

Executive Summary

i) Background

The South West Corridor Development Foundation Incorporated (SWCDeF Inc) appointed Hocking Heritage Studio to prepare a conservation management plan (CMP) for the Point Peron "K" Battery site, following an approach by the Point Peron Rehabilitation Committee (PPRC) and the securing of grant funds for this purpose.

The PPRC was established in late 2014 by the Hon. Phil Edman MLC as a voluntary committee of stakeholders with an interest in rehabilitating the historic Point Peron Battery "K" structures built during World War II. The PPRC propose that a museum should be established on the site of the former Barracks/Recreation Camp in the northern part of the Point Peron headland, to recognise the important defence role of Point Peron as part of the "Fremantle Fortress" and to house safely valuable memorabilia and artefacts gathered to date.

The CMP forms the first step in the larger Point Peron Restoration project, which seeks to rehabilitate the site, conserve the structures with possible adaptive reuse for some elements of the infrastructure, and introduce improved visitor services whilst celebrating the role these structures played in the coastal defence of Western Australia during WWII.

Fremantle was the Allies' major Indian Ocean gateway during World War II and as such needed to be defended. Point Peron "K" Battery was one of seven similar gun emplacements built between 1937 and 1945 to defend major Australian ports from bombardment by warships.

By 1967, all of the batteries had become obsolete and were closed down. As with the other sites, Point Peron was stripped of its guns and has since been left to fall into a state of disrepair. The unstable land conditions of Point Peron have also resulted in slippage causing one of the gun emplacements to move down the hillside and break up. Whilst it is not the intention of the Point Peron Rehabilitation Project to fully restore each of the structures to their original condition, it is the intention that essential conservation works be undertaken to stabilise the structures and to protect their cultural heritage significance.

The area is well used by the local community for recreational purposes with walk tracks through the site but due to a lack of interpretation, many are unaware of the significance of the site and the purpose of the structures. The site is also subject to vandalism and inappropriate use of the pathways by motorbikes. It is anticipated that the rehabilitation of the site together with the introduction of improved visitor services will encourage greater visitation of the site and ultimately lead to the protection of the place.

The Point Peron "K" Battery Conservation Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with State Heritage Office guidance on the preparation of conservation plans.

ii) Study Area

Cape Peron is a headland to the west of Rockingham city centre located at the southern end of Cockburn Sound approximately 45kms south of Perth and approximately 5kms to the west of Rockingham city centre. The headland contains the suburb of Peron and is known locally known as 'Point Peron'. This study will refer to the site by the local name 'Point Peron'. The study area is located within Crown Reserve No. 48968 and the responsible agency is the Conservation Commission of WA and Department of Parks and Wildlife.

The headland is accessed via Point Peron Road with the study area located to the north west of the three main carparks on the headland. The school camp to the south east of the car parking area is not included in this conservation plan nor is the southern portion of the headland which includes the lookout and paths. General comments and policy relevant to future interpretation may be applicable to these areas.

The study area consists of the remaining WWII infrastructure that formed part of the coastal defence system around the Port of Fremantle. Point Peron "K" Battery is an area of sand dune formation creating a naturally undulating and ever changing landscape which is predominantly covered in dense native shrubs. The northern part of the headland is characterised by the limestone cliffs whilst to the north east are the protected waters of Mangles Bay in Cockburn Sound and the adjacent Garden Island. To the west and south of the cape is Shoalwater Bay and the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean.

There is little built infrastructure on the headland, all of which relates to the WWII coastal defence system constructed in the 1940s. A more recent viewing platform constructed to the south-west of the headland is excluded from the CMP study area. There are no public facilities on site.

The Point Peron site contains the remnant extant WWII infrastructure, pathways leading around and through the site and a couple of seating benches. The northern section of the headland is protected by timber fencing due to the vulnerable and dangerous condition of the cliffs.

