



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*

St George's Anglican Church has considerable aesthetic value. The building displays attractive proportions in the roof form, and the truncated corners of the building create an unusual plan-form. (Criterion 1.1)

St George's Anglican Church has a high degree of artistic and technical sophistication, both internally and externally, and exhibits a well resolved combination of architectural, symbolic and artistic motifs. (Criterion 1.2)

St George's Anglican Church is a distinctive part of the streetscape and makes a positive contribution to the character of the town. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

St George's Anglican Church is evidence of the religious and social activities of the Anglican Church in Carnarvon and the Gascoyne district. (Criterion 2.2)

The growth and development of Carnarvon at the end of the gold boom period is reflected in the construction of *St George's Anglican Church* in 1907. (Criterion 2.2)

The Memorial altar commemorates those from the district who served in the armed forces during World War Two. (Criterion 2.2)

St George's Anglican Church has a very close association with architect J. Herbert Eales, as designer of the Church. (Criterion 2.3)

St George's Anglican Church has been associated with the Iles family of Carnarvon since its construction. G. Iles was a member of the church building committee and one of its first wardens, and the memorial altar rails were presented by the Iles family in memory of Alan Noel Iles, who died in 1944, as a POW in Burma. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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 and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

St George's Anglican Church has a lengthy association with the Sharp family. Rev William Sharp was the longest serving rector of Carnarvon parish (1896-1922) and the moving force behind the construction of the place. His son Herbert was a lay reader in the 1940s. (Criterion 2.3)

St George's Anglican Church is an example of the work of architect, Joseph Herbert Eales, who was responsible for designing a number of buildings constructed in both metropolitan and rural Western Australia. The baptismal font, presented to the Church in 1917, is the work of well known sculptor, Pietro Porcelli. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

St George's Anglican Church fulfils an important role in the religious activities of the Carnarvon community and specifically to members of the Anglican Church. (Criterion 4.1)

St George's Anglican Church is valued as a demonstrative piece of local architecture and contributes to the Carnarvon community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2. REPRESENTATIVENESS

St George's Anglican Church demonstrates the characteristics of the Church class of Christian places of congregational worship in Australia, and is representative of the Federation Gothic (c.1890-c.1915) style of architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3. CONDITION

St George's Anglican Church is in good condition. Maintenance of the building has been undertaken on a reasonably regular basis. The ongoing maintenance requirements are considerable, and it is apparent that a significant 'catch-up' maintenance program is required. The guttering to the eaves around the nave has been removed, exposing the timber fascia boards.

12. 4. INTEGRITY

St George's Anglican Church has a high degree of integrity. The Church continues to be used for the original purpose for which it was designed and the original intention of the cultural values is highly intact. The likely longterm sustainability of the values identified and their ability to be restored is well assured. The time frame for any restorative process is relatively extensive.

12. 5. AUTHENTICITY

Apart from the removal of vents, bellcote and timber cross from the roof, *St George's Anglican Church* is intact and retains a high degree of authenticity. It would appear that no structural additions have been made to the original fabric. If alterations of a liturgical nature have been made to the interior spaces, they have not diminished the authenticity of the place. The fleche over the north end of the nave was severely damaged during a cyclone and no longer exists.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Taylor Architect.

13.1. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

St George's Anglican Church is a brick and iron building, constructed in 1907, and displays some features of Federation Gothic style.¹ The place was designed by architect J. H. Eales.

The Gascoyne district was taken up in pastoral leases from about the middle of the 1870s. The Gascoyne-Minilya Road Board was formed in 1882, and the town of Carnarvon was gazetted the following year. The town was named for Lieutenant Carnarvon who was the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1873-1877. It developed as the port and service centre for the Gascoyne region.

Carnarvon was connected to Geraldton and Perth by telegraph in 1884. By 1885, there were a number of houses, two hotels and three shops. Over 60 town lots had been sold by 1890. The region was declared a municipality in 1891, with a population of 266 in the town and 305 in the district.² At the turn of the century, a one mile long jetty was built on Babbage Island, with a tramway providing transport from the jetty to the mainland and the town. By 1911, the population of Carnarvon had grown to 755.

