



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Myrniong is a very fine example of the Federation Bungalow style, as demonstrated by its large simple roof planes, prominent gable verge and deep verandah supported on substantial timber posts. (Criterion 1.1)

The harmonious massing of the roof planes and the sensitive detailing, displayed, for example, by the finely articulated gable verge, display design excellence. (Criterion 1.2)

By being set back from the corner and having a substantial front garden, *Myrniong* displays a landmark quality. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Myrniong represents the architectural evolution and development of the bungalow form of housing, and is an example of an architecturally designed country house influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is representative of the early Twentieth Century trend which saw academically trained artists of all professions transform Bunbury's cultural environment into a town influenced by international artistic movements and standards. (Criterion 2.2)

Myrniong is significant in its close association with the architect Eustace Gresley Cohen, who was responsible for the design of many houses and public buildings in Perth and the south-west and was a prominent person in the architectural community at this time. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

* 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.

Myrniong contributes to Bunbury's sense of place as it is an intact, representative example of early Twentieth Century architecture and for its landmark quality. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

While Federation Bungalow houses are not rare, the size and quality of *Myrniong* make it an uncommon structure. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Myrniong is a late representative of a large Federation Bungalow residence. The place is also representative of the work of architect Eustace Gresley Cohen. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Myrniong is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Integrity is high. The original intention, that of residence, is intact.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is high. Apart from the verandah floorboards and posts that have been recently replaced, most of the fabric is original.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Natasha Georgiou, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

Curtilage should extend to the boundaries of lot 206.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Myrniong is a single storeyed brick and tile domestic house constructed for Maria Rose in 1925.

The first land grants at Bunbury were taken up in 1830 when an expedition navigated the Collie River to the Darling Range in search of fertile property. The region was settled in 1838 when John Scott was brought out to farm Governor Stirling's land in Bunbury, to fulfil the conditions of the land grant.¹ James Stirling, the largest landowner of the area, was granted more than 20,000 acres of fertile land.² In 1852, Stirling sold a half share of his holdings in Wellington Location 41 and Leschenault Location 26 to Frederick, Ross, Emily, and Charles Mangles, William Stockley, John Cator, and Ulysses Latreille for £4,400.³ The land was acquired as an investment with portions sold off over the years while the owners continued to live in England.

The townsite of Bunbury was surveyed and gazetted in 1841.⁴ Bunbury remained a small town until the 1890s mining and timber boom. This catalyst saw the emergence of Bunbury as a seaside health resort, nicknamed 'the Brighton of the Colony'.⁵ Hotels, guesthouses and even fisherman's hovels carried on a roaring trade and new baths were built south of the jetty in the Koombana Bay.⁶ The population in Bunbury increased in the 1890s from 572 to 2,970.⁷

As gold exports helped finance a major program of public works, Bunbury was the beneficiary of improved rail and communication links with its rural hinterland, Perth, and Busselton. Government expenditure also saw the harbour made safer with the million pound harbour breakwater scheme, and the waterside movement of goods became more efficient with jetty extensions and its connection with the railway.⁸ These improvements were an attempt to consolidate Bunbury as the regional centre of the south-west.⁹ House

¹ Municipal Inventory Working Group, 'City of Bunbury Municipal Inventory', Hocking Planning & Architecture, Subiaco, 1994, p. 1.

² This grant included the huge land grant of 16,600 acres that ran from Leschenault Location 26 then down the coast towards the Capel district. Enrolment, No. 371.

³ Memorial, Vol. 16 / No. 1946. The Mangles were relatives of Lady Ellen Stirling, nee Ellen Mangles. Mangles, R.P., *The Mangles Family*, Kent, 1979, pp. 16-28.

⁴ Surveyed by H. M. Ommaney, 184, *Government Gazette*, ; no. 246, 26.3.1841. This continued to occur even after the Governor named the townsite on 21 December 1836. The town was named in honour of its early explorer Lieutenant Henry Bunbury.

⁵ Thiel P.W.H. et al., *Twentieth Century Impressions*, Perth, 1901, p. 85.

⁶ Bunbury Heritage Trail Planning Committee, 'Bunbury Heritage Trail', 1988, p. 4.

⁷ Municipal Inventory Working Group.op. cit., p. 5.

⁸ Clarke, G., *Early History of Bunbury*, Colortype Press, Perth, 1946, p. 43.

