



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)

- 103 Racial contact and interaction
- 2.6.2 Displacing Aboriginal people
- 3.4 Developing sheep and cattle industries
- 3.5 Recruiting labour
- 3.15 Struggling with remoteness
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions
- 5.6 Surviving as Aboriginal people in a white-dominated society

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 102 Aboriginal occupation
- 106 Workers
- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 204 Droving
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Although in a state of ruin, the homestead that comprises part of *Moir Homestead Ruins* has aesthetic interest as a tangible reminder of a vernacular building influenced by Victorian Georgian architecture which has been adapted to suit local conditions, as with the verandah addition, and by using local limestone as building material. As such, the building is typical of its period. (Criterion 1.1)

Their similar building style and construction materials aesthetically link the ruins. The texture and colour provided by the local limestone creates visual interest and provides a unifying theme to *Moir Homestead Ruins*. (Criterion 1.1)

The landscape of *Moir Homestead Ruins* has aesthetic value by virtue of the variety of views and spatial qualities it provides; the contrasts between the picturesque views to the water of the cove and within to the sparsely located

* 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.

masonry walls of the ruins; the additional landscape interest and contrast provided by the scrub vegetation against the white sand; and its overall, tranquil ambience. (Criterion 1.3)

The extant limestone buildings collectively form a cultural precinct and are a visual focus for the historic landscape that is important evidence of the history of an early settlement and occupation of Esperance. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place contributes to an understanding of the pattern of early European settlement in the south-east of the State. *Moir Homestead Ruins* is associated with the development of pastoralism in that region and the rural expansion of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

The grave of John Moir is a reminder of Aboriginal and settler relations in the early years of European occupation of Aboriginal lands. (Criterion 2.1)

Fanny Cove, the location of *Moir Homestead Ruins*, was the main point of entry for gold prospectors travelling to eastern goldfields following the discovery of gold at Dundas, Coolgardie and Norseman in 1892. William Moir regularly carted provisions to the goldfields for sale to prospectors. As the goldboom extended c.1894, Esperance became the area's major port. (Criterion 2.2)

Moir Homestead Ruins has close associations with the Aboriginal farm labourers and shepherds who were employed on the property. The place is important as a contact site. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is associated with its builders and long-term owner-occupiers, the Moir family. The extended Moir family were prominent in the development of the region, with many of them taking up pastoral leases and/or operating businesses in the area. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Moir Homestead Ruins has the potential to yield information on the material culture and the social and agriculture adaptations of colonists living in an isolated and very remote part of Western Australia. (Criterion 3.1)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is highly valued by the local community as one of the earliest homesteads in the district. (Criterion 4.1)

Moir Homestead Ruins is valued by the local community for its historic associations with the Moir family and the development of the region, and as such, contributes to their sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The ruins of the homestead that comprises part of *Moir Homestead Ruins* is a representative reminder of a simple structure built in c.1870, based on a

vernacular Victorian Georgian model adapted to local conditions and built of local materials. (Criterion 6.2)

Moir Homestead Ruins is representative of the lifestyle of early European settlers and contributes to Esperance's community's sense of place and history. (Criterion 6.2)

Moir Homestead Ruins is representative of a number of pastoral station complexes built throughout Western Australia in the mid to late nineteenth century. The individual buildings and associated amenities had specific roles in the operation of isolated, largely self-sufficient family holdings. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The homestead is in a state of ruin. The roof has collapsed, the fire of 1993 destroyed much of the timberwork and joinery, but timber lintels remain to each of the exterior walls. All glazing is missing. Blown sand has added to sub-floor deposits since the structure has been in ruins. Shrubs grow inside the structure and from the walls, especially within the north-west room, which is choked with vegetation.

The blacksmith's workshops are in ruins with only the south wall standing and part of the end gable walls (east and west). Timberwork and joinery is missing, and the remaining timberwork is fire damaged. The remnant stonework is in a severe state of decay, and the south wall has severely weathered. The interior is overgrown, and filled with blown sand – adding to the deposits.

The shepherd's camp is in fair to poor condition. Stonework to the lower sections of the west wall and to the north wall has fretted. The roof covering has rusted and there are no gutters. Beehives above the doorway and in the fireplace have dripped honey over the openings and slabs of honeycomb have fallen to the ground.

The woolshed is in ruins and now presents as a single-cell structure, with only the east, west and south (including gable wall) walls standing. Connected to the woolshed are the remains of what is believed to be the former stables. A remnant leaning low wall in coursed random rubble limestone is in partial collapse.

The remnant stonework to the woolshed and stables is in fair to poor condition. The west wall of the woolshed is outward leaning, the stonework around the opening on the south wall and to the gable has fretted, and there are severe cracks at the south end of the west wall, and the south end of the east wall.

The mature Morton Bay Fig Tree appears to be in fair to good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Although the structures that comprise *Moir Homestead Ruins* are in a state of ruin, the layout of each structure is evident; however, the structures have a moderate degree of integrity due to the substantial amount of loss of fabric enabling only a portion of the structures to be discernible with any degree of accuracy.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

As reconstruction has not been carried out, overall *Moir Homestead Ruins* has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence, prepared by the National Trust of Australia (WA) with Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, Jacqui Sherriff Historian, Gaye Nayton Historical Archaeologist, 'Moir Homestead, Conservation Plan', April 2000.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to National Trust of Australia (WA) with Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, Jacqui Sherriff Historian, Gaye Nayton Historical Archaeologist, 'Moir Homestead, Conservation Plan', April 2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to National Trust of Australia (WA) with Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, Jacqui Sherriff Historian, Gaye Nayton Historical Archaeologist, 'Moir Homestead, Conservation Plan', April 2000.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to National Trust of Australia (WA) with Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, Jacqui Sherriff Historian, Gaye Nayton Historical Archaeologist, 'Moir Homestead, Conservation Plan', April 2000.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

National Trust of Australia (WA) with Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, Jacqui Sherriff Historian, Gaye Nayton Historical Archaeologist, 'Moir Homestead, Conservation Plan', April 2000.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
