



## 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

The site is within a parkland setting on a knolle within an idyllic remnant of the Preston River embankment and flood plain and the building per se stands within its graveyard setting as a major picturesque element. (Criterion 1.1)

The small, human-scaled and charming cruciform chapel, built from timber and graveyard monuments are a creative achievement of some considerable merit. (Criterion 1.2)

The setting is within a scenic riverine precinct of meadows and regularly spaced historic homesteads of the lower Preston River and the building per se is the remains of one homestead, a rare example of a settler-priest's farmstead and chapel, essential to the perception of the existence of the precinct. (Criteria 1.3, 1.4)

#### 11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The site selection and building are important evidence of the Preston River settlement of the 1840s prompted by and following on the failure of the Western Australian Land Company's settlement scheme of 1841-43 at Australind, and is important evidence of the subsequent growth phase of the town of Bunbury and its region. It is evidence of liturgical practices in a colonial rural chapel. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

The site has close associations with several of the historic personages who played roles in the story of the Preston River settlement and the Town of Bunbury including Lt. Henry Bull, Government Resident, Henry Ommaney, Government surveyor, Captain Francis Chase Coffin (Coffier), marooned American whaler, Archdeacon Rev. John Ramsden Wollaston, John Moore, builder and forebear of State Premier Sir Newton Moore, Frederick Hymus, thatcher, Henry Sillifant, gentleman whaler, Lady Margaret Richardson-Bunbury, James Thompson Lawrence, shoemaker, Harriett Lawrence nee Moore. (Criterion 2.3)

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is a creative and technical achievement of considerable merit and great interest as it included remains of a vernacular technique imported from Britain, possibly by John Moore from Kent, which is one of only two places in which the technique appears, to present knowledge. (Criterion 2.4)

### 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The precinct of which the building and site are essential and inter-related parts is a very important site for its potential to act as a research , teaching and benchmark site for the understanding of the development of the State and region (at State level especially for the achievements elsewhere of its historic personages) and for comparative evaluation of other sites. (Criteria 3.1, 3.2)

The fragmentary remains of the wattle and daub construction of the chapel is of great technological interest apart from the historical information it conveys for the identification of the authorship of the more complete remains of the same technique at nearby *Leschenault Park*. (Criterion 3.3)

### 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*St Mark's Anglican Church* and graves are important to the local Anglican community and families of those interred there for spiritual and social reasons. (Criterion 4.1)

The precinct of which the building and site are essential and inter-related parts is a very important site for its presently recognised status as a regional geographic feature and scenic pathway and for its potential to be recognised as a regional cultural heritage and recreational precinct (for all cultural environments; built and culturally modified, natural and Aboriginal), all of which characteristics have the propensity to engender community cohesiveness and sense of place. (Criteria 4.1, 4.2)

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is a well preserved and cared for member of an endangered class of structures, a colonial chapel attached to a priest's house (albeit the house is non extant). (Criterion 5.1)

The graveyard is one of a limited number of extant examples of a distinctive class of places; the small colonial graveyard attached to a chapel. (Criterion 5.2)

### 12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is a representative of a characteristic class of structures in Australia; ie., the early settlement with improvised construction from locally found material, commonly by artisans adept in the vernacular crafts of their localities of origin. (Criterion 6.1)

The building is representative of the liturgical practices of an Anglican parish within an early rural settlement. (Criterion 6.2)

### 12. 3 CONDITION

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is in very good condition, with most of the fabric being in a stable and well-maintained state. The current management is of a responsible curatorship.

### 12. 4 INTEGRITY

*St Mark's Anglican Church* retains a high degree of integrity, the original purposes of worship having been revived from a state of decline from the

1850s and the place is highly sustainable for public visitation albeit subject to vandalism. The condition of the churchyard warrants conservation and stabilisation of the fabric to resist visitor impact and weathering.

## 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The fabric of the building walls and roof shingling is, according to the documentary evidence, largely that reconstructed during circa 1969, with all but a fragment of the original wattle and daub filling and timber cladding of the walls having been lost. Nevertheless the graveyard is of high authenticity and the church form is substantially in accord with early drawn and photographic views.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence and record of physical evidence has been compiled by Ian Molyneux, Architect.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is a small timber church constructed in 1842 by the Rev. Wollaston to provide a place of worship for the early settlers of the district.

The building was designed by the Rev. John Ramsden Wollaston (1790-1856) Colonial Chaplain at Bunbury 1841-48 and first Archdeacon of Western Australia. The Church was opened without consecration in September 1842.<sup>1</sup>

The place was built in 1842, by Wollaston and his sons, agricultural servants and parishioners, originally as a small timber chapel, at his own and donors' cost, on his own private land holdings at *Charterhouse*, as a condition of his receiving a stipend to act as Colonial Chaplain. This was in compensation of his failed expectations in having privately migrated to be the chaplain for the failed Australind settlement of the Western Australian Land Company.