Early religious services in the district were ad hoc, held on the rare occasion of a visiting clergyman, usually travelling by sea. The first recorded visit to the North West was at Roebourne, in 1871. In 1885, Rev John Barlow Gribble arrived in Carnarvon to establish a ministry to the Aborigines. He stayed only 12 months, but during that time he built a mission house on the banks of the Gascoyne River which served also as a rectory. Rev William Thorburn arrived in 1888, but six months later had to leave due to ill health.³ In 1891, Rev Robert Elliott arrived. Church services at this time are believed to have been held in the schoolroom. Where this was located is unclear, as although classes were begun in 1885, a school was not built until 1893.⁴

The Anglican Church was granted Carnarvon Town Lots 178 and 179, on the corner of Robinson and Francis streets, on 24 November 1892.⁵ The first church was a bungalow style building constructed in 1894, on the Robinson Street frontage. The building was financed by a £200 loan from

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. 120-123.

2 Findlay, Merrill, *Carnarvon: Reflections of a Country Town*, Shire of Carnarvon, 1983, pp. 7-80.

3 Doncaster, Ted, *Spinifex Saints: The Diocese of North West Australia, 1910-1985*, 1985, pp. 3-9.

4 Memory, R. Scott, *A Town Grows: Carnarvon*, Shire of Carnarvon, 1967, p. 58.

5 Lands & Survey Department, Land grants and sales, Battye microfilm No. 594; 'Proposed brick church Carnarvon,' *Northern Times*, 14 October 1905, p. 2.

Bishop Parry with parishioners raising another £250. The place served as rectory and church, with Rev William Sharp in residence from 1896.⁶

At this time, the Perth Anglican Diocese included the whole State. In 1900, a Bishopric Fund was established to finance the division of the state into manageable Bishoprics and Dioceses. In 1903, the Bunbury Diocese was created. Its responsibility included the North West of the state, which at that time was served by 2 priests, one deacon and two stipendiary readers.⁷

In 1905, church services at Carnarvon were moved to the Court House. The reason for this appears to have been 'a revival of interest in Church matters in the district', which must have necessitated a larger venue. Rev Sharp believed that the time was 'an opportune one to build an edifice in keeping with the growing importance of the town and district.' This was further aided by the sale, in 1903, of a portion of the Church's grant to the Union Bank, allowing a sum of £200 to be put toward a church building.⁸ Rev Sharp appeared to be well organised for the task ahead.

He had drawn up a list of persons who he thought should be appointed as collectors, and also another list of gentlemen whom he hoped to secure as guarantors of the overdraft they would require... He had had a rough estimate and plan of the church drawn up by Mr. Stansmore and from it appeared the cost would be approximately £1,000. There were two sites available for building on the grant which the church still retained. The one between the Rectory and the post office fronting Robinson street, and the other fronting Francis street.⁹

A church building committee was established comprising Rev Sharp, G. Baston (merchant), P. MacNish, D. Matheson (pastoralist), D. N. McLeod, G. Lefroy, P. Sheard (teacher) and W. G. Iles (postmaster). Architect Joseph Herbert Eales was engaged to design the place. Whether he followed Sidney Stansmore's 'rough plan' is not known. Stansmore was a builder who worked in the North West for a few years at the turn of the century and built the Carnarvon Union (ANZ) Bank building in 1905.¹⁰

Joseph Herbert Eales was educated in England, where he served articles with E. H. Harbottle, gaining experience in church restoration. He studied in Europe before migrating to Australia in 1887. He worked as a draftsman in the Melbourne Civil Service and later set up private practice in Ballarat. In 1897, he came to Fremantle and set up in partnership with Charles Oldham. The partnership ended in 1906, and Eales established a practice in Perth.¹¹ He then went into partnership with Eustace Cohen in 1913, which lasted until Cohen's death in 1938.¹²

During his early years in Western Australia, Eales was responsible for such buildings as the Fremantle Markets, Esplanade and Terminus hotels, Roman Catholic Girls School, and the Tramways Car Barn, all in Fremantle and later, with Cohen, Royal Kings Park Grandstand and the

6 Photograph, Old church and rectory c. 1900, Battye 3439B; Doncaster, op cit, p. 9; Memory, op cit, p. 58.

7 Doncaster, op cit, p. 8-9.

8 'Proposed brick church Carnarvon,' op cit.

