



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

Tranby House, particularly at the northern corner, has a picturesque massing of its architectural elements, natural vegetation and interesting scale and detail. (Criterion 1.1)

Situated on the banks of the Swan River, *Tranby House*, together with the oaks nearby, has a landmark quality in the area and has strong visual connections with the river. It terminates the vista to the foreshore reserve and contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Tranby House was one of the early residences in the district. It is closely associated with the early phases of rural development along the Swan River. The trees that survive from the early landscape (oaks, olives, mulberrys) also contribute to an understanding of that period of development. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

Tranby House has a close association with the Hardey family, whose members were influential in religious, business and political activities in the Swan River colony, early settler Joseph Hardey, in particular, and the original farming of the district. (Criterion 2.3);

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Tranby House has the potential to yield information as an interpretative teaching site depicting early colonial development because the layout of the rooms, the various fireplaces, separate dry store and cellar, and the well, demonstrate the way of life of the period. Archeological investigation of the place may reveal more information. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Tranby House is the oldest extant residence in the district and is highly valued by the general community as a place of historic and social significance. It contributes to the community's sense of place by providing a link with the colonial development of the area. The importance of the site has been

commemorated for some time : by a plaque in 1929, and subsequently in 1979 and 1988. It is a focus for cultural tourism. (Criteria 4.1, 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Tranby House is a rare example of a colonial farm house within some of its original setting within the inner metropolitan area. The setting of the place is enhanced by the retention of public open space nearby. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Tranby House demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Old Colonial Georgian style of architecture in Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

Tranby House is representative of the form and function of a colonial farm house in Western Australia. Its simplicity and use of local materials, together with associated structures, including separate dry store and cellar, is representative of the way of life of a farmhouse of the nineteenth century, a way of life no longer practised. (Criterion 6.2)

The building incorporates, in its fabric, upgrading of the dwelling in response to the improved circumstances of the Hardey family over time. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

In a report written in 1992, Rob McK Campbell and Ingrid van Bremen indicated that *Tranby House* required a program of maintenance, repair and restoration, inclusive of connection to the sewer.¹ The report also recommended restricted use of some areas of the place to prevent further deterioration of the fabric of the building where this fabric was unable to sustain continuous heavy traffic.

The National Trust (WA) was successful in gaining Lotteries Heritage Funding in early 1995, and the recommended conservation work and sewer installation will commence in late 1995.

Generally, *Tranby House* is in sound condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The use of *Tranby House* as a museum and the furnishing and presentation of the rooms to be representative of the era in which the house was built, and lived in, is compatible with the original intention of the place as a residence. *Tranby House* has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

There have been additions, alterations, relocations and reconstructions to both the internal and external fabric of *Tranby House* since its construction. In some cases it is difficult to date the changes accurately. However, the external fabric of the building is largely intact and recent restoration of the place has sought to conserve the cultural heritage significance of the place. *Tranby House* has a high degree of authenticity.

¹ Campbell, R. McK. and van Bremen, I. H., 'Tranby House, Peninsula Farm, Maylands. Conservation Report', (for Boat Torque Cruises September 1992).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The first Methodists came to Western Australia, in February 1830, aboard the ship *Tranby* to found a small religious community in the newly established Swan River Colony. Led by the brothers John and Joseph Hardey, the group included a surgeon, preacher, bricklayer, blacksmith, shoemaker, surveyor, hatter, midshipman and several farmers.² They were granted, upon arrival, land on a peninsula four miles upstream from Perth, where the present Perth suburb of Maylands is situated.³ The group were amongst the first European residents of the area and the buildings they constructed some of the first in the colony.⁴

Tranby House, named after the ship that brought the settlers to Western Australia, was established as the residence of Joseph Hardey and his family. There is some doubt as to the actual date of *Tranby House* but it appears to have been the third house built by the Hardeys on the site. Initially, the Hardeys established a property and built a wattle and daub house with a thatched roof, in 1830. A well was also sunk. Floods in the area of the house forced them to rebuild this house and, in 1836, the family moved to York for two years where they established another farm. In 1838, Joseph Hardey recorded in his diary that he had purchased bricks and wood for a new house, and by June 1839, he recorded that, 'Mr Lazenby and Mr Lockyer finished putting up the roof of the new house'.⁵ It seems likely that this is the current house. If so, *Tranby House* is one of the oldest brick houses in the State and the earliest domestic residence still extant in the inner metropolitan area.⁶

