

Place No. 05 Black Hawke Bay



View of Black Hawke Bay 2012

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Black Hawke Bay
Location/Address	
Suburb/Town	Gidley Island, Dampier Archipelago
Other Locational descriptor (text)	The first inlet on the eastern side of Gidley Island, heading north in Flying Foam Passage. 481458 mE, 7738448 mN (MGA94 Zone 50) mE 481458 mN 7738448 Longitude 116.82222 Latitude -20.4524

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
<i>Owner</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone/fax</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Item No.</i>
DEC	PO Box 835 KARRATHA 6714	Ph 08 9143 1488 Fx 08 9144 1118		
<i>Reserve No.</i>	<i>Lot/Location No.</i>	<i>Plan/Diagram</i>	<i>Vol/Folio</i>	<i>Item No.</i>
Vested Crown Land				

LISTING & ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8662
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	Yes
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	
Management Category	A

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	c. 1870s onwards
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site
Use(s) of Place	

<i>Original</i>	INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING: Housing or Quarters Other – Pearling Camp
<i>Present</i>	VACANT/UNUSED: Vacant/Unused
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	9. STONE 904 Local Stone
Condition	Poor
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	The main elements at the site are wall footings of dry stone construction, and substantial foundations of major structures at the edge of the bay.

Physical Description

The bay is clearly marked by a prominent vertical rock at its southern promontory. It is well sheltered from the elements by a range of hills on its northern shore and a lower line of ridges on its southern shore. The inlet forms a muddy bay at low tide upon which vessels were careened.

A number of dry walled stone structures are located approximately 300 metres from the bay entrance and approximately 20 metres from the high tide level.¹ These consist of huts and small stone hearths, suggesting that the structures used a range of moveable fabric (such as metal sheeting or canvas with wooden frames) held down with stones. Material culture associated with these is sparse and includes some ceramic and glass fragments, alongside some faunal remains and pearl shell fragments.

The most dominant part of the settlement is a levelled platform backing into the hillside, consisting of retaining walls and a stone ramp. This is located at the upper reaches of the small bay. There are two drystone walled structures alongside the platform. This is presumed to have served a role in either processing the pearlshell or the maintenance of the watercraft.

The littoral zone of the inlet contains evidence of past vessels including mooring chains, parts of boats including gearing, and ballast piles.

History

The Flying Foam Passage was a significant focus for the pearling fleet in the late 1800s and this is the largest site complex on the Flying Foam Passage. It provided a protective harbour, a location to careen the fleet, a residential camp, and was of use for processing the pearlshell.

Archaeology

Historical settlement: The settlement includes the large platform, ramp, and stone-walled buildings. Nearby were a ship's tank, windlass parts and ship's fittings. The more ephemeral structures are characterised by areas cleared of stone to form small open platforms, stone lines as bases for tent-like structures, cairns, hearths, and cleared 'laneways'. Surface finds included fragments of 'champagne' bottles, schnapps bottles, pickle bottles, salad oil and medicinal bottles, Asian ceramic tea bowls, iron tools and small locks. Shell included pearlshell and trochus. The littoral zone is littered with copper sheathing, chains, ballast mounds, glass and ceramic vessels and ship parts.

Aboriginal sites: There are two Registered Aboriginal Sites at this location; both encompass rock art and evidence of occupation (DAA Site ID 11699 'Gidley Bay, Gidley Island' and DAA Site ID 11713 'Last Encounter Cove'). The main engraving at the historical complex is a large macropod engraving on an outcrop overlooking the bay.

SIGNIFICANCE**Historic theme (s)**

1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY
106 Workers (incl. Aboriginal, convict)

3. OCCUPATIONS
305 Maritime industry

Statement of Significance:

Flying Foam Passage was an area of major importance during the early pearling days in North West Australia, and over 500 people have been described as being there in the pearling season. Black Hawke Bay is of historical significance was used by the pearlers as a settlement and base, and is a rare type of site. Black Hawke Bay is of value to researchers as it contains more relics and remains of structures than any other known pearling site in the Dampier Archipelago.

ASSOCIATIONS

Other Associated Person(s)

MHI 1996

Assessment undertaken, Place Record Form created

MHI Review 2013

Entry updated



Schooners *Cutty Sark* and *Fanny Thornton* and luggers *SeaGull* and *Albatross* moored at Black Hawke Bay at low tide. Courtesy Shire of Roebourne Local History Collection, 2005.280

¹ Macilroy, J. 1979, *Dampier Archipelago Historic Sites Survey*, 1979.

Paterson, A., and C. Souter 2004, Cultural Heritage Assessment & Management Proposal for Historical Archaeological Sites – Dampier Archipelago, Western Australia. Karratha: Conservation and Land Management (Karratha).

Paterson, A. 2006, 'Towards a Historical Archaeology of Western Australia's Northwest' in *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24, pp. 99-111.

Souter, C., A. Paterson and F. Hook 2006, The Assessment of Archaeological Sites on Barrow Island and the Dampier Archipelago, Pilbara, Western Australia: A Collaborative Approach in *Bulletin of the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology* 30, pp. 85-92.