



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.15 Struggling with remoteness
- 3.10 Altering the environment for economic development
- 3.3 Exploiting natural resources
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions
- 2.5 Promoting settlement on the land through selection and group settlement

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 301 Grazing pastoralism and Dairying
- 104 Land allocation and subdivision

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a landmark on the South West Highway due to its prominent location. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm demonstrates the origins of settlement in the district as modest farming ventures managed by small family groups. (Criterion 2.1)

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm demonstrates the self-reliance required of early settlers through the use of simple construction methods and roughly finished local materials. (Criterion 2.2)

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is associated with several families and individuals who contributed to the settlement and development of the Boyanup area including James Bessonnet who was responsible for the naming of the Boyanup farm; Robert Scott and his extended family who were large landholders in the Boyanup and Bunbury districts; and William Henry Smith, the younger, a significant landholder and farmer in the area. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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 and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a good example of an early form of building used by settlers in the south west of the state in the nineteenth century. (Criterion 3.1)

The archaeological material of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* has the potential to provide information about farming practices of the nineteenth and twentieth century. (Criterion 3.1 and 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm contributes to the community's sense of place because of its visible location on the South West Highway and because it has been relatively unchanged in that location for over 100 years. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a rare remaining example of the use of a construction method once common in the nineteenth century in the South West, and is an unusually late example of the style. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm demonstrates the design and construction of timber slab cottages that were common in the south west of the state. It is representative of the materials used and the scale of cottage that were built in remote locations for modest farms. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The place is in a poor condition as the timber slabs walls have badly deteriorated through white ant attack. The intrusion of trees on to the structure has altered the soundness of the structure although in some places the trees are contributing to holding the timber slabs vertical.

There has been no regular maintenance undertaken on the place since 1925. Materials have been removed and the action of white ants, weathering and plant growth has been unchecked. This lack of activity has however contributed to the likelihood that the site has potential as a source of archaeological material.

The current use as a storage facility makes access to the interior of the place difficult and has contributed to the poor floor and sub floor timbers.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm has a high level of integrity, as the original intention of the structure is intact although subject to serious decay and weathering. The place is currently unused except for storing farm machinery, which does not seriously contribute to further decline of the place.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm has a high degree of authenticity, as it has been relatively unchanged since its construction in the 1880s. The original structure has not been added to only elements have been removed or deteriorated.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Robert Nicholson and Prue Griffin, in January 2005, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a single-storey derelict cottage constructed in the vernacular style using timber slabs for walls and corrugated iron for the roof. The cottage was built in the period 1882 to 1891 during which time Robert Scott owned the land.

The site of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* falls within one of the first landholdings in the Boyanup area within the land division named the Wellington District by the colonial government. Location 54 was originally granted to John Schoales.¹ Schoales, who held a position with the Perth Agricultural Society, was granted two locations in the vicinity: Location 54 and Location 55 further east on the Preston River. It has not been established if Schoales undertook any work on either of these Locations during the time he owned them. Whilst travelling back to the colony in 1841 aboard the *Ganges*, Schoales met Dublin solicitor, James Bessonnet.² Schoales provided Bessonnet with letters of introduction to the authorities in the colony, and in 1845 Schoales' grants, Locations 54 and 55, were transferred to Bessonnet.³

In 1846, Location 54 consisted of 385 acres through which the Preston River flowed and the new road from Bunbury to the Blackwood had just been completed.⁴ The land also had a natural spring, sometimes known as Bessonnet Springs,⁵ and a permanent billabong. Bessonnet named his farm 'Boyanup', an aboriginal word meaning 'place of quartz'.⁶ Bessonnet was apparently a well-liked and capable farmer in the district. He received support from the Resident Magistrate for the Wellington district, George Eliot, who on several occasions petitioned to the Colonial Secretary on Bessonnet's behalf.⁷ Bessonnet was also one of several landowners who petitioned Governor Hutt in 1845 following the heavy rains and subsequent floods of that year. The petitioners wrote that they were ready to 'assist by every means in their power' to help in the construction of better communication links within their community.⁸ In the same year Bessonnet and other members of the district petitioned Governor Hutt to retain the services of Reverend Wollaston in the district rather than transfer him to Albany. A similar group of gentlemen prepared another petition to organise regular weekly postage delivery between Perth and the Wellington district.⁹

