



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 VALUE¹

Maurice Lyons' House could best be described as of a 'Broome Tropical Bungalow' style although characteristics of an earlier Federation period are evident. The climatic responsive features of lattice, louvres and shutters and extensive ornamental tropical planting which characterise the styles are aesthetic characteristics valued by the community. (Criterion 1.1)

Maurice Lyons' House is one of the few surviving examples of houses established by wealthy Europeans in the original residential quarter of Broome which together form a significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Maurice Lyons' House was constructed as a result of the ongoing development of Broome as the centre of the pearling industry in Western Australia. It was built at a time when Broome was segregated by race and many Europeans and their families lived lives of privilege and luxury. (Criterion 2.2)

Maurice Lyons' House is associated with civil servant William Lightfoot, and pearlmen Wilfred Hawkes and Maurice Lyons. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place is an example of the tropical architectural style characterised by design features which promoted cross ventilation and natural climatic control in the period before the introduction of mechanical air conditioning systems. (Criterion 3.3)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

¹ For consistency, references to architectural style are usually 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, however the Heritage Council has decided that Broome places have an individual style not included in that publication.

Maurice Lyons' House is valued by the local and wider community for social and cultural associations of a way of life no longer practised. (Criterion 4.1)

Maurice Lyons' House contributes to the local community's sense of place having stood on its large corner site since 1903. The presence of the place is enhanced by the tropical garden. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Although extensively modified, the place is a rare example of a substantial house constructed in Broome in the early 1900s and use for much of its history as a pearling master's residence. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Maurice Lyons' House is representative of Broome residential architecture initially established by a typically wealthy European owners in the early twentieth century but modified to adopt a expression and style of accommodation suitable for the late twentieth century. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Extensions and alterations to the scale and style of the house in the 1980s have upgraded the standard of accommodation so that the overall condition of *Maurice Lyons' House* is very good.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Maurice Lyons' House has high integrity. The place maintains its original residential function.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Maurice Lyons' House has moderate authenticity. The form of the house has been extended, and new fabric introduced so that the expression is now quite different to the original. Some of the early character and fabric is still apparent, predominantly in the central living space.

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.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Maurice Lyons' House is a timber and iron bungalow residence constructed in 1903, for civil servant William R. Lightfoot, and later occupied as a pearler's residence. The style is 'Broome Tropical Bungalow'.² *Maurice Lyons' House* was extended in 1984 and 1985.

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 gaol, 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.³

The pearling industry experienced two boom periods, 1889 to 1893 and 1898 to c.1910. For the most part, however, the industry struggled, dealing variously 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.⁴ Broome has experienced a tourist boom from the 1980s to the present.

Broome developed as a segregated town, with wealthy pearlmen 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. *Maurice Lyons' House* is situated on Lot 197, on the corner of Anne & Walcott streets, in the European section of town.

Lot 197 was first purchased by William Robert Lightfoot, a civil servant, in December 1902. Two years later ownership was transferred to his wife Marie.⁵ William Lightfoot held the position of Assistant Landing Waiter at Broome from October 1899 to July 1902, and was then Acting District

² Style description decided by the Heritage Council at its meeting of 8 October 1999.

³ Edwards, Hugh, *Port of Pearls: A History of Broome*, pp. 1-65.

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

⁵ Certificate of Title Vol. 262 Fol. 31, 22 December 1902 & 19 October 1904.

Registrar for a period from August 1902.⁶ He does not appear in the Blue Books after that date, but he did remain in Broome for a few more years. On the 1904 Electoral Roll he is listed as residing at Annie [sic] Street, confirming that the house was constructed by that date.⁷

Maurice Lyons' House is typical of the bungalow style residence built by the wealthy Europeans in Broome in the early years of the twentieth century. It is timber framed with corrugated iron and timber cladding on the walls and an iron roof. The verandahs have metal storm shutters, common to Broome buildings. The garden features exotic tropical vegetation, also typical of residential gardens in this section of the town.

