# Balaclava Island Lightstation

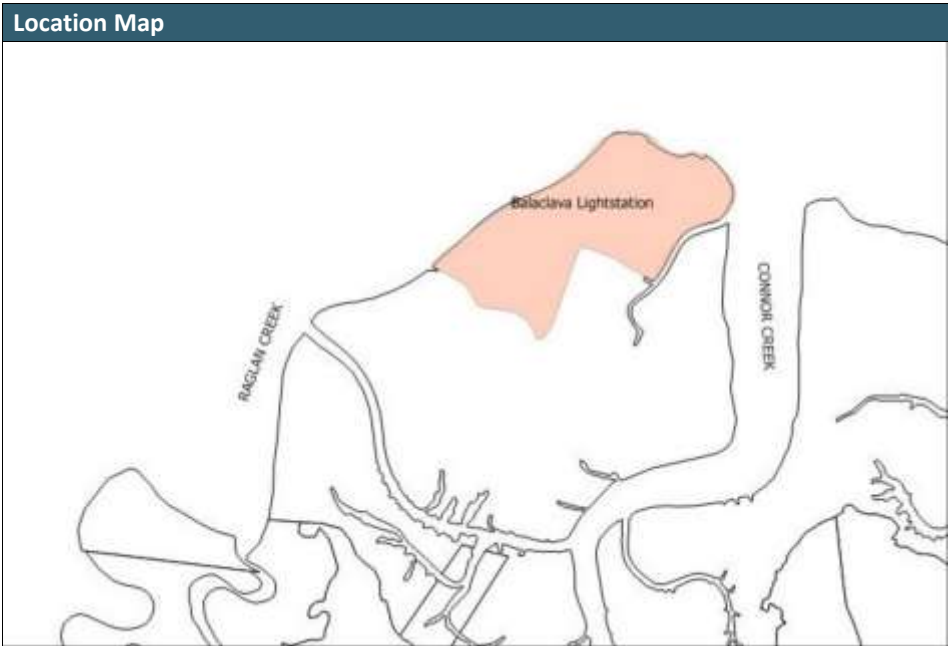| Other Names | Port of Rockhampton harbour lightstation | |
|---|---|---|
| Street Address | N/A | Balaclava Island |
| Title Details/ GPS Coordinates | Part 18DS727 | |

## Historical Context

A manned Lightstation was established on Balaclava Island in 1884. Balaclava Island is located in the Fitzroy River estuary and it is a harbour Lightstation for Port Alma and the Port of Rockhampton. Two light towers were erected in 1884 and two lightkeepers – one an assistant – were stationed on the island. Balaclava Island consists largely of mud and mangroves and the island regularly floods; consequently, the lightkeepers' cottages were built slightly above the high-water mark. The Queensland Harbours and Marine Department determined that the towers should be replaced and two new towers were erected adjacent to the original towers in 1932. When the new towers were completed, the old towers were removed. The new lights were powered by acetylene gas and did not require constant lighting. The lightkeeper – by this stage there was only one – was therefore redundant and the remaining cottage was removed from the island. The two towers remain in use today.

## Physical Description

Balaclava Island, northwest of Gladstone, is divided into three parts, numbered one to three, and Balaclava Island Lightstation is located on Number One, which is the northern most section of the island. The island is situated at the mouth of the Fitzroy River and Raglan Creek estuaries and consists of a flat mud surface with mangroves on the coastal fringe and along the inland creeks. The lightstation consists of two towers, one close to the waterfront and the second approximately 1.5 kilometres further inland to the southwest. The front tower consists of a white, pyramid shaped skeletal timber structure with a platform. There is a trapezium shaped panel at the upper section followed by a large triangular slatted panel pointing upwards showing a black vertical strip through the centre. The rear tower is identical except for the triangular panel pointing downwards.

There are some timber stumps visible indicating the location of the former cottage and gangway.

| Integrity | N/A | Condition | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|
| Statutory Listings | No statutory listings | | |
| Non-Statutory Listings | No non-statutory listings | | |
| Inspection Date | Place not inspected. | | |

## References

Gordon, C, 2005, "Balaclava Island – far from your average Lightstation", Lighthouses of Australia Inc, Monthly Bulletin, vol. 8, no. 2, viewed 24 February 2012, <http://www.lighthouse.net.au/lights/bulletin/0503/balaclava_island.htm>.
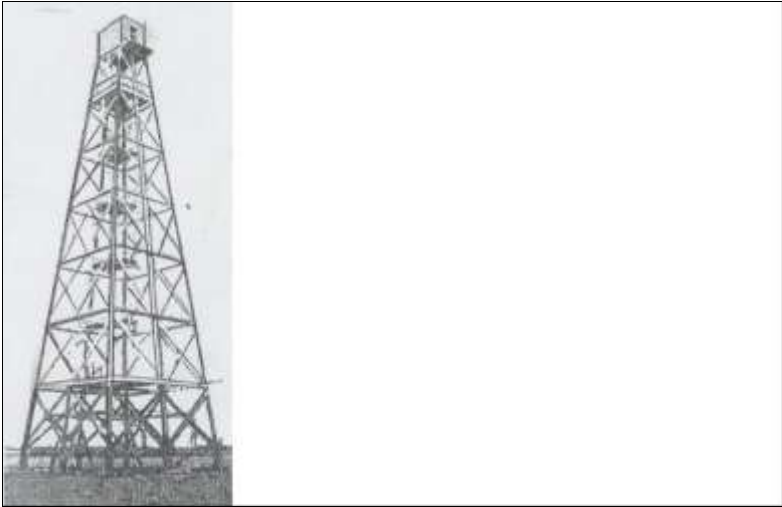
## Heritage Significance

| Criteria | Definition |
|---|---|
| A | *The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.* |
| Statement | The Balaclava Island Lightstation is important in demonstrating the pattern of the region's history, as the establishment of ports and related infrastructure, such as lighthouses, was integral to the settlements of Gladstone and Rockhampton and the hinterland. |

| Criteria | Definition |
|---|---|
| C | *The place has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history.* |
| Statement | The Balaclava Island Lightstation has the potential to contribute knowledge regarding the homesites of the lightkeepers that lived on the island from the 1880s through to the early 1930s and other infrastructure related to lightkeeping operations. |

| Criteria | Definition |
|---|---|
| D | *The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places important to the region.* |
| Statement | The Balaclava Lightstation is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of light towers constructed in the 1930s. |

## Location Map




*Balaclava Island Rear Tower, courtesy Craig Gordon.*


*Aerial View of Balaclava Island, courtesy Noel Patrick.*


*Rear Tower 1932, courtesy Craig Gordon.*