



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*

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is a small, simple building that appropriately fits the local townscape. The aesthetic characteristics, particularly the stucco work of the front facade and internal, pressed metal ceilings contribute to a distinctive character which is valued by the local community. (Criterion 1.1)

Despite the relatively simple form of the building, the place forms a landmark within the town. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson illustrates the growth of the Chapman Valley agricultural and pastoral district early this century. (Criterion 2.1)

The growth of the Chapman Valley area was due to Government policies of the time which actively encouraged people to settle on the land. *Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson* is a direct result of these policies. (Criterion 2.2)

The site for *Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson* is directly related to the development of the Geraldton-Yuna railway line, and illustrates the importance of railways in the European settlement of the state. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is highly valued by the local community as a place of social interaction and local government. This is demonstrated by the restoration of the place by the Chapman Valley Historical Society and their ongoing use of it as their headquarters. (Criterion 4.1)

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson, in the heart of the small village of Nanson, contributes significantly to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is the only public building of significant character in Nanson. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson displays characteristics of the Federation Free style and is representative of a design produced by the Public Works Department for a small road board office. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is in sound condition, having been restored by the Chapman Valley Historical Society in 1982 after a period when the building fell into disrepair. Side walls have been stabilised and there is evidence of some attempts to repair deteriorating brickwork externally. Not all of the windows are operable and joinery frames, generally, require painting. The roof and some floor boards need to be replaced. Funding has been acquired recently to commission a conservation plan.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The building no longer functions as a municipal office although some of the internal fittings from this period, such as the coat hooks and picture rails are still evident. The use as headquarters for the local historical society is sympathetic with the intent of the original function as a community focus point. The place has high integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson has moderate authenticity. There is evidence that additional fabric once formed a rear room but the exact location, purpose and era of this accommodation is unclear. Much of the original fabric is still evident.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Ham-Sauman, Historian and HCWA staff. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Graduate Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is a small red-brick building with iron roof constructed in Federation Free style, in 1913, for the Upper Chapman Road Board.¹

Nanson is a small settlement thirty six kilometres inland from Geraldton in the Chapman Valley, a pastoral and agricultural area on the eastern side of the Moresby Ranges. In 1849, with the opening of the Geraldine Lead Mine and the surveying of the townsite of Geraldton, land further inland was taken up in large tracts for pastoral use.² A large freehold estate, Mt Erin', was taken up by Michael Morrissey in 1854.³ Lead and copper were also mined in the region.

During a closure of the 'Narra Tarra' mine in 1879, due to a fall in the price of lead, a few ex-employees selected land in the area for farming, and built homes. However, until the early 1900s, the area was given up almost exclusively to grazing on expansive pastoral leases.⁴

The Upper Chapman Roads Board was formed on 16 January 1901, reflecting significant growth in the farming population. The first permanent Secretary-Supervisor of the Roads Board was Bill Stansfield. His wife, Rose, was the first official postmistress and their home acted as Post Office, General Store and Roads Board Office.⁵

On 1 August 1902, several lots, formerly part of a pastoral lease held by T Burges, were reserved as the Chapman Agricultural Area. While most of the land was opened for public selection, three lots comprising 483 acres were set aside for the Chapman Experimental Farm.⁶ This farm was managed by an appointee of the Department of Agriculture and was run as a training farm for young immigrants and Australians. Experimental cereal and vegetable crops and artificial grasses were grown and livestock kept. By 1906, Chapman Experimental Farm had expanded considerably to over 2,000 acres and the farm was very successful in promoting the productivity of the area.⁷

¹ Apperly, R. Irving, R., Reynolds, P. op. cit., pp. 136-139.

² Sims, Shirley 'The History of the Upper Chapman District, 1839-1911' bound typescript, Battye Library, c.1957, p.5.

³ Geonoma database, Geographic Names Section, DOLA.

⁴ Department of Agriculture, 'Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30 1906', Report No. 24, WA Parliament Votes and Proceedings, 1906.

⁵ *Chapman Valley Heritage Trail* WA Heritage Commission, 1989, p.10.

⁶ *Government Gazette* 1 August 1902, p.3193.

⁷ Department of Agriculture, op.cit., Similar experimental farms were located at Drakesbrook, Narrogin and Nangeenan. Other experimental plots were located at Northam, Beverley and Katanning where pastoralists and farmers lent land to the Department of Agriculture for the same purpose.

In response to the subsequent demand for farming land, the Government resumed leases and repurchased freehold estates to subdivide into lots of 700 to 800 acres. These lots were sold cheaply on conditional purchase, that is, conditional on the buyer completing improvements, such as clearing and fencing, and building a dwelling, within a stipulated time frame. The first government purchase was 56,840 acres of Michael Morrissey's estate, 'Mt. Erin'.

In 1910, the railway line from Geraldton reached the district on its way to Yuna, some 54 kilometres further on. The railway siding was initially named 'Mt Erin' and a portion of the 'Mt Erin' land adjacent was gazetted in October 1910 as the townsite of Nanson.⁸ The town was named after John Leighton Nanson MLA, Minister for Works in 1904.⁹ Nanson became a centre for railway maintenance on the line and the home of railway workers and their families. At the siding there was a large railway yard and buildings to house maintenance equipment, and a goods shed, weigh bridge and wheat silos.¹⁰

There was competition between Nanson and the town of Nabawa, nine kilometres further up the railway line, as to which would be the centre of the Upper Chapman Roads Board district. Nabawa was the site of the local school and The Mining Arms hotel.

