



**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)**

- 2.2 Adapting to diverse environments
- 2.4 Migrating to seek opportunity
- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 6.2 Establishing schools

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

- 301 Grazing, pastoralism & dairying
- 302 Rural industry & market gardening
- 402 Education & science
- 603 Early settlers

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

The stables and drying shed at *Spring Park* are aesthetically pleasing separate structures in their own right. The stables is a very simple and fine example of a Victorian Georgian style farm building. The brick bonding and stable interiors including wood block floors are both unusual and visually pleasing. The drying shed is executed in a simple vernacular style that has an overall impact and is a good example of a simple farmers' utilitarian solution to a practical building requirement. (Criterion 1.1)

#### **11.2. HISTORIC VALUE**

*Spring Park* comprising the stables, drying sheds and various archaeological sites, is important in the development of the Swan district from the early 1830s, being sited on one of the first rural grants in the State, and having been in continuous occupation and use for farming purposes. (Criterion 2.1)

Susannah Smithers grave is representative of the practice in the early years of European settlement of burying the dead near to their place of residence rather than in communal cemeteries, which is no longer practised. (Criterion 2.1)

*Spring Park* was one of the first rural land grants in 1829, and has been associated with every significant phase of agricultural development in the Swan district since that period, in particular early rural development for mixed farming, and the development of the viticulture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through into the late 20th century. (Criterion 2.2)

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\* 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.

William Heaves Smithers, who named his grant Albion Town, the name by which the surrounding locality became known, and his wife, Susannah, who was buried at the place in 1839, were among the earliest European settlers in the Swan River Colony, arriving in 1829. (Criterion 2.3).

*Spring Park* was occupied, worked and owned by the Minchin family for more than a century, and descendants of the family maintain links with the place. Minchin Road in the Swan district is named after the family in recognition of their long association with the district. (Criterion 2.3)

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

The documentary evidence indicates the existence of significant archaeological remains at *Spring Park* in the locations and surrounds of the no longer extant buggy shed, 1897 Minchin homestead and Morley's and Smithers' 1830s cottages. These sites have the capacity to contribute to a wider understanding of the cultural history of the Swan district and of the State as a research site, a possible teaching site and benchmark site that includes material from the earliest years of settlement in the Swan River Colony. (Criterion 3.1)

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

*Spring Park* is highly valued by the community of the City of Swan and by the wider community as one of the first rural land grants in 1829, one of the earliest and continuously occupied farms established on the first rural grants in the State, as evidenced by the inclusion of the place in the Municipal Heritage Inventory, its classification by the National Trust and inclusion in the Register of the National Estate. (Criterion 4.1)

*Spring Park* contributes to the community's sense of place as a well-known place in the Swan district that has been known by this name since the late 1830s, as commemorated in Spring Park Road. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Spring Park* provides evidence of early European settlement on the Swan River and the stables itself provides evidence of farm building construction in the period from 1850. Evidence extends from the 1830s to the present and evidence of this kind of continuum is uncommon. (Criterion 5.1)

The place includes the early burial site of Susannah Smithers, an original Swan River Colony settler of 1829, where the original gravestone, with later cast iron stanchions and railings, remain in situ, which is rare. (Criterion 5.1)

Drying sheds were once a common part of the farming landscape in the Swan Valley, however, since drying fruit has been phased out, the number of sheds has diminished and the drying shed at *Spring Park* is an example of a building type that is becoming increasingly rare. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Spring Park* provides near complete evidence of two past practices. The stables are evidence of a modestly scaled stables structure, while the drying shed provides evidence of the once common practice of fruit drying. (Criterion 6.1)

Susannah Smithers' grave provides evidence of early burial practices in the Swan River Colony. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The stables have received reasonable maintenance and much of it has been sympathetic, with the use of recycled materials from demolished structures to repair the stables structure. Render applied to the lower and interior walls as a repair strategy has obscured some original fabric. Overall the stables are in fair condition.

The drying shed has been extended and modified to suit changing farm practices, and in the process the shed has received sufficient maintenance to ensure its stability. Construction details such as the drying racks have been removed to suit the alternative uses such as storage of farm machinery and general storage. However, the structure itself is in fair condition.

#### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

Most of the early buildings indicated in the documentary evidence are no longer extant.

The stables exhibit a high level of integrity in that their original purpose is clearly apparent, as are the overlays created for subsequent milking and there are no conflicting current uses. The identified cultural heritage values are sustainable in the medium to long term with a modest level of conservation.

The drying shed has lost important fabric but retains a moderate to high degree of integrity, as its original use is reasonably apparent. The current use is not in conflict with the retention of the remaining cultural heritage values.

#### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The stables retain a large amount of original fabric, together with some replacement fabric (roof), some subsequent adaptations (milk stall), and some repairs (render and replacement brickwork). Overall the stables retain a moderate to high level of authenticity.

The drying shed has lost important fabric, but the remaining structure consists of mainly authentic fabric relating to two principal stages of construction, the interwar and early post-WWII periods.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Spring Park* comprises a five-stall stable and tack room, constructed in brick with iron roof, for the Minchin family in the mid 19th century, together with a timber and iron fruit drying shed, the southern half built by the Minchins (precise date unknown, but pre-WWII), and the northern half built by Bob Bowman c.1954, Susannah Smithers' grave dating from 1839, and archaeological sites dating from the 1830s to the 1890s. There are other structures on the site, including a home constructed in 1973, timber framed laundry, brick water closet and various metal framed and clad sheds, fences and plantings.

In March 1827, Captain Stirling explored the Swan River including the area later named Guildford, after his home place in England. He noted the fertile soils of the Upper Swan. In June 1829, he returned to establish the Swan River Colony.<sup>1</sup>

In late September 1829, Captain Stirling and Surveyor General Roe travelled to the head of the Swan River above Guildford with a group of European settlers to whom permission had been given to select land. These were the first rural grants in the Colony. Most of those who obtained these grants were notable men in the young Colony, whilst a few were wealthy absentee investors, among the latter being Lieutenant-Colonel Peter A. Lautour, who obtained the grant of Swan Locations F and 6, each 5,000 acres in area, the former on the west bank, and the latter opposite on the east bank.<sup>2</sup>

Lautour had already obtained a large amount of land in Van Diemen's Land. In order to obtain substantial grants of land at the Swan River Colony he dispatched to the colony sufficient settlers, goods and servants (arr. per *Calista* and *Marquis of Anglesea*, August 1829) to entitle him to grants of 113,000 acres, the largest entitlement of any grantee in the early colonial period other than Thomas Peel. Lautour's agent and manager, Richard Wells, selected the land at Swan for his employer.<sup>3</sup> Unlike Peel, Lautour never visited Australia. There is some mystery surrounding Lautour's apparently abundant wealth, as he appears to have neither inherited nor earned the large sums that he invested in speculative ventures in the Australian colonies.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the original grants, known as 'ribbon grants' from their elongated form, were between 6 and 18 miles long, running from the fertile alluvial land by the river. In 1829, carving incisions on trees at the riverbank marked the boundaries of the grants. No complete survey of the grants along the Swan and Helena Rivers was undertaken until the early 1840s. The grantees were required to fulfil location duties requiring the expenditure of 1s 6d on permanent improvements to the satisfaction of the Government before receiving freehold title to their grants.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Bourke, Michael J. *On the Swan: A History of the Swan District of Western Australia* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1987), pp. 31-32.

