



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Old Gaol, Albany is aesthetically pleasing in its use of a variety of brick structures, unified by diapered brickwork. (Criterion 1.1)

Old Gaol, Albany forms part of a precinct of historic buildings which reflect the mid-nineteenth century settlement of Albany. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The site of *Old Gaol, Albany* has an association with the exploration of the coast of Western Australia by Matthew Flinders in 1801. (Criterion 2.1)

The site of *Old Gaol, Albany* is of exceptional interest in that it is the location of Major Edmond Lockyer original settlement at Albany (1826); the first European settlement in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

Old Gaol, Albany has a close association with the Convict Establishment in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Old Gaol, Albany has the potential to reveal information about the life and treatment of prisoners during the convict period. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Old Gaol, Albany contributes to the Albany community's sense of place by providing a tangible link with the history and past governance of the area. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

The buildings of *Old Gaol, Albany* are of an age and architectural style that is rare in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Old Gaol, Albany has been restored by the Town of Albany and the Albany Historical Society, with the aid of National Estates Grants Program funding, under the direction of Ron Bodycoat, Conservation Architect of Duncan, Stephen and Mercer. *Old Gaol, Albany* is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Old Gaol, Albany is no longer used as a gaol. The use of the place as a museum of the area and as a repository of historical information relating to the area, does not significantly alter the integrity of the place. *Old Gaol, Albany* has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Despite the loss of most of the early buildings, *Old Gaol, Albany* has a high level of authenticity. The later buildings are substantially intact, and recent conservation work has retained the cultural heritage significance of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Old Gaol, Albany was constructed in two stages: in the early 1850s and in the early 1870s. The 1852 buildings comprising twelve cell lock-up and keepers quarters, were designed and constructed under the authority of the imperial convict establishment at Fremantle and were largely built by convict labour. The substantial additions to the lockup, which formed the 1873 stage, were also designed by the clerk of works at the convict establishment, although they were built by a private contractor and were paid for by the colonial government.

The context in which *Old Gaol, Albany* was constructed was one of austerity. The buildings of the convict establishment were 'of the plainest and most simple character' and minimising costs was an over-riding concern.¹

The site of the Gaol precinct itself is quite significant. Captain Matthew Flinders camped at Point Frederick from December 1801 to January 1802 when he took on water and was preparing his ship before embarking on his survey circumnavigation of Australia. Major Edmund Lockyer also landed at the same place in December 1826 and established a military outpost of the colony of New South Wales at the site, which he named Point Frederick (later called Residency Point). Both Flinders and Lockyer chose the site because of the presence of a fresh water stream which flowed into the harbour at this point. This stream also appears in the records relating to the gaol and was most likely the source of the water for the convict depot.

Old Gaol, Albany was in fact two separate gaols. The original convict lockup which was built by the imperial establishment, was shared with the colonial police in Albany during the period of transportation. The site at Point Frederick was selected by Lieutenant Crossman, in early 1852, for the permanent depot and work on the construction of the facilities commenced soon after. The permanent facilities included a lockup and quarters, warders quarters, a large depot building, workshops, hospital, kitchens, offices, commissariat store and quarters and garden and parade ground. The twelve cell lock-up was one of the first buildings to be constructed. Attached to the lock-up was a three room brick cottage, used initially as the superintendent's quarters and depot store. The construction of the depot buildings was carried out by ticket-of-leave men and masons from the Royal Sappers and Miners who served as instructor warders to the convict establishment. The design of the lock-up was most likely determined at the headquarters of the convict establishment at Fremantle.

The granite stone used in the construction of the 1852 depot buildings was initially quarried at nearby Mt. Melville by a local contractor. However, most of the stone used in the buildings was quarried by ticket-of-leave men, from a site just west of the depot on townsite Lots 63, 64 and 65.

¹ Information provided in this documentation, unless otherwise stated, is taken from a report entitled 'Old Albany Gaol Historical Study Report', (prepared for the Western Australian Heritage Committee by Oline Richards, June 1989).

Timber used in the construction was also cut at a site close to the town by ticket-of-leave men. An attempt to have roof shingles cut as well was unsuccessful due to the lack of skilled men. Bricks were made locally under contract, the first one being with John Parrs. Building lime was originally purchased locally under contract and later the depot produced its own supplies at a site on the southern shores of Princess Royal Harbour. The depot blacksmith supplied the metalwork for the public works being carried out in the district as well as probably the metalwork for the lock-up such as the door grilles and window bars. Over the years a number of internal changes were made to cope with changing numbers and conditions.

The depot lock-up was intended as a place of punishment for ticket-of-leave men who committed offences while working at the depot or in the district and not for colonial prisoners. Problems arose when it became apparent the conditions in the colonial gaol were inadequate. As a result, the new lock-up facility was used for colonial prisoners as well as imperial convicts as soon as it was opened.

The convict depot was proclaimed a public gaol in 1864, (belonging to the colony) at which time it appears to have come under control of the local police. The provision of more adequate gaol accommodation in Albany was addressed again, in the early 1870s, as the winding down of the convict establishment proceeded. Authority was given to proceed with plans for a new gaol, attached to the old one, in 1871. The clerk of works for the convict establishment, James Manning, was responsible for the design of the new gaol. Tenders were called in June however, due to the high prices no tender was accepted. It was another eighteen months before tenders were called again. After some negotiation a tender for £1230 from Fremantle contractor, J. J. Harwood was accepted in November 1872. Work proceeded through the first half of 1873 and the Albany Gaol was officially proclaimed as a public gaol in June 1873. The new accommodation included gaoler's quarters, a new depot building, a timber lined cell for Aborigines, female cells and a day room, a kitchen and wash house and two separate walled exercise yards for male and female prisoners.

