



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 *

Matthew Cull's House has as its basis a simple Victorian Georgian house to which numerous additions and adaptations have been made. This accumulation of historic layers has led to a place of some visual complexity and an aesthetic value that arises from its ad hoc nature and naive qualities. (Criterion 1.1)

Matthew Cull's House is a local landmark and contributes to the aesthetic qualities of Albany, a town of dense historic fabric. (Criteria 1.3 & 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Matthew Cull's House has a strong association with the Cull family. The place was built by Matthew Cull in 1872, was occupied by his family for 117 years, and is still owned by a family member. (Criterion 2.3)

Matthew Cull's House is illustrative of the self-reliance of the early European settlers and the use they made of locally available building materials. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Matthew Cull's House is significant to the local community for its landmark value and for the contribution it makes to the town of Albany. (Criterion 4.2)

* 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.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Matthew Cull's House demonstrates an unbroken family land holding which is becoming less common in Western Australia.

The complex of the house and outbuildings provide an increasingly uncommon example of associated domestic structures surviving from the mid to late nineteenth century. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Matthew Cull's House is representative of a humble vernacular cottage, constructed by the original family member. It has evolved to meet the changing requirements of his descendants. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Matthew Cull's House is in sound condition. The recent replacement of the roof has been a necessary step towards the immediate preservation of the place. Many of the surfaces and fabric of the main house are deteriorating, some quite severely. Outbuildings at the place are in poor condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Matthew Cull's House has high integrity. The residential function has been maintained and although the place is currently occupied by tenants, descendants of Matthew Cull retain a close association with the place. The proposed use as a tourist attraction to preserve and display items of the family collection would be compatible.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Matthew Cull's House has evolved to adapt to changing family requirements and currently presents a clearly different form from the original three bedroom cottage; however, it is these alterations which contribute to the significance of the place. *Matthew Cull's House* has high authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Ham-Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Graduate Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Matthew Cull's House is a two-storey residence which displays elements of the Victorian Georgian style.¹ The place, which began as two rooms and a separate kitchen, was built by Matthew Cull and first occupied by the Cull family c. 1872. The building was extended as the family grew.

Michael Cull, Matthew's father, was transported to Western Australia on the convict ship *Robert Small*, arriving 19 August 1853. In 1855 he brought his family out from Ireland. His wife Margaret, and their two children, Matthew, then seven years old, and Ellen, arrived in Western Australia on the *Berkshire*.² Three children were born after their arrival, between 1856 and 1859. The family lived at Fremantle before moving to Albany where Michael worked at 'Strawberry Farm' and Mt. Barker. Michael Cull died in December 1861, aged about 40 years, and was buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery at Albany. Margaret Cull remarried to Thomas Crean.³

In 1869, at the age of 21, Matthew Cull, married Welsh born Sarah Ann Bagg. Sarah's father, George, was a former Pensioner Guard who had arrived in Western Australia with his family on the *Scindian*, later taking up land at York, before moving to Kojonup after his wife's death in 1865.⁴ Prior to her marriage, Sarah was employed as nursemaid to the Alexander Moir family in Albany.⁵

Matthew and Sarah Cull first lived in rented premises in Albany. Matthew was working as a mailboat attendant and lumper, loading coal for the steamships that called into Princess Royal Harbour. In between these jobs he worked as a gardener for Sir Alexander Cockburn-Campbell on his land at Lots 301 and 302 in Middleton Road.⁶ Matthew liked the land there and applied for the adjoining Lot 303. He received it as Crown Grant No. 2876, on 14 June 1870, and set about building *Matthew Cull's House*.⁷

Stone for the foundations of *Matthew Cull's House* was collected from the site now occupied by the reservoir. During the day, Sarah would fill a wheelbarrow with stone and Matthew would wheel the barrow to the lot

¹ Apperly, R., Irving, R. & Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present* Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1994, pp. 24-27; 'Historic Homesteads,' illustration, *Western Mail* 28 September 1939, p. 12. (See supporting material in HCWA File 0031)

² *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* Perth, UWA Press, 1988.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Verschuer, Mavis *Echoes of the Past* 1978, p. 21. Note: Material in this publication was broadcast by Albany Radio 6VA in the early 1960s, as part of the programme, 'Address Unknown'. The information on the Cull family was obtained through an interview with Matthew Cull's son, Ivon.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22; Lands and Surveys Description Books 1837-1920.

