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)

- 3.26.2   Providing hospital services
- 8.12   Living in and around Australian homes

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 306   Domestic activities
- 404   Community services & utilities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Melville House is a good example of a single-storey Victorian Georgian residence displaying simplicity and unforced harmony in form and detail, although some modifications to the fabric have compromised the purity of the stylistic expression. (Criterion 1.1)

Melville House has landmark value as a simple but elegantly designed house with associated outbuildings sited at the top of a large suburban lot, which has a moderate fall to the south and complementary landscaping. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Set on large suburban lot, *Melville House* is an example of a simple but substantial dwelling built in the second half of the nineteenth century for John F T Hasell, with possible servant's quarters still extant. (Criterion 2.1)

Melville House is significant for service as a private hospital from 1912 to 1922. (Criterion 2.2)

Melville House is closely associated with pastoralist and businessman John Frederick Tasman Hassell, an influential contributor to the

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*   For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

development of the Albany region, who had the place built c.1873, and occupied it with his family until 1906. (Criterion 2.3)

Melville House is associated with Dr Thomas Henry Robinson (son-in-law of John Frederick Tasman Hassell), who owned the place during its operation as a private hospital from 1912 to 1922 and occupied it as a residence from 1923 to 1946, and with prominent businessman and art benefactor Sir Claude Hotchin, who owned the place from 1950 until his death in 1977. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Melville House is highly valued by the local and wider community for its associations with the early history and settlement of the Albany district, its association with the Hassell and Robinson families, and its early hospital function. (Criterion 4.1)

Melville House contributes to the local community's sense of place with its streetscape value as an early residence in an elevated setting, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Albany Municipal Inventory. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

With a spreading verandah form and conservative styling, *Melville House* remains a good example of domestic architecture of the Victorian Georgian period. (Criterion 6.1)

The associated outbuildings at *Melville House* are representative of an earlier way of life where some functions and additional accommodation were detached from the main house. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Both buildings and grounds at *Melville House* are in very good condition and have been well maintained during the current owners' occupancy.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Melville House has high integrity. The absence of evidence relating to the former hospital function, in operation in the early twentieth century, does not detract from the overall integrity as the place is well suited to the residential function for which it was constructed and is likely to be sustainable. Subdivision or development on the large block of land may detract from some of the landscape value of the place.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Melville House has moderate authenticity. The form of the building and construction technology is identifiable as belonging to the Victorian Georgian period. It is unclear whether some of the interior finishes, which have strong aesthetic impact, particularly the timber panelling, date from the original period of construction. Modifications have been made to window treatments and more recently to internal planning to suit a style of living appropriate in the late twentieth century. The layout and plantings of the existing garden setting are not believed to reflect an early garden design.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian.
The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Melville House is a single-storey brick and iron residence constructed in Victorian Georgian style c.1873 for John Frederick Tasman Hassell. The place includes a freestanding Annexe, which may have been servants quarters, and other domestic outbuildings including a c.1999 Garage.

In 1827, in order to lay claim to the western half of Australia for Britain and prevent French claims on the area, a penal outpost of NSW, known as Frederick Town, was established at King George Sound. In 1831, the convicts and troops were evacuated, and land in the area made available to free settlers. The townsite was named Albany in January 1832. Albany developed as a trading and servicing post for whaling vessels and ships travelling from England via the Cape, and was the mail port for Western Australia until 1900. Development of the hinterland was slow but by 1850, most of the suitable pastoral land had been taken up in large holdings.[1]

One person who had taken up pastoral lands was John Hassell. Hassell was a master mariner, formerly with the Royal Navy. After trading for several years between NSW and Tasmania, he returned to England in 1837, visiting King George Sound for a few days on the way. In England, he married Ellen Boucher and formed a business partnership with her brother. The following year, he brought out a shipload of goods to trade at Albany, using the money paid for the goods to buy land, and then trading more goods to get back the money he paid out. In this way, he tied up much of the cash in the district, putting himself in a strong negotiating position. Hassell then sailed to Sydney where he purchased livestock and equipment for his newly acquired properties. While the depression of the 1840s cost his brother-in-law his share of the partnership, John Hassell continued to expand his holdings. By 1850, he leased some 63,000 acres and held about 25,000 acres freehold.[2]

John Hassell's main properties were 'Kendenup', 'Jerramungup' and 'Warriup'. He worked these pastoral properties with his sons. His eldest son, John Francis Tasman Hassell (John Jr), was born in 1839, in Tasmania, and educated at Albany until an early age when he went to work on his family's properties. It is not known at exactly what age John Jr left school, but his younger brother, Albert Young Hassell, is recorded as working as a jackaroo at 'Kendenup' at the age of eleven.[3]

John Hassell Sr moved into Albany township in 1863, and leased the station properties to John Jr and Albert. The brothers formed the partnership J. & A

[1] Garden, Donald S. *Albany: A Panorama of the Sound from 1827* Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 36-70.
[2] Garden, D. S. op cit, p. 71.
[3] Spriggs, A. 'The Hassell Family of Jerramongup,' bound typescript, Graylands Teachers' College thesis, 1965, p. 10.