2 *ibid*, p. 33 p. 38, and Appendix B 'Original Land Grants in the Swan District from Upper Swan to Perth', p. 325 and p. 328; Hasluck, Paul 'Guildford and the Swan' in *Early Days* (RWAHS Vol. 1 Pt. 2, 1928) pp. 1-2; Battye, J. S. *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia* (The Cyclopaedia Company, Perth, 1912-13) Vol. pp. 96-97.

3 Bourke, Michael J. *op. cit.*, p. 26, p. 30.

4 Statham, Pamela, 'Peter Augustus Lautour: absentee landlord extraordinaire' in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol 72 No 3, December 1986, pp. 226-240.

5 Bourke, Michael J. *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32, and p. 155.

In 1829, the town of Guildford was laid out, and, by late 1829, vast tracts of land had been selected in the Guildford-Swan area, and some of the European settlers had moved to their selections.<sup>6</sup>

In 1830, the first Guildford Town Lots were sold. In part, the town was opened up to provide for discharged servants of the early European settlers, following completion of their service. They were to be granted lots of four to five acres, with the intention that they should assist each other in a cooperative settlement. From 1830, boats regularly plied the Swan River from Guildford to the coast.<sup>7</sup>

In June 1830, due to a lack of sufficient funds in the Colony, Lautour's establishment was broken up, and his servants and employees dismissed.<sup>8</sup> Lautour was sentenced to debtors' prison in England, and was interned from May 1830 to September 1831. Information prepared in London for an 1840 court case regarding his investment in the Leschenault area portrayed him as a man duped by his managers in the colonies, who made personal profits out of his investments while allowing them to fall into disarray. Later investigations into the matter in the Swan River Colony suggested that the managers may in fact have performed honestly, and served a difficult or even foolish superior in Lautour.<sup>9</sup>

From 1830-31, a number of the original 1829 rural land grants were transferred to other European settlers. Frequently half of the grant was transferred to a new settler on condition that he performed the location duties in order to secure the whole. By November 1830, there were 'several very respectable persons settled' in the Swan district.<sup>10</sup>

On 5 September 1832, Lautour's two grants in the Swan district were transferred to other European settlers. Swan Location 6 was transferred to J.W. Wright, whilst Swan Location F was divided in more or less equal proportions between Captain David Dring and William Heaves Smithers.<sup>11</sup> The latter's portion included the future site of *Spring Park*.

William Heaves Smithers (b. 1782) arrived at the Colony with his wife, Susannah, and their family, per *Gilmore* in December 1829. By 1832, he was the licensee of the Albion Hotel at Fremantle. He named his newly acquired grant at Swan Location F Albion Town.<sup>12</sup> Not intending to work the entire grant himself, he divided the portion that fronted the river into three 20 acre lots, and a larger lot of 100 acres, which were advertised for sale or lease in 1833.<sup>13</sup> Agricultural labourers, William Haddrill, Elijah Cook and Richard Holland purchased the smaller lots.<sup>14</sup> More labourers acquired land in the Swan district than elsewhere in the Swan River Colony, being able to support their families on the arable portion of the grants and work on neighbouring properties.<sup>15</sup>

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6        *ibid*, Bourke, Michael J., *ibid*. p. 52; and Paget, T. 'Early Days in Guildford. Agricultural Development 1829-1850' Typescript (1949) Batty Library, p. 2.

7        Paget, T. *ibid*, pp. 2-3.

8        Bourke, Michael J. *op. cit.*, p. 48.

9        Statham, Pamela *op. cit.* pp. 233-37.

10       Moore, George Fletcher *Diary of Ten Years of an Early Settler in Western Australia* (Facs. with an introduction by C.T. Stannage, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1978) November 1830, pp. 26-27.

11       Enrolment 146; and Bourke. Michael *op. cit.*, p. 48 and Appendix B, p.328.

12       Erickson, Rica (Ed.) *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre-1829-1888* (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1988) Note: The *Bicentennial Dictionary* recorded 'Heares' rather than 'Heaves'. The latter is believed to be the correct name as it was consistently recorded on all the Memorials.

13       Bourke. Michael *op. cit.*, p. 101.

14       Memorial 1/964.

15       Bourke, Michael J. *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Smithers is believed to have leased the large lot to James Minchin (b. 1799, d. 1837) of Hampshire, who had arrived at the Swan River Colony per *Caroline* in October 1829, with his wife, Elizabeth (also recorded as Eliza), and their five children. A baker and carpenter, he had previously worked for Samuel Moore at Oakover, and obtained an allotment in Perth, but instead took up the lease, whilst also working on occasion as a builder in Perth.<sup>16</sup>

On 4 January 1834, an Indenture was made whereby Richard Holland's part of Swan Location F, 20 acres in area, was conveyed to Henry Robert Morley.<sup>17</sup> Morley (b. 1802, arr. per *Wanstead*, January 1830) had been one of Lautour's settlers. He and his family settled to farm the land at Upper Swan, and later he took up pastoral leases at Gingin and Victoria Plains.<sup>18</sup>

By late 1835, there were 'upwards of seventy families and establishments' on the Swan, and at Albion Town 'the little rising flourishing village', there was a ready supply of 'steady and industrious labourers'.<sup>19</sup> With a continued demand for labour, men such as William Haddrill and James Minchin were able to exercise a greater degree of independence than their fellows in Britain.<sup>20</sup>

In July 1837, James Minchin died, probably at the Swan as he was buried at nearby Baskerville. His widow and family remained in the district. In the Census of December 1837, seventeen people were recorded as heads of households and occupiers of land in the Swan district from head of river to Albion Town, including Eliza Minchin, widow and laundress, with one and a half acres of wheat, and one-quarter acre of garden. Most of her children were working as servants in the district: James (b. 1821) and Andrew (b. 1822) as farm servants, and Alfred (b. 1825) and Eliza (b. 1823) as servants for Samuel and Dora Moore at Oakover.<sup>21</sup>

On 7 April 1839, Susannah Smithers died at Albion Town, and she was buried near the boundary to Morley's. George Fletcher Moore read the burial service, and noted the grave place in his diary, "a picturesque place, not far from the house". The siting of the extant gravestone in relation to Haddrill's cottage (extant), when compared with early maps, suggests that the house referred to by Moore was Morley's 1830s cottage, but it is clear that Smithers was residing on his land in Albion Town at this time.<sup>22</sup> Marked by a fine slab of South African slate, with a simple wrought iron surrounding fence, the dedication reads:

In memory of Susannah Smithers  
Native of England  
Who departed this life 7<sup>th</sup> April 1839.  
This Stone if placed on her remains  
As a Testimony of Affection by her Children.  
Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain but a woman  
that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.  
Proverbs XXXI 30

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16 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., p. 2174; and Coral Wager, great grand-daughter of Alfred Minchin, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 9 February 2003. Note: No extant documentary evidence of the lease has been located to date.

