



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 *

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The site is associated with the history of timber milling in the State, having been established as a sawmill site in 1902 by Alexander Barton. The Forests Department also maintained an outpost in the vicinity with associated housing and community buildings. The sawmill was subsequently sold to Millars Timber and Trading Co. Ltd., a significant operator in the timber milling industry in Western Australia, and closed down in 1937. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is associated with the development of a minimum security prison facility from 1942 through to 1989 when it was closed. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is important for its links with Fremantle Prison during World War II. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The surviving fabric may assist in demonstrating the Government's approach to the layout and design of a minimum security prison facility in the early 1940s. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is significant for social reasons through association with two former communities in Western Australia, a sawmilling community resident on the site from 1902 to 1937, and a prison community which occupied the site after from 1942 to 1989. (Criterion 4.1)

* 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.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The place is uncommon for its adaptation from a sawmill site to a prison facility, thereby encompassing the milling of timber and the incarceration of convicted people in a remote, low-security prison environment. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Bartons Mill Prison (ruins) is currently an abandoned site from which significant elements have been removed, both legally and illegally, or vandalised. The site and buildings/structures are in a state of dilapidation; the place is now hazardous due to the extensive presence of asbestos cement building materials, broken glass and unprotected pits, dams, etc. The site is being cleared to allow regeneration of the natural forest under the management of the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The site is abandoned and integrity is low. There is no clear tangible evidence to enable the interpretation of the place as the site of a former timber mill; also the particular characteristics of its subsequent use as a prison facility have been removed and little evidence of their former existence survives - viz security fencing, area lighting, control towers and signage.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of the place is moderate, being compromised by the removal of specific prison elements and as a result of the vandalism the place has sustained since the prison closed. The place has been abandoned as a redundant facility for both timber-milling and as a place of incarceration. There is no intention to retain or restore the built fabric and removal of hazardous materials will further erode the authenticity of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by Ronald Bodycoat, Heritage Architect, with additional research by HCWA staff.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The place comprises a prison compound, workshops, administration and visitor facilities and a range of staff houses. The surviving buildings and structures are shown on Site Plans dated May 1985.¹ The most relevant elements have been code numbered on those drawings and are listed in 13.2 Physical Evidence. It is important to note that progressive drawings in the Government Record Sets indicate substantial changes in the uses of many of the buildings which survive on the site in December 1997, as well as the development of facilities and alterations to the layout of the cells which housed the prisoners. These changes are extensive and complex and it would be a lengthy exercise, not relevant to this assessment, to discover and document all the changes which have occurred.

The following brief historical notes are extracted from a collection of papers held by the Kalamunda Historical Society and the Annual Reports of the Western Australian Prisons Department, reinforced by the drawn evidence to provide a chronology of the place.²

1891 The zig zag railway from the Canning Mills to 'Midland Junction', developed primarily for the transporting of timber, was completed in July 1891 by E V H Keane. Keane held exclusive rights to Mason and Bird's old timber concession of 95,000 acres around Canning Mills and this was transferred to Edward Noyes, then to the Canning Jarrah Timber Company Ltd which had been incorporated in Victoria in June 1891.

1902 The Canning Jarrah Timber Co. Ltd. and a number of other sawmilling companies merged into Millars Karri & Jarrah Company (1902) Ltd. and the Canning Mills operation moved to the Pickering Brook area.

John Alexander Barton commenced timber milling at Carilla, 3km from Pickering Brook, cut out all the permissible timber and moved the mill operation to No. 4 millsite about 3km further east.

1908 Barton died in an accident at the mill on 13 July 1908. William Thomas took over the operation at the sawmill, prior to its sale to Millars who relocated Bartons Mill to its final location where the prison was later developed. Horse teams and whims were used to convey logs from the forest to landings on a network of timber tramways connected to the sawmill.

¹ Drawings from Record Sets held in the Plan Room of CAMS, at Dumas House, PWD WA 32/509 Book 2 and 32/509/11. Other Record Sets are in the same collection. They include a site plan dated November 1942 recording the status of the site at the time of adaptation to a prison facility and the location of the mill building, the railway and some of the associated mill cottages.

² Slee, John and Shaw, Bill, *Calamunnda: A Home in the Forest - A History of Kalamunda*, Shire of Kalamunda 1979; History Village, Kalamunda - Notes on Barton's Mill 1977 and notes from talk given on 4 May 1995.

The sawmill was also connected by rail to Pickering Brook and sawn timber and goods were transported to and from Bartons Mill by company locomotives. Postal services operated from Pickering Brook as well as grocery deliveries three times a week. Only one telephone connection was provided to the mill office from the Pickering Brook Post Office. A State School was provided at Bartons Mill in 1910, with a room at the rear for the teacher.

