



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Despite the modern light green corrugated zincalume roof cladding and the use of compressed cement sheets to the external walls of the dormers reducing the aesthetic value, *Minninup Homestead* has high aesthetic characteristics, particularly the original house, which has fine proportions, a symmetrical facade and good quality stone work. (Criterion 1.1)

Minninup Homestead both compliments and punctuates the flat coastal plain. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Minninup Homestead is one of the earliest homesteads in the Wellington district and gives an understanding of the early European occupation of the Capel region. (Criterion 2.1)

It demonstrates the settlement and development of outlying farmlands of the Bunbury region during the 1840s. (Criterion 2.2)

It is associated with Reverend J.R. Wollaston and some of the earliest settlers of Bunbury, such as James Child and William Ramsay. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Minninup Homestead contributes to the community's sense of place because of its long and continuing association with the farming of surrounding lands. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The original part of *Minninup Homestead* is by nature of its age and design an uncommon structure and therefore has some rarity value.

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Minninup Homestead, a Victorian Georgian rural homestead, is characteristic of its class. (Criterion 6.1)

It represents a rural way of life and an agricultural land function. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Minninup Homestead is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Minninup Homestead has high integrity. The original house was built as a rural homestead, the modern extensions were built for the same purpose, and the place continues to be used as such today.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The use of modern cladding materials externally, the large ground floor extensions, the use of brick paving to the verandah and the insertion of a raised floor in the first floor bathroom have compromised the original state of the building. Authenticity is fair.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Elise de Munck B.A. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Minninup Homestead is a two-storey farmhouse with an attic, ground floor verandah and modern ground floor extensions. One of the earliest homesteads in the Wellington district, and one of the grandest in its day¹, it is situated on Mangles Road within a kilometre of the coast and about 5km north-west of Capel townsite, which it predates by 50 years or more.²

In 1830 Lt Governor James Stirling caused a temporary military station to be established at Port Leschenault under the command of Lt Henry W. Bunbury of the 21st Fusiliers. Bunbury engaged in explorations in the district and wrote a book on his experiences. When a townsite was proposed at the site of the former military station, it was named Bunbury and shown on Arrowsmith's 1839 map of the colony.³ Townsite lots were declared open for selection on 26 March 1841⁴ and settlement there facilitated the taking up of outlying land for farming purposes.

The 'Minninup' property, Leschenault Location 44 of about 130 hectares, was surveyed in June 1843 for James Kay Child, a young Bunbury merchant who had arrived in the Swan River Colony 26 months earlier. Child, who was busy diversifying into 'Bay Whaling' and the brewing of 'Colonial Sugar Beer' in Bunbury, erected a hut on the property and put his servant, William Allan King, on the land as tenant. Within months, however, financial troubles obliged Child to close down his Bunbury operations and join his servant in the hut at 'Minninup'. The Deed of Grant for the farm is dated 30 January 1844 and, despite Child's reduced circumstances, it appears possible that the construction of *Minninup Homestead* commenced around this period.⁵

The house was solidly constructed and on a larger scale than most farm homesteads in the region. Limestone for the walls was quarried and dressed 100 metres from the building site and incised Roman numerals on the attic floor joists may indicate prefabrication on the ground. Originally, the homestead had a shingle roof.⁶

In June 1846, Child, aged 27, died of consumption. He was buried at his friend Reverend John R. Wollaston's church at Picton. Child's will named his father, James Child of London, as beneficiary and Wollaston became executor of the will.⁷ King continued as tenant on the 'Minninup' farm with a partner named John Bell. In an arrangement known as an 'Improving Lease', these two may have continued with the construction of the house in lieu of rent.⁸

¹ *Inquirer* 17 September 1851, p.2.

² 'Notes on the history of Capel', BL - RN587.

³ DOLA Exploration Plan 124A.

⁴ *Government Gazette* No.246.

⁵ Cook, John Robert 'Notes on "Minninup" and its early owners, Child and Ramsay', BL - Q994.12MIN.

⁶ Brockman, Mr & Mrs E. 'Application for Assistance under the National Estate Programme'.

⁷ Memorial VI/162, BL - microform and *Inquirer* 6 January 1847, p.1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Certainly, the building was nearing completion when the property was advertised for sale in September 1851 as follows:

For Sale by Private Contract - That excellent farm called MININUP [sic], situate about 14 miles from Bunbury, between that and the Vasse - consisting of about 320 acres of land; 40 acres about the house are well fenced, and under good cultivation, most of which is first-rate Wheat Land. A very handsome House of three stories high has been erected at great expense, about half a mile from the Sea, upon an excellent site and is certainly one of the best buildings in the colony, being entirely of dressed stone, and commanding an extensive view; is completely roofed in, and is fitted with Verandah Posts and Rafters all round. Most of the Stuff required for floors, and interior fittings, is lying in the House, and well seasoned, and much of it already framed.

