



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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.4 Developing Sheep and Cattle Industries

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 301 Grazing, pastoralism, and dairying.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

St Erney's Homestead is an unusual and aesthetically pleasing composition of two elements, a pisé construction Federation Bungalow gable roof building with a later Group Settlement house of timber, and this combination in its forest clearing setting has pleasing aesthetic qualities. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The first stage of *St Erney's Homestead* was constructed in the first decade of the twentieth century, as the farmhouse of a Homestead Block settler, as European settlement extended in the Upper Warren district in the period. The second stage, formerly a Group Settlement house, was added in 1945. (Criterion 2.2)

St Erney's Homestead was built for Thomas Harris Parsons, a farmer in the Upper Warren district in the early 1900s, and continued to be owned and occupied by the Parsons' family until 1979. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

St Erney's Homestead was constructed in pisé, complete with a damp proof course and has proved to be a durable material. The make up of the material is of technical interest for its durability and its well-preserved state and is worthy of study. (Criterion 3.3)

* 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. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place contributes to the community's sense of place as the homestead of the Parsons' family, a family well known and important in the district for c. 70 years, and through the naming of the road leading to the place, Parsons Road. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Though mud construction was quite common in Western Australia at the time of construction of the place, the use of mud bricks was the most popular form and the use of pisé remained a rarely used technique in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

St. Erney's Homestead is a fine representative example of a simple, Federation period pisé construction homestead. (Criterion 6.1)

St. Erney's Homestead is a representative example of local settler making use of available materials for pisé construction and recycled buildings, namely of a group settler's house as an addition. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The place is sufficiently well maintained for all its values to be legible. Maintenance has been minimal, but has been sufficient to maintain the fabric intact. The current form of tenure militates against regular maintenance. Overall the place is in fair condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place is no longer used as the homestead of a farm, but is tenanted as a house. The use is compatible and capable of conserving its heritage value. The place retains a moderate to high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The two sections of the homestead retain much of the original fabric of the two major construction phases. There has been little change to the first section constructed in pisé and only upgrades to the kitchen and bathroom areas of the timber construction section. The authenticity of the pisé section is moderate to high while the authenticity of the timber-framed section is moderate.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect.

A survey should be prepared to ascertain the correct position of the improvements in relation to the Lot, and then a curtilage diagram prepared.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

St Erney's Homestead is a three-room homestead constructed for Thomas Harris Parsons in c. 1908-09. The walls of the place that form this part of the

place are of pisé construction, the floors are of jarrah, and the ceilings of jarrah boards. A former Group Settlement house of timber construction with an iron roof was added at the south side in 1945, opening to the original house via an existing door.

In 1831, Lt. Preston, R. N., discovered the mouth of the Warren River; and the name of the district is derived from it.¹

In 1852, A. C. Gregory undertook the first European exploration of the Warren District, which takes its name from the Warren River. Crossing the Blackwood River, he followed the Donnelly River downstream to the coast to its mouth, before heading east and striking the Warren River three miles from the coast. He found good grassy flats six miles up the river, and a good strong stream. Then he went south-east to Brooke Inlet, and further explored the Warren District. In the same year, Robert and Thomas Muir made an exploratory journey to the district in search of new land.²

In 1856, Thomas and Andrew Muir took 1,000 sheep to the Warren district, to Perup and Lake Muir. Subsequently, they established themselves at Fernhill, Deeside, and Mardalup. In 1859, Charles Rose and Frank Hall took up adjoining leases 1425 and 1426; however, only Rose persisted and remained at Walgarrup.³

In the late 1850s, and through the 1860s, a number of people took up Locations in the Warren District, mostly for pastoral purposes. In this early period of development, convicts were employed on the construction of roads and bridges, and also ticket-of-leave men as shepherds to care for the pastoralists' flocks.⁴ Circa 1865, ticket-of-leave men built 'Lake Muir' homestead, with the bricks made on site, and a shingle roof; and Rose built his homestead at Walgarrup of slab and daub with a roof of jarrah shingles.⁵ In 1866, 'Deeside' was built by ticket-of-leave men for Thomas Muir; and Walter Blechynden settled at 'Glenpennant'.⁶