1 National Trust Assessment form, Fmr Smith's cottage, Boyanup, p. 2. The original locations were named Leschenault Locations 54 and 55 but were later renamed Wellington Locations 54 and 55. For convenience this assessment will use the current terminology of Wellington. The exact date of the original grant has not been determined but could be established through further research at the Department of Land Information.

2 Krantz, V and Chase, D. *Just a Horse Ride Away A History of the Shire of Capel and its People*, Shire of Capel, 1995, p. 26. Note that the spelling is shown elsewhere as Bissouet, Bessneut or Bessonnet.

3 *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 26.

4 *Ibid*, p. 34

5 National Trust Assessment, p. 1.

6 Department of Land Information, Geonoma Database and *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 34.

7 SROWA, Acc 36 CSO vol 120, f. 91 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 34.

8 SROWA, Acc 36, CSO vol. 139, ff. 183-4 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 33.

9 SROWA, Acc 36, CSO vol. 153, ff 128-9 and ff. 110-12 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 32.

By 1848, the whole of the Swan River colony was in a period of economic despondency. Land prices were so high they discouraged new settlers and few buyers could be found for local produce. Whooping cough also swept through the small communities of the Southwest.¹⁰ The difficulties of distance and unfamiliar farming conditions saw many ventures fail in the colony. James Bessonnet left the colony in 1849 aboard the *Despatch*. His friend, John Schoales died of 'financial trouble, loss and disappointment'.¹¹ Location 54 proved to be 'too far from anywhere to be workable and eventually the bush took it back'.¹²

In December 1855, Location 54 was surveyed by the Department of Lands and Surveys. Surveyor Robert Austin did not note any structures on the location or make any comment on the landscape.¹³ A plan drawn of the area c.1866 shows Location 54 or 'Boyanup' as an isolated farm on the Blackwood Road, as the South West Highway was then known. Between the Preston River and the coast there are few locations marked out as surveyed. The majority of settlements are clustered along the coast between the present day Bunbury and Busselton.¹⁴

It has not been established if all or only parts of location 54 were leased to tenant farmers during the period in which James Bessonnet was an absentee landlord from 1849 to 1882.¹⁵ It is known that in 1871 in the northeast corner of Location 54, on the western bank of the Preston River south of the present day Trigwell Road, some distance from *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*, farmer Philip McGowan (or Magowan) and his wife, Margaret leased a small portion of location 54 from Bessonnet.¹⁶ The McGowan's had a small cottage in this leased area in which they lived with their five children. Tragically, a young Aboriginal boy killed Margaret McGowan when she went outside the cottage to gather woodchips. The boy escaped but was subsequently caught, sent to trial and finally hanged at Rottnest.¹⁷ The McGowan's had further tragedy in 1875 when Philip McGowan died suddenly whilst out collecting firewood leaving the five children as orphans.¹⁸

By the 1870s the district's pioneering families had established several successful farms. The Scott family was one of the successful families in the district. John and Helen Scott had arrived in the colony in 1831 aboard the *Eliza* from Scotland. They settled in the region near Bunbury and in 1837 John Scott entered into an agreement with Governor Stirling which consisted of Scott fulfilling the title requirements of one of Governor Stirling's land grants near Bunbury, in return Scott would receive 300 acres of land in the property known as 'Eelup'. Stirling must have had confidence in Scott's ability as he arranged for his nephew,

10 Green, N *Broken Spears: Aboriginals and Europeans in the Southwest of Australia*, Cottesloe, 1984, p. 235 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 36.

