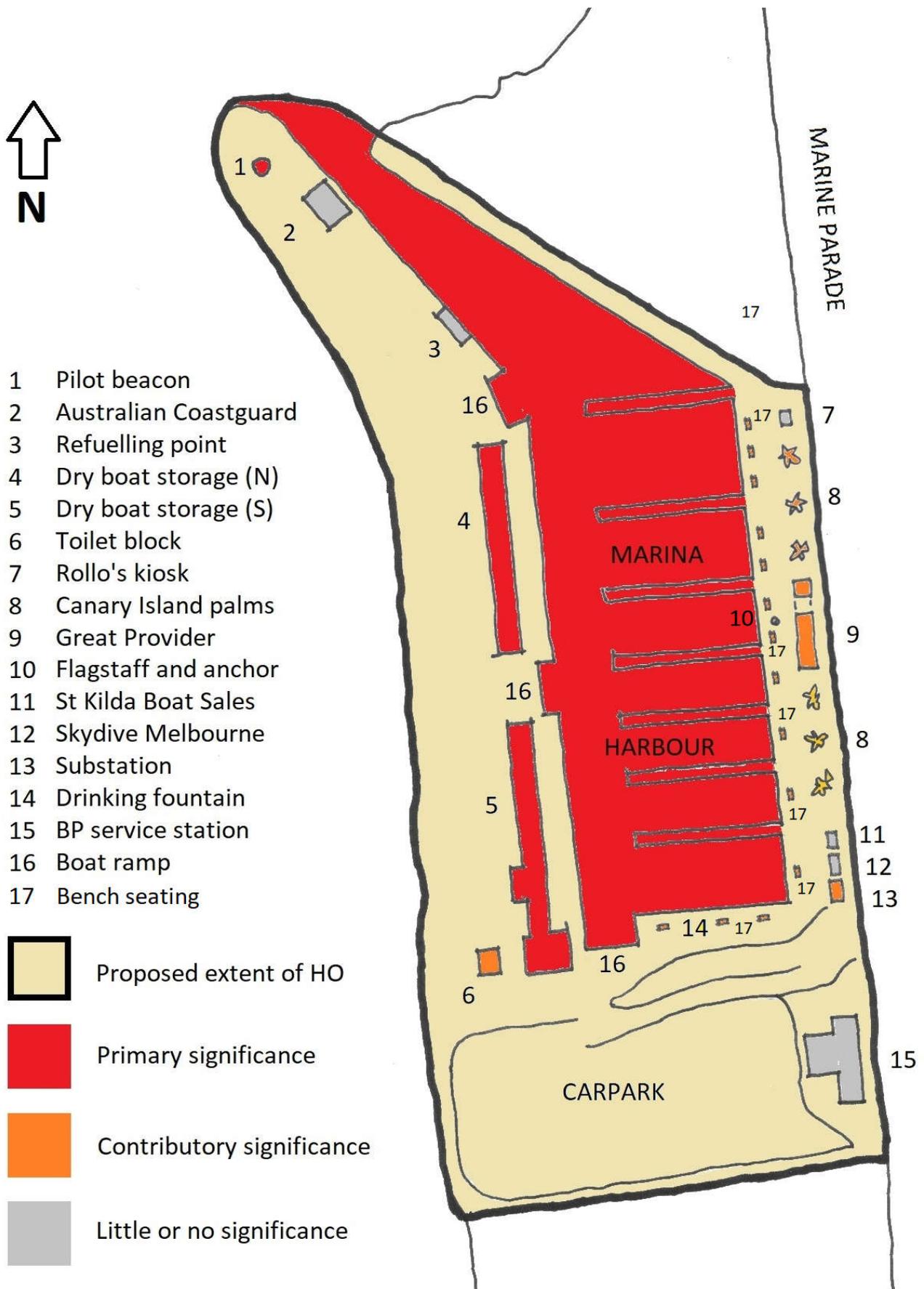


Figure 15: Map of marina site (not to scale) showing proposed extent of Heritage Overlay and hierarchy of significance of the various elements within it



## 4.0: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

At the time of its design, construction and completion in the late 1960s, the St Kilda Marina was often described in superlative terms. An article in one boating journal described the facility as ‘our first big-time marina’, noting further that it ‘offers luxurious facilities previously unknown in Australia’.<sup>42</sup> Another article referred to the marina as ‘the only one of its kind in Australia’, while an early advertisement for the completed complex promoted it as ‘Australia’s first modern marina, designed to provide the ultimate in facilities for boating enthusiasts’<sup>43</sup> This position has been reiterated in more recent secondary sources, with Anne Longmire’s official history of the City of St Kilda recording that the marina ‘provided the only facilities of its type in Victoria: concrete sea walls surrounded wet pens for about two hundred boats, and dry storage was provided in triple tiered racks for another two hundred smaller crafts which were retrieved by fork-lift’.<sup>44</sup>

The following comparative analysis will place such sweeping statements under close scrutiny.