⁷ Verschuer, M., *op cit*; DOLA Deed of Memorial Book 13, No. 290.

when he finished work on the wharf. The family occupied the place when the first two rooms, and the separate kitchen, were completed, sometime after the birth of the second child, Matthew Lewis, in 1871, but before the birth of the third, Evaline, in 1873.⁸

When her second husband died, Margaret Cull lived in *Matthew Cull's House* with her son and his family until her own death in 1895, at the age of 75.

Matthew and Sarah Cull had 15 children and the house grew to accommodate them. A gangway from a ship was used in place of stairs to provide access to the upper floor. Matthew Cull was a self-taught carpenter and bricklayer, using whatever crude implements he could devise, including a bottle of water as a spirit level. Behind the house is a small building which was used as a bakehouse. A fire was lit inside the brick oven and when the bricks were thoroughly heated the coals were raked out and the tins of bread dough placed inside on the hot brick floor.⁹

Matthew Cull was appointed Verger to St John's Anglican Church in 1881.¹⁰ He occupied this position for 56 years, until 1937, a year before his death at the age of 90. Part of his job was to clean the Church and collect the pew rents. In 1892, these brought in over £100 a year, and Matthew's income as Verger was £50 a year.¹¹ Matthew Cull was also a founding member of the Albany branch of the Manchester Unity Lodge, where he served as warden for 54 years.¹²

In 1911, Ivon Raymond Cull, eleventh of Matthew and Sarah's 15 children, married Maude May Quartermaine in St John's Church. The reception was held at *Matthew Cull's House*. Maude's grandparents, Elijah and Eliza Quartermaine, had arrived in Western Australia on the *Britomart* in 1838. They established 'Yowangup', a large farming and grazing establishment at Katanning, and raised 13 children.¹³ Their eleventh child was William Charles, Maude's father. William inherited part of his family's property, but sold his holding in 1906 and moved to Albany.

Ivon and Maude inherited Matthew Cull's House after Matthew's death in 1938. Ivon was a Provincial Grand Master of the Manchester Unity Lodge at Albany, a founding member of the lodge at Mount Barker and a member of the Albany Militia. His working life was spent as an employee of the general merchants Drew, Robinson & Co. and Barnett & Co.¹⁴

In 1956, Lot 303 was subdivided into two equal parts, the half on which *Matthew Cull's House* is sited becoming Lot 13 and the other half Lot 12.¹⁵ Lot 12, at 252 Middleton Road, was given to daughter Joy Emmeline and her husband Edgar Green. Joy and Edgar built a small fibro house which

⁸ Verschuer, M., op cit.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ 'The Church of St John the Evangelist, Albany' Parish of St John, Albany, n.d., p. 3.

¹¹ The Church of St John the Evangelist, Minutes, 1889-1892, Microfilm 651A, Battye Library.

¹² Verschuer, M., op cit, p. 23.

¹³ The Quarternaines were the first settlers at Katanning.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Survey diagram 21690, 11 September 1956, HCWA File 0031.

has more recently been replaced with a modern brick and tile residence. There is no fence separating this property from *Matthew Cull's House*.¹⁶

Ivon Cull died in 1968, and Maude in 1981.¹⁷ On Maude Cull's death, their son, Ronald, inherited *Matthew Cull's House*. Ronald did not marry and when he died in 1989, his sister Joy inherited the place.¹⁸ In 1995, Joy's son, Ivon Green, concerned that *Matthew Cull's House* should be preserved, purchased the place from his mother and set up Matthew Cull's House Trust.¹⁹ The Green family have many items of Cull family memorabilia, including family Bibles, a customs book, and photographs, etc, and Ivon Green is interested in developing *Matthew Cull's House* as a museum, or in some other function where it will be self-supporting.²⁰ At present *Matthew Cull's House* is rented out, but the facilities are still much in their original condition. For example, there is no running hot water.²¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Matthew Cull's House is located on the north side of Middleton Road, within the periphery of the town centre of Albany. The long, narrow site has a north/south orientation with the house situated close to the south boundary, bordering the main road, and a ground floor level below that of the street. Neighbouring properties are predominantly residential but the site to the east is occupied by squash courts. The high, face brick wall of this building is believed to encroach over the boundary of *Matthew Cull's House*, and overshadows the land behind the house.²²

Various structures of timber and iron construction, of varying degrees of significance for their associations with the early function of the place, are located to the rear of the house and a significant amount of land up to the north boundary remains undeveloped. The neighbouring lot to the west is owned by family members having been subdivided in 1956. Physical evidence to define the shared boundary between the two lots is scarce.