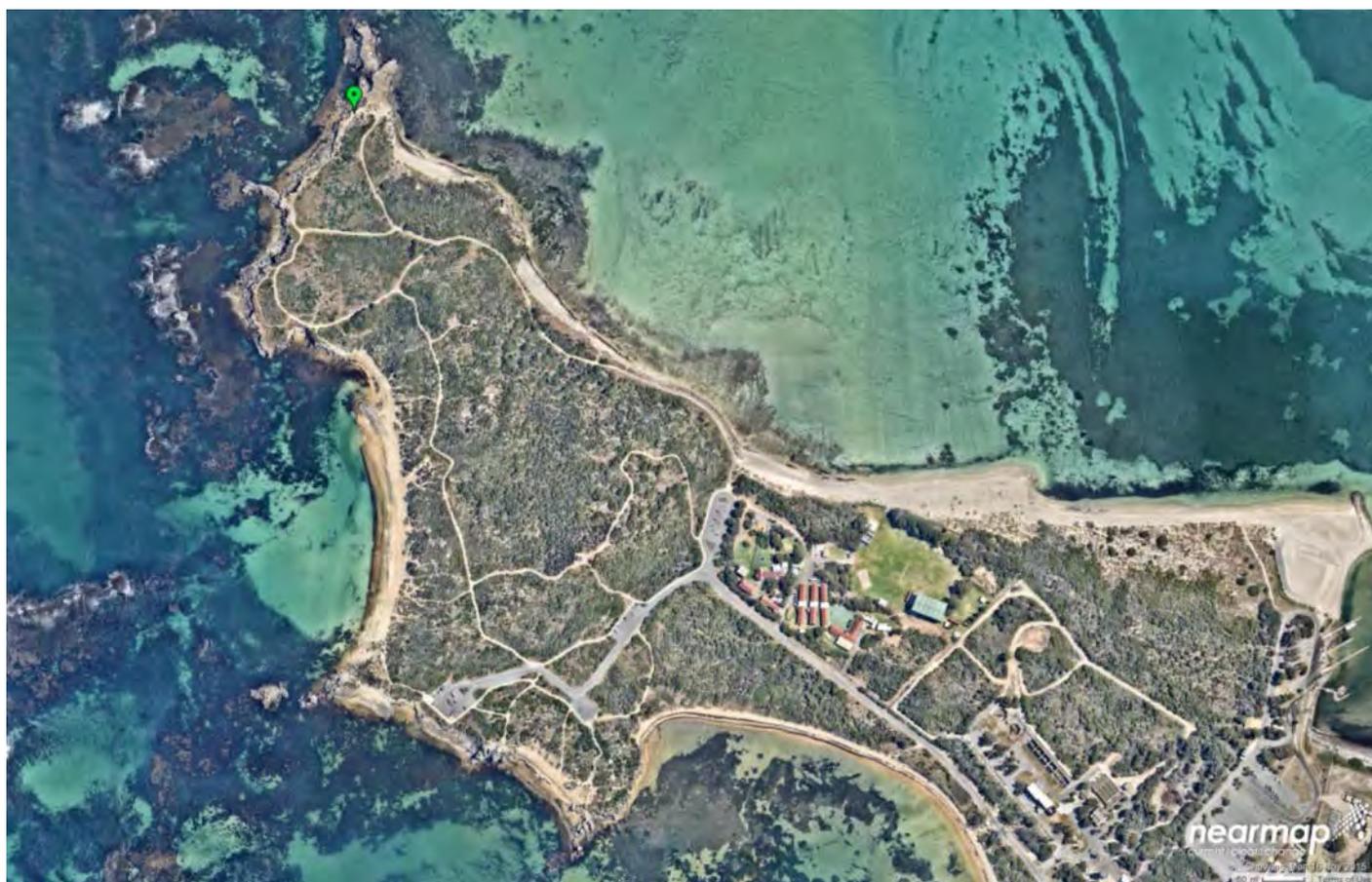


Figure 1: Aerial View of Point Peron in a local Rockingham Context
Courtesy Nearmap 2015



Figure 2: Aerial View of Point Peron in a wider Rockingham Context
Courtesy Nearmap 2015

