

Place No. 21 Hearson Cove



Hearson Cove aerial image (Nearmap)

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Hearson Cove
Other Name (1)	Murujuga
Other Name (2)	Hearson's Cove
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	Hearson Cove Road
Suburb/Town	Burrup Peninsula
Other Locational descriptor (text)	478909 mE, 7718482 mN (MGA 94 Zone 50) Longitude: 116.7976 Latitude: -20.6328

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Crown Land vested in the Shire of Roebourne				
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
RES 47014	Lot 3002	P41697	LR3138/ 630	

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8663
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)	Yes
Management Category	B

DESCRIPTION	
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site Landscape
Use(s) of Place	

<i>Original</i>	TRANSPORT/COMMUNICATION: Other (Water) – Landing Place/Camp
<i>Present</i>	PARK/RESERVE
<i>Other</i>	OTHER: Aboriginal Occupation
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	None
Physical Description	
<p>Hearson Cove is a small sandy cove with steep rugged hills to the south and west. A low flat valley, mainly sand, extends from the head of the cove through to Mermaid Strait. The cove is accessed by an unsealed road.</p>	
History	
<p>Hearson Cove, at the south east corner of Nickol Bay, is the landing place and base camp of the 1861 North West exploration party led by F T Gregory. It remains a popular tourist and recreational site.</p> <p>The Gregory expedition was fuelled by growing interest in the colony for pastoral land and mineral resources, and preceded by the colonisation of the Murchison River region. Francis Gregory was keen to explore the North West regions of the state, until then known through descriptions of the coast and offshore islands through the Admiralty survey under Captain Phillip Parker King in 1817. Gregory found backers willing to supply horses and men, the Royal Geographic Society and the Legislative Council.</p> <p>The expedition led by Gregory included J. Turner, E. Brockman, W. Shakespeare Hall, J. Harding, J. Maitland Brown, P. Walcott, and A. James. They travelled on the barque <i>Dolphin</i> and arrived at Nickol Bay on May 10, 1861. The cove was the main landing point for the exploration party and was named after a crew member accidentally shot and injured while landing the horses who were all swum ashore.</p> <p>The expedition party would leave on May 25 and would return to the cove October 17 to rejoin with the <i>Dolphin</i>, having travelled over 2000 miles. In the meantime, cotton planted at the cove had been destroyed by a grass fire and Gregory's experiment in the viability of cotton production was ended. Cross-cultural engagement between the crew of the <i>Dolphin</i> and local Aboriginal people during the months waiting for the expedition to return extended to assisting in locating water and wood for the vessel, according to the expedition account, which stated that Aboriginal people would not prove a major barrier to European colonisation of the Northwest. Pearl shell collected in Nickol Bay by the crew of <i>Dolphin</i> may have involved Aboriginal people as well.</p> <p>The expedition determined that Nickol Bay and the Dampier Archipelago were suited for possible future use as a harbour. However, they ended their voyage with a survey for other more suitable landing sites and future town sites. The report by Gregory laid the basis for the immediate colonisation of the Northwest with an emphasis on pearling and sheep pastoralism.</p>	
Archaeology	
<p>There is no physical evidence of the historical events for which this site is listed. There is evidence of continued use of the site for occupation and camping for Aboriginal people and in the period since European colonisation. There are two Registered Aboriginal archaeological sites closely associated with this site, both are middens/artefact scatters (DAA Site IDs 19217 and 19215).</p>	

SIGNIFICANCE	
Historic theme (s)	1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 102 Aboriginal Occupation 105 Exploration & surveying
Statement of Significance:	
Hearson Cove is significant as a historic site of the landing of the Northwest Exploring Expedition led	

by F.T. Gregory. Backed by colonial authority, the expedition laid the basis for the colonisation of the Pilbara in the 1860s, and the rapid development of pastoral and pearling industries across the region. The cross-cultural engagement between local Aboriginal people and the crew of the *Dolphin* and expedition members marks the beginning of the eventual dispossession of traditional lands.

ASSOCIATIONS	
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Architect/Designer (1)	F.T. Gregory
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	

OTHER	
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References	
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Gregory, F.T 1862, 'Expedition to the North-West Coast of Australia', *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 32.

Macilroy, J 1979, 'Dampier Archipelago Historic Sites Surveys.' Canberra: Unpublished report for Australian Heritage Commission, Department of Environment and Heritage.

Withnell Taylor, Nancy E. 2002 *A Saga of the North-West Yeera-Muk-a-Doo: The First Settlement of North-West Australia Told through the Withnell and Hancock Families 1861 to 1890*, Victoria Park, Hesperian Press.

MHI - 1996	Assessment undertaken, Place Name Record created
MHI Review - 2012	Entry updated



F.T. Gregory. (Item is held by John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.)