



# 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)

- 3.4 Developing sheep and cattle industries
- 3.15 Struggling with remoteness
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions

### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 204 Droving
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 601 Aboriginal people
- 602 Early settlers

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* has a landmark quality through its position on elevated and slightly sloping ground away from the banks of Forrest Creek, commanding extensive views. (Criterion 1.3)

The buildings form a significant pastoral precinct establishing a cultural environment that is important evidence of the history of early European settlement and occupation of the Kimberley. (Criterion 1.4)

The landscape character of the *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* derives from its environmental components. The site provides a range of views and spatial qualities from the open outlook to the river to the sparsely located masonry walls of the ruins. The scrub vegetation and red dirt provide additional landscape interest and contrast. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* is a evidence of the importance of the pastoral industry to the occupation and development of the Kimberley. (Criterion 2.1)

The place was the destination of the first of the great overland treks in 1882, when a cattle drive of 4000 head of cattle to stock Ord River Station began. (Criterion 2.2)

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\* 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, NSW, 1989.

*Ord River Station Homestead* has meaning for the many Aboriginals who worked, lived and died and were born on the property, and the place is important as a contact site. [Criterion 2.2 & 2.3]

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* is closely associated with the pioneering stockman and explorer Nat Buchanan who in 1880 signed his first lease, being Wave Hill on Victoria River, and who was employed by the station's original leaseholders Joseph Anderson Panton and William Henry Osmond from Melbourne in the 1880s. (Criterion 2.3)

*Ord River Station* has been closely associated with Vestey Ltd, significant landowners in Australia, since 1914, when the *Ord River Station* comprised approximately two million acres.

### 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The archaeological resource of *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* has the potential to inform on the lifestyles of the first European settlers in East Kimberley. It also has the potential to inform on how the Queensland based culture brought to the Kimberley changed under the influence of frontier processes to that of today in East Kimberley. (Criteria 3.1 & 3.2)

The place as a whole, which by the 1960s was in poor condition with badly degraded pastoral areas, became a regeneration site, with Agriculture Western Australia taking over management of *Ord River Station* and beginning to regenerate the site. After the successful regeneration of the eastern side of the *Ord River* by the 1980s, Agriculture Western Australia continued with the western side of the property in 1985 (Criterion 3.3)

### 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* contributes to the general community's sense of place as a former pastoral station homestead. It also most likely contributes to the sense of place of the Aboriginal people of the region who would have worked there as stockmen and women, domestic servants and general pastoral workers. Considering that since 1884 the homestead area has been the central activity area of a large cattle station, its pastoral industry would not have survived without Aboriginal labour.

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* demonstrates a distinct way of life, namely that the early pastoralists in the Kimberley region incorporating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal labour and adapting to an unfamiliar environment, a way which is no longer practiced today in its original form. (Criterion 5.2)

### 12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The ruins of *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* are a representative reminder of a simple type of vernacular architecture built in the late 1800s in the Kimberley, which was to proliferate in many rural areas in Western Australia, and the thick stone walls of *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* were often found in other homesteads in this region. The variety of building types suited for different weather conditions which make up a

homestead complex such as *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* is typical. (Criterion 6.1)

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* in its physical manifestation as ruins reflects a way of life of the early days of European settlement. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* consists of a complex of structures which are vacant and of which the two homesteads (c.1890) are in ruins, and the kitchen(c.1916) and workers quarters (n.d.) are dilapidated and in poor condition. The graveyard with seven graves (the oldest headstone dates back to 1890), though overgrown with low scrub, and the shed (n.d.) are in fair condition.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Although the structures that comprise *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* are in a state of dilapidation and ruin, the layout of each structure is evident. However, the structures have a moderate degree of integrity due to substantial amount of loss of fabric, enabling only a portion of the structures to be discernible with any degree of accuracy. The place as a whole continued to be used for its original purpose, that of a pastoral property, and later as a regeneration site. Overall, *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* has a moderate degree of integrity.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Although the site as a whole has a high level of authenticity, since it has been little varied from its fundamental form as a homestead complex, alterations to the original buildings that comprise *Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* - two stone cottages, have been carried out. These include the inaccurate reconstruction of the roof of the larger homestead building and, to both structures, the replacement timberwork, rendering of interior and exterior walls, and re-pointing using a stronger mortar. Much of the exterior fabric has been lost and all interior fittings and fixtures have been removed.

*Ord River Station Homestead (fmr) & Cemetery* retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, 'Ord River Station Homestead, East Kimberley: Conservation Plan and Archival Record', for Department of Contract and Management Services in May 2000.

Key sections used are: 1.0 Documentary Evidence (p1-30), 3.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence (p67-73)

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, 'Ord River Station Homestead, East Kimberley: Conservation Plan and Archival Record', prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services, May 2000, and Additional Information prepared by Helen Burgess for HCWA, January 2001.

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, 'Ord River Station Homestead, East Kimberley: Conservation Plan and Archival Record', prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services, May 2000.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a discussion of the Comparative Evidence refer to Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, 'Ord River Station Homestead, East Kimberley: Conservation Plan and Archival Record', prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services, May 2000.

### **13.4 REFERENCES**

Kelly Aris Conservation Architect, 'Ord River Station Homestead, East Kimberley: Conservation Plan and Archival Record', prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services, May 2000.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research on Aboriginal labour and relations.