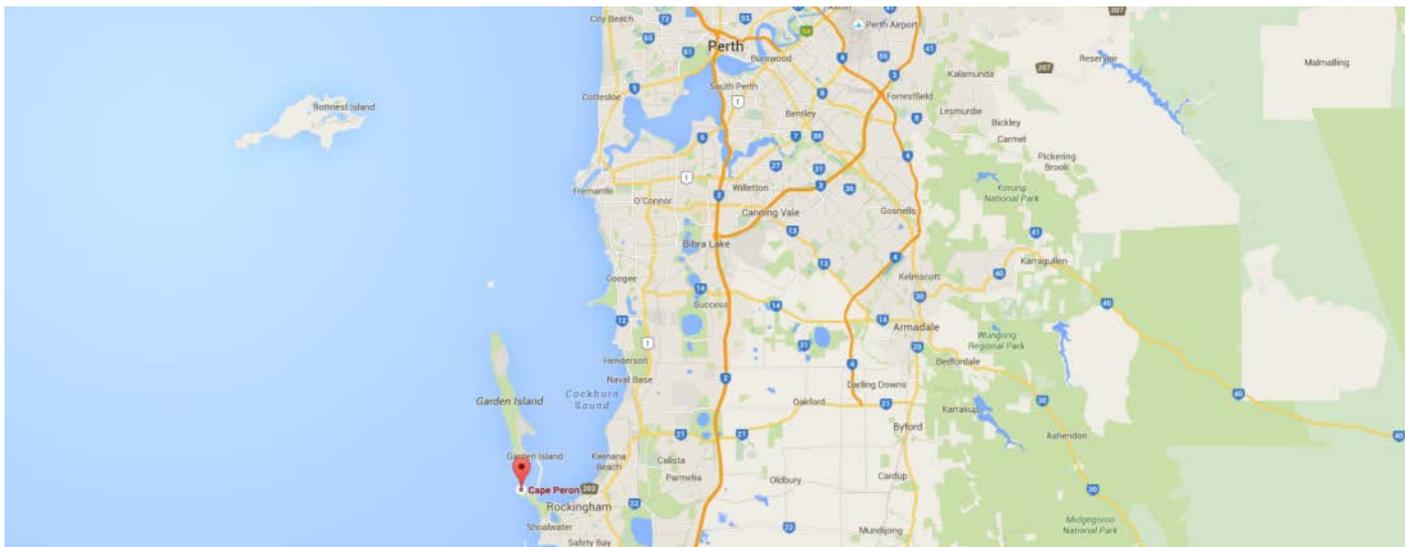


Figure 3: Point Peron site in a regional context
Courtesy Google 2015

iii) Historical Overview

The Cape Peron headland has undergone minimal development and the main features on the site are remnants of the World War II battery and associated structures constructed in 1942 as part of the defence system for the port of Fremantle. Prior to this period of occupation by the Australian Army the headland had been the home for fisherman and a destination for tourists. After the dismantling and removal of the guns from the site in 1944 the site remained the domain of the Australian Army until a long term lease with the National Fitness Council. This organisation used the former barracks constructed on the northern side of the headland as a holiday and recreation camp for young people. The campsite was subsequently used as a holiday camp until the late 1990s by government and private organisations as well as individual family groups. The campsite buildings were demolished c1997.

Since that time the site has been accessed for informal recreation with the provision of paths and parking enabling visitors to access the site without damaging the landscape. The native vegetation had degraded throughout the 20th century and regeneration programs in the late 20th century have helped to stabilise the landscape.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the battery structures and their role in the defence of Australia during World War II. Local community groups, army reservists and members of the military have contributed many hours of voluntary labour to clear the structures of sand.

In addition to the removal of sand, the structures have been secured and painted, although evidence of graffiti is still visible in the interiors of some of the structures.

There is community interest in developing the site for an enhanced visitor experience through interpretation and better facilities. This community interest has been focused through the formation of the Point Peron Rehabilitation Committee (PPRC).

