



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE *

The rural setting of the place, together with the numerous mature plantings which include pine trees planted in the 1960s, has aesthetic value. (Criterion 1.1)

The administration building is a good example of the International style, based on Corbusian design principles. The use of piloti to elevate the building, the expressed framework (with integrated louvre shading), ribbon windows and open floor plan are notable features of the building. (Criterion 1.1)

The interior of the chapel building, naively finished and decorated, displays visual coherence and appeal. (Criterion 1.2)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place has associations with the Anglican Church in Western Australian, who established several homes in the Swan Valley for children. *Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)* provided welfare services for boys from 1946 to 1984. Originally an extension of the Swan Homes orphanages, the place was established by the Anglican Church as Padbury's Boys Farm for orphans and disadvantaged boys (1946 to c. 1955). From c. 1955 to 1984, the place operated as a reformatory for delinquent boys, under the joint control of the Anglican Church and the Child Welfare Department. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.3)

The place has associations with and for the many boys who lived at the place from 1946 to 1984, particularly those who cleared the land, built the first buildings and established the farm from virgin bush. (Criterion 2.3)

The chapel interior displays the naive artistic endeavours of the boys. (Criterion 2.4)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr) has strong educational and spiritual associations with those men who, because of family circumstances or criminal conviction, spent part of their childhood years in the institution. Local residents associate the place with thefts by inmates. There appears to be little continuing social interest in the place other than that of the former inmates and nearby residents. (Criterion 4.1)

The chapel has social value for its associations with the boys who built the place. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The chapel is an uncommon structure, having been built and furnished largely by the efforts of institutionalised boys. (Criterion 5.1)

The place is one of a limited number of institutions of its kind in Western Australia, and its remaining fabric has some value for demonstrating the way of life experienced by boys in that institution. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The various structures are representative of those designed by the Public Works Department in the inter-war years and used extensively in outlying areas during the early post World War Two years as the construction materials were easily transportable. (Criterion 6.1)

The place is representative of a number of institutions established throughout Western Australia to provide welfare services for children, which combined industrial and technical training with usual school instruction. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The place is generally in sound condition. A caretaker is employed full time to look after the day to day cleaning and on-site management of the place, and essential maintenance of the principal buildings appears to be ongoing. Services are kept up to date, with considerable investment having been made in recent years with the replacement of water pipes. A number of buildings do, however, have painting and drainage works outstanding.

A number of building defects exist, including deteriorated asbestos roofing material, water damaged ceilings in the chapel and schoolhouse, deteriorated flashings and guttering of the main dormitory block, and the upper portion of wall inside the chapel.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place has a low degree of integrity.

Originally the place functioned as an Anglican run home for orphaned boys, the boys being taught skills relating to farming on the property. When the place became a public institution for juvenile offenders the focus on teaching farming skills continued, although it is likely that particular areas of activity changed with the result that the earlier outbuildings were removed or replaced. Since the institution's closure it has been used for occasional camps and also as a headquarters for the State Emergency Services. Farm related activities have ceased on the site.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr) has a low degree of authenticity. The site has been subject to several stages of development that have gradually effected

the removal of those buildings that were initially erected on the site. Replacement buildings have generally been substantially different in their form and character, with the result that the spatial relationships between buildings on the site has significantly changed over time. Many of the pine trees planted during the 1960s have survived and are now mature specimens, providing the site with a sense of domesticity that would not have been present in the first decades.

The schoolhouse may be the only remaining complete structure dating to the period that the place was known as Padbury Boys' Farm School (1946 - c.1955), all other buildings having been cleared from the site (some concrete floor pads of other early outbuildings remain).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Dr Robyn Taylor, art and architectural historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Ian Boersma and Christopher Paterson of Kevin Palassis Architects. Additional information has been compiled by HCWA staff.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

