

## 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 'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' and from 'Gwalla Cemetery Preliminary Conservation Report' with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 2.3 Coming to Australia as a punishment
- 3.4.3 Mining
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 107 Settlements
- 303 Mining
- 406 Religion
- 602 Early settlers

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* occupy an elevated position above the town of Northampton and are the most conspicuous reminders of the once busy mining settlement of Gwalla. Although the church is not as prominent today as it was in the past, when the steeple was clearly visible, the site provides strong visual evidence of the community created at Gwalla. (Criterion 1.3)

The combination of church ruins and cemetery set in open ground combined with the cypress sentinel trees have an understated landmark quality. (Criterion 1.3)

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* comprises the only remaining visual elements of the Gwalla Mining Precinct, of which archaeological evidence exists for the copper mine, stone workers cottages, railway station, school, a second mine at Camp Hill, and an extensive network of boundary walling. (Criterion 1.4)

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\* 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

Gwalla Church, constructed in 1861, and partly demolished in 1929, was the first church in the Northampton district, and the only non-denominational church to be constructed in Northampton. With its last regular service held in 1913, Gwalla Church served the community for many years before being replaced by sectarian churches. (Criterion 2.1)

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* comprises the only remaining visible elements of the Gwalla Mining Precinct. During its limited period of operation, between 1858 and 1868, Gwalla Mine, a copper mine, was one of the richest mines in the Northampton Mineral Field, and played an important role in the development of Northampton and Western Australia's early mining industry. The development of a mining industry represented an important goal for the colony's early settlers as the export of mineral wealth was considered to be vital to the on-going survival and success of the colony. (Criterion 2.1)

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla*, once the centre piece of the Gwalla Mining Precinct and important amongst Horrock's well-remembered philanthropic work, was an important development of the mine community at Gwalla, which foreshadowed the eventual development of the town of Northampton. (Criterion 2.2)

Gwalla Cemetery, established in 1861, was the first of three cemeteries to be opened in Northampton and, like the church, is non-sectarian in nature. The cemetery is the final resting place of many of Northampton's early pioneers, including Joseph Horrocks and Samuel Mitchell, Captain of the Geraldine Lead Mine and MLA for Murchison (1897-1901). (Criteria 2.2 and 2.3)

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* is closely associated with Joseph Horrocks, a former Imperial convict who was an important figure in the development of Northampton and the mines of that district. Horrocks attempted to establish his own village at Gwalla, and donated the Gwalla Church and the land on which it stands to the community. *Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* is an enduring record of Horrocks philanthropy. (Criterion 2.3)

## 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The archaeological potential of *Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* has the capacity to inform on the lifestyle of the people who lived, worked and died in Gwalla. (Criterion 3.1)

## 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* remains a place of importance to the community as evidenced by its inclusion in the Shire of Northampton's Municipal Inventory, the community's endeavours to conserve the place and by the community's ongoing concern for the place. (Criterion 4.1)

Set on high ground, *Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* remains an important place for quiet contemplation, contributing to the community's sense of place. (Criteria 4.1 & 4.2)

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

The establishment of a non-denominational church is in itself unusual in the development of nineteenth century settlements, as religion was such a strong

social structure, and the development of sectarian churches was often an initial phase in the building of a town. (Criterion 5.1)

*Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* is rare as part of the mining village at Gwalla, which appears to be the only one of its kind in colonial Western Australia. Many villages or settlements grew up around mines and these would later grow into towns that still exist today or they would fade away once the mineral wealth had been extracted from the mine. Gwalla Mine was closed shortly after George Shenton, the owner succeeding Horrocks, drowned in 1867. (Criterion 5.2)

The Gwalla Church is associated with Joseph Horrocks, who was unique as a mine owner in that he desired to establish a settlement that would not only house his workers but one that could also sustain its inhabitants both physically and spiritually. In addition to providing cottages for the physical well-being of the inhabitants, he also provided for their spiritual needs by erecting a non-denominational church. Horrocks realised that in a community with no church the provision of a church for any one group would leave others disenfranchised. The solution was obviously a non-denominational building. The idea of the community that he was trying to create has survived even though the physical elements have largely disappeared. (Criterion 5.2)

## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The construction techniques used in *Church and Cemetery, Gwalla* can be found in other buildings and cemeteries of the same age in the district and elsewhere in Western Australia. Similar archaeological artifacts can also be found scattered over sites of a similar nature throughout the state. (Criterion 6.2)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

Conservation works were undertaken on the cemetery walls in 1998-9, and involved the stabilisation of the walls by reconstructing collapsed sections of the walls using original materials, and the replacement of sections of capping.

The graves are in poor condition and the temporary repairs carried out in response to vandalism are not a satisfactory long term solution.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Although the church is in a ruinous condition the structure has been stabilised and a church service is held there once a year. As the building still retains its original plan and continues to be used as a church, it is considered to have moderate to high integrity.

The location of many of the burials is not known, however, the cemetery is still recognisable as a burial ground and work could be undertaken to determine the position of those graves whose location has been lost. The cemetery is considered to have moderate to high integrity.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Those structures which remain within the Gwalla mining precinct at Northampton have remained largely undisturbed for many years. Although the church was demolished many years ago the fabric of the building has not been added to and what does remain represents the fabric used to construct the building in 1861.

Although many enclosures, which mark burial sites, at the cemetery have either been removed or replaced, the burials themselves are intact and they are considered to have high authenticity. The remaining grave markers are also authentic, but the marking out of burial locations is not authentic. It is not even certain that all of these outlines represent actual burial sites.

The material that makes up the walls of the cemetery apart from the cement render repairs is authentic. Sections of the rounded coping are made of replacement material. The gates to the southern end or the main entry of the cemetery are replacement timber wicket gates. Those to the north made of galvanised pipe framing with chain link mesh panels are also replacements.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Supporting evidence has been taken from 'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for The Shire of Northampton in April 2000, and from 'Gwalla Cemetery Preliminary Conservation Report', prepared by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for the Shire of Northampton in June 1998.

Key Sections from Gwalla Precinct Conservation Plan: 2.0 Documentary Evidence (sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 & 2.11), 3.0 Physical Evidence, 4.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence.

Key Sections from Gwalla Cemetery Conservation Report: 1.0 Documentary Evidence, 2.0 Physical Evidence.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to 'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for The Shire of Northampton in April 2000, and to 'Gwalla Cemetery Preliminary Conservation Report', prepared by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for the Shire of Northampton in June 1998.

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to 'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for The Shire of Northampton in April 2000, and to 'Gwalla Cemetery Preliminary Conservation Report', prepared by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for the Shire of Northampton in June 1998.

#### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a Comparative Analysis refer to 'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for The Shire of Northampton in April 2000.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

'Gwalla Precinct, Northampton Conservation Plan' prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for The Shire of Northampton in April 2000.

Gwalla Cemetery Preliminary Conservation Report' prepared by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd for the Shire of Northampton in June 1998.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is not certain that all of the marked outlines of graves represent actual burial sites, nor is it known who the unmarked graves belong to.