

Place No. 44 Point Samson Jetty



Remains of Point Samson Jetty, 2013

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Point Samson Jetty
Other Name (1)	Port Walcott
Other Name (2)	
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	Vitenbergs Drive
Suburb/Town	Point Samson
Other Locational descriptor (text)	mE 520677 mN 7718558 Longitude 117.1985 Latitude: -20.6321

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Crown land vested with Shire	Shire of Roebourne			
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
23664	289	40335	LR313/ 563	

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8679
State Register of Heritage Places (Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Management Category	C

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	Contract let 11 July 1902
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site
Use(s) of Place	
Original	TRANSPORT/COMMUNICATIONS: Water - Jetty
Present	VACANT/UNUSED: Vacant/Unused

<i>Other</i>	
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	
<i>Roof</i>	
Condition	Very Poor
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	A few remnants are visible on the land
Physical Description	
<p>The timber jetty consisted of a neck 1,816 feet long by 15 feet wide with a head 281 feet long by 30 feet wide, with fender piles and horizontal chafers. The cost of the jetty was £16, 967 19s 5d.</p> <p>A small transit shed 30 feet long and 15 feet wide was provided at the head and the jetty was also equipped with a 3'-6" gauge tramway, a steam locomotive and a car barn transferred from Cossack in 1908, cattle yards and a goods shed. ¹</p>	
History	
<p>After Cossack became inadequate as a port in the late 1890s and early 1900s due to the use of larger ships, a new jetty was required. A site was chosen at Point Samson and on the 11 July 1902 a contract was let to Lewis and Reid to construct a jetty, approach banks, sheep yards and goods shed. The jetty was completed in 1904. A tramway was constructed at Point Samson in the financial year ending 1909, when a 2ft gauge tramway was built, connecting Point Samson with the existing Roebourne-Cossack line. ² In the following financial year, the Point Samson and Cossack lines were taken over from West Australia Government Railways by the Public Works Department.</p> <p>In 1912 the jetty is described as having an anchorage in which ships of 200 tons could lie alongside it. Steamships from the North-west ports called fortnightly whilst on voyages between Fremantle and Singapore. ³</p> <p>The first jetty which was built using the two pile system suffered a fire in January 1908. The cause was undetermined but it possibly resulted from people smoking and throwing cigarette butts onto the jetty whilst loading copper. The jetty was described as being in a poor and dirty state, covered by dry manure from stock being loaded. This likely contributed to the fire. ⁴</p> <p>The jetty was destroyed by a cyclone on 21 January 1925. A replacement jetty was originally proposed to be built at Phillip Point, 30 miles to the west. Tenders were called in 1929 but a contract was not awarded due to the onset of the Depression. A new jetty was eventually built on the old site in 1936-38. It had a total length of 2,267 ft. The berth was 347 feet in length with a depth of 22 feet at low water. The structure contained 632 timber piles in groups of three. The jetty was officially opened on the 7th February 1938, coinciding with the berthing of the state ship 'Koolinda' alongside the new jetty. ⁵</p> <p>From the late 1940s to the mid 1960s the port was used for shipments of asbestos, mainly from Wittenoom, and between 1950-64 shipments ranged from 1200 to 15,000 tons, peaking in 1962. The first asbestos mine was at Yampire Gorge. Australia Blue Asbestos Pty. Ltd then began operations at Wittenoom in 1943 and by 1950 this had become the sole producer. Asbestos was taken on carts from Wittenoom to Point Samson for loading from the late 1940s until 1966 when the mine closed. ⁶</p> <p>The jetty was also used by Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd and Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates in the early days of their operations before their own shipping facilities were completed.</p> <p>Cargos carried northwards to Point Samson included general goods, timber, cement, petrol and oils. Outward cargoes carried southwards included general goods, asbestos ores, wool and skins. ⁷</p> <p>The jetty stopped functioning as a working jetty in March 1976 and in June of that year was designated for recreational use only. In 1989 it was partially destroyed by Cyclone Orson. The jetty was finally destroyed (by burning it down) in 1991 due to its poor state of repair. A commemorative</p>	

plaque was erected by the Shire of Roebourne near the site of the jetty in the 1990s.

