



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

Blackwood Inn demonstrates the aesthetic characteristics of colonial vernacular architecture valued by the people of the district as a reminder of the early European settlement of the district. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The *Blackwood Inn* played a significant role in the regional transport network by providing a safe, secure and comfortable place of rest for people who travelled along the primary communication routes, at a time when the mode of transport and road conditions made travel difficult. (Criterion 2.1& 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Blackwood Inn contributes to the district's sense of history and place. It is a reminder of the early European settlement of the region. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Although other staging inns exist, the fabric of these buildings have been altered to such an extent that the original layout of the building is no longer readily evident. *Blackwood Inn* is one the few remaining staging inns in the State, that is still largely in its original form. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Blackwood Inn is highly representative of the form and function of a mid-nineteenth century inn. It has remained largely unchanged for more than a century and is still used for its original function, offering refreshment and

accommodation, although now incorporating modern amenities. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The place is structurally sound and in good condition. A number of recent renovations have been undertaken to both the interior and exterior to increase the serviceability of the place as a working inn. In February 1993, a site inspection was carried out by Willcox & Associates Pty Ltd, Architects to update the site plan, inspect the original outbuildings and verify if works mentioned in the 1992 report had been carried out. In addition a letter was received by the Heritage Council of Western Australia from the owners, dated February 1994, outlining work that has been carried out to rectify earlier, unsympathetic alterations.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The overall integrity of the exterior is moderate on the north, east and west ends, though the southern elevation is less intact. The integrity of the interior varies from room to room as a result of a number of modifications that have been made to accommodate modern accommodation requirements. Overall *Blackwood Inn* retains a moderate degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

During its lifetime, the building has undergone a number of alterations and some restoration work. However, the building is largely intact and retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Blackwood Inn is located on the South Western Highway in the small township of Mullalyup, situated halfway between Kirup and Balingup, approximately 200 kilometres south-east of Perth. *Blackwood Inn* was built as one of the first staging inns on the road linking Bunbury to Bridgetown. As a staging inn, it played an important role in an era before the railway and motor car linked the towns of the south-west by providing a place where travellers could rest their horses, enjoy refreshments and take shelter overnight.

There is some uncertainty as to the actual date of construction of *Blackwood Inn*. The first contract to transport the colony's mail between Bunbury and Bridgetown was let on 4 April 1864.³² Staging inns were established at Donnybrook, around 1862, and another at Balingup to accommodate travellers. The existence of outbuildings in close proximity to *Blackwood Inn*, and originally on the same title, suggest that inn might originally have been a farm homestead and that it accommodated the travellers on this service.³³

³² Frost, A. C., *Bayly Balinga - A History of Balingup, WA*, (Donnybrook-Balingup Shire Council, 1979), p.41.

³³ The original outbuildings were subdivided from the title in 1988. Certificate of Title 1822/758; Frost, p.42.

The style of the building, a late rendition of the Old Colonial Georgian, also suggests a date of construction in the mid-nineteenth century.

The construction of the building has been attributed to John Coverley but is more likely to have been his father William who is listed as the grantee for Nelson Location 23 in which *Blackwood Inn* is sited.³⁴ On 13 September 1873, Thomas Maslin, described as a farmer, is cited as the owner on the first certificate of title issued under the Transfer of Land Act.³⁵ The next transfer is, in 1889, to John Bovell.

John Bovell was born in Ireland, in 1847, and arrived in Western Australia aboard the *Palestine* on 5 August 1868, with his wife Mary. He proceeded to settle at Mullalyup where he took up a land grant.³⁶ In 1882, he was Lance Corporal (Police) and Bailiff at the local Bridgetown Court. He was due to be transferred to Victoria Plains in 1889, but retired instead and, according to Erikson, 'became licensee of the *Blackwood Arms* at Mullalyup where he had established a farm'.³⁷ On 19 June 1889, Nelson Location 23 was officially transferred to John Bovell, cited as 'of the Blackwood Hotel Keeper'³⁸ and a 'Wayside Houses Licence' was issued to John Bovell, in the same month.³⁹

A short description of John Bovell, in a book published in 1895, provides a contemporary picture of his activities:

Mr. John Bovell., the present proprietor of *Blackwood Inn* and surrounding farm lands, was born in 1846 in County Antrim, Ireland, and landed in Western Australia in 1869(sic), when he immediately joined the police in which he remained until 1889, and on retiring took over the "Blackwood Inn" and farm, which consists of 340 acres freehold, and 15,000 acres leasehold, and is admirably adapted for fruit, wheat, potatoes and oats. There are a number of cattle on the estate, which are apparently doing well, but Mr. Bovell is justly proud of his potato crops, which surpass most others grown in the district. The hotel is pleasantly situated in the Blackwood Road, and one can obtain food and refreshment of the best, provided by a genial host. Mr. Bovell, in the course of his police career, aided in the capture of some of the greatest scoundrels of the day, and relates with gusto some of his varied and trying experiences.⁴⁰

³⁴ National Trust Assessment Exposition, July 1979. No reference is provided. It is John Coverley, (son of William) who is referred to, however, biographical information states that he would have only been about 10 years old in the 1860s. If the Inn was built later, it is possible he may have built it. Erickson, R. (ed) *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia* Vol. 1., (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1987), p. 683.