With Laborer's Huts, Stockyard, Piggeries, Barn, and Stackyard [sic]. A complete Lime Kiln, and abundance of fine limestone close at hand. Half an acre of land well trenched, to form a Vineyard, and the soil is excellent for growing Potatoes, both winter and summer. The whole forming a most valuable Homestead. A responsible tenant is in possession, under term, of which about 18 months are unexpired.⁹

However, no sale took place at that time and it was another five years before Wollaston was able to write to Child's father in London to inform him that he had at last disposed of the 'Minninup' property to William Cunningham Ramsay for £600.¹⁰ The Indenture of Sale was lodged in Perth in June 1856.¹¹

Ramsay had arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1842 aboard the *Diadem*, a ship that conveyed 166 people to the new settlement at Australind. Little is known of his early years in the colony, although there is some evidence that he was a servant of W.R. Bunbury who arrived on the same vessel.¹² By 1851, Ramsay was using Child's former store in Bunbury as a 'grog shop'.¹³ Some believe that he completed the construction of *Minninup Homestead* around 1853-54.¹⁴ He married 18 year old Bridget Shanahan at Dardanup in 1853 and they had three children before she died in the late 1850s. In addition to farming at 'Minninup' from 1856 and his business interests in Bunbury, Ramsay also operated a whaling company that used three whaleboats to chase and harpoon whales in Geographe Bay. He remarried in 1860 to Grace Campbell Hill. They had no children and Ramsay died two years later.¹⁵

When Grace Ramsay inherited *Minninup Homestead*, she had three young stepchildren to care for. It is thought that a young nephew of Ramsay's who arrived in the colony about six weeks after his uncle's death may have helped her operate the farm for a time. From 1863 to 1873 Grace Ramsay of *Minninup*

⁹ *Inquirer* 17 September 1851, p.2.

¹⁰ Wollaston, Rev. J.R. *Wollaston's Albany Journals, (1848-1856)* Vol.2, Compiled by Rev. Canon A. Burton, edited by Canon Percy U. Henn, 1948 (facsimile edition UWA Press, Nedlands, 1975), p.230-231.

¹¹ Memorial V/777, BL microform.

¹² Wollaston, Rev. J.R. *Wollaston's Albany Journals, (1848-1856)* Vol.2, Compiled by Rev. Canon A. Burton, edited by Canon Percy U. Henn, 1948 (facsimile edition UWA Press, Nedlands, 1975), p.230-231 and Cook, John Robert 'Notes on "Mininup" and its early owners, Child and Ramsay', BL - Q994.12MIN, p.8.

¹³ Wollaston, Rev. J.R. *Wollaston's Albany Journals, (1848-1856)* Vol.2, Compiled by Rev. Canon A. Burton, edited by Canon Percy U. Henn, 1948 (facsimile edition UWA Press, Nedlands, 1975), p.117-118.

¹⁴ Cook, John Robert 'Notes on "Mininup" and its early owners, Child and Ramsay', BL - Q994.12MIN.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Homestead was a regular employer of Ticket of Leave men, convicts who had earned their work release, to help with the heavy labour.¹⁶ After that period, the running of the farm was probably taken over by Ramsay's elder son, 19 year old James. When James was accidentally killed in 1879, the younger son, William, then 21 years old, took over. Grace Ramsay died in 1893, leaving the farm to William and his sister.¹⁷

Over the next decade, William greatly enlarged his surrounding land holdings to 1805 hectares and imported cattle and horses for breeding purposes. This program resulted in high class stock that were exhibited with considerable success at local shows. Under his development program, the extensive property was acknowledged as 'about the finest in the district.' An influential figure in the region, he occupied a seat on the Bunbury Road Board for five years.¹⁸

Around this period, possibly during the 1920s, the original shingle roof of *Minninup Homestead* was replaced with corrugated iron and the six original dormer windows were taken out and replaced with small skylights.¹⁹

William remained a bachelor until about 17 months before his death. He married his housekeeper, Mrs Uranie Murnane, a widow, in March 1924 and died at the age of 68 in August the following year. His will included bequests to the value of £22,900 and left *Minninup Homestead* to his widow. In 1928, she in turn transferred ownership of the farm to her two sons, Michael V. and Adrian R. Murnane.²⁰

The Murnane brothers and their wives and families resided on the property in houses adjacent to *Minninup Homestead* for some years until the farm was purchased by E.J.T. Brockman of 'Dudinalup via Balingup' in 1936.²¹ Mrs Ramsay stayed on in the main house for a few years, but when the property eventually passed into the hands of Brockman's son, Francis Edward Brockman, and his wife in 1960, it appears that *Minninup Homestead* had been unoccupied for a considerable time and had endured many years of neglect.²² In 1968, F.E. Brockman's son, Ted, and his wife, Fiona, set about restoring the building which was classified by the National Trust in 1973.

Minninup Homestead was enlarged by the addition of ground floor extensions in 1987²³ and still functions as a farm homestead.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Battye, J.S. *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia* Vol. 2 (facsimile edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1985), p.442.