The simple, rectangular form of the two-storey house, constructed predominantly in brick, has a hipped corrugated iron roof and displays some characteristics of the Victorian Georgian style.²³ The front facade is symmetrical and features a central, gabled portico sheltering the front door. This structure is supported on rendered brick piers and was attached

¹⁶ Telephone conversation by Irene Ham-Sauman with Ivon Green, Monday 2 February 1998, Memo, HCWA File 00031.

¹⁷ *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* op cit; DOLA Certificate of Title, Vol. 1410 Fol, 556, HCWA File 00031.

¹⁸ DOLA Certificate of Title, Vol. 1410, Fol. 556, op cit; Telephone conversation with Ivon Green, op cit.

¹⁹ Deed of Trust F 805147, HCWA File 0031.

²⁰ Letter from Ivon Green with site plan and photos, HCWA File 0031; Photos of front room, c. 1914, Battye Library, 88681P & 88682P. (See supporting material in HCWA File 0031)

²¹ Telephone conversation with Ivon Green, op cit.

²² Conversation conducted by Katrina Chisholm with descendants of the Cull family at the site, Wednesday 18 February 1998. The encroachment has not been confirmed through accurate survey data.

²³ 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, pp. 24-27.

to the house circa 1930.²⁴ The quality of the external brickwork is uneven and crude consistent with unskilled labour and gives the place a rustic, unsophisticated appearance. Windows in the south elevation are of 'Georgian' proportions using small panes of glass divided by glazing bars. While flat arch lintels are apparent above the ground floor openings, the proximity of the roof line to the head height does not permit the same detail at the first floor. The current arrangement of window and door openings is not representative of an earlier composition as former door openings are evident in the brickwork between the windows and portico.²⁵ Brick chimneys with raking courses where the flue narrows, abut the side elevations, and rise above the roof level adding interest to the overall form. The rear external wall is clad with corrugated iron, and lined internally with hessian at the upper level. There is little formality or consistency in the appearance of this north elevation. The overlays of various ad hoc additions give the place a naive charm and much visual interest.

The ground floor layout comprises two rooms each side of an entry hall and stairwell, with a rear enclosed verandah running across the width of the house. The two front rooms, together with the present kitchen, located in the north-east corner, are believed to be the remaining fabric of the single-storey, three room house built by Matthew Cull. The kitchen is entered from the stairwell immediately behind the entry hall. Physical evidence confirms that the current stair, built of timber with a half landing, replaced an earlier ship's ladder which provided access to the upper floor, as the steep angle of the stringer is still apparent. The rear verandah is enclosed and partitioned at the western end to provide privacy for the bathroom facilities. Doors from the verandah give access to the kitchen and a room currently used by the owners as a storeroom which is inaccessible to the tenants.

The stairs to the upper floor terminate in an unusual manner, with virtually no landing and risers turning on top of themselves to reach the required level. Five bedrooms have been incorporated into the upper floor with the three front rooms at a higher level than those at the rear. The rooms have painted walls, timber floors and boarded ceilings which rake towards the external edges. The internal side of the north wall is clad with hessian, painted to match other internal finishes. Fireplaces with timber surrounds are located in the two bedrooms on the west side of the house. There is evidence that the central wall of the bedroom level, running through the length of the house, was once an external wall as window openings can be detected in the brickwork. Window construction is varied and includes centre pivot and double hung sliding sash windows. In some cases, these frames have been altered to act as casement windows. Doors are of simple ledged construction with tongue and grooved boards.

²⁴ Conversation conducted by Katrina Chisholm with descendants of the Cull family at the site, Wednesday 18 February 1998.

²⁵ *Western Mail*, 28 September 1939, p. 12. A sketch of the house before the construction of the portico confirms a different configuration of fenestration with a central window opening and a door and window on each side.

Ground floor internal finishes are similar, except there are no ceilings in the front rooms and part of the kitchen, and the floor framing of the first floor is exposed.

Documentary evidence relating to the evolution of the house from a simple three room cottage to the present structure is generally supported by examination of the fabric, although exact time frames for development are less clear.

Almost all of the fabric at *Matthew Cull's House* is deteriorating and some is in poor condition. The recent replacement of the roof covering should have arrested further water damage which is particularly evident in the upper floor ceilings. There are a number of broken window panes and some of the joinery appears very delicate. Walls appear sound despite signs of weathering. Many of the outbuildings are in poor condition and difficult to document as the current dilapidated condition and high content of items stored within, made inspection hazardous.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

The owner and his family are a potential source of further information and detail regarding the place, although this is unlikely to reveal any further cultural heritage significance.