#### 4.1.1 Marinas in Victoria

It is difficult to chart the history of marina developments in Australia, as the word has been loosely applied to a range of marine facilities: from small privately-operated boating business (perhaps comprising merely a jetty and a shed), right through to substantial harbour-like complexes of the type seen at St Kilda. Regardless, all of these developments can be considered as manifestations of the significant theme of recreational boating in Australia, which boomed from the late 1950s.

Victoria’s earliest marina-like developments were the so-called ‘boat harbours’ that developed around existing piers and breakwaters to provide safe mooring, invariably for local yachting clubs. An early example at Port Melbourne, dating back to the late Victorian era, stood at the mouth of the Saltwater Lagoon (between present-day Esplanade East and Esplanade West) and comprised a J-shaped pier with a smaller jetty alongside, forming a compact harbour. It was still used as such in the early post-war era, as it was labelled as a ‘boat harbour’ in a 1945 street directory.

Virtually all of the yacht clubs along Port Phillip Bay maintained similar facilities, which were expanded and upgraded as recreational boating became increasingly popular in the post-war era. One of the first of these was at St Kilda Pier, redeveloped by the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron from 1951-55.<sup>45</sup> During the 1960s, many other yacht clubs followed suit as they replaced old-style swing or pole moorings with the more modern system of pen moorings or floating berths. Such was the case with the respective facilities of the Royal Victoria Motor Yacht Club at Williamstown (1961), the Sandringham Yacht Club (1961), the Royal Brighton Yacht Club (1965-66) and Hobson’s Bay Yacht Club, also at Williamstown (1966).

The commercially-oriented marina developed in parallel, with early examples appearing in such hotspots for boating tourism as Metung (1961), Eildon (1962) and Loch Sport (1963). The contemporaneous Parson’s Marina at Williamstown (1965), described at the time as the first commercial enterprise of its kind on Port Phillip Bay, provided moorings for 46 boats, along with refueling and repair services, toilet/shower facilities and a shop.<sup>46</sup>

42 ‘Our first big-time marina’, *Modern Boating*, September 1969, p 90.

43 ‘It’s marina for service’, *Weekender*, 11 December 1970, p 28; ‘The new St Kilda Marina’, press clipping (circa 1970), reproduced in *St Kilda Marina, 1968-2009*.

44 Anne Longmire, *St Kilda: The Show Goes On*, p 202.

45 ‘Sea wall for St Kilda to shelter small craft’, *Age*, 1 August 1951, p 4.

46 ‘Now it’s Parson’s Marina’, *Age*, 26 November 1965, p 19.

Grandier still was Alf Priestley's Patterson River Marina at Carrum, a so-called 'dry marina' initially developed from 1964-66 on former farmland. Existing farm outbuildings were adapted for boat storage, and new facilities provided including four boat ramps, repair centre, refueling service, shop and carpark.<sup>47</sup> This period saw the establishment of the first marina on Westernport Bay, a modestly-scaled facility at Somerville known as the Yaringa Boar Harbour. By 1968, this provided berths for thirty boats, with ambitious plans for further expansion to include a fueling service, shop, boat storage, picnic facilities and a swimming pool.<sup>48</sup>

Following this initial burst of marina development in the 1960s, there was little further expansion of the typology in Victoria until the 1980s. This period saw the establishment of a second marina at Westernport Bay, the West Haven Boat Harbour (1982), followed by a substantial upgrading of the nearby Yaringa Boat Harbour (1986). Towards the end of the decade, the old 'dry marina' on the Patterson River was also entirely redeveloped to create the Runaway Bay Marina, complete with a new harbour (for 300 vessels), dry boat storage and other modern facilities.<sup>49</sup> In the early 2000s, the completion of the Pier 35 project, on the Yarra River at South Melbourne (1998-2000), ushered in a new era of marina development, characterised by luxury residential accommodation and high-end facilities such as helipads, restaurants and convention centres.<sup>50</sup> Since then, there has been a renewed boom of new marinas in Victoria, typified by the Anchorage Marina at Williamstown (2004), the Melbourne City Marina at Victoria Harbour, Docklands (2005), Marina YE at Yarra's Edge, Docklands (2006), the Martha Cove Marina (2006) and Hidden Harbour Marina (2008), both at Safety Beach and the Portland Marina (2009).