11 Statham, Pamela (compiler) *Dictionary of West Australians 1829-1914, Volume 1 Early Settlers 1829-1850*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979, p. 292 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 37.

12 *Wollaston's Albany Journals, 1848-1856, being volume 2 of the Journals and Diaries of Reverend John Ramsden Wollaston*, collected by Rev. Canon A. Burton, Perth 1954, p. 14 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 37.

13 SROWA, Cons 5000, SDSR/RA1 f 173.

14 Wellington 33 c.1866 as reproduced in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 55.

15 A search of the correspondence records of the Department of Lands and Surveys, now held by the SROWA, did not reveal any documentation relating to the leasing of part of this land during the time it was owned by Bessonnet.

16 This information relating to the location of the McGowan farm was supplied by Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, January 2005.

17 SROWA, Acc 36, CSO vol. 696, ff, 79, and 81 as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p.71.

18 Ibid.

George Eliot, to remain with the Scott family to learn farm management. Eliot subsequently took up land in the district and became the Resident Magistrate.¹⁹

John and Helen Scott had three boys, John Jnr, William and Robert, all of whom farmed in the Wellington district; John Jnr established the farm 'Stratham Park'. Robert married Jane Roberts in 1853 and they subsequently had ten children.²⁰ Shortly after marriage, Robert Scott took up duties as second Police constable for his old friend George Eliot, now Resident Magistrate of Wellington District. In addition to these duties Robert Scott managed his parents' lease 'Eelup' for some years until establishing his own farm 'Roselands', not far from 'Stratham Park'.²¹

In 1882, Robert Scott purchased Location 54 from James Bessonnet, now resident in Dublin, for £50. In the memorial documenting this transaction, Robert Scott is noted as residing at 'Eelup'.²² It is likely that Robert took over managing the farm as his father; John Scott Senior had died in 1880.²³ By 1892, Robert Scott is recorded as being a boarding house keeper.²⁴

In 1891, surveyor G.R. Turner undertook a survey of portion of Location 54. Turner was in the district to resurvey Blackwood Road and to subdivide blocks for the Boyanup Agricultural Area. He surveyed a portion of Location 54 to the west of the present day South West Highway. The survey shows that *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* was extant and drawn as a house with verandas on the north and east sides. Further north of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is a structure denoted as a shed that appears to have been larger than the total perimeter of the house, including the verandas. The house and shed are fenced off from the remainder of the property and the road is also fenced.²⁵ This diagram demonstrates that the original structure of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* was larger than that which remains standing. The physical evidence shows that the chimney had a hearth on both sides. A plan of the site prepared by Fiona Bush for the National Trust Assessment shows that partial remains of another room on the south side, where the chimney is located.²⁶ The occupants may have used the veranda side of the fireplace to cook and prepare meals and the internal fireplace for heating.

The notation in the surveyor's field book states '23rd October 1891 survey of part of Wellington Loc No 54 for Robert Scott at present occupied by C. Magowan'.²⁷ This note is curious as it is recorded elsewhere that Charles McGowan, the eldest son of Philip and Margaret McGowan left the district with his brothers and sisters to begin anew at a place called 'Thompson's Brook'.²⁸

19 *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 17.

20 Erikson, R (ed) *Dictionary of Western Australians* Vol 4, UWA Press Nedlands, p. 2754.

21 *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 45.

22 Memorial no 1302 in book 8, dated 1882, Department of Land Information.

23 *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 82.

24 Certificate of Title, Volume 45 fol 328, Department of Land Information.

25 A notation in the field book relating to the shed is visible but not clear. It appears to be either 'outstation' shed or 'castration' shed. The fencing in the drawing suggests that the property was used for stock, so the latter is possible.

26 National Trust Assessment, p. 6. In April 2005, there are no remains evident of a southern room.

27 Field book 6435, G. R. Turner, held by the Department of Land Information.

28 SROWA, Acc 36, CSO Vol 696, f. 79 and Battye Library PR 14514, as quoted in *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 71.