The churchyard site is part of Wollaston's historic farm which he held from 1842 to 1850, being part of the 15 acre lot in Location 26 that Stirling gave to Bull who in turn conveyed it to Coffin who sold to Wollaston prior to the latter's return to America. It was attached to the abutting 100 acre Location 29 bought from Coffin, to which Wollaston added the 100 acre Location 39 across the river, all of which he sold to Sillifant about the time when he was posted to Albany in 1848. It was rented by Moore and then taken up by Lady Margaret Bunbury-Richardson in 1856, by which time *St Mark's Anglican Church* had fallen into disrepair, albeit that Wollaston had gifted the churchyard out of his 215 acres to the Church trustees in 1843.

According to a parishioner, Mr Mick Morrisey, the Church acquired a lean and was pulled into shape with jacks in the early half of the twentieth century under Rev. Foley Whaling. Mr. R. H. Rose of *Moorlands* also provided funds for some minor repairs, but it had been committed to demolition when rescued and repaired in 1936 under Rev. Arnold Fryer, Rector of South Bunbury from 1932-48.

*St Mark's Anglican Church* was restored with the assistance of noted architect Marshall Clifton in circa 1969 and finally consecrated on 13 July 1969 when it

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<sup>1</sup> Molyneux, I., 'The Lower Preston River Settlement: Chronology of European Exploration and Settlement of the Lower Preston River at Bunbury', (unpublished paper, 1996), pp. 14-15. Document attached to assessment for *King's Cottage* (0339).

was certified in the Diocesan Register at Bunbury as "St. Mark the Evangelist" with the certification that, '... the same building has been restored to its first state ...'

*St Mark's Anglican Church* is located within a wider precinct of the lower Preston River settlements. The documentary evidence of the development of this precinct within Leschenault Location 26, Stirling's vast South Bunbury-Picton estate, and upstream along the Preston, as the contextual locality for the place, is summarised by Molyneux in a paper, 'The Lower Preston River Settlement'. This paper provides a history and makes the case for the definition of a riverine heritage precinct on the Preston.

*St Mark's Anglican Church* was evidently designed in wattle and daub, it may be presumed, to take advantage of the particular available skills of Wollaston's servant John Moore, a builder and a man recorded by Wollaston as being clever with clay and straw; skill with timber and clay construction being appropriate to Moore's Kentish origins. Frederick Hymus is recorded as the thatcher of the roof.

The family plots, monuments, gravestones and graveboards record the surnames of most of those associated with the Preston River settlement properties; such as Clifton, Forrest, Hales, Hayward, Johnston, King, Lawrence, Ramsay, Rose, Bunbury-Richardson and Scott, including the usual mixture of examples of longevity and pathos such as the three Lawrence infants buried in 1856 with their octogenarian parents beside.

In 1996, *St Mark's Anglican Church* is used as a place of worship.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*St Mark's Anglican Church* comprises a gutterless roof clad with timber shingles, lined with untreated boards carried on exposed steep pitched rafters, with the crossing tied diagonally with forged steel rods. The walls are clad with weatherboards and lined with painted matchboards. The floor is cement, as planned by Wollaston for the original. The windows replace the documented improvisations of oiled callico painted with mock diamond quarries (panes), being paired casements with diamond leadlights.

Faint allusions to gothic are applied in the gothic arch shaping of the slab ends of the timber pews, the triangular lights over each casement, and in the tri-foil vents in the gable and porch boards. Otherwise, the building is styleless carpenter's work; too sophisticated to be called vernacular and too early to be Arts and Crafts. It is not entirely unlike the extant earliest cottage boxes of *Leschenault Park*, which may have been prefabricated overseas and brought to Australind in the cargoes in 1841-42 and re-erected on the Preston in 1846, so there is a puzzle as to which may have influenced which, if at all.

Wollaston's cruciform plan is a delightful sophistication which has permitted a most appealing space and participation between communion table in the east arm and the congregation, with the pews re-oriented to the east window from the north (facing a pulpit in the northern arm) as is evident in early drawings.

The grave monuments and markers include carved marble monuments, cast and wrought iron fences and unusual timber, bed-head like boards, from which the names of the Scott family have weathered away.

Former split post and rail fencing has been replaced with not unharmonious open picket fencing.

The appearance and condition of the site is very good.

### **13.3 REFERENCES**

Molyneux, I., 'The Lower Preston River Settlement: Chronology of European Exploration and Settlement of the Lower Preston River at Bunbury', (unpublished paper, 1996).