The PPRC was established in late 2014 by the Hon. Phil Edman MLC as a voluntary committee of stakeholders with an interest in rehabilitating the historic Point Peron Battery "K" structures built during World War OO. The PPRC are working towards the construction of a museum, to recognise the important defence

role of Point Peron as part of the "Fremantle Fortress" and to house safely valuable memorabilia and artefacts gathered to date. The proposed location for the museum is the site of the former Barracks/Recreation Camp in the northern part of the Point Peron headland.

iv) Brief Physical Description

Cape Peron is a headland to the west of Rockingham city centre located at the southern end of Cockburn Sound. The headland contains the suburb of Peron and known locally known as 'Point Peron'. The cape is noted for its protected beaches, limestone cliffs and natural bushland. Officially, "Point Peron" is the designation of a minor promontory on the south side of the cape's extremity.

A causeway connects Cape Peron and Garden Island to carry vehicle traffic between the mainland and the island. Since the island houses a major naval base, access is restricted by the military.

Point Peron itself is a natural landscape of sand dune formation resulting in an undulating and ever changing landscape of hollows and hills covered in a dense native bushland with pathways leading around and through the site. Steep steps lead up from the car parking area to the Observation Post with lower level pathways also leading from the car parks around the site.

v) Statement of Significance

Point Peron "K" Battery large, public open space of sand dune formation covered with dense native planting which features structures constructed in 1941/1942 including two gun emplacements, observation post bunker, operations bunker, two ammunition bunkers and several other ancillary elements which together were part of a network of defence strategies around the port of Fremantle. The place has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons;

- the place, together with the other elements of Western Australia's coastal defence system, known as 'Fremantle Fortress' erected in response to external threats during WWII and together , have the potential to yield information about coastal defence strategies;
- The 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;
- The remaining built elements of Point Peron "K" Battery are representative of WWII coastal defence architecture, of functional design and simplistic but robust construction used by the military engineers in a remote sand dune environment;
- 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;
- 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;
- the place is valued as an informal recreational space both before and after WWII and as part of the Rockingham Lakes National Park; and,
- Point Peron "K" Battery is valued by the local community, members of Parliament and the Army Reserves who are contributing to the restoration and conservation of the place.

The pathways, car parks and remnant signage have no cultural heritage significance

vi) Summary of the Conservation Policy

The policies recommended in Point Peron "K" Battery Conservation Management Plan are based on the need to conserve it as a place of aesthetic, historic and social significance. The conservation of the buildings and site features assessed as being of cultural significance should take account of the physical changes and changes of use that have occurred over time and which reflect the historical development of the place.

Generally, the policy recommends that Point Peron including any buildings and site features assessed as being of cultural significance should be conserved and retained on its existing site in accordance with the policies outlined in the Conservation Management Plan.

Generally, conservation of elements of exceptional or considerable significance should be considered as a higher priority than the conservation of elements of some or little significance, however these should be considered in the context of the future use and development of the site.

Key policy statements of the Conservation Policy are as follows:

Key Policy Statements

- Policy 1.1 The assessed significance of the Point Peron "K" Battery and the recommendations of the conservation plan should be adopted by the Conservation Commission of WA, Department of Parks and Wildlife, City of Rockingham and the State Heritage office, as well as users of the place, as a guiding document for decisions about management, maintenance, development and future use.*
- Policy 1.2 The conservation of significant elements should be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the Australia ICOMOS charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance (the Burra charter). These principles are fundamental to the conservation plan.*
- Policy 1.3 The conservation plan should be reviewed periodically to consider the continued applicability of the conservation policies and to assess the manner in which they have been implemented.*
- Policy 1.4 All work undertaken to conserve or adapt the site, site elements or buildings should be appropriate to the assessed significance of the place and should be guided and supervised by experienced conservation practitioners.*

Policies Arising from the Cultural Heritage Significance of the Place

- Policy 2.1 The future conservation and use of the Point Peron "K" Battery should take account of the assessed significance of the place. New uses can be introduced if the original or long-time uses of the place are no longer sustainable. Any new use should not result in harmful alterations to the buildings or excessive loss of original fabric. Small changes or changes that are reversible may be acceptable in order to accommodate a new use.*

Policy 2.2 All the buildings and site features assessed as being of cultural heritage significance on the Point Peron "K" Battery site should be retained and conserved in their original locations.