CHRONOLOGY

- 1891 Grant of land in Stoneville from the government to the Church of England to establish an orphanage.¹
- 1946 Anglican Church gifts about 830 hectares of the land to Anglican Home for Children to establish Stoneville Farm. This becomes known as the Padbury Boys' Farm School.²
- c.1955-6 Anglican Farm School. Padbury Boys' Farm School ceases as a place for disadvantaged boys, and becomes a centre for juvenile delinquents. Called Anglican Farm School to distinguish its new function and protect the reputations of the boys who had attended the Padbury Boys' Farm.³
- 1958 Land purchased from the Anglican Church for £5,420. Land transferred to the Crown July 3rd, 1958 and vested in the Hon. Minister for Works. The place is also referred to as the Stoneville Institution.⁴ Controlled by a joint committee of the Church of England and the Child Welfare Department.⁵ (This Department becomes the Department for Community Welfare, then Family & Children's Services.
- 1959-60 New buildings commence.⁶
- 1958-1961 Chapel designed by Rev. Walter Churchill and built by the boys.⁷
- 1960 Dining room and kitchen block officially opened on 16 June.⁸
- 1964 Place referred to as Hillston. New dormitory block officially opened by Child Welfare Minister L. A. Logan.⁹

¹ This grant is mentioned by a couple of people, including Bruce Callow, architect, who undertook the Mundaring Municipal Inventory, and Jack Nugent, first supervisor of the Padbury Boys Farm. Land titles information provided by DOLA indicates that a Country Enrolment was made out to the Diocesan Trustees of the Church of England on 18 September 1891, and that Title Deeds were issued on 14 October 1891.

² Peterkin, A. R., *The Noisy Mansions, The story of Swanleigh 1868-1971*, Swanleigh Council, Midland, 1986, p99.

³ *ibid*, p.101, p.149.

⁴ 'Report of the Committee to investigate and advise on options and other measures for the control of Hillston absconding and associated offending.' Department for Community Welfare, WA, August 1980, p.16.

⁵ Plaque outside dormitory block. Peterkin, *op. cit.*, p.149.

⁶ PWD plans.

⁷ Plaque inside the chapel.

⁸ Plaque inside dining room.

⁹ Plaque outside dormitory block.

- 1980 Report on investigations into absconding and options for control, including closing Hillston and moving boys to another more secure location.¹⁰
- c.1983/85 Hillston Boys' detention centre closes. The place remains with Department for Community Welfare, now Family & Children's Services.¹¹ Alternative uses are sought while the place remains vacant.
- 1992 October 22 - re-opens as Hillston Community Centre with plans for Aboriginal groups to use the place.¹²
- c.1994 Hillston ceases to be used as a Community Centre and becomes available for hire for youth camps and other groups such as Rally Australia etc.¹³
- 1998 The local Volunteer Fire Brigade holds regular meetings at Hillston and the State Emergency Services use the former administration building.
- Family and Children's Services propose to develop the site to provide alternative, short term, care and counselling for youths experiencing difficulties with foster and other care.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr) is a former detention centre for delinquent boys, which operated under the jurisdiction of the Government's Family and Children's Services. It was established on the site of the former Padbury Boys' Farm which had been set up in 1946 by the Anglican Church as an extension of the Swan Homes orphanage. The detention centre operated from c.1955-56 until its closure in c.1983-84. Apart from a couple of years when it operated as a Community Recreation Centre, Hillston has largely been vacant since 1994, except when used for youth camps and other recreational and community group activities. In 1998, local Volunteer Fire Brigade holds regular meetings there, and the former administrative building is used by the State Emergency Services.

According to various people who have been involved with Hillston, and work within Family and Children's Services, most documents relating to the place have been destroyed. The following history has been compiled from a variety of sources (see footnotes), however, dates for some of the events or changes in the function of the place could only be approximated to within a couple of years. The name of the place also varies in written texts and on plan drawings. For example, the name Padbury Boys' Farm School refers to the place when it was an orphanage, however it is sometimes used when reference is being made to Hillston, the reformatory. Other names include Stoneville Farm School, Anglican Farm School, Hillston Boys' Farm, and Hillston Boys' Detention Centre.

¹⁰ 'Report of the Committee to investigate and advise on options and other measures for the control of Hillston absconding and associated offending.' Department for Community Welfare, WA, August 1980.

¹¹ Steve Boylan, Family and Children's Services, conversation with Robyn Taylor.

¹² '300 Flock to Reopening of Hillston', in *Milli Milli Wungka*, No.4, January 1993, p.13.

¹³ Steve Boylan and Peter Holden, op. cit.