¹⁹ Brockman, Mr & Mrs E. 'Application for Assistance under the National Estate Programme'.

²⁰ Cook, John Robert 'Notes on "Minninup" and its early owners, Child and Ramsay', BL - Q994.12MIN.

²¹ DOLA, Certificate of Title Vol. 1045 Fol. 199; telephone interview with Mr F.E. Brockman by Ian Elliot on 29 May 1996.

²² *South Western Times* 27 October 1988, p.31.

²³ Letter to HCWA from Mrs E Brockman, 1 June 1997

Minninup Homestead is located on the west side of Mangles Road, about 1km from the coast and about 5km north-west of Capel. To the north-east of the homestead are machinery sheds and to the east are two houses. To the north, west and south are paddocks. The land is on a flat coastal plain behind a primary dune system and is used for beef and dairy farming.

Minninup Homestead is a large homestead consisting of an original two-storey Victorian Georgian house with an attic and modern ground floor extensions. The extensions comprise of a kitchen, laundry, bathroom and living area to the west of the original house and a garage to the south-east of the original house, attached to the original verandah. Immediately to the north is a grassed area, a garden and a tennis court.

The original house is symmetrically laid out, rectangular in plan with its long axis running east-west. A central hallway that contains a staircase is aligned north-south and divides the house into two equal halves, consisting of two rooms each. The southern rooms of each half are equally sized and slightly larger than the northern rooms. This pattern is repeated on the first floor. In the attic, there is only one room to each side of the central hall and staircase, due to the roof encroaching on usable floor space. The steeply pitched, hipped roof is pitched on a wall plate about 600mm above the attic floor level, and has six symmetrically arranged dormer windows, three to the north and three to the south.

Typically, the construction of the original house consists of timber flooring, limestone walls plastered internally, and plaster ceilings. Four rooms have differently patterned pressed metal ceilings, the earliest probably dating from the turn of the century. Windows are either timber or steel casements. The timber casements are original. The steel casements date from about 1968. The attic windows have aluminium sliding sashes, with six poorly proportioned panes in each sash.

Commencing with the ground floor, the south-west or living room has polished floorboards, wallpapered walls and a pressed metal ceiling. The original fireplace is still in use. This room was probably originally a sitting room. The north-west room, which is now a spare room, was morning or day room and converted to a kitchen in 1968. It has a fireplace which has been subsequently blocked off. This room has a plaster ceiling which appears original. The original kitchen was a separate timber construction with workmen's dining rooms. The north-east room is used as a bedroom and was possibly a dining room. The south-east room, has carpet laid over the timber floor and is used as an office. This room was originally a sitting room. The central hallway has a pair of half glazed timber entrance doors to the south and a window to the north. The floors are of timber and the ceiling is pressed metal. A steep timber staircase with finely turned newels and simple, square in plan, balusters leads up one flight to the first floor. The rooms on this floor were probably used as bedrooms and three of them are still used for this purpose. The north-west room was converted to a bathroom in 1978 with most of the original floor being covered by a raised floor, in order to accommodate plumbing. It has a pressed metal ceiling, as does the hallway. The staircase leads from the first floor to a landing, from which a view of the coast is available through the dormer window. The stairs continue back in the opposite direction to the attic floor. The two attic rooms are lined with

asbestos up to the 600mm high wall plate level and also within the dormers. The roof construction is unusual in that each rafter has a collar tie, presumably to ensure that the roof structure is able to withstand strong ocean winds. A chimney penetrates the western attic room, and its brick construction is evident through gaps in the cement render.

The 1987 ground floor extensions are the same width as, and immediately adjacent to, the original building and consist of an open plan kitchen, dining and sitting area and a separate laundry and bathroom area. The construction of the extensions consists of limestone walls and a corrugated metal roof externally, while internally there are terracotta tiles on a concrete slab and plastered walls and ceilings. The external stonework of the extensions, while matching the original limestone in colour, differs from the original in that the coursing is random, not the stretcher bond of the original, the mortar joints are much wider than the original, there are no quoins to openings and corners unlike the original building, and different cutting techniques have resulted in a different surface texture to the original. The extensions have a verandah to the north, south and west so that *Minninup Homestead* has a single-storey verandah to all four sides. Redundant verandah posts to the original west facade have been incorporated in the verandah to the north of the garage, judging by the coarser grain of the new timbers used in this area. The detailing of the old and new verandahs is similar, however, the original verandah beams have drip grooves whereas the new ones do not. Also, the spacing of the verandah posts to the extensions is about 300mm wider than the original. Both new and old verandahs have matching modern brick paving. The original verandah floor was probably timber.

The garage is located to the east of the original verandah. A verandah to the north side of the garage aligns with the original south verandah. The garage has a concrete floor, limestone walls identical to the residential extensions and a corrugated zincalume roof.

13. 3 REFERENCES

No key references.