Policy 2.3 Site features assessed as being of little significance may be retained or demolished on the basis of the requirements of use.

Policies Arising out of the Burra Charter

Policy 3.1 The definitions and principles of the Burra Charter should be used to guide all considerations for the future conservation, development and use of the buildings and site features on the Point Peron "K" Battery site and any associated requirements for physical works. (Refer section 7.7 Policies Arising from the Physical Condition of the Place).

Policies Arising out of Graded Zones and Elements of Significance

Policy 4.1 The significant fabric of spaces or elements of exceptional significance should be preserved or restored in such a way as to demonstrate their significance

Policy 4.2 The significant fabric of spaces or elements of considerable significance should be preserved restored or reconstructed as appropriate.

Policy 4.3 The general policy is that significant fabric of spaces or elements identified as being of some significance should ideally be preserved, restored or reconstructed as appropriate.

Policy 4.4 There should be no new works in areas, which will adversely affect the setting of the buildings or obscure important views to and from the site.

Policy 4.5 The fabric of spaces or elements of little significance may be retained or removed depending on the future use requirements. However, care should be taken to ensure that any such works do not detract from the significance of adjoining spaces or elements. Before removal, ensure that comprehensive photographic and graphic recording is completed.

Policy 4.6 Intrusive spaces or elements have been identified as detracting from the significance of the place and their removal, and/or replacement with more appropriate detailing, should be encouraged. Their removal needs to be assessed against other considerations, such as function and economy, before implementation. Before removal/demolition ensure that comprehensive photographic and graphic recording is completed.

Key Policies Arising out of the Physical Condition of the Place

- Policy 5.1 All original fabric should be retained wherever practicable.*
- Policy 5.2 The original planning of the site must be retained which may require some works of improvement to the natural landscape setting and visitor access to the structures. Such alterations should not impact on either the significance of the setting or its relationship to the structures.*
- Policy 5.3 The natural environment of Point Peron is a key consideration. Point Peron is a designated Bush Forever site and is being retained as a natural area. Fire is a key factor that must be taken into consideration in planning any new development and future management of the site. In addition, wind conditions continually impact on the condition of the coast, especially the dominant S/SW wind that blows during the summer.*
- Policy 5.4 Coastal erosion must be considered in the placement of the proposed museum/interpretative centre. The coastal pathway has been subject to erosion in the past with the stone sea wall being constructed in an attempt to reduce the erosion and limit the possibility of the pathway falling into the sea. The water levels and coastal behaviour must be analysed and understood prior to any new building being placed on the eastern side of the site.*

Conservation of Point Peron "K" Battery Structures

- Policy 6.1 All external brick and reinforced concrete walls should be inspected on a routine basis for cracking, spalling and deteriorating concrete. Where issues are known to exist, these should be remediated by appropriate professionals and/or monitored for further deterioration.*
- Policy 6.2 All painted finishes should be carefully removed and the structures returned to their original finish of natural brick and grey concrete, where practical and feasible. The method of removal is to be specified by the heritage architect to ensure that the underlying fabric is not unduly or irreversibly harmed by the removal method. Test areas should be carried out prior to full removal.*
- Policy 6.3 The distinction between the brick and concrete sections to the various structures should be maintained as this is a distinctive feature of the restrained institutionalised architectural style of hastily erected WWII infrastructure.*
- Policy 6.4 Where it is desirable to deter graffiti, consideration may be given to applying a specific graffiti coating ensuring that this will not be harmful to the fabric or to the aesthetic of the structures.*
- Policy 6.5 Due to the harsh environmental conditions and the age of the structures, the condition of all built elements should be continually monitored.*

