



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)

- 3.15.3 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 201 River and sea transport

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Jarman Island is a place of great natural beauty. Aspects of the island that contribute to its appeal include; its visual relationship with the mainland (the mainland can be viewed with clarity from the island and vice versa); its contrasting landforms, the greater area of the island is gently undulating whereas its periphery comprises a rugged rocky coast with two small areas of beach; its relatively unspoilt vegetation and undisturbed birdlife; and, the harmonious relationship of the manufactured structures and the island's natural landscape. The quarters and privy are built of locally sourced stone which, with many years of exposure to weather, has developed a colour and texture that relates closely to the surrounding environment. The quarters, built against the hillside, are almost camouflaged by the colour of their stone and the vegetation which has encroached on its verandah slabs. (Criterion 1.1)

The architecture of *Jarman Island Lighthouse & Quarters* reflects a sensitivity towards good proportion, and quality craftsmanship. In the case of either structure, the built form has been derived from a tradition. The lighthouse is typical of cast iron towers of the late nineteenth century and represents a long tradition of tower construction in Britain and her colonies. Aesthetically, the tower is instantly recognisable as 'a lighthouse' by a collective stereotype of what lighthouses should look like. The quarters, although ruined, retain a sense of domesticity appropriate to their intended function, and the built form relates to both the design aesthetic of the PWD during the 1890s and regionally distinctive building practices that were emerging at this time. (Criterion 1.2)

* 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.

Environmentally, Jarman Island is of significance as an important landmark in the land and seascape of the region. The lighthouse is a prominent landmark and is locally synonymous with Jarman Island and Cossack. (Criterion 1.3)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Jarman Island is significant for its associations with the development of the north-west of Western Australia and, in particular, the Roebourne area. The history of the lighthouse is inextricably interwoven with that of the Port of Cossack, which was the first port in the north-west, and for many years, the main point of access for the settlement and development of the Pilbara region. The lighthouse was one of a string of navigational beacons on the Western Australian coast, established for the safety of coastal shipping. (Criterion 2.2)

Some significance may be attributed to the place for its association with George Temple Poole, the architect responsible for the design of the lightkeepers' quarters, and who has since become recognised as one of the greatest architects in the history of this state. Some significance is also attributed to the relationship of the place with William Lambden Owen who was the engineer responsible for erecting the lighthouse. Owen was the PWD's resident engineer at Roebourne at the time, and later served in various government offices, including a supervisory role in the construction of railways, warden of the Pilbara region and the Coolgardie goldfields, and Resident Magistrate at Bunbury. In addition to this, Owen actively participated in Western Australian civic and social affairs. After the lighthouse was automated, the island and quarters were leased to the Muramats family who were prominent merchants and landowners in Cossack and were the last of the pearlers to leave the town. (Criterion 2.3)

The lighthouse is important as an example of technical excellence, innovation and achievement of the late colonial period on Western Australia when settlement in the north-west was being established. The feat of erecting the prefabricated cast iron tower was executed in adverse conditions, with unskilled labour and limited resources. William Lambden Owen's account of the undertaking provides a detailed record of the extraordinary circumstances in which this technical operation was achieved. The manufacture of the lighthouse is an excellent record of nineteenth century industrial architectural achievement and navigational aid technology. The tower comprises a large number of cast iron elements that are fitted together with considerable precision, and the forms of some of these elements are complex, involving tapered and spiral curves. The lighthouse was originally fitted with a long range lens and a powerful lantern: high precision optical instruments that remained in service until the lighthouse was decommissioned in 1985. The lens equipment was of a standard that would still be acceptable for navigational beacons today. (Criterion 2.4)

The quarters, with its vaulted roof design, is important as one of the more innovative designs of the Public Works Department (WA) during the late nineteenth century. The use of unreinforced concrete in roof construction was a practice that had rarely been employed at the time. The initial part of the quarters, constructed in 1888, was one of the earliest government built structures in the north-west region and its vaulted roof design, treatment of fenestration, and iron verandah posts reflect the PWD's response to an environment that was still relatively unfamiliar to the colonists. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The relatively undisturbed cultural fabric and natural environment found on Jarman Island make it a valuable research site for archaeological, architectural and natural study. (Criterion 3.1)