- 1924 Bartons Mill was burnt out and rebuilt by Millars.
- 1926 There were 30 houses at Bartons Mill for families and 20 cabins for single men, altogether a community of around 200 people.
- 1929 The Forests Department maintained an outpost in the vicinity with associated housing and community buildings.
- 1937 Bartons Mill closed when the distance to stands of millable timber (as great as 40 km) made the operation uneconomic. Also, the demand for sawn timber was low and Millars diverted supply demands to their other sawmills. On closure, the buildings were sold to settlers and orchardists who dismantled them and carted them away. The houses were simple timber-framed cottages clad in rough sawn weatherboarding with an open front verandah and 'settler's chimneys' of timber. Some early dwellings appear to have been slab huts with camp ovens for cooking. Store buildings were timber-framed and lined with corrugated iron sheeting.

After the commencement of World War Two, a large stockpile of poorly sawn timber remaining at Bartons Mill was purchased by Douglas Jones, timber merchants of Guildford. After redressing with a thicknesser, this timber was used in the construction of the RAAF huts at the Pearce Air Base.

- 1940s *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* was established in April 1942, when the Fremantle Prison was occupied by the military authorities during World War Two. A barbed wire fence was set around the perimeter of the compound, tents set up for staff and the male prisoners transferred from Fremantle. Some of the single men's huts from the mill were initially recycled for the prison. Thirteen prisoners escaped on the first night: a stronger perimeter fence was erected and the military agreed to set aside a section of Fremantle Prison for recalcitrant prisoners. The captured escapees and those considered to be of maximum security risk were returned to Fremantle. In April 1944, 68 acres of land at 'Bartons Mill' was leased (Forest Lease 449/40) to the Comptroller General of Prisons for a prison farm. New timber-framed buildings were introduced for administration, staff housing, single-bed hut accommodation, and support facilities such as kitchen, latrines and workshops. After the evacuation of Fremantle Prison by the military at the end of World War Two, Bartons Mill continued as a prison for 'suitable' prisoners of minimum security risk.
- 1950s Activities at *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* initially centred on firewood cutting for supply to Government facilities, including hospitals and homes. By the mid-1950s, demand for firewood was declining and

some prisoners moved into the business of breadmaking for other Government institutions.

1960s By the late 1960s, prisoners were employed in a number of activities aside from woodcutting and breadmaking, including carpentry and mechanical and building repairs. General improvements were made to the prison facilities, including a new breadhouse, renovations to the prisoners' huts and the establishment of gardens.

1970s In August 1973, committed inebriates began arriving at *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* and were accommodated in a section of the prison set aside for that purpose. The Inebriates Advisory Board was abolished the following year and its functions and charges were transferred to the Drug and Alcohol Authority's facility at Byford.

Due to declining musters, which made the continued use of *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* uneconomical, the facility was closed on 31 October 1975. All inmates and staff, aside from a skeleton caretaker staff of three, were transferred to other institutions. The closure was short-lived, however, and *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* reopened in November 1977 in order to cope with the increasing prison population.

1980s In the early 1980s, existing buildings were upgraded and additional men's quarters, fibreglass workshop and garden sheds constructed. Due to the decline in the need for minimum security accommodation, and despite a ten year renewal of Forest Lease 449/40 extending the expiry date to March 1999, *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)* was closed on 7 July 1989. All staff and inmates were transferred to other metropolitan and country minimum security facilities, the site was abandoned and since that time, the entire place has been subject to illegal entry and vandalism.

Bartons Mill Prison (ruins) was the second prison facility established by the Prisons Department outside of Fremantle Prison. The first was Pardelup Prison Farm, established near Mt Barker in 1927, which led the way in prison reform. While the benefits of the gainful employment of prisoners, under minimum security conditions with prospects of rehabilitation, were acknowledged, the main motivation for the establishment of Pardelup Prison Farm was economic, rather than humanitarian. At the time, there was much discussion in Parliament and the press regarding the cost of keeping prisoners. Economic motivations also prompted the decision to retain Bartons Mill as a minimum security prison at the end of World War Two - the employment of prison labour for woodcutting and carting presented a considerable saving to the Government, while allowing the tractable type of prisoner to serve his time in open spaces. Karnet Rehabilitation Centre, established in 1963, and Wooroloo Training Centre which opened in 1970, provide similar facilities and employment to those at Pardelup Prison Farm and *Bartons Mill Prison (ruins)*.

In 1997, none of the pre-1940 mill buildings survive; archaeological investigation is likely to locate the mill, the railway and the mill cottages, mainly because, as the 1942 PWD.WA drawings record, the mill buildings are located to a large degree apart from the later development of the prison farm. The prison site and buildings/structures are in a state of dilapidation; the place is now hazardous due to the extensive presence of asbestos cement

building materials, broken glass and unprotected pits, dams, etc. The site is being cleared to allow regeneration of the natural forest under the management of the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Bartons Mill Prison (ruins) is located within the Goldfields Water Supply Catchment Area, which has been proclaimed Priority 1 Source Protection under the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909*. The site is a portion of catchment reserve/state forest vested jointly in the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Water Corporation (formerly known as the 'Water Authority of Western Australia').

