



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 informal all timber construction of the original house and the handsome proportions and formal design of the second house both have aesthetic value. (Criterion 1.1)

The contrasting styles and sizes of the two houses, emphasised by their close proximity to one another, demonstrate aesthetic value. (Criterion 1.1)

The letter 'A' in the west gable of the second house demonstrates aesthetic innovation. (Criterion 1.2)

Together the houses and surrounding gardens contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The original house was one of the first in the Yallingup district. (Criterion 2.1)

The original house demonstrates the opening up of the Yallingup district to small farms in the 1860s. (Criterion 2.2)

The original house has a close association with George Guerrier, an early settler in the Vasse district. (Criterion 2.3)

The second house has historic associations with the Abbey family, early farmers in the Vasse district. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The original house has scientific value in that it demonstrates construction methods no longer practiced. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Abbey Farm contributes to the community's sense of place because of its long association with the farming of the region. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The original house, with its low door heads, window heads and verandah beams, and unusual wall construction, is an uncommon structure. (Criterion 5.1)

The second house, because of its age and style, is an uncommon structure. (Criterion 5.1)

The second house, formal in design and more conventional in construction, contrasts with the rudimentary original house. This juxtaposition has rarity value. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Both houses are representative of the way of life of the owners. The original house reflects the needs of the pioneering owners, who built a solid, dependable and economical structure. The second house reflects the prosperity and growing confidence of the settlers of *Abbey Farm*. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Both houses are in good condition. The external window sill of the south-west room of the second house has borer damage. The south-east corner of this building has been painted, and the removal of some of the paint by abrasive methods has resulted in the deterioration of the brickwork. To the lower part of the west gable, a cement render has been applied, presumably as a form of waterproofing. While this detracts from the appearance of the west facade, there is no evidence of any leaks to the rooms below this area.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Both buildings were built as homes and continue to be used as such today. The current use of *Abbey Farm* as a hobby farm has resulted in high integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The original house, having undergone recent and mainly sympathetic repairs, has less authenticity than the second house. These repairs, such as the new shingled roof, collar ties and fireplace, have been done in a manner which is sympathetic to the original. The new glazing to the east is unsympathetic. Apart from the western verandah enclosures forming the kitchen extension and bathroom, the concrete floor to the front verandah and the corrugated iron roof, the second house has high authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Elise de Munck, B.A. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Abbey Farm, situated about 8km south of Yallingup townsite, has two adjacent farmhouses, one built by George Guerrier in 1864, the other by Nathaniel Abbey in the 1870s.

George Frederick Guerrier and his wife arrived in the Swan River Colony in November 1845.¹ A sergeant in the 21st Regiment, Guerrier first found employment in the colonial police force, then tried his hand as a building contractor. By the late 1840s, he was farming in the Vasse district.² In 1864, he took up property near Yallingup and cleared it for farming. As living quarters he constructed a two-roomed cottage on the property.³ One of the earliest farmhouses in the area, the building was noteworthy for its low eaves, said to have been designed to prevent the penetration of Aboriginal spears. With a large kitchen and one bedroom, small windows and a low doorway, this dwelling was solidly constructed of jarrah planks and had a shingled roof.⁴

In 1871, Guerrier's third daughter, Adela, married Nathaniel Abbey. Nathaniel's parents, Thomas and Mary Ann Abbey, immigrants from Ireland, had arrived in the Swan River Colony thirty years earlier.⁵ Thomas Abbey worked for John Bussell at the Vasse at a time in the 1840s when there was a severe shortage of labour in the colony.⁶ Later, he leased land at Wonnerup, then settled near The Broadwater west of Busselton. The couple had four sons during this period, including John and Nathaniel, twins born in 1844.⁷ Nathaniel and Adela Abbey took over Guerrier's Yallingup property and built the second house.

Sources disagree over the exact year of construction of the second house, but it was apparently completed by 1877.⁸ The house was built of brick on limestone footings. Of aesthetic interest is the letter A incorporated into the brickwork of the western gable. The walls, 12 inches thick, are solid brick. The bricks were made on site at the farm.⁹ The high pitched roof was built to

¹ *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1914* Vol.1, Early Settlers 1829-1850, compiled by Pamela Statham (UWA Press, Nedlands, WA, 1979), p.136.

² *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1914* Vol.3, Free 1850-1868, compiled by Rica Erickson (UWA Press, Nedlands, WA, 1979), p.341.

³ *Historic Busselton* (RWAHS, 1970); National Trust Classification document.

⁴ *Countryman*, Vol.79, No.3881, 26 March 1964, p.31.

⁵ *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1914* Vol.1, Early Settlers 1829-1850, compiled by Pamela Statham (UWA Press, Nedlands, WA, 1979), p.1.

⁶ Jennings, R. *Busselton, Outstation on the Vasse, 1830-1850* (Shire of Busselton, Busselton, WA, 1983), p.241.

⁷ 'The Abbey Family of Busselton' BL - RN559.

⁸ *South West Region Tourism Development Plan* prepared by Coopers & Lybrand, Hassell Planning Consultants, Rob Tonge & Associates, February 1986; *Countryman*, 26 March 1964, p.31; *The Architect* Vol.2, September 1971, No.105, p.32; *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1976, p.32; National Trust Classification document.