Later, it becomes the Hillston Community Recreation Centre. According to Phil Bowyer, who had been employed at Hillston during the 1960s and 1970s, eventually becoming Superintendent, the name Hillston was chosen by the boys in 1962. 'The then Superintendent Roland Ridley thought it would be a good idea if the boys thought about a name themselves. The boys were divided on what name to choose and met in the gym to take a vote. They decided on Hillston because they felt they were "Hill's people"'.¹⁴

Padbury Boys Farm, 1946- c.1955-56

Hillston developed from what had formerly been the Padbury Boys' Farm which was run by the Anglican Church for 'disadvantaged' boys.¹⁵ The farm was an extension of Swan Homes, an amalgamation of the Perth Girls' and the Swan Boys' Orphanages located in Middle Swan.¹⁶ The farm was developed on land in Stoneville which had been gifted to the Church of England by the Colonial government in 1891, apparently for the purpose of establishing an orphanage.¹⁷ The Church, in turn, gifted over 2,000 acres of this land to Swan Homes for the establishment of a farm school.¹⁸

The notion of a farm school accords with the practice of providing boys and girls in orphanages with 'some industrial and technical training in addition to the usual school instruction'.¹⁹ During the first decade of the twentieth century, there were six orphanages run by various denominations. These were subsidised by the state government which paid so much per child per week. The homes included the Swan Boys' at Midland Junction (Middle Swan) and the *Girls' Orphanage* in Adelaide Terrace, Perth (which amalgamated with Swan Boys'), the Parkerville Orphanage for Infants, St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage in Subiaco, Clontarf Orphanage for Boys, and the Salvation Army Boys' Orphanage in Collie.²⁰ These orphanages were separate from the Industrial Schools which were established for delinquent children and run by the denominations, but they did at times take in such children.²¹

Stoneville is located in the hills area of the Darling Ranges. Although it appears to be an isolated place in which to have established a farm for orphan boys, by the 1940s it had become well established as an agricultural area. The good soils and climate of this district encouraged farming, in particular fruit growing, while nearby Mundaring, had evidently been regarded 'as an ideal sanatorium for consumptive patients'.²² These

¹⁴ Phil Bowyer, telephone discussion with Robyn Taylor, 8 September, 1998. Mr Bowyer is currently writing a history about Hillston as part of his memoirs.

¹⁵ Disadvantaged included orphans or boys with one parent who had difficulties in looking after them.

¹⁶ The amalgamation took place in 1942 when the girls were moved out of the city orphanage as a war time precaution. See Peterkin, p.1. Swan Homes is now known as Swanleigh and functions as a residential centre for country school children attending metropolitan schools.

¹⁷ DOLA Land Titles Information (See chronology footnote).

¹⁸ Peterkin, op. cit., p.99.

¹⁹ Battye, J. S. (ed.) *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Vol.1, 1912, p.505.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*, Vol. 2, 1913, p. 467.

attributes of good farming soils and healthy climate may have been deciding factors in the Church of England's choice of the area for two of its orphanages. In 1903 the Sisters of the Church of England purchased 20 acres in Parkerville (adjacent to Hillston) and established the Waif's Home which still operates today as the Parkerville Children's Home.²³ The area also supported a timber industry, with rail lines being established to haul the timber. One track to the Lion Mill timber centre, now the Mount Helena township, went through the church lands at Stoneville and its formation is still visible today.²⁴ Timber from the Padbury Boys' Home was milled and sold by the church.²⁵ Apart from the Great Eastern Highway which passes through Mundaring just south of Stoneville, there were two rail lines constructed from Midland Junction to the eastern districts. The first by way of Greenmount and Darlington, and the second rail track, which had been established to cope with the increased traffic to the goldfields, went by way of Swanview, Parkerville and Stoneville.²⁶

As the then Director of the Anglican Homes for Children, and later Director of Swanleigh (formerly Swan Homes) A. R. Peterkin points out, the establishment of the farm was 'no easy matter in the rather heavily-timbered hills' country'.²⁷

A suitable site for the institution buildings had to be selected and cleared, a water supply and roadway provided, temporary accommodation erected, staff appointed and suitable boys chosen to pioneer the new venture.²⁸

The man chosen to supervise the establishment of the farm was Jack Nugent, who had been the Assistant Manager of the Anglican Swan Homes for Children. He had recently returned from active service in the Air Force, was 23 years of age, fit and married.²⁹

...on February 25th, 1946, just two months after the land grant had been made to us by the Diocesan Council, Mr. Nugent with a former Swan boy, Mr John Bentley, as his assistant, and accompanied by four trainees, pitched their tents and commenced clearing the site for the first building.³⁰

The place was named after Walter Padbury and his nephew Matthew Padbury who was a member of the Board and first chairman of the Farm School Committee.³¹ In just a few months good progress was made in clearing the land with the help of neighbouring farmers, and the erection of three army huts that had been transported to the site. Land was also

²³ 'Parkerville Children's Home Annual Report', 1998, p.4

²⁴ Jack Nugent, Hand written notes supplied by for this report, 6 August, 1998.