In 1871, the Upper Warren district was included under the Sussex Roads Board.⁷ In the early 1870s, more homesteads were built by those who had taken up Locations in the district, including John Mottram at Peppermint Grove near the Warren River, and Peter Wheatley at 'Clover Cottage'. A. L. Clarke established 'Fern Hollow', and Charles Young, 'Mica Hill'.⁸ In 1876, the Upper Warren District became part of the Blackwood Roads Board.⁹

The population in the district gradually increased, and there was an increasing number of families by the early 1880s. Several of these families, the Blechyndens, Clarkes, Mottrams, and Wheatleys, decided that a school should be built to provide for the educational needs of their children.¹⁰ On

¹ Evans, H. D. *Southern Sketches: A tale of the development of the Warren and nearby districts* (Dept. of Agriculture, Western Australia, 1993) Foreword. Note :The river is thought to have been named after Admiral John Borlase Warren.

² Jennings, Roger 'The History and Development of the Warren District of Western Australia, 1852-1911' Typescript in Battye Library, pp. 1-4.

³ *ibid.*, p. 5. Note: Some secondary sources give the date as 1857, and some spell the name of the place Wilgarrup.

⁴ Jennings, Rodger *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁶ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁷ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁸ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁹ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 22; and Jennings, Rodger *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁰ Evans, H. D. *op. cit.*, p. 23. Note: Jennings gives the date as 1871.

completion in 1891, the school building served also as a church for the local community.

In 1893, the *Homestead Act* (the Act) was passed, by which it was possible for potential settlers to select a free homestead farm, to a maximum of 160 acres, provided it the selector resided there and improved it for a period of seven years.¹¹ More land could be selected under Conditional purchase.¹² The Act encouraged a new wave of European settlers to the district.

In 1896, the Upper Blackwood district broke away from the Blackwood Roads Board, and formed the Nelson Roads Board, which included the Warren district and Bridgetown.¹³

In 1898, the railway reached Bridgetown.

Circa 1908-09, Thomas Harris Parsons took up land to farm with his wife and three sons in the Upper Warren District in the early twentieth century, with each of the four men taking up a homestead block of 160 acres.¹⁴ In addition, together they took up 1,000 acres on Conditional purchase, adjoining the homestead blocks, the whole area including the homestead blocks comprising Nelson Locations 3743, 3744, 3745, 3746, and 3747.¹⁵ They selected good country at the confluence of three tributaries of the Warren River. The site Thomas Parsons chose for his homestead, at Lot 3 of Nelson Location 3745, is on the north bank of a tree lined creek, with a bridge leading to the farm buildings.¹⁶

Circa 1908-09, Thomas Parsons built a homestead at his selection, which was named *St. Erney's* after St. Erney Church, at Landrake, Cornwall, where his wife, Edith Jane, had been christened in 1850.¹⁷ By 1910, three rooms of the homestead had been built, with substantial walls of pisé construction on a mixture of clay, sand and ironstone foundation with all materials obtained on site.¹⁸ The floors were of jarrah boards, and the ceilings lined with jarrah boards.¹⁹ A verandah and the entrance were built at the north side, and skillion rooms at the south.²⁰ The verandah at the north is no longer extant, and the skillion rooms were removed to make way for additions in 1945.

In 1910, the railway reached Manjimup, providing the impetus for further development in the surrounding district, including the Upper Warren district.²¹

On 9 May 1917, following the death of Thomas Harris Parsons, his wife, Edith Jane Parsons, as Administratrix of his Estate, was granted at a peppercorn rental the 160 acres at Nelson Location 3745 on which the homestead was located.²² On 11 May, a Certificate of Title was similarly registered in her

11 Crowley, F. K. *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia from the first settlements to modern times* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1960) p. 104.

12 Evans, H. D. op. cit., p. 30.

13 Jennings, Rodger op. cit., p. 16.

14 S. E. Parsons in National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment, August 1985.

15 *ibid.*

16 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment, August 1985.