⁹ Barker, A. & Laurie, M., *Excellent Connections*, Southwest Printing and Publishing, Bunbury, 1992, p. 141.

construction and civic architecture from 1890 onwards reflected this increasing prosperity, as portrayed in the *Bunbury Herald*,

The appearance of our street architecture will very soon be changed; the old-fashioned shops and dwelling houses that were comfortable enough and well adapted to the requirements of our tradesmen and residents for a number of years will soon be superseded by dwellings of more recent model.¹⁰

Lot 106 (later to be lot 206) of Location 26, on which *Myrniong* is located, was created in 1897, with the subdivision of the larger lot 105 that was owned by Robert Wheatley, a farmer in the district of Warren.¹¹ In 1897, a blacksmith from Fremantle, William Edward Cross, purchased lots 106 and 107 from Wheatley. However, the land was not developed until the mid-1920s. On 23 July 1925, Maria Eliza Rose and George Canler Rose purchased lots 106 and 107 from George Ephraim Clarke, Mayor of Bunbury from 1914-1918 and a real estate agent, and Francis Frederick Anderson, who was the Bunbury Town Clerk.¹²

George Canler Rose, a son of early Bunbury farmer, Robert Henry Rose I, had previously worked on his stations in the Kimberley region until he returned in 1893 to manage the large family property, 'Parkfield', at Australind. He married Edith Clarke in 1901.¹³ Edith Clarke was the sister of the previous landowner of lot 106, George Ephraim Clarke. Later he was to become the Director of the Bunbury Butter Company and by 1913 had retired to his home, 'The Grange', in Claremont.¹⁴ Therefore, within two months he had transferred his share of the land on Beach Road to his sister-in-law, Maria Eliza Rose.¹⁵ Maria Rose was the oldest child of Thomas Hayward, who was one of the earliest storekeepers in Bunbury and previously had been in partnership with Robert Henry Rose I at 'Parkfield'.¹⁶ In 1883, Maria married Robert Henry Rose II and for many years they lived on his successful farming estate on the Collie River, called 'Roelands'.¹⁷ When Robert Henry Rose II died in 1900, Maria continued to manage the farm along with her seven children.¹⁸ Before the land on Beach Road was transferred to her in 1925, she lived on another Rose property, 'Carlaminda', which was located in Ferguson.¹⁹ In 1925, Maria Rose contracted the architect Eustace Cohen to design her a house on Lot 106.²⁰

After the positive influence of the 1890s gold boom and subsequent establishment of responsible government Bunbury had grown into a large country town. As Bunbury greeted the new decade of the 1920s, it once again promoted its own healthy image as a beachside resort. There were also hopeful economic signs both for the town and the wider community.²¹ The

¹⁰ *Bunbury Herald*, 12.10.1892, p. 3.

¹¹ Certificate of Title, Vol. 87 / Fol. 99.

¹² Certificate of Title, Fol. 858 / Fol. 50.

¹³ Erickson, R., *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, Vol. 4, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1988, p. 2678; Electoral Roles, 1900-1916

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Certificate of Title, Fol. 858 / Fol. 50.

¹⁶ Erickson, R., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 1421.

¹⁷ *Bunbury Herald*, 3.2.1900, p. 3.

¹⁸ *South Western Times*, 26.8.1943, p. 3.

¹⁹ Electoral Roles, 1924.

²⁰ Molyneux, I. 'Bunbury National Estate Study', South Perth, 1978, p. 99.

²¹ Barker & Laurie, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

Mitchell Nationalist government, which had come to power in May 1919, was strongly promoting dairying and very high butter prices were inducing more farmers to enter the industry. The group and soldier settler schemes were promising to introduce 6,000 new settlers to the region.²² There were also high hopes of increased sales in the shipping industry.²³ A promising innovation in January 1921, was the establishment of a regular Bunbury-Fremantle shipping schedule. These improvements naturally flowed into other areas of the town's economy. By 1921, there were 105 shops and warehouses, employing a total of 235 men and 194 women. There were now seventy-nine employees at the railway station, while employment in the harbour was also increasing.²⁴