### Conclusion

While the St Kilda Marina has been described as the first marina in Victoria, research shows that this assertion needs qualification. It was not first marina in the loosest sense, as it was predated by marina-like boat harbours that had been developed by yacht clubs on Port Phillip Bay by the mid-1960s. These, however, admittedly represented partial enclosures of bayside water, rather than the excavated harbour seen at St Kilda. While excavated harbours were certainly unusual at the time (as Peter Horman has pointed out), the example at St Kilda was predated by a few others, notably the Loch Sport Marina (1963). Before the opening of the St Kilda Marina, Victoria's most well-appointed counterpart would have been the Patterson River Marina (1966). However, although this offered some services akin to St Kilda, it otherwise remained a 'dry marina' that did not obtain a boat harbour until the complex was redeveloped over two decades later.

What sets the St Kilda Marina apart from these earlier examples is that it was conceived from scratch as a single cohesive development, with expert architectural input, and with the intent to introduce high-end marina facilities to the latest American standards. This was a major innovation over earlier marinas, which tended to develop in an *ad hoc* fashion, over many years, with utilitarian intent and little (if indeed any) architectural pretension. As such, the St Kilda Marina is likely to be significant at a regional or even statewide context.

Considered in a municipal-wide context, the St Kilda Marina is of local significance, as a unique example of its type in the City of Port Phillip. As a marina, its nearest local comparators would be the former small boat harbour at Port Melbourne, and the St Kilda Harbour (Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron) off St Kilda Pier. Neither, however, is truly comparable. The paired jetties at Port Melbourne hardly constitute a marina in any modern sense, while the marina-like harbour associated with the yacht squadron was effectively rebuilt in 2013-14.

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47 'Marina down on the farm', *Age*, 22 May 1964, p 15.

48 'Westernport marina', *Age*, 10 May 1968, p 20.

49 'Marina developers offer a life on the waterfront', *Age*, 19 May 1988, p 6.

50 'Shops, offices, restaurant, helipad... another step towards Melbourne's future by the bay', *Age*, 27 March 1998, p 5.

At the local level, the St Kilda Marina is also significant for broader associations with boating (and, more specifically, with the important post-war boom of recreational boating) which has been a notable recurring theme in the history of the municipality. The growing popularity of recreational boating in the 1960s was ably demonstrated by massive showroom that Sports Marine erected on the Lower Esplanade in 1960, but this building (which stood between the sea baths and the pier) has long since been demolished. One comparator that still survives is the boat shed at the Port Melbourne Yacht Club, which dates from 1962 and was designed by architect (and club member) John Adam. At the other end of the municipality's foreshore, and later in date, are the clubrooms of the Elwood Sailing Club, designed in 1972 by architects Norris & Associates.

#### 4.1.2 Modern American-style Marinas in Australia

Considered in a broader nationwide context, local interest in the introduction of modern American-style marinas dates back as far as 1958, when a Sydney syndicate announced plans to reclaim shallow waters at Careel Bay, Pittwater, for a facility to include two jetties, amenities buildings and ships' chandlery.<sup>51</sup> However, this ambitious project did not proceed. During the 1960s, marina development in New South Wales tended to be characterised by the same sort of small-scale *ad hoc* development seen in Victoria, with limited shoreline facilities and harbours that projected into a watercourse, rather than being excavated alongside it. These centres were typified by the Cammeray Marina & Boat Shed, which advertised "ideal mooring facilities" and "complete marine services" from 1961, and the St George Motor Boat Club's "boat harbor and marina" on the Georges River at San Souci, for which tenders were called that same year.<sup>52</sup>

The later 1960s saw renewed local interest in modern American-style marinas that incorporated a range of boating and recreational facilities. One example was the small 15-berth marina provided at the South Lakes Resort in Goolwa, South Australia (1966-67), an ambitious private development that included housing as well as a golf course, hotel, restaurant and other facilities.<sup>53</sup> However, it was not until the 1970s that such developments, conceived entirely from scratch with architectural input, became more common here. One of the first key examples was the Two Rocks Marina at Two Rocks, WA (1973-74; Forbes & Fitzhardinge), which formed part of Alan Bond's ambitious Yanchep Estate project and was upgraded for the 1974 America's Cup Challenge.<sup>54</sup> This marina was followed by three high-profile examples in New South Wales, all completed towards the end of the decade: the Rushcutters' Bay Marina in Sydney (1973-78; Fisher, Jackson & Hudson), the Akuna Bay Marina, at Coal & Candle Creek, Kuring-gai Chase National Park (1973-79; Phillip Cox & Associates) and the Birkenhead Point Marina on Sydney Harbour at Drummoyne (1977-79; Jackson, Teeco, Chesterman & Willis).