Hassell. John Jr took over the management of 'Kendenup' and Albert managed 'Jerramungup'. John Jr married Isabella Morison in 1868, and the two-storey homestead, *Kalgan Hall,* at Kendenup is believed to have been built around this time for their occupation.[4] Isabella Morison was governess to the family of William Carmalt Clifton at the time of her marriage. Clifton was the P&O agent in Albany, and when he refused John Hassell Jr's request for the hand of one of his daughters John Jr married the family's governess instead. Ten years later, John's younger brother, Albert, married another of the Clifton girls, the Hassells apparently having risen sufficiently in local society in the intervening years.[5]

In 1873, Isabella Hassell purchased Suburban Lots 118 and 119 from Sophia Uglow for £30.[6] Sophia was the first owner of the Lots, having been granted the land in 1871.[7] Lots 118 and 119 consisted of a little over 9 acres (3.65 ha). The exact date of construction of *Melville House* is not known, but it appears to have been built between 1873 and 1877. John Jr and Albert Hassell dissolved their partnership in 1877, and John Hassell Jr moved to Albany where he took over the management of the store and the sale of stock from the properties. Albert married in 1878, and moved into *Kalgan Hall*. In 1872-73, extensive work was done on *Kalgan Hall* requiring 20,000 bricks and 44 yards of stonework. Timber skirtings, linings and architraves were fitted by builder, John V. Green. Green was the builder of Albert Hassell's Albany residence *Hillside*, in 1886, and may have built *Melville House*.[8]

In 1877, Albert formed a partnership with younger brother Alfred (A & A Hassell) for the management of the properties. Alfred had been living at 'Warriup'. The partnership lasted until 1892, and John Hassell Jr continued to manage the Albany side of the business. John Jr and his family, which included five daughters, lived at *Melville House* until 1906.[9] An Annexe, which is still extant, may have been occupied as servant quarters during this period.

Mrs George Walpole, wife of the resident doctor at Albany, wrote in her diary of spending a night at *Melville House* during a measles epidemic in 1883, shortly after she and her husband arrived in the town.

> A few nights ago I spent the night away from home, this time with some children who were all ill with measles. George was attending them and the mother and governess were both tired out with nursing them, so he said he was sure I would not mind going, and they accepted his offer very gladly. They are the children of one of the storekeepers here and about the wealthiest people in the

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4   Hassell, Cleve W. *The Hassells: A historya of the "Hassells of Albany" covering primarily their activity as settlers in the 19th century,* [C. Hassell, 1973?], pp.48 & 194.

5   Walpole, Mrs George Albert, Diary, 1883-1885, entry for 30 October 1883, Battye private archives collection 585A.

6   DOLA Deeds of Memorial, Book 7, No. 1271, 10 February 1873; DOLA survey diagram 16059.

7   Enrolment 2986, 7 October 1871.

8   Hassell, Cleve W., op cit, pp. 49-50; Jones, Peter. 'Hillside Lodge, Albany: Conservation Plan, 1994,' Section 2.2.

9   Hassell, Cleve W., op cit, pp. 194-195; *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians,* UWA Press, Perth, 1988.

place. They have a very nice house high up on one of the hills overlooking the entire township and harbour. I have often in my walks admired the situation and wondered who lived there.[10]

In 1906, the Hassells moved to Perth and occupied a two-storey house, *Kendenup,* in West Perth (not extant).[11] *Melville House* was leased out, and was occupied as a boarding house run by Mrs E. Greenwood.[12] In 1911, *Melville House* was purchased by Thomas Henry Robinson. Robinson is recorded as a pastoralist on the land transaction documentation, but he was also a doctor, and had married John Jr and Isabella Hassell's daughter Edith in 1896.[13] Robinson raised a mortgage of £2,000 for purchase of the property with his mother-in-law, Isabella Hassell.[14]

Robinson leased out *Melville House* as a private hospital under the management of Nurse E. Brown, from 1912 to about 1922. It is the only private hospital listed for Albany during this period.[15] Photographs of the place dated c.1915 and 1916, when it was in use as a hospital, show the building with shingled main roof and corrugated iron verandah roof. A driveway off Collie Street accessed the north side of the property.[16]

