



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

Claremont Museum is significant in exhibiting aesthetic characteristics imparted by its setting adjacent to a park of mature trees and spacious lawns on the right bank of the Swan River, together with its limestone walls, corrugated iron roof and simple symmetrical design. (Criterion 1.1)

The place contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape in that it is an extension of the adjacent park. (Criterion 1.3)

Claremont Museum forms a part of a significant streetscape with the adjacent house and similar of the turn of the century houses to the west along Victoria Avenue. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Claremont Museum is significant as having been built to satisfy a demand for a school for the children of Pensioner Guards, who were established on neighbouring riverfront blocks from the 1850s, and for other members of the community. (Criterion 2.1)

The place is significant for the variety of uses, important to the local community, to which it was put throughout its history. At the outset it doubled as a church, then, when a school was established in Bay View Terrace after the construction of Stirling Highway, it became a boarding house for young men of the district, and was known as the 'Appy 'Ome. Subsequently, around 1900, the place was acquired by the Police Department and used as a residence for various police officers until vested in the Claremont Council in 1972. (Criterion 2.1)

The building is associated with the convict era in that the stone for its walls was quarried by convicts and the convict department helped with funds and labour so that it could be completed in 1862. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place is important for information contributing to a wider understanding of cultural history by virtue of its use as a teaching site open to the public.

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Claremont Museum is highly valued and supported by the local community. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Claremont Museum is rare for its association with the Pensioner Guard community which inhabited the environs from 1850 and as a surviving example of an 1860s school. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Claremont Museum is in very good condition. The buildings and the grounds together with the adjacent park are well maintained.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The original intention of the 1861-2 building is intact in so far as its later adaptation to residential use is concerned. The construction of the new administration building and the storage shed to the south is in an imitative style and does not intrude on the historic structure. The current use has not caused the 1861-2 building to be altered and appears to be compatible. Being under the control of the Claremont Town Council, the long term sustainability of the significant values of the place appears to be assured. The integrity of the 1861-2 building is high.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of the 1861-2 building is high in so far as its later adaptation to residential use is concerned. There has been very little alteration to the structure since the addition of the bullnosed verandah and the timber lean-to structure at the rear, south side was added, and the other modifications made at the turn of the century.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled from material published by the museum and Ronald Bodycoat and from National Trust of Australia (WA) files.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Built during 1861-62, *Claremont Museum* is one of the oldest buildings in the Perth metropolitan area. It was built after a decade of requests by the local residents of Freshwater Bay and officials within government departments on their behalf.

The community of Freshwater Bay was formed in 1850 by the Pensioner Guards who were pensioned soldiers who served as guards to the convicts during their transportation to Western Australia and subsequently. The land to the west of this building was divided into half-acre allotments for the Pensioners. Each Pensioner also received a larger block at Butlers Swamp (now Lake Claremont) for cultivation purposes. The original name of Victoria Avenue was 'Pensioner's Row'.

A depot for the convicts was formed at the site of the present Council Park. Among the first tasks for the convicts was the construction of a good road between Fremantle and Perth along the route of the present Stirling Highway. Until that time, the sandy tracks through the thick coastal scrub were of no use for heavy traffic and the river was the only reliable line of transport. The community at Freshwater Bay was the only centre of population between Fremantle and Perth and the stationing of the convicts was part of this.

The need for a school and church was felt from 1850. Finally the erection of the school building began in 1861 with the co-operative pressure of Bishop Hale and Henry Trigg for the educational and church interests of the district. The free men of the community undertook the construction work voluntarily while stone for the building was quarried by convicts and the convict department helped with funds and labour so that it could be completed in 1862.

It was opened as a school for the children of Pensioner Guards and other local residents and the teacher, Mrs. Anne Herbert, had an enrolment of sixteen girls and boys of various ages. On Sundays the schoolroom was used as a church for the residents and parties of convicts came along the bush track from the Depot to attend services.

With the coming of the railway in 1881 the main focus of the settlement in Claremont shifted to Bay View Terrace and the Freshwater Bay School slowly ceased to play a central role in the life of the community. It was finally replaced by the central State school in Bay View Terrace, Claremont, in 1892 and the erection of Christ Church, Claremont, in 1893. During this time the old government school of Mrs. Herbert's became known as the 'Appy 'Ome and was used as a boarding house for young men in the district. By 1900 it had passed into the hands of the Police Department by whom it was used as a residence.

Having been vacated by its last occupants, the cottage was vested by the State Government in the Claremont Town Council in 1972. The Cultural Affairs

Committee of the Council set up a working party to determine the future of the building, and with the co-operation of the Western Australian Museum and the W.A. Craft Council, plans were devised for its renovation. The Museum was officially opened to the public by Sir Paul Hasluck on 12 April 1975.

Mr. Peter Parkinson served as honorary architectural consultant. Mr Parkinson designed the administration building. Subsequently, in 1987, architect Ronald Bodycoat carried out restoration work on the 1861-2 building, treating rising damp in the stone walls and painting internally and externally.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The place consists of three buildings, the original old school facing on to, and with its axis parallel to, Victoria Avenue and new structures, not included in the assessment, to the south of, and with their axes at right angles to the original building.

The buildings form a U shaped configuration enclosing a grassed quadrangle to the south flowing into the grassed and treed park sloping down to the river bank. The administration building lies on the east side of the quadrangle and a storage shed is sited on the west side against the boundary with the next door house, no 64 Victoria Avenue. There is a car park to the east of the buildings which adjoins the northern part of the park.

The original building consists of a central core constructed of white painted random rubble limestone walls and a steeply pitched corrugated iron, hipped roof. The Victoria Avenue façade has a centrally placed front door with one window symmetrically placed each side in the typical Georgian Colonial manner. There is one centrally placed window in the east facing stone wall.

The north side (Victoria Avenue side) of the central core is protected by a verandah supported on timber posts with decorative diagonal cross brackets at plate level. The bullnosed roof of the verandah is painted in white and green stripes.

On the south side (the river side) of the central core are timber framed and weatherboard clad additions under a lean-to roof. The west side of the central core is another lean-to which once housed the laundry.

Internally, the central core is divided into two areas. At the eastern end is a large room, the original school room, into which the front door opens and at the west end is a smaller room, originally the teacher's room, taking up the remainder of the central core. Centrally placed in the wall between the two rooms is a chimney breast containing fireplaces opening to each room. The ceilings are oregon pine boarding running east to west, the walls are white painted rough finished stone work and the floors are wide, polished jarrah boarding. The western room has narrower boards. The window reveals are splayed.

Originally the school consisted of the stone walled class room and teacher's room. The stone was unpainted. The windows of the class room were set high in the walls so that their sills were above the eye height of children, in the typical manner of class rooms. The present front door was such a window, as were the doors now leading onto the rear lean-to. The window

now in the east elevation of the class room was originally the entrance door and had a round arch over it. The teacher's room window was at its present height. The roof was clad in timber shingles.

The lean-to section at the rear has timber partitions dividing the display room from a work room. These areas have a similar ceiling to the central core, but raking with the roof slope and similar oregon pine boards lining the walls. The floors are of wide, polished jarrah boards.

The lean-to at the west of the central core is unlined and contains a copper in a brick fire box and cement troughs.

The administration building is constructed with white painted brick walls and has a corrugated iron clad, hip roof of matching pitch to that of the central core of the 1861-2 building.

The storage shed is constructed fibre cement clad walls and has a low pitched corrugated clad roof.

13. 3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition 02/11/1981

Pamphlet of the Claremont Museum.