Maurice Lyons' House was constructed at a time when life in the pearling town was more reminiscent of the British in India than of life in other Western Australian towns. Homes were decorated with silk wall-hangings, pottery and carved furniture imported from Asia, and servants were plentiful and cheap.⁸

Each master pearler's home had a Chinese or Japanese cook; an Aborigine was employed for garden work, Koepanger boys supervised the children at play, did housework and polished the silver. An Aboriginal woman trained by the Sisters at the local convent, was given some flour and tobacco in return for doing the daily washing, another Chinese young man did the ironing, while the valet-waiter-general factotum was either a Japanese or a Koepanger.⁹

People in government positions and in commerce, could also partake of this life style in Broome.

In January 1908, master mariner Henry Lee purchased *Maurice Lyons' House*, but he sold it again later that year to pearler Wilfred Cory Peate Hawkes. The Hawkes are not listed on Broome records between 1914 and 1918, but in the latter year, Wilfred Hawkes is recorded as working for pearlmen James Clarke & Co, and was still working for them in 1926.¹⁰ In 1919, ownership of *Maurice Lyons' House* was transferred to Hawkes' wife, Ella Lander Hawkes.¹¹

In 1930, *Maurice Lyons' House* was purchased by Edith Lyons, and the Hawkes were no longer listed on Broome records.¹² Maurice Charles Austin Lyons, first appears in Broome as a clerk for the Union Bank in 1917.¹³ By the early 1920s, he is listed as a pearler, in Robinson Street.¹⁴ It was not uncommon for men engaged in various other occupations in the north-west to branch out into pearling as soon as they could finance their

⁶ Western Australian Blue Books, 1900-1904; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1900-1920. **Note:** *Wise's Post Office Directories* do not give street addresses for Broome residents. Occupation only is listed.

⁷ *Legislative Assembly Electoral Roll, Kimberley District*, 1904.

⁸ Francis, Iris, *Broome: A Pictorial History*, self published, 1992. Iris Francis is the granddaughter of pearling captain George Francis.

⁹ Bain, Mary Albertus, *Full Fathom Five*, Artlook, Perth, 1982, p. 235.

¹⁰ *Legislative Council Electoral Rolls, North Province, 1914-1932*.

¹¹ Certificate of Title Vol. 262 Fol. 31, 17 October 1919.

¹² Certificate of Title Vol. 262 Fol. 31, 20 August 1930; *Legislative Council Electoral Rolls, North Province, 1932-1940*.

¹³ *Legislative Assembly Electoral Roll, Kimberley District*, 1917; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1918; Certificate of Title Vol. 262 Fol. 31 also records him as a clerk.

¹⁴ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1918-1925; *Legislative Council Electoral Rolls, North Province*, 1922.

first lugger. Pearling was seen as a lucrative operation, rightly or wrongly, as well as an adventurous one.

Maurice Lyons owned his Robinson Street property until the mid 1930s. In 1938, he is listed on the Electoral Rolls as the householder, cnr Anne & Walcott streets. Edith Lyons does not appear on any Roll until 1946, when she is recorded as residing in Victoria Ave, Claremont, her occupation given as clerk. They both appear to have left Broome during World War Two. After the war, and their return to Broome, both Edith and Maurice Lyon are recorded as clerks until at least 1960.¹⁵ They do not appear to have taken any part in the attempted revival of the pearling industry after the war.

When Edith Lyons died in 1968, the title of *Maurice Lyons' House* transferred to her husband. Following his own death two years later the property was purchased by William Jerry Fong, storekeeper, segregation no longer relevant in the pearling town. In 1975, *Maurice Lyons' House* was purchased by Keith Russell Thomas, a carpenter.¹⁶ In 1978, Thomas had a carport and patio added to the place. In 1984-85 he enlarged the kitchen and dining areas, added a bathroom and timber deck, and relocated the carport. The work was carried out by North West Homes in keeping with the style of the original structure.¹⁷

In 1996, *Maurice Lyons' House* was purchased by current owners Richard Byron Murray and Sophia Couzos.¹⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Maurice Lyons' House is located at the south-east intersection of Anne and Walcott streets in a residential quarter of the Broome township. The house is well shielded from public view by the extensive tropical vegetation common to the area. A wire fence surrounds the swimming pool to the south of house with the southernmost portion of the block left vacant. A double carport, with a pitched roof and lattice gable infills, is located at the north-east corner of the block.