From 1923, the Robinsons occupied *Melville House* themselves. Dr Robinson may have conducted a surgery at the place following his occupation of the premises, but no proof of this has been located in the records.[17] Thomas and Edith Robinson both died in 1946, and Harold Francis Timewell acquired *Melville House*, paying £4,000 for the property.[18] The following year the title was registered in the joint names of Timewell and his wife Lily, Mrs Timewell having been overseas at the time of the original purchase. The Timewell's operated Timewells Store on York Street, a business that they had established in 1935.[19]

Melville House was purchased by Claude Hotchin in October 1950.[20] Hotchin had the landholding of Suburban Lots 118 and 119 subdivided in 1951 and 1953. Following the subdivisions, *Melville House* was situated on 3,549 sq metres, designated Lot 33. A street, named Hotchin Avenue, was put through the estate, linking Parade and Collie streets, and *Melville House* was given a new street address, 5-9 Hotchin Ave.[21]

Sir Claude Hotchin was a businessman and art benefactor. Born in South Australia in 1898, he began work at the age of 15 with Clarkson Ltd, a

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[10]   Walpole, Mrs George Albert, op cit.
[11]   Hassell, Cleve W., op cit, pp. 194-195.
[12]   Albany Rate Books, 1909 & 1911.
[13]   *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, UWA Press, 1988.
[14]   Deed of Memorial, Book 15 No. 1022, 24 July 1911.
[15]   Albany Rate Books, 1912, 1916, 1920, 1923; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1910-1920.
[16]   Photograph 1916, Battye 1654B and photograph c.1915, Battye 23475P.
[17]   Albany Rate Books, 1923, 1926; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1940.
[18]   Deed of Memorial, Book 22 No. 1791, 15 August 1947.
[19]   Deed of Memorial, Book 22 No. 1995, 3 September 1948; Certificate of Title Vol. 1137 Fol. 340, 25 May 1950; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1930 & 1940.
[20]   Certificate of Title, Vol. 1127 Fol. 340, 2 October 1950.
[21]   Certificate of Title Vol. 1143 Fol. 70, 23 November 1951; Land Diagrams 16059, 17 April 1951 & 18117, 31 July 1953.

hardware store in Adelaide. In 1925, he married Doris Clarkson, his employer's daughter, and moved to Perth to manage the company's West Australian store. The store was destroyed by fire in 1932, and Hotchin bought the goodwill and name of Clarksons (WA) Ltd, in partnership with a co-manager, and re-established the business. In 1940, he became sole manager, and in 1950, he sold the business and retired. Sir Claude also owned and ran the Claude Hotchin Art Gallery in Perth from 1947 to 1951, inaugurating an art prize, which bore his name until 1973. In an effort to stimulate 'art appreciation', he donated an estimated two thousand original paintings to galleries, hospitals and shire councils throughout the State. He was a member of Perth Rotary Club from 1930, a founding member of the Crippled Children's Society of WA (1938), member of the board of trustees of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of WA (1947-1964), chairman of the board of the Art Gallery (1960-1964), and served on the UWA senate (1951-1969). He was knighted in 1967, and died in Albany on 3 June 1977.[22]

It is believed to have been during Sir Claude Hotchin's ownership that the leadlight windows were installed in *Melville House*.[23] *Melville House* was purchased by pharmacist Robert Norman George Reynolds and his wife Elaine Hope Reynolds in 1978.[24] A double garage attached to the Annexe was added by the current owners around 1999. In 2001, the Reynolds continue to occupy the place.

13.2   PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Melville House comprises a single-storey residence and freestanding Annexe (c.1873) constructed for John Frederick Tasman Hassell. A lock-up Garage (c.1999), small Outhouse, Garden Shed and a Garage/Workshop are also located on the site.

The place is located on the south and east sides of Hotchin Avenue, a road that incorporates a quarter turn bend between the parallel Collie and Parade streets, so that the place has two street frontages. Surrounding buildings are residential and are afforded good views of the harbour due to their moderate elevation above the town. The property is a large suburban lot with the principal structure, the house, located close to the street boundaries. An expanse of lawn stretches in front of the house down to the southern boundary and features some large-scale landscape elements including a Norfolk Island Pine Tree and a granite boulder straddling the southern boundary. Dense planting is concentrated on the east providing some privacy from the neighbouring property with the Garden Shed nestled amongst the planting, near the southeast corner of the house. A row of tall poplars forms an attractive screen along the long west boundary, planted just inside a well-maintained white picket fence. A rendered brick fence with grille gate screens the courtyard between the house and Annexe and

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22   *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 14, 1940-1980, MUP, 1966, p. 502.
23   Physical evidence; conversation with current owner Elaine Reynolds by Katrina Chisholm.
24   Certificate of Title, Vol. 1165 Fol. 173, 29 May 1978.

adjoins the lock-up Garage that is on the street side of the fence and accessed by a gravel driveway from Hotchin Avenue.

