



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

The imposing scale of the house and the attractive use of textured building materials at *Faversham House* have created a pleasing composition. (Criterion 1.1)

Faversham House, situated high on a hill overlooking the centre of York, has a landmark quality from many directions including the main street, Avon Terrace. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Faversham House was constructed with the assistance of convict labour at the commencement of the convict era in 1850. (Criterion 2.2)

It was built and extended by successive generations of the Monger family, one of Western Australia's more significant pioneering families, reflecting the growth and development of York. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The development of *Faversham House* from a humble, single storey structure to a grand residence through subsequent additions demonstrates the evolution of Australian house design. The adaptation of building techniques and local materials to the York environment contributes to a greater understanding of the cultural history of Western Australia. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Faversham House has been a focal point for social, medical, religious and educational associations. Highly valued by the York community, the place is important to the cultural fabric of the York district. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

As one of the larger residential complexes in York with a total of almost fifty rooms, the scale of *Faversham House* makes this a rare example of Colonial architecture. (Criterion 5.1)

Faversham House is significant for the ability to demonstrate the development of the place over an extended period of time from humble beginnings to a grand, colonial residence. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Faversham House is in good condition and has benefited from professional conservation treatment, and financial assistance in the form of grants over the past decade.

Areas of immediate concern lie in the fragility of the fabric of the cellar which has the ability to affect the structural stability of the upper floors. The boundary brick wall is in poor condition and the landscaping requires attention . The upgrading of the standard of interior finishes is continuing at present.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Much of the integrity of *Faversham House* has been restored by the return to its residential function after a long period of heavy public use of the building. The intention to limit public access should be beneficial to the long term viability of the place and is compatible with its use as a residence.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The relatively long period of development of *Faversham House* has seen a continuing process of addition and removal of fabric. The structure has a high level of authenticity, although internal finishes have evolved to accommodate multiple changes in function. Overall, the building displays moderate authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Sarah Stephenson BA. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Architect.

13.1. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Faversham House is located at 24 Grey Street York. It was built for John Henry Monger in 1850c.¹ It was named after his birthplace in Kent, England. Faversham House is a two-storey residence, with balconies, verandahs, and nearly fifty rooms. The house is the focal point of one of Western Australia's early pioneering families, the Mongers.

The Avon River valley was explored by Ensign Robert Dale in 1830. York on the Avon River was the first inland town to be established in the Swan River Colony, proving to be successful in agriculture.²

The Monger's were early settlers in the York district. In addition to being a large land holder, John Henry Monger was a hotelier and a general storekeeper.³

Site excavations were begun in 1849 and *Faversham House* was built with the assistance of convict labour in 1850c. Originally comprising a single-storey residence built into the side of a hill, it was constructed of stone quarried from the other side of Grey Street. Inner walls were built from sun-dried bricks of local clay and sheoak shingles were the original roof covering. The original home had five rooms; two bedrooms, kitchen, vestibule and a large storeroom. It had only one entrance and all windows were barred.⁴

The addition of a second storey was made some years later, probably once again utilising convict labour.⁵

John Henry Monger Jr., a member of the Legislative Council and a prominent business man, extended *Faversham House*, after his father's death in 1867.⁶ These additions included two gabled wings north and south of the central section, verandahs, white railed balconies and high gabled turrets.⁷ The new north wing consisted of a large billiards room with bedrooms above; the new south wing contained a large dining room with nurseries and a nanny's room above.⁸

On John Henry Jr's death in 1892, *Faversham House* was inherited by his eldest son, Alexander J Monger. There is evidence that the property was leased out for a number of years, while A.J. Monger attended to business in London.⁹

1 'Faversham House Restoration: a project by Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod)'.
2 Rankin, D., *The Avon Valley, The Story of York, 1829-1834*, PR8679, Batty Library, date unknown.
3 National Trust Assessment Forms and File on Faversham, circa 1970; 'Faversham House Restoration: a project by Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod)'.
4 Ibid.
5 'Faversham House Restoration: a project by Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod)'.
6 Wilson, H., *Avon Valley Sketchbook*, (Rigby, Perth, 1977).
7 Ibid.
8 'Faversham House Restoration: a project by Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod)'.
9 Ibid.

In 1903, A.J. Monger returned from London with intentions to sell the property. However, after marrying Florence McCracken in 1906, he decided to restore the house.¹⁰ Servants quarters were added. A wing running east and west on the southern end of the house was also built, providing a kitchen and staff dining room.¹¹ Additions were built with locally produced bricks.