³⁵ Certificate of Title XI/393 (copy held on file)

³⁶ Shipping Register, Battye Library (Acc No. 115/107); Erikson, R. *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1914. Volume 3; Free 1850-1868* (UWAP, Nedlands, 1979) p. 58; Erikson, R. *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australian* Vol 1. A-C, (UWA Press, Nedlands 1987) p. 269.

³⁷ *ibid.*, Erikson, p. 269. Erikson states that John Bovell settled at Mullalyup on a grant taken up in his name in 1866; however, shipping records show the date of their arrival as 1868.

³⁸ Certificate of Title XI/393 (copy held on file)

³⁹ *Police Gazette* 26 June 1889, p.103. First mention is made of a 'Wayside Houses Licence' being issued to John Bovell, of the Blackwood Inn, in the Blackwood district. A search of the *Government Gazette* and *Police Gazette* for the period 1864-1886, did not reveal any conclusive evidence of a licence being issued prior to 1889.

⁴⁰ *Western Australia: The Garden Colony Bunbury, Busselton, Bridgetown* (Harris and Besly Publishers, Perth, February 1895) The description is accompanied by a sketch of the Inn and surrounding buildings, providing a clear illustration of the layout of buildings, some of which are now in ruins.

Bovell died in December 1900, and his wife and sons continued to run the Inn.⁴¹ In January 1901, probate of Bovell's will was granted to his son, William James, and Alfred Blechynden.⁴²

An advertisement in a journal printed by the *Morning Herald* (c.1908) paints a glowing picture of the attractions of the *Blackwood Inn* and the district. The caption below a photograph of the *Blackwood Inn* reads as follows:

Oldest Hotel in the district. Licensed for over 20 years. Favourite Resort of Visitors from all over the State. Horses and vehicles on hire. Post Office and Telephone on the premises. Table of the best - Fruit from our own Orchard and Dairy Produce from our own Cows. Ideal Climate, Beautiful Scenery, Comfortable Home, Reasonable Tariff and the Best Liquors.⁴³

In May 1909, the property was leased to John Edward Hawes for a period of five years. At the expiration of this, the property was leased to William Henry Oliver, for a further period of five years. In October 1919, the property was transferred to Joseph Spencer Bovell who owned it until July 1927, when the property was transferred to William Ramsey and Kenneth Griffin, and passed out of Bovell family ownership.

Blackwood Inn has had a number of owners since this time, although it has not always functioned as a public Inn. From approximately 1927 to 1985, the place was closed to the public and was used as a farmhouse. In 1985, the Inn was reopened to the public by Premier Brian Burke as a tearooms and restaurant. Approval to provide accommodation in two rooms in the Inn was granted by the Shire in 1990. Today, *Blackwood Inn* continues to provide accommodation and a restaurant.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Blackwood Inn is constructed of brick in a late rendition of the Old Colonial Georgian style.⁴⁴ The building has a veranda across the front (building a) and originally had a shingled roof which has since been covered with corrugated iron; however, remnants of the original timber roof shingles are still visible from the under side of the verandas.⁴⁵ The original Inn was two rooms deep and the rooms were divided by a central passage way, a section of which remains today. Additions were made to the fabric over the years and the current owners ascertain that the Inn eventually comprised eight bedrooms, a lounge, dining room, kitchen and storeroom.

41 *ibid.*, Erickson, p. 269.

42 Certificate of Title XI/393 (copy held on file)

43 *ibid.*, Frost, p.125. A copy of the advertisement is reproduced in this book. The author provides no reference as to the name or date of the journal in which the advertisement appears, although other advertising material in the journal is circa 1908.

44 Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present.* (Angus and Roberston, North Ryde, 1989) pp. 24-27.

45 Willcox & Associates Pty Ltd Architects, *Updated Assessment of the Blackwood Inn at Mullalyup*, (prepared for the HCWA, January 1992). The report was commissioned by the Heritage Council of W.A., the aim being to provide an update on the significance of the Inn. It includes an assessment of changes to the Inn (since its Classification in 1979) which could influence its significance and reports on changes, additions or alterations that the current owners propose to carry out that may also impact on its significance.

In January 1992, an architectural assessment carried out by Willcox and Associates, Architects, on behalf of the Heritage Council, which noted intrusive alterations to the place.⁴⁶ In February 1994, a further assessment of the place by Willcox and Associates reported that the new owners had removed many of the unsympathetic alterations to the fabric of the building.⁴⁷

It should be noted that the two new outbuildings that have been constructed at the rear of the existing Inn are not included in this assessment. The new accommodation wing incorporates five well appointed guest rooms, and a storeroom . It was constructed, in 1992, in brick and iron and is surrounded by a veranda to three sides. The architectural design of the building is sympathetic to the era of the original building and continues the tradition of *Blackwood Inn* by providing further accommodation.

The original out buildings, on the opposite side of the South Western Highway, were subdivided from *Blackwood Inn's* title in 1988 and are now on a separate title and not owned by Melcoast Pty Ltd.⁴⁸ As such, they are not included in this assessment. However, they may be considered for assessment at a later date as they have some heritage significance in that they contribute to the place as a whole.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition

Willcox & Associates Pty Ltd Architects, *Updated Assessment of the Blackwood Inn at Mullalyup* (prepared for the Heritage Council of WA, January 1992)

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, Willcox & Associates Pty Ltd Architects, *Updated Assessment of the Blackwood Inn at Mullalyup*, (prepared for the HCWA, January 1992).

⁴⁸ Certificate of Title 1822/758 (copy held on file)