The house and Annexe are most representative of the Victorian Georgian style of architecture featuring simplicity, symmetry and unsophisticated detailing. The house has a rectangular plan form extending in an east-west orientation across the site. The Annexe stands close to the house on the west side, but is unattached. Its L-shaped plan form partially encloses a courtyard between the two structures. The hipped roofs of both buildings are clad with corrugated iron with the house roof created by two forms of equal proportions divided by a central box gutter down the long axis. There may be sheoak shingles from an earlier period under the current roof cladding but these were not obvious at the site inspection. A number of painted brick chimneys of varying proportions and with terracotta chimney pots are evident above the roofline. A verandah is continuous around the north, east and part of the south elevations of the house with the roof set below and at a lower pitch than the main roof. Square timber posts spaced evenly along the edge of the verandah support the awning, which has a slight concave camber. The verandah along the south elevation does not appear to have been constructed at the same time as that of the north and east as there are clear differences in the floorboards and framing of the roof.[25] Timber boarded and glazed partitions divide the north verandah, although their function and origin has not been determined. A lean-to roof extends over an addition to the original house structure on the west. The Annexe also has a verandah with a roof supported on square timber posts around the north and east elevations.

The external construction detailing of the place is simple, with few noteworthy features. The masonry walls of the house have been rendered while the walls of the Annexe are painted, revealing the English bond brickwork behind. The small, square Outhouse to the southwest of the Annexe is also constructed in painted English bond brickwork and has a pyramid shaped corrugated iron roof. Windows and doors are of timber construction, with projecting rendered sills, and both sliding sash and casement opening systems in evidence. The two rectangular window openings at either end of the north elevation do not match the proportions of openings in early photographs of the place and the glazing is now divided by lead cames in a grid pattern. The east elevation features three-sided bay windows projecting onto the verandah, which has timber floorboards. The glazed openings have low sills close to the verandah. A rectangular bay window with timber-framed glazing has been incorporated into the south elevation by the current owners. Horizontal elements including a band around the top of the chimneys, the gutters of both the main and verandah roofs, and projecting window sills have been highlighted in a dark paint colour which contrasts against the cream coloured walls and visually emphasises the low and longitudinal form of the buildings.

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25   This is confirmed by a photograph in the Battye collection, BA 209/7 c.1915, which shows the east verandah terminating at the southern end of the building.

Internally, the house features dark timber dado panelling and joinery in the entrance hall, dining room and passage. It is unclear whether this fabric is original. According to the current owner, the glazing with lead cames in the dining room was added by Claude Hotchin. The front entrance and passage doors exhibit a similar style of glazing in the highlights, so the joinery and glazing may have been introduced at the same time, along with replacement windows in the north elevation. Most rooms have plastered walls and ceilings with simple timber picture rails and skirtings. A coved plaster cornice is evident in the lounge. The timber floors are generally carpeted although the boards of the passage and kitchen-living room are exposed. Boards in the latter room show some evidence of previous room divisions. A further alteration to this room includes the removal of part of the south wall to create a bay window under the existing verandah roof by the current owners. Timber fireplace surrounds are evident in some rooms with the dining room featuring particularly elaborate joinery, which appears to relate to the wall panelling, and maybe a later addition. A potbelly stands against the west wall of the kitchen-living room. An informal family room and laundry extend from the west end of the house under a skillion roof with French windows opening onto a paved courtyard.

The interior of the Annexe was not inspected in keeping with the owner's wishes. Rooms occupy the width of the building and are accessed from the verandah. Curved metal deck awnings shelter windows on the west elevation. A kitchen with contemporary fittings has been incorporated into the north end. The Outhouse is a small structure located between the Annexe and picket fence along the west boundary, is approximately two metres square and entered from the south elevation. The Workshop/Garage, located in the southwest corner of the site is a metal clad structure of the late twentieth century and of low significance.

The place is currently occupied, in very good condition and being well maintained.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Melville House is a representative example of a Victorian Georgian style residence and has much in common with farm homesteads of the style. Examples of such residences are *Old Blythewood*, Pinjarra (1845), *Enderslea*, Chittering (1853), and, *Sandiland*, Busselton (1840), which are all on the Register of Heritage Places. The single-storey residential section of *Camfield House*, currently undergoing assessment, is another example of the style, although this building was originally constructed in Victorian Rustic Gothic style and had the verandah added in the 1910s.

13.4 REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may discover whether Sir Claude Hotchin ever ran a gallery from the place.