17 Memorials 1/964 and 11/84.

18 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., p. 2230.

19 *Perth Gazette* 19 December 1835, quoted in Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. 101.

20 Bourke, Michael J. *ibid.*, pp. 101-103.

21 Erickson, Rica (ed.) op. cit.; Cecil King, descendant of Alfred and Lucy Minchin, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 Feb 2003; Census of Swan River Colony, 30 Dec 1837 (Library Board of WA, 1974) pp. 59, 65, 92 & 97; and Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. 113. In 1837, James Minchin was one of a several men who were building the Public Offices in St. George's Terrace, Perth, under contract.

22 Quoted in Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. 142.

J. Fitzpatrick Cape Town.<sup>23</sup>

Smithers may have decided to leave Albion Town as a consequence of his wife's death, for he disposed of the property promptly thereafter. On 20 April 1839, a Memorial was registered whereby W.H. Smithers, yeoman, of Guildford, surrendered 2,300 acres, part of Swan Location F.<sup>24</sup> On 14 May 1839, a Memorial of agreement was registered for the sale and purchase of 140 acres of land, the balance of Smithers' portion of Swan Location F, by Walter Sleep, carpenter, of Middle Swan, for the sum of £280.<sup>25</sup>

Walter Sleep (b. 1807) had arrived at the Swan River Colony per *Nancy* in January 1830. Having brought with him a carpenter's chest of tools and clothing, he was granted 400 acres of land.<sup>26</sup> By 1839, he was well established in the Colony, for skilled tradesmen were in high demand.

In November 1839, Roe's Plan of Part of Spring-Park Farm on the Swan River, Western Australia, 'the property of Mr. Walter Sleep' shows Sleep's, 140 acres, with a brick house and a timber building, set beside the road. It is likely that this house was built originally for Smithers', as per Moore's diary above. There is a line of fencing stretching from the north and south boundaries, running more-or-less parallel to the road that passes by the buildings, and a second fence extending towards the river, near the boundary to Morley's. The plan shows a group of buildings on Morley's grant, enclosed by fencing, and a further building to the west, near the fence to the boundary to Sleep's. There are also groups of buildings at Haddrill's and Dring's (Goodwood).<sup>27</sup> This is the first known recorded use on a plan of the name 'Spring-Park', the name by which the property has been known ever since.

The above plan provides a useful view of the development of the immediate district by late 1839, in particular the number of buildings already built by the early European settlers, whose homes were within relatively short walking distance of each other, enabling them to visit frequently, facilitating the development of a sense of community in which the social distinctions of an English county were largely maintained. The fences erected by this date indicate the boundaries recognised by those settlers, which were revised in the later survey of 1841.

On 17 January 1840, a Memorial of Conveyance of the aforementioned 140 acres was registered between Smithers and Sleep.<sup>28</sup>

In September 1841, an Act was passed providing for an accurate survey of land boundaries in the Swan River Colony, and surveys of the Upper Swan commenced in October. In 1842, a survey was undertaken by Assistant-Surveyor Chauncy for the proposed road from West Guildford to Cruise's Mill, which passed through Swan Location F.<sup>29</sup> His fieldbook drawings show Sleep's brick house (Smithers' 1830s cottage), tenanted by John Aikin (*sic*, a misspelling of

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23 Susannah Smither's gravestone, site visit, Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, 3 February 2003.

24 Memorial 1/736

25 Memorial 1/755. Note: Whilst Smithers was still recorded as yeoman, his address was recorded as Fremantle, indicating that he had removed from Guildford since 20 April 1839.

26 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., p. 2838.

27 Plan of part of Spring-Park Farm, on the Swan River, Western Australia, November 1839. Jean Gardiner Collection, held by Swan-Guildford Historical Society, courtesy of Shane Burke, Centre for Archaeology, University of Western Australia.

28 Memorial 1/964.

29 Bourke, M.J. op. cit., p. 155; Plan of Proposed Road from West Guildford to Cruise's Mill, by P.L. Snell Chauncy, Surveyor, 1842. Reproduced as end papers in Bourke, DOLA Roads 75; full scale copy held by City of Swan.

Eakin) at this period, and a second building of timber, neither of which are extant in 2005.<sup>30</sup> Sleep, one of two wheelwrights in the district in the mid 19th century, may have employed Eakin to work the property or leased it to him.<sup>31</sup> James Minchin was working in the Swan district at this period, and was in partnership with Eakin in the early 1840s. This partnership was dissolved 'by mutual consent' on 30 October 1844, as witnessed by William Haddrill and Sleep, suggesting that Minchin was working *Spring Park* at this date.<sup>32</sup>

On 16 April 1844, the proposed road to Cruise's Mill was approved.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1847, Walter Sleep was living at *Spring Park* when he advertised it for sale by private contract. It comprised

All that Estate on the right bank of the Swan River, containing 140 acres of thereabouts, with dwelling house, out-houses, large paddock, &c. This land is partially fenced in, cleared, and fit for cultivation.<sup>34</sup>

It has not been possible to determine whether the outhouses mentioned were those shown on Chauncy's drawings, or whether additional buildings had been built in the intervening period.

In May 1853, Walter Sleep married Eleanor Margaret Robinson (b. 1828, arr. per *Will Watch*, 1852).<sup>35</sup> On 8 September 1855, he mortgaged his 140 acres, part of Swan Location F, to Frederick Dirck Wittenoom to secure the sum of £100 and interest.<sup>36</sup> The mortgage may have been to finance building a new residence or for additions to Smithers' 1830s cottage, as often the bachelor residences built in the early period were insufficient for the needs of a family.

