

BATTERY POINT SCULPTURE TRAIL

The Hobart City Council's Public Art Strategy has a stated policy to 'maximise the interpretation, promotion and celebration of Hobart's cultural heritage and unique built and natural environment.'

No part of Hobart has more significant cultural heritage than the Battery Point precinct. It's the location of some of the city's oldest surviving residences, the site of Hobart's largest suite of historic buildings and the place where many of Tasmania's first industries and commercial enterprises were established. Nowhere else in the city is there such an important conjunction of Hobart's built and natural environment.

Battery Point is a blunt promontory that shelters Hobart's port to the north and looks south towards Storm Bay, so it has intimate links to the harbour and shorelines of the River Derwent.

The Battery Point Sculpture Trail celebrates this heritage and reinforces the link to the shoreline through installations of public artwork, following the theme 'sculpture by numbers'.

At nine sites along a walking trail between Salamanca Place and Marieville Esplanade, numerical sculptures interpret some of the stories of Battery Point – from the building of the New Wharf, now the scene of the city's famous Salamanca Market; to the maritime industries of today, working at slipyard sites on the river's edge, where ships have been built and launched for 150 years and more.

As you walk from site to site, the sculpture trail makes clear the connection between the suburb and the sea – sections of the trail take you down to the water, then up into the streets of Battery Point and back to the shore again.

The sculpture trail takes about an hour to walk in one direction. If you start at the 1833 sculpture at the southern end of Salamanca Place, you'll reach the end at the 1909 sculpture on Marieville Esplanade. On the return walk, detour through the Battery Point village precinct and return to Salamanca Place via Arthur Circus, passing some of the city's oldest houses. You'll find maps and directions along the way.



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A POINT WITH A BATTERY

Fortified artillery emplacements, a labyrinth of underground tunnels, stores of ammunition for big guns – that's why Battery Point is so named.

In the early days of the colony, threats of a French invasion led to the establishment of a gun battery on the point south of Sullivans Cove. A few decades later, amid fears of an attack by Russia, the battery was extended.

Those invaders never came.

Today, Princes Park is a quiet haven of green turf and shady trees – but the tunnels still stretch back beneath the point to Anglesea Barracks, on the crest of the hill.

Hobart in the 19th century was a rough and rollicking place – a whaling town, a sailors' town, rum-fuelled, grubby and dangerous, a long way from the civilised cities of Europe.

Workers lived in slums around the reeking tanneries of Wapping, on the banks of the open sewer that was the Hobart Rivulet – pioneer farmers felled the forests and scratched a living from strange southern soil – the gentry built their Georgian mansions on land granted to them by the Crown.

Battery Point was a mixture of it all. There were fine homes – Lenna, Narryna, Secheron House – there was a dairy farm and a church, both greatly outnumbered by pubs – and there were terraces of conjoined workers' cottages in South Street, Kelly Street and Waterloo Crescent.

In a town where a ticket-of-leave convict could make his fortune milling grain or distilling grog, where American whalers rubbed shoulders with British marines, where boats were built, beer was brewed and brothels were busy, Battery Point echoed every aspect of the young society.

It was a place of energy and industry. A blast furnace once smelted iron on the foreshore. A fruit cannery and jam factory sent sweet cooking smells over the houses of factory workers. Slipyards, ships' chandlers and boat-builders plied their trades on the shores of the Derwent.

Through most of the 20th century, Battery Point was a mixture of shabby and chic – and it's much the same today. University students still house-share in cheap rental accommodation, a few doors from gentrified colonial cottages, expensively renovated in the latest style. Friendly old pubs where seafarers drank are just around the corner from trendy cafes and restaurants with 21st century degustation menus.



That's Battery Point – eclectic and prestigious, neighbourly and eccentric, classy and rough around the edges – a place of cool sea breezes and sun-warmed sandstone, looking west to Hobart's guardian mountain and south to the city's sparkling harbour.

Image Credits

Left: Lucas' Shipyard, Battery Point, with various yachts, c1920. **Far Left:** Battery Point from Sandy Bay Road, c1873. Both images sourced from W L Crowther Library, Tasmanian Heritage and Archive Office. **Above & cover:** 313, painted aluminum, moored at the end of Derwent Lane, 2010, photographer Jonathan Wherrett. **Right:** Details of 628nm, concrete and white ink embedded in laminated glass, foreshore near CSIRO, 2010, photographer Jonathan Wherrett. Images overleaf: **1.** Detail of 1833, sandstone and powder-coated steel, Salamanca Place, 2010, photographer Jonathan Wherrett. **2.** Tide-house, Castray Esplanade, photographer Jonathan Wherrett. **3.** Detail of *The Flurry*, by William Duke, c1848, W L Crowther Library, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office. **4.** c1944. Rows of women stand beside a table sorting fruit in a jam factory, Australian War Memorial. **5.** Detail of topiary, inspiration for 1923. **6.** Detail of *Barque Helen* on the slips c1890 from the O'May album, W L Crowther Library, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office. **7.** Detail of rusted waterfront debris, inspiration for 1,250. **8.** *Terre de Diemen, navigation, vue de la cote orientale de l'île Schouten*, 1807, 7573651, National Library of Australia. **9.** Portrait of Errol Flynn, c1940, 13384126, National Library of Australia. **Bottom right overleaf:** 1909, Routered Trespa Meteon® mounted to steel frame, Errol Flynn Reserve, 2010, photographer Jonathan Wherrett.



