



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## 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)

- 2.4.4 Migrating through organised colonisation
- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 8.14 Living in cities and suburbs

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

- 107 Settlements
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism & dairying
- 401 Government & politics
- 605 Famous & infamous people

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Leschenault Homestead* the house and surrounding gardens contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and its picturesque setting is extensively used as a venue for wedding photographs. (Criterion 1.1)

In a setting of riverine environment and remnant farmland, the gardens and structures form a picturesque precinct, with many attractive vistas and aspects. The gardens having been skillfully developed over several generations from natural bush into a picturesque 'English' landscape, the original 'front' gardens and lawn led down a gentle slope to the river bank. (Criterion 1.2)

*Leschenault Homestead* is bordered by the Old Coastal Road, along which are remnants of the Clifton family's early olive tree plantings. The mature trees provide an avenue for the homestead's access road and the main road. (Criterion 1.3)

The group of buildings and the stone water tanks, although simple in structure, blend well with their environs and the use of local materials further contributes to the aesthetic quality of the place. (Criterion 1.2)

The place is a recreational landmark for the community and a point of reference in a landscape that is changing from a riverine and farming environment to a heavily industrial area. The place forms a pleasing contrast to the nearby heavily industrialised area. (Criterion 1.3)

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For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from 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.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

## 11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place illustrates the evolution and history of the Bunbury area and, as an example of an early farm homestead surviving within the urban area, contributes to the cultural diversity of the City and its region. (Criterion 2.1)

The place is closely associated with the historic, convict-free Wakefieldian Australind Settlement Scheme and its demise. (Criterion 2.2)

Leschenault Homestead was located near the Old Coastal Road, the mail route and the main route between Bunbury and Australind. (Criterion 2.2)

*Leschenault Homestead* is significant for its connections with Governor Sir James Stirling, and with well known pioneering families of the area, the Cliftons and the Johnstons. The surviving journals and papers of these families provide an invaluable record of colonial settlement at the time and the way in which people coped with the conditions. (Criterion 2.3)

It is an example of colonial transportable construction technologies in Western Australia at the time and the use of earth and other indigenous building materials. The water tanks provide an important example of the water collection and storage techniques of the time. (Criterion 2.4)

## 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

*Leschenault Homestead* illustrates the development of a variety of building and farming techniques and has the potential for adaptation to a teaching site. It is especially significant as a surviving text book example of wattle and daub infilling of timber wall frames and for the evidence it may provide as to the precise origins of the craft in Australia. (Criterion 3.1)

*Leschenault Homestead* has the potential, through the use of archaeological methodologies, to yield information about the lives of the former occupants of the site, through an investigation of sub-floor deposits, the homestead's gardens, the sites of the demolished dairy sheds, barns, stables and timber sheds, and archaeological deposits in the bed of the river, which is understood to have been used by the household as a refuse dump. This information would provide a rich source of information about early colonial life in Western Australia (Criterion 3.1)

The extant pond to the west of the buildings provides evidence of the original river course. There is also evidence (pond/billabong) of the flood plain for the wetlands to the northeast of the site. (Criterion 3.1)

## 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Leschenault Homestead* is highly valued by the local and wider community for its association with well known pioneering families of the area, the Cliftons and the Johnstons and with the settlement scheme for the area at that time. Descendants of these families still live in the area. The building was also used as the Government Residency of Bunbury. (Criterion 4.1)

*Leschenault Homestead* is significant for its recreational value to the local community, being extensively used as a venue for wedding photographs, and contributes to the community's sense of place and social cohesion. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

*Leschenault Homestead* is a relatively intact homestead. It includes one of a small number of surviving buildings built by participants in the Wakefieldian Australind Settlement, and one of only three known buildings to contain imported cast iron casement windows. The place also contains a remarkable collection of water collection and storage structures of the period. (Criterion 5.1)