Constructed in timber and clad with corrugated iron and fibre cement cladding, *Maurice Lyons' House* could originally have been described as of a *Federation Bungalow* style however a more complete style description of *Maurice Lyons' House* is considered to be 'Broome Tropical Bungalow' style. Broome and other Kimberley Region towns in Western Australia have developed a climate responsive architecture with narrow linear planning to facilitate cross ventilation, extensive shady outdoor spaces surrounded by dense planting, ventilating ridges to release hot air from in the roof, and roofs generously extended to shelter verandahs and breezeways. Adjustable louvres and large insect screened areas of living and sleeping accommodation under the verandahs with buildings often raised above flat sites, permit maximum air-flow. These features are also characteristic of the Late Twentieth Century Tropical style.¹⁹ Whilst some

¹⁵ Legislative Council Electoral Rolls, North Province, 1932-1962.

¹⁶ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1020 Fol. 323, 20 August 1930.

¹⁷ Plans, North West Homes, 28 November 1984 and 11 October 1985.

¹⁸ Certificate of Title, Vol. 2081 Fol. 548, 31 July 1996.

¹⁹ Apperly, R., op cit, pp. 144-147 & 250-251.

internal detailing retains the character of the Federation period, alterations to the scale and style of accommodation of *Maurice Lyons' House* in the 1980s have modified the overall expression to the later period. This is particularly apparent in the new fabric which has a lightweight and machined quality as opposed to the more rustic qualities of the original material.

Maurice Lyons' House has an L-shaped form and a hipped roof with gablets in the east and west elevations. The verandah which once surrounded the north-west portion of the house has been adapted to provide extra accommodation. A loft with ensuite bathroom and walk-in-robe facilities has been constructed over the kitchen. It is unlikely that this space was part of the original form of the house.

The main floor level of the western portion of the house is raised above the ground on concrete stumps topped with ant caps. Timber steps have been located at the external access points to the house at a home office and southern timber deck. The eastern extension is lower, at approximately ground level.

The house is entered from Anne Street to the north through a free standing lattice clad portal which leads into a brick paved courtyard space filled with lush planting. At the time of inspection a water feature was being added, close to the house in the entrance courtyard. Double doors open onto a lobby between the central living area to the west and kitchen to the east. The living room has high ceilings under the pitched roof with the original roof framing exposed and a ventilating louvred gable in the west end wall. This space has dark timber stained floor boards and 'ripple iron' cladding to the lower portion of the walls beneath the picture rail. Bedrooms, study and a home office with separate external access, surround the living area to the west with the south and north rooms infilling the former verandah. A timber deck to the south of the living space may have been the original entrance porch to the house. This area has been extended and now provides an outdoor sitting area surrounded by lattice balustrades and incorporates decorative timber detailing to the verandah posts. The skirting, timber panelling to the walls and ceiling are indicative of early material.

The kitchen, laundry and meals area to the east of the main living space are at a lower level to the rest of the house and have tiled floors and timber panelled lower walls with lattice and flyscreen above. The mezzanine floor above is accessed by a timber stair from the living room. A balustraded gallery overlooks the main space with folding screen doors behind providing privacy when the room operates as a bedroom. An ensuite bathroom and walk-in-robe are situated at the south end of the room while glazing in the upper portion of the north wall overlooks the entrance hall.

Plans approved by the Shire of Broome show a carport and patio addition to the north and east of the house in 1978. Further alterations were proposed in 1984 although a revised scheme was also approved the following year. With a few alterations, probably made during construction, these plans document the current state of the house. The extensions show a new timber deck; an extended loft above the kitchen

area which was also extended into the previous carport extension pushing the carport further east; a new verandah to the north elevation; and alterations to the bathrooms.

The place is currently used as a residence with modifications to the place in the 1980s having upgraded the standard of accommodation. Some of the original features of the house remain in the 'ripple iron' cladding and timber detailing, predominantly in the main living space.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13. 4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
