

Place No. 52 Rosemary Island



Inland valley: Rosemary Island

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Rosemary Island
Other Name (1)	
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	
Suburb/Town	
Other Locational descriptor (text)	21 kilometres NW of Dampier, Dampier Archipelago 457518.38 mE, 7735455.82 mN (MGA Zone 50) Longitude: 116.5926 Latitude: -20.479

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
State of Western Australia	PO Box 2222 MIDLAND 6056	92737373		
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
Pt 36915		Res.Dia: 368; Dia: 87702		

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	NEW ENTRY
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
Management Category	A

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic site
Use(s) of Place	
Original	OTHER: Aboriginal Occupation
Present	VACANT/UNUSED: Vacant/Unused

<i>Other</i>	MILITARY: Other – Airstrip INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING: Other – Whalers camp
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	
<i>Roof</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
Condition	
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	NA
Physical Description	
<p>The island is located in the Dampier Archipelago and its westerly location makes it one of the first islands to be visited by sailing ships.</p>	
History	
<p>The island has historical significance as an accessible island in the archipelago once known as the 'Rosemary Island(s)' after William Dampier's visit of 1699. The name applied to the islands well into the 1800s, when visiting whalers referred to the islands they found to be rich in whales. Some whalers appeared to stop at Rosemary Island. For example, the barque <i>Mars</i> in a voyage of 1856-1859 described visiting the popular whaling destinations at Exmouth Gulf, Muiron Islands, and Barrow Island before arriving at Rosemary Island where they met other American whalers named in the captain's log as <i>Minerva Smith, Abigail, Stephania, William Smith, Spledid</i> and <i>Richard Mitchell</i>.¹ These numbers suggest the waters of the archipelago would have been busy, with ships often sighting each other, and with clear impacts on the population of migratory whales who relied on these protected waters.</p> <p>After British colonisation the island must have been used as part of the pearling fleet, although there is no documentary or archaeological evidence for this.</p> <p>As stated below, the island was used in World War 2 as an airstrip --- one of many located along the West Australian coast. The airstrip is located in the centre of the island, where there is a vehicle track and a well with a distinctive date palm. The well was constructed of concrete and is filled with 20th century debris.</p> <p>The island is recognised as being rich in natural assets, encompassing turtle nesting, coral reefs, mangroves, significant flora, dugongs, seabirds and terrestrial fauna.</p>	
Archaeology	
<p>There is much evidence for Aboriginal occupation of the island, as evidenced by the numerous Registered Aboriginal Archaeological sites on this island. These include artefact scatters and middens and engravings (e.g. DAA Site IDs 966-799, 11772-11777).</p> <p>The 20th century airstrip is located in the centre of the island, where there is a vehicle track and a well with a distinctive date palm. The well was constructed of concrete, and is filled with 20th century debris.</p> <p>At Chookie Bay there is a small site with remains of fauna and historical material.</p>	
SIGNIFICANCE	
Historic theme (s)	1.DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 102 Aboriginal occupation 105 Exploration and surveying 110 Resource exploitation and depletion 5. OUSIDE INFLUENCES 501 World Wars
Statement of Significance:	

Rosemary Island is of extreme significance for its natural and ecological values, and for that reason access is strictly controlled. The name of the island reflects the voyage of William Dampier and of numerous American whalers who were the first regular visitors to the islands. The use of the island by Aboriginal people reveals the ways that islands were travelled between using traditional watercraft. The island was part of a network of World War sites that formed part of the defence of the continent.

ASSOCIATIONS

Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	William Dampier

OTHER**References**

See Endnotes
 Paterson (2006, p.101)
 Paterson and Souter (2004, p.11)

MHI 1996	Identified on the Review List
MHI Review 2012	Site assessed from existing research and Place Name Record created



Aboriginal living site: Rosemary Island



Nesting turtle Rosemary Island



Interior of well: Rosemary Island

¹ Paterson, A. 2006, 'Towards a Historical Archaeology of Western Australia's Northwest' in *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24, pp. 101