



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

Old Blythewood is a fine example of Old Colonial Georgian farm house architecture, displaying the simplicity of design and construction imposed by the lack of technical sophistication in rural Western Australia in the 1850s. The simplicity of detail and the formal proportions give elegance to the buildings. (Criteria 1.1, 1.2)

The house and kitchen buildings, mature vegetation and grounds are a focal point in the rural landscape setting. The texture, form and colour of the group provides visual contrast to the surrounding landscape of cleared paddocks and meandering watercourse, and contributes to the aesthetic quality of the landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Old Blythewood has a close association with the development of the pastoral industry in the south-west of the State. After being purchased by John McLarty in 1856, the property was successfully developed to become one of the most renowned farms in the south-west of the State. (Criterion 2.1)

Old Blythewood, comprising the house and kitchen block and immediate surrounds, formed the nucleus of the original farm and was the centre of the farming, domestic, commercial and civic activities of the McLarty family in the second half of the nineteenth century, accommodating the family home, the 'Pinjarrah Arms Hotel' (1861-1895), and the local post office service (1861-1868). The hotel served for a time as a staging inn for the coach service between Perth and Vasse until the closure of the service in 1893. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

As a staging inn, *Old Blythewood* played a significant role in the provision of refreshment and a comfortable place of rest for people who travelled along the primary communication routes south. At a time when the mode of transport and road conditions made travel difficult, *Old Blythewood* contributed to the development of transport links in the south west of the State. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

Old Blythewood has a close association with the McLarty family, a prominent pioneering family in the Murray District and in the Kimberley, and a prominent family in Western Australian politics for nearly seventy years. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Old Blythewood, with appropriate presentation and interpretation, has potential to contribute to the understanding of the way of life in the nineteenth century in rural Western Australia. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Old Blythewood is important to the National Trust as part of its property holdings throughout the State and as testimony to its commitment to the conservation of Western Australia's built heritage. Since being vested in the National Trust, National Estate grants have been expended on restoration as have monies raised by the Trust. Many hours of voluntary work have been expended in the management and upkeep of the buildings and gardens. (Criterion 4.1)

Old Blythewood contributes to the community's sense of place by providing an historical link to the settlement of the Murray District, and the past economic development and political importance of Pinjarra. The importance of the place has been supported by community involvement in the conservation and management of the place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Old Blythewood demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Old Colonial Georgian style of architecture in Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

The location of *Old Blythewood* close to a water source and fertile soils, is a typical relationship found in rural homesteads in Western Australia and elsewhere in Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

The mature trees and other historical plants are representative of plantings in late nineteenth and early twentieth century gardens in Western Australia. The original garden layout, although no longer intact, was representative of an unsophisticated garden style which had its antecedents in the early colonial period and which continued to manifest itself in suburban gardens in the metropolitan area, in country towns and on rural properties throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, until World War Two. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Old Blythewood is generally in sound condition. For full discussion of the condition of the place, see the Conservation Report by Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

This plan has been received by the National Trust and is currently being used as the basis for implementation of conservation works to the place.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Old Blythewood has a moderate degree of integrity. Unsympathetic renovations in the early 1970s have been, or are being, removed. Although no longer a homestead, the presentation of the rooms to be representative of the era in which the house was built, and lived and worked in, is compatible with the original intention of the place as a homestead.

For a full discussion regarding the integrity of the place see Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Despite changes in use over time, and the degradation and modification of some of the components of the place, *Old Blythewood* retains a high degree of authenticity.

For a full discussion regarding the authenticity of the place see Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to the Conservation Plan by Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the physical evidence, refer to the Conservation Plan by Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).

13.3 REFERENCES

Pidgeon, J. & Richards, O. 'Conservation and Management Plan for Old Blythewood, Pinjarra, Western Australia' (for the National Trust of Australia (W. A.), 1992).