



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Memorial House is a fine example of the Arts and Crafts style. Elements of this style evident in *Memorial House* are the proportioning of the building and the interior treatments. (Criterion 1.1)

Memorial House is integral in the Bruce Rock Hospital complex and valued by the Bruce Rock community for its presence. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Memorial House was constructed as a memorial to those who fought in World War One. (Criterion 2.2)

Memorial House was built and operated with funds raised, in large part, by local effort, and represents the country philosophy of community self-help. The place represents the establishment of permanent medical facilities in the Bruce Rock district. (Criterion 2.2)

Memorial House is an example of the work of local architect W. T. Thorne. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Memorial House is highly valued by the local community for its associations with health care. The place was established as a hospital in 1922 and, since 1978, has operated as a frail aged facility. (Criterion 4.1)

Memorial House contributes to the local community's sense of place. *Memorial House* is still identifiable despite the construction of a larger hospital complex on the site. (Criterion 4.2)

* 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.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The style of *Memorial House* is representative of the philosophy of the time which advocated hospital buildings of domestic scale and character. (Criterion 6.1)

Memorial House is representative of the functional memorials built throughout Western Australia in the inter-war years to commemorate those who served in World War One. (Criterion 6.1)

Memorial House was built and operated with funds raised, in large part, by local effort, and represents the country philosophy of community self-help. (Criterion 6.2)

At least five other Memorial Hospitals were established in rural Western Australia as memorials to those who served in World War One, and were largely community funded. These are Boyup Brook (1923); Dumbleyung (1925); Merredin RSL Ward (1932; addition to existing hospital); Narembeen (1929); and, Northam (1923; demolished c. 1970). (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Memorial House is in good condition due to a regular maintenance program.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Memorial House continues to be a facility associated with the hospital. A number of minor internal alterations and additions have taken place over the years, and ensuite facilities have been built along the side verandahs to accommodate functional changes and facilitate the ongoing use of the place. It has retained a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The original 1922 fabric is mostly in place, although some removal of fabric, including some windows and doors, the timber verandah floor, and the replacement of roof material, has reduced the degree of authenticity to a moderate level.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Memorial House is a brick and iron building showing elements of the Inter-War Californian Bungalow style with the influence of Federation Arts and Crafts style.¹ The place was built in 1922, as the Bruce Rock War Memorial Hospital. In 1978, the place was converted to an aged care facility known as *Memorial House*.

Sandalwood cutters worked in the Bruce Rock district in the 1880s and 1890s. Their tracks criss-crossed the district between the granite outcrops that dotted the area. The rocks acted as water catchments, providing a reliable source of water at a shallow depth with good grass for horse feed. Pastoralists also took up leases in the district around the same time.²

The discovery of gold in the Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie area presented problems of transport. The Eastern Railway, which had been constructed as far as Northam in 1886, was extended to Southern Cross in 1894, and reached Kalgoorlie in 1897. The Northam-Kalgoorlie section was known as the Eastern Goldfields Railway. As well as servicing the goldfields, the railway opened up the district for settlers on the land. Branch lines were constructed into the new wheat growing areas to provide better transport for farm produce and supplies.³

In 1913, a townsite, initially known as Nunagin, was surveyed at the T-junction where the York-Quairading railway line met the Narrogin-Merredin line. These two railway branch lines linked the Great Southern and Eastern Goldfields railway lines. Nunagin was immediately confused with Narrogin and Nungarin, and goods and mail were wrongly delivered. On 17 June 1913, the Surveyor General recommended the lots at Nunagin siding be renamed Bruce Rock townsite.⁴ The name came from one of the granite outcrops in the area, which had probably been named for a sandalwood cutter who worked the district and used the rock as his base camp.⁵

The first 31 lots of the Bruce Rock township sold quickly. A further 64 lots were surveyed and offered for sale in October 1913. There were already 600 people resident in the district and medical and hospital services were needed.⁶ In 1913, there was a hospital at Southern Cross, and Nurse Sampson's Private Hospital at Kellerberrin, which catered for general hospital cases as well as maternity patients. Some districts were able to attract the services of a Local Medical Officer, but seriously ill patients had to be transported to Perth by train, and there were problems with trying to fit a

¹ Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1994, pp. 144-147.

