

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



MV FLORRIE 2015-2020

Prepared by Kate Gahan with Ballina Shire Council and the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum

August 2015

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2

WITH THANKS

Ballina Shire Council and the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum express sincere thanks to David Payne, Curator Australian Register of Historic Vessels (ARHV), Australian National Maritime Museum, for undertaking a peer review of this Plan.

Front image: *Florrie* facing the Ballina waterfront prior to her relocation at the western end of the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum – c. 2004. Courtesy Ballina Shire Council.



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CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN *MV FLORRIE* – 2015-2020

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3

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

About this Conservation Management Plan	4
Preparing this Plan	5
Stages and actions for the conservation and interpretation of <i>Florrie</i>	6
Stage one: Pre-conservation – prepare <i>Florrie</i> for and undertake 3D scan	6
Stage two: Pre-conservation – audit and add to research record of <i>Florrie</i>	7
Stage Three: Phase one conservation – remove introduced fabric and document and read unveiled historic fabric	8
Stage Four: Phase two conservation – assess condition of unveiled historic fabric to confirm which sections will be retained and conserved (bow and stern)	10
Stage Five: Phase one interpretation – develop an interpretation plan to finalise nature of methods used to interpret <i>Florrie</i> as a functioning museum exhibit and online	11
Stage Six: Phase two interpretation – further develop the telling of <i>Florrie's</i> story	12
Stage Seven: Ongoing conservation of <i>Florrie's</i> fabric	12
Sources and relevant Links	13

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN *MV FLORRIE* – 2015-2020

About this Conservation Management Plan:

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) sets out the heritage management actions to be undertaken to conserve and interpret the *MV Florrie* (henceforth the *Florrie*) to 2020. It is premised on a vision to *unveil and exhibit the fabric and history of Florrie* and has been organised to enable its 'friendly use' by staff from Ballina Shire Council (BSC) and the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum (BNMM).

Florrie is an important timber vessel that spent most of its working life – across a century c. 1880-1980s – on the Richmond River in northern NSW. *Florrie* is listed on Ballina Shire Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) as an item of environmental heritage and on the Australian National Maritime Museum's Australian Register of Historic Vessels (ARHV). Owned by BSC, *Florrie* is housed at the BNMM. Together, the BSC and BNMM's executive and volunteer's will manage and / or undertake the heritage management actions outlined in this CMP, and where necessary with the assistance of professional conservation assistance or guidance.

This CMP follows, and should be read in accordance with, several research documents that have preceded it; this includes the work of Graeme Anderson, Richard Wilson and Helen Wilson, and timber boat specialist Michael Staples.¹ These reports were commissioned by BSC to understand the heritage values, and technical implications of managing the historic fabric, of *Florrie*. This advice resulted in *Florrie's*

¹ See references to these reports in the attached bibliography.

relocation from the exposed Ballina (river) waterfront to its present housing at the BNMM. The relocation of *Florrie* to the BNMM was considered integral to her conservation.

As a result of *Florrie's* exposure on the Ballina riverfront, reports made by Michael Staples in (2002 & 2009) indicated that sections of her fabric had significantly deteriorated, due (mainly) to timber decay and the corrosion of metal fastenings, which compromised its solid form and strength. Consequently, (and to enable *Florrie's* relocation), a galvanised steel cradle was constructed around the vessel to support the hull and prevent collapse.

In 2014, in light of previous heritage advice and consultation with the BNMM, BSC resolved to take action to strategically manage *Florrie* and prepare this CMP. The CMP is premised on BSC's decision to partly retain key sections of *Florrie's* historic fabric – namely the bow and stern. The decision to partly-retain *Florrie* is in response expert advice given, which indicated that that much of her extant historic fabric is compromised; and the cost of conserving *Florrie* in her totality would cost the Council hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The heritage management actions outlined in this Plan include: the conservation of historic fabric that demonstrates *Florrie's* heritage values and story; as well as the interpretation of *Florrie's* fabric and key facets of her story.

Preparing this Plan:

The preparation of this CMP was undertaken as a partnership between Ballina Shire Council and the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum. The BSC and BNMM have agreed to work collaboratively to conserve and interpret *Florrie* as an engaging exhibit for locals and visitors of Ballina and to the Northern Rivers Region. The BNMM is a unique facility in the Ballina Shire; it presently attracts approximately 5000 visitors annually.

