



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)

- 1.3 Assessing scientifically diverse environments
- 1.4 Appreciating the natural wonders of Australia
- 2.5 Promoting settlement
- 2.6.2 Displacing Indigenous people
- 3.14.2 Using Australian materials in construction
- 3.3.4 Looking for land with agricultural potential
- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 3.09 Farming for commercial profit
- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 103 Racial contact and interaction
- 106 Workers (including Aboriginal, convict)
- 109 Environmental change
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 506 Tourism
- 602 Early settlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Wallcliffe House is a fine residence of a large pioneering agricultural enterprise, set on a magnificent sweeping site, close to the mouth of the

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Margaret River. The attractive scenery and vegetation of the landscape were features that first drew settlers to this area, and the views from the house remain substantially intact today (2005). (Criterion 1.1)

Wallcliffe House is an excellent example of a homestead in the Victorian Georgian style as it displays considerable finesse in its siting and design against a backdrop of bushland and limestone cliffs, and in the materials and level of craftsmanship employed in its original construction and restoration. (Criterion 1.2)

Wallcliffe House is a distinct and important landmark due to its isolated and open setting and the contrast of the limestone walls against the darker bushland vegetation, but does not detract from the magnificence of its natural setting. (Criterion 1.3)

There are important views and vistas to and from Wallcliffe House both up and down stream on the Margaret River that have changed little since it was constructed. (Criterion 1.3)

Wallcliffe House & Landscape is an important cultural landscape that contains a rich diversity of natural, indigenous and cultural elements (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Wallcliffe House & Landscape is important for the high density and diversity of its cultural features including: Aboriginal sites and mythology, pioneering European settlement and agricultural activity, use as a guest house and the development of early eco-tourism, development as a residential retreat and associated resort and tourist facility, and most recently its inclusion within the boundaries of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. (Criterion 2.1)

The establishment of *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* by the family of Alfred and Ellen Bussell marked the beginning of agricultural development in the Margaret River region. (Criterion 2.2)

Wallcliffe House & Landscape demonstrates changes in the use of land, and agricultural practices, and the economic fortunes of its owners from first settlement to the present time. Landscape remnants include tracks and access ways, house paddock spaces and remnants of the original limestone path and significant remnant exotic vegetation. Significant remnant exotic vegetation includes: "Century Plant" *Agave Americana*, "Yuccas" *Yucca glomiosa*, "Belladonna Lilies" *Amaryllis belladonna*, "Cape Lilac" *Melia azedarach*, "Kurrajong" *Brachycton populneus*, "Mulberry" *Morus nigra*, "Lambertiana aurea" "Golden Monterey Cypress" *Cupressus macrocarpa* and "New Zealand Christmas Tree" *Metrosideros excelsa*. Significant native vegetation includes the dominant *Agonis flexuosa* "Peppermint Trees" and "Marri" *Corymbia calophylla* in the remnant woodlands and "Paper Barks" *Melaleuca raphiophylla* that form the bushland along the river embankments (Criterion 2.2)

Wallcliffe House & Landscape is predominantly associated with the Bussell, Terry and Hohnen families, each of which is of long standing in the Margaret River community and of influence in WA business circles. A. P. Bussell, the

founder of Wallcliffe, was also a member of the Legislative Council from 1872 to 1874. (Criterion 2.3)

Wallcliffe House established a new level of design and craftsmanship and as such was a benchmark for subsequent residences in the Margaret River area. Its restoration during the 1980s has re-established this level of construction achievement. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Wallcliffe House & Landscape is a relatively intact site with a generally well-documented record of the local natural, cultural and Aboriginal histories and their interaction over a period of more than 130 years. It has the potential to be an important research and teaching location. (Criterion 3.1)

The adjacent Bushland and Bushland Scarp have the potential to yield important information about native flora and fauna in the Margaret River region, and this place specifically. There is anecdotal evidence from Aboriginal stories of rare white *Hovea* growing in the area around Wallcliffe House. (Criterion 3.1)

The length of European occupation associated with *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* has considerable potential to provide a wider understanding of the occupation of the locality and the region. (Criterion 3.2)