² Ewers, John K. *Bruce Rock: The Story of a District*, Bruce Rock District Road Board, 1959, pp. 10-13.

³ Stannage, C. T. (ed) *A New History of Western Australia*, Perth, UWA Press, 1981, p. 250.

⁴ Ewers, John K. op cit, p. 42-45.

⁵ Ewers, John K. op cit, p. 10.

⁶ State Hotels Department, File 26/1921, 'Bruce Rock Hotel building', Vol. 1.

stretcher in a railway carriage.⁷ The people of Merredin requested a hospital and were advised by the Government to 'set to work and provide funds.'⁸ The Government did not have the money to build hospitals in every country centre that wanted one.

The situation after World War One was little different. Bruce Rock Road Board employed a nurse, Nurse Glass, to administer to the local residents. When she left the district in early 1920, the Road Board advertised for a Medical Officer for the District. Dr Noel Brown was appointed in April 1920, and occupied the house previously used by Nurse Glass. Dr Brown wanted a house set up as a hospital but there was difficulty finding a suitable house to lease. The Road Board was keen to have a hospital as they were afraid the good Doctor would not stay in the district otherwise. There was also concern about whether there would be 'enough business for his remuneration.'⁹

Later in 1920, Nurse Haythornthwaite, a maternity nurse, arrived in the district. She set up a private maternity hospital in Bruce Rock.¹⁰ A general hospital was an 'absolute necessity [as] present conditions are not fair to residents nor to the doctor, who is always anxious to save suffering or risk.'¹¹ Dr Brown resigned after nine months, and Dr Andrew Bean took his place in February 1921.

The idea of a World War One memorial in the form of a hospital was put forward by Bruce Rock Roads Board. The Board donated £65 and the Government offered £1 for every £1 raised by the community. There was a desire to be self-reliant and not dependent on Government handouts (or under Government control). Funds were raised by dances, socials, fancy dress balls, flower selling and a farm to farm canvas. An amount of £1,406 was raised and architect William Thorne donated his £150 fee. The State Government donated £1,500 for the project.

A 6.3 acre (2.55ha) site was gazetted Reserve 42725 for Hospital & Community Health purposes.¹² The foundation stone for the War Memorial Hospital was laid on 19 August 1922, by former Colonial Secretary W. T. Broun. Construction was carried out by local builder F. T. Deacon. Deacon also built Bruce Rock and Narembeen Road Board offices and Bruce Rock Masonic Lodge in the 1920s.

Many memorials have been erected in Australia following major wars to honour and remember the sacrifice of those who served and are important for their community associations, as well as the values and sentiments they represent.¹³ Memorials erected following World War One were central to a sense of national identity and expressed Australia's allegiance to and pride in

⁷ *Merredin Mercury*, 17 September 1913, p. 2.

⁸ *Merredin Mercury*, 15 October 1913.

⁹ *Bruce Rock-Corrigin Post & Narembeen Guardian*, 16 April 1920, p. 2; 23 April 1920, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Bruce Rock-Corrigin Post & Narembeen Guardian*, 13 August 1920, p. 2; *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1920-1928.

¹¹ *Bruce Rock-Corrigin Post & Narembeen Guardian*, 17 December 1920, p. 2.

¹² *Western Australian Government Gazette*,

¹³ Richards, Oline, 'War Memorials in Western Australia', Perth, 1996, p. 1.

being part of the Imperial British Empire and were often derived from ancient classical memorial traditions.¹⁴

Memorials took many forms and were generally monumental, in the form of a sculpture, cenotaph, honour board, obelisk, soldier statue or wall, or were practical, in the form of ornamental clocks, flag poles, sundials, seats, buildings, plantings or other recreational or community sites.¹⁵ Unlike the eastern states, many memorials constructed in Western Australia in the inter-war years were practical buildings rather than monuments or ornaments, as many rural areas at the time were underdeveloped and generally lacking in community amenities.¹⁶ *Memorial House*, a community building, fits into this pattern.