*Leschenault Homestead* includes remains of imported prefabricated cottages, relocated from the Australind Settlement site and a complete wattle and daub tradesman constructed dwelling rather than a layman's improvised construction. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Leschenault Homestead* is representative of the type of building and time, the exotic garden buffering the homestead from the working fields and harsh native bush surrounding it. The design of the buildings represents a class of sophisticated domestic architectural design carried out over a long period of time as evidence by the number of detached buildings, including the kitchens. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

The homestead is in fair condition having undergone maintenance works since 2008 to the present including recent restoration works (2011) for use as office space. The rear outbuildings have fallen into a poor state of disrepair due to a lack of maintenance.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Leschenault Homestead* has a high degree of integrity. Although it is no longer in use as a homestead, this former function is still readily discernible.

For a discussion of the integrity of the place refer to Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996).

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Leschenault Homestead* has a high degree of authenticity, each occupant and generation having made changes to the place without rebuilding, thereby contributing information as to how people lived and adapted to conditions and the availability of building materials of the times.

For a discussion of the authenticity of the place refer to Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996).

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

This document has been based on 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' prepared by Ian Molyneux and Associates for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996 with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a detailed discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to the Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996).

It appears that the Cliftons' Leschenault property was not being farmed until c.1845, following the failure of the Australind settlement. Pearce Clifton, son of Marshal Clifton, moved from Australind to Leschenault some time in the year following his marriage to Annette Gaudin in January 1845, and Marshal Clifton notes in his diary in February 1846 that cottages from Australind were moved to Leschenault for Pearce's use. Although the Cliftons occupied the site from this time, they were not formally granted the land until 1858, following prolonged correspondence between Marshall Clifton and the defunct Western Australia Company, seeking settlement for outstanding salary owed to him by the Company.<sup>1</sup>

The Heritage Council were informed in the late 1990s that the Bunbury Port Inner Harbour expansion would result in the need to relocate the Leschenault Homestead and Outbuildings due to the requirement to divert the Preston River.

In July 2007, after much deliberation and negotiation, the Heritage Council conditionally supported the relocation of the Homestead, Outbuildings and its setting. A Management Agreement and Maintenance Plan formed part of the conditions of support.

As at August 2011 a date has yet to be set for the relocation.

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a detailed discussion of the physical evidence, refer to Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996).

Works carried out on the Homestead and surrounds from 2008 to 2010 included the following:

- All asbestos material has been removed and replaced.
- The two bathrooms and laundry have been refurbished and the kitchen upgraded.
- The interior of the homestead has been repainted.
- The timber flooring on a section of the front verandah has been replaced.
- Post and wire fencing has been installed around the homestead.
- The brick water tank at the rear of the homestead has been enclosed.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the letters of Marshall Waller Clifton, 1841-1852, submitted to the Heritage Council by P. Barnes, June 2003; on HCWA file P00344; diaries of Marshall Clifton, February 1846, quoted in Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996), Volume 1 p.144.

With the occupation of the Homestead by Bunbury Port Authority for office space, the following works were undertaken:

- A termite inspection and treatment program.
- The old well has been covered over with tin.
- Electrical and water services have been upgraded.
- Air-conditioners have been installed.
- The external surfaces of the Homestead have been repainted.
- New carpeting has been laid.
- Security and smoke detection systems have been installed.
- White ant affected structural wall timbers have been replaced.
- Broken windowpanes have been replaced.
- Gutter board scalloping has been repaired and/or replaced.

Other works proposed for the near future include the installation of a damp course to the two western chimney bases, stabilisation of brickwork and mortar courses, and the refurbishment of the cast iron sash window frames.

The outbuildings to the rear of the site are in a poor state of disrepair and are currently fenced off. There are no maintenance plans in place for these structures. Blue asbestos has also been found in the outbuildings.

### **13.3 REFERENCES**

Ian Molyneux and Associates, 'Leschenault Homestead Conservation Plan 1996' (prepared for the Bunbury Port Authority, March 1996).

### **13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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