



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Creaton Ruins represent the remnants of a diverse range of buildings originally established along the lines of an Irish estate. (Criterion 2.1)

Creaton is associated with the successful founding development of the Murray District and the settlement of Pinjarra. (Criterion 2.2)

The ruins have close association with Singleton, a former soldier who came to the Colony bringing not only wealth, but a philosophy for the direction and administration of the Colony. He set about to lead in the affairs of the Murray District in a practical manner as well as developing his rural property. The ruins of *Creaton Ruins* are also associated with the successful, constructive, energetic and diverse business interests of the Cornish and Paterson partnership. The influence of these two families was felt in Fremantle and the Murray District as well as the North West. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The layout and planning of the place have the potential to provide archaeological information leading to an understanding of the aspirations of the settlers of the Colony. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Creaton Ruins contribute to the sense of place of the community. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Creaton Ruins are representative of the core of a colonial estate. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

No management of the ruin was apparent at the time of the inspection in 1995 and the collapsed roof structures do nothing for the extant masonry which is exposed to rain wash, dampness and wind pressure. Farm animals graze among the debris. The ruins are in poor condition and in unstabilised and precarious circumstances from which deterioration will accelerate.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Evidence of the original intentions of the successive occupants is still visible. The loss of the highly visible masonry elements of the ruin is likely to be decisive in determining the chances of the place to be conserved at all. As major collapse is possible at any time in some sections, stabilising processes are required as a matter of urgency.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The fabric is in its original state of staged construction and occupation. There is no evidence of intrusive fabric.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon and David Kelsall, Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The original grant on which *Creaton Ruins* was built was located at the south eastern extremity of Peel's holding, Cockburn Sound Location 16. Although arguably the most fertile, this land was generally inaccessible to him due to the hostility of local Aborigines.

In May 1836, following the Battle of Pinjarra in 1834, Stirling set up a military station at Pinjarra. A short period of unrest was felt in 1837, but gradually the situation subsided.

In 1839, the *Hindoo* arrived carrying, amongst others, a naval man, Francis Corbet Singleton, aged 27. Singleton brought a number of settlers and servants with him.

He purchased 10,000 acres from Peel at 2/6d per acre, about half the official price for Crown Land, for what was clearly the best of Peel's grant. He set out to breed horses for sale in India. This project soon failed from a disease, later thought to be poisoning from Heart Leaf.

Singleton intended to settle his servants and others interested, on small holdings with frontages to the rivers Dandalup and Murray, a system of tenant farming similar to his home county, in Ireland.

By June 1839, Singleton had been appointed Justice of the Peace in Pinjarra and by 1840 was very busy with public affairs - sitting on the bench, directing works, witnessing documents, acting as agent for the Bank of Western Australia and running his own property. He came into serious conflict with Peel, also a JP, who was asked to resign his position.

Singleton was a founder of the citizens group which initiated the building of a church by subscription in the township. By 1841, Singleton became a Resident Magistrate in Pinjarra and was involved with the formation and marking of the roads, water sources and bridges into the District from Canning; in addition he was appointed Sub-Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages with a Deputy. He was also involved with clearing tracks of undergrowth and rebuilding bridges damaged in the floods. He was the local representative on the Road's Trust, a position he held until 1846.

As Resident Magistrate he sat on the bench at least once a month, settling issues, collecting fees, fines, dog licences, to report statistical information, ensure postal service operating, inspect lands to verify values prior to issue of title, assist the militia, keep the peace, supervise the constable and so on. By 1843 he was allowed the privilege of franking his mail. In 1844, Singleton was appointed to the Legislative Council where he fought for reform of the land laws.

Singleton's farm had become the social, economic and administrative centre in the district. Three hundred acres of the property had been cleared and fenced, barns, sheds, a horse mill (for grinding wheat produced on his 70 acres of crop land) and stockyards were built.

Then, on the peninsula at the confluence of the Dandalup and Murray was Singleton's farm, enclosed with ditch and rail fence. It is interesting, on glancing at an old map of the property, to read not "paddocks", but "horse close", "stockyard close", "house close" and "garden close.

On Singleton's place was the barn that had been first used for church services in the district. Nearby was his horse mill for grinding wheat. The house stood close to the river. It was totally destroyed by fire in 1844, during Singleton's absence, and all his books and furniture valued at £1,200 (which for a Colonial residence of the time, was considerable), were lost.

Michael Pollard declared that Singleton also lost his second house, it being washed away in 1847. Besides this, he suffered severe losses of stock through poison plant.

After the fire, Singleton tried to lease the farm. Peel heard of this and tried to seek redress for an alleged 2,000 acre excess surveyed into Singleton's land from Peel's. The claim by Peel came to nothing. Singleton was very disturbed about proposals to introduce convicts to the Colony. The distribution of a circular was passionately opposed by him and it may well have influenced his decision to leave. He battled on until 1848 when he left the Colony ultimately for South Australia after making W E Oakley his agent in farm matters.

In 1847, the dissolution of a partnership between Anthony Cornish and Charles Clewlow was witnessed by Nicol Paterson (a shipwright) who then joined with Cornish, a brickmaker and builder. It is suggested that Cornish provided practical skills and Paterson the business acumen. The pair started out in lighterage and boat hire in Fremantle, adding other businesses, flour milling, sandalwood trading, hotels and then farming. In 1849, the partnership was dissolved. Paterson leased 20,000 acres from Peel and in 1853 rejoined Cornish to lease Singleton's farm which they later purchased in 1856 for £3,000.

