



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*

Spring Reserve has precinctual aesthetic value. While neither *Spring Reserve* nor the Johnson Avenue houses that face it have, individually, particular aesthetic merit, they combine to form a visually satisfying precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Spring Reserve illustrates both the importance of access to a water supply for early European occupation of a district, and the changing water supply needs of a developing town. (Criterion 2.1)

Spring Reserve is significant for the innovation and technical achievement of the public water supply system developed in 1897, with the sinking of the artesian bore on the place. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

By virtue of the fact that this place is the location both of an early defunct soak and an artesian bore, still in use, *Spring Reserve* demonstrates technical achievement and development. (Criterion 3.3)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Spring Reserve is highly valued by the local community, demonstrated by their efforts, over a number of years, to have the place appropriately conserved and its integrity retained. (Criterion 4.1)

Spring Reserve contributes significantly to the local community's sense of place as the site of Guildford's public water supply from early settlement to the present day. (Criterion 4.2)

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

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Spring Reserve is an unusual phenomenon as the site of a succession of town water supplies of various kinds; spring soakage, well and artesian bore, all in close proximity to one another. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

It is characteristic of a land function both as a spring and as a recreational reserve. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Spring Reserve is in good condition. At the time of the inspection, the grass was healthy, mown and free of weeds. The two buildings, the pavilion and the toilet block, are sound, as is the play equipment. The bitumen paving of the tennis court is cracked, particularly on the north side where it is subject to moisture, but the cracks are of a minor nature and the playing surface is relatively flat.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Spring Reserve has high integrity; the original intention, that of a spring and water source, is intact.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is moderate. All of the visible structures on *Spring Reserve* are relatively modern and not original. The original well and trough will require search and excavation to become apparent.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Ham-Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Spring Reserve is the site of a public water supply for Guildford, consisting of a spring (soak), a well and an artesian bore. Also on the place are tennis courts, a pavilion and toilet block, and a children's play area containing play equipment.

Guildford was planned as a market town and inland port at the junction of the Swan and Helena Rivers and was the converging point of early roads from Northam, York, Toodyay and Victoria Plains.¹ The townsite was surveyed late in 1829, and in February 1830, town allotments were opened for selection.

Many of the early settlers in Guildford were indentured servants who had come out with Thomas Peel and been released from their indenture when Peel's settlement scheme failed. Guildford was described by Captain F. C. Irwin in 1834,

At Guildford the town grants amount to from two to four acres each ... This village has a very interesting appearance and covers a considerable space of ground. Each cottage is surrounded by its garden and has fields neatly fenced contiguous.²

Guildford was the site of the colony's early agricultural shows from 1835 to 1845, before the shows outgrew the town's limited space.³ By 1848, the population had reached 95, almost half of whom were children. A Convict Depot was established in 1851, and operated until 1873. This depot served the Swan Valley area, convicts from it maintaining the York, Toodyay and Gingin roads, and building bridges in the district. The Depot was also important to the prosperity of Guildford so that by 1859, the population had risen to 369, plus 59 convicts.⁴

Guildford's first water supply was obtained from a spring, or soak, located on low, swampy ground on what was then the southern half of Church Square.⁵ Private domestic wells were also sunk by the settlers, but these sometimes became brackish or dry in summer months. At these times, water had to be fetched by ferry from Success Well at West Guildford.⁶ This suggests, of

¹ *The Story of Guildford 1829-1952*, compiled by The Town Clerk to commemorate the Commonwealth Jubilee, 1951, pp. 2-4.

² Irwin, F. C. *The State and Position of Western Australia: commonly called the Swan River settlement*, London, 1835.

³ Moss, J. V. The birth and growth of Guildford, Teachers Higher Certificate optional thesis, bound typescript.

⁴ Ferguson, R. J. & Stephenson, Gordon, Survey of Historical Buildings in the Shire of Swan, 1975. p. 7-8. Bound typescript

⁵ Dundas, Barbara, Historic background material obtained from Guildford Town Trust Minutes and CSO records; Guildford Town plans of 1829 & 1836. (See supporting material)

⁶ Bourke, Michael J., *On the Swan: A history of the Swan District, Western Australia*. Perth, UWA Press, 1987, p. 56.

course, that the spring on Church Square was not capable of supplying enough water to the township during the summer months.

