

5.0 Assessment of Significance

The aim of this section is to discuss the issues arising from the documentary and physical evidence, which contribute to the significance of the place.

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance states that:

Cultural significance is a concept, which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

Although there are a variety of adjectives used in definitions of cultural significance in Australia, the adjectives "aesthetic", 'historic', 'scientific', and 'social', given alphabetically in the Burra Charter, can encompass all other values.'

In addition to the Burra Charter definitions of value, the criteria adopted by the Heritage Council of Western Australia in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place. Acknowledgement is extended to the authors of both documents.

5.1 Aesthetic Value

Criterion 1 It is significant in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the community.

Point Peron "K" Battery is located in an attractive, large, public open space of sand dune formation resulting in an undulating topography covered with dense native planting which together helps obscure much of the WWII infrastructure from clear views. (Criterion 1.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery is significant as an example of WWII coastal defence architecture, of functional design and simplistic but robust construction. (Criterion 1.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery is significant as a local landmark, which together with the adjacent Garden Island battery protected the coast (Criterion 1.1)

5.2 Historic Value

Criterion 2 It is significance in the evolution or pattern of the history of Western Australia.

Point Peron "K" Battery is significant in as part of the coastal defence system erected during WWII to protect Fremantle Port. (Criterion 2.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery demonstrates the style and method of construction used by the military engineers during World War II to build robust structures quickly. (Criterion 2.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery is significant as a recreational space both before and after WWII, with the erection of the recreation camps on the northern side of the headland. (Criterion 2.2)

5.3 Scientific Value

Criterion 3a It has demonstrable potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the natural or cultural history of Western Australia.

Criterion 3b It is significant in demonstrating a high degree of technical innovation or achievement.

Point Peron "K" Battery has the potential to yield information about coastal defence strategies in Western Australia during WWII. (Criterion 3.1 and 3.2)

Point Peron "K" Battery demonstrates technical achievement in its design – the guns were placed to enable them to cover any shipping approaching within range south of Rockingham and Safety Bay and the western approaches to Garden Island, as well as providing cover for the boom defence which was laid across South Channel. (Criterion 3.1 and 3.2)

Point Peron "K" Battery is significant as an example of technical achievement in the construction of a military outpost in a remote sand dune environment for the purposes of military coastal defences during WWII. (Criterion 3.3)

5.4 Social Value

Criterion 4 It is significant through association with a community or cultural group in Western Australia for social, cultural, educational or spiritual reasons.

Point Peron "K" Battery is valued by members of the public as a place of recreation and as part of the Rockingham Lakes National Park. (Criterion 4.1)

The site of the former Point Peron campsite and the headland is valued by the wider community as the venue for many school camps since 1946 to 1996. (Criterion 4.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery is associated with members of the Australian Army specifically the Artillery who served at this site or similar batteries. It is also valued by members of this cohort for its demonstration of past techniques and practices. (Criterion 4.1)

Point Peron "K" Battery is valued by the local community, members of Parliament and the Army Reserves who are all contributing to the restoration and conservation of the place. (Criterion 4.2)

5.5 Rarity

Criterion 5 It demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the cultural heritage of Western Australia.

Point Peron "K" Battery is important in being part of the seven coastal defence sites erected rapidly in the early 1940s along the Fremantle coast, known as Fremantle Fortress, acting together to defend the important port during WWII.

5.6 Representativeness

Criterion 6 It is significant in demonstrating the characteristics of a class of cultural places environments in the State

The design of Point Peron "K" Battery is representative of other defence systems constructed during WWII to defend the port of Fremantle consisting of above ground structures, gun emplacements and ancillary accommodation. Other batteries included Garden island and Oliver Hill Battery Rottenest Island.

5.7 Condition

Condition Refers to the current state of the place in relation to each of the values for which that place has been assessed. Condition reflects the cumulative effects of management and environmental events.

Point Peron "K" Battery is in fair to good condition. The built structures are showing signs of concrete cancer in places and general environmental decay due to years of neglect. The ever changing land conditions of the sand dune formation is harmful to some of the structures. The place is currently managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife who have taken some steps to reduce the amount of damage caused by unauthorised access to the structures.

5.8 Integrity

Integrity Is a measure of the likely long-term viability or sustainability of the values identified, or the ability of the place to restore itself or be restored, and the time frame for any restorative process.

The integrity of Point Peron "K" Battery is moderate. The basic structures of the WWII infrastructure remain in tact though were decommissioned within two years following their construction. The current use of the site is for public recreation. At present the site has not been fully interpreted and there is little understanding of the site as it operated during WWII. Due to the intactness and condition of the site, the Point Peron "K" Battery has the ability to be able to be fully interpreted and enhanced to allow for long term viability and preservation of the site.

5.9 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

The authenticity of Point Peron "K" Battery is moderate to high. The original WWII structures remain in tact in and in their original locations which will facilitate the understanding, appreciation and legibility of the site. The structures have been painted but little alteration to the original fabric has occurred. Related structures such as the barracks/recreation camp buildings have been removed which impacts marginally on the understanding and authenticity of the wider functionality of the site but a well considered interpretation strategy will address this issue in part.