#### Conclusion

Aside from being the earliest example of a modern American-style marina in Victoria, this research would indicate that (as suggested by the contemporary statements quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and since confirmed by eyewitnesses Don Fulton and Peter Horman) the St Kilda Marina was the first of that type anywhere in Australia, predating a number of high-profile architect-designed examples that developed during the 1970s.

51 'US Style boat marina plan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 April 1958,

52 'St George Motor Boat Club Ltd', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 1961, p 32.

53 'Tremendous development at Goolwa', *Victor Harbour Times*, 21 July 1967, p 1.

54 'Two Rocks Marina, North of Perth', *Architecture in Australia*, December 1974, p 87.

### 4.1.3 Dry Boat Storage Buildings

The dry boat storage building at St Kilda Marina has been described as the first example of its type in Australia. At the time of construction, the concept of storing boats in a multi-tiered rack system (also known as 'dry rack' or 'dry stack') was relatively new on a global scale. Peter Horman, who investigated dry boat storage in the USA in the 1960s, noted that the idea originated in the colder northern states, where boats had to be removed from rivers and lakes that froze over in the winter; from there, the idea spread to boating hotspots in warmer states such as Florida.<sup>55</sup>

A recent survey of the American marina industry recorded that "dry stack boat storage has been around in some form of another since the 1960s, with the first believed to have been in Florida. There, the owner used a forklift truck with modifications to remove the boats from the water and then stack them on the racks inside a building".<sup>56</sup> A notably early example of the typology, lauded at the time as 'novel' and 'unique', was erected at the Outboarder Marina at City Island, Sarasota (1959-60) and provided triple-tiered storage with access by forklifts and hydraulic lifts.<sup>57</sup> Many others followed, including those at the Home Port Marina (1961) and Intercoastal Marina (1963), both in Largo, and the Lauderdale Life Launch & Layaway Marina at Fort Lauderdale (1963). The latter, reportedly accommodating 400 boats in five four-tiered racks, was promoted as "the world's biggest indoor boat storage center".<sup>58</sup> By the mid-1960s, multi-tiered boat storage was ubiquitous at American marinas, not only in the major boating hotspots of Florida and southern California but also elsewhere along the seaboard (eg Rehoboth Bay Marina at Dewey Beach, Delaware) and on inland lakes (eg Battery Park Marina in Sandusky, Ohio).

It has proven more difficult to chart the early development of dry boat storage in Australia, with only a few examples identified to date. When the Patterson River Marina opened at Carrum in the mid-1960s, it offered dry boat storage, albeit not in the form of enclosed multi-tiered racks; rather, the service was provided as either uncovered (or 'dry yard') storage, or as enclosed storage in converted farm outbuildings. In Sydney, several small commercial ventures similarly advertised dry boat storage, such as the Lemerle Marina at Woolwich (from c.1968) and the Berry's Bay Marina at Waverton (from c.1975), although further details remain sketchy.<sup>59</sup> In 1975, a newspaper announcement for a proposed marina at Werribee South mentioned that 'dry boat storage buildings' were to be included in the development.<sup>60</sup> This project, however, did not proceed.

Research suggests that the next multi-tiered dry boat storage buildings to actually be realised in Australia, in a form truly comparable that at St Kilda, did not appear until the late 1970s. These were both part of ambitious architect-designed marina developments in New South Wales: the Akuna Bay Marina on the Coal & Candle Creek at Kuring-gai Chase National Park (1973-80) and the Birkenhead Point Marina at Drummoyne (1977-79). The former, masterplanned by Phillip Cox & Associates, included a dry boat storage building that was advertised from May 1980; it then accommodated 200 small boats (up to 25 feet long) on a four-tier vertical rack system.<sup>61</sup> The Birkenhead Point Marina, designed by Jackson, Teeco, Chesterman & Willis, was largely a refit of a former factory complex overlooking Sydney Harbour.<sup>62</sup> Its dry boat storage building, with space for 155 boats, was advertised from April 1979 (nothing further than "a forklift truck will lift your craft from the water and store it in a rack, instead of outside your house").<sup>63</sup>

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55 Interview with Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

56 Ralf Heron & Wael Juju, *The Marina: Sustainable Solutions for a Profitable Business* (2012), p 80.

57 'Layer-cake storage solves boat problem', *Racine Journal-Times*, 28 May 1961, p 34.

58 'Small boat storage home super site', *Fort Lauderdale News*, 7 April 1963, p 64.

59 See respective advertisements in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 March 1968, p 29; 11 January 1975, p 30.

60 'Public Notices', *Age*, 2 April 1975, p 46.