This situation was not uncommon. Development of water supplies by Government was confined to providing wells within its own institutions, as well as on the longer roads.⁷ Water supply was considered the responsibility of local authorities, so one of the first tasks of the Guildford Town Trust, established in 1840, was to establish a reliable supply of potable water for the town.

The annual rental of the ferry was the Trusts main source of finance. A traveller wrote to the *Inquirer* in August 1840, complaining that income from the ferry was not being spent on the roads in the area, which were in bad repair. A reply came quickly and stated, in part:

as many of the inhabitants suffer great inconvenience during the summer months for want of good water, it is proposed to expend about £13 in forming a well and watering place for the public benefit.⁸

Details of exactly what this money was spent on are not available.

Sometime between 1846 and 1849, Church Square was divided in half. The northern section was renamed Stirling Square, and the southern section was subdivided into six lots. One of these was Town Lot 144, the site of the spring, later to be known as *Spring Reserve*.⁹

In 1852, two wells were sunk on Town Lots 44 and 45 which were the site of the Convict Depot.¹⁰ In 1865, the spring in Helena Street, which was the main source of water supply, was stoned and fenced, the approach being over a stile.¹¹ This work was carried out by the convicts from the Depot.¹² In 1877, the Town Trust purchased two troughs for watering livestock, and a fifteen foot trough was placed in *Spring Reserve*. The following year they purchased a pump for the spring. A trough made from a hollowed trunk was discovered on site recently, but had to be covered again due to lack of conservation funds.¹³

In 1882, an open well was sunk for the town herd, and for travellers and teamsters. According to Town Trust minutes, the well was to be bricked and curbed and a new pump was to be added to relieve the critical water supply situation in the town. A local resident, Mr S. Gardiner, recorded how children from the local government school would cart water from the well in the early 1900s, for use in the school. Other residents remember 'Afghan' camel teams watering at *Spring Reserve*.¹⁴

In the 1880s, water supply schemes began to be developed in Western Australia. Central Fremantle was served with a reticulated water supply

⁷ Le Page, J. H. S., *Building a State: the story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829-1985*, Leederville, Water Authority of WA, 1986, p. 154 & 159.

⁸ Bourke, Michael J, op cit, p. 151.

⁹ Dundas, Barbara, op cit; Guildford Town plans of 1829, 1836 and 1882. (See supporting material)

¹⁰ Guildford Town plans, 1836 & 1882; Bourke, Michael, op cit, p. 171.

¹¹ *The Story of Guildford 1829-1952*, op cit, p. 15.

¹² Dundas, Barbara, op cit.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

from underground reservoirs within Fremantle Gorge, and Geraldton and Carnarvon had small schemes operating by 1889. Perth's first water supply scheme was operated by a private company, City of Perth Water Works Company, which began supplying water in 1891. But the supply was not reliable, costs were high, and quality of water often poor. The company was purchased by the government under the Metropolitan Water Works Act, 1896, and water supply became a responsibility of the Public Works Department.¹⁵

During the 1890s, the PWD undertook a drilling programme to ascertain the extent and quality of artesian water. A bore at Midland Junction, sunk in 1895, provided 266,000 gallons a day for the Midland and Government railways, and another artesian bore in Perth Station Yard, near Milligan Street, supplied 400,000 gallons per day.

On 15 September 1897, work began on a bore on *Spring Reserve*. The bore, known as the Guildford Town Bore, was sunk to a depth of 1,202 feet and produced 1,167,000 gallons of water per day.

A very successful bore was completed at Guildford in January 1898; the 1200 feet deep bore supplied 1,000,000 gallons per day ... The existence of substantial quantities of artesian water was by then well and truly established although the quality was by no means universally acceptable.¹⁶

Piping was laid through the streets of Guildford to supply potable water under artesian pressure to most homes in the town. A map, c.1900, shows the extent of this water supply system.¹⁷ Water was also pumped to the cattle trough on *Spring Reserve* and to the troughs in James Street and Terrace Road. The water was reputed to have become increasingly sulphurous and unpleasant to drink by the late 1890s, and could only be used for stock and gardens.¹⁸ By 1906, Guildford's water supply needs were met by the government supply scheme.