Conducted in 2015, workshops between BSC staff and BNMM executive, facilitated by heritage management practitioner Dr Kate Gahan, established the following parameters that underpin this plan:

- *Florrie's* bow and stern will be the focus of the conservation of her fabric;
 - Conservation actions adopted will preserve and restore fabric and features that demonstrate *Florrie's* heritage values/significance;
 - Conservation actions need to be flexible as the process of unveiling *Florrie's* original fabric evolves. Any departure from actions presently outlined in this document will require a further review of proposed actions and amendment/s to this CMP;
 - Conservation and interpretation phases and actions have been staged to ensure work is carried out effectively in accordance with best heritage management practice and to spread costs over a period of time;
- *Florrie's* interpretation will focus on the story of her origins and construction, select aspects of her working life on the Richmond River (and in the context of local historic shipbuilding practices) and contemporary heritage values and significance;
 - The process of conserving *Florrie* is considered an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of BNMM staff / volunteers and that where necessary outside assistance will be sought to instruct and guide BNMM staff / volunteers;
 - The process of physically conserving *Florrie* will be harnessed to promote the BNMM / *Florrie*;
 - The interpretation of *Florrie* aims to engage and develop local audiences, as well as augment existing visitor experiences offered at the BNMM;
 - The BNMM is willing to dedicate people and time to execute as many actions as possible outlined in the CMP but understands that outside expertise will be needed from time to time; and that any future action concerning *Florrie* should be undertaken in accordance with this CMP;
 - Both the Council and the BNMM are concerned to measure *Florrie's* educative value to the local community and develop her interpretation and audience overtime.

STAGES AND ACTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION OF *FLORRIE*

STAGE ONE:

TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
PRE-CONSERVATION - PREPARE FLORRIE FOR AND UNDERTAKE 3D SCAN			
June 2015	C1. Assess any potential weak points in <i>Florrie's</i> historic fabric, especially on the deck and in the base of the hull where weight will be directed when working on, or inside, the <i>Florrie</i> to clear detritus and make 3D scan;	To ensure safety of museum volunteers and others accessing the vessel, as well as to protect the vessels historic fabric from further damage;	1. To be made by Council and with museum staff;
June 2015	C2. Clear any bulky objects from around and on <i>Florrie</i> . Carefully remove loose debris from inside the hull. Small debris inside the hull should be meticulously sorted in the case of uncovering historic fabric, such as bit of metal fastenings, coins etc.	<p>This is so that the scan can be completed without obstruction and is as accurate as possible. Care should be taken toward the safety of personnel and the vessel's fabric.</p> <p>As detailed in M Staples 2009 report p. 10. Staples notes that cleaning of the floor/base of the hull should be done by hand, carefully shovelling debris for sorting.</p> <p>When cleaning the base of the hull care should be taken not to damage the timbers with the shovel (due to rot these timbers will be vulnerable). Safety should also be considered when working inside the hull due to the possible presence of asbestos and fungal spores. Appropriate protective clothing should be worn.</p> <p>Any artefacts uncovered should be retained by the museum for analysis.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work outside <i>Florrie</i> is undertaken by museum staff and following a risk assessment of <i>Florrie's</i> historic fabric as per action C1. 2. Work inside <i>Florrie</i> is undertaken by museum staff in pairs with a shovel and bucket and following a risk assessment of <i>Florrie's</i> historic fabric as per action C1. 3. Sorting debris should be undertaken outside the hull, where the light will be better to see small objects that may be in the debris.
July/August 2015	C3. Undertake Scan of <i>Florrie</i> ;	To be contracted to RPS. Outcomes will be a 2D and 3D scans. The 2D scan will result in line plans of the shape, a construction / arrangement plan, and an outboard profile drawing of how <i>Florrie</i> looks at present and originally. The 3D scan will be produced as a point cloud file (photo coloured), Truview product.	1. Jennifer Colwell, RPS and with Kate Gahan and museum staff assisting;
August 2015	PROJECT PROGRESS MEETING I between Council and BNMM	To provide an update on action taken and troubleshoot any issues that may arise;	1. Nominated Council and museum representatives;

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN *MV FLORRIE* – 2015-2020

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STAGE TWO:

PRE-CONSERVATION - AUDIT AND ADD TO RESEARCH RECORD OF FLORRIE			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
July to December 2015	C4. Prepare audit of primary and secondary reference material on <i>Florrie</i> (including any images and plans etc.) – the BNMM Library, Council Records, RRHS, <i>Northern Star</i> (Trove), NSW State Records and relevant Central Coast archives, public appeal for images locally and on the central coast;	Audit is undertaken to establish where gaps in documentary record are. Compiling a complete as possible documentary record will assist in reading <i>Florrie's</i> historic fabric (as the conservation process unfolds) to maximise the knowledge it reveals, as well as to interpret <i>Florrie</i> .	1. Audit of documentary material can be undertaken by nominated museum volunteers; OR alternative option is to prepare a project brief for this work to be undertaken as a student placement project through SCU.
	C5. Identify gaps in the historic record of <i>Florrie</i> , including information pertaining to timber vessel construction methods used to build <i>Florrie</i> by Rock Davis at Brisbane Water, information on other shipwrights operating at/near the Port of Ballina in the same era, and <i>Florrie's</i> working life on the Richmond River in the late nineteenth century.	The construction methods and timber used to build <i>Florrie</i> will be a central feature of 'her' interpretation; as well as the life and career of shipwright Rock Davis of Brisbane Water. In addition, <i>Florrie's</i> working life on the Richmond River in the late nineteenth century will be a further key focus of her story. This is arguably the heyday of her use as a passenger vessel.	1. Audit of gaps in <i>Florrie's</i> historic record can be undertaken by nominated museum volunteers; OR alternative option is to prepare a project brief for this work to be undertaken as a student placement project in partnership with Southern Cross University.
	C6. Undertake additional research to 'fill' gaps in <i>Florrie's</i> documentary record;	Additional research is targeted and will help to build as complete a record of <i>Florrie</i> , shipwright Rock Davis, materials and construction work/methods (including tools) used to build <i>Florrie</i> and during this era by Rock Davis; as well as her working life as a passenger vessel in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.	1. Compiling of additional documentary material can be undertaken by dedicated museum volunteers; OR an alternative option is to prepare a project brief for this work to be undertaken as a student placement project through SCU.
	C7. Make summarised report on documentary record pertaining to <i>Florrie</i> by way of an annotated bibliography;	An annotated bibliography is a summary of each historic source uncovered – primary and secondary. This will help to build a picture of material available for interpreting <i>Florrie</i> and to read her historic fabric once fully unveiled.	1. Compiling of an annotated bibliography can be undertaken by dedicated museum volunteers; OR an alternative option is to prepare a project brief for this work to be undertaken as a student placement project through SCU.
Following action C8	PROJECT PROGRESS MEETING II between Council and BNMM	To provide an update on action taken and troubleshoot any issues that may arise;	1. Nominated Council and museum representatives;

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STAGE THREE:

PHASE ONE CONSERVATION: REMOVE INTRODUCED FABRIC AND DOCUMENT AND READ UNVEILED HISTORIC FABRIC			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
2016	C8. A NMM assistance to brief museum volunteers working on the <i>Florrie</i> about undertaking stage one conservation actions.	This is an opportunity for BNMM volunteers to receive expert instruction on the conservation of timber vessels; it is also an opportunity for BNMM volunteers to ask questions of ANMM experts;	1. ANMM representative, museum and Council.
2016	C9. Carefully remove as much as possible of the recently added plywood and fibreglass decking;	As detailed in M Staples 2009 report p. 8 – especially note instruction that where fibreglass serves to strengthen the deck it should remain in place. In the context of this CMP, this is until a final decision is made regarding at which points in the hull the vessel will be sectioned (see C 19). These elements may/may not be retained once this occurs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BNMM volunteers working in pairs and with hand tools; the outcome of the C1 assessment will establish arrangements for working on the deck; 2. A photographic record of the work being undertaken should be made as it proceeds; 3. Photographs are to be logged each day to record what each image illustrates (photographic log sheet to be provided by Kate Gahan).
	C10. Carefully remove galvanised steel hull sheathing;	As detailed in M Staples 2009 report p. 8-9 – especially note instruction that where most of the extant/visible metal sheathing is not original, but rather added after <i>Florrie's</i> 'retirement' from service. However, any original sheathing uncovered, during the removal of external sheathing, <u>should be left in place</u> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BNMM volunteers working in pairs and with hand tools; 2. A photographic record of the work being undertaken should be made as it proceeds; 3. Photographs are to be logged each day to record what each image illustrates (photographic log sheet to be provided by Kate Gahan).
	C11. Secure loose hull planking;	As detailed in M Staples 2009 report p. 9. Staples notes that after the removal of the sheathing the vessel will look rather archaeological and planks may come away from the vessel's frame. These should be resecured with tie-wire until action C20 is completed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BNMM volunteers working in pairs and with tie-wire and pliers; 2. A photographic record of the work being undertaken should be made as it proceeds; 3. Photographs are to be logged each day to record what each image illustrates (photographic log sheet to be provided by Kate Gahan).