- Policy 6.6 The existing concrete slab roof should be retained and maintained. Where failure is occurring due to concrete cancer, appropriate remediation as specified by the heritage architect and project engineer should be implemented. Due to the harsh environmental conditions at Point Peron, the condition of the roofs should be continually monitored.*
- Policy 6.7 None of the structures were constructed with roof plumbing. Water ingress in some of the structures caused by inadequate roof plumbing is an issue but it is not recommended that any form of roof plumbing is introduced as this will have a negative impact on the aesthetic significance of these structures.*
- Policy 6.8 Impacts of water ingress should be regularly monitored.*
- Policy 6.9 All original openings are to be retained and conserved without alteration to their dimensions. No new door or window openings should be made in the principal elevations of any of the structures at Point Peron "K" Battery.*
- Policy 6.10 Conserve and retain original doors and hardware where they remain extant.*
- Policy 6.11 The newly installed metal grille gates across the entrances to several of the structures can be retained or removed depending on user requirements.*
- Policy 6.12 Original internal wall finishes should be reinstated. The current non-original paint finish should be carefully removed to the recommendations of the heritage architect. Test areas are to be carried out prior to full paint removal to ensure that the underlying fabric is not unduly damaged by the method of removal.*
- Policy 6.13 Internal walls should be regularly checked for any signs of cracking with the appropriate remedial action take where necessary. Where issues are known to exist, these should be remediated as appropriate following the project engineer's and heritage architect's recommendations and/or continue to be monitored for signs of further deterioration.*
- Policy 6.14 Existing concrete floors should be retained and conserved. Repairs are to be undertaken where required. Apart from the flagstones to the lower level of the Observation Tower, all floors are uncovered concrete. No additional floor finishes should be applied.*
- Policy 6.15 Sand accumulation is an issue for all structures on the site and should be removed on a regular basis. Sand accumulation can result in damp issues and failure of the concrete due to the inability of the fabric to be able to breathe and function as it is designed to.*
- Policy 6.16 All ceilings are the underside of the reinforced concrete roofs and are to be retained and conserved. The condition of the ceilings/roofs are to be monitored as cracking has occurred in places. All repairs are to be undertaken following engineer's specifications.*
- Policy 6.17 Gun Emplacement No. 1 is in poor condition due to the instability of the underlying ground conditions. The Gun Emplacement has slipped and is no longer in its original form or position. It is not recommended that this feature be reconstructed as its current condition contributes to the story of the site. However, visitor safety and structural stability is essential and works are required to stabilise the structure before it slips any further. Stabilisation works are to be undertaken to the engineer's and heritage architect's specifications.*

- Policy 6.18 Additional facilities for visitors may be constructed around the site but these must not compromise or confuse the understanding of the WWII infrastructure and how the site functioned. Careful consideration must be given to the location and form of any additional structures/facilities to ensure that key views and significance are not compromised.*
- Policy 6.19 A structural engineer should be commissioned to generally inspect Point Peron "K" Battery paying particular attention to identified wall cracking.*
- Policy 6.20 All works identified in the 'Urgent Works' section of this report should be dealt with within one year of the completion of this report.*
- Policy 6.21 All hazardous materials (e.g. asbestos) must be handled with due care and attention and in accordance with Government Standards and Worksafe regulations.*
- Policy 6.22 The natural environment should be maintained and conserved. The native bushland was important in both ground stabilisation and camouflage of the structures. The sand levels in the structures should be monitored and removed on a regular basis to prevent deterioration of the fabric of the structures.*