Wallcliffe House & Landscape has the potential to lead to further understanding of the folklore, mythology and lifestyle of Aboriginal people. (Criterion 3.2)

The nature of the agricultural enterprise in the Margaret River region, of which *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* was the initial focus, was a substantial and significant achievement of its time, illustrating the conditions, resources, capabilities and aspirations necessary for such an enterprise. (Criterion 3.3)

Wallcliffe House demonstrates a high degree of technical accomplishment in its design and the craftsmanship of its construction and restoration. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Wallcliffe House & Landscape has important social, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic associations for the Aboriginal and European communities, and has the potential to be a significant educational resource to both these communities. (Criterion 4.1)

The site of *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* has been significant to Aboriginal people of the district since well before European occupation. (Criterion 4.2)

Wallcliffe House & Landscape has been a landmark on its special site since European settlement of the Margaret River area. There has been a history of co-location and respect between the Aboriginal and European communities at *Wallcliffe House & Landscape*, which has contributed significantly to the sense of place felt here by both communities. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Wallcliffe House is rare as an early example of a two-storey homestead constructed in stone and designed to emulate a British gentleman's country residence. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The physical evidence at *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* is representative of the changing activities that have taken place at the site during its history, particularly the change from agriculture to tourism. The remnant native and exotic plantings reflect changes in plant availability, owner preferences and fashion, and the environmental limitations of the site. (Criterion 6.1)

The establishment of the dairy and pastoral industries at *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* by the women in the Bussell family represents the important role that women played in the early rural development of the Colony. (Criterion 6.2)

The attention to detail in the design and construction of Wallcliffe House represents the aspirations of many early colonists to emulate the standard of living of a British country gentleman. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Wallcliffe House & Landscape is overall in very good condition.

Wallcliffe House is in very good condition having undergone extensive conservation works during 1988-89.

The following important trees, identified in 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment' (2004) by Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, are in a state of decline: one of the original "Mulberry" *Morus sp.* trees, a "Kurrajong" *Brachychiton Populneus*, some of the remnant woodland "Peppermint Trees" *Agonis flexuosa* and some of the "Paper Barks" *Melaleuca Rhapsiophylla* along the southern river embankments.

The Wallcliffe Cliffs have been subject to some damage as a result of recreational pursuits, such as rock climbing, and vandalism.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The overall integrity of *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* is high.

Conservation work to Wallcliffe House has resulted in it having high integrity as it has enabled the place to continue to be used for residential purposes.

Wallcliffe House Landscape has moderate to high integrity as its original use as a garden has been substantially maintained.

The Bushland on both sides of the Margaret River have high integrity as nature reserves and form part of the Leewin-Naturaliste National Park.

The riparian areas on the southern bank of the Margaret River have a moderate degree of integrity as they are declining through age and have limited opportunities of regeneration.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The overall authenticity of *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* is high.

Conservation work to Wallcliffe House has resulted in it having high authenticity due to the substantial retention and conservation of original fabric.

The adjacent Bushland and Bushland Scarp retain a high degree of authenticity.

In the Wallcliffe House Landscape, the house paddock has a low degree of authenticity due to changes in land use and function over time. The development of the gymnosperm hedges above the house impacts on the previously open nature of the house paddock. The scale and form of the plantings dominate this part of the landscape and form a visual barrier between Wallcliffe House and the adjacent Bushland. Sections of Wallcliffe House Landscape characterised by annual planting, ie the kitchen, have a moderate to low degree of authenticity. The pattern of land use remains although few, if any, original plantings remain. The re-use of post and rail fencing is interpretative as fencing boundaries have changed over time. The slab path has a high degree of authenticity, although it has been re-laid and extended.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Supporting evidence on *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* was prepared by Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Conservation Plan' prepared for M. A. & C. A. Hohnen, in September 1998.

Supporting evidence on Wallcliffe Landscape was prepared by Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment', June 2004.

Additional documentary and physical evidence has been prepared by Heritage Council officers.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Conservation Plan' prepared for M. A. & C. A. Hohnen, in September 1998.

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence relating to the landscape, refer to Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment', June 2004.