By the 1860s, the Hardey families became part of the Swan River Colony's fledgling gentry.⁷ They had prospered since their arrival with the lands they held at Tranby and York being highly productive and the family able to extend its land holdings in the colony significantly. When an appeal was launched, in 1867, to raise the funds for the construction of Wesley Church in Perth, Joseph and John Hardey, together with another settler, George Shenton, gave over half the cost of the church between them. The balance of the cost of the church was raised by subscription and a bank loan of £800 at the interest rate of two per cent per annum, for which Joseph Hardey and George Shenton were guarantors - a measure of their wealth and standing in

² Lutton, W. *The Wesley Story, Centenary of Wesley Church, Perth, Western Australia 1870 - 1970* A4 brochure, no pagination, (Perth, Wesley Church, 1970), pp. 1, 2.

³ Stannage, C. T. *The People of Perth. A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth, 1979) p. 38; Lutton, circa p. 2; Johnston, R. *The Tranby Hardeys* (Serpentine, Parmelia Publishing Pty. Ltd.) p. 13.

⁴ Lutton, pp. 1, 2.

⁵ The Diary of Joseph, 1830-1839 cited in Campbell and van Bremen, p. 1.

⁶ Information for this section comes from Campbell, R. McK. and van Bremen, I. H., 'Tranby House, Peninsula Farm, Maylands. Conservation Report', (for Boat Torque Cruises September 1992).

⁷ Stannage uses the term. See Stannage, p. 103.

the community.⁸ John Wall Hardey was active in political life and became a member of the Legislative Council.⁹

Tranby House continued as Joseph Hardey's principal place of residence until his death although Joseph Hardey's only son, Richard Watson Hardey, took over the running of the property in the late 1860s. In 1876, Richard married Jane Vounder Lowe and lived there with his own family. In 1880, he bought a large property in the Darling Ranges where he established a vineyard. Jane died in 1886 and by 1890, *Tranby House* and the farm, which was by then known as *Peninsula Farm*, was being offered for lease as grazing land. As well as his viticultural activities Richard Hardey had a long career in local government as a member of both the Perth City Council and as Chairman of the Perth Districts Road Board. He was also a member of the Legislative Council.¹⁰

In 1903, the peninsula was re-surveyed for subdivision into lots advertised as 'mansion and villa' sites and 'garden and orchard lots' and Richard Hardey acquired additional lots, including neighbouring houses and outbuildings close to the river. These new lots were amalgamated into new lot 507 and he returned to live on this larger property which he called *Tranby Park*. Richard Hardey died in 1910 and the property passed to his second wife. The estate was subsequently surveyed and blocks sold off. In 1913, lot 507, containing *Tranby House*, was purchased by Henry Baker who lived on the property with his family. He used the paddocks to agist his bread-cart horses and built a race track for his race horses. He also erected a windmill and a 20,000 gallon tank to store water.¹¹

Tranby House continued to be used as a residence by Baker and photographic evidence shows the evolution of the house. The house was originally roofed with shingles which were replaced by corrugated iron by the 1920s.

In 1929, the Perth Road Board marked the centenary of Western Australia with a marble plaque on the wall of *Tranby House*. The plaque commemorates the role the Hardey family played in the settlement of the district in the early 1830s, mistakenly stating that *Tranby House* was the Hardey's original home.¹² At this time, *Tranby House* is depicted as a gabled house with three tall chimneys and a verandah wrapped around. The gable stopped at the easternmost of the three chimneys, and the roofing was corrugated iron. The south east corner was enclosed. Evidence in the fabric of the attic shows the remnant of this external wall.¹³

By 1950, photographs show *Tranby House* with the main roof extending beyond the eastern chimney. There is also a gable facing south on the south-eastern corner of the house, with no verandah, porch or skillion roof on the eastern face. There were windows and a door, and vents in this wall. Today there is no evidence of the south gable, and the east gable is bagged and

⁸ *ibid.* p. 9.

⁹ *ibid.* pp. 81, 102, 120.