The design of the War Memorial Hospital followed popular thinking on hospital design. Since the 1880s, there had been an endeavour to get away from the institutional styles of the past and to build hospitals which were 'home-like' in character, 'cottages for cure and convalescence.' The bungalow style of building with verandahs on all sides was a popular design for country hospitals. Medical principles of separation, ventilation and sanitation were applied to hospital design for functional efficiency, resulting in pavilions, such as the separate ablutions block and operating theatre at the War Memorial Hospital.¹⁷ Ideas of sanitation were also evident in that all internal corners in the place were rounded.¹⁸

The Hospital was opened by the Premier Sir James Mitchell on 18 November 1922, and the place was managed by a Hospital Board made up of local residents and the doctor, and responsible to the Health Department.

[the hospital] has bricks to sil [sic] line and rough cast above. There are seven wards, observation ward, sitting room, matrons room, and maids quarters. It is considered one of the best appointed institutions in the state.¹⁹

The place opened debt free, but it was recognised that it would be difficult to carry on in like manner. Fundraising was a constant occupation for the Hospital Women's Auxiliary. The Co-op store also provided funds for the operation of the place. The Nurse's Quarter's were built by Wilfred Baxter, shortly after the Hospital opened. In 1928, The Hospital Board rented Nurse Haythornthwaite's maternity hospital, with the Road Board contributing £1 per week toward the rent, until a separate Maternity block was added to the hospital in 1929.²⁰

In 1940, the ablutions block at the back (north side) of the hospital was replaced with a new wing comprising kitchen, bathrooms and laundry. This wing was attached to the existing verandah on the north side of the hospital building.²¹ In that year, a new doctor took over the local practice. He was Dr. H. J. Illingworth. Dr Illingworth was soon at loggerheads with the

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 5.

¹⁷ Van Bremen, Ingrid, 'The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia', PhD Thesis, UWA, 1990, Vol. 2, p. 329-303.

¹⁸ *Merredin Mercury*, 1 February 1923, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Merredin Mercury*, 1 February 1923, p. 2.

²⁰ Lovell, Avon, *op cit*, p. 223; Health Dept files, Site plan, 23 September 1929.

²¹ PWD Plan 29192, 17 January 1940.

hospital staff and the Hospital Board. Patronage of the hospital and the doctor's practice fell away, with residents seeking medical services in Kellerberrin or Merredin. A reduction in hospital revenue resulted and, in 1941, the Board closed the hospital. A new Board was constituted and the hospital reopened shortly after.²²

In 1948-49, further alterations and additions were carried out to the hospital complex. New nurse's quarters were built on the site, north-west of the hospital, and the old nurse's quarters became domestic staff quarters and dining room. A new laundry and ironing room was built and the existing laundry in the north wing was converted to a storeroom. The lattice drying shed was also constructed at this time. The major buildings in the complex were linked by covered walkways.²³

In 1953, a large oval garden comprising nine dozen roses was planted at the front (south side) of the place to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.²⁴ In 1959, a new maternity wing was added on the west side of the existing maternity block. Part of the old maternity block was converted into an operating theatre, and the old operating theatre became the outpatients' clinic.²⁵ By 1968, further extensions to the new maternity wing had added extra wards and facilities and the original hospital building was no longer required to house patients. The new hospital took over the name of Bruce Rock War Memorial Hospital and the original hospital building became known as *Memorial House*.