The well was covered some time after the bore was sunk, and its exact location is not known.

A subdivision plan of 1882, shows Lot 144 marked for conditional sale.¹⁹ The land was not sold; however, and ownership remained with the Crown. In 1959, ownership was transferred to the Municipality of Guildford. Guildford, Midland and the Swan district amalgamated and became the Shire of Swan in 1970. The site was gazetted Reserve 6449 on 14 January 1927, and the name *Spring Reserve* was gazetted on 12 August 1988.²⁰

The Town Bore currently provides water for irrigating the Kings Meadow Polo fields, and Stirling Square, but it is understood that because of increasing mineralisation of the bore water, future irrigation water for Stirling Square

¹⁵ Le Page, J. H. S., op cit, p. 159 & 258.

¹⁶ ibid, p. 261.

¹⁷ Barabara Dundas, op cit, map derived from one held at S. B. Devenish Real Estate Agents. (see supporting material)

¹⁸ ibid.

¹⁹ Subdivision plan, 1882. (See supporting material)

²⁰ Information supplied by Swan Shire, 10 November 1997.

may be supplied from a new bore at Lilac Hill. If use of the Town Bore declines residents fear it may be at risk.²¹

The importance of the artesian bore site was recognised by Jenny Gregory who, as history consultant for the MWSS, stated in 1981:

I would stress that any artesian bores put down before 1905 and that are still in use represent an important part of Guildford's history. The municipal bore of 1897 is of particular interest as it represents the first attempt to provide a public water supply before 1900 for the residents of Guildford.²²

The Guildford Association, formerly the Swan-Guildford Historical Society, and residents, are concerned at plans by Swan Shire Council to erect basketball courts on *Spring Reserve*. Given that the position of the well is not currently known, they are afraid that any further work may disrupt the integrity of the place.²³

Work already carried out includes the digging of drainage, reticulation of the site, and the planting of trees that are historically and environmentally inappropriate for a swamp site.²⁴ In 1994, Curtin University lecturer Dr Vern Wilson offered the assistance of post graduate students with ground probing radar to assist in locating the well, but Swan Shire Council has not taken up this offer to date.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Spring Reserve is located on the north-west corner of the junction of Helena Street and Johnson Avenue, Guildford. Helena Street runs east-west and Johnson Avenue north-south. About 500 metres south of Helena Street is the Helena River, which at this point runs approximately parallel to Helena Street. Between Helena Street and the river is vacant land. Immediately to the east and north of *Spring Reserve* are private houses, side on to the reserve. Across Johnson Street to the west and north are private houses that face *Spring Reserve*.

Spring Reserve falls from north to south, and consists of a grassed area, almost square in plan but for an additional section in the north-east corner. At the time of this assessment, about 8.00am on an October morning, the grass was very damp underfoot and in places shallow pools had formed, up to 400mm deep, despite there being no recent rains.

Two tennis courts with a perimeter chain link fence are situated in the south-east corner. To the west of the tennis court is a pavilion with table and benches. South of the pavilion is a bench, a wood fired barbecue and a bin. North of the pavilion is a modern bore consisting of a sheet zincalume bore housing, about 1.2 metres square and half a metre high, north of which is a pump on a concrete stand.

West of the bore is a children's play area with a retaining wall, swings and a timber climbing structure with a slide.

²¹ Letter, Swan-Guildford Historical Society to Hon Mr. Tonkin, Minister for Water Resources, 4 November 1985, HCWA file 6120.

²² Dundas, Barbara, op cit.

²³ Letter, Swan-Guildford Historical Society, op cit; Letter, The Guildford Association, 15 May 1997; Letter Mrs J. Hamersley, 28 March 1997, HCWA File 6120. (see supporting material)

²⁴ Telephone conversation with Barbara Dundas, 24 October 1997.

South of the playground and immediately north of the exposed aggregate footpath that runs parallel to Helena Street, is a timber sign bearing the words 'Spring Reserve' and 'Shire of Swan'.

North of the tennis courts is a toilet block with a narrow verandah to the south overlooking the tennis courts.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Physical search for the original well.

Archaeological conducted to locate and investigate the spring and trough.