²⁵ Jack Nugent, conversation with Robyn Taylor.

²⁶ Battye, op. cit., p.467.

²⁷ Peterkin, op. cit., p.99.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Jack Nugent, conversation and typed draft supplied, 6 August, 1998. This draft document was recently written by Mr Nugent in response to the current controversies about migrant children from England in Western Australian orphanages. Jack Nugent left the farm in 1951 to train as a teacher.

³⁰ Peterkin, op. cit., p.99.

³¹ Jack Nugent, Hand written notes, op. cit. Walter Padbury was apparently Perth's first millionaire. His philanthropy is commemorated on a plaque at the Parkerville Home for Children where he donated Padbury Cottage in 1906. See 'Parkerville Children's Home Annual Report,' 1998, p.4. The Parkerville Home and Hillston properties are adjacent to each other.

being cleared for an orchard, bores sunk for water and a road was under construction. Over three hundred fruit trees were planted on the farm by 1950, which would increase to over a thousand. According to Mr Nugent, only a few fruit trees, the dams and the entry road remain on the Hillston site from those earlier Padbury Farm days.³² Financial assistance was also given towards the establishment of the Farm by the Lotteries Commission.³³

In his memoirs, Roy Peterkin fondly recalls the time when he invited Mrs Fairbridge, wife of the founder of the Fairbridge Farm School, to visit Stoneville to see the progress made there. 'She was delighted with her visit: "This would have thrilled Kingsley", she said, "or it is a real farm school with the boys not only clearing and cultivating the land which they have carved out of virgin bush, but even erecting their own buildings."' ³⁴ In his own memoirs, Jack Nugent who was supervising the boys at that time, now wonders if too much was expected of the boys given their young age, and that perhaps 'a major weakness of Padbury [and the other home] was little love shown to the boys.'³⁵

Further buildings were added to the site in 1948 and schoolboys were included in the intake bringing the number of boys to eleven. This number gradually rose to twenty and included some migrant children from England.³⁶ The farm developed with the purchase of equipment, new fields established with pastures for stock, water storage tanks erected and a large dam constructed for irrigation. This was donated by Bell Brothers.³⁷ There were sheep, cattle and poultry.

However, during the mid 1950s the number of children going into orphanages declined creating financial difficulties for the church and Swan Homes. The decision had to be made to close down the Padbury Boys' Farm.³⁸ 'An experienced farmer was employed to carry on farm maintenance until new arrangements were made for the future of this property.'³⁹

The Anglican Farm School c.1955-56

The conversion of the former Padbury Boys Farm into the Anglican Farm School, a reformatory for young boys, came about through a Labor government initiative to investigate child welfare in the state. A. R. G. Hawke, MLA, who became Premier in 1953, held the portfolio for Child Welfare, and invited the Director of Child Welfare in New South Wales, Mr R. H. Hicks to overview the situation. Hick's report was highly critical

³² Peterkin, op. cit., p.99, and conversation with Mr Nugent.

³³ *ibid*, p.100. Peterkin refers to dollars in this instance although decimal currency had not been introduced.

³⁴ *ibid*, p.100.

³⁵ Jack Nugent, conversation and typed article, op. cit.

³⁶ Mr Nugent recalls life being hard in those times for the children and items such as shoes were kept for special occasions. The children generally went bare footed, or wore sandals. He spoke of the English children complaining that the sandals didn't keep their feet warm in the winter.

³⁷ Jack Nugent, conversation, op. cit.

³⁸ According to Mr Nugent, orphanages were no longer considered the best way of caring for children and were being replaced by foster homes.

³⁹ Peterkin, op. cit., p.101.

of the establishments in Western Australia, apart from the Anglican run Swan Homes which he referred to as 'outstanding'.⁴⁰ Hawke acted on Hick's recommendations, which included the removal of the 'care and reformation of delinquents from the denomination which had been doing this work, and make alternative arrangements.'⁴¹ The decision was made to request the Anglican Homes Board to undertake this responsibility. It was fortuitous that the Padbury Boys' Farm had just been closed so that facilities were already available for the transfer of the boys from one institution to another. The farm changed its name to the Anglican Boys' Farm to distinguish it from the days when it operated as an orphanage. The name change also served to protect the Padbury boys from any association with a reformatory.