9 ibid.

10 *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, UWA Press, 1988; 'The Building Trade in Carnarvon: Signs of Progress, re Union Bank', *Northern Times*, 16 September, 1905, p. 2.

11 Morison, M. P. 'Immigrant Architects and Their Work, 1885-1905', unpublished paper, p. 5.

12 ibid.

Eagle Star Building in Perth, and the Chapel of St Michael and All the Angels, Mt Lawley. He also worked on St Mary's Cathedral, Victoria Square. He also designed the Loton Park Tennis Club pavillion, All Saint's Anglican Church, Collie and the Rosella Hospital, Geraldton.

Between partnerships, Eales undertook country work, and was responsible for a number of buildings in Carnarvon. In December 1906, it was reported that there were 'three shops and six cottages on the drawing board, some by J. H. Eales', and in February 1907, it was noted that he was responsible for the Presentation Sisters' Convent and the Settlers Hotel.¹³

The site chosen for *St George's Anglican Church* was the section of the Church's land fronting Francis Street, directly behind the original church and rectory building. The tender of Brocks and Lienig, with a price of £1,405, was accepted in July 1906. Sixty five thousand bricks were ordered from the local brickmaker, a Mr Ellis, but the contractors withdrew from the job, having 'tendered under a misapprehension'.¹⁴ The bricks were delivered to the site in December, but a decision had still not been made on a new contractor for *St George's Anglican Church* as a further sum of money had to be raised. In April 1907, a contract was let to C. H. Carter, of Perth., with the work to be carried out by J. Crothers, 'who is at present building the shops next to the Settlers Hotel'.¹⁵

The final cost of the place was £1450, most of it met by twenty five pastoralists, led by Septimus Burt of Brickhouse Station, who each donated £50.¹⁶ The foundation stone of *St George's Anglican Church* was laid on 7 July 1907, by Mrs C. D. Foss, wife of Carnarvon's Resident Magistrate.¹⁷ The place had one stained glass window, a three light window on the east side above the sanctuary, executed by Mr D'Estcourt. The remaining windows were of plain coloured glass. The Church displayed fine detailing with louvered roof vents, a bellcote situated on the main roof above the porch entry, and a timber cross on the apex of the entry porch roof.¹⁸

The first service at *St George's Anglican Church* was held on Sunday 13 October 1907.

Though the painting of this church is not quite completed, sufficient progress has been made with the work to allow of tomorrow's service being conducted there instead of at the Court House.¹⁹

13 *Northern Times*, 1 December 1906 & 2 February 1907, p. 2.

14 *Northern Times*, 11 August 1906, p. 2.

15 *Northern Times*, 1 December 1906, p. 2, op cit, & 20 April 1907, p. 2; photograph of church under construction in Miller, Cecily, *Photographic History of Carnarvon & the Gascoyne Region*, Shire of Carnarvon, 199-, Vol. 4, p. 282.

16 'St George's Church is now 60 years old,' *Northern Times*, 26 October 1967, p. 9 'Report of sermon by E. W. Doncaster, Rector of Carnarvon and Archdeacon of the North West Diocese'.

17 Memory, op cit, p. 58. This must have been C. D. Foss's third wife, as his second wife died in 1890. Rev Sharp married Miss Minna Foss in 1899, referred to as Mrs Foss's sister, but could have been a sister-in-law.

18 'St George's Church is now 60 years old,' op cit; Peter McArthur, Carnarvon Parish, telephone conversation with Irene Sauman, 2 February 1999, Memo, File 0460; historic photographs.

19 *Northern Times*, 12 October, 1907, p. 2.

St George's Anglican Church was consecrated the following week, on Sunday 20 October.