¹⁰ Richards, O. 'Conservation Master Plan for Tranby House Grounds, Maylands Peninsula, Western Australia', (prepared for the National Trust (WA), May 1990).p. 16.

¹¹ *ibid.* pp. 2-3.

¹² *ibid.* p. 3.

¹³ Photographs cited *ibid.* pp. 4, 7.

painted. Only the wall vents can still be identified on site. A timber and iron stable and a brick and iron feed store were also identified on plans.¹⁴

After Henry Baker died the property was sold, in 1951, to Harold Cheshire, a grazier who kept race horses and enlarged the training track established by Baker.¹⁵

In May 1967, the Bond Corporation purchased the property from Cheshire for a large scale housing development. There were two main conditions attached to approval for the scheme. The first was the excision of land from lot 507 to form a public reserve along the foreshore. The second was the creation of another reserve around *Tranby House* and for the restoration of *Tranby House* in consultation with the National Trust.¹⁶

In 1977, the property was vested with the National Trust of Australia (WA). The place was restored with funding under the 1977/78 National Estates Grant Program and opened to the public as a house museum depicting the way of life in the 1830s and 1850s. In 1979, a brick sun-dial was constructed in the north garden to celebrate the sesqui-centenary of the State. The inscription on the bronze plaque reads:

In commemoration of the Exploratory Journey up the Swan River by Captain James Stirling A.N. of H.M.S. Stirling in March 1827. Unveiled by his worship the mayor of Stirling Dr A. S. Luketina during the re-enactment of 1979.¹⁷

Further funding under the 1982/83 National Estate Grant Program enabled the National Trust to complete restoration of the roof of *Tranby House*. As part of the Bicentennial program of 1988, *Tranby House* was selected as the starting point for the Swan River Heritage Trail.¹⁸

In 1990, a conservation master plan for the gardens was prepared by Oline Richards who provided policies to guide the management of the property and future organisation and planting of the grounds.¹⁹

In 1992, the vested property was extended to include a northern triangle of land bounded by the public pathways surrounding it. The property was surveyed and a new Reserve 35112 loc. 11547 was created to define the new title.²⁰

Tranby House is currently used as a house museum and, together with its gardens, as a venue for classical music concerts, special cultural events and selected social functions. It is a popular tourist destination and views of it are painted and photographed for their picturesque qualities.

¹⁴ *ibid*, pp. 3, 7.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Stirling City Council files of correspondence on Tranby. Vols 1-3 (BL: 2655) cited *ibid*, p. 5.

¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 11.

¹⁸ *Swan River Heritage Trail* (WA Heritage Trails Network, Perth 1988).

¹⁹ Richards, O. 'Conservation Master Plan for Tranby House Grounds, Maylands Peninsula, Western Australia', (prepared for the National Trust (WA), May 1990).

²⁰ Campbell and van Bremen, p. 4.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Tranby House is situated near three large old oaks, one of which (on the northern side) is estimated to be at least one hundred years old.²¹ There is a group of old olive trees along the top of the river bank just east of the house and there is an old mulberry tree in the cottage garden.²² Other mature trees are nearby, which although now outside the property boundary, and in the public reserve, make a visual contribution to the setting by extending the visual limits of the site and by softening the impact of the new houses on the west. The house has views of the Swan River through the windows, and light is reflected from the river across the walls and ceilings.

Tranby House is a single storey farmhouse with a long, low gable running east-west with a break-pitch verandah all around. It is built in the Old Colonial Georgian style which has been described as being colonial vernacular architecture, typical of early farmhouses.²³

The verandah, is partly open on the south, forms a porch on the east, is closed in along the north, and on the west meets a skillion roof from the separate lock of the dry store and cellar building. This block has its own hipped roof and lean-to verandahs. The composition is punctuated by unusual arch-hood chimneys.

The house and the separate dry store form a picturesque massing, particularly at the junction on the north. The dominant roof is accentuated by the chimneys. The colour and texture of the shingles is counter-balanced by the contrasting white walls. The whole composition is framed by oak branches in winter and merges into their dark leaf mass in summer.

Tranby House is built with brick walls which are plastered inside and features original hand cut rafters and flooring. It has a simple plan form, with principal rooms accessed off the verandah. Sleeping accommodation is provided in the attics approached by internal staircases.