There were to be two establishments for delinquent boys. One for seniors and one for juniors which would be at Stoneville. In the interim, the Padbury site was used for all the boys. 'Legal ownership of the latter [Stoneville] was to remain with the Board who would charge a rental for the premises and for the use of the developed farm land. An Anglican chapel was to be built and there was to be a part-time chaplain appointed by the Archbishop.'⁴²

While the place was controlled by the Anglican Church, which held a majority of voting rights on the Board, the government had the responsibility of upgrading the facilities. Apparently this upgrading did not happen quickly enough, and overcrowding and frequent absconding resulted. Bad press and political pressure resulted in the government's decision to make finance available to establish a reformatory at Riverbank for the older delinquents, and the purchase, from the Board, of 300 acres of unimproved land at Stoneville in order to begin work on new buildings.⁴³ On 3 July 1958 the land was transferred and vested in the Hon. Minister for Works. Documents refer to the place as the Stoneville Institution, then Hillston.⁴⁴

The first building was an ablution block, then during 1958 and 1961, the Anglican chapel, 'The Chapel of the Holy Redeemer' was built. Initially, a design had been prepared by the Public Works Department in 1956. (See archive drawings in Appendix). This design was not used, being replaced by a simpler plan worked out by the chaplain, the Reverent Walter Churchill. The chapel was built by the boys, under the supervision of a qualified builder, using local stone and concrete.⁴⁵ A brief account of the chapel is given in a newspaper article following the dedication service in 1961.

The lower half of the walls are panels of ironstone rock precast on the ground before being lifted into position. Each panel weighs about six tons. The altar and flooring are made from granite slabs. The pews were rough hewn with an axe from jarrah

⁴⁰ *ibid*, p.146.

⁴¹ *ibid*, p.147.

⁴² *ibid*, p.149.

⁴³ *ibid*.

⁴⁴ 'Report of the Committee to investigate and advise on options and other measures for the control of Hillston absconding and associated offending.' Department for Community Welfare, WA, August 1980, p.16.

⁴⁵ *The West Australian*, 17 July, 1961, p.10, Country News section.

and waxed. A tall redgum, 3ft in diameter, was cut down to 4ft, and set in a natural stone base for a reading desk.⁴⁶

The chapel has added interest for the wrought iron decorations made by the boys, and the front doors which are made up of individual panels which have also been designed and worked upon by the boys. Pine trees were planted near the chapel after its completion.⁴⁷ The chapel continues to be used to this day, and weddings have taken place there.⁴⁸

Hillston Boys' Farm - c.1964 - c.1983/4

On 16 June 1960, the dining room and kitchen block, designed by the Public Works Department, was officially opened by the Minister for Child Welfare, The Honourable L. A. Logan MLC, and dedicated by the Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Dr R. W. H. Moline. This was followed on 24 May, 1964, with the official opening of a sixty bed accommodation block consisting of separate secured 'cabins' which could be locked at night. This building, designed by the Perth architectural firm of Duncan, Stephen & Mercer, was officially opened by the Minister for Child Welfare and dedicated by the Archbishop of Perth.⁴⁹ Homes had also been established for staff which included two cooks.

Hillston Boys' Farm continued to develop as a largely self sufficient institution. There was a piggery where the boys were taught to slaughter and dress the meat, cows for milking, poultry, vegetables and fruit trees to tend. A marron farm was also established, and a smoke-house. Younger boys attended the local school, while the older boys were given the opportunity to work outside on day release. About eight boys worked at the abattoirs.⁵⁰ The boys also took part in the local community's sporting activities. Apart from the main accommodation blocks, younger boys stayed in one of the home cottages, and older boys who went out to work lived in a demountable. During the 1970s three demountable Bristol classrooms were erected on the site.⁵¹ A large weatherboard and asbestos building, used at one end as a classroom and the other for manual training, was erected on the site in two stages, the first half in the 1950s, and the second half in c.1973.⁵² According to Jack Nugent, no buildings from the Padbury Farm School days were left after Hillston was established. A 'plantation' of pine trees was also planted by the boys in c.1964 using seedlings which were being given away by the Forestry Department.⁵³

Hillston did not have a security fence, and frequent abscondings and complaints from local residents about thefts in the district resulted in the

46

ibid.