In the two decades to 1904 the State's population increased seven fold, largely due to the boost in Western Australia's economy and the recession in the eastern states.²⁵ Among the people who settled in the State were mining and other kinds of engineers, from the fields of the eastern states, the U.S.A., and Europe. Architects were also included in the professional immigration, they being the first to lose work from the impact of the recession on the building industry.²⁶ These professionals assisted in Bunbury's progress towards a modern city with international standards and influences. This was the era where architect designed houses, like *Myrning*, were reaching a new high.²⁷

One of these architects, from whom the most extensive body of work has survived, was Eustace Gresley Cohen.²⁸ Cohen was born in the United Kingdom in 1882. He was articled in Chester, and later worked with Guy Dawber, who was President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His working life in England was coincident with a boom period in building, when Arts and Crafts was one of the leading architectural styles. From this background Cohen appears to have received a profound knowledge of half-timber construction and a well-developed personal style, based upon free versions of vernacular elements utilised in an Arts and Crafts manner. He came to Western Australia in 1904 with his brother Gilbert on account of ill health. They purchased 'Beachlands', near Busselton, and farmed the property and raised horses.²⁹ However, the demand for architectural services induced Cohen to re-enter his profession. In 1913, he formed the partnership of Eales and Cohen in Perth with J. Hubert Eales, who had previously been in partnership with Oldham.³⁰ William Bennett then joined them from 1928 until 1936.³¹ Eales and Cohen then partnered with Fitzhardinge until Cohen's death in 1938.³² Examples of Cohen's work are 'Walker House' and 'Kaeshagen House' both in Turner Street, Bunbury. Others include 'Chennell House' in Tuart Street and 'Moorlands' in Carey Street, Bunbury, two stately

²² ibid.

²³ ibid.

²⁴ ibid.

²⁵ Molyneux, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁶ ibid.

²⁷ ibid.

²⁸ Molyneux, op. cit., p. 81.

²⁹ ibid.

³⁰ Post Office Directories, 1913.

³¹ Post Office Directories, 1929-1936.

³² Post Office Directories, 1937-1939.

houses in Karoo Street, South Perth, and 'Reynolds Homestead', and 'Beachgrove', both in Busselton.³³

Maria Rose raised a mortgage of £1,000 from John Walker, a retired Solicitor from Bunbury, so as to finance the building.³⁴ The builder of the house was Joseph George Hough, who appears to have been the 'architects' builder' of the town during the lives of Cohen and the other prominent Bunbury architect, F. W. Lee Steere.³⁵ The house was named *Myrniong* after a small town between Melbourne and Ballarat.³⁶ *Myrniong* is characteristic of Cohen designed houses. According to a 1978 National Estate Study of Bunbury,

Cohen's design includes casually related roofs, extending out, over verandahs, in the vernacular bungalow form, and which are elaborated upon with ventilating and decorative, half-timbered gables. The ends of structural verandah rafters are exposed, and, with the arch-shaped verandah-beams, they illustrate a typical achievement of decorative enrichment from functional elements. Circular windows are also used, hallmarks of the era. Tiles...have recently replaced the original corrugated-iron roof cladding.³⁷

Myrniong combined all these features, being a good representative of the Federation bungalow style. It is significant that at the time that *Myrniong* and 'Moorlands', which belonged to a Mr. Percy Rose, were being designed Cohen was building two houses of English derivation at Karoo Street in South Perth. The houses at South Perth displayed a more elaborate urban style of the Arts and Crafts movement, while the houses in Bunbury were a simpler countryside vernacular version of the same movement.³⁸ The house originally consisted of three bedrooms, a bathroom, living room, dining room, and kitchen.³⁹ The building was completed in 1926.⁴⁰

On 20 August 1943, Mara Eliza Rose died and in May 1944, probate of her will was granted to her eldest son, Robert Henry Rose III and John Strachan.⁴¹ Robert Henry lived on his prize stud farm, 'Grass Vale', in Burekup, and John Strachan owned a mill in Palgarup but was at that time a Major in the Australian Military Forces.⁴² In 1945, they sold the house and the land to Ivor Thomas Williams.⁴³ Ivor Williams was a farmer at Boyanup until 1945, when he lost his right hand in Volunteer Defense Corp activities. Therefore, he decided to retire to Bunbury and hence purchased *Myrniong*. He soon quit retirement and opened a popular toyshop in Victoria Street and later became the joint owner of the Julianne Restaurant, which was located on the same

³³ Morrison, M. P., 'Immigrant Architects', Battye PR 13589, p. 3.

³⁴ Certificate of Title, Fol. 858 / Fol. 50.