The main roof structure is of timber rafters, purlins and collar-ties, some of which have been re-engineered. Although there are some rafters and purlins that are probably of an early date, it is not clear if they are original or in the original position.²⁴

The main walls of the house are locally produced orange clay bricks : 22.5 cms in length, set in lime mortar, rendered and painted. On the south, the walls have been rendered and ruled. On the east, the walls of the porch, the small service rooms and the east gable, the bricks are larger: 27.5 cms, and are bagged and painted.²⁵

Internally, the walls are plastered and painted, and in one room the walls are papered. There is evidence of earlier wall papering.

²¹ Richards, p. 15.

²² *ibid.*

²³ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms for 1788 to the Present.* Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989) pp. 42-45; Molyneux, I. *Looking Around Perth* (Wescolour Press, East Fremantle, 1981) p. 2.

²⁴ Campbell and van Bremen, p. 7.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 8.

The fireplaces in the rooms differ in shape and size. The largest ones in the kitchen and on the west verandah are traditional cooking fireplaces. The one in the dining room is smaller but has hobs and may also have been a kitchen fireplace at one time.²⁶ Over the years, the functions of rooms changed, and some of the original external walls have now become internal walls. The fireplaces built into these walls are flush with the inside and project outwards, perhaps having been originally externally sited.

In 1974, there was still evidence of shingles on the dry store and at the southern end of the house. In 1983, the roof was recovered with new sawn she-oak shingles. By 1993, there was no evidence of any other roofing materials on site.²⁷

In 1974, a schedule of renovation and repair work to be carried out as part of the Bond Corporation's restoration of *Tranby House* was prepared for the National Trust by W. Broomfield. This included the addition of caretaker's quarters to the eastern end of the house consisting of a new porch, kitchen, laundry and bathroom along the east, all under a new roof. The new roof extended the existing verandah around the gable end. Doors and windows in the existing eastern rooms were altered and rearranged. Floor tiles to the kitchen and verandahs were donated by Metro Bricks to assist in damp control.²⁸ Flooring was taken up and relaid and, in some areas, replaced. There is only a small area with hand-forged nails in the sitting room to suggest their age.²⁹

In 1976, the south facing gable was dismantled and the verandah roofline was extended and carried on around the corner. The feed store and stable were demolished as they were not considered significant and were in poor condition.³⁰

In 1983, new she-oak shingles were placed on the roof of *Tranby House* and the dry store, under the direction of J. Pidgeon for the National Trust. A new warden's house was constructed in the north west-corner of the property in 1984. The caretaker's quarters at the eastern end of the house were converted for use as a public entry, gift shop and coffee shop.³¹

In 1988, further restoration work in the cellar and kitchen was done and landscape improvements including the erection of a new garden store were undertaken under the direction of J. Pidgeon.³²

In their report, Campbell and van Bremen identify three levels of cultural significance which relate to the various development of *Tranby House* and its grounds.³³

26 *ibid*, pp. 8, 10.

27 *ibid*, p. 7.

28 *ibid*, pp. 3-4, 7, 10.

29 *ibid*, pp. 8, 10.

30 *ibid*, p. 4.

31 *ibid*, p. 4.

32 *ibid*, p. 4.

33 *ibid*, p. 16.

- i) Of primary significance are the four core rooms (bed/sitting/dining/kitchen), their associated verandahs, the dry store and cellar, the well, and the oldest trees (oaks, olives, mulberry).
- ii) Of secondary significance are the east wing additions, 1929-1950, currently the gift shop and coffee shop.
- iii) Of tertiary significance are the most eastern additions of 1976, (caretakers flat - porch/laundry/kitchen, the toilets, garden store and warden's house)

For a complete analysis of the development of the built fabric of the house see Campbell, R. McK. and van Bremen, I. H. 'Tranby House, Peninsula Farm, Maylands. Conservation Report', (for Boat Torque Cruises September 1992).

13. 3 REFERENCES

Campbell, R. McK. and van Bremen, I. H., 'Tranby House, Peninsula Farm, Maylands. Conservation Report', (for Boat Torque Cruises September 1992)

Richards, O., 'Conservation Master Plan for Tranby House Grounds, Maylands Peninsula, Western Australia', (prepared for the National Trust (WA), May 1990).

National Trust Assessment Exposition.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.