47

Phil Bowyer, op. cit.

48

Peter Holden, op. cit.

49

Information from plaques located on the inside of the dining room, and outside the main block.

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Terry Millar, former Assistant Superintendent at Hillston, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 August, 1998.

51

ibid.

52

ibid. Mr Millar indicated that the schoolhouse was erected on the site in the early 1960s, but this appears to be in conflict with an archival drawing of 1958 which show the building to already be on site.

53

Phil Bowyer, op. cit.

government appointing a committee to look into the matter. A report undertaken by the Department for Community Welfare was completed in August 1980. Issues were identified and options outlined, which included closing Hillston and moving the boys to another location.⁵⁴

Around 1983-84, the Hillston Boys' Farm closed. The place was apparently left vacant until an alternative use could be found.⁵⁵ Discussions about a drug rehabilitation centre were not met with enthusiasm by the local community.⁵⁶

Hillston Community Centre - 1992-c.1994

On 22 October, 1992, Hillston reopened as the Hillston Community Centre. Three hundred people were reported to have attended the festivities, and it was hoped that this could be an annual event.⁵⁷

The primary purpose for re-opening Hillston is to offer a retreat venue for organisations, dealing particularly with disadvantaged young people, to hold training courses, conferences and 'get togethers'.⁵⁸

Alterations to the place to make it more suitable for users included taking out the wall between every two 'cabins' to enlarge the bedrooms, and remove the heavy concrete security grids which had been installed outside each window.⁵⁹

Some of the events that had been held at Hillston, apparently before the official opening, included 'Camp Turnaround' for one hundred teenagers which was jointly organised by Community Policing and the Department for Community Development (now called Family and Children's Services), and a 'Workskills Training Course' for young unemployed people.⁶⁰

Former assistant superintendent, Terry Millar, was employed as the Centre's Project Manager, and part of his brief was to encourage Aboriginal groups to organise and use the facilities. However, 'this petered out after a couple of years, and eventually the centre closed down.'⁶¹ For a time the place had been leased by Westrek for youth programmes.

1994 - 1998

Since 1994, Hillston has had no regular programme of use other than being available for hire as a place for youth camps and such one-off events as Rally Australia.⁶² The former administration building is used by the State Emergency Services and the local Volunteer Fire Brigade holds regular meetings at Hillston.

⁵⁴ "Report of the Committee to investigate and advise on options and other measures for the control of Hillston absconding and associated offending." Department for Community Welfare, WA, August 1980.

⁵⁵ Terry Millar, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Jack Nugent, conversation, op. cit.

⁵⁷ *Milli Milli Wungka*, No.4, January 1993, p.13.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, and Peter Holden, op. cit.

⁶⁰ *Milli Milli Wungka*, op. cit., p.13.

⁶¹ Terry Millar and Peter Holden, op. cit.

⁶² Peter Holden, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 10.08.98.

In late 1998, Family and Children's Services propose to develop the site to provide alternative, short term, care and counselling for youths experiencing difficulties with foster and other care.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr) is situated in the hills approximately 32 kilometres east of the Perth city centre. The site is approached via a private road off Stoneville Road which is flanked on the left by bushland owned by Landcorp and on the right by pasture which is the eastern extent of Parkerville Children's Home. Four houses stand on the north side of the roadway, two (unoccupied) in Landcorp land and two near where the roadway terminates at the collection of buildings which form the nucleus of the place. The latter are occupied by Hillston's site manager and an assistant site manager respectively. The eastern part of the driveway is shaded by a scattered plantation of a dozen or so mature pine trees.

Besides the site managers' quarters, the first building one passes is an old schoolhouse (presently referred to as the old workshop) that stands a short distance uphill from the roadway. Immediately beyond this the driveway veers to the left and branches: The right turn leading to the bitumen carparking area is located between a two level administration block, the south and east arms of a low, spreading dormitory block and the old schoolhouse. The left branch, gravelled, curves around to the right, encircling the main group of buildings and rejoining the roadway between the old schoolhouse and the assistant site manager's quarters. The encircling track also has a northern branch which provides access to a dairy building, piggery and a number of stone lined marron ponds beneath some large trees.