The date when Alfred Minchin occupied *Spring Park* is unknown, but on 15 April 1856, Sleep granted to Minchin, both of Upper Swan, the aforementioned 140 acres, part of Swan Location F, in consideration of £200 already paid.<sup>37</sup> Minchin had married Lucy Martin (b. 1833, d. 1919) in August 1850. While his brothers, Andrew and James, were to try their luck at the recently discovered Victorian goldfields, Alfred and Lucy lived at *Spring Park* for the remainder of their lives, where they raised their family of 10 surviving children, including their eldest son, William (b. 1851, d. 1933).<sup>38</sup>

Through the 1830s and 1840s, Aboriginal people continued to frequent the Swan district, and some were employed by the European settlers as shepherds, in agricultural pursuits and as domestic servants. There was also conflict at times. George Fletcher Moore, who read the burial service for James Minchin, noted the five adjoining graves 'were of men murdered by natives. The feeling of the settlers are just now greatly... exasperated against them, and this sight did not tend to soothe them much'.<sup>39</sup> The European settlers exercised considerable care whenever relations became tense. On one occasion, the Minchins' house was attacked in Alfred's absence. On his return, he found spears embedded in the

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30 Surveyor Chauncy, Fieldbook 16, SROWA, p. 76.

31 Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. 192.

32 *The Inquirer* 20 October 1841, p. 3, and 6 November 1844, p. 1.

33 Plan of Proposed Road to Cruise's Mill op. cit.

34 *The Inquirer* 21 April 1847, p. 2.

35 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit.

36 Memorial 5/627.

37 Memorial 5/739.

38 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., pp. 2173-75.

39 Moore, G.F. *Diary of Ten Years' Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia* (London, 1884) p. 230; letter to the Editor from Minchin descendant, T.A. Harrop, City of Swan Library, no details.



rolled up mattress in which Lucy and the children were hidden.<sup>40</sup> To date, no records have been located regarding employment of Aborigines at *Spring Park*. However, it is known that they were employed by Morley in the late 1840s.<sup>41</sup>

Some members of the Minchin family believe that Alfred built a mud brick house on the property, at an unknown date.<sup>42</sup> The present owner, Bob Bowman, believes the house, stables and barn, all of brick construction, were built by the Minchins c.1841.<sup>43</sup> However, photographic and oral evidence from other members of the Minchin family indicate the house occupied by Alfred and Lucy was Smithers' 1830s cottage, as documented by Moore and Chauncy. This mud brick house comprised two rooms, with a brick 'annex' at one end, which was of later date.<sup>44</sup> Handwritten notes on a 1920 photograph state that Mr and Mrs Minchin lived at this homestead 'over 72 years ago'.<sup>45</sup>

An early photograph of Alfred and Lucy Minchin taken at the 1830s homestead in the period 1897-1906, when the couple was elderly, shows the mud brick construction of the original two room house (Smithers' 1830s cottage), and the later brick work of the 'annex' that was built at one end of the building (1850s).<sup>46</sup>

Alfred possibly built additional buildings after the property was transferred to him in 1856. The need for additional buildings as he developed the property may have been the reason he mortgaged it to Frederick Dirck Wittenoom to secure the sum of £100 in mid 1861.<sup>47</sup> As there was no school in the vicinity, the Minchins' barn was utilised for a school until a new building was built for that purpose 'out the back, on the other block out the back', which in turn served as the school until a public school was built in the district.<sup>48</sup> Neither building is extant in 2005.

From the 1850s, the use of convicts with tickets-of-leave provided a useful labour force in the Swan district, and on occasion between 1862 and 1868, Alfred Minchin employed three ticket-of-leave men.<sup>49</sup> Wheat growing and hay making continued to be the major forms of agriculture in the district, although the viticulture had begun in the district in the 1830s, and a number of vineyards were well established in the Swan district and the colony was producing wine and dried fruit.<sup>50</sup> William Minchin assisted his father on the farm, and he was recorded as a farmer and grazier at Swan from 1876.<sup>51</sup>

On 6 December 1876, Henry Morley died.<sup>52</sup> On 2 May 1877, a memorial was registered of his last will and testament, whereby 'his land called "Albion Town"'

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- 40 Ellen Henley, conversations with Robin Chinnery, March-May 2003. Note: The spears remain in the family's possession.
- 41 *The Inquirer* 7 March 1849, p. 2.
- 42 Coral Wager, great-grand-daughter of Alfred Minchin, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 9 February 2003.
- 43 Arthur Robert 'Bob' Bowman, Oral History, interview with Gail O'Hanlon, 23 March 1998. Transcript, Battye Library, OH 2896, pp. 29-34.
- 44 Cecil King, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2003.
- 45 Photograph originally from collection of Mary Minchin, courtesy Cecil King. Note: Some Minchin family history notes that Alfred and Lucy when first married lived at Dring's property, Goodwood.
- 46 Photograph Alfred and Lucy Minchin at *Spring Park*, courtesy Cecil King.
- 47 Memorial 6/1049.
- 48 Arthur Robert 'Bob' Bowman, Oral History, interview with Gail O'Hanlon, 23 March 1998. Transcript, Battye Library, OH 2896, pp. 29-34; and Bob Bowman, conversation with Robin Chinnery, site visit, 3 February 2003.
- 49 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., p. 2173.
- 50 Bourke, Michael J. op. cit. p. 105 and p. 179.
- 51 *Western Australian Almanac* 1876-1889.
- 52 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., p. 2230.

was bequeathed to William and Charles Morley, his two grandsons whose father, William, had died in 1872, as tenants in common.<sup>53</sup>

In May 1880, William married Mary Louisa Hitchcock, daughter of Dr David Hitchcock of Swan. William and Mary lived the rest of their lives at *Spring Park*, where they raised their family, a son, Francis Keane, and four daughters, Lilian Blanche, Rosina Margaret, Gertrude Elizabeth and Amy Theresa.<sup>54</sup> It is believed that a new homestead was built for William and Lucy c. 1880, near an olive tree. However, the house is no longer extant, and members of the Minchin family do not know where it was located on the property.<sup>55</sup>

On 15 April 1886, an indenture was made whereby the property mortgaged to Wittenoom in 1855, was vested in Alfred Minchin as an estate subject to a mortgage and the sum of £100.<sup>56</sup> On 20 June 1887, an Indenture of Conveyance between William Dalgety Moore and Alfred and William Minchin was registered whereby the place was transferred to William Minchin and the 1855 mortgage was discharged.<sup>57</sup>

On 11 September 1890, an Indenture of Conveyance and Partition was made between William Ralph Morley and Charles Robert Morley.<sup>58</sup> On 7 November 1890, an Indenture of Conveyance was made whereby William Ralph Morley, farmer, sold to William Minchin, farmer, 20 acres being part of Swan Location F, at Albion Town, fronting the river, adjoining William Haddrill's land and to the north thereof, in consideration of the sum of £80.<sup>59</sup> It is not known whether Morley's 1830s cottage remained extant on the property at the time of this sale, but the sale value and lack of later mention of a residence on this land suggests that there was no longer a habitable residence on Morley's land by 1890.