61 Leon Parossien & Michael Griggs (eds), *Old Continent, New Building: Contemporary Australian Architecture* (Darlinghurst: David Ell Press, 1983), p 102.

62 'Birkenhead Point Project', *Constructional Review*, May 1979, p 7.

63 'The new Birkenhead Point Marina', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 1979, p 51.

Another decade passed before a comparable facility next appeared in Victoria, with the completion of a huge shed-like dry boat store at the Runaway Bay Marina (formerly Patterson River Marina) at Carrum. A massive and utilitarian steel-framed building, measuring 80x30x19 metres with space for at some 300 boats, it was erroneously described at the time as “a new storage system used in America but not yet seen in Australia”.<sup>64</sup> With the late 1990s ushering in a new era of marina development, the number of dry boat storage buildings in Victoria has increased in recent years. Examples include the four-storey facility at the Pier 35 project in South Melbourne (1998-2000), the three-storey facility at the Martha Cove Marina at Safety Beach (2006) and the two-storey facility at the redeveloped Queenscliff Harbour (2009).

### *Conclusion*

Research into the history of dry boat storage buildings, both in the USA and in Australia, has underpinned the claim that the example at St Kilda Marina was indeed the first of its type, not only in Victoria but also in Australia. This has been absolutely confirmed by eyewitness Peter Horman, one of the original developers of the marina site, and the one who was responsible for investigating dry boat storage in the USA in order to inform the design of the one at St Kilda.

#### **4.1.4 The Work of Don Hendry Fulton**

Born in 1925, Donald Hendry Fulton commenced architectural studies at the Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) in 1942.<sup>65</sup> His education was interrupted by the Second World War, during which he served for three years with the RAAF. Resuming his course at MTC in 1946, he transferred thence to the University of Melbourne, where he was top student in his final year. After graduation in 1950, Fulton worked as chief assistant to Roy Grounds. In 1953, Fulton was awarded a scholarship to undertake post-graduate in the USA, and he enrolled in a master’s degree at the University of California at Berkeley (San Francisco).

Returning to Melbourne in 1954, Fulton worked for Mussen, McKay & Potter before establishing his own practice. In 1955, he was invited (on the strength of his master’s thesis on mass housing) to work with Czech emigre architect Ernest Milton (1892-1968) on the masterplanning of a mining township at Mary Kathleen in far north Queensland. Its success brought a subsequent commission for a similar project at Weipa, originally under the auspices of Milston and Fulton in association, but, following dissolution of the partnership, developed and completed by Fulton alone.

In 1963, Fulton re-established sole practice as Don Hendry Fulton Pty Ltd. His office subsequently undertook a broad range of commissions, including residential work (individual dwellings, project houses and blocks of flats) as well as civic, industrial and institutional buildings. His specific expertise and experience in master-planning was often sought-after for projects involving multiple buildings on large sites, such as the GTV9 television studios in Richmond, and the Victorian State Forensic Science Centre.

At the time that Fulton was engaged to design the St Kilda Marina in 1967, his public profile was especially high, as he had recently been awarded the Victorian Architecture Medal for his design of a monumental new administration building at the BP refinery complex at Crib Point. The success of the marina project brought Fulton further work from the City of St Kilda. In 1967, he was engaged to design a series of beach shelters along the Lower Esplanade, which he conceived as freestanding concrete structures of striking mushroom-like form. A few years later, Fulton was commissioned to design the new premises of the Elwood Surf Lifesaving Club, which was expressed in the concrete block Brutalist aesthetic that was starting to become popular at the time.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Marina development offers a life on the waterfront’, *Age*, 19 May 1988, p 6.

<sup>65</sup> Biographical information on Fulton is drawn from Philip Goad, ‘Mary Kathleen and Weipa: two model mining towns for post-war Australia’, *Transition*, No 49/50 (1996), pp 46-48.



Figure 16: Beach shelters, Lower Esplanade, St Kilda, designed by Don Fulton in 1967  
 (source: Peter Wille Collection, State Library)



Figure 17: Premises of the Elwood Surf Lifesaving Club, designed by Don Fulton in 1971  
 (source: Heritage Alliance, *Elwood Heritage Study*)

### Conclusion

The St Kilda Marina can be considered as a notable, high-profile and substantially intact example of the work of eminent and award-winning Melbourne architect Don Fulton, who is best known for projects involving careful master-planning of multiple buildings and structures on a single site. Although the marina project may be one of Fulton's smaller forays into master-planning, it is still the largest and most prominent example of his work in the City of Port Phillip. While Fulton's office maintained a brief but fruitful association with the City of St Kilda in the later 1960s, little evidence now remains of this. His distinctive mushroom-like beach shelters on the Lower Esplanade have been removed, while the building that he designed for the Elwood Surf Lifesaving Centre (included on Port Phillip's heritage overlay schedule as HO428) has been altered.