17 S. E. Parsons to National Trust of Australia (W. A.) op. cit.

18 S. E. Parsons to National Trust of Australia (W. A.) op. cit.

19 Site visit by Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, 23 May 2001.

20 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment op. cit.

21 Evans, H. D. op. cit., p. 15.

22 Grant under the Land Act, 1898, 18C/172.

name as sole proprietor.²³ As the latter shows her address as Bridgetown, she may have ceased occupying the place by this date. The Parsons' family continued to work the farm, and Harold Edward Parsons resided at the homestead with his wife and family.²⁴ Harold's wife (nee Wheatley) loved gardening, and she established and maintained 'a beautiful garden' around the homestead in the period inter-war period through into the 1950s.²⁵

On 23 June 1937, Edith Jane Parsons died.²⁶ The Parsons' family continued to reside at the place, and to work the farm.²⁷

In 1945, the skillion rooms on the south were replaced by a large timber addition comprising dining room with a fireplace, kitchen with a corresponding fireplace, vestibule, bathroom, laundry and toilet, an enclosed sleep-out at the south side, an open verandah at the east side and glass enclosed verandah at the west side. The original three rooms were put to use as bedrooms on either side of a central lounge room. The walls of the addition were painted; the lining was dressed jarrah timber and the ceiling of hardboard sheeting. The addition was formerly a timber framed cottage, which had been brought to the place from its original site at an abandoned Group Settlement block at Northcliffe, where it was believed to have been built in c. 1930.²⁸

In the early 1950s, Harold Parsons, with his wife and daughter and son Tom, moved into Manjimup to live, whilst his other son, Stanley Edward Parsons remained at the place.²⁹ He and his wife, Kit, continued to live there and to work the farm until 1979.³⁰

On 11 August 1955, Letters of Administration of the un-administered Estate of Thomas Harris Parsons were granted to Stanley Edward Parsons, farmer, of Manjimup, and this was registered on the Certificate of Title in July 1956.³¹ On 9 May 1957, a new Certificate of Title was issued in his name as sole proprietor; and the place continued in his ownership until June 1973.³²

In August 1972, S. E. Parsons wrote to National Trust of Australia (W. A.) regarding the possible Classification of the place, which at that date was in very good condition.³³ A sketch plan (not to scale) by Mr. Parsons shows the place comprised two bedrooms, lounge and dining rooms, with a double sided fireplace between the kitchen and dining room, a vestibule, and bathroom enclosed sleep-out at the side, toilet and laundry at one end of the enclosed rear verandah, and an open front verandah.³⁴ The two bedrooms

23 Certificate of Title Vol. 668 Fol. 137.

24 Dorothy Pozzi (nee Parsons) telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 29 May 2001.

25 *ibid.*

26 Certificate of Title Vol. 668 Fol. 137.

27 Dorothy Pozzi *op. cit.*; and Phyll Mottram, conversation with Robin Chinnery, 22 May 2001.

28 Stanley Edward Parsons to National Trust of Australia (W. A.) *op. cit.*

29 Dorothy Pozzi *op. cit.*

30 *ibid.*

31 Certificate of Title Vol. 668 Fol. 137.

32 Certificate of Title Vol. 1203 Fol. 40.

33 S. E. Parsons to National Trust of Australia (W. A.), in National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment *op. cit.*, 24 August 1972.

34 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment *op. cit.*

and lounge room were the earliest construction (c. 1908-09).³⁵ Subsequently, the place was recorded by the Trust in December 1972.³⁶

On 25 July 1979, new Certificates of Title for the property were issued registering Neville Bernard Rodwell, farmer, and Barbara Mary Rodwell, married woman, of Boyup Brook, as tenants in common in equal shares of Nelson Locations 3744, 3745, and 3747, and for portion of Nelson Location 3745, being Lot 3 on Diagram 56972, the site of the place.³⁷ On 11 October 1979, the place was transferred from them to Neville John Simcock.³⁸

On 20 October 1981, a Memorial, C237377, was registered on the Certificate of Title under Section 12EA of Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947; and a similar Memorial, C458549, was registered on 24 November 1982.³⁹

