



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)

- 7.5.9 Providing services and welfare
- 7.5.11 Administering Aboriginal Affairs
- 9.1.1 Providing maternity clinics and hospitals

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 102 Aboriginal occupation
- 404 Community services and utilities
- 406 Religion
- 601 Aboriginal people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The place has aesthetic value as a simple, vernacular building with a central breezeway and surrounding wide verandahs in a ruinous condition. (Criterion 1.1)

The place is highly significant as an example of the development of hospital architectural design on the goldfields which evolved from the tent hospital wards to hessian and canvas frame structures with iron fly-over roofs to the quadrangle style buildings of the mid-1930s. It is a landmark building for the innovative achievement of having been built c. 1897/1900 and relocated in 1931. (Criterion 1.2)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Relocated from Mt Morgans to the United Aborigines Mission at Mt Margaret in the 1930s, the place contributes to the evolving relationships that exist between mining development and indigenous history of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.1)

The place is significant as being the first hospital to care for all indigenous groups on the goldfields. (Criterion 2.2)

* 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.

In this place, women were helped by the establishment of maternity and labour wards and, in so doing, contributed to the reduction of extremely high infant mortality of the area. (Criterion 2.2)

In this place, knowledge and training in western medicine was first introduced to the indigenous tribal groups as an alternative and supplement to the practice of traditional medicine. (Criterion 2.2)

It is important for its associations with all the many Wongi people, who helped build the settlement, and relocate and re-construct the hospital from Mt Morgans townsite. They also established the Aborigines for Outback Survival Movement and training centre for religious leaders and medical assistants at Mt Margaret. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is also important to the local community for its associations with Matron Mildred Murray, who first arrived in 1936 to work at the hospital and was responsible for training many assistant nurses, in particular, Sadie Canning, who went on to become the first Aboriginal matron in the Leonora Hospital and began a programme to fully integrate Aboriginal in-patients with general wards or the district hospital. (Criterion 2.3)

The hospital building was relocated from Mt Morgans to Mt Margaret by the United Aborigines Mission movement, under the direction of Rod Schenk who founded the settlement at Mt Margaret Common in 1922. The United Aborigines Mission movement was founded in Sydney in the late 1890s. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is significant as an example of the creative achievements of Rod Schenk and the Wongi construction team of Mt Margaret Mission for their efforts at dismantling, cutting up, transporting and re-assembling large buildings from Mt Morgans under extremely remote and harsh conditions. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place has significance in providing physical evidence in the design and construction of the unique type of iron fly-over roof structure which was used in the building of late nineteenth century hospitals in the goldfields which is first recorded in use at Menzies in 1896 designed by a local Public Works officer, Mr Kunst. (Criteria 3.2 & 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is held in high regard for social, cultural and spiritual reasons by the local Wongi people as many were born there in the first western style maternity ward available to Aboriginal people. It was a place where all Aboriginal patients were treated, at a time when there were many outbreaks of epidemic such as typhoid, and when it was difficult for an indigenous person to obtain full medical treatment at the local district hospitals in the goldfields. (Criterion 4.1)

The place is important to the local community for its associations with Rod Schenk, the founder of the mission settlement and the Wongi men who helped build the settlement and relocate and re-construct the hospital from Mt Morgans townsite. The place is also important to the local community for its associations with Matron Mildred Murray, who first arrived in 1936 to work at the hospital and was responsible for training many assistant nurses, in particular, Sadie Canning, who went on to become the first Aboriginal matron in the Leonora Hospital and began a programme to fully integrate

Aboriginal in-patients with general wards or the district hospital. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The place is a rare surviving example of its type, based on the iron fly-over roof structure which was used in the building of late nineteenth century hospitals in the goldfields, first recorded in use at Menzies in 1896 designed by a local Public Works officer, Mr Kunst. There are no other recorded buildings of this type which have survived in the goldfields in WA. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

The place formed part of a much wider complex associated with the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. The fact that the hospital has this added layer of important significance contributes to its rarity value, as only a few settlements associated with this period of our history have a recycled nineteenth century mining hospital as part of the complex. (Criterion 5.1 & 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is a good representative example of an early hospital ward building built in circa 1897-1900 specifically associated with the eastern goldfields area. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

The building is in very poor condition caused by lack of maintenance to the complex roof structure and consequent water damage. The whole structure is in danger of irreversible damage and needs preservation action urgently.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The whole building is an intact example of a typical late nineteenth or early twentieth century hospital ward built on the Western Australian goldfields.

As a ruin, the place has a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of the place is considered high, as the design and all major spaces within the building are original, reflecting a purpose designed hospital ward.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Amanda Jean, Sandra Goulder with Mrs Majorie Bonney, 'Mt Margaret Mission Hospital Conservation Plan' prepared for the Heritage Council of WA and the Mt Margaret (AMOS) Aboriginal Corporation in June 1999.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Amanda Jean, Sandra Goulder with Mrs Majorie Bonney, 'Mt Margaret Mission Hospital Conservation Plan' prepared for the Heritage Council of WA and the Mt Margaret (AMOS) Aboriginal Corporation in June 1999.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Amanda Jean, Sandra Goulder with Mrs Majorie Bonney, 'Mt Margaret Mission Hospital Conservation Plan' prepared for the Heritage Council of WA and the Mt Margaret (AMOS) Aboriginal Corporation in June 1999.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For Comparative Information refer to Amanda Jean, Sandra Goulder with Mrs Majorie Bonney, 'Mt Margaret Mission Hospital Conservation Plan' prepared for the Heritage Council of WA and the Mt Margaret (AMOS) Aboriginal Corporation in June 1999.

13.4 REFERENCES

Amanda Jean, Sandra Goulder with Mrs Majorie Bonney, 'Mt Margaret Mission Hospital Conservation Plan' prepared for the Heritage Council of WA and the Mt Margaret (AMOS) Aboriginal Corporation in June 1999.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