## 4.2 PILOT BEACON

The brief for this heritage assessment also required a review of the significance of the pilot beacon, which is the only component of the marina complex that is already included in the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Port Phillip planning scheme.

### 4.2.1 Current heritage status

The pilot beacon was originally identified as a heritage place in the *City of St Kilda 20th Century Architectural Study* (1992), and this recommendation was subsequently endorsed in the *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review* (2000). The citation in the latter report is brief. It does not provide a date of construction, thematic context nor any historical details. Heritage significance is ascribed on the basis that:

*This visually distinctive structure is of significance primarily as a scenic element which contributes to the maritime character of the foreshore area.<sup>66</sup>*

The beacon is currently included on the heritage overlay schedule to planning scheme. While it is shown on the heritage overlay maps as HO167 (a designation corresponding to the 2000 citation), it is listed on the actual schedule as HO187. Council's heritage advisor has confirmed that this error has been slated for correction.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Andrew Ward & Associates, *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review* (2000), database number 2057.

<sup>67</sup> Email from David Helms, 6 December 2017.

#### 4.2.2 Historical context and interpretation

As noted in the historical section of this report, the pilot beacon formed part of Stage One of the original marina project. Don Fulton confirms that the structure was designed by his office, and Peter Horman confirms that it was fabricated in fibreglass using boat-building equipment at the International Plastics factory in Scoresby.<sup>68</sup> Although the pilot beacon at St Kilda may have been completed by the time the marina commenced operation in December 1968, the earliest published photographs of the structure appeared in 1970.

A review of online sources (ie, websites and blogs on amateur photography and the history of lighthouses in Australia) reveals that there has been a certain amount of confusion regarding the history, construction and use of the beacon at St Kilda. Its date is often cited incorrectly, with one website devoted to lighthouses around Australia stating that the beacon was built in 1965.<sup>69</sup> A brochure for a walking tour of the Acland Village area ascribed the beacon with more venerable age, referring to it as “a 150-year-old landmark”.<sup>70</sup> Several sources indicate (presumably based on assumption) that the white-painted structure is of concrete construction. Another website devoted to Australian lighthouses even provides this detailed technical specification for the illuminations, overlooking the fact that these are a relatively recent addition and that, while originally intended as a functioning navigational beacon, the beacon remained inoperative for many years:

*Active (privately maintained); focal plane 19 m (62 ft); two white flashes every 6 s; the lighthouse is also floodlit at night. 18 m (59 ft) tapered octagonal concrete tower with lantern and gallery.*<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Review of significance

The *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review* (2000), acknowledged the beacon’s aesthetic significance in describing it as a “scenic element”. Notwithstanding its relatively recent vintage, it remains a distinctive focus along the foreshore landscape. This was reported in the aforementioned walking tour brochure, which not only referred to the beacon as “the tallest building on the beach”, but also noted its potential as a photographic subject. The status of the beacon as a minor local landmark is underscored by the degree to which it has been photographed, both by professional and amateur photographers. It is documented in images by the late Rennie Ellis, a leading social photographer active in Melbourne from the 1970s to the 1990s (whose photographic archive is now held by the State Library of Victoria). More recently years, images of the beacon have been made available for sale via the websites of professional photographers such as Matt Hull and Peter Bellingham. It is also perennially popular with amateur photographers, as evidenced by its recurring appearance in the various photo-sharing websites.

The form of the beacon, with polygonal plan and bellcast shaft, appears unusual in the broader context of lighthouses in Victoria. The only other similar example identified to date is the Shortland Bluff Lighthouse, a timber structure erected at Queenscliff in the 1850s, relocated to Point Lonsdale in 1863, and finally dismantled in the early twentieth century.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to any aesthetic significance for landmark qualities and its distinctive form, the beacon also retains associations with the historical development of the marina complex, of which it form a key element. The unusual use of fibreglass construction is also of interest, as it demonstrates the significant connection to International Marine, Scoresby-based boat manufacturers, which was also responsible for the pontoons, collars and dock boxes at the marina.

