

## Place No. 28 Lazarette, Cossack



View across Butchers Inlet from Cossack to the site of the Lazarette

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Lazarette, Cossack
Other Name (1)	Leprosarium
Other Name (2)	
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	
Suburb/Town	Cossack
Other Locational descriptor (text)	Lower Landing mE 519861 mN 7712424 Longitude: 117.1907 Latitude: -20.6875

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
612	83			

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8665
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
<b>Management Category</b>	Further consultation required with Aboriginal community

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1909/1910
Construction Date (2)	1913, 1925

Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site
<b>Use(s) of Place</b>	
<i>Original</i>	GOVERNMENTAL: Quarantine Station HEALTH: Other - Leprosarium
<i>Present</i>	VACANT/UNUSED: Vacant/Unused – Ruin
<i>Other</i>	
<b>Construction Materials:</b>	
<i>Walls</i>	
<i>Roof</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
Condition	Poor - ruin
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Little - ruins
<b>Physical Description</b>	
<p>The Cossack Lazarette was situated on the mainland adjacent to Cossack and was gazetted as Quarantine Reserve No 612-A in 1910. This was the only lazarette sited on the mainland.</p> <p>The site is a low, lightly vegetated sandy rise surrounded by mangroves. Very little evidence remained in the 1990s, consisting mainly of pathways of coral and shell grit and concrete stumps of the main hospital building.</p> <p>The sleeping shed was on a concrete floor with galvanised iron walls and barbed wire lacing on top. Inside was a low lean-to shelter for sleeping under. When the site was closed the buildings were either burned or dismantled and the materials used elsewhere.</p>	
<b>History</b>	
<p>Leprosy was detected among Aborigines near Roebourne in 1909. Land adjacent to Cossack was gazetted as a quarantine reserve in 1910. In 1911 an alternative site on Bezout Island was chosen. However, this proved to be unsuitable so it was decided to re-establish the quarantine area at Cossack.</p> <p>Dr Thorpe inspected the Lazarette in 1914; he described it as a cruel situation for a leper camp, as there were neither trees nor undergrowth to shelter the patients from heat or sun. A new lazarette was constructed at the site in 1925 and was run by the Medical Department. Buildings consisted of a cottage for the staff with a ward attachment and a cottage for white leper patients.</p> <p>The Lazarette remained at Cossack until 1931. When the site was closed all mia-mias, sheds and the main ward used by the patients were burned. The remaining buildings were dismantled over the years and the materials were used elsewhere, including Karratha Station. Fourteen patients were transferred to Darwin when the Lazarette was closed.</p> <p>In a report by David Hutchison (1992) he states, "The site has high historic significance. It represents the story of the treatment of lepers in this State, Aboriginal patients in particular. Even allowing for the contemporary ignorance of the disease, the story of the treatment of Aboriginal lepers confirms the generally poor attitude to the needs of the Aboriginal people and the lack of understanding of the effects of the impact of European settlement".<sup>1</sup></p>	
<b>Archaeology</b>	
<p>There is clear potential for archaeology to provide a materially-based account of this institution. It would be comparable to other studies of similar institutions in Western Australia and Australia, such as of lock hospitals and reserves for Aboriginal people.</p>	

<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	
<b>Historic theme (s)</b>	1. DEMOGRAPHICA SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 107 Settlements  4. SOCIAL & CIVIC ACTIVITIES 404 Community services & utilities  6. PEOPLE 601 Aboriginal people
<b>Statement of Significance:</b>	
<p>The site is significant as the primary location for the treatment of leprosy in the Northwest, particularly for Aboriginal people. It represents a key locale for one of the many negative aspects of colonisation for Aboriginal people and is part of a broader history of the arrival of colonial authority, and western diseases and ideas regarding containment and treatment. There is potential for collection of oral histories and archaeological evidence to better understand the location. Aboriginal people today have strong responses, not positive, to the history of the site given the trauma of leprosy.</p>	

<b>ASSOCIATIONS</b>	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	DOLA

<b>OTHER</b>	
<b>References</b>	
<p><sup>1</sup> Hutchinson, D and T. Suba 1992, <i>Cossack: The Cultural Significance of the Lazarette</i>.</p> <p>Davidson, W.S. 1978, <i>Havens of Refuge: History of Leprosy in Western Australia</i>, Crawley, University of Western Australia Press.</p>	

MHI 1996	Assessment made and Place Name Record created
MHI 2012	Entry updated