In 1912, when the growing population required a dedicated Roads Board office, a referendum was held to decide whether it would be sited at Nanson or Nabawa. Nanson won the vote, and land was resumed from the railway reserve as a site. But the Public Works Department insisted that another referendum should be called because Roads Board boundaries were being altered. The Upper Chapman Roads Board District was enlarged by about one fifth, but the second referendum, held on 8 March 1913, returned another win for Nanson.¹¹

The *Fmr Roads Board Office*, Nanson was built to a Public Works Department plan and financed by a Public Works Department grant of £112-10-0.¹² The building was constructed by Bill Stansfield, and was to function as the headquarters of the Upper Chapman Roads Board for sixty years.¹³

With the closure of the railway in 1957, Nanson lost some of its permanent residents. The following year, the Roads Board changed its name to Chapman Valley Roads Board. There were murmurings about a new office building as Roads Board Office, Nanson was no longer adequate for the community. Annual General and Special meetings of residents had to be held in the Nabawa Hall.¹⁴ Nabawa had grown and, in 1964, it became the site of the new Shire Offices, the Roads Board having become the Shire of Chapman Valley on 1 July 1961.

⁸ *Government Gazette* 21 October 1910, p.3131.

⁹ Geonoma database, Geographic Names Section, DOLA.

¹⁰ *Chapman Valley Heritage Trail* op. cit., p.9.

¹¹ Upper Chapman Road Board Minute Book No. 2, 27 July 1912 - 7 March 1914.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *Chapman Valley Heritage Trail* op. cit., p.10.

¹⁴ Upper Chapman Road Board Minute Book No. 2 op. cit.

The former Roads Board Office, Nanson was used as a meeting place for the Country Women's Association until 1974, when they built new restrooms. It was also used as a centre for bush-fire control.

Eventually, the building fell into disuse and disrepair. The back wall was cracked, windows broken, the floor affected by termite damage, and the interior littered with rubbish.¹⁵

In 1982, the former Roads Board Office, Nanson was restored by the Chapman Valley Historical Society and is now used as their headquarters for meetings and functions. A plaque on the outside wall of the building reads:

This building was restored for posterity by the Chapman Valley Historical Society in 1982. Now used as headquarters for the Society.

¹⁵ Letter (n.d.) and photographs, September 1981, HCWA File PD0474.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson is a single storey brick building with a corrugated iron roof located in East Terrace in the small town of Nanson. Constructed to a design provided by the Public Works Department, the small, one room building displays some of the characteristics of the Federation Free Style. The place is included in the Chapman Valley Heritage Trail and a sign with information about the building is located just outside the front fence. The timber balustraded fence extends across the front boundary to the driveway located along the south-west boundary defined by a stone fence on the neighbouring residential property. A gate and path lead to the front door of *Fmr Roads Board Office, Nanson*. A water tank is located immediately adjacent to the west corner of the building with a free standing toilet block and windmill situated further to the rear of the site. The north-west boundary is indicated by a right-of-way. A shed housing machinery and equipment as part of the Chapman Valley Historical Society display is located on a separate lot to the north of the site.

The rectangular building has a simple roof form with a half-gable behind the triangular pediment in the front facade and prominent cylindrical vents penetrating the roof planes. A square brick chimney with projecting brick courses at the top of the flue is located in the south-west corner of the building. The walls are constructed in stretcher bond brickwork with contrasting bands of stucco applied principally to the front elevation, although door and window lintels have been emphasised on the side elevations. The mortar joints of the south-east and north-east elevations have been painted to resemble tuck pointing. The brickwork to the rear and south-west elevations has been painted and render has been applied to the north-east elevation up to window sill height. The central gable pediment with scrolled consoles rises above the line of the closed eaves, and the main entrance. The words, 'Roads Board' are inscribed in painted raised lettering within the entablature and the date is contained in the pediment. Timber double-hung sash windows with projecting, cement rendered sills are located at either side of the main entrance with one window of the same proportions in each of the side elevations. The double leaf front door is constructed in tongue and grooved timber, framed and ledged internally. Glass louvres are set above the entrance doors. A single leaf timber door is also located in the north-east elevation towards, the rear of the building and double doors with glazed panels are located centrally in the back wall. A curved, corrugated iron canopy supported on scrolled metal brackets shelters the rear entrance.

Some remaining flashing, beneath the gable end and set at a slightly lower pitch to the main roof, provides evidence of an earlier extension to the rear elevation. There is no remaining *above* ground evidence to determine the exact size and location of this addition but a tree stump located close to the rear wall suggests the addition may have been removed some time ago.

A metal plate is located at the rear of each of the side elevations, just below the eaves. A tie rod, visible internally, connects these two plates providing remedial structural support to the walls. A plaque by the front door commemorates the restoration of the building by the Chapman Valley Historical Society.

Internally, the only division in the single room building is provided by a timber partition around the front entrance. A door with diagonal boarding is located in one side of the partition, with a counter on the other. The room has a timber floor, painted walls and a pressed metal ceiling. Four metal ceiling vents punctuate the ceiling. Some of the early fittings such as coat hooks, picture rails and bracketed timber shelves remain. A fireplace with a timber surround is located in the truncated west corner.

The building was restored by the Chapman Valley Historical Society in 1982. Some general maintenance is required to joinery frames, floor boards and the roof. The society have recently received funding to commission a conservation plan.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
