



# 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\*

*Uniting Church, Broome*, is a fine example of tropical vernacular architecture, which comes into the Inter-War Bungalow style. The building displays attractive proportions in the roof form, window openings and contrast of the lattice work against the bulk of the building. (Criterion 1.1)

The place is an architectural and technical accomplishment. Every aspect of its design - the rolling and folding doors, the wide verandahs, the double high pitched roof, and the opening clerestory were especially designed to cope with the intense northern heat of Broome. (Criterion 1.2)

The building is a distinctive part of the streetscape and makes a positive contribution to the character of the town. (Criterion 1.3)

*Uniting Church, Broome* and the adjacent manse form a significant precinct of religious buildings within the town. (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is evidence of the religious and social activities of the Uniting Church in Broome and the Kimberley district. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is a memorial to Rev. F.G.H. Brady who ministered to the Kimberley from 1913-1917, and again in 1925, when he died. (Criterion 2.3)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place exhibits technical sophistication that demonstrates a significant response to the tropical climate. (Criterion 3.3)

### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place fulfils an important role in the religious activities of the Broome community and specifically to members of the Uniting Church. (Criterion 4.1)

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

In 1997, the church is valued as a demonstrative piece of local architecture, a raised building with a primitive verandah all the way around, and contributes to the Broome community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Uniting Church, Broome* is one of a small group of its type in Western Australia which demonstrates the adaptation of temperate ecclesiastical architecture to suit tropical climatic conditions. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The design of the church is representative of the Broome vernacular style. While not architecturally as complex as many urban churches, *Uniting Church, Broome* has nevertheless an important role in demonstrating the adaptation of conventional church architecture to a tropical climate. (Criteria 6.1, 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The Church is in good condition. Maintenance of the building has been undertaken on a regular basis. Some of the supporting concrete stumps will require attention in the future.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

The Church has a high degree of integrity, and continues to be used for the original purpose for which it was designed.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The Church is intact and retains a high degree of authenticity. It is possible that the rear verandah was open at the time of construction, its enclosure demonstrates evolution of use. The enclosing work has been done with some sensitivity to the local style and the authenticity of the place is only marginally diminished.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Tanya Suba, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Taylor, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Uniting Church, Broome*, also known as the Brady Memorial Hall, is a timber and corrugated iron building which was constructed in 1925.

Roebuck Bay was named by Philip Parker King in 1821, in honour of William Dampier's earlier visit. Initial settlement of the area occurred in 1864, when the Roebuck Bay Pastoral Association was established by pastoralists eager to develop new grazing land. However by 1867, they had withdrawn their interest from the area following some violent confrontations with Aborigines. The north-west pearling industry commenced in the late 1860s, initially around Cossack and, by the late 1870s, around King Sound, with Roebuck Bay used as a safe anchorage.<sup>1</sup>

Broome townsite, gazetted on 21 November 1883, was named in honour of the Governor, Sir Frederick Napier Broome. With pearling being a major industry for Broome, the town soon developed a diverse ethnic character with 'whites', Aborigines, Malays, Chinese, Filipinos and Japanese employed in pearling and support industries. Broome was connected to the outside world firstly by a steamer service from 1884, and then in 1889, with the laying of submarine cable between Broome and Java. A deepwater jetty was built in 1896-7, and by the following year Broome had taken Cossack's place as the principal cargo port in the north-west.<sup>2</sup>

In 1907, Mr Oliver Hogue, a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church, having returned from the north, reported to the Western Australian Presbyterian Assembly on the need for a church in Broome and the north where 'appalling neglect and degradation were the accepted way of life.'<sup>3</sup>

The Presbyterians were shocked by the report and Rev. J.C. Fordyce, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia, volunteered to begin work in Broome. In April 1910, Rev. J.C. Fordyce was appointed to Broome and the North-west, after initiating the Pilbara Mission. Following his arrival in Broome he formed a local committee of management, acquired land in Anne Street through a donation and erected the present manse at a cost of £600, with about a quarter of its cost contributed. Worship was held on the wide latticed verandahs of the building which was known as the 'Verandah Church'.<sup>4</sup>

When Rev. Fordyce, who resigned after five months, left Broome in February 1911, the debt for the manse was £400; a considerable financial liability for the management committee. Fordyce was eventually succeeded by Rev. F.W. Rolland, later Sir Francis Rolland, who arrived in May 1911, having received twelve months leave of absence from his

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<sup>1</sup> Edwards, H., *Port of Pearls* (Adelaide, Rigby, 1983) pp.1, 20 & 24.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, pp.1-4.

