



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)

- 3.5 Developing primary production
- 3.6 Recruiting labour
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 309 Technology and technological change
- 605 Famous and infamous people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The shearing shed, a timber framed weatherboard building in functional vernacular rural style, makes a positive contribution to its natural setting, enhancing the pastoral setting with its simple vernacular structure. In a similar manner, the shearers' quarters form a valuable and positive feature of the landscape. The quarters also a functional rural vernacular structure, using local stone as the major building fabric with a hipped corrugated iron roof. This use of local stone is an important aesthetic characteristic of the quarters, ensuring that the presence of the building accentuates, rather than obstructs, the beauty of the rural Australia. (Criterion 1.1)

The Shearing shed, constructed with eight shearing stands, and the quarters of *The Arthur' Wool Shed Group*, were both considered up-to-date in design when they were constructed c.1910. (Criterion 1.2)

The shearing shed has been a landmark on Albany Highway at Arthur River since c.1910. Situated on a rise, individually and in association with the shearers' quarters, it has an impact on the vistas of the surrounding pastoral environment. (Criterion 1.3)

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group forms an important cultural environment representing associations with the pastoral industry and Arthur River. (Criterion 1.4)

* 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.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group represents the human occupation of the area as a working place of shearers from c. 1910, and reflects the changes that took place in the 1950s. *Arthur' Wool Shed Group* is also a remaining Western Australian example of the important role shearers have played nationally in the Australia's political history, particularly through union activities. (Criterion 2.1)

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group was associated with important events in the state, such as the Western Australian Land Company deal with the construction of the Great Southern Railway (c.1908), the War Settlement Land Scheme (c.1947) and the development of the place as a community shearing facility (c.1953). (Criterion 2.2)

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group was associated with land settlement in the area and in particular with Charles Arthur Piesse who established 'The Arthur' property and acquired this site to expand the property in c.1908. His son G.A.W. Piesse, who was a civic identity in Wagin, took over 'The Arthur' property and had the shearing shed and quarters constructed in c.1910. (Criterion 2.3)

The place also demonstrates associations with George Cuthbert, a stonemason and builder who had some involvement with the construction of the shearers' quarters before he constructed the Darkan Hall. (Criterion 2.3)

The place also demonstrates associations with former owners who were also identities in the Arthur River area, such as Jim Hatherly, Bill Nicholls (chairman of the Arthur River Road Board in the early 1940s), John Leggoe, a half share owner between 1953 and 1963, during which time he and Roy Ladyman, the other half share owner, established community shearing facilities at the place, and Leggoe was the spokesman for the War Service Settlers in Arthur River, and Don and Phyllis Roe who continued to use the place for another decade. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group provides information about shearers' working and living conditions in c.1910, and the 1950s, which contributes to an understanding of the functions and changes within the pastoral industry since 1910. (Criterion 3.1)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is valued for the associations with the shearers who have worked there at various times since 1910, and particularly in the 1950s. The place holds significance as a communal icon and landmark for both local residents and also for travellers on Albany Highway, given the prominent location of the building.

The Arthur' Shed Wool Group is highly valued by the community because of the contribution of shearers and the shearing culture to Australian folklore and songs. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group is an important indicator of what has been a major economic, social and cultural aspect of rural Western Australia. With the collapse of the Federal Government's Reserve Price Scheme for Wool in 1991, the wool industry has significantly declined and therefore the place and its cultural associations are, to a significant extent, endangered. The cricket pitch demonstrates the strong social and cultural associations with shearing time. (Criterion 5.1)

The Arthur' Wool Shed Group demonstrates processes associated with the pastoral use of the land, and exemplifies a specific design of an up-to-date shearing shed and shearers' quarters in 1910. The quarters is an important example of the traditional shearing practice, which was characterised by 'live-in' teams, later replaced by 'cut-lunch'/'suburban' shearers who returned to their homes each night. The place also reflects the changes undertaken in the 1950s to facilitate the ongoing use and the point of focus and social contact that the Group provided for the Arthur River district while it functioned as a community shearing shed. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The shearing shed and quarters of *The Arthur' Wool Shed Group* are representative of the functional rural vernacular style, with the use of local building materials for their construction. (Criterion 6.1)

The individual places of *The Arthur' Wool Shed Group*, namely the shearing shed, quarters, sheep dip and cricket pitch, demonstrate a range of human activities associated with the pastoral industry and particularly sheep shearing, since c. 1910, and specifically in the 1950s. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

In July 1999, the condition of the place is fair. The buildings comprised with *The Arthur' Wool Shed Group* appear to be structurally sound, although the shearing shed needs some attention to the subsidence in the south east corner, and the quarters need attention to the walls associated with the damage on the central north wall. The roofs are rusted in places, and many sheets are lifting or missing, with serious damage to the shearing shed roof. The interiors are in fair condition. The original yards are in poor condition and the more recent yarding is fair. The sheep dip is in fair to good condition with minimal cracking. The cricket pitch is cracked and in poor condition.

In June 2000, conservation works were undertaken to reconstruct the north east section of the roof cladding, replacing damaged and intrusive colorbond sheets with short sheets of Galvabond sheeting; to restore and reconstruct weatherboards and door in the east section of the north wall, and restore the north wall in general; and, to completely reconstruct the east wall including new stumps, framework and weatherboards. All works completed were in accordance with the Conservation Plan. In October 2001 the place is in sound condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The shearing shed was still usable in 1990/1, however has not been used since then. It is not known when the quarters were last used, possibly in the 1960s, and it is likely that the sheep dip has remained unused for as many years. *The*

Arthur' Wool Shed Group thus remains with a moderate to low degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The minimal intrusion into the original fabric has been the result of the unoccupied nature of the quarters, over a long period of time, and the continued, irregular, use of the shearing shed. The intrusions include the installation of the louvred windows in both buildings in c.1950, the enclosure and the provision of bathroom and toilet services on the rear verandah of the quarters, and the installation of water tanks and new guttering on both buildings. The sheep dip remains unchanged. The place has retained a significant amount of the original fabric that is considerably intact with a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Gray, Laura, "'The Arthur" Wool Shed Precinct comprising Shearing shed, shearers' quarters, sheep dip & cricket pitch. Arthur River', prepared for the owners G & C Robinson, 'Arthur Downs', July 1999.

Key sections used: 1.0 Documentary Evidence (p8 -16), Physical Evidence (17, 19 -21), Analysis of Evidence (42, 43, 52, 53).

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Gray, Laura, "'The Arthur" Wool Shed Precinct comprising Shearing shed, shearers' quarters, sheep dip & cricket pitch. Arthur River', prepared for the owners G & C Robinson, 'Arthur Downs', July 1999.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Gray, Laura, "'The Arthur" Wool Shed Precinct comprising Shearing shed, shearers' quarters, sheep dip & cricket pitch. Arthur River', prepared for the owners G & C Robinson, 'Arthur Downs', July 1999.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Gray, Laura, "'The Arthur" Wool Shed Precinct comprising Shearing shed, shearers' quarters, sheep dip & cricket pitch. Arthur River', prepared for the owners G & C Robinson, 'Arthur Downs', July 1999.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

Gray, Laura, "'The Arthur" Wool Shed Precinct comprising Shearing shed, shearers' quarters, sheep dip & cricket pitch. Arthur River', prepared for the owners G & C Robinson, 'Arthur Downs', July 1999.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Research into traditional ownership and occupation of the area of *'The Arthur' Wool Shed Group* by indigenous people, and their associations with the place as workers.