On 28 November 1894, a mortgage on the aforementioned 20 acres, made between William Minchin and the Rev. George Hallett Sweeting of Guildford, to secure the sum of £50, was discharged.<sup>60</sup>

Circa 1897, a substantial new homestead was built at *Spring Park* for William and Mary and their young family, and its completion was celebrated with a large party.<sup>61</sup> An early photograph shows the homestead was constructed of brick with an iron roof, with verandahs on all side, and a simple timber gable above the main entry, with two chimneys, one at either side. It was enclosed by a low timber and wire fence, with a single gate aligned with the main entry, and with steps leading up to the verandah.<sup>62</sup> Trees planted in proximity to this homestead included a mulberry tree and a lemon tree, both of which are known to have

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- 53 Memorial 7/2436. Note: In August 1872, William Morley (b. 1845, Upper Swan), Henry's youngest son died, and Henry's Last Will was made in December 1872.
- 54 Erickson, Rica (Ed.) op. cit., pp. 2173-75; and Battye, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 162. William's brothers, James, John, Alfred, Frederick all married Hitchcock sisters.
- 55 Cecil King, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2003.
- 56 Memorial 10/213.
- 57 Memorial 10/213.
- 58 Memorial 11/84.
- 59 Memorial 11/84.
- 60 Memorial 12/101.
- 61 Battye, J. S. *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia* (The Cyclopedia Company, Perth, 1912-13) Vol. 2, p. 162; and Cecil King, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2002.
- 62 Spring Park, Minchin property. Post card photograph, from William and Mary's daughter Gerty to her sister Amy, 7 June 1908, courtesy Cecil King People in the photograph from l. to rt., Colin Demasson, Mary Minchin, Frank Minchin, ? Demasson, William Minchin. The Demasson boys were William and Mary's grandsons.

survived into the late 20th century.<sup>63</sup> This homestead is not extant in 2005, although an outbuilding remains.<sup>64</sup>

In the early 1900s, when the alluvial gold had been worked out, many former prospectors returned from the Western Australian gold fields, creating a considerable demand for small holdings in the Perth region, which led to the subdivision of large portions of estates in the Swan Valley, with most new lots being 20-40 acres in area. Between 1900 and 1920, mixed farming in the Swan Valley gave way to viticulture, with some land planted with citrus orchards and also some continuing in use for grazing. Vine growing in the district was increasingly dominated by the small holders, and grapes were produced primarily for dried fruits and table grapes for local and export markets. The expansion of vine growing provided employment opportunities for immigrants and Aboriginal people, some of whom were local residents whilst others were employed on a seasonal basis, mainly at harvest time.<sup>65</sup> It is probable that vine growing was established at *Spring Park* in the early 20th century, along with the continuation of mixed farming at the property.

Among the earliest surviving photographs (pre 1907) of the buildings known to have been built at *Spring Park*, one shows Smithers' 1830s cottage with members of the Minchin family standing either side of the entry to the grounds. The fence at the left has hewn timber posts and top rail and wire below, there is timber rail gate, and the timber fence to the right has timber posts and top rail, with closed timber fencing from ground level to about three-quarters height. To the left side of the house is a brick addition, a skillion roof of iron, and with a brick chimney. The house has an iron roof. Vines grow across the front of the front of the verandah, which has support timber posts. There is a water tank at ground level to the right. In the front yard is a tall mature tree.<sup>66</sup> Another photograph shows similar timber fencing with the timber slab shed in the rear ground.<sup>67</sup>

In 1906, the Rate Books for the Swan Roads Board recorded separate assessments at Swan Location F for William Minchin, farmer, 160 acres, with an annual value of £70, and Alfred Minchin, householder, house and garden with an annual value of £15, with the notation by the latter that it was to be part of the aforementioned assessment in the following year.<sup>68</sup> After Alfred Minchin retired due to ill health, William took over management of *Spring Park*. Alfred and Lucy Minchin continued to live in Smithers' 1830s cottage until their deaths in 1907 and 1919 respectively. On 25 May 1907, *The Western Mail* reported that Alfred 'an old and well known pioneer of this State', who had lived 'for over fifty years at his home on the banks of the Swan River' had died, and his funeral was 'largely attended'.<sup>69</sup> From 1908, William served on Swan Roads Board.<sup>70</sup>

In 1910, Rev. A. Burton inspected Susanna Smithers' grave and found it 'sadly out of repair', with the grave stone cracked, 'probably by the action of bush fires', into five pieces, which were 'lying loosely on the granite blocks which marked the

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63 Ellen Henley, conversations with Robin Chinnery, February 2003.

64 Bob Bowman op. cit.

65 Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. 285 and p. 305.

66 Copy of photograph of old homestead, Spring Park, Upper Swan, courtesy Ellen Keane Henley.

67 Fence and shed *Spring Park*, c. 1900?, courtesy Cecil King.

68 Swan Roads Boards Rate Books, SROWA AN 188 WAS 324 Cons. 3739, 1906, p. 44. This is the first year for which Rate Books are extant.

69 *The Western Mail* 25 May 1907, p. 16.

70 Erickson, op. cit., pp. 2173-75; Battye, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 162; and Cecil King and Ellen Henley, telephone conversations with Robin Chinnery, February 2003.

sides of the grave (all except one piece which was not to be found)<sup>.71</sup> The Rector obtained permission to repair the grave, and erected 'a plain iron railing, so that it may be protected from stock and more clearly set apart as sacred to the memory of a pioneer who, by her children at least, was had in reverence'.<sup>72</sup>

In 1912-13, *Spring Park*, with an area of 160 acres, continued to be owned and worked by William Minchin. About 60 acres was cropped with hay, and there was an orchard, six acres in area, where vines, apples, and stone fruit flourished. In addition, William ran a flock of about 100 Shropshire and Lincoln sheep. The family continued to occupy the c.1897 homestead, 'a solid building of sun-dried bricks' that had been erected 'about fifteen years ago'.<sup>73</sup> The period 1900-20 saw the Swan Valley change from predominantly mixed farming area to grape growing, with some fruit growing also including citrus. Most of the grape growing was for the production of dried fruit, along with some table grapes for local and export markets, and some grapes for wine making.<sup>74</sup> The drying shed of timber and iron construction near the stable may have been built around this period.