Archaeological Policies

- Policy 7.1 Prior to any development on the site any potential archaeological significance should be determined by professional archaeologists. If the site is determined to be of archaeological significance, appropriate monitoring of the site by professional archaeologists should take place during the ground disturbance phase of development.*
- Policy 7.2 Within the archaeological zones of significance ground disturbance for maintenance, services or new developments should be kept to a minimum. Where such work is required to go ahead the site works should be monitored by an archaeologist if archaeological material is discovered during the course of the works.*
- Policy 7.3 The advice of an archaeologist should be sought if features or significant clusters of artefacts are uncovered during ground disturbing site works in areas outside the defined archaeological zones.*
- Policy 7.4 An archaeologist should monitor any site works carried out on the buildings that is deemed likely to involve the removal or the uncovering of significant building fabric or artefacts.*

Requirements for Interpretation

- Policy 8.1 Provide a copy of this conservation plan to the City of Rockingham, to be held at the City Library for information of visitors and for research purposes.*
- Policy 8.2 Ensure the conservation of the structures that comprises the Point Peron "K" Battery as the fundamental component of its interpretation.*

Policy 8.3 Encourage the development of interpretive material on the history and significance of the development of the Point Peron "K" battery within the context of the history of WWII, the coastal defence of Western Australia, the Fremantle Fortress and the development of the Rockingham area generally.

Policy 8.4 Encourage all future owners and occupiers to include interpretation in their development and use of the place.

Policies Arising from External Requirements

Policy 9.1 Generally, any development or adaptation of the place should comply with statutory constraints including building and health requirements administered by the local authority.

Policy 9.2 A copy of this conservation management plan should be provided to the following agencies for their information and guidance.

- *City of Rockingham and Heritage Reference Group*
- *Department of Parks and Wildlife*
- *Conservation Commission of WA*
- *Heritage Council of WA*
- *Battye Library of WA*

Policy 9.3 Point Peron "K" Battery should be assessed for inclusion in the State Register of Heritage Places as part of the coastal defence system constructed during World War II.

Policy 9.4 Any future decision regarding the disposal or demolition of Point Peron "K" Battery or any of the significant elements within it should comply with the requirements of the Government Heritage Disposal Process.

Policy 9.5 Any works requiring a development application should be submitted to City of Rockingham, which may be referred to Heritage Council of Western Australia for their comment.

Policy 9.6 As Point Peron "K" Battery was originally part of a wider coastal defence network with elements of the network now in other local government authorities. Efforts should be made to develop policies and approaches that address the network as a whole, across local government boundaries, rather than address each place as an individual site.

Policy 9.7 The Department of Parks and Wildlife should adopt the Conservation Management Plan as a companion document of the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Management Plan.

Requirements of Statutory Authorities

Policy 10.1 Where elements have been assessed as having significance, any works arising from requirements to comply with statutory regulations should be evaluated against this conservation policy to ensure minimum impact on significant fabric. Professional advice should be sought to ensure that both safety and conservation issues are fully assessed.

Requirements of Owners and Users of the Place

Policy 11.1 Current and future users of the place should be made aware of this document and any alterations to accommodate new uses should be mindful of the significance of the place and the levels of significance of the elements within the structure.

Policy 11.2 It is unlikely that Point Peron "K" Battery will operate again as war infrastructure but an associated use such museum or interpretative centre may be possible. Any adaptation must ensure that the fabric of the individual structures is retained and maintained and fully interpreted. The owners of the site have a duty to maintain the structures and to share the stories with the public, informing them of the part that Point Peron "K" Battery played in the defence of the Port of Fremantle and its general contribution to the WWII war effort.

Policy 11.3 Conservation works described in this conservation management plan are likely to be beyond the general budget of the Department of Parks and Wildlife who manage the site. Sources for additional funding which should be investigated by the owner, and other interested stakeholders in the site include; National, State and Local government grants, individual and corporate donations and Lotterywest community grants.

Policies for Future Site Development

Policy 12.1 There is to be no new work including additions to existing buildings.

Policy 12.2 New buildings or structures may be constructed in the open areas close to the extant buildings but should not compromise the understanding of the site or harm the physical fabric of the original buildings.

Policy 12.3 New visitor facilities, including the proposed museum, would be best located on the site of the former Barracks/Recreation Camp site.

Policy 12.4 Any future development on the site is to be cognisant of the impact on the views to and from the site.