



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The rolled iron framing system is an elegant structural solution of aesthetic merit in its own right. (Criterion 1.1)

The location of the building close to the intersection of two streets, which meet in an acute angle, helps to define the street corner and contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the streetscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) was constructed as a result of the ongoing development of Broome as the centre of the pearling industry in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is associated with the development and operation of the pearl industry in Broome. (Criterion 2.2)

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is the only surviving commercial premises located at the southern end of Hamersley Street (known as Dampier Terrace or Railway Terrace in the early 1900s) which represents the development of Broome as a segregated town with wealthy pearlers and Europeans at one end and Chinatown at the other, linked by a tramway that ran from the Mangrove Point jetty to the Chinatown. (Criterion 2.2)

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is probably the second oldest iron framed building in Broome, the oldest being the Broome Court House which was constructed as a Cable Station in 1889. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) represents considerable innovation in the adaptation of the structure to align the front of the building with Hamersley Street. (Criterion 3.3)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

* 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.

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is valued by the local community for its associations with life in Broome, and for the social associations of a general store. This is evidenced by the inclusion of the place in *Broome Planning Strategy*.¹ (Criterion 4.1)

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) contributes to the local community's sense of place, situated as it is on a prominent corner site in an area of mixed use. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The place is a very rare example of an iron framed building constructed in Broome in the period circa 1900 when steel and iron structural elements were commonly imported from England. (Criterion 5.1)

The place is the only surviving commercial premises located at the southern end of Hamersley Street (known as Dampier Terrace or Railway Terrace in the early 1900s) which represents the development of Broome as a segregated town with wealthy pearlers and Europeans at one end and Chinatown at the other, linked by a tramway that ran from the Mangrove Point jetty to the Chinatown. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is representative of former land usage at the southern end of Broome, adjacent to the former tramway linking the Mangrove Point Jetty with Chinatown. It is now the only extant example of a retail structure from the early 1900s in the area. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Overall *Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr)* is in fair condition. The place is not currently in use and has not been maintained for some years. The structure is in fair condition and the cladding is in poor condition. The structure is capable of restoration.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) has moderate integrity. The original use is hard to discern but could be restored.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) has moderate authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm of John Taylor Architect.

Further Documentary Evidence has been compiled by Dr Cathie Clement, MPHR. See 'Notes on some of Broome's Heritage Structures and their links with the Mangrove Point Stock Jetty and Tramway', National Heritage, Mt Lawley, 1999 revision.

¹ Broome Planning Taskforce, *Broome Planning Strategy*, p. 35.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is a single-storey iron framed, timber and concrete floored building clad in corrugated iron, constructed as a general store for Bourne & Inglis in 1903. The place operated as a general store until c. 1963, after which it was used to store pearling equipment. In 1999, the place is vacant.

The town of Broome was gazetted in 1883, and named for Governor Sir Frederick Napier Broome. Together with Derby, it was gazetted in response to the growth of the pastoral and pearling industries in the western part of the Kimberley. By 1898, Broome had a government residency, customs shed, bond store, hospital, police station and a long deepwater jetty. Aborigines were used as divers during the early years, but with the need for deep divers Filipinos, Malays, Koepangers, and later Japanese, were recruited, often as indentured labour.²

The pearling industry experienced two early boom periods, 1889 to 1893 and 1898 to c. 1910. For the most part, however, the industry struggled, dealing at various times with market forces, two depressions, two World Wars, immigration restrictions, government duties, and cyclones, until the advent of the plastic button finally ended the pearl shell trade in the 1950s.³

Broome developed as a segregated town, with wealthy pearlers and Europeans living at one end in elegant bungalows surrounded by tropical gardens and tended by servants, and Chinatown at the other end, where the Asian and coloured populations lived, and some of the commercial and pearling activities took place.

Lot 213, on the corner of Hamersley (formerly Dampier Terrace) & Louis streets, in the European section of town, was first purchased by pearler, Captain Frank Biddles, in 1899, for £104.⁴ Biddles also purchased lots 214 and 215 at this time, the purchases following the completion of the Mangrove Point stock jetty and tramway. The tramway ran along Dampier Terrace from the stock jetty, and took a route through the town to Streeter's Jetty. Construction of the tramway made the land along its route an attractive development proposition.⁵

A building, comprising a store, was constructed on a portion of Lot 213 and first occupied in 1903, by Herbert Greenhill Bourne and Percy Inglis, trading as Bourne & Inglis, general storekeepers and pearlers.⁶ In 1908, Bourne & Inglis were advertising themselves as 'general storekeepers, pearlers, wine & spirit merchants & auctioneers, agents for Swan Brewery Ltd & Byrnes Bros Queensland meats'.⁷ Photographs of the store showing large advertising hoardings confirm their Swan Brewery agency.⁸ The place seems to have

² Edwards, Hugh, *Port of Pearls: A History of Broome*, Rigby, 1983, pp. 1-65.

³ Clement, Cathie 'Notes on some of Broome's heritage structures and their links with the Mangrove Point Stock Jetty and Tramway', 4p.

⁴ Land Grant, 5 May 1899 & Certificate of Title Vol. 170 Fol. 173, 7 June 1899.

⁵ Clement, Cathie 'Notes on some of Broome's heritage structures and their links with the Mangrove Point Stock Jetty and Tramway', 4p.

⁶ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1903-1915; Legislative Council Electoral Rolls, North Province, 1910 & 1912. **Note:** No addresses are given for Broome residents in the Post Office Directories. Occupations only are listed.

⁷ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1908.