SCULPTURE TRAIL

To discover more of Battery Point's history, follow the sculpture trail that winds from Salamanca Place to Marieville Esplanade. As you explore, you'll discover that this waterfront area has a layered history, steeped in stories. The full trail takes about an hour – look for signs along the way.



**CREATIVE
HOBART**

SCULPTURE BY NUMBERS

Numerals are not words.

But when numerals stand together, the numbers they make can become sculptural forms – physical shapes that symbolise an idea, suggest a thought or create an image in the mind.

There are nine different numbers in the Battery Point Sculpture Trail – weights and measures, times and quantities, dates and distances.

Each number is a unique sculpture – each one opens up its own part of the Battery Point story.



2,000

Run your hand across the hard metal wrapped over the concrete retaining wall at this sculpture site and think about the thousands of workers who have laboured in slipyards, furnaces and factories in this location.

Etched in metal are the shadows of some of the generations of Battery Point women who walked to work in the fruit cannery and jam factory here. All day they chopped, peeled, stirred, ladled and labelled – then they strolled back home together, laughing and chatting ... about chores and children, purchases and pay packets, husbands and houses.

1923

Topiary is the art of trimming shrubs into decorative shapes – the natural growth of a plant is clipped and controlled to a form that the gardener chooses. This sculpture is a living and growing reference to the manicured gardens of the first imposing residences on the Secheron Estate, which was subdivided in the 1920s.

If William Finlay had had his way back in 1923, this land would have been open parkland all the way to the river's edge, a public reserve owned by the people of Hobart.

It didn't happen – instead, the estate was cut up into 26 lots – fenced in and hedged, to become the site of some of Hobart's most prestigious real estate.

313

Afloat in the Derwent, like the 313 vessels launched from Battery Point slipyards through the 1800s, this sculpture is constructed from some of the most commonly-used materials of modern-day shipbuilding – aluminium and fibreglass.

Securely anchored, but rising and falling with the tide, the sculpted number is just one craft among the flotilla of working barges, fishing boats, bluewater racers and cruising yachts that anchor off Battery Point.

Beyond the sheltered shore is the widening expanse of the estuary, where the searoads that lead out to the world begin.

1,250

Metal rivets and steel plate recall the materials of ship-building through the later decades of the Ross Patent Slip's operation on the shores of the Derwent.

This is a sensitive heritage site, so an unintrusive sculptural form was designed – flat, non-permanent and easily removable, to allow any future archaeological investigation of the place where a steam-powered winch once hauled vessels of up to 1,250 tonnes from the water.

With almost two-dimensional simplicity, the sculpture lies at the base of the slip's excavated formation – a fragmentary remnant of rusted and riveted steel reminding us that this place has been the scene of years of tough, noisy and grubby labour.

24

A light glows within a block of transparent resin. As the sunset fades on the hills across the river, the number 24 gleams red in the dusk, a symbol of the many different lights that have glowed every hour of the day and night along the banks of the Derwent.

