



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

Sited at the junction of the Lower Serpentine River and Carralong Brook, *Spencer's Cottage* has a landmark quality.¹ (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The remains of the surrounding orchard, demonstrate the need for self-sufficiency. (Criterion 2.1)

Spencer's Cottage is important in illustrating the difficult conditions the early settlers faced when building with few tradesmen in the colony and no readily available manufactured building products. (Criterion 2.2)

Spencer's Cottage has a close association with Joshua Spencer and his family who are important within the history of the Jarrahdale, Serpentine and Gosnells area. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The property could be important as a teaching site in that *Spencer's Cottage* demonstrates graphically, by means of its rudimentary construction, the early settlers' difficulties in the early days of settlement. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Spencer's Cottage has social importance for the local community, in particular the long-standing use and occupation of the place by the Spencer family. (Criterion 4.1)

Spencer's Cottage, as a colonial building, contributes to the local community's sense of place in that it represents one of the first points of settlement of the region. (Criterion 4.2)

¹ The information for the criteria section and the condition, integrity and authenticity sections is taken directly from a report by John Taylor Architect, who was commissioned by the Heritage Council to assess the cultural heritage significance of Carralong Homestead, dated September 1992.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The building is significant in that there are few surviving buildings in the area which represent the early farming phase where colonists settled the Serpentine and surrounding districts before moving on to other areas. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

In 1993, *Spencer's Cottage* was re-roofed and a wall reconstructed, under the supervision of the architectural practice: Hocking Planning and Architecture. The homestead's condition has been stabilised but will require further conservation work in the future. The place is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place was in use as a family residence until purchased by the Water Authority in 1979. The building has recently undergone some conservation work to secure the place, and, although currently vacant, is able to be used for its original purpose. The place has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Spencer's Cottage is in an original state. Home-improvements over the life of this building have been minimal. Recent conservation work has retained the heritage significance of the fabric of the place. With most of the original fabric intact, the place has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Spencer's Cottage is believed to have been built in about 1860, by Joshua Spencer for his bride Mary Ann Moore.² Joshua Spencer was a son of Charles and Elizabeth Spencer who arrived in Fremantle in 1829.³

The first settlers to take up land in the Serpentine-Mardella district east of Peel's land were John Giblett and Stephen Longbottom. After working around Perth for some years they bought land on the north bank of the Serpentine, about 500m east of today's highway bridge.

² Spencer's Cottage is also sometimes referred to as Carralong Homestead.

³ The documentary evidence section is based on information taken from a National Trust Assessment Exposition dated August 1991, incorporated in John Taylor's report, that utilised the following sources: Coy, N. *The Serpentine: A History of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale*, (Shire of Serpentine- Jarrahdale, 1984); Spencer Family Oral History and Notes.

In 1851, Giblett sold his first blocks of land miles further north on the Medulla Brook. He also obtained an annual renewable lease of a large block of hill country east of his homestead. Within this he purchased four tiny blocks containing creek-bank flats of fertile loam - location 51, location 69, location 68 and location 79 in 1857. A survey taken in 1856 shows that Stephen Longbottom already claimed ownership of location 79 and had built a small flour mill on the Carralong Brook. The location changed hands: Longbottom to Giblett; Giblett to Longbottom. Joshua Spencer purchased location 79, the land and the mill, from Longbottom in 1860 for £50. Local people have long referred to this general area 2 km upstream from Serpentine Falls as 'Spencer's Flats'.

By 1860, settlement, expanding from Bunbury, had penetrated the valleys of the rivers flowing from the hills south of Bunbury and many of the early Serpentine settlers sold out and moved south to these more fertile areas. Other families then moved into the Serpentine after the early pioneers moved on. During one period there were seven pioneers near the Serpentine River between Carralong Brook and the Pipe-head Dam.

Joshua Spencer is thought to have built his house in 1860, just prior to the birth of his first child. The original dwelling was extended as the family grew (eight children were born to the couple). In the mid-1880s, Mary Spencer and her eldest son Edward, purchased land on the other side of Carralong Brook. By the 1930s, the Spencer holdings in the valley and the scarplands had extended to over 800 hectares.

The Spencer family's 115 year association with the valley ended with the sale of *Spencer's Cottage* to the Water Authority of Western Australia in 1979. The place is currently vacant.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Spencer's Cottage sits on gentle sloping ground close to Carralong Brook. It is surrounded by the remains of an orchard: mulberry tree, fig trees, almonds and pomegranates. The walls are constructed of pise on a stone foundation. The shingled roof is now covered with galvanised iron. The walls are covered with mud render and whitewashed both inside and out. Ceilings are unlined and it is possible to see the hand-adzed roof beams. The floor joists are set directly into the ground and covered by wide planks. A verandah protects the front (north) of the building.⁴

The building was constructed in two stages. Stage I was a two roomed cottage with fireplace on the east side. Stage II has been built on a lower level to the same design as Stage I. Pictorial evidence shows a fireplace in the new section which was apparently washed away on several occasions. The remaining chimney is constructed of stone.

The building was re-roofed and a wall reconstructed in October 1993, under the supervision of an heritage architect. In addition the perimeter was secured against vandals. No further work has since been carried out, though the possibility of re-rendering the exterior walls and improving the security fencing is being investigated.

⁴ *ibid.*

13.3 REFERENCES

Taylor, J. 'Conservation Report for Carralong Homestead', (September 1992).

National Trust Assessment Exposition.