⁸ Photographs, early 1900s, provided by Broome Historical Society. See supporting material.

been run by Herbert Bourne alone, as Percy Inglis is not recorded on Broome records from 1905.⁹

Frank Biddles was not the only pearler to invest in enterprises other than pearling. Business diversification was a form of insurance for pearlmen. Bad weather could wipe out a pearling fleet and everything could be lost. There was more security in land and commodities, and commercial premises returned higher rentals. The Gregorys and the Kennedys were two other pearling families who owned stores in Broome.

In January 1912, Bourne & Inglis relinquished their lease and Norman Harper took over the store, with a four year lease at a yearly rental of £168.¹⁰ Norman Harper was one of three brothers, trading as Harper Brothers, pearlmen. They appear to have operated the store for eight years.¹¹ In 1920, a new lease was entered into with David Lennie Dyson, pearler and storekeeper, for the term of five years. The rental was then £240 a year.¹² David Dyson traded as Dyson & Co. The company traded at *Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr)* until at least 1963, except for the war period 1944-48, when the place was empty.¹³ The store was referred to locally as the 'Conti Store' because of its location directly opposite the Continental Hotel.¹⁴

Broome Shire rate records list two rateable properties on Lot 213 between 1931 and 1955. The other property was a small building (not extant) which appears to have been used as a residence. It had six different tenants during the years for which information is available, and is shown as vacant on a number of occasions.¹⁵

Frank Biddles died in 1932, and the land and the store came under the control of The West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Co Ltd. They managed the property until 1949, when title was transferred to Audrey Pamela Villiers Langdon Clement Nielsen of Norfolk, Virginia, USA. What connection Audrey Nielsen had with Broome is open to speculation, but it is worth noting that the name Clement was a Gregory family name, as indicated in the names of Captain Ancell Clement Gregory, his brother Fleming Clement Gregory, and their father Edward Clement Gregory. Ancell Gregory was harbourmaster, marine surveyor and inspector of shipping at Broome, as well as being involved in pearling with his brother.¹⁶

Audrey Nielsen owned *Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr)* for twenty years until, in 1969, ownership was transferred to Pearls Pty Ltd. Pearls Pty Ltd was the company initially formed to develop the cultured pearl industry in Broome in the 1950s, after the pearl shell industry collapsed with the introduction of the plastic button. The company, and the industry, began with Japanese knowledge and American money.¹⁷

Pearl shell is still collected in the waters off Broome, but now the occupant of the shell has to be kept alive for the transfer to the pearling beds where the

⁹ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1905-1912.

¹⁰ Certificate of Title Vol. 170 Fol. 173.

¹¹ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1912-1920.

¹² Certificate of Title Vol. 170 Fol. 173.

¹³ Broome Shire Rate Books, 1931-1963, researched by Broome Historical Society, June 1999.

¹⁴ Val Burton, Broome Historical Society.

¹⁵ Broome Shire Rate Books, 1931-1963, op cit; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1931-1949.

¹⁶ Battye, J. S. (ed) *The History of the North West of Australia: embracing Kimberley, Gascoyne & Murchison districts*, V. K. Jones & Co, Perth, 1915, pp. 152-153.

¹⁷ Ruby Morgan, Battye Library Oral History 246, 1977.

seeding for the pearl takes place. Cultured pearls take three years or so to develop.¹⁸

After purchase of the place, Pearls Pty Ltd, trading as Paspaley Pearls, used *Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr)* for storage of pearling equipment.¹⁹ In 1999, the building is empty and in poor condition.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Bourne and Inglis Store (fmr) is located at the corner of Hamersley and Louis streets south of the main town centre of Broome. Hamersley Street runs along the foreshore at this location so that the building has views across the road to the mangrove swamps and Roebuck Bay beyond. The site is flat and features some eucalypt trees, low scrub and a few unpaved paths.

The single storey structure is not in use and is in a deteriorated condition. Inspection was from the exterior only as the place is secured and inaccessible to the public. The building is located close to the two street boundaries which intersect in an acute angle at the north-east corner. This intersection has produced an irregular shaped building. The front or east elevation and verandah align with Hamersley Street, the main street of Broome at the time of construction, although the side walls, roof and supporting structure have been skewed to run along an east-west axis parallel with Louis Street

The structural frame of the building comprises columns and trusses which are probably constructed of rolled iron sections imported from the United Kingdom.²⁰ The structure has a corrugated iron half-hipped roof with gables to the east and west. There are no gutters and skylights are spaced evenly along the length of the roof, close to the ridge on both the north and south elevations. Where external corrugated iron wall cladding is not placed, wire grid mesh is evident between the structural frames to secure the place. A concrete slab, which forms the floor of the structure, is approximately one step above ground level. Two rectangular concrete slabs extend behind the building line at the north and south corners.

No solid interior partitioning remains but the structure of the internal space is readily apparent comprising two rows of columns delineating a wide central bay and supporting the roof trusses. The narrower external bays around the exterior of the building may once have formed verandahs. The trusses over the front or east verandah, radiate at the corners to compensate for the irregular alignment of the building.

The tubular steel columns supporting the front verandah have replaced the original cast iron posts. There is evidence of former attachments and decorative features which is confirmed by early photographs of the place obtained from the Broome Historical Society. It is unclear when the place was last used and the building is currently in poor condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Telephone contact with the owners has failed to obtain a date regarding last use of the place.

²⁰ It is likely the rolled iron framework was manufactured and shipped from England. Conversation between Katrina Chisholm of John Taylor Architect and Tom Chapple, former Broome resident, 25 May 1999. Further inspection is needed to verify that it is iron. Internal inspection may reveal a manufacturer's imprint on the frames.

13. 4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research into the origin of the steel framework may confirm the belief that the material was manufactured and shipped from England.