Apparently they tossed a coin to decide who was to go to Dandalup - Cornish won. Cornish left the 'Race Horse' Hotel in Fremantle and moved down to the property from Fremantle and commenced building another house and more barns. Paterson remained in Fremantle until 1859 when he leased the Freemasons Hotel to Mr Rummer and moved down to Dandalup himself.

Richards notes the building of the main house probably commenced in 1856 by Cornish who named it after his birthplace, 'Creaton Hall' in England. When completed, the house contained twelve rooms with a line of barns and outbuildings stretching out behind the house. The complex included a smoke house as well as a number of houses for tenants and labourers. At its zenith, the property now called *Creaton Ruins*, contained fourteen homes.

The floods of 1862, almost certainly higher than any since, covered the floors of the house to a depth of about three feet (1m). The family resorted to boating between their refuge in a large barn and the house.

Around this time, Dr Bedingfeld was appointed to the area. He lived with his family on the Creaton Estate in a double storey house called *Parkfield* (which burned down in 1961). The main road from Pinjarra to Mandurah passed by *Creaton Ruins* in the 1860s.

Richards gives the following description of *Creaton Ruins*:

south of the doctor's residence and immediately in front of John McLarty's old house was the Queen's Hotel; to the north was a small cottage past Cooroolyup, (then called Parkfield) and then the Creaton Homestead itself. This was quite substantial for the times, consisting of four rooms with verandahs front and back, connected by a central passageway. To this fairly common plan was added a large kitchen and sitting room which were linked by a covered way to another spacious room with a lean-to at the rear. This latter room was used as a retail store by Anthony Cornish. He also had a gallon liquor licence here and no doubt did a brisk trade. Other out-buildings were located at the rear of the house, including a smokehouse. Behind the main building was a long complex of barns, servant's quarters, blacksmith shop, etc., ...

Other descriptions of *Creaton Ruins* mention the extensive orchards and vineyards, and a summerhouse by the river. Nicol Paterson and Cornish both died around 1872. Mrs Jane Paterson continued on at *Creaton Ruins*, her sons William and George running the property. She died in 1896 and *Creaton Ruins* was left to the sons. William moved to the Whitby Falls area, George passed the property to his sons Douglas and Frank. Douglas lived there until 1940 with the northern section of the estate coming into the possession of the Gibbs family until 1968, then the Emanuels.

A number of attempts to obtain assistance to conserve the buildings have been made over the last thirty years, all without success. The buildings have been measured by students at the University of Western Australia and a report and photographs were prepared for a private client by R J Ferguson and Associates, Architects.

The place was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in November 1964. This was downgraded to recorded in June 1973.

The place was entered into the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission in September 1984.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

At Paterson Road, just north of the township of Pinjarra, there are the remnants of a formal gateway denoting the former entrance to the property containing the ruins of *Creaton Ruins*. The land is fairly flat from the road, falling away at the rear of the site of the ruin down a levee to a watercourse, perhaps an oxbow lake, leading to the main river further away. A number of old fruit trees were apparent around the ruins, some deciduous, with several surviving citrus along the levee. A group of water tanks mounted high on stands remain arrayed along the top of the levee.

The surviving ruins of *Creaton Ruins* still standing above ground are in a T plan with the top of the T facing Paterson Road (running mainly north-south at this point) and the leg of the T comprising some farm sheds.

The northern building (right side facing) appears to be either the smokehouse or a kitchen evidenced by the remnants of several brick-vaulted ducts at floor level leading from outside through a diaphragm wall into the main room which is somewhat higher than usual. The accommodation wing extends southwards from an adjoining covered way.

Construction is of hand made bricks in lime mortar with mud plaster and limewash. The roof was originally shingle later covered with galvanised corrugated iron. The ceilings varied from lathe and plaster to timber boarding, with some pressed metal sections and fittings. Some details such as the arches were considered 'charming'.

The wall plaster is falling away revealing the mud float and lime plastered finish coat with stone coursing raked into the surface. Lintels are sawn timber. The verandah floor appears to be compacted clay. There is a parapet wall along the main verandah.

Some lathe and plaster, pressed metal and matchboard ceiling fabrications were evident in the remnant fabric.

The Design Style is a simple form of the Victorian Regency style.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition and files

References used in compiling the Documentary Evidence are as follows:

Early Days W A Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, Volume 1, Part 5, p27; Volume 5, Part 8, p32; Volume 7, Part 4, p10.

George, K. M. *A Brief History of the Town of Pinjarra and the Murray Shire Council* (Frank Daniels Pty Ltd, Printers).

Hasluck, A. *Thomas Peel of Swan River* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1965).

Hasluck, P. 'Early Settlers on the Murray', *Early Days* W.A. Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, Vol 1 1929, Part V.

Richards R. *The Murray District of Western Australia, A History* (Shire of Murray, 1978), pp.131, 167, 312-313 & 399-402.

Will of Thomas Peel, Probate Office, Supreme Court of Western Australia.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

There may be structures/ruins that have not been included. Further research may uncover evidence of archaeological sites.