The evidence available indicates that *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* was likely to have been constructed in the 1880s after Robert Scott purchased the land.²⁹ Previous reports³⁰ have indicated that the place was built in the 1890s but the evidence of the survey field book indicates that it was extant in 1891.

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a building constructed as a response to the environment and the materials available. As noted by Gare:

The common circumstance that produced this most distinctive architectural form was the bare necessity caused by the isolation and lack of conventional building resources. Most often they were built by the intended occupant using a few essential tools. Their method of construction was adopted widely across Australia and was still employed up until the late 19th century.³¹

The corrugated iron roof stamped with the logo of the 'Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company' is likely to be the original roof. This company located in the Midlands of England was one of a number of manufacturers that exported galvanised iron sheets to Australia from the 1850s to provide for the rapidly growing settlements following the discovery of gold in Victoria and Western Australia. The lack of supplies during the World War I led to the establishment of Australia's iron manufacturing industry.³²

Timber was plentiful in the vicinity and the timber industry well established by the end of the nineteenth century with several mills operating in the area.³³ Many farmers also undertook timber cutting for additional income.³⁴ Slab huts were often made by their owners, although it has not been established who built *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*. Nor is it apparent why it was constructed from timber slabs when weatherboards were produced in the Southwest in the late nineteenth century. It may have been the issues of cost and transport that persuaded the builders to use timber probably found on site to construct the place.

In 1892, the location was divided along the boundary of the Blackwood Road (South West Highway). Robert Scott, now noted as a boarding-house keeper, retained the western portion of 273 acres and the eastern portion, 103 acres, was transferred to Charles McGowan.³⁵ After 1893, McGowan probably moved to his own property on the eastern side of the present day South West Highway.

In 1894, a portion of the land (12 acres) was excised from Location 54 for the Boyanup to Minninup (Donnybrook) Railway.³⁶ Although the railway was completed in 1893, completing the title information took more time.³⁷ This railway was the result of much agitation by the people of the southwest who needed rail transport for goods and passengers. In the early 1890s the town of Boyanup had

29 The current owner Clive Reid believes that the place was built during the ownership by Robert Scott. His opinion has been formed by the knowledge passed onto him by locals. Conversation with Prue Griffin, January 2005.

30 The National Trust Assessment and the Municipal Inventory entry indicate that the place was built during the period when Robert Scott owned the land in the 1890s.

31 ANU Forestry Slab Huts by Justin Gare at www.anu.edu.au

32 Evans, Ian *Aussie Roofing History Began With Bark* in <http://www.roofingcontractor.com>

33 The WA Timber Company built a saw mill on the upper Capel River and Paynes Mill in Capel had been operating since 1850. Other mills operated in the vicinity. See *Just a Horse Ride Away*, pp. 41, 89, 115, 129, 196, 210, 242, 272 and 331.

34 See *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 120.

35 Certificate of Title Vol 45 Fol 328, and Certificate of Title Vol 69 fol 188, Department of Land Information.

36 Memorial 1167, Book 11, 1894, Department of Land Information.

37 *The West Australian* 20 November 1893, p. 7 and Memorial no. 1167 in Book 11, 4th September 1894.

a population of 450 with a similar number of people in the surrounding area.³⁸ The junction of the railways from Bunbury, Donnybrook and Vasse made Boyanup a prosperous and busy town in the early part of the twentieth century.³⁹

Between 1900 and 1903, Joe Scott one of the grandsons of Robert Scott occupied *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*.⁴⁰ Robert Scott died in 1907 and the property containing *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* was transferred to his widow Jane Scott.⁴¹ She retained the land until 1915 when it was transferred to William Henry Smith, the younger.⁴² Smith was the son of William Henry Smith who also farmed in the district; so to avoid confusion he was referred to in the title documentation as, William Henry Smith, the younger. William Smith Senior purchased the eastern portion of Location 54 in 1912⁴³ and his son William, purchased the western portion of approximately 220 acres, containing *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* in 1915.⁴⁴ Another son of William Senior, Francis purchased the 38 acres, which was portion of Location 54 between the railway line, the South West Highway and north of the small piece of land that contains *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*.⁴⁵ He ran a dairy farm on that portion of land.⁴⁶