Archaeology

There is potential for archaeological deposits related to the jetty construction (which is well understood from historic images) and the use of the jetty through materials discarded or accidentally dropped to the sea bed. A survey by trained maritime archaeologists with remote sensing would be able to map the location of the jetty and any associated deposits.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historic theme (s)

2. TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS
201 River & sea transport

Statement of Significance:

The Point Samson jetty played an important role in the development of the northwest. It replaced the Cossack land backed wharf in c1902-1903 as the main port for ships visiting the area and held a position of importance for many years. It remained significant, being rebuilt in 1936. The jetty fell into disrepair after the decline of general shipping in the area and was demolished in the 1980s. A remnant of the jetty can be seen on the land. For almost a century this jetty was the main point of arrival in the Pilbara.

ASSOCIATIONS

Architect/Designer (1)

Builder – Lewis and Reid

Architect/Designer (2)

Other Associated Person(s)

OTHER

References

JSH Le Page, 1986, *Building a State*, p 340, including view of jetty construction c1903

Light Railways, No. 57, Spring 1976

Cumming, D.A., Garratt, D. McCarthy, M. & Wolfe, A., 1995 Port-Related Structures on the Coast of Western Australia. Report – Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 98

Truslove, E.H., *Not So Long Ago*, Part One, Roebourne

The Northern Times, 15/02/1908

MHI 1996

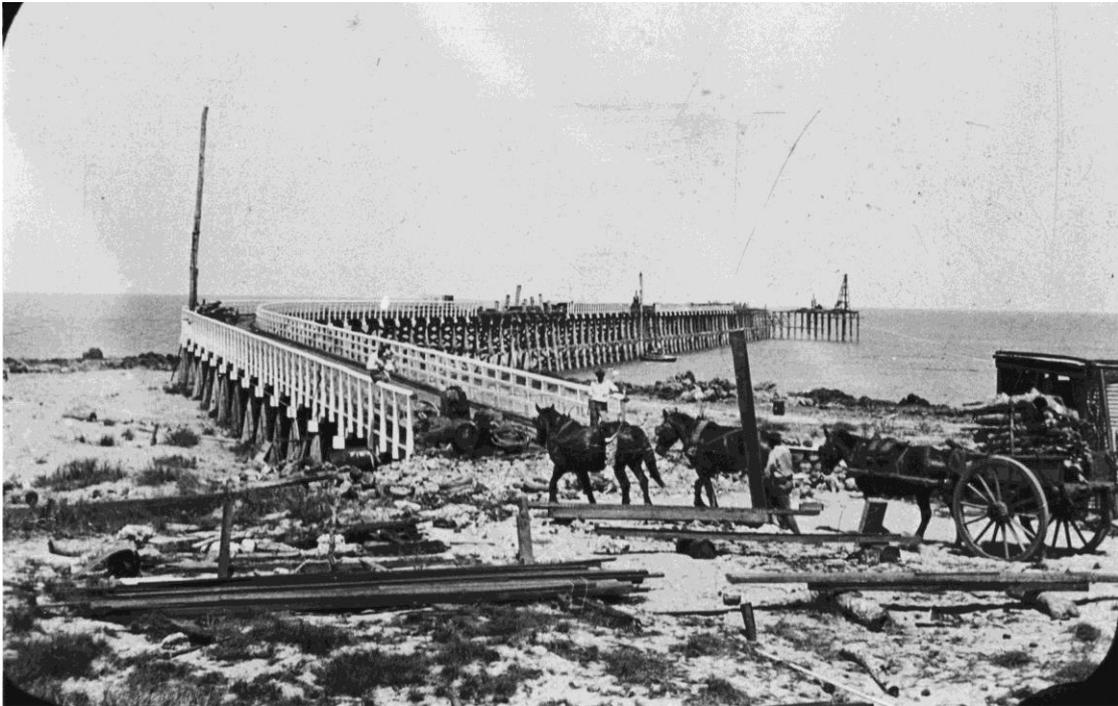
Site assessed and Place Name Record created

MHI Review 2012

Entry updated



Carriages on length of rail track at the site of the old Point Samson Jetty, 2013



Point Samson jetty soon after completion, c1903
Courtesy Shire of Roebourne Local History Office, 2005.2002



Point Samson jetty in January 1925 after cyclone
Courtesy Shire of Roebourne Local History Office, 2005.2003



Construction of the second jetty at Point Samson, 1936
Courtesy Shire of Roebourne Local History Office, 2005.1977

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- ¹ Port Related Structures, p47
 - ² Light Railways, No. 57, Spring 1976
 - ³ Port Related Structures, p47
 - ⁴ The Northern Times, 15/02/908
 - ⁵ Building a State, p412-3
 - ⁶ Port Related Structures, p47
 - ⁷ Port Related Structures, p47