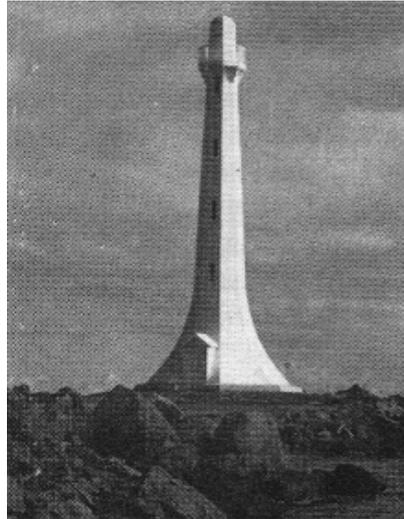
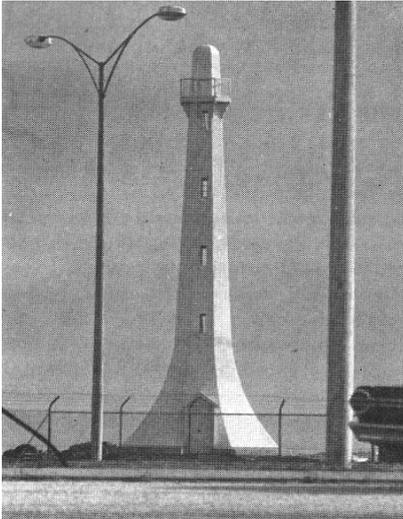
68 Interviews with Don Fulton, 19 December 2017, and Peter Horman, 31 January 2018.

69 ‘St Kilda Marina’, <<[www.seasidelights.com.au/au/vic/stkilda.asp](http://www.seasidelights.com.au/au/vic/stkilda.asp)>>

70 ‘Explore Acland Street Village: Walking Tour’, 13pp brochure, undated (c.2015). Available online at <<[stkildamelbourne.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Acland-Village-Walking-Tour.pdf](http://stkildamelbourne.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Acland-Village-Walking-Tour.pdf)>>

71 ‘Port Phillip City Lighthouse’, <<[www.unc.edu/~rowlett/lighthouse/vic.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/lighthouse/vic.htm)>>

72 ‘Point Lonsdale Lighthouse’, <<[www.lighthouses.org.au/lights/VIC/PtLonsdale/PointLonsdale.htm](http://www.lighthouses.org.au/lights/VIC/PtLonsdale/PointLonsdale.htm)>>



Figures 18a and 18b: two early views of the beacon at the St Kilda Marina, photographed soon after completion  
Source: *Architect*, No 9 (Jul/Aug 1970) (photographer uncredited)

Figure 19: The Shortland Bluff Lighthouse at Point Lonsdale  
Source: [www.lighthouses.org.au](http://www.lighthouses.org.au)

### 4.3 ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

The following lists the HERCON criteria for heritage significance, with an indication of how the St Kilda Marina (or any individual components thereof) are satisfied:

*Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Port Phillip's cultural history.*

The marina is associated with the post-war boom of recreational boating, a sub-set of the broader theme of maritime activity along the foreshore that has been influential in shaping the municipality since the earliest days of post-contact settlement. Today, little evidence remains of the initial boom of post-war recreational boating. The original premises of Sports Marine, built on the Lower Esplanade in 1960, have been demolished. The St Kilda Marina stands out amongst the few surviving examples of this sub-theme, such as the boat shed at the Port Melbourne Yacht Club (1962), and premises of the Elwood Sailing Club (1972).

The marina is also associated with council-initiated programmes to upgrade and improve public recreational facilities on the foreshore, which has also been an important recurring theme for many years. Initiated by Maurice Moran, City Engineer, the marina project formed part of Council's ambitious scheme to reclaim foreshore land in the early 1960s. The Canary Island date palm trees, planted in the 1980s, provide evidence of subsequent Council schemes to beautify the foreshore.

*Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Port Phillip's cultural history.*

The marina is uncommon within the City of Port Phillip, as a unique example of a purpose-built marina that was developed from scratch as a cohesive and self-contained facility. As an example of this typology, its nearest counterpart would be the boat harbor maintained by the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron off St Kilda Pier, which developed piecemeal over many years and was entirely redeveloped in 2013-14.

The marina is not merely uncommon within the City of Port Phillip, but also in a broader regional, statewide or even national context. It was the first marina in Australia to be developed as a cohesive facility, along the latest luxurious American lines, with expert architectural input. The harbour itself is one of few excavated marina harbours (ie, as opposed to those that merely project out into bay waters) to be developed in Victoria prior to the 1980s; it is the only one in the City of Port Phillip, and the earliest of relatively few others that exist on Port Phillip Bay.

*Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Port Phillip's cultural history.*

N/A

*Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*

The marina is a representative example of a purpose-built marina complex, developed in a relatively short time as a cohesive entity. While certain elements of the original masterplan were never realised (ie motel, convention centre, sports centre), the complex otherwise demonstrates the principal characteristics of the typology, typified by the latest American prototypes: a secure boat harbour with ramps, refuelling station, finger piers with floating berths, dry boat storage, amenities block, administration offices, workshops, etc.

*Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*

The marina exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics in the distinctive form of its buildings, most notably the unusual zigzag roofline of the dry boat storage buildings, which was intended by the architect to evoke ocean waves. The zigzag roofline has become something of a local icon, to the degree that, in the 1990s, it was incorporated into the logo of the new City of Port Phillip.

The pilot beacon exhibits aesthetic qualities through its unusual design (ie, polygonal plan and bellcast shaft) and prominent location. Befitting its intended function as a visual marker for entrance to the marina, this eye-catching structure has since become a minor landmark in its own right, evidenced by its popularity as a subject for amateur and professional photographers.

*Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

The marina demonstrates a high degree of creative and technical achievement as an example of a modern marina complex that was conceived and designed along the latest American lines, incorporating some elements derived from specific precedents (such as the distinctive diagonal timber decking and triangular dock-boxes of the floating berths, which were closely patterned after those at the Long Beach Marina in California).

More specifically, the marina demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement through the local application of the latest American techniques for dry boat storage, with multiple tiers of storage in an open-sided building, accessed by use of a specially-designed forklift truck to allow boats to be removed and lowered directly into the harbour. Peter Horman, who was involved in the design of the forklift truck for the St Kilda project, confirms that this was the first time that this had been done in Australia. The dry boat storage buildings (and original BP service station, since demolished) otherwise demonstrate technical achievement in the realisation of its distinctive zigzag roof, which required considerable technical expertise in the use of custom-made fascias, guttering and concealed downpipes, in aluminium to minimize corrosion from sea spray.

*Criterion G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

N/A

*Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Port Phillip's history*

As a notable example of the work of notable architect Don Fulton, the marina has a special association with the designer, who went on to undertake further work for the City of St Kilda including a cluster of mushroom-shaped concrete beach shelters (1967; since demolished) and the new premises for the Elwood Surf Lifesaving Club (1971).

## 4.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### What is significant?

Mooted by the local council in 1961 and developed by private enterprise from 1967-69, the St Kilda Marina occupies 20 acres between Marine Parade and the bay. It comprises a seven-acre harbour, six buildings designed by Don Fulton as part of the 1967 masterplan, and some later additions.

The significant fabric is defined as the extent of the original development, comprising the harbour and its infrastructure, two dry boat storage buildings, pilot beacon, former amenities block (now *Great Provider*), substation, low bench seating and toilet block, plus a curtilage to the boundaries of the 20-acre site. Canary Island date palms, added in the 1980s, contribute to the setting; other buildings, structures and elements added since 1970s are deemed to be of little or no significance.

### How is it significant?

The St Kilda Marina satisfies the following criterion for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Port Phillip Planning Scheme:

*Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Port Phillip's cultural history.*

*Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Port Phillip's cultural history.*

*Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects*

*Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*

*Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating high degree of creative or technical achievement at particular period*

*Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person of importance in Port Phillip's history*

### Why is it significant?

The marina is significant at the local level for associations with the post-war boom of recreational boating, a sub-set of the broader recurring theme of maritime activity in the municipality. It is also associated with the similarly strong and recurring theme of council-initiated improvements to public recreational facilities along the foreshore (*Criterion A*).

The marina is significant as a unique example of purpose-built marina that was developed from scratch as a cohesive and self-contained facility. Certain individual components of the marina, namely the excavated marina harbour, dry boat storage buildings and pilot beacon, were highly innovative at the time of construction and remained uncommon until more recently (*Criterion B*).

The marina is significant as a representative example of a modern marina complex, demonstrating the principal characteristics of the typology as typified by the latest American prototypes of the day that were investigated (and visited) in preparation for the design (*Criterion D*).

The marina is significant for the distinctive expression of some of its components, notably the two dry boat storage building, with iconic zigzag roofs (symbolic of ocean waves) and the pilot beacon, with polygonal plan and bell-cast shaft. All three structures have landmark qualities as distinctive and prominent elements on the foreshore landscape, visible also from sea (*Criterion E*).

The marina is significant for the creative achievement in designing a modern marina complex along the latest American lines. It also demonstrated technical achievement in the adaptation of dry boat storage technology (including a specially-designed forklift), the complex detailing of the zigzag roofs (using custom-made components) and the use of resilient construction materials to minimize weathering from the wind and spray of a harsh coastal site (*Criterion F*).

The marina is significant as a major project by prominent and award-winning Melbourne architect Don Fulton, who went on to undertake other commissions for the City of St Kilda including some beach shelters on the foreshore, and a building for the Elwood Surf Lifesaving Club (*Criterion H*).

# APPENDIX

## KEY REFERENCES

### Unpublished Primary Sources

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