The main group of buildings are arranged in such a way that they define two distinct quadrangle areas, one being the bitumen carparking area previously described; the other, also bitumen paved, is an area intended for recreational use and is defined by the administration building and main dormitory on the east, by the main dormitory and an older dormitory on the north, the kitchen and dining area and recreation hall on the west, and swimming pool area on the south. The site of these buildings has a gentle downward fall southwards, being part of a hillside that drains into the Clutterbuck Creek.⁶³

Buildings on the site are of greatly differing constructions. Four main types of construction are evident:

1. 1950s weatherboard and asbestos structures including the old schoolhouse and various quarters. The chapel (1958-61) is a crossover between the weatherboard and asbestos structures of the 1950s and the masonry construction that occurred in the early 1960s. Two demountable Bristol classrooms on the site may also be included in this category, being stud walled 1950s buildings. They are, however, clad with aluminium sheeting and were brought onto the site in the 1970s.

⁶³ The upper reaches of this creek extends east within the land owned by Parkerville Children's Home, but its watershed is in the Landcorp property so the creek does in fact at one point cross under the Hillston private road. There are a number of dams on the Clutterbuck within the Parkerville property. Two smaller dams are located on the northern branch of the creek which passes through the Hillston property.

2. Public Works Department institutional buildings built of masonry in the early 1960s, including the kitchen and dining building (1959-60) and the recreation hall.
3. Later buildings erected in the 1960s that were designed by architects commissioned by the Public Works Department, including the main dormitory (1964), administration building and science block.
4. Utilitarian outbuildings mostly erected after 1960, including the fuel store, smoke house, dairy, piggery, mechanical workshop, generator shed, and poultry sheds. Brick and cement mortar was predominantly employed for the construction of these outbuildings, although the sheds for keeping chickens are corrugated iron and timber and the piggery is partly made of formed concrete.

The staff houses are timber framed structures clad with asbestos sheeting and weatherboard. Although inhabited, the buildings show some evidence of neglect, with the paintwork being in fair to poor condition.

The oldest complete structure on the site is the schoolhouse which is essentially a timber stud-walled building on stumps. Its walls are externally clad with weatherboard (from base plate to sill height) and asbestos sheeting. The hipped roof is clad with corrugated asbestos sheeting. Internally the building has tongue and groove hardwood floors, asbestos clad walls and plasterboard ceilings. Most of the building's windows are the double hung sash, the larger windows being composed of multiple panes. A flat verandah roof of corrugated iron with tubular metal posts has been added to the rear of the place, as well as a rather unsympathetic extension of a room that is clad with asbestos sheeting.

The schoolhouse has recently been condemned by CAMS because of the deteriorated condition of the asbestos used in its construction and the inherent health risk this poses.⁶⁴ Consequently all maintenance of the place has lapsed. The asbestos roof has numerous minor leaks which have stained the ceilings and in places result in floor boards getting wet. Timberwork forms the greater part of the building fabric and is mostly in very good condition.

The two Bristol demountables are located north-east of the schoolhouse, behind the quarters presently occupied by the site managers. From the outside these buildings appear to be in fair condition. The one furthest west is badly damaged by termites and has been condemned, the other is utilised by the local fire brigade.⁶⁵

Of those buildings in the main cluster, the chapel is probably the next oldest. The chapel is rectangular in plan, aligned approximately on an east-west axis with its altar at the east end and main entrance facing west (the traditional orientation for high Anglican chapels). The roof of the church slopes gradually upwards towards the east. A tubular steel structure immediately in front of the west entrance originally housed a bell, and supports a concrete slab that forms an entrance canopy. Two types of construction have been employed for the walls. Up to head height the wall consists of masonry of laterite rubble stone and cement mortar

⁶⁴ Peter Holden, op., cit., 10.08.98.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

between a grid of painted concrete columns, the wall having the same finish inside and out. Above head height, and up to the eaves line, the walls consist of studwork clad externally with a square profiled asbestos sheet (painted a light grey-blue) and internally with cement render supported by a fine steel mesh. Inscribed vertical lines provide a texture to the cement render. In terms of structure, the side walls are composed of six bays expressed by the projecting concrete piers and exposed rafter ends. In the upper part of the wall a window is positioned in the centre of each bay except that furthest east. From west to east each window is larger than the previous one as an expression of the roof line. A small window with a decorative screen and red stained glass is located above the west doors, and a large multipaned window with clear glass is situated in the east wall - highlighting the altar.

