



## 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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.5 Developing primary production
- 3.14.1 Building to suit Australian conditions
- 3.16.1 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 5.7 Surviving as Indigenous people in a white-dominated society
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 6.5 Educating people in remote places
- 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare

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

- 107 Settlements
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 303 Mining (including mineral processing)
- 402 Education and science
- 404 Community services and utilities
- 601 Aboriginal people
- 602 Early settlers

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The primary school building has aesthetic significance for its simple form, symmetrical plan and elevation, exposed stonework and general design quality. (Criterion 1.1)

*Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* makes an important contribution to the streetscape and to the precinct of buildings which identify the original nineteenth century Roebourne townsite. Its proximity to the Roebourne Hospital and to the Holy Trinity Anglican Church visually link it to the early buildings on Hampton Street. Other stone buildings in the town, including

\* 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.

the gaol, courthouse and police buildings, give a distinctive character to the old town centre of Roebourne. (Criterion 1.3)

#### **11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE**

The town of Roebourne was the first European settlement in the north-west of Western Australia, gazetted in 1867. *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* represents the importance of educational facilities as a public amenity in the developing town and region. (Criterion 2.1)

*Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* contributes to a precinct of buildings which represent the period of prosperity and growth in Western Australia due to goldrushes in the north-west and eastern goldfields. The place is a significant component of the original Roebourne townsite. (Criterion 2.1)

In its recent history, the use of the place for the Yaandina Babies and Children's Centre and for Aboriginal community support purposes is an important reflection of the changing character and available facilities of Roebourne. This is influenced by the changes to the place since the early 1970s. An increase in awareness of Aboriginal esteem and culture, the effects of state legislation on the Aboriginal population of the area with equal pay laws reducing the ability to provide for families on pastoral stations and therefore increasing Roebourne's indigenous population, and the growth of new mining towns such as Dampier, Wickham and Karratha at the expense of Roebourne are illustrated in these changes. (Criterion 2.1)

#### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

The history of *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* makes a significant contribution to an understanding of the history of the settlement of the north-west of Western Australia generally, and the town of Roebourne specifically. The hardships faced due to a harsh climate are illustrated by the history of changes to the place. The difficulties faced by the school due to isolation from the state's administrative centre are also illustrated in the ongoing struggle to maintain adequate facilities, with sufficient room and provisions frequently inadequate for the number of students requiring education. (Criterion 3.2)

#### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* is socially significant to the community of Roebourne as a school which was initiated within the first years of settlement of the town by the early European settlers to the area. The extant school building has survived relatively unchanged for over 100 years and has been used as a school for over 80 years. (Criterion 4.1)

Since the early 1970s, *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* has maintained its use as a community facility, supporting a babies and children's centre, youth development classes, and a drop-in centre and hostel. The buildings continue to support significant community uses. (Criterion 4.1)

As one of a group of late nineteenth century stone public buildings which represent the history of settlement in Roebourne, *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* is significant in contributing to the sense of place of the local community. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

Comparative study shows that *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* was the first school opened in northern Western Australia, and is the oldest extant school building in both the north west region, and in northern Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Comparative study also shows that the Roebourne Primary School is a unique design. Many school buildings in remote areas were constructed with less permanent materials – such as the tent schools in Coolgardie. Other stone buildings, such as the school at Cossack, were of similar but different design and it is not likely that there are any similar structures remaining extant. It has not been determined whether there are any remaining quarters buildings in other centres. (Criterion 5.1)

*Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* are unique structures in the north-west of Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The buildings which comprise *Roebourne Primary School & Quarters (fmr)* have materials, design and structure similar to other public buildings from the same period in Roebourne. They are significant as a representation of the dominant architectural style and philosophy of substantial and formal stone structures that was applied to the region in the late nineteenth century. (Criterion 6.1)

The law and order precinct reflects the dominance of the new European settlers over the original Aboriginal occupants of the area. In this context the construction of the school in 1891 represents provision for the children of the European community without consideration of the needs of the indigenous inhabitants of the area. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

The stone walls of the primary school building are generally in good condition. Externally, the concrete slab floor to the eastern verandah is in poor condition. Internally, the concrete floor slabs are in fair to poor condition. The roof structure and sheeting appears to be in good condition although the timber fascia is in fair condition only. Generally, doors and windows are in fair to good condition. Internally, the concrete floor slabs are in fair to poor condition. The walls are in good condition and the ceiling is in fair to good condition. Overall, there have been various modifications to the building over its lifetime. It is generally in fair to good condition.

The internal finishes of the former headmaster's quarters building are generally good. There is no evidence of structural problems. The additional buildings to the former headmaster's quarters are in good condition and there do not appear to be any major structural or maintenance issues.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The school building is of medium to high integrity.

The headmaster's quarters' building is of medium integrity.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The internal elements of the headmaster's quarters are of low authenticity. The original building layout has been retained although there are no original window openings. New openings in the original fabric have generally been limited to provide doorways in existing window openings. Additions have been constructed on the southern and eastern sides of the building, and the verandahs have been enclosed. This building is of medium authenticity.

The original ventilating lantern of the school building has been removed, as has the original dropped verandah roof. The entire roof was replaced c1953. This building is of medium authenticity.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Supporting evidence has been taken from the 'Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Family and Children's Services in May 1998.

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to the 'Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Family and Children's Services in May 1998.

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to the 'Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Family and Children's Services in May 1998.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a comparative analysis refer to the 'Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Family and Children's Services in May 1998.

### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

The 'Former Roebourne Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Family and Children's Services in May 1998.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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