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Bartons Mill Prison (ruins) survives in a deteriorated condition in its original forest clearing adapted from the former sawmilling operation. None of the mill buildings have been discovered on site.

The prison compound within the former security fencing comprises a fairly loose arrangement of timber and brick buildings including residential buildings (cell huts), recreational structures and workshops, administration and visitor facilities. Staff housing is located to the west outside the prison compound and on the northern side of the entry road into the prison. Orchards are located between the prison and the staff housing. Water dams and a sewerage treatment plant are located south of the prison compound in the natural bush.

The earliest prison buildings are timber-framed with pitched roofs; the more recent buildings are constructed in brickwork. Buildings and facilities remaining in December 1997 are as follows:

- 1-7 Staff cottages 1942: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, galvanised corrugated iron roof with open verandahs front and back. Timber floor. Interior walls are vertical boarding and asbestos. Ceilings are asbestos.
- 8 Officers' Club: Only the concrete slab, stone retaining walls and steps remain.
- 9 Tennis Court: Bitumen paving and stone retaining walls only.
- 10 Children's Playground: Stone retaining walls only.
- 11 Superintendent's House 1942: Weatherboard walls, galvanised corrugated iron roof, timber floor. Interior walls are vertical boarding and asbestos. Ceilings are plasterboard.
- 13 Shelter: Corrugated galvanised iron on steel pipe frame.
- 14 Public Toilets: Face brick walls rendered on the interior, concrete floor.
- 15 Gates: Wrought Iron.
- 16 Tank, Stand, Shed
- 20 Administration building 1943 & 1969/78: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, corrugated asbestos roof, timber floor. Interior walls are plasterboard. Ceilings are acoustic tiles and plasterboard.

- 21 Visitors' building 1943/44: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, corrugated asbestos roof, timber floor. Interior walls and ceilings are plasterboard.
- 22 Emergency Generator 1979: Concrete block construction with metal decking roof.
- 23 Tool Sheds: Only concrete bases remain.
- 24 Visitors' Toilets 1972: Face brick walls, corrugated galvanised iron roof, asbestos ceiling and concrete floor.
- 25 Visitor's Hall 1942/44: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, Corrugated asbestos roof, timber floor. Interior walls are asbestos, ceilings are plasterboard.
- 26 Education Centre 1942 & 1984: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, Corrugated asbestos roof, timber floor. Interior walls are asbestos, ceilings are plasterboard.
- 27 Garage/Workshop 1942 & 1980: Concrete floor, corrugated galvanised iron walls and roof.
- 28 Workshop: Only the concrete slab and stone retaining walls remain.
- 34 Kitchen & Dining Room 1942 etc: Concrete floor and walls, corrugated asbestos roof. Interior walls are rendered. Ceiling is asbestos.
- 35 Art Room & Library c1965: Concrete floor, brick walls, corrugated galvanised iron roof. Interior walls are rendered, ceilings are fibro cement.
- 36 Boiler House: Concrete floor, brick walls, corrugated asbestos roof. Ceilings are fibro cement.
- 37 Ablutions & Laundry c1966: Concrete floor, brick walls, corrugated asbestos roof. Interior walls are rendered, ceilings are fibro cement.
- 38 Workshop 1986: Concrete floor, fibro cement walls, metal decking roof.
- 40 Carpentry Workshop: Concrete floor slab only remains.
- 42 Cell Huts 1942: Weatherboard and asbestos walls, corrugated asbestos roof, timber floor. Interior walls and ceiling are asbestos.
- 43 Rotunda pre 1970: Concrete base, rendered face brick walls and corrugated galvanised iron roof with plasterboard ceiling.
- 46 Toilet Block 1943: Concrete base and asbestos walls.
- 47 Compound Office c1942: Asbestos walls and ceiling, corrugated asbestos roof, timber floors.
- 48 Cell Huts: Asbestos walls, corrugated asbestos roof, timber floors. Interior walls and ceilings are fibro cement.
- 49 Recreation Building 1985+: Concrete base, face brick walls, corrugated galvanised iron roof. Interior walls are rendered, ceilings are plasterboard.

The 1942 site plan shows the original layout of prison buildings in relation to former mill buildings. The present layout is shown on the 1985 BMA site plans using the above identification numbers.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Research the history of Bartons Mill as a sawmill.

There exists a reference in the Kalamunda Historical Society papers to one, or possibly two, graves on the higher ground in the bush behind the Superintendent's House. Confirm the existence of the graves and research documentary evidence.