Various fittings and ornamentation within the building are evidently hand made and of naive style. The main doors consist of wide planks cladding a timber frame, and the external faces of the doors are crudely inscribed with religious symbolism. A baptismal font is located immediately inside from the doorway - located mid aisle - and is made of a hollowed out laterite boulder decorated by a number of crudely carved religious symbols and supported by three granite boulders. A stand of similar construction (laterite boulders) is located near the front of the church (south side). The lectern is near the front on the north side and made of a tree stump (apparently still firmly rooted in its original position). Beyond this is the altar rail of wrought iron decorated with representations of fish and waves. The altar itself is rectangular in form, built of laterite boulders and finished with black tiles. Behind the altar is a crude cross of CCA treated pine, apparently a recent replacement of an earlier hardwood cross. The pews are unsophisticated and angular in form, being made of hewn jarrah boards with a varnished finish. The floor beneath the pews is paved with natural stone and cement mortar, but the aisle, front and rear of the church are paved with polished cement slabs. Black tiles, like those covering the top of the altar top, are used for the entire area behind the altar rail. Decorating the walls are a number of large symbols created with the type of steel mesh that had been used to support the cement render. The ceiling is lined with boards of a light timber, laid longitudinally, with the rafters and supporting timbers exposed beneath.

Occasional use is made of the chapel with the result that the interior is well kept. Most internal finishes are low maintenance, although dirt is difficult to remove from parts of the floor flagged with stone. Deterioration of the rendered upper wall is evident, caused by corrosion of the steel mesh backing. Staining has occurred to the timber ceiling lining, and is caused by leaks in the asbestos roof sheeting. Externally, paint on the asbestos upper wall cladding, timber work and steel bell tower is in poor condition. The building's rainwater goods also require attention.

The recreation hall is constructed of cream brick with expressed concrete columns, a duo pitch roof clad with corrugated asbestos sheets, and a sprung wooden floor on the inside. Two courses of cream coloured vent bricks provide horizontal articulation to the elevations. Natural lighting is provided by windows that are positioned near the eaves in the side walls

and extend from column to column. A loading dock at the east end of the hall and a secondary room on the north side of the hall break up the monolithic visual effect of the hall. The hall is in good condition and its stage and sprung floor are well suited to a range of recreational uses.

The kitchen and dining building, with adjoining dormitory, is constructed of red brick masonry with large openings, framed with timber and part glazed/part filled with solid panelling. The building has a duo-pitch roof clad with galvanised iron sheeting, and has a verandah on the eastern side. The kitchen is one of high quality, built to commercial requirements and fully equipped. The kitchen and dining facilities are regularly used by groups staying at the camp.

The dormitories, both the 1960 and 1964 sections, are furnished and regularly used by groups staying at Hillston. The 1964 section forms a cross in plan with a superintendent's station in the centre and with staff quarters in the short northern arm. The external form of this building is uncompromisingly severe: repeated cream brick bays, two cells wide with a low pitched roof and window (partly) screened with a lace of precast concrete panels. Internally one is faced with long passages, the walls lined on either side with twin sets of doors leading into the bedroom cells, tongue and groove hardwood floors, and pitched ceilings. The interior of this building is in good condition, but externally it is apparent that the roof requires a high level of maintenance and replacement of roof sheeting may be needed for some areas.

The administration building is built lower down the slope from the main dormitory and has floors on two levels, the upper level being the principal floor. In terms of its architecture, the building is an example of the International Style that was based on Corbusian design principles, notably the use of piloti to elevate the building, the expressed framework (with integrated louvre shading), ribbon windows and open floor plan. The building is occupied by the State Emergency Services (Mundaring Branch), and generally appears to be in fair condition.

Consideration is being given to the demolition of the administration building, and in the event that this is carried out the State Emergency Service has plans to relocate into the former science block which is located behind the west Bristol demountable.⁶⁶ The former science block is one of the more recent buildings on the site and is in good condition. It is constructed of light coloured brick with a flat metal roof, and consists of two principal rooms serviced by male and female toilet facilities.

13.3 REFERENCES

'Report of the Committee to investigate and advise on options and other measures for the control of Hillston absconding and associated offending.' Department for Community Welfare, WA, August 1980.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

⁶⁶ Peter Holden, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 9.09.98.