From the 1950s, the Forests Department had been extending its pine planting programme in the South-West. On 7 March 1985, the place was transferred to the Conservator of Forests for this purpose.⁴⁰

In August 1985, the place was assessed by National Trust of Australia (W. A.). At that period, the place was unoccupied, and quotations had been obtained by Mr. Heberley for repairs at an estimated cost of \$2,000-\$3,000.⁴¹ On 2 December 1985, the place was classified by the National Trust.⁴²

A former single-man's hut was re-located to the place from Quininup at an unknown date, to serve as an outbuilding at the rear of the homestead.⁴³

The place was entered on the Interim Register of the State Register of Heritage Places; and accordingly, on 24 January 1994, a Memorial was lodged under the *Heritage Act of Western Australia Act 1990*.⁴⁴

On 10 July 1997, the place was included in the Municipal Inventory, which was adopted by the Shire of Manjimup.

A number of the roads in the Upper Warren district are named for the early European settlers to whose homesteads the roads lead, including Parsons Road, leading to the place.

The place is no longer used as the homestead of a farm, but is tenanted as a house. In 2001, the place is leased to tenants, who have resided there for about four years.⁴⁵ During their tenancy, they have undertaken some minor repairs, including replacement of the shingling beneath the gable on the east face of the original building, repairs to roofing, built timber railing to the front verandah, and repaired some fencing.⁴⁶

35 *ibid.*

36 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment op. cit.

37 Certificates of Title Vol. 1537 Fol. 971 and Vol. 1537 Fol. 974.

38 *ibid.*

39 *ibid.*

40 *ibid.*

41 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment op. cit.

42 National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment op. cit.

43 Chris Wade, current tenant, conversation with Robin Chinnery at the site, 23 May 2001.

44 Certificate of Title Vol. 1537 Fol. 974.

45 Mrs. Wade, conversation with Robin Chinnery at the site, 23 May 2001.

46 Mr. and Mrs. Chris Wade op. cit.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

St Erney's Homestead is a three-room homestead constructed for Thomas Harris Parsons in c. 1908-09. The walls that form this part of the place are of pisé construction, the floors are of jarrah, and the ceilings of jarrah boards. A former Group Settlement house of timber construction with an iron roof was added at the south side in 1945, opening to the original house via an existing door. The house is located west of Wheatley Coast Highway at the end of Parsons Road, approximately 2.28 kilometres from the highway. Much of the unmade approach road is lined with plantation pines (*Pinus radiata*-Monterey Pines).

The site of the homestead slopes gently from the north to the south and is fenced in parts with post and wire fences. Plantation pines surround the site with a single Monkey Puzzle Pine (*Auracaria auracana*) located just outside the fenced area to its north east. The buildings lie near the northern fenced boundary. The house is surrounded by lawn and gardens. There are eucalypts along the eastern boundary, Pepper Trees (*Schinus spp.*) and Apple Trees (*Malus spp.*), with Apple, Lemon, Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) and Kurrajong. There are several clumps of *Jacksonia*. There are plantings of *Agapanthus* (*Agapanthus spp.*) in the lawn areas, together with a Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and Camellia and Roses around the east side of the house.

Pisé Homestead (1908-09)

The homestead is located close to the north fence, with the pisé section on the north side, a lean-to carport attached to the north wall. The timber-framed section of the building abuts the south wall of the pisé section of the house. Further to the west there is a timber framed former single men's quarters that is used for storage, with a lean-to attached to its southern side. A little to the north there is a chicken run. There is brick footing to the south east of the house, and it would appear to be the remains of an oven or boiler.

The first section of the homestead is a rectangular plan, gabled roof three-room building in the Federation Bungalow style, with casement windows and framed ledge and braced doors. The walls are built up in stages with a footing and first stage of pisé terminating at a sand and bitumen damp proof course. The upper walls are raised over the damp proof course in stages to plate height. The pisé has white and cream clay soils, broken brick and other debris in it. The walls do not rise into the gables, and the gable walls are framed with split jarrah shingle cladding. The roof to this section is painted galvanized corrugated iron with rolled ridges. There is a brick construction chimney rising through the northern roof slope. The eaves gutters are Sheerline profile and the northern gutter discharges into a rainwater tank at the western end of the wall. A timber framed lean-to carport is attached to the northern wall and it has a concrete floor.