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PHASE ONE CONSERVATION: REMOVE INTRODUCED FABRIC AND DOCUMENT AND READ UNVEILED HISTORIC FABRIC			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
2016	C12. Clean external and internal hull planking and deck-head/underside;	<p>Cleaning of the floor/base of the hull should be done by hand. The hull topside and deck-head should be cleaned with a brush and vacuum (where appropriate). Safety should continue to be considered when working inside the hull, due to the possible presence of asbestos and fungal spores. Appropriate protective clothing should be worn.</p> <p>Any artefacts uncovered should be retained by the museum for expert analysis.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inside the hull, BNMM volunteers working in pairs and with a bucket soft brush and vacuum cleaner; relevant protective clothing should be worn; 2. Sorting of further debris should be undertaken outside the hull, where the light will be better to see small objects that may be in the debris. 3. A photographic record of the work being undertaken should be made as it proceeds; 4. Photographs are to be logged each day to record what each image illustrates (photographic log sheet can be provided by Kate Gahan).
Following action C13	PROJECT PROGRESS MEETING III between Council and BNMM	To provide an update on action taken and troubleshoot any issues that may arise;	Nominated Council and BNMM representatives;
2016	C13. Measure the moisture of the hull timbers;	As detailed in M Staples 2009 report p. 10. Expert assistance will be needed to perform and report on this action, as well as provide advice on future measures taken to monitor the moisture content of <i>Florrie's</i> timber to thwart rot.	It is recommended that to carry out C13, and C14 expert advice is sought from the ANMM. If deemed appropriate, BNMM staff can execute these actions in accordance with expert advice given; if not an alternative means of funding these actions should be sought (Funding of this action can be coupled with C15 – C18 outlined below).
	C14. Treat timbers with fungicide as per M Staples Report (2009 p. 10)	<p>This treatment is to arrest the fungal spores present in the hull of the vessel that contribute to rot of its timbers.</p> <p><i>Florrie</i> should be covered with a breathable cover if housing is not enclosed at this stage.</p>	

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STAGE FOUR:

PHASE TWO CONSERVATION: ASSESS CONDITION OF UNVEILED HISTORIC FABRIC TO CONFIRM WHICH SECTIONS WILL BE RETAINED AND CONSERVED (BOW AND STERN)			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
2016	C15. Read and carefully record (with photographs and written report) the unveiled fabric of <i>Florrie</i> to document additional historical information it reveals about the vessel - its fabric and story;	The historic fabric of <i>Florrie</i> will contain traces such as holes in the planks indicating where the original sheathing was fixed etc. These are fragments of evidence that can be read in the same way a historic document can be and will contribute to new understanding of her construction and story.	
2016	C16. Assess strengths and weaknesses of unveiled historic fabric with respect to the aim of interpreting <i>Florrie</i> in accordance with her heritage values and to confirm which fabric is retained (i.e. at which points of the hull will the vessel be sectioned and historic fabric permanently removed).	Expert advice to make this assessment is gained from a timber boat conservationist with the assistance of relevant BNMM executive/ volunteers;	1. Funding to engage and expert may be sought through the ANMM MMAPPS program or the NSW Museum and Gallery's VIM Grants.
	C17. Before (permanently) sectioning the vessel establish how the cutting open of the hull will impact the integrity and strength of <i>Florrie's</i> retained historic fabric, as well as how this will be treated to ensure the success of the proposed sectioning. This step will also determine if some cradle supports can be removed to gain a better view of the vessel's exterior.		
	C18. Assess detailed conservation action for remaining fabric, including ongoing treatment of vessel timbers and in the context of <i>Florrie's</i> housing.		
	C19 Section <i>Florrie</i> and clean up.	As per recommendation made following action C17	1. As per recommendation made following action C17; 2. A photographic record of the work being undertaken should be made as it proceeds; 3. Photographs are to be logged each day to record what each image illustrates (photographic log sheet to be provided by Kate Gahan).
Following action C19	PROJECT PROGRESS MEETING IV between Council and BNMM	To provide an update on action taken and troubleshoot any issues that may arise;	Nominated Council and museum representatives;

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN MV FLORRIE – 2015-2020

9.5 Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum - Timber Vessels.DOC

STAGE FIVE:

PHASE ONE INTERPRETATION: DEVELOP AN INTERPRETATION PLAN TO FINALISE NATURE OF METHODS USED TO INTERPRET FLORRIE AS A FUNCTIONING MUSEUM EXHIBIT AND ONLINE			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
2017	C20 Develop an Interpretation Plan for <i>Florrie</i> to establish the themes used for exhibition and online purposes by considering historic fabric retained, historic record compiled from actions C4 to C7, the desire to engage children and locals as a primary audience, an emphasis on <i>Florrie's Background and Significance</i> section that highlights its social story through its contribution to work and life on Richmond River, and technological story as a wooden boat and its construction, and notes also that it is the only surviving example;	Themes to reflect the key story of <i>Florrie's</i> construction history and late nineteenth century working life as a passenger vessel. These elements are indicative of what <i>Florrie's</i> unveiled conserved fabric symbolises.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BNMM staff to develop proposed themes based on historic record compiled. 2. BNMM staff and Council to agree on final themes; OR expertise is engaged to determine/confirm final themes to be used. (Grant funds may be sought to engage expert advice. There are various grant options – including ANMM, Arts NSW and Museum and Galleries NSW).
	C21 Council and museum staff meet to prepare a brief to engage expertise to execute actions C20 and C22 detailed below.	To fulfil the desire to interpret <i>Florrie</i> in accordance with best practice, and engage a mixed audience of children and locals through a professional interactive display, expert assistance is needed.	Council and BNMM staff.
2017	C22 Establish budget to finalise copy for and the nature of interpretation panels/other methods and the exhibition layout, as well as associated lighting used to exhibit <i>Florrie</i> . Have interpretive panels etc. installed and online material uploaded.	Copy and interpretation panels should be interactive, engage children as well as adults, and reflect the themes established by action C20. (Assumption of this action is that <i>Florrie's</i> housing will be a fully enclosed environment).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expertise is engaged to prepare copy and liaise with relevant businesses to design and manufacture panels etc. and lighting for <i>Florrie</i>. 2. Grant funds can be sought to engage expert advice. There are various grant options – including ANMM, Arts NSW and Museum and Galleries NSW.
	C23 Installation of interpretive panels etc. and lighting.	As per design developed by action C22.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant installer.
Following C23	PROJECT PROGRESS MEETING V between Council and BNMM	To provide an update on action taken and troubleshoot any issues that may arise;	Nominated Council and BNMM representatives;

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STAGE SIX:

PHASE TWO INTERPRETATION: FURTHER DEVELOP THE TELLING OF FLORRIE'S STORY			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
	C24. Prepare and conduct a survey of visitors to collect data on satisfaction with <i>Florrie</i> exhibit. Survey will record overall visitor numbers; who is coming to see <i>Florrie</i> (age, gender etc.) Are visitors satisfied with the <i>Florrie</i> exhibit? What else would they like to see/hear about <i>Florrie</i> ?		
2018	C25. Using visitor feedback and historic documents compiled develop new themes to tell other stories concerning <i>Florrie</i> for inclusion on museum website to augment static exhibit and for a varied audience.	These are measures aimed at: supplementing <i>Florrie</i> 's static display, appease visitor interests/desires concerning information about <i>Florrie</i> , develop printed material available on <i>Florrie</i> for visitors, and to vary engagement of local children with <i>Florrie</i> and her story.	1. Council or BNMM staff or seek relevant funding to provide expert assistance.
	C26. Prepare booklet on <i>Florrie</i> for sale at the museum shop.		
	C27. Work with schools to develop educational material concerning <i>Florrie</i> and in line with relevant curriculums.		

STAGE SEVEN:

ONGOING CONSERVATION OF FLORRIE'S FABRIC			
TIMELINE	ACTION	NOTES ON ACTION	BY WHOM and HOW
Ongoing -2020	C28. Execute as per recommendations made by action C19.	This action will establish how to continue to care for <i>Florrie</i> 's historic fabric once sectioned.	1. BNMM staff or otherwise determined/recommended.

SOURCES AND RELEVANT LINKS:

Graeme K Andrews. *Report and Suggestions Concerning: ex Motor Vessel, ex Steamship Florrie* (1880), unpublished report, July 2000.

Kate Gahan. *Statement of Heritage Impact MV Florrie*. Unpublished report prepared for Ballina Shire Council, 2014.

Michael Staples. *Florrie: Conservation Assessment*, unpublished report, 2002.

Helen J Wilson and Richard J Wilson. *Florrie: A preliminary history*, unpublished report prepared for the *Florrie* Committee, Ballina Shire Council, November 2000.

<http://www.anmm.gov.au/learn/explore-online/australian-register-of-historic-vessels> , accessed November 2014.