

BANTRY BAY EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE

Most people are aware that the Explosives Magazine complex at Bantry Bay is registered on the National Estate and associate it with the buildings remaining on the western shore. However the administrative buildings were all located on the eastern side of Bantry Bay. The Magazine was used to store explosives from 1908 until its closure in 1974 and the complex is now entirely within the Garigal National Park. Up to 1908, explosives had been stored in hulks in Middle Harbour after being shipped from overseas. A total of 701 acres and 2 roads were allocated for the facility and it straddled the mid section of Bantry Bay. The security of the complex necessitated a boom being built across the mouth of the bay during the Second World War. The coming of new technologies and resident pressure resulted in the closure of the facility.

The complex on the eastern side of the bay is now less visible than it was in its days of activity. However at its peak, it has 2 jetties, 2 pontoons, a Watchman's Cottage, a Testing Shed, a Sailmaker's Loft, an Office and a Slipway. The remnants of these structures can still be seen, as well as the terracing that was created at the northern end of the eastern shore complex.

Prior to 1908 the site had contained a private home, a dance pavilion and picnic grounds somewhat similar to the Killarney, nearer the Roseville Bridge. Further back in history, the site was the point where French's Old Bullock Track delivered timber to be freighted elsewhere in Sydney. The eastern side of Bantry Bay has a rich history from a number of different angles.