



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 9.7.3 Remembering the dead

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 602 Early Settlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

John Morrell's Grave holds aesthetic value in its simple, white, rectangular structure and also in the view of the town that the site commands. (Criterion 1.1)

The site has landmark quality due to its prominent position on the verge of a busy road, clearly visible to all. The site is immediately noticeable due to the contrast of the memorial's white finish with the surrounding landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

John Morrell's Grave was constructed as one of a number of memorial structures and dedications to early settlers for the centenary of Western Australian European settlement in 1929.¹ (Criterion 2.1)

The site indicates the centenary interest in the history of State since European occupation. (Criterion 2.2)

The site is significant because of its close association with John Morrell, one of the first landholders of the Northam region. Morrell (c.1786–1843) arrived in Western Australia in March 1831, with his first wife Ann (1789-1833), two sons (a further son was born later) and daughter. It was understood, incorrectly, in the 1930s, that Morrell arrived in Northam to found the township in 1833. While Morrell's role was not as the 'Founder' of Northam, nevertheless, he

* 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.

¹ Garden, Donald S. *Northam: An Avon Valley History*, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 232.
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was one of the first large landholders in the district, acquiring a land grant of 4 600 acres, 1 January 1836. With the help of the Chidlow brothers (also well known early settlers in Northam), Morrell's 'Morby Farm' prospered and in 1837 was recorded as including wheat, barley and rye crops, a garden, sheep, goats and swine.² (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The site is valued by the Northam and wider community for its view of the township. (Criterion 4.1)

The site contributes to the Northam and wider community's sense of place as both a symbolic reminder of the history of the town and as a landmark of the townscape. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The memorial is one of the few centenary dedications erected in 1929 to early European settlers. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

John Morrell's Grave is representative of centenary memorial structures to early European settlers. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The condition of the memorial is very good.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The memorial retains its original purpose and is therefore of high integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The structure's condition is highly authentic. (It is important to note, however, that the actual grave is covered by the bitumen road, rather than being under the memorial itself).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

² Garden, Donald S. *Northam: An Avon Valley History*, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 12 – 14, p. 232.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