The 1873 gaol buildings, were built with solid brick walls on stone foundations, brick chimneys and timber joinery, roof framing, floors and roof shingles. The boundary walls enclosing the exercise yards were constructed in brickwork. At the same time, a number of minor internal alterations were made.

The workshops and offices from the former convict depot were demolished in the course of building the new gaol. The other buildings from the depot had been converted to new uses soon after they were handed over at the beginning of 1872, including the commissariat stores and quarters which were renovated and became the Resident Magistrate's home.

It seems likely that further additions to the gaol, in 1878, were the upper storey room and external timber staircase to the large building in the centre of the exercise yard which was constructed for £115. It is also known that repairs and additions were made in 1881/82 although there are no details as to what was actually done or how much it cost. From 1882, the buildings

remain virtually unchanged although there were alterations to the internal arrangement of spaces, particularly in the old lock-up building.

The centre portion of the old convict depot site was acquired by the Western Australian Land Development Company for the construction of their timber railway line through the townsite in the late 1880s. A small part of the gaol garden lot was used but the gaol itself remained intact with the south wall becoming the boundary to the railway property. The demolition of most of the remaining buildings from the 1852 convict depot, apart from the Residency, probably occurred at this time.

The gaol had always been considered small, so when a new police lock-up and quarters were completed in 1908 behind the courthouse, the gaoler, McGovern suggested that improvements be made. However, very little was done and the gaol remained in a poor condition until its closure in 1940.

Services to the remaining buildings were very basic during the entire period that they functioned as a gaol. As late as 1933, there was no lighting in the gaol except for a couple of gas lights. Although proposals were put forward to connect electricity there is no record of this being done before the gaol was closed.

The decision to close the gaol and to demolish the buildings was made in May 1940. Although tenders for the demolition were called in March 1941, no tenders were received. As a result, the buildings were made available to the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Division of the Public Works Department and were used as a store, workshop and garage. By 1959, the Department had built a new depot and no longer required the buildings. Several suggestions were put forward for the possible use of the buildings and, in 1968, the site was formally reclassified, and the property vested in the Albany Historical Society (Inc). The Society opened the buildings to the public as a folk museum as a repository for the Society's historical records, library and large collection of historical artefacts.

Old Gaol, Albany survives as part of an historic area which contains: The Residency, the house built for the Colonial Government Resident which is now used as a major Regional Museum under the control of the Western Australian Museum; the Brig *Amity* re-construction; a number of residential buildings of historic value and unchartered remains of colonial buildings which do not survive but which would, if investigated by archaeological digs, add to the historic interest of the total area.

In 1989/90, *Old Gaol, Albany* was vested in the Town of Albany in return for the partial funding of its conservation. Since 1990 a staged conservation program, which continues in 1996, has gradually restored the place.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Old Gaol, Albany comprises a series of buildings arranged around a central courtyard with the hiring depot in the centre. (see attached plan)

The 1852 building is constructed from rough cut granite, is single storey and simple in finish with a steeply pitched roof. The 1873 buildings are of handmade bricks laid in flemish bond, sometimes with a pleasing diapered effect created by the variation in tone in the bricks. There is a two storey brick observation tower overlooking the complex. The whole is surrounded by a random rubble wall, interspersed by brick reinforcing and infill.

According to documentary evidence, the buildings remained in substantially an untouched condition until the 1960s when they were renovated for use by the Albany Historical Society. The work done at this time was minor but included the installation of electricity.

In 1990, a comprehensive conservation and restoration program was begun which was funded through the National Estates Grant Program. Although the buildings were generally in sound structural condition, there was an urgent need for restorative work to halt the deterioration of the internal and external fabric of the building. Stage two of the restoration project was completed in December 1991 and included: completion of the interior and exterior of the hiring depot, native cell and exterior of tower room. This involved work such as pressure injections to arrest rising damp, the removal and replacement of inappropriate modern lighting, repairs to walls, replacement of deteriorated brickwork, removal of modern enclosures and repointing of stonework.

As at June 1993, stage three had been completed. This involved: reinstatement of timber floors; extensive restoration of brickwork and stone base of west, south and north walls; completion of restoration of external brickwork; reconstruction of single flight timber external stair and the internal restoration and provision of new display lighting in the ceiling. The project was overseen and managed by Duncan, Stephen & Mercer Architects.²

In 1994, stage four included the restoration of the outer walls of the refectory.

Additional conservation funds, also under NEGP, were allocated in 1995 for stage five of the conservation work, and it is anticipated this work will be completed in April 1996.³

For further information concerning the extent of the works undertaken, and future plans for maintenance, see the reports by Duncan Stephen & Mercer.

² A photographic record of the restoration work completed in each stage is included in the final report.

³ *Albany Advertiser* 9 March 1995, p. 3, and 12-14 January 1996, p.3..

13.3 REFERENCES

Duncan Stephen & Mercer 'Old Gaol Albany: An Architectural Assessment for the Western Australian Heritage Committee' (February 1989)

Duncan Stephen & Mercer 'Old Gaol Albany : Conservation and Restoration. Report, Completed Work, Stage One' (November 1990).

Duncan Stephen & Mercer 'Old Gaol Albany : Conservation and Restoration. Report, Completed Work, Stage Three' (June 1993)

Richards, O., 'Old Albany Gaol Historical Study Report', (prepared for the Western Australian Heritage Committee, June 1989).