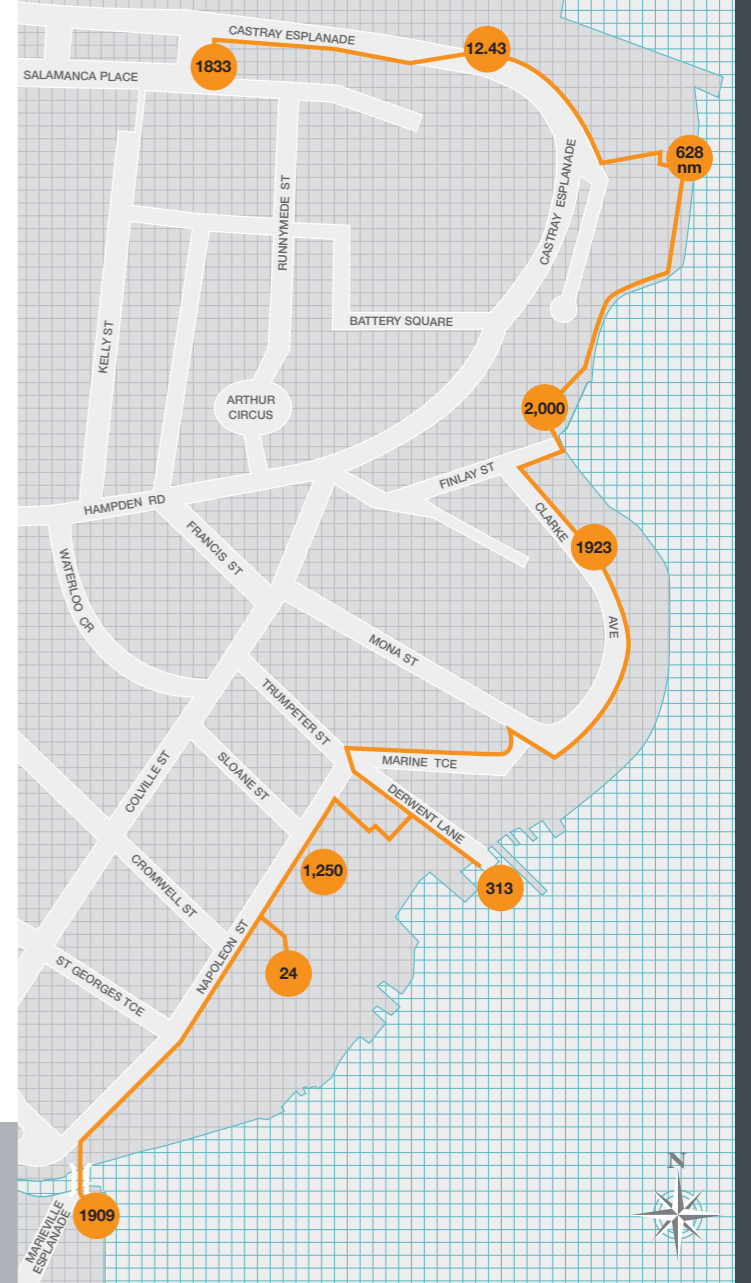
Fires of the Palawa (Aboriginal) tribes of Moomairemener to the east and Mouheneener to the west and the flash of welding torches, burning branches beneath bubbling pots of whale blubber and signal lamps from ships in the harbour, quartz-halogen spots in 21st century kitchens and the Iron Pot lighthouse, (flashing its welcome and warning to mariners) and high above, the stary blaze of the Milky Way – the Derwent's shorelines are never totally dark.

1909

On a Californian hill, the epicentre of American dreams shouts its name in white-painted steel letters, 14 metres high.

Expatriate Tasmanian, the legendary screen actor Errol Flynn would have been familiar with the original HOLLYWOOD sign – although at the peak of his stardom, through the mid-20th century, the original sign, made of wood and sheet metal, was faded and decrepit. (Flynn probably saw it when it read 'OLLYWOOD', after a drunk driver crashed his Model A Ford into the sign, destroying the first letter.)

On a River Derwent beach, not far from Errol Flynn's childhood home in Sandy Bay, his birth date – 1909 – stands tall in white letters that echo the shape and style of the world's most famous outdoor sign.



This sculpture trail is a Hobart City Council Public Art initiative. Artistic team; Futago in collaboration with Judith Abell and Chris Viney.
For more information visit www.hobartcity.com.au
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1833

Steel cages of stone chips represent the cuttings that flew from the chisels of convict chain gangs in the early days of the colony. Gouging rock from the cliff-face close to the original shoreline of Sullivans Cove, they created building sites for the Georgian warehouses that line today's Salamanca Place.

On the cleared space by the water, the rubble was dumped to establish the foundations of a busy wharf – while stonemasons constructed the stern-faced commercial buildings from blocks of solid sandstone, cut from quarries in Shag Bay, across the River Derwent.

In modern roadworks, cages of rock – gabions – are used to stabilise steep slopes. These 1833 gabions echo the hard labour done by men in chains to build the wharf that was the business hub of Hobart in the mid-19th century.

12.43

Intricacy of numbering, accuracy of measurements and the Victorian-era spirit of enquiry are the themes behind this sculpture. The scale intervals on the surveyor's rule are fixed points in concrete and steel – the numerals are frozen in resin, like ice bobbing on water – while out of sight below the tide-house opposite, Huckson's metal float moves up and down with the tide, as it has since 1889.

The solidity of the sculptural material reflects the integrity of the surveying datum point at the tide-house. A square socket carved in stone, it is an unequivocal reference point – fixed, rigid, immovable through a century and more.

628nm

Images sandwiched within multiple layers of glass – itself a material that recalls ice and water in its clarity, transparency, solidity and fragility – are reminders that people have looked out across the waters of the River Derwent and observed many different scenes through long ages.

If you'd been standing here at the height of the last Ice Age, you would have seen an ancestral river valley, then a broad saltwater estuary as glaciers melted – thousands of years later, you could have watched the first square-rigged sailing vessels enter the harbour.

Today, we can see Sydney-Hobart racing yachts cross the finish line, watch fishing boats come and go and see Antarctic supply ships heading south to the ice – one expansive estuary, many scenes and uses.