³⁵ Molyneux. op. cit., p. 82.

³⁶ Conversation with Rodney Johnston, owner of *Myrniong*, 15.5.1998; No further association could be ascertained as to why the place was named after the Victorian town.

³⁷ Molyneux, op. cit., p. 99.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Conversation with Rodney Johnston, owner of *Myrniong*, 15.5.1998.

⁴⁰ Electoral Roles, 1926.

⁴¹ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073 / Fol. 461.

⁴² Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073 / Fol. 461; 'Leading Personalities of Western Australia', Paterson, Brokensha Pty. Ltd., Perth, 1950, p. 55.

⁴³ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073 / Fol. 461.

street.⁴⁴ He therefore moved to a more central residence and sold *Myrniiong* to Forrest Ramsay Hay in August 1946.⁴⁵ Forrest 'Barney' Ramsay Hay, owned a petrol station business in South Bunbury. From 1938, he entered local politics first as a Councillor for the South Ward and later as Mayor of Bunbury from 1959 to 1963. In the first 24 years of his marriage he shifted house 24 times.⁴⁶ One of his houses included *Myrniiong*, but before he sold the house he added on a laundry to the rear of the house, converted the old kitchen into another bedroom, and incorporated an old sleep-out and a back bedroom into a kitchen. He also added a garage next to the new kitchen by extending the verandah roof line.⁴⁷

On 2 May 1949, *Myrniiong* was transferred to Rodney Forster Johnston, nephew of Maria Eliza Rose.⁴⁸ In 1961, the land title was cancelled and re-issued with the lot number being changed from 106 to 206 according to Diagram 26228.⁴⁹ In c.1949, Rodney Johnston added on two more garages one to the east side of the new garage and the other addressing Palm Street.⁵⁰ In April 1998, \$1,797 was spent on replacing the old sagging timber floorboards and posts of the verandah with new timber.⁵¹

In 1994, the house was listed on the Bunbury Municipal Inventory for its historic and aesthetic values.⁵²

In 1998, Rodney Forster Johnston and his wife Amy Ruby presently own *Myrniiong* for residential purposes.⁵³

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Myrniiong, a large single storeyed residence, is located on the north-east corner of the junction of Beach Road and Palm Street, Bunbury. Adjacent and opposite the place are residences, and addressing both frontages of *Myrniiong* is a large garden with rose bushes, mature trees, numerous shrubs and an extensive lawn.

Myrniiong is built in a Federation Bungalow Style, as demonstrated by the large simple roof planes, prominent and finely articulated gable verge and deep verandah supported on substantial timber posts.

Myrniiong has timber doors and windows, and brick walls. The timber roof framing supports clay tiles. Externally the brick walls are painted up to door and window head height, above which the walls, including the gable, have a rough cast render applied.

Internally, the finishes consist typically of carpeted floors, plastered walls and fibrous plaster ceilings, without cornices. The windows have curtain pelmets of timber with a central simple geometric motif. The main rooms are embellished with timber shelves on decorative brackets.

⁴⁴ *South Western Times*, 19.6.1958, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073 / Fol. 461.

⁴⁶ *South Western Times*, 8.5.1958, p. 5; 30.8.1962, p. 20; 3.12.1959, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Conversation with Rodney Johnston, owner of *Myrniiong*, 15.5.1998.

⁴⁸ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073 / Fol. 461.

⁴⁹ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1248 / Fol. 477.

⁵⁰ Conversation with Rodney Johnston, owner of *Myrniiong*, 15.5.1998.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Municipal Inventory Working Group, op. cit.

⁵³ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1248 / Fol. 477

The entrance hall addresses Palm Street, is aligned east-west and is entered through a pair of doors with leadlight in the upper panels. On the south wall, about 1.6 metres above floor level, a timber shelf, with a double bullnose, is supported on simple timber brackets. A picture rail is located 2.7 metres above floor level.

The hall has a segmented arched opening, the springing points and head being about 2.1 metres and 2.4 meters above floor level, respectively. Immediately beyond the arched opening are two doors to the right leading, respectively, to the second and main bedrooms. At this point the hallway ends and a passage runs off it at 90 degrees. About halfway along the passage are two doors, leading to the third bedroom and bathroom, respectively. At the end of the passage is a door leading to the dining room.

The second bedroom has exposed tongue in groove floorboards, and a pair of sliding sash windows with six panes per sash.