The following additional documentary evidence was prepared by Heritage Council officers.

After the Union Bank foreclosed on the Bussell Brothers, Wallcliffe was leased and then sold, in 1902, to A.C. Loaring and N. McLeod. Loaring and McLeod ran the property as a farm, but also operated the house as a guesthouse. This business expanded as more tourists came to the area following the opening of the caves to the public, from at least 1905 and possibly as early as 1902.¹

In 1910 Marmaduke and Filumena Terry purchased the property, closed the guesthouse, and ran the property as a dairy farm.² Marmaduke Terry, born in 1860, was a surveyor, who had been appointed by the government in 1898 to chart the limestone caves nearby.³ His wife of six years, Catherine (nee Selman) died in 1895, leaving him with four young children, all of whom had been born in Victoria. On 14 February 1900, Marmaduke married Alfred and Ellen Bussell's youngest daughter, Filumena Mary Bussell (born 1876). The couple went on to have seven children of their own, and all eleven children lived at Wallcliffe.⁴ From an early age Filumena and Marmaduke's second child, Brian Walker Terry, worked the farm, as well as a property across the river known as 'Kilcarnup Run', while Marmaduke supported the family by continuing his surveying business. *Wallcliffe House*

¹ Price, Judi *The History of 'Wallcliffe', Margaret River* (Thesis, Graylands Teachers College, 1967) p.29; Lynn, Kevin K. *Thirteen Decades: A Short History of the Augusta-Margaret River District (1850-1960)* (Thesis, Claremont Teachers' College, 1960) p.60.

² Price, Judi op. cit. p.29.

³ Lynn, Kevin K. op. cit. p.59;

⁴ Cresswell, Gail J. *The Light of Leeuwin* (Augusta-Margaret River Shire History Group, Margaret River WA, 1989) pp. 127, 132;

& *Landscape* remained very isolated until group settlers arrived in the area in the 1920s, providing significant surveying work. During the twenty years that Marmaduke Terry resided at Wallcliffe House, the shingle roof was replaced with corrugated iron.⁵

In 1932 Marmaduke Terry died. Brian took over the house and property, continuing to work the dairy farm.⁶ Filumena died in May 1944. The probate of her will was granted to Norman Terry, the oldest of Marmaduke and Catherine's children, the following year. He worked as an assistant surveyor in West Perth. In August of 1945, ownership was transferred to Brian, who had worked the property for over thirty years.⁷ Brian Terry was married to Susan (nee Spargo) and they had four daughters. After Susan's death, he married his younger brother Lennox's widow, Frances Terry (nee Giles),⁸ who had been living at Ellensbrook.⁹

In early 1953, returned soldier Geoffrey Edwards and his wife purchased a southern coastal portion of the Wallcliffe property from the Terrys to establish a caravan park and holiday 'resort'. Initially this consisted of only 30 acres, and was little more than a few tent sites. Later the land holding was increased, holiday cabins built, and a caravan park established. The access road, a fishing track that also serviced Wallcliffe House, was gradually improved, and tourist numbers in the area increased. In the early 1960s, the Edwards began to subdivide their land, and the settlement of Prevelly was established on land that had formerly been part of Wallcliffe. Prevelly is now the service town for a significant tourism industry that depends heavily on the international reputation of the local surf.¹⁰

Electricity was connected to Wallcliffe House 1967, at which time the Terrys continued to live there and operate a small dairy farm.¹¹ It is not known at what point a Caravan Park was established on the property to the east of Wallcliffe House, but it was well-established by the time the property was sold in 1987, and included a caretaker's residence and a shop-cum-office. Sometime in the 1970s, the dairy was converted to a restaurant, indicating an end to the property functioning as a commercial dairy. However, stock continued to graze across the site until the Terrys sold the property. A number of proposals to develop the site into a holiday resort were considered in the 1980s and 1990s, but none were carried through.¹²

In May 1987, Mark Ainsworth Hohnen and Catherine Anne Hohnen purchased *Wallcliffe House & Landscape*. Mark was a founding member of Margaret River Land Holdings Ltd, a prominent Western Australian businessman and head of a hotel chain in the 1980s, and a significant

5 Price, Judi op.cit. p.30.

6 ibid. p.32

7 Certificate of Title, Vol 1303, Fol. 761, DOLA.

8 Cresswell, Gail J. op. cit. p.132.

9 Terry, Frances *They Came to the Margaret* (Southwest Printing & Publishing Co, Ltd., Bunbury, 1978) Preface: author's biographical details.

