



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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.12.2 Developing sources of fresh local produce
- 3.19 Marketing and retailing
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 107 Settlements
- 113 Natural disasters
- 302 Rural industry and market gardening
- 602 Early settlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Russ Cottage is a good example of a random rubble limestone building in the Victorian Georgian style, its simple construction demonstrating the methods used during the early development of Dongara. (Criterion 1.1)

Russ Cottage is a landmark, situated on a prominent corner at the edge of Port Leander Drive. (Criterion 1.3)

Russ Cottage, contributes to an historic precinct of buildings within Dongara that collectively form a significant streetscape. These heritage buildings include the Courthouse, Police Station and Gaol Complex (1870-71), the Mechanics Institute (1881), the Methodist Church (1884), the St John the Baptist Church (1884), the Anglican Rectory (1882), the Catholic Presbytery, the former West Australian Bank (1894), the Dongara Post Office & Quarters (1894) and the Dongara State School (1902). (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

Russ Cottage is an integral part of the historic coastal township of Dongara, an early settlement with a significant number of nineteenth century buildings remaining in the town. Completed in 1870, *Russ Cottage* was constructed during the early development and consolidation of the town, which occurred during the 1860s and 1870s. This period was marked by an increase in use of the port, a successful milling industry, and the establishment of commercial enterprises and community facilities. (Criterion 2.1)

Russ Cottage was the site of the first newsagency in Dongara, a corrugated iron shop established in front of *Russ Cottage* in the 1890s, and operating until the 1930s. Dongara's first museum was also established in *Russ Cottage* in 1971, established by the Irwin District Historical Society, and still operating in 2002. (Criterion 2.2)

Russ Cottage was established as the home of the Russ family, early European settlers of the Irwin District who farmed in the area from the early 1860s. Constructed between 1868 and 1870 under the direction of Titus Russ, and assisted by ticket-of-leave labour, *Russ Cottage* was occupied by Titus Russ until 1874, and his youngest son Robert Russ lived there until 1943, establishing a shop adjacent to the cottage and a market garden on the adjoining land, both of which operated until the 1930s. Produce from the market garden was transported for sale in the Kalgoorlie goldfields during the 1890s. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Since 1971, *Russ Cottage* has been highly valued by the community as a museum housing items of local historic memorabilia, and contributes to the sense of place of the Dongara community. The social value of *Russ Cottage* is further evidenced by its inclusion in the Shire of Irwin's Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2. REPRESENTATIVENESS

Russ Cottage is representative of a typical small four-room cottage, constructed in the Victorian Georgian style, similar to many other cottages in the near vicinity in terms of its size, scale and construction materials. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3. CONDITION

Russ Cottage is in good condition internally and generally in good condition externally with some minor exceptions. These include weathered timber posts along the north verandah and the south door, poor condition of fixings to the gutter, concrete rendering to chimney, and some evidence of damp along the interior and exterior south wall.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Russ Cottage has a high degree of integrity. Although it does not continue to function as its original purpose, its function as a museum is compatible and retains much of the integrity and authenticity of the place. Some of the rooms display scenes as if the place was still used as a house.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Russ Cottage is of moderate to high authenticity. Much of the original form and fabric remains, although alterations and restoration campaigns have introduced some new finishes and materials, and caused the removal of significant fabric such as the interior wall to the hall, ceilings, floors and roof materials.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Key sections of the supporting evidence have been taken from 'Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan' prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage for the Shire of Irwin, in November 2001.

Key sections used: 3.0 Documentary Evidence (p10-36), 4.0 Physical Evidence (p37-66), 5.0 Analysis of the Documentary and Physical Evidence (p67-69), 8.0 Graded Zones and Elements of Significance

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to 'Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan' prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage for the Shire of Irwin, in November 2001.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence, refer to 'Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan' prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage for the Shire of Irwin, in November 2001

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For Comparative Analysis, refer to 'Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan' prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage for the Shire of Irwin, in November 2001

Russ Cottage is one of about ten single-storey cottages in Dongara dating from the mid- to late- nineteenth century.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

'Russ Cottage, Dongara Conservation Plan' prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage for the Shire of Irwin, in November 2001

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