⁹ National Trust Classification document.

incorporate attic bedrooms when the Abbeys had children, but since they remained childless, the additions never eventuated.¹⁰

The property remained with the Abbeys until they retired to Busselton. The farm was taken over by a Major Daniel who later sold it to the government. After World War One, the property was acquired for the Soldier Settlement Scheme for the rehabilitation of returned soldiers.¹¹ Throughout the 1920s, with renewed agricultural expansion and development advocated by successive State governments, many inexperienced men, including returned soldiers, were encouraged to take up land in the South-West and the eastern margins of the State.¹² For a time, *Abbey Farm* became part of this scheme for the rehabilitation of soldiers through agricultural development.

In 1976, *Abbey Farm* was classified by the National Trust. By that time it was privately owned and farmed by H. Curtis.¹³ The original farm house was described as a 'step back into the past' and in need of renovations.¹⁴ The original roof of shingles had been replaced with corrugated iron and the small building had been used as a shed when the farm had developed after the construction of the second house.

The most significant change to the second house, noted at the time of classification, was the replacement of the shingles with corrugated iron.¹⁵ Currently, in 1996, *Abbey Farm* is privately owned by R. and J. Salmon and the property is still being actively farmed.¹⁶

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Abbey Farm is located on the north side of Abbey Farm Road, about 500 metres from Caves Road.

Abbey Farm consists of two adjacent buildings; an original house, built in 1864 and a second house built between 1871 and 1877. The original house comprises of two rooms with timber floors, a verandah to three sides and a shingled roof. The second house has brick walls with a steep pitched corrugated iron roof, with a verandah to all four sides.

The two houses are about two metres apart, rectangular in plan and have their long axis aligned east-west. The original house is located to the east and the second house to the west. The land falls to the south-east, particularly at the second house. The south-east corner of the second house has a floor level about one metre higher than ground level.

The original house is not built to any style. The larger eastern room, originally the kitchen and currently a bedroom, has a fireplace centrally located in the eastern wall. The fireplace, its chimney and the windows to either side all appear to have been constructed in recent times. The western room is, and probably was originally, a bedroom.

¹⁰ *Historic Busselton* (RWAHS, 1970), p.9; *The Heritage of Western Australia, The Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (Macmillan Co. of Australia Pty Ltd, South Melbourne, 1989), p.69.

¹¹ *Historic Busselton* (RWAHS, 1970), p.9.

¹² Stannage, C.T. *A New History of Western Australia* (UWA Press, Nedlands, WA, 1987), p.251.

¹³ *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1976, p.32.

¹⁴ *Countryman*, 26 March 1964, p.31.

¹⁵ National Trust Classification document.

¹⁶ Private Files of Elise de Munck, PF1.

At present the construction of the original house consists of timber floorboards on joists which are probably laid directly on the ground. Cane matting has been fixed over most of the floorboards. The perimeter walls are timber framed with brick infill between the timber framing and plastered internally so that the inner faces of the studs and wall plates are expressed. Externally the walls are lined with vertical continuous planks about 250mm wide and 50mm thick, up to the wall plate line. Above the wall plate, the internal brickwork is visible from the outside and has sections showing evidence of repair with modern bricks, particularly on the north side. Perhaps the original top courses of bricks were dislodged during roof repairs.

The broken backed, hipped roof is clad in what appear to be new shingles, on original battens on rafters. Two new timber collar ties with modern galvanised bolted connections have been inserted, one over each room. Typically, connections are by means of handmade iron nails or by close notching, such as the fitting of rafters over the wall plates.

Door heads and window heads are very low, about 1.7 metres above floor level. The verandah beams are also low, about 1.6metres above floor level. The verandah floor consists of floorboards, typically laid on joists directly on the ground. On the western side of the north verandah and the northern side of the west verandah is a 1 metre long weatherboard cross wall adjacent to which is a built-in timber trunk. On the southern verandah, on the opposite side of the house, is another cross wall, built of vertical planks similar to the perimeter wall. At this point there is a step in the verandah floor, accommodating the change in ground level. It appears that the western part of the verandah was enclosed and two rooms created. New floorboards to the southern part of the verandah and timber windows and flyscreened doors have been installed.

The second house is built in a Victorian Georgian style. The construction consists of brick walls on limestone footings, with timber floorboards probably on traditional joists, bearers and stumps. The roof is clad in corrugated iron, but was probably originally shingled, judging by the closely spaced roof battens to the east and west verandahs. The windows are double hung sliding sashes, with each sash divided into six panes. Timber lintels with raked cut ends are built in the brickwork over each window.

The front and rear doors are glazed with twelve panes to the upper section. Internally, the walls are plastered, with the original floorboards, panelled timber doors, brick fireplaces and timber mantelpieces in good condition. The ceilings and ceiling roses are sound. Three sides of the verandah floor are original, but the northern or front section has been concreted.

The layout of the second house is as follows. A central hallway, running north- south, divides the house into two equal halves of two rooms each, with each group of two rooms having back to back fireplaces. The central hallway has a full width archway that aligns with the internal walls of the rooms to each side. The north-west room was a kitchen and is used as such today. The south-west room, which was probably a bedroom, is now a sitting room. The south-east and north-east rooms are used as bedrooms. The slightly larger fireplace to the north-east room would indicate that it had been a sitting or dining room. To the north-west of the house the verandah has been enclosed. A kitchen extension leads off the original kitchen. This consists of asbestos

walls, a timber floor, with a sink and benches. A door in the southern wall leads on to the verandah. An asbestos walled, concrete floored bathroom has been added to the north of the verandah. This is entered by a door off the front verandah.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.