10 Edwards, Geoffrey *The Road to Prevelly* (Armadale, 1989)

11 Price, Judi op. cit. p.36.

12 Hocking Planning and Architecture *Wallcliffe Conservation Plan* (prepared for MA & CA Hohnen, 1998)

investor in and developer of the Margaret River Area. In 1970, he and his brother David established the local Cape Mentelle Wines, one of the earliest commercial vineyards to operate in an area that has come to be characterised by this industry.¹³ In 1998, Hocking Planning & Architecture, in association with historian Barbara Dundas, compiled a conservation plan for Wallcliffe for the Hohnens that focussed mainly on the buildings on the site.¹⁴ In 1988-89, the Hohnens undertook a program of restoration and adaptation of Wallcliffe House on the basis of a report commissioned from Kevin Palassis. The works were awarded a Royal Australian Institute of Architects Award for Conservation.¹⁵ Mrs Rosemary Chaney purchased Wallcliffe from the Hohnens in November 2001.

Wallcliffe House continues to be used as a residence, with the former dairy adapted for use as a guest house and occasional meeting room.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Conservation Plan' prepared for M. A. & C. A. Hohnen, in September 1998 and 'Annexure for Wallcliffe House Conservation Plan' by Marcus Collins Architects, in November 2003.

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence relating to the Wallcliffe Landscape refer to Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment', June 2004.

The following additional information has been provided by HCWA officers.

The Bushland Scarp on the northern bank of the Margaret River is an area of low woodland consisting of "Peppermint Trees" *Agonis flexuosa* and "Marri" *Corymbia calophylla* with an under-story of shrubs such as "Shark's Tooth Wattle" *Acacia littorea*, "Parrot Bush" *Dryandra sessilis*, "Basket Bush" *Spyridium globulosum*, "Grass Tree" *Xanthorrhoea preissii* and "Coastal Honeymyrtle" *Melaleuca acerosa* on sandy loam soils over limestone. At the bottom of the hill adjoining the river there is a dense stand of "Paperbarks" *Melaleuca Rhapsiophylla* over what appear to be *Cyperaceae* and *Restionaceae* sedges.¹⁶ This area of the curtilage represents the original view from Wallcliffe House, and together with the attractive sweep of the river, was one of the reasons that Alfred and Ellen Bussell settled at this location.

¹³ Smith, Roger & Urquhart, Barry *The Jindalee Factor: Insights on Western Australian Entrepreneurs* (Marketing Force, Perth, 1988) pp.183-185.

¹⁴ Hocking Planning and Architecture *Wallcliffe Conservation Plan* (prepared for MA & CA Hohnen, 1998)

¹⁵ Hocking op.cit.

¹⁶ Email from Andrew Webb, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Blackwood District on 13 August 2004 based on a limited site inspection in August 2004 and information from *Vegetation Survey of Western Australia Busselton SI 50-5, Augusta SI 50-9*, Western Australian Department of Agriculture, 1973 and *Regional Forest Agreement Vegetation Complexes – Busselton-Augusta*, by EM Matiske and JJ Havel, 1998.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Comparative Information was outside the scope of 'Wallcliffe Conservation Plan' prepared by Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Barbara Dundas, for M. A. & C. A. Hohnen, in September 1998.

For Comparative Information relating to the landscape refer to Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment', June 2004.