The house has three rooms arranged in a linear pattern, with inter-linking doors between each of the rooms. Each room has 5" (125mm) tongue and grooved timber board floors, with a rectangular skirting and quad, though the middle room has replacement 3" (75mm) boards. The walls are all 15" (385mm) thick and finished with plaster. The ceilings are lined on the rake for the first 300mm and then flat, with all of the lining made of jarrah boards. The centre room has a large fireplace in its north west corner, and part of this construction is face brickwork, while the remainder is finished with plaster. The door opening to the exterior of bedroom 4 has French doors, which appear to be a later addition.

Apart from some deterioration of the pisé, the corrugated iron and the gable shingles, the exterior of this section of the house is in fair condition. There is some structural cracking around the door and window frames on the building interior, but it is otherwise in fair condition.

Timber addition (c1945)

The timber addition is located on the south side of the original 1908-9 pisé construction house.

This section of the homestead is a rectangular plan, gable and hipped roof four-room building also in the Federation Bungalow style, with surrounding verandahs partly filled in to provide a further two rooms. It has timber casement and fixed light windows and ledge and braced doors. Windows to the filled in verandah are double hung sashes. The floors and walls are timber framed raised timber stumps. The walls are lined with painted weatherboards. The verandah has square timber posts and carpenter's handrails. The roof to this section is painted galvanized corrugated iron with rolled ridges. The eaves gutters are Sheerline profile.

The house has four central rooms, kitchen, vestibule, bathroom and living room, arranged in a linear pattern, with inter-linking doors between each of the rooms. The perimeter rooms are verandah spaces filled in to provide a further vestibule, laundry and water closet, and a bedroom.

Each room has 4" (100mm) tongue and grooved timber board floors, with a rectangular skirting. The floors to service rooms are finished with sheet vinyl, while the remaining rooms have carpets. The walls are all 4" (100mm) thick and finished with fibro-cement and cover battens throughout, with the exception of the living room, which has a jarrah wainscot, and the bathroom, which has tempered hardboard 'tiles'. The ceilings are flat and are lined with the same materials. The living room has a masonry construction fireplace and the kitchen has a place in which a wood range once stood. The bathroom and kitchen fittings would all appear to be from the post World War Two period.

Apart from some deterioration of the stumping, the corrugated iron and the verandah boards, the exterior of this section of the house is in fair condition. The interior is in fair condition.

Timber single men's quarters

This is a simple rectangular plan gabled roof one-room structure, with an iron roof and painted jarrah weatherboard walls. Lean-tos have been attached to the north and south sides to provide roof shelter.

Oven

This is a rectangular plan structure with stone foundations and a brick superstructure some three courses high. The eastern end has a brick construction floor and there is no floor on the western end.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

There are two basic forms of mud construction. The most commonly used form in Western Australia, according to census information was mud brick. This method simply involved pressing bricks in form boxes, drying them and lying them in pug or lime mortar. Pisé or rammed earth construction makes use of mud also. This technique involves forming up shutters or formwork of boards in sections and laying in selected gravelly loam without too much clay, and is sometimes mixed with a small amount of cement other materials. The

layer of wall is rammed solidly between the forms, allowed to set and then the formwork is struck and raised for the next layer of walling. This generally results in simple architectural forms to avoid special cutting and shaping.

Methods of founding buildings varies, some having stone foundations, and others having rammed earth. *St. Erney's* has a rammed earth foundation with a damp proof course of bitumen and sand.

Pisé was a common form of construction in New South Wales, where it was widely promoted in agricultural journals. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics census information, mud bricks were in common usage in Western Australia, but pisé was not reported as being in widespread use. The 1911 census recorded 17 pisé buildings in Western Australia, with many times that number of mud brick constructions.

13.4 REFERENCES

National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment, August 1985

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may provide more evidence of rarity value.