There was a large attendance at St. George's Anglican Church on Sunday afternoon when the consecration service was conducted by the Bishop of Bunbury. The Bishop, attended by the Archdeacon of the Nor'-West (Rev. F. R. Brookes), was met at the church door by the Rector of Carnarvon (Rev. W. Sharp), the church wardens Messrs. Iles and Nicol, and the vestrymen, and the petition for consecration was read and delivered to him... In the evening the church was well filled, nearly 200 people being present... At the conclusion of Evensong eight candidates were confirmed.²⁰

At this time, Carnarvon was vying for selection as the See of the 'to-be-established' Bishopric of the North West. The town offered to provide a house for the Bishop for five years.²¹ About this time also, a new rectory was built and the original church and rectory building on Robinson Street was sold to Herbert Thomas Jackman. The place became a private residence, and later a shop.²²

By 1910, the necessary minimum of £10,000 for the endowment of a Bishopric had been raised and North West Diocese declared, but the Bishopric was to be centred in Broome. *St George's Anglican Church*, however, had the honour of hosting the enthronement of Bishop Gerard Trower, first Bishop of the North West.

On Monday 4th July the Right Rev. Gerard Trower, former Bishop of Nyassaland [sic], appointed Bishop of North West Australia, arrived in Carnarvon accompanied by the Bishop of Perth, who in the evening of the same day enthroned him in St George's Church, in the presence of a very large congregation. The Bishop was met at the door by the Church Wardens and the vestry, the choir, the Rector (the Rev. W. Sharp) and the Bishop of Perth and the usual formalities were observed... During the collection, which was made for the General Sustentation Fund of the new Diocese, the Te Deum was sung, and after the Blessing, given by the Bishop of the North West, an impressive and solemn service was brought to a close... The Bishop of the North West said he was disposed at present to carry his stool about with him and be known as the Bishop of the North West, with headquarters in Broome.²³

In 1917, a baptismal font, the work of sculptor Pietro Porcelli, was presented to *St George's Anglican Church* 'by the children of the Parish'.²⁴ The Rev W. Sharp remained at Carnarvon until 1922. Between 1942 and 1947, Carnarvon parish had no rector. The Bishop and Archdeacon ministered to parishioners with the assistance of two lay readers, one of them Herbert Sharp, son of Rev Sharp. In the late 1940s, the Memorial altar was installed. Altar rails were presented by the Iles family in memory of Alan Noel Iles who died in 1944, as a Prisoner of War on the Burma Railway.²⁵

20 ibid.

21 *Northern Times*, 1 December 1906, op cit.

22 Miller, op cit, Vol. 4 p. 484; Certificate of Title, 33/35, 23 March 1910. According to Rev Doncaster, in 1967 this building formed the 'rear portion of Fitz's Newsagency and Grave's Delicatessen, although very much improved.' See 'St George's Church is Now 60 Years Old, op cit. It is not known if the building is extant in 1999.

23 *The Guardian*, quoted in Doncaster, op cit, p. 12.

24 Information supplied from physical evidence.

25 'St George's Church is Now 60 Years Old, op cit; physical evidence.

The Carnarvon Parish included Shark Bay, until a small church was built there in the early 1950s. Between 1961 and 1964, Carnarvon was once again without a rector. Rev Legg from Northampton conducted services for the parish during this period.²⁶

In June 1965, it was reported that a new arrangement of the sanctuary of the Church had been undertaken and was well received, and that 'the new pattern of celebrating Holy Communion places Carnarvon at the fore in liturgical development.'²⁷

Because Carnarvon was a very large parish, the Rector was often away on station visits. It was reported, in the parish newsletter of June 1965, that the church bell was rung on mornings when the Rector was in town, to remind parishioners that the Daily Office of Morning Prayer was about to be said.²⁸ Some time after this date, the bellcote is believed to have been severely damaged by a cyclone.²⁹

In 1983, the oil lamp inside *St George's Anglican Church* was electrified. Two of the original windows of plain coloured glass have been replaced with leadlight windows, each costing over \$2,000. There are no plans to replace any more. During the past five years, the interior has been repainted, and much maintenance carried out. The place has had no structural changes made. The original font and wooden pews are still in place. Facilities have been augmented by modern sound equipment and air conditioning.³⁰

In 1999, *St George's Anglican Church* continues to be used for religious services.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Carnarvon is a low-lying coastal town located at the mouth of the Gascoyne River in the Gascoyne Region of Western Australia. The *St George's Anglican Church* is located on Francis Street in the town's centre.