A pre-WWI postcard photograph shows Minchins' c.1897 homestead, with the lemon tree as a young tree, the slab shed and the barn.<sup>75</sup> Another photograph shows an early fruit drying shed at *Spring Park* and the brick stables.<sup>76</sup>

On 19 May 1916, a new Certificate of Title was issued in the name of William Minchin, farmer, of West Swan. The property was defined as portion of Swan Location F, being the whole of the land comprised in diagram 4417, as surveyed by L. Steffanoni in November 1915, 155 acres two roods and 33 perches in area. William Minchin continued to own and occupy the property for the remainder of his life. His son, Francis, also lived and worked there.<sup>77</sup>

An undated photograph, believed to be pre-1920, shows at left foreground Minchins' c.1897 homestead; at middle rear ground Smithers' 1830s cottage nearer to the river; at right the slab shed (largely obscured), the barn, cart shed, and brick stables all with iron roofs, the latter being the only building extant in 2005.<sup>78</sup>

In 1920, photographs show Smithers' 1830s cottage as viewed from the roadside and as viewed from the riverside. There are no longer vines across the house. At this period, this homestead was noted as 'one of the oldest houses left on the Swan'.<sup>79</sup> A photograph shows the lemon tree and the slab shed.<sup>80</sup> Another photograph shows the group of outbuildings as viewed from the north, the slab shed, the barn, drying shed, and stables.

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- 71 Burton, Canon A. (c.1930) Copy of diary of Mrs Mitchell, wife of Rev. W. Mitchell, who succeeded Rev. Giustiniani at the Swan in the year 1838. (Copied from the original by Alfred Burton, Rector of the Swan since 1899, 9 July 1910) p.17. Bob Bowman indicated he believes the gravestone survived intact into the late 20th century, when it was damaged by a tractor (conversation with Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, site visit 3 February 2003.). However, this seems unlikely in the light of Mrs Mitchell's diary.
- 72 ibid. p.18.
- 73 Battye, J. S. *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia* op. cit. p. 162.
- 74 Bourke, Michael op. cit., p. 285.
- 75 Postcard showing *Spring Park*, written to Amy from mother, 11 January 1914. Courtesy Cecil King.
- 76 Photograph *Spring Park*, Minchin Stables. Courtesy Mrs. Hamersley.
- 77 Certificate of Title Vol. 644 Fol. 179; Swan Roads Board Rates Cash Book, 1918-1920; and Cecil King, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2003.
- 78 *Spring Park*, West Swan Road,
- 79 Photographs *Spring Park* homestead, where Mr and Mrs Minchin lived 'over 72 years ago.' Courtesy Cecil King.
- 80 Cecil (King) and pup, *Spring Park*. Courtesy Cecil King.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Smithers' 1830s cottage was 'something of a curiosity' to the children in the Minchin family when they visited *Spring Park*, who heard stories from William and Mary of the early years of the Swan district. In the inter-war period, this house was used to accommodate seasonal workers on the property, whilst William and Mary and their son, Frances Keane, lived in the 1897 homestead. By this period, the timber and iron fruit-drying shed had been built and was in regular use.<sup>81</sup>

On 16 April 1933, a photograph shows Smithers' 1830s cottage with a corrugated iron roof. In this period, the verandah was in use for the storage of timber crates used for the grapes. There is evidence of repairs to the brick addition, and there is the water tank as per the earlier photograph. The mature tree is still growing in the front yard, but there are no longer vines across the front verandah.<sup>82</sup>

On 4 November 1933, William Minchin died, and Probate of his Will was granted to the Executors, his son, Frances Keane Minchin, orchardist, of West Swan, and Harry Cameron Lochiel Gardiner, grocer, of Guildford, on 7 December 1933.<sup>83</sup> As Frances was recorded as an orchardist, evidently by this period fruit and vine growing had replaced mixed farming at the property. He and his mother lived in Minchins' c. 1897 homestead for the remainder of his life. Miss Murray, of Henley Park, moved to reside with Mary and Frances, to assist with the housekeeping.<sup>84</sup>

On 4 January 1944, the place was transferred to Francis Keane Minchin, who died on 20 July 1944. Probate of his Will was granted to one of the Executors, Harry Cameron Lochiel Gardiner, grocer, of 2 Stirling Street, Guildford, on 27 September 1944. Subsequently, on 14 December 1945, the place was transferred to William Murray, farmer, and Elizabeth and Jane Murray, spinsters, all of Henley Park, West Swan, as joint tenants.<sup>85</sup>

In the latter half of the 1940s, Arthur Robert 'Bob' Bowman, leased 20 acres of *Spring Park* from his uncle, William Murray. This portion was already established as a vineyard, whilst the portion of the property on the west side of West Swan Road was still bush. Bob's brother, George, lived in the larger house, Minchins' c.1897 homestead. There was no kitchen in the main body of the house, and part of the verandah on one side had been enclosed to serve this purpose. There was also an old wash-house of timber and iron construction, which is extant in 2005. Smithers' 1830s cottage was also extant, as were the brick stable and barn, a timber hay shed, and a cart shed, timber framed with slab sides, and the aforementioned drying shed. By this period, the original timbers to the loft area of the barn had been removed. Bob and George Bowman continued to work the 28 acre vineyard, producing currants, wine grapes, burgundy, muscats, and sultanas, and planted an additional five acres of currants.<sup>86</sup>

After George Bowman died, Bob and his wife moved to the property in c.1954, and took up residence at Minchins' 1897 homestead.<sup>87</sup> In c. 1954-55, Bob Bowman doubled the size of the drying shed, the extension being to the north of the Minchin's drying shed. It was also of timber and iron construction. Through

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81 Cecil King, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2003.

82 Copy of photograph of old homestead, *Spring Park*, Upper Swan, courtesy Ellen Keane Henley, 16 April 1933.

83 Certificate of Title Vol. 644 Fol. 179; and Survey Diagram 4417.

84 Cecil King telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 12 February 2003.

85 Certificate of Title Vol. 644 Fol. 179.

86 Arthur Robert 'Bob' Bowman, Oral History, interview with Gail O'Hanlon, 23 March 1998. Transcript, Battye Library, OH 2896, pp. 29-34; and Bob Bowman, conversation with Robin Chinnery, site visit 3 February 2003.

87 Bob Bowman, conversation with Robin Chinnery, site visit, 3 February 2003.

the 1950s and early 1960s, dried fruit production continued to be a feature of the Swan Valley, then declined. The once significant industry in the Swan ceased, and with the passage of time and increasing sub-division of properties many of the drying sheds and drying racks have fallen into disrepair or have been removed, and the earlier drying sheds had become uncommon by 2005.<sup>88</sup>

Around 1955-56, Bob Bowman made a sloping concrete floor to stall four in the stables to facilitate milking the family's cow. The original timber cheese block floor to the balance of the stall area was left intact, and the brick floor to the tack room likewise.<sup>89</sup>

On 11 May 1963, Jane Murray died, and William and Elizabeth Murray became sole proprietors of the place by survivorship.<sup>90</sup>

On 11 October 1967, the place was transferred to A.R. Bowman, who continued to work the property.<sup>91</sup>