The kitchen of *Memorial House* continued to be used to provide meals for the hospital and in late 1971, the place was occupied by Sister Hawkins, Sister for Home Nursing for the Aged. It was proposed at that time that when other accommodation was found for Sister Hawkins, *Memorial House* could be converted to a Day Centre for the elderly under her direction.²⁶ In 1972, five double flats were built in Bruce Rock to house well aged residents. Hostel accommodation for the frail aged was required so that elderly people could remain in the district. *Memorial House* was considered a suitable place to house a hostel, and the Bruce Rock Memorial House Committee was constituted in 1977, to facilitate the matter.²⁷

The Shire of Bruce Rock was keen for the project to go ahead and was prepared to take on the financial responsibility of remodelling *Memorial House* for its new function. The building was ready for occupation by March 1978, and in May had three residents. In 1981, there were 29 people in Home Care and five residents in *Memorial House*.²⁸

In 1980, *Memorial House* was considered to be in a dilapidated condition and \$215,000 was allocated by the State from the Hospital Fund for Special Repairs and Equipment. This covered re-roofing the place, rebuilding the

²² Lovell, Avon, op cit, p. 225.

²³ PWD site plans 23756, 25 July 1947 & 31555, 30 September 1948.

²⁴ Ewers, John K. op cit; Site plan, November 1992.

²⁵ PWD Plan 36629, 19 January 1958; PWD Site plan 23756, 14 April 1959.

²⁶ Health Dept File, BK-05-06 'Bruce Rock Hospital - site, properties & buildings', 15 December 1971.

²⁷ Health Dept. file BK05-08-01, 'Bruce Rock Memorial Hospital - leasing & rental of land,' 24 June 1977.

²⁸ *ibid*.

verandahs (the timber verandah floors were replaced with concrete) and exterior painting. A new kitchen also had to be provided for the hospital. The kitchen in *Memorial House* was gutted and converted for use as an activity room in 1983. Meals for the residents of *Memorial House* were provided by the hospital, which also provided Meals on Wheels for elderly residents in their own homes.²⁹ Ensuite bathrooms were added to the bedrooms at *Memorial House* c. 1984. These structures protrude onto the verandahs.

Government funding for residents of *Memorial House* was difficult to get, both from the Commonwealth Government in the form of a Department of Social Security (DSS) Personal Care Subsidy, or from the State Government as gap funding. The objection from the DSS was that there was no subsidy payable for hostels located on public hospital sites. The answer was for the Bruce Rock Memorial House Committee to lease the land from the Hospital Board. In 1982, a new vesting order vested the hospital reserve in the Bruce Rock Hospital Board who were then able to lease the land for any period up to 21 years.³⁰ A lease for that period was finalised in 1984.³¹ Funds are also donated by local organisations such as the Masonic Lodge and the Apex Club.

In 1998, *Memorial House* continues to function as a frail aged facility for the residents of the Bruce Rock district. The place is referred to as the Frail Aged Lodge in the Memorial Hospital's annual reports.³²

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Memorial House is located in the grounds of the Bruce Rock Hospital in Dunstal Street Bruce Rock. The place is located on the east side of the Hospital complex along the Butcher Street side of the property and facing Dunstal Street (south). *Memorial House* functions as an independent residential care facility for aged people.

Memorial House comprises the original 1922 hospital building and the former operating theatre. It is one of a number of buildings in the hospital complex, and adjoins the 1940 kitchen and bathroom block on the northern side. West of the kitchen block is the c. 1924 former Nurses' Quarters and north is the lattice drying shed. The main hospital is located west of *Memorial House*. A rock wall surrounds a large oval memorial rose garden in front of *Memorial House* on the south side.

Memorial House, originally a freestanding building, now adjoins the former operating theatre on the east, and the former kitchen and bathroom block on the north. The building is linked to other facilities in the hospital complex by means of a covered walkway which adjoins the western side of the breezeway between *Memorial House* and the kitchen block, and is integral within the hospital complex.

Memorial House displays elements of the Inter-War Californian Bungalow style with the influence of Federation Arts and Crafts style.³³ The characteristics of the style appropriate to this place include; freestanding single-storey

²⁹ *ibid.*; PWD Plan Job No. 23/508/4, 6 November 1979.