Mr and Mrs Monger lived in the house for the next thirty years. During their residence, *Faversham House* was a focal point for social events and business meetings.¹²

At the beginning of World War Two, Mrs Monger presented *Faversham House* to the Australian government and the Red Cross.¹³ During the war, *Faversham House* was used as a hospital and convalescent home for servicemen.

In 1944, men who had been in action in the Middle East and New Guinea were sent to *Faversham House* to recuperate.¹⁴ In 1945, the property was leased to the Dutch government to house refugees escaping from the war. The RSL also used *Faversham House* during this period.¹⁵

After the war *Faversham House* was put up for tender, as the Federal Government had no further use for it. In 1961, the Methodist Department of Christian Education bought the property for £500.¹⁶

On 20 April 1963, *Faversham House*, was officially opened as a Methodist conference centre, holiday home and educational facility.¹⁷ *Faversham House* was dedicated to Moya Watson, first office secretary of the Department of Christian Education who had died on 25 July 1961, at age twenty eight.¹⁸

At its reopening, *Faversham House*, was reported in the *Northam Advertiser* to be in splendid condition.

Commenced in the 1830s the building is in splendid condition and this was remarked by the visitors as they made their inspection during the afternoon. The furnishings are of a very high standard and it is certain that this centre will play an important part in church matters.¹⁹

The Uniting Church continuously renovated *Faversham House* with money obtained from bequests and public subscription.²⁰

In 1975, restoration work was planned for *Faversham House* by architect J. Thompson. The estimated cost of the work was \$50,000. The Uniting Church applied for financial assistance to the Commonwealth Government.²¹

10 Ibid.

11 National Trust Assessment Forms and File on Faversham, circa 1970.

12 Ibid.

13 *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 28 August 1943.

14 An interview by Joan Bower of Miss Bronti Harford, 1988, transcribed by Miss Val Lukeis, Battye Library.

15 *Northam Advertiser*, 17 April 1963.

16 *York, Western Australia, Welcome to York Tour Guide*, February 1979, PR8679, Battye Library.

17 *Northam Advertiser*, 17 April 1963.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 *Northam Advertiser*, 24 April 1963.

21 Faversham House York, Newsletter, November 1976, in National Trust File.

Faversham House was classified by the National Trust in October 1976. The place was noted for its architectural and historical importance to Western Australia.²²

The Uniting Church, with its priorities in assisting homeless youth and charity work, could no longer afford the restoration of the large property.²³ In February 1994, Glenn and Judith Darlington purchased *Faversham House*. Over the next two years, they report spending in excess of \$300,000 for conservation work on the place, which they use as their home.²⁴ Therefore, having been used by a number of community organisations for fifty years, *Faversham House* has had its original intention as a private residence restored.

Faversham House is a building of notable architectural interest. It displays the character of a period and has considerable historical significance relating to the Monger family, the York community and the development of Western Australia.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a detailed description of the physical evidence, refer to the report by Kevin Palassis, Architect: 'Report on the Restoration of Faversham House York' (for the Uniting Church in Australia W.A. Synod, October 1986).

Although this report was completed almost ten years ago, the information it provides is generally still valid. An update of the work completed in the last decade and the current condition of the place, where it differs significantly from a decade ago, is detailed below.

Following a National Estate Grant and program of conservation to *Faversham House* in 1987-1988 the principal changes to the place have been brought about by the change in ownership from a church group into private hands and the subsequent restoration of the place as a family residence. Restorative work to the building fabric and a substantial upgrading of internal finishes have been undertaken without impairing the form or significant details and features of the building.

The problem of rising damp in the cellar, identified in the 1986 report, appears to have been rectified as it was not evident when the site was visited in February 1996. Deteriorating fabric in the cellar remains a concern, especially the sun-dried bricks of the fireplace, which are badly eroded, and the poor condition of the ceilings.

The condition of the courtyard and servants' quarters has been improved and the servants' quarters now provide overnight guest accommodation. New bathroom facilities have been incorporated and room 39 has been removed.

The boundary wall remains in a state of disrepair and the landscaping requires attention.

²² National Trust Assessment Forms and File on Faversham, circa 1970.

²³ Personal communication with Marion Lukis, Uniting Church of Australia, regarding *Faversham House*, 20 October 1995, transcribed by Sarah Stephenson.

²⁴ Letter from Glenn Darlington to the Hon Richard Lewis, Minister for Planning;Heritage, dated 19 July 1996, HCWA File P2876, p.18.

13.3 REFERENCES

Report by Kevin Palassis, Architect: 'Report on the Restoration of Faversham House, York' (for the Uniting Church in Australia WA Synod, October 1986).