William, the younger, and his wife Maggie occupied *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* from 1915 until 1925 when they built a new home north of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* facing the South West Highway. William Smith, the younger, was an orchardist by trade but the land was used as a dairy farm and also to run pigs.⁴⁷ During their occupancy they raised their two daughters Gladys and Ella.⁴⁸ A new title was created in 1921, which excised a small portion of the land in the north east of the landholding.⁴⁹ This land was transferred to local timber merchant, Percy Thompson, who established a timber mill on the site.⁵⁰

The remaining landholding of two hundred and sixteen acres consisted of the land on the western side of the Boyanup to Donnybrook Railway and the small triangular portion of land that contains *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* and the 1921 cottage. An aerial photograph taken in 1942 shows the land to be used exclusively for grazing, as no other crop marks can be determined.⁵¹

The property was transferred to the two daughters, Gladys and Ella in 1955.⁵² Gladys and Ella married the Reid brothers Mac and Doug. The two couples went into a farming partnership after World War II. They used the land for bullocks and established an orchard, as prices were excellent for exporting fruit to England.⁵³ In 1968, the property was divided on a line from north to south and Gladys Reid

38 *Just a Horse Ride Away*, p. 112.

39 Ibid.

40 Information from Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, 31 January 2005.

41 Certificate of Title Vol 45 Fol 328, Department of Land Information.

42 Certificate of Title Vol 398 Fol 88, Department of Land Information.

43 Certificate of Title Vol 69 fol 188, Department of Land Information.

44 Certificate of Title Vol 398 Fol 88, Department of Land Information.

45 Certificate of Title Vol 627 Fol 140, Department of Land Information

46 Information from Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, 31 January 2005.

47 Information from Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, 31 January 2005.

48 'A Peek into the Past' by Julian Sanders in *Boyanup Post*, October 2000, p. 5 and information from Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, 31 January 2005

49 Certificate of Title Vol 792, Fol 69, Department of Land Information.

50 Information from Clive Reid, February 2005.

51 Aerial photograph Bunbury Run 14, photograph 3498, dated 9 February 1942, Department of Land Information

52 Certificate of Title Vol 792 Fol 69, Department of Land Information.

53 Information from Clive Reid in conversation with Prue Griffin, 31 January 2005.

retained the eastern portion of 121 acres, which contained *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*.⁵⁴ This was transferred to the current owner, her son Clive Reid, in 1996.⁵⁵ Clive and his wife Tess maintain the cattle farm and built their current home in 1994 on the western side of the railway line, which they operate as bed and breakfast accommodation.⁵⁶

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm was included on the Shire of Capel Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places in 1999.

Since late 2003, Clive Reid has undertaken several steps to legally isolate this small piece of land from his larger landholding. The 4 acres containing *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* has proved impractical to farm and he has requested the Shire of Capel and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) that the zoning be changed to tourism and farming. Because of the existence of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* on the land, the Heritage Council of Western Australia and the Western Australian Planning Commission agreed to undertake a heritage assessment of the place.⁵⁷

As part of the process for rezoning, gates have been removed from the fence line and underground power has been supplied to the site. A considerable amount of money and resources have been outlaid by Clive Reid to make these zoning changes. *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is currently, in January 2005, derelict and subject to weathering and vandalism, although this has been a minimal problem due to the difficulty of accessing the site.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is a single storey derelict cottage with timber walls and a corrugated iron roof constructed in the period 1880 to 1891 for the Scott family. The building is located on the western side of the South West Highway, approximately 15 kilometres south of the town of Boyanup.

