

SORELL HERITAGE STUDY

Address: Arthur Highway Dunalley 7177		UPI: 2900399	PID: 0
Name: DENISON CANAL			
Structure Type: _____ Site Feature Type: _____ Feature Type: Canal	Dating: 1891 - 1915		1905
	Access Restrictions: Unrestricted		
	Inspection date: October 1996		P Davies
	Style: N/A		
	Grid ref: 5625	565600	5250800
Indication of Significance: High probable significance		Theme: Shipping	
Material: _____		Listings: _____	
Condition: Good			
Integrity: Intact			
National Estate Criteria: A4, B2, C2, D2, F1	Photograph Index: 8:8-10		
Risk: Excavation: ☐ Development: ☐ Maintenance: ☐ Vandalism: ☐			
SITE DESCRIPTION: The canal was constructed between 1902 and 1905 at a cost of £17,779. The canal was basically hand dug with a steam dredge only being used in the latter stages of construction. It divided the town into two sections and changed the focus of the town cutting streets and isolating the cemetery, hotel and small group of houses to the east. The canal is the major feature of the landscape, defining the town form by cutting obliquely across the street pattern.			
HISTORY: The narrow isthmus at East Bay Neck provided 'the key to communication between Hobart-town and . . . all the east coast' with settlers following James Kelly's 1816 example and dragging their boats over 'on round blocks of wood'. In unfavourable winds the effort could save up to two weeks of battling around the Tasman Peninsula. A convict tramway across the isthmus allowed the arriving Governor Eardley-Wilmot to cross over in 1843. Although the excavation of a canal through the isthmus was touted as 'a work which the Government will, no doubt, soon effect' and Governor Denison ordered a report into the matter in 1854, tenders were not called until 1901. Work started in 1902 with a steam dredge brought down from Derby for the work. The Salisbury Foundry Company in Launceston was contracted to fabricate a hand operated swing bridge to be erected at the western end. This bridge was replaced by a hydraulic system on the new concrete and steel bridge in 1965. The Denison Canal was finally completed and opened by the Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland on October 14, 1905, although not without his vessel being stranded several times at the entrance to the canal by the changing tide. In c1953 a small weatherboard control box was erected approximately 100m from the bridge on the Arthur Hwy. The canal heralded a buoyant period in Dunalley's economy and social life. A library was established for the influx of workers while new faces brought new ideas. The town's importance grew as it consolidated itself as the major regional port for the Sorell district and Forestier Peninsula.			
BOUNDARY: The listing boundary is formed by a line on either side of the canal at a distance of approximately 5 metres from the top of the embankment and extending into the water at each end to include sea walls and structures.			

COMMENTS:

The canal and bridge are of high significance to Dunalley in that it is one of the major defining characteristics of the town and was a key factor in the development of the town as a significant fishing area. It is also of State significance as a major engineering work and government achievement and a major link in the transport route to the mainland from Hobart cutting time off the sea journey. Interestingly the canal construction changed the ecosystem in the adjacent waterways affecting tides, amounts of salt and fresh water, siltation, water levels and fishing.

It meets Criteria A4, B2, C2, D2 and F1 for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate.

It should be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

DUNBABIN, Thomas. 1954. *A Farm at the Worlds End: Some account of the Dunbabin's of Marchwiell in Tasmania*. T Dunbabin, Hobart.

Hobart Town Gazette 1/10/1825, p2

REID, Owen. 1979. *The South East*. Curriculum Centre, Education Department, Hobart

ROSS, James. 1830. *Hobart Town Almanac and Van Diemen's Land Annual*. James Ross. Hobart Town
Hobart Town Gazette 1/10/1895 p2

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