³⁰ Vesting Order, 9 March 1982.

³¹ Health Dept File BK05-08-01, *op cit*, 26 June 1984.

³² Bruce Rock War Memorial Hospital, annual report 1987/88, p. 5.

³³ Apperly, R., *et. al.*, *op cit*.

structure, verandahs, vernacular, simple massing with broad roof planes and the main roof extending over the verandahs, and simple timber verandah posts. The construction of *Memorial House* is typical of the period, with traditional brick bearing walls and roughcast rendering, and timber floor and roof construction with a corrugated iron roof.

Memorial House was the original hospital building on the site, with the adjacent one roomed operating theatre, and an ablution block north of the verandah, which was replaced by the kitchen block in 1940. The place has undergone a number of extensions along the east and west side verandahs, and the space under the verandah bounded by the former kitchen block on the north, has been enclosed on the east and west ends. All the changes that have taken place are to facilitate the continuous use of the place in association with the hospital and health care services available on site.

Memorial House is a single-storey brick building with a surrounding verandah. The hipped gambrel roof extends over the verandahs at break pitch. The roof is clad with long sheets of colorbond steel sheeting in a custom orb profile. The original face brick has a double header course at dado line, and the wall above is rendered in rough cast. The verandahs are supported by square timber posts, and diagonal timber balustrading has been inserted across the front verandah.

The original simple building layout has been retained. A central corridor leads from the front to the rear (south to north), accessing seven rooms, four on the west side and three on the east side. Each of the seven rooms has hard plaster walls, plaster ceilings and timber floors. There is no evidence of the north west rear room having been the original kitchen. The rooms originally all opened onto the verandahs through French doors and flywire doors. Except for the rooms at the front (south), the former door openings now access the ensuite facilities. Safety hand rails have been fitted along one side of all the corridors. All service facilities are connected to the rooms, ducted airconditioning has been installed, and some rooms also have airconditioners fitted in the remaining windows. Another corridor leads to the former operating theatre on the eastern side.

Few changes have taken place to the original fabric of the hospital building other than the c. 1984 addition of ensuite bathroom facilities to each of the seven rooms. The ensuites are constructed of face brick and roughcast render to match the original fabric. They have separate flat roofs under the verandah roof. Internally, they are fitted out with ceramic tiles and fittings to comply with health and care requirements. Access from the rooms to each of the ensuites is through the original window openings which were enlarged to accommodate doorways.

The former operating theatre, although originally freestanding, is now connected to *Memorial House* by means of enclosed verandah spaces. The building is of the same brick and roughcast construction as *Memorial House*, and has a hipped gambrel roof. It has a considerably higher wall height than the hospital building. The original double hung window has been replaced with casement windows. The place is otherwise intact, and functions as a staff room.

The rear (north) veranda is enclosed each end (west end 1940, east end c. 1984.) to form a breezeway between *Memorial House* and the building on the

north edge of the verandah. The walls of the breezeway are formed by the external walls of the two buildings. A window and door is in place on the north east corner of the hospital accessing that room under the verandah space which is now a sunroom.

Memorial House is in good condition. The place has undergone extensions and minimal internal alterations to facilitate the conversion to a residential care facility for aged people, but has retained a moderate degree of integrity and has maintained a continuous association with the hospital. The structure and fabric of the place is mostly intact, and the place has retained a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

Memorial House, Bruce Rock, is one of six known Memorial Hospitals established in rural Western Australia as memorials to those who served in World War One. The majority of these were community funded, and provided a much needed community service. These are Boyup Brook (1923; has been extensively modernised); Dumbleyung (1925; three ward building); Merredin RSL Ward (1932; addition to existing hospital); Narembeen (1929); and, Northam (1923; demolished c. 1970).³⁴

13. 3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

³⁴ Richards, op. cit.