The Minchin family continued to maintain an association with the place and its owner through the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. In April 1969, a photograph shows the members of the Minchin family with Joyce Bowman at Minchins' c.1897 homestead. The homestead is little changed from the early photograph. There is a fence of cyclone wire with timber posts and rails around house and its simple garden that includes mature shrubs, and a hedge at one side. A second photograph shows Smithers' 1830s cottage with an iron roof, a water tank to one side of the verandah, with a post and wire fence around the site. It was being used to accommodate workers at the property at this date.<sup>92</sup>

In 1973, Bob Bowman applied to the Shire to build a new homestead at *Spring Park*. Approval was conditional upon demolition of the earlier house, Minchins' c.1897 homestead, which was duly carried out. The new house was built in close proximity, and a brick water closet was built on the site of the former kitchen, and the timber and iron washhouse building was retained. Around this period, Bob Bowman removed the cart shed with slab timber sides.<sup>93</sup>

Until the early 1970s, Smithers' mud brick 1830s cottage was utilised to accommodate Aboriginal workers on the property at various periods. In 1974, photographs show that a section of the corrugated iron roof had gone, exposing the original shingle roof beneath. There was a timber water closet with an iron roof near the annex, water tanks and a small corrugated iron construction at the opposite end of the house. The house was extensively damaged in a storm,<sup>94</sup> and, with much of the roof gone, the building rapidly deteriorated, and was eventually demolished in 1974. A photograph taken shortly before demolition shows the damage to the place.<sup>95</sup>

In 1975, *Spring Park* and Susannah Smithers grave were included in R.J. Ferguson and G. Stephenson's 'Survey of Buildings in the Shire of Swan, WA.'<sup>96</sup>

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88      ibid.

89      ibid.

90      Certificate of Title Vol. 644 Fol. 179.

91      Certificate of Title Vol. 644 Fol. 179.

92      Spring Park Homestead, with I. to rt., Joyce Bowman, Gerald Minchin, Bob Bowman, Belle Minchin and Len Minchin; and Original Spring Park Homestead, April 1969. Courtesy Ellen Keane Henley.

93      Bob Bowman, conversation with Robin Chinnery, site visit, 3 February 2003.

94      It has not been possible to determine the date of this storm damage.

95      Photographs, taken by Michael Bourke, 1974, courtesy of Michael J. Bourke and Shane Burke; Bourke, Michael J. op. cit., p. xii; and Arthur Robert Bowman op. cit.

96      Ferguson, R. J. and Stephenson, G. 'Survey of Buildings in the Shire of Swan, W. A.' (1975), p. 23.

In late 1976, *Spring Park* was assessed by the National Trust of Australia (WA). By this date, Smithers' 1830s cottage could be identified only as 'a heap of mud' sited 'at some distance from the farm buildings'.<sup>97</sup> The extant buildings comprised a stable and barn building, 'of hand made clay bricks laid on a flemish (sic) bond', with a corrugated iron roof, that was 'probably not original', reported to have been built in the 1850s by Alfred Minchin, but no reference was given for this information.<sup>98</sup> The stables comprised five stalls, and a small groomsman's room, with a brick floor. There was a hayloft above the stalls. The barn had a timber floor, made of planks laid on to the ground, large, double, timber doors that extended to the eaves. At the southern end of the barn, there was an extension comprising a timber post and beam cart shed. At this period, the buildings were 'in fair condition and reasonably unaltered'.<sup>99</sup> Photographs taken by Frank Sharr show the timber framed iron roofed cart shed and the barn and stable in November 1976.<sup>100</sup> On 17 January 1977, *Spring Park* was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA), as elements 'form an impressive collection group of mid-nineteenth century farm buildings.', the barn had been used 'for many years as a school room' before a Government school was built in the Swan Valley, and for their historic association with the Minchin family.<sup>101</sup>

On 21 March 1978, *Spring Park* was included in the Interim Register of the National Estate.<sup>102</sup>

In May 1983, Bob Bowman made application to erect a new farm building on the site of the existing brick barn. The Shire's Report noted that the original group of farm buildings had diminished with time, leaving only the two classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) and included in the Register of the National Estate. It was reported that 'the location of the new building was forced on the owner by existing working areas of the farm', and, under the existing Act, the Shire could not refuse the application.<sup>103</sup> In May, the building was found to be 'acceptably sound' and an estimate prepared for renovation costs.<sup>104</sup> Subsequently, the building was demolished. However, the Shire secured a number of the bricks for re-use in the repair of other old buildings, and with 'an understanding... that the owner would endeavour to maintain the last remaining building of the group and not seek its demolition'.<sup>105</sup> The new farm building on a concrete base was built in August 1983.<sup>106</sup>

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- 97 National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment Spring Park Buildings, Assessment, January 1977. The handwritten assessment has more information than the final typewritten version. The former includes a description of the house, with a 'low, shed-like brick attachment on the north side' and a verandah on the west side, which inspection indicated were later additions. The main fabric was rammed earth, with a brick wall and chimney on the south, and a brick wall in the centre supporting the roof. The earliest portion of the house had two rooms, with the later room added on the north side, with entry from the verandah, believed to have been used as an additional bedroom. The chimney-piece included a fireplace and a baker's oven, and there were timber cupboards built-in at the corners of the kitchen. In the mid 1970s, the remnants of the roof were shingles, with corrugated iron over them. (Handwritten Assessment, p. 3.)
- 98 *ibid.*
- 99 *ibid.*
- 100 National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment Spring Park Buildings, Assessment, photographs by Frank Sharr, 17 November 1976.
- 101 National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment Spring Park Buildings, January 1977.
- 102 Register of the National Estate, 21 March 1978.
- 103 'Spring Park Farm Buildings - Middle Swan' Shire of Swan, May 1983, courtesy Local History Section, Midland Library.
- 104 *ibid.*, Appendix 3.
- 105 *ibid.*
- 106 Bob Bowman, *op. cit.*, site visit by Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, 3 February 2003. Note: Date of construction is in the concrete by the entry to the building.