<sup>3</sup> *The Inlander* as cited in Vawser, Betty, 'The Brady Memorial Uniting Church' 1986, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> *The Inlander*, Vol 2, first quarter 1915, pp.11-13; Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit. & 'The History of the United Church in Broome', n.d.

parish in Noorat, Victoria in order to organise the mission at Broome. Rev. Rolland, who lived for a time in the foreshore non-European community, is noted for riding a camel around town and organising a six week social and sporting program for the 'lay-up' period. He had a congregation of 70 worshipping at the 'Verandah Church'.<sup>5</sup>

In June 1911, Rev. Robert and Frances Wilson used Broome as a base for establishing the Presbyterian Aborigines Mission at Port George Fourth, on the Kimberley coast.<sup>6</sup>

In 1912, Rev. F.W. Rolland returned to his Victorian parish and was replaced by Rev. A.S. Houston who arrived from Allensford, Victoria.<sup>7</sup>

In 1912, the Australian Inland Mission (A.I.M.) Board of the National Presbyterian Church was created and in May 1913, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church transferred responsibility for the Northwest of Western Australia to the A.I.M.. Until 1962, Broome was the base for the Presbyterian Church's A.I.M. pastoral patrol to Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Wyndham which ministered to people over an area of 86,000 square miles.<sup>8</sup>

In 1913, the Rev. F.G.H. Brady (Frank) and his wife, Mary, arrived in Broome from Stratford, Victoria to commence their five year ministry, with 'high qualifications and considerable experience'.<sup>9</sup>

By 1915, the manse debt was paid off by locals as stated in an article in *The Inlander* which also refers to plans for a church:

The hearty response of the residents has resulted in the erection of a manse thoroughly adapted to work and climate. In fact the manse was built at the very outset, for the people were willing to face the liability gladly to house their minister. With some assistance they recently cleared away all debt, and plans are already made to erect a church on a fine site procured some time ago.<sup>10</sup>

In 1916, the Bradys left Broome for Subiaco, Perth and were succeeded by Rev. A.J. and Mrs Eipper who remained in Broome until 1919, when they left for Geraldton. The following year Rev. S.R.W. and Mrs Richardson arrived and stayed until 1922, after which the position was vacant.<sup>11</sup>

The prospect of a church being built was raised again in 1916:

There is widespread feeling that a building of our own is necessary. Though times are not favourable we will at least try and complete all the preliminaries, clearing the way for action at the first opportunity.<sup>12</sup>

A report in *The Inlander* in 1918, states that 'serious thought' was being given to 'the question of early building' of a church, especially given that the Municipal Council had increased the rent of the public hall to £1 per service.<sup>13</sup> This indicates that some services may have been held in a local

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<sup>5</sup>       ibid.

<sup>6</sup>       Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit., p.7.

<sup>7</sup>       *The Inlander*, Vol 2, first quarter 1915, p.13.

<sup>8</sup>       Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit., p.5 & 'The History of the United Church in Broome'.

<sup>9</sup>       *The Inlander*, No 1, November 1913, p.33.

<sup>10</sup>      *The Inlander*, Vol 2, 1915, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, p.13.

<sup>11</sup>      Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit., p.7.

<sup>12</sup>      *The Inlander*, Vol 3. No 2, 1916, p. 86.

<sup>13</sup>      *The Inlander*, Vol 5, No 1, 1918, p.34.

hall as opposed to the 'Verandah Church.' However, efforts towards the building of a church had to be postponed to direct more energy and financial contributions towards wartime needs and the Red Cross. Nevertheless, two years later, further reports maintained that a church was 'badly needed' and that 'over £200' had already been collected for the purpose while further activities to raise money were planned 'with a view to building about the end of this year'. At this stage meetings were being held on the manse verandah.<sup>14</sup>

Rev. Frank and Mary Brady returned to Broome for a second term in 1925. Part of the Broome Minister's responsibility was to be the agent for the Presbyterian Aborigine Mission at Kunmunya up the Kimberley coast near Port George the Fourth. Brady was also responsible for the staff at the A.I.M. hospital in Hall's Creek and the patrol of the Kimberley region generally. This involved a considerable amount of travelling over rough dirt tracks, and one journey was to take a tragic toll on Rev. Brady, as was described in *The Inlander*:

The Rev F.G.H. Brady died on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1925, in the service of the A.I.M., at the outpost station of Broome in the North-West. Here he and Mrs. Brady endeared themselves to everybody and did splendid service for the Church. For several years after leaving Broome, he was parish minister at East Fremantle, where he became the Moderator of the Church of W.A. He again volunteered for service, and for the second time settled in Broome. He did most valued work there until his death. His last long journey of 1,700 miles, when he took Sisters McDonagh and Streatfield out to Hall's Creek from Derby and returned Sisters Cousin and Bennett to Wyndham, proved too much for his overtaxed strength. He was attacked by malaria, and very soon after his return to Broome, passed on to his reward. His comparatively early death was due to his vigorous attention to duty and his arduous labours, and was no doubt hastened by the very gruelling journey he had just undertaken and the difficulties encountered on the way.<sup>15</sup>

The death of Rev. Brady, who was buried in the Anglican section of the Broome Cemetery, shocked both the town and the church. Funded by public subscription, construction of the long awaited church commenced in 1925, and was called the Brady Memorial Hall to commemorate the work of the late Rev. Brady.<sup>16</sup>

Located adjacent to the manse, the church could possibly have been designed by Rev. John Flynn, the Superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission, given the ingenuity displayed in dealing with the climate and other similarities to Adelaide House in Alice Springs, which Flynn designed. The church was built in the Broome style, 'specially adapted for comfort in the tropics. Its walls are moveable - its verandahs are wide - and in every way it is ideal for its purpose.'<sup>17</sup> Further, the rolling and folding doors, the double high pitched roof, and the opening clerestory were especially designed to cope with the intense northern heat of Broome as well as the cyclone season.<sup>18</sup> A brass plaque in the church denotes that this church is a memorial to Rev. Brady.

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<sup>14</sup> *The Inlander*, Vol 6, No 1, 1920, p.61.

<sup>15</sup> *The Inlander*, 1925 as cited in 'The History of the United Church in Broome'.

<sup>16</sup> Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit.

<sup>17</sup> *The Inlander*, No 20, November, 1929, p.28.

<sup>18</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 07/06/1983.

Mary Brady, the Rev. Brady's wife, continued in the manse in Broome until 1926, when Rev. and Mrs G.L. Johnson arrived. There were two more changes of minister in the Broome parish prior to 1934, when A.I.M. replaced ministers with welfare officers. In 1942, Broome was bombed by the Japanese and subsequently the town was evacuated, with welfare officer Mr A.W. Roger, being one of the last to leave. Following the war, the A.I.M. appointed Rev. Ken Beckett as a 'patrol padre' to cover all the towns between Broome and the Northern Territory, with Rev. Beckett having 'no fixed abode'.<sup>19</sup>

In 1962, changes in the zoning of the Kimberley by the Presbyterians and Methodists resulted in Broome and the West Kimberley becoming the responsibility of the Federal Methodist Inland Mission. Under the Rev. Dean Tietzel, Broome was now the centre for the Methodist Inland Mission West Kimberley Patrol which covered Broome, Derby, Cockatoo and Koolan Islands, the stations from Anna Plains to Cape Leveque and out to Fitzroy Crossing and the communities of Camballin and Liveringa. Although the Methodists took over the manse and church in March 1962, it was not until 1967 that they purchased the property for \$2,000. At this time the Brady Memorial Hall was used for services, youth work, women's fellowship and Sunday School.<sup>20</sup>

In 1971, the North West and the Kimberley became part of the United Church of North Australia (U.N.C.A.) and the following year the Broome congregation became known as the Broome United Church.<sup>21</sup> During this year, alterations were made to *Uniting Church, Broome*, which saw the folding timber doors to the front verandah fixed and a double door inserted as a front door.<sup>22</sup>

In 1975, celebrations were held for the Golden Jubilee of the construction of *Uniting Church, Broome*. Major renovations were carried out to the adjacent manse in 1976.<sup>23</sup>

In 1977, the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches joined to form The Uniting Church of Australia. All Presbyterian and Methodist work in the Kimberley went into the Uniting Church which became the Kimberley Presbytery of the Northern Synod. To fit in with the new regulations the term 'Parish' was adopted instead of 'Patrol', thus giving rise to the West Kimberley Parish. The Broome congregation celebrated becoming the Broome Uniting Church in August 1977.<sup>24</sup>

In 1983, Broome became the regional centre for the Uniting Church Kimberley Presbytery and an office and residence were subsequently built in Herbert Street.<sup>25</sup>

*Uniting Church, Broome* was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) on 7 June 1983.<sup>26</sup> In 1989, the church was painted inside and outside and the adjacent manse underwent further renovations.