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm is located within a roughly triangular block of approximately 4 hectares that is fenced on all sides. Within this triangle *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is located within the southern most point of this rough triangle with approximately 5 to 10 metres between the structure and the fence line. The block is also bound by the physical boundaries of the South West Highway on the east and the Bunbury to Donnybrook railway to the west. The highway and railway line run parallel to the fence lines. *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is highly visible to the passing traffic on the South West Highway however the site is not easily accessible as there are no gates in the perimeter fencing.

In the northern portion of the four-hectare block is a derelict cottage of timber, asbestos and iron. This former residence was constructed in 1925 and was vacated in the 1960s. Also within the block are remains of several structures relating to farming practices undertaken on the site. These include the foundation blocks of the apparatus used for milking cows, the remains of a former shed, stock pens, sundry farm machinery and building materials. These structures are predominantly located in the northwest of the block adjacent to the 1925 residence. The remnant structures are generally overgrown with weeds. The majority of the block is loam soil with sparse ground cover except for adjacent to the two buildings. Mature trees are clustered around *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*

54 Certificate of Title Vol 141 Fol 133a, Department of Land Information.

55 Certificate of Title Vol 1520 Fol 298, Department of Land Information.

56 Site visit by Pure Griffin 31 January 2005 and conversation with Clive Reid

57 HCWA Correspondence file for Place No. 3089.

and the 1925 farmhouse including several mature fruit trees. In the northeast corner of the block is a new underground power connection to the site.

Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm was constructed in the vernacular style in the 1880s and consists of two rooms; a living room and a second room created under the skillion roofline. A clay brick chimney is located on the south elevation of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*. The chimney has access from both sides suggesting that an additional roof or enclosure may have been present at some time to protect what is now the exterior of the building. The brick fire place and chimney are well constructed and in good condition.

The most distinctive feature of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is the external walls made of squared jarrah slabs between 100mm to 300mm width x 100mm minimum thickness and dug into the brown loam soil forming a wall. The slabs are tied in with a timber top plate and a series of rafters with ties and small king posts. The external slabs have substantial white ant damage; the inner chambers of the timber are exposed as the top layer of the timber has eroded. The majority of the slabs have been damaged in this way due to direct access for white ants between soil and slabs. Tree roots on the northwest corner of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* have moved several slabs out of level. Numerous slabs have collapsed, particularly on the south elevation and do not form a continuous walling.

The roof is traditional single span rafter and batten construction. Rafters have been machine sawn, but timbers do not have an overall consistency. The roof sheeting is corrugated iron and the manufacturer's logo of a crown and knot with the words 'Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company Emu Brand' are clearly visible from inside the structure. The sheeting is corroded on the western elevation and it is likely that the roll top roof ridge is a replacement. The roof timbers are serviceable, and have kept their geometry. There is considerable inconsistency between the positioning of the timber collar ties, and it looks as if these have progressively been located to straighten the timber slab walls over years of use. Vines are rampant on the northwest corner of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* and have gained access to all parts of the structure. Foliage has accumulated in the roof and caused fracturing of the veranda timbers in the southeast corner.

The original floor of 160mm x 20mm jarrah boards were nailed to joists set onto the ground. The floor is still evident within the living room but has been removed within the skillion room. Within the skillion room some large section joists remain in the soil, probably in their original location.

The internal cladding of the walls in the living room and skillion are of 'lathe and plaster' construction. Wooden lathes have been nailed to all internal walls 25mm x 12mm with 30mm to 40mm gaps, rendered over with tan coloured mud mix of lime and sandy clay. Portions of the internal plasterwork remain in a cracked condition due to the significant movement of the building and the variable mix of the plaster. A small area of plaster above the fireplace still retains some wallpaper. The walls were trimmed out with a chamfered skirting and some portions of skirting and architrave remain in the living room. The existence or location of a ceiling is not evident.

All doors and windows in *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* have been removed, although some sub frames still exist which used straight finished sections of slab. The positioning of mortices, stops, indicates the probable location of the doors and windows and hinge rebates. The lack of doors and windows and the corroded roof has contributed to the weathering of the interior of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*.