Country Gentlemen's Residences

Wallcliffe House, as a two-storey stone rural homestead in the Victorian Georgian style, is notable for its attempt to emulate the design of a British country gentleman's residence. Building a home of this caliber was an ambition of many early settlers, and is discussed frequently in early correspondence.¹⁷ Of the rural homesteads comparable to Wallcliffe in terms of scale and attention to detail, most were built in brick: P01132 *Maddington Homestead* (1836); P01187 *Upton House, Australind* (1844); P02893 *Bridge House & Grounds, York* (1860); P03414 *Bardeen, Irishtown* (1858); P00020 *Wollaston House, Albany* (1840);

Only three two-storey rural homesteads in this period were built in stone. P00440 *Minninup Homestead, Capel* (1844) is a more substantial two-storey Victorian Georgian homestead than Wallcliffe House as it has an additional storey of dormer rooms under the roofline. Similarly P02876 *Faversham House, York* (1850) is a much more substantial dwelling than Wallcliffe House. Built in the Victorian Rustic style it has been extended several times to reach its current proportions and now contains almost 50 rooms. Although the two storey stone house at P00032 *Strawberry Hill Farm & Gardens* (1836) was not built in any definable style, it is noted as an example of a country gentleman's residence despite its more modest scale. It is likely that the difficulties associated with quarrying and building in stone, as compared to building in locally made or imported bricks, partly account for the lower number of stone houses built at this time, and this was exacerbated by labour shortages in the Colony prior to the introduction of convicts in 1850.

Wallcliffe House is therefore rare as an early example of a two-storey homestead constructed in stone, designed to emulate a gentleman's country residence.

The Role of Women at Wallcliffe

For most of the time that *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* was owned by Alfred Bussell, and for six years after his death in 1882, the property was substantially operated by women. Alfred Bussell's wife, Ellen Heppingstone, had established a productive dairy at their first property in the Margaret River area at *Ellensbrook*, and this enterprise was relocated and expanded when they moved to their new property at Wallcliffe. Ellen was assisted in this by her daughters, particularly the eldest five: Francis

¹⁷ Jennings, R *Outstation on the Vasse: 1830-1850*, Shire of Busselton, c.1983 includes several references to the desire of residents in the Bussleton area to build more substantial country homes, particularly the Bussell brothers.

(Fanny), Edith (Bessie), Mary, Charlotte and Grace. A year after Fanny Bussell married John Brockman in 1870, the couple moved to *Ellensbrook* and the two properties were operated as one with the assistance of several Aboriginal farm workers, until 1884.¹⁸

In the 1870s, Alfred diversified into beef cattle. The diary kept by Fanny Brockman (Bussell) covering this period details her efforts and those of her sisters and Aboriginal farm workers driving the cattle herds between properties at Ellensbrook, Wallcliffe, Boranup, Cowaramup, and an unidentified location called Miamup, and the dairy herds between Wallcliffe, Ellensbrook, Ferndene, Middlepond and Boodjidup.¹⁹ It was necessary to drive the herds to coastal pastures as forest pastures had been found to be nutrient deficient and the herds failed to thrive. Further research may confirm whether many of the roads in the Margaret River area were laid along routes established by the Bussell family's cattle and dairying activities.

After Ellen's death in 1877, Fanny who had by then separated from her husband, moved to Wallcliffe to care for the youngest three children, and after her father's death in 1882, she managed the estate until in 1888 when her brother, Alfred John Bussell, inherited the property at the age of 23.²⁰

The establishment of the dairy and pastoral industries at *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* by the women of the Bussell family represents the important role that women played in the early rural development of the Colony.

13. 4 REFERENCES

Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Conservation Plan' prepared for M. A. & C. A. Hohnen, in September 1998.

Blackwell & Associates in association with Barbara Dundas, 'Wallcliffe Landscape Assessment', June 2004.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

There is anecdotal evidence from Aboriginal sources of rare white Hovea growing in the House Landscape. Further research is needed to substantiate this or identify specimens.

Further research may reveal more information on the nature of associations between *Wallcliffe House & Landscape* and Wallcliffe caves, and associated oral traditions, and their scientific significance.

Further research may confirm whether any of the roads in the Margaret River area were laid along routes established by the Bussell family's cattle and dairying activities.

¹⁸ Hocking op.cit.

¹⁹ Diary of Francis Louisa (Mrs John) Brockman nee Bussell 10 Sept 1872 – 24/04/1905, Brockman Family Papers, Battye Library, Acc 938A.

²⁰ Hocking op.cit.