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<sup>19</sup> Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit., pp.8-9.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, pp.5 & 10.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, p.12.

<sup>22</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 07/06/1983.

<sup>23</sup> Vawser, Betty, Op. Cit., p.12.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, pp.5 & 12.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p.5.

Over the years, *Uniting Church, Broome* has been used for a variety of purposes other than a church, including local hall, town meeting place, youth centre, social club, day care centre and a regular opportunity shop. The building continues to be used as a church today while the adjacent manse is used as a residence by Rev. Glenys Gill.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Uniting Church, Broome* is located on a corner site, with other public facilities including the Broome Hospital located adjacent. The associated manse is located on the adjacent Lot 198 immediately to the west of the Church Lot 199. The car park is to the rear (south) of the church, and this car park allows access to an 'opportunity shop' located in a framed building to the rear and south west of the church. The main entry to the church is via a path and up several steps onto the verandah from Anne Street to the north, although access to the verandah is also gained from both the east and west sides by steps up to the verandah also.

*Uniting Church, Broome* could be described as Inter-War Bungalow style<sup>27</sup>, although this would simply classify the place by time (Inter-War c.1915 - c.1940) and external shape (Bungalow - a single-storey building with commodious verandahs). A more complete style description of *Uniting Church, Broome* would perhaps include the word **tropical** (Inter-War Tropical Bungalow). Broome and other Kimberley Region towns in Western Australia have developed a climate responsive architecture with narrow linear planning to facilitate cross ventilation, extensive shady outdoor spaces surrounded by dense planting, ventilating ridges to release hot air from in the roof, and roofs generously extended to shelter verandahs and breezeways. Adjustable louvres can be provided for maximum cross-ventilation, with buildings often raised above flat sites to permit maximum airflow. Shading planting is important. The term tropical vernacular describes the regional adaptation of temperate architecture to suit local conditions.

Concrete stumps have been used to support the timber floor of this building. The stumps are capped with metal (corrugated sheet hammered flat) to assist in termite control measures. The main portion of the church (the nave or worship area) is located under the main half-gabled roof form. The timber framed walls of this portion of the church rise clear above the surrounding verandah roof form of the building, and allow clerestory horizontal pivot openings for ventilation purposes. These pivot ventilators appear to have been fixed shut. Large portions of the walls of the nave can be opened.. Two thirds of each of the side walls are able to be rolled back on metal tracks. The north (entry) wall hinging indicates that this wall previously folded concertina-fashion each side to completely open the wall, although the leaves of the previously operable wall now appear to be fixed in place and are divided by a pair of hinged doors fixed in the central axis location.

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<sup>26</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 07/06/1983.

<sup>27</sup> Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. pp.206-209. Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1994.

The area under the verandah roof from to the rear (south) of the church has been enclosed with asbestos fibre cement clad timber framed walls. These walls are punctuated with three louvre windows to the south elevation, and single sliding aluminium framed windows to both the east and west elevations. The south-west corner is used as the vestry/historical display area, and the south-east corner as a small kitchenette. The verandah floorboards are narrow and have arised (sharp) edges, the excellent condition and highly machined finish indicating that they are relatively recent material. The balustrade to the verandah is formed of timber lattice work within timber rails between the timber verandah posts.

Both the roof forms are timber framed and 'corrugated iron' clad. The half-gable to the north end of the roof has a cross fixed prominently at the apex. As is typical and required of roof construction of the region, the timber framing is securely strapped and tied down with metal fasteners.

A brass plate mounted on a timber block and fixed inside the building above the entry doors notes:



TO THE GLORY OF GOD

AND IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. F.G.H. BRADY. B.A.

MINISTER OF BROOME

FROM JULY 1913 TO NOV. 1917 & FROM JUNE 1925 TO OCT. 1925

OBIT 24TH OCTOBER 1925.

HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH

*Uniting Church, Broome* is in very good condition. The place has been recently painted. A section of lattice work to the balustrade was replaced recently after deterioration was noticed, and it appears that the place is well looked after - particularly given the adjacent location of the minister in the manse next door which ensures very good levels of security and observation of the building.

### 13. 3 REFERENCES

Edwards, H. *Port of Pearls* Adelaide, Rigby, 1983.

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 07/06/1983.

'The History of the United Church in Broome'.

*The Inlander*.

Vawser, Betty, 'The Brady Memorial Uniting Church' 1986.

### 13. 4 FURTHER RESEARCH

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