The main bedroom has a pair of windows identical to those in the second bedroom. Both pairs of windows are arranged to each side of the gable addressing Beach Road, reinforcing the symmetry of the Beach Road elevation. A pair of French doors lead on to the east verandah. The French doors have four panes across, two for each door, and five panes high. The top two panes have a segmented arched head, with timber spandrels to each side, with a horizontal door head. In the south-west corner of the main bedroom is a timber shelf, similarly detailed to the hallway shelf.

The third bedroom has a pair of French doors, identical to those in the main bedroom.

The bathroom has a carpeted floor with a quarter round skirting. The walls to the shower recess are tiled up to a height of about 1.8 metres above floor level. A laminated plastic splashback is located over the basin and the same material is also used on the basin side of a partition that separates the basin from the toilet. On the toilet side of the partition, wallpaper has been applied. A sliding sash window is located in the eastern wall and has four obscure panes per sliding sash.

By proceeding left or north from the entrance hall, one arrives in the living room. The living room is aligned with the axis running east-west. The hallway door has, on the living room side, a decorative cornice at head height, as do the adjacent French doors that lead on to the front verandah, near the entrance doors. The cornices consist of a double bullnose shelf supported by console brackets.

Centrally located on the wall addressing Palm Street are two narrow sliding sash windows, with four panes per sash. A split-system air conditioner has been mounted in recent times halfway between the pelmet and the ceiling.

Centred on the north wall is a brick fireplace with a jarrah chimneypiece. The chimneypiece consists from bottom to top of a lower shelf sitting directly on the top course of brickwork, another shelf about 200mm higher supported on console brackets, and jarrah panelling surmounted by an a cornice at door head height.

To the east of the fireplace is a shelf detailed similarly to the hallway shelf. Adjacent to the shelf is a timber door, leading to the dining room, with the

bottom two panels identical to the other internal doors. The upper part of the door has eight glazed panels arranged in two rows of four, one above the other.

At the end of the passage, is the dining room, with exposed floor boards about 100mm wide. The window to the north has two horizontally sliding sash windows each side of a central fixed sash. All three sashes have three panes, one above the other.

The kitchen, located to the east of the dining room, and built in the 1940s, has a timber floor over which vinyl has been applied. The plaster ceiling is formed into square panels by 75mm by 25mm timber cover strips, and contained by a plaster cornice. The walls are finished with wall tiles or plaster up to about 1.8 metres above floor level, over which is a textured render, similar to that used on the external walls above head height, indicating that the wall between the dining room and the kitchen was an external wall. It is likely that the kitchen was originally a verandah or sleepout.

To the west of the dining room is a bedroom, which was probably the original kitchen. A fireplace on the south wall, adjacent to the fireplace on the north wall of the living room, has been converted into a low wardrobe.

North of the dining room is a sunroom. The tongues in groove timber floorboards are about 100mm wide, and have a quarter round timber skirting. In the north wall is a continuous window, which consists of horizontally sliding sash windows, with six panes per sash. The walls below sill height are lined with vertical tongue in groove boards, and clad externally with weatherboards. The timber lining also continues above window head height for about 300mm, above which is a fibrous cement lining. The fibrous plaster ceiling is raked.

To the west of the sunroom is a small room used as a study. The floor is concrete, over which carpet has been applied. A timber shelf, similar to but not identical to the shelves in the living, dining and main bedrooms, is located in the south-west corner. The pair of casement windows in the west wall have six panes per sash. The ceiling is raked and in the same plane as the sunroom ceiling, indicating that these two rooms, and, as previously stated, the kitchen as well, were originally part of a verandah that extended for almost the entire perimeter of *Myrniiong*.

A laundry with a concrete floor has been added to the north of the study, and is entered from an external door on the east side. Internally, the south wall is painted and the other walls are rendered. The ceiling consists of raking fibrous cement. The external walls are painted and the roof is tiled.

A garage is situated to the east of the kitchen, and was built at the same time as the kitchen addition, judging by the common roof over the kitchen and garage that forms a separate element to the main roof of *Myrniiong*. To the north of the garage is a bathroom and toilet. Circa 1960 a narrow garage with a flat roof was added to the 1940s garage. Circa 1975 a garage addressing Palm Street was also added. The rear of this garage is about two metres to the west of the window of the fourth bedroom.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