St George's Anglican Church is a single-storey building of masonry (brick) wall construction. The timber-framed roof structure is clad in corrugated iron roof sheet, and the floors to the interior spaces are polished timber floorboards. The orientation of the Church follows the street alignment rather than the orthodox east west orientation.

The external walls are of masonry (brick) construction with rendered dressings. The mortar joints are tuck-pointed consisting of a red ochre colouring. The external walls of the nave are broken into bays created by the stepped buttresses bracing the walls. Lancet style lead light windows are set into the walls between the bays of the nave. The parapeted gable end wall of the sanctuary has stained glass windows set in three smaller lancet style openings. Stained glass windows in the truncated corner bays on the west side of the nave are protected by a poly-carbonate sheet fixed to

26 ibid.

27 *Anglican Parish of Carnarvon: St George's Church Newsletter*, June 1965.

28 ibid.

29 It may have been at about this time that the place was re-roofed. The bellcote and roof vents, as shown in historical photographs, are no longer extant.

30 Peter McArthur, telephone conversation, op cit.

the outside. Small rectilinear leadlight windows are located in the east wall of the vestry.

The main roof form of the nave is a steeply pitched hip roof, which reflects the truncated corners of its rectilinear plan-form. This is characteristic of Eales' work. The timber-framed roof structure over the nave is clad in corrugated iron sheet. The roof sheet is unpainted corrugated iron that has acquired a patina of Pindan dust, characteristic in Carnarvon. The guttering around the nave roof has been removed exposing the timber fascia boards. The original bellcote, roof vents and cross, as shown in historic photographs, are no longer extant.

An open porch covered by a steeply pitched gable end roof is located at the north end of the nave. The batten and rough cast gable end roof is supported by painted timber posts with large timber brackets forming a lancet style motif between the timber post spacings. The balustrade height masonry wall around the porch is rendered and painted.

A plaque set into one of the truncated corner walls at the north end of the Church reads:

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

To the Glory of God

This stone was laid on July 7th 1907

by

Mrs C.D. Foss

J. Herbert Eales, F.W.A.I.A.
Architect

C.H. Carter
Builder

Entry to the Church is via the open porch at the north end of the building. Painted timber double doors set into a Gothic pointed arch provide access to the rear of the nave. The doors have decorative cast iron hinges.

The nave has a central aisle, with timber pews located either side of the aisle that leads from the entry to the raised floor of the sanctuary. The nave has a timber-lined and painted wagonette ceiling. The internal walls are rendered and painted and have a timber lined dado. A baptismal font is located at the north end of the nave. An inscription at the base of the font reads 'P. Porcelli'.

The sanctuary has a raised and stepped floor, stepping up to the altar. A small stage extends out into the nave space from the sanctuary. Timber altar rails separate the nave from the sanctuary and are located below the large Gothic pointed arch. A brass plaque set into the wall near the base of the arch reads:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

and

In Loving Memory of

WX8188 Spr. Alan Noel Iles

2/6 Aust FD.PKCoy.

died while Prisoner of War

on the Burma Railway

4th JANUARY 1944

these altar rails were presented by
HIS PARENTS BROTHERS & SISTER

A stone plaque set in west wall of the nave at the sanctuary end reads:

In Memory of
GEORGE FRANCIS
Shenton
who was accidentally killed
at Carnarvon
13th JULY 1908

Access to the vestry is at the south end of the nave and also from the sanctuary. The floor level is the same as the nave, the walls are painted and the ceiling is lined with painted timber boards.

Physical evidence would suggest that no structural additions to the *St George's Anglican Church* have been made. At some stage alterations of a liturgical nature may have been made to the interior of the place. Air conditioning has been installed to the nave of *the Church*. Documentary Evidence photographs reveal that wall fans have been installed at one time and have been replaced by the current ceiling hung fan/light combination.

The *St George's Anglican Church* is in good condition, it appears that the place is well maintained.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet (Database No: 010789)

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