The interior of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is currently used to store farm machinery that is no longer used by the owners.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The most readily recognisable feature of *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* is the timber slabs used for external cladding of the cottage. This feature was used to determine if there were many other comparative places in Western Australia. A search of the Heritage Council database yielded 28 places, which were recorded as incorporating timber slabs in their construction. Examination of these places revealed the following eighteen comparable places in relation to the materials used, date of construction and original use.

Nine of the comparable places are on the State Register. These include:

Slab Cottage Group (03478) Quindalup, which consists of several buildings, one of which is a split timber and weatherboard cottage built c.1860s. *Abbey Farm* (00426) in Yallingup consists of two cottages one of which is a timber slab cottage built in 1864. *Glenbourne Homestead* (00116), constructed in 1888/9 has been added to several times but the original sections of the homestead with timber slab walls remain. *Picton Inn* (00382) in Picton on the Preston River built c. 1850 uses split timbers in the interior of the former wayside inn. This place differs in its original use and the form of construction however the use of timber slabs is comparative as is its location adjacent to the Preston River, similar to *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm*. Of similar construction is *Stirk Cottage* (01253), Kalamunda comprising a single-storey Victorian Georgian style building constructed in 1881 from mud-brick and jarrah, with a bedroom extension to the east constructed from sun-dried clay blocks. *Maddington Homestead* (01132), built from 1863 onwards is a complex of buildings in the metropolitan area, which includes some slab hut or split timber construction sheds and outbuildings. *Levis Wallis's Cottage* (09012) built in 1915 in Walliston is a timber framed, sawn board clad dwelling with a gabled corrugated iron roof. *Alverstoke* (04536) is a pastoral property built from 1840 with a homestead complex of several buildings including a slab-walled worker's cottage. *Westbrook Homestead* (05732) built from 1863 to 1866 has a detached kitchen of timber slab construction.

The following places are included on the HCWA database but are not on the State Register. *Abbey Farm* (00426) consists of two adjacent single-storey farmhouses, the original house built in 1864 comprises two rooms with timber walls and floors and a shingled roof. *May Cottage* (03204) in Bridgetown is a timber slab and iron roofed cottage built in 1880. *Perup Homestead* (01722) in Manjimup, built in 1885, uses a timber slab external cladding in addition to mud brick walls. *Tathra Cottage* (04788) Nannup, built in 1870, is a pole and slab structure with gabled iron roof over the main room, with skillion verandas. *Ellis House East Augusta* (04952) is a timber slab and shingle cottage built in 1920. *Kayanaba Homestead and Outbuildings* (05806) in Dandaragan has elements of the complex constructed from timber slabs. *Lodges* (15322) built in 1911 in Koorda is very similar to *Slab Hut, Boyanup Farm* as it is a simple pioneer cottage constructed of vertical jarrah slab boards with sash windows, jarrah joinery and veranda

Places that have incorporated timber slabs are predominantly in the southwest of the state where the timber industry was well established in the nineteenth century. However two Perth metropolitan examples were found of timber slab cottages separate from farming complexes. These were *House* (08333) in

Claremont built in 1902 and *House* (08750) built in 1905 in Mount Lawley neither of which are on the State Register of Heritage Places.

The use of timber slabs and style of construction was widespread in the nineteenth and early twentieth century however the intrinsic impermanency of placing the timbers in the ground has meant that very few cottages have survived into the twenty first century due to the rigours of damp and white ants.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The assessment of the place by a qualified archaeologist would be a useful adjunct to this assessment. The possibility of finding archaeological material is high as the site has been relatively unchanged and has been used by the owners since the 1960s. These factors increase the likelihood of finding artefacts in and around the cottage. A broader survey of the whole block would be useful to establish the potential of finding further archaeological information.

Further research into the leasing arrangements entered into by James Bessonnet and the subsequent owner Robert Scott may reveal information regarding the construction date.