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Name: Perry-Ling Gardens
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 10963
Municipality: Central Coast Council
Date Listed: 11/07/2007

Location Addresses

MAIN RD, PENGUIN 7316 TAS

Title References

0/0

Property Id

2080307



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Setting: The Perry Ling Gardens are situated on Crown Land and rail reserve at the eastern end of Penguin, off the Main Road (originally the highway to Ulverstone). The plantings line both sides of the railway track and are formed to about 15 metres between the railway line and the high tide mark. To the west the Perry Ling Gardens link to the Max Perry Reserve and Lions Park and on the east they adjoin a coastal reserve forming a continuous band of coastal landscaping approximately one kilometre long.

Description: Perry Ling Gardens are situated either side of the railway line which links the north and north-west coasts of Tasmania. One side extends to Watcombe Beach on Bass Strait and the other side links the outer fringe of the Penguin residential area, along the old highway to Ulverstone.

The plantings form a colourful and continuous band of native and exotic plantings approximately 240 metres long, from Max Perry Reserve on the west to residences at approximately 190 Main Road Penguin on the east. An interpretation installation provides a brief history of the establishment of the gardens.

The plantings have also been continued on the nature strips of the opposite houses along Main Road creating a vibrant floral display.

History: In 1983 Penguin resident Max Perry started a small garden on Crown land opposite his home at Main Road, Penguin. He did so partly to be rid of the eyesore of rubbish and blackberries, partly to provide better access to the beach, and partly to create a lawn for his grandson, who suffered with spina bifida (Examiner, 18 Aug. 1987).

Later the same year, Gordon Ling, another retiree who lived near Perry in Main Road, started a similar roadside garden opposite his home. Ling's intention, like Perry's, was to tidy up blackberries and rubbish.

Before long, the two gardens were linked. They featured a row of acacias and several varieties of native shrubs, as well as exotic flowers such as pigface, daisies, geraniums and various annuals. When Max Perry died in 1994 the Central Coast Council took over his section of garden. Gordon Ling, meanwhile, continued to tend his section. A descendent of a pioneer who had arrived in Penguin as a timber splitter in the late 19th century, Ling had a lifelong association with the land. Despite this, he did not consider himself to be a gardener (Ulverstone Post, 14 Oct. 1998). Nevertheless, he continued to work his section of roadside garden well into his eighties. As his health deteriorated, his wife Nancy helped him and neighbours constructed a garden seat.

In early 1997 the Central Coast Council took over responsibility for the maintenance of Ling's section of garden as well as Perry's. Initially, Gordon Ling's section the 'Ling Oasis', but soon the gardens became widely known as the 'Perry Ling Gardens'.

According to the Ulverstone Post, the gardens are known world-wide for their brilliant blaze of colour (Ulverstone Post, 14 Oct. 1998) and they are much photographed. They featured in a promotional film by

TasRail, and as a result of their existence, Watcombe Beach has become one of the most popular beaches on the North-West Coast for locals and tourists (Examiner 18 Aug. 1987). The gardens are also featured on post-cards and in tourist promotions.

The Central Coast Council has ensured that no declared weeds have taken hold in the long garden. It is aware that some of the species are now considered environmental weeds and has a policy of containing these within the area and replacing them with other, preferably native, species when the occasion allows. Perry Ling Gardens are considered to be the oldest and most substantial example of an ornamental community garden in Tasmania. Other known examples of public gardens tended by members of the community include Bernices Garden in Marine Terrace, Battery Point, and the Community gardens at Deloraine on the old high school site (Carr, PC 2008). These are less extensive and less known than Perry Ling Gardens. Comparable mainland gardens include Wendy Whiteleys garden at Lavender Bay, Sydney, NSW (Wendy Whitley, 6 Sept 2004) and Ruby and Lex Grahams foreshore garden at Cremorne Point, Sydney, NSW (Stanton Library, North Sydney Council and Hoskins, Pers. Com. 2007). The Perry Ling gardens are unique in the way they have evolved as a local voluntary beautification process and as an expression of the community's sense of place. The gardens are a landmark recognised beyond the state.

Statement of Significance:
(non-statutory summary)

Perry Ling Gardens, which began with two men attempting to improve and beautify their immediate environment, were established on a wave of nation-wide community action to keep Australia beautiful. Over a 30-year period the gardens were extended to form a band 240 metres long either side of the railway line with the participation of other Penguin residents. Perry Ling Gardens represent in Tasmania a demonstration of community concern for the environment and for the philosophy that every individual's action can make a difference.

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

Perry Ling Gardens are the oldest and largest ornamental community gardens in Tasmania.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

Although created piecemeal over many years by voluntary labour, the gardens have evolved into a prominent landscape feature. The success of the gardens as a drawcard to the area is evident from its prominence on the Central Coast Council tourist website and as regular stop for tourist buses. The gardens are a recognised landmark on the edge of the township.

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

The place has community value through approximately 30 years of volunteer labour devoted to constructing the gardens. The gardens are demonstrably popular with the local community, the wider north-western community and with visitors from elsewhere in Tasmania and interstate. The Perry Ling Gardens are a landmark on tourist routes to the north-west.

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

The site has special associations with Gordon Ling and Maxwell Perry, both active and respected members of the Penguin community. Memorial plaques commemorate the efforts of both men. The gardens are indicative of the wave of community beautification and tree planting projects which swept the country in the last decades of the 20th century. The Australian National Railway presented a bronze medal to the gardeners for their work and financed a name plate for the reserve, as well as celebrating the gardens in a promotional film. The adjacent Max Perry Reserve adds to the landscape quality of the Perry Ling Gardens.

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.