It is one of few remote nineteenth century lighthouses to have survived with such a rich collection of architectural and archaeological remains, and features one of only five traditional cast iron lighthouses in this state. The study of archaeological remains on the island has the potential to yield information that would contribute to a wider understanding of the lifeways of the island's past residents. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Jarman Island lighthouse tower, and to a lesser extent, the ruined lightkeepers' quarters, are coastal landmarks visible from Cossack, Port Samson and from an elevated position in Roebourne and as such have contributed to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Jarman Island Lighthouse & Quarters is evidence of a distinctive way of life that is no longer practiced in Western Australia. Lightkeeping tended to be an isolated existence, and as technology for the automation of beacons developed early in the twentieth century, the number of lighthouses where the full-time attendance of a lightkeeper was required diminished. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The lighthouse on Jarman Island is typical of the cast iron towers used in Britain and her colonies during the latter part of the nineteenth century, in particular the towers manufactured by Chance Bros. of Birmingham. The quarters are representative of the more substantial masonry buildings erected under government contracts in the north-west in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The walls of these buildings typically consisted of dark granite rubble with cement mortar, trimmed with quoins of cement blocks or applied render. Iron verandah posts and cement floors were also commonly used in the north-west. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The lighthouse is in sound condition, despite not having been subject to any maintenance for over a decade. Concern has been raised over the condition of the foundations, with a section of the concrete beneath the base flange having deteriorated over time. It is, however, generally agreed that this deterioration poses no immediate threat to the tower. Other defects of consequence include deterioration of the protective paintwork, corrosion of unprotected metalwork and joints (the severity of which is likely to accelerate as the paintwork deteriorates), and broken lantern panes.

The quarters are in ruinous condition due to most of the roof and other fixtures having been stripped off in 1950. Only the kitchen retains a timber roof structure and some rusty sheets of corrugated iron. Moisture penetrating the vaulted concrete roof of the 1888 part has resulted in the

corrosion of the corrugated iron sheeting beneath. The friable render on the walls inside the 1888 section has also deteriorated consequent to removal of the roof, although render in the later part which is not protected by a vault has survived reasonably well. The masonry is in good condition generally, although the corrosion of iron elements embedded in the wall has resulted in some spalling and cracking. Concrete verandahs around the perimeter of the building, and concrete floors inside, are in good condition. Iron verandah posts are badly corroded, with few components remaining in a salvageable condition. In its present state, the deterioration of the remaining fabric of the quarters will be gradual, with the remaining timberwork being the most vulnerable.

The two underground water tanks contain considerable debris and the lid of the large round tank on the south-east side has collapsed inwards. Otherwise the remaining fabric appears to be in sound condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The lighthouse is mostly intact, although the lantern and optical equipment have been removed and located in the Cape Naturalist lighthouse museum. With the light no longer operational, the tower is no longer able to serve its intended function. There have been few changes made to the lighthouse that are of an intrusive nature. The integrity of the lighthouse has been compromised by the removal of lantern and lens equipment, but this injury is non-permanent. Reinstatement of the original equipment is possible given that it is presently on loan to a museum and has not been damaged.

The masonry shell of the quarters is intact, but much of the timber and metal work of the quarters has been lost, largely due to the demolition work that occurred in 1950. Subsequent to the demolition, deterioration of wall finishes, joinery and remnant metalwork resulted in a further loss of fabric. The internal wall faces have suffered the loss of finish and some render on the inside. Only the kitchen and the privy retain their timber roof structure.

Despite the amount of fabric that is missing or in deteriorated condition, an accurate reconstruction of the quarters would be possible, given the traces that are left of the missing fabric and the available documentary evidence. Reconstruction would, however, result in the loss of some of the aesthetic qualities for which the place is deemed significant.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Jarman Island lighthouse is no longer in the state it would have been when the lighthouse was operational and tended by resident lightkeepers. Changes that have occurred, however, are principally dilapidation of the building fabric rather than constructive alterations. In effect, the remaining fabric of the lighthouse is original, the finishes are original or closely matching those originally used, but all fabric is in a deteriorated or ruinous condition.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Jarman Island Lightstation Conservation Plan' prepared for the Shire of Roebourne, administered by the National Trust of Australia (WA), in May 1999.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Jarman Island Lightstation Conservation Plan' prepared for the Shire of Roebourne, administered by the National Trust of Australia (WA), in May 1999.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Jarman Island Lightstation Conservation Plan' prepared for the Shire of Roebourne, administered by the National Trust of Australia (WA), in May 1999.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For Comparative Information refer to Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Jarman Island Lightstation Conservation Plan' prepared for the Shire of Roebourne, administered by the National Trust of Australia (WA), in May 1999.

13.4 REFERENCES

Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Jarman Island Lightstation Conservation Plan' prepared for the Shire of Roebourne, administered by the National Trust of Australia (WA), in May 1999.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
