



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

The place is important for its aesthetic characteristics imparted by the simplicity of the Colonial Georgian architecture and the pleasant texture and warmth of colouring of the mellow brickwork. (Criterion 1.1)

The place is important for its contribution to the scale and quality of the streetscape, combining with the other historic buildings of the Meadow Street precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is significant for its association with the establishment of the convict depot in Guildford which, with the rest of the convict establishment, introduced a major change in the way the affairs of the colony were conducted. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

The place is important in demonstrating the transition from an impoverished colony suffering severe labour shortage to the more affluent period where the arrival of the convicts provided an influx of capital and cheap labour. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is highly valued by the local community for its role in the historic, social and cultural activities of Guildford. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The place is rare as one of the few intact parts of a convict depot demonstrating the way of life in the convict era. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is representative of the characteristics of Commissariat stores of the convict establishment in Western Australia, such as the larger example in Cliff Street, Fremantle. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The condition of the place is generally sound; however, there are areas of severely fretting brickwork.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place has a moderate degree of integrity in that the present use as a theatre has brought about the addition of a wing at the east end of the store which has had some, but not major, impact on the significant values of the building, while leaving the original fabric generally undisturbed.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a high degree of authenticity in that the original building fabric is largely intact.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The supporting evidence was compiled by John Pidgeon, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The former Commissariat Store and Quarters, was among those buildings designed and constructed as part of the Guildford Convict Depot by Lieutenant Du Cane.

2nd Lieutenant Edmund F. Du Cane, of the Royal Engineers, arrived in Western Australia in December 1851 aboard the *Anna Robertson* with Lieutenant Wray and a party of 65 Sappers and Miners, their wives and children.¹ Lieutenant Du Cane was at that time 21 years of age. He was placed in charge of convict works in the Guildford, Toodyay and York district, with his base at Guildford.

Lieutenant Du Cane designed and supervised the construction of most of the buildings associated with the convict depot in Guildford, as well as building the first bridge over the Swan River at Guildford, at the site of the public wharf in Meadow Street. Of these works only the Commissariat building, the Pensioner's Cottage, West Guildford, and his own house, immediately to the south of the Commissariat Store, remain.

On a trip to Busselton in 1855, Du Cane met Mary Molloy, daughter of Captain John Molloy, an old colonist. The two were engaged a few weeks later and were married in the old church of St John, Fremantle. Mary Molloy's sister, Mrs E. R. Brockman, later wrote:

We stayed with the dear bride and bridegroom a fortnight. he was like a brother to me, as well as Amelia; we used to go for walks and one day had a boat and rowed on the river. We took the oars and Mr Du Cane sat in the stern and sang 'Ben Baxter was a Boatman'. He brought me one day Macaulay's 'Lays of Ancient Home'; it was my first introduction to those inspiring poems, and I have loved them ever since.²

Du Cane emerges as a person of considerable intelligence and charm, and this is reflected in the design of his house and other buildings at Guildford. He was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant in February 1854 and made a Justice of the Peace. In March 1856 he and his wife left for England in the *Esmerelda*, never to return to Western Australia.

With the benefit of hindsight, Du Cane's unprecedented sway over prison administration in the last third of the 19th century in Great Britain was neither enlightened nor reformist. As the Government's chief adviser on prisons, he advocated and was largely responsible for the nationalisation of local prisons on the basis of flawed and misleading calculations of the financial benefits of the change. He was also instrumental in increasing the severity of punishment given to prisoners by subjecting them uniformly to long hours of meaningless labour, a near-starvation diet and rigorous living conditions.³ These practices were later discredited as inhumane and ineffective.

¹ *Perth Gazette*, 26 December 1851.

² Battye Library, Accession No. 353A.

³ McConville, S. 'The Victorian Prison' in Morris, N. and Rothman, D.J. (eds.) *The Oxford History of the Prison : the practice of punishment in western society* New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 141-154.

The Commissariat Quarters were intended as a dwelling for the officers in charge of the Commissariat Store. According to Lieutenant Du Cane's reports the Commissariat Quarters were completed at the end of 1853, and the Commissariat Store was completed in 1854.⁴ Du Cane describes both buildings in one of his reports:

A Commissariat Store has been erected 55' x 25', to it are attached a quarter consisting of two rooms and a kitchen and an office. This building is of brick with wooden floors; the quarter and office only are ceiled. It is surrounded by a fence enclosing a yard about 130' x 145' in which also has been erected a wooden stable; this has been built with one side open as being best suited to the climate, and the work required of the horses; there is accommodation for 7 horses, a loose box for a sick horse, a harness room, a room for the groom, and a shed capable of containing 4 carts and 30 tons of hay.⁵

When Lieutenant Du Cane was transferred to Fremantle in 1855, his former house was handed over to the Director of the Commissariat Store in Guildford, Deputy Assistant Commissary-General Travers.⁶

The Commissariat Store was later used as a Drill Hall by Enrolled Pensioner Guards. When the convict depot in Guildford was closed in 1878, the buildings were handed over to the municipality of Guildford⁷, which sold Du Cane's house, and the section of Allotment 45 on which it stands, to a private buyer.

The Commissariat Quarters were renovated in 1951 for use as an Infant Health Centre. The whole building is now leased from the Shire Council by the Garrick Club.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Commissariat Store, now *Garrick Theatre*, still conforms fairly closely to the description by Lieutenant Du Cane given above. It stands between the old Town Hall, dating from the 1930s, to the north and Lieutenant Du Cane's house of the same period as the Commissariat Store but much altered. Between the old Town Hall and the Commissariat Store is a courtyard paved with cement blocks laid in circular patterns. To the south, between the building and the fence of the Du Cane house, is a grassed area shaded with trees.

The original quarters section of the building is on a north south axis facing Meadow Street and built close to an open timber paling fence on the street alignment. The hipped and steeply pitched roof is clad with corrugated iron painted Indian red. The street elevation is protected by verandah with a lean-to roof with half hips at each end and supported on timber columns. The verandah roof is pitched separately from the main roof. The walls of the store are Flemish bond brickwork.

From the south end of the quarters, the long narrow form of the Commissariat Store projects eastward. The roof of the Store is similar to that of the quarters and the walls are of English bonded brickwork. The roof of the store is

⁴ Battye Library, *The Convict System* Vol. VII, 1855, p.145.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*, p.111.

⁷ W. A. Almanac 1879 (Inquirer edition), List of Events.

supported by wooden rafters joined by collar ties. Above the rafters the roof is close boarded. There is no glazing in the windows of the store, but they are fitted with bars and wooden shutters.

A new brick building has been built across the east end of the former Commissariat Store to provide more accommodation for the theatre. This building has been designed in similar mode to the store and quarters.

13.3 REFERENCES

Battye Library, *The Convict System* Vol.VII.

Bourke M. *On the Swan* Nedlands, UWA Press, 1987.

The National Trust of Australia (WA) files.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