In 1986, *Spring Park* and Susannah Smither's grave were included in Palassis' 'Survey of Historic Buildings and Sites in the Swan Valley WA'.<sup>107</sup>

Undated photographs show deterioration of the roof of the stables and the brickwork.<sup>108</sup> In the early 1990s, Bob Bowman re-roofed the barn and carried out repairs to the brickwork and around the doors.<sup>109</sup>

On 25 February 1994, a new Certificate of Title was issued, showing the property as per Diagram 4417, 29.3ha in area.<sup>110</sup>

In 1997, *Spring Park* was included in the Municipal Heritage Inventory for the Shire of Swan. The stable was estimated to have been built c.1870. It was described as a single storey hand made brick and iron building, with timber horse stalls, and internal floor and partitions intact. The floor at one end had been concreted, and the building had been cement rendered to dado height. It was recorded that the original building was largely intact including the internal fittings, and the place was in very good condition. The stable was considered: 'Historically very significant as one of the few remaining handmade brick farm structures in the Swan valley', and it was to be given the highest level of protection and recommended for entry in the State Register of Heritage Places.<sup>111</sup>

Susannah Smithers gravestone was also included in the MI with similar recommendations. It was noted that there was 'an urgent need to resolve the boundary issue' as the current boundary bisects the site, and it was recommended that the grave be considered part of the land on which Haddrill's Cottage is located, as the cottage was already protected by the State Register.<sup>112</sup> The owners of the two properties proposed an excision of part of each to incorporate the grave site and sufficient ground to provide protection for it, to be transferred to the Shire to ensure its proper conservation.<sup>113</sup> A deed between the owners, and the National Trust was entered into in June 1983, providing the Trust with access to the gravesite for the purposes of assessment and repair, and to erect a fence around the grave. The owner of the neighbouring property at this time was the Hon. Peter Frederick Brinsden AM QC AO, a prominent Western Australian lawyer, judge and Royal Commissioner. The National Trust took responsibility for maintenance of the grave.<sup>114</sup> However, to date no action has been taken regarding this site.<sup>115</sup>

In the late 20th century, it had become increasingly difficult to get labour for the vineyard, and so Bob Bowman removed the last of the vines at *Spring Park*.<sup>116</sup>

In 2005, the brick stables and the drying sheds continue in use at *Spring Park*. Minchin Road in Middle Swan commemorates the Minchin family's contribution to the Swan district and their long association with *Spring Park*, which is commemorated in turn in Spring Park Road.

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107 Palassis, Kevin 'Survey of Historic Buildings and Sites in the Swan Valley WA' 1986, Code 46.

108 *Spring Park* stable, courtesy Mrs. Hamersley.

109 Bob Bowman op. cit.

110 Certificate of Title Vol. 1991 Fol. 990.

111 Municipal Heritage Inventory, Shire of Swan, June 1997, No. 587.

112 Municipal Heritage Inventory, Shire of Swan, June 1997, No. 614.

113 Shane Burke, conversation with Robin Chinnery, 25 January 2003.

114 Peter Frederick Brinsden, Arthur Robert Bowman, The National Trust of Australia (W.A.), 'Deed, Susannah Smithers' Grave', 6 June 1983.

115 Bob Bowman op. cit.

116 Bob Bowman ibid.



## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Spring Park* comprise a five-stall stable and tack room constructed in brickwork, with an iron roof, designed in the Victorian Georgian style, together with a timber and iron construction fruit drying shed designed in a utilitarian vernacular style. Other buildings and features at the place include Bowmans' 1973 brick and tile house, brick water closet, timber framed laundry, several metal framed and metal clad sheds to the north of the stables and drying shed, sheds to the north of the stables, Susannah Smithers' grave, fencing, pasture to the west of the drying sheds, cultivated land to the east and south of the stables and archaeological sites dating from the 1830s to the 1890s. Bowmans' 1980s residence near to the grave is not included in the study area for this assessment.

The place is located between the West Swan Road and the Swan River and slopes away from the road, descending in a series of plains to the river. It is an open site with little vegetation around the cultural features apart from trees and plantings associated with the house. A mature Fig Tree is located nearest the group that contains the extant buildings at *Spring Park*. Lost structures include Minchins' c.1897 homestead, which was located to the immediate east of the present house, Minchins' c.1880 residence, at an unknown location, Smithers' 1830s cottage east of this group, Morley's 1830s cottage near the southern boundary, and a barn and buggy shed that was located in the vicinity of the present storage shed immediately north of the stables.

### Homestead Group

Still further north and west of the farming work area is the area on which Minchins' c.1897 homestead was located. To its immediate east there is a metal framed and clad garage, to the north a brick construction water closet, further north and west a timber framed and metal clad laundry structure, and closing an informal rectangle described by these building on the western side, there is a single storey brick and tile bungalow constructed in the 1970s (Bowmans' 1973 residence). These buildings enclose the plan area of Minchins' c.1897 house that was demolished in 1974. The water closet and framed laundry are all that remain above ground of the homestead group. There is no above ground trace of the house that was demolished in 1974.

### Susannah Smithers' Grave.

The grave is located on the southern boundary of the property and is partly located on the adjoining property to the south, Haddrill's. It comprises a soft burnt brick surround, slate slab from Cape Town, South Africa, inscribed with Susannah Smithers' epitaph, together with cast iron stanchions and railings. The slate slab has been damaged by an impact as noted in the documentary evidence, and is cleanly broken into four or five pieces. The grave is in poor condition and requires conservation work to ensure its survival.

### Stables

The stables comprise a five-stall stable and tack room constructed in brickwork, with an iron roof, designed in the Victorian Georgian style.<sup>117</sup> The lower section of brickwork has been rendered as a repair strategy and the upper walls remain exposed soft red bricks, laid in a bond that is made up, in the main, with two stretcher bond bricks followed by a header bond brick in each course. The lintels are recently constructed jarrah, with replacement bricks around the openings in

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<sup>117</sup> 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) pp. 42-45.

the case of the central and northern openings. The stable doors are half doors that are made up of ledge and braced construction with tongue and groove board facings. The southern opening is a window and is of a similar kind of construction, but the fabric to this opening is older. The roof is a gable format framed up in light timber common rafters and it is clad with corrugated iron laid in single length sheets. In the northern gable there is a ledge and boarded door that provided access to the hayloft.

The interior of the stables is planned around five stalls at the western end of the building and a tack room on the eastern end. The interior of the stables section is characterised by its timber construction roof, unlined soffit, rendered brick walls, irregular patterned wood block or timber cheese block floor, and timber construction stalls. Feed bins have been removed, as has the loft floor. One of the stalls has been converted to a milking stall, with a ramped concrete floor leading from the exterior. The tack room adjoins the stalls and has a soft burnt brick floor, brick walls, and unlined soffit.

Changes have been made in the course of maintaining the place and these include the replacement of the roof, removal of the hay loft, patching in recycled bricks and the application of renders. Further, timber doors have been replaced. Other changes include the aforementioned adaptation of a stall to a milking bay.

Generally the place is in fair and sound condition. The stables are used for secure storage for farm chemicals and general storage.

There is no above ground trace of the very tall drying shed that appears in photographic records and was later used and referred to as the cart or buggy shed.

The slab shed that was located at the northern end of the working buildings group has been demolished without trace and it would appear that the current tractor shed is built over the site.

A lean-to addition to the western side of the stables at its northern end has been removed, again without leaving any surface traces.

Timber and bushpole paling fences indicated in the documentary evidence, apparently without leaving any trace.

### **Drying shed**

There are two sections of drying shed, both of which are similar in their construction. The first section at the northern end of the assemblage was completed at an unknown date pre-World War II and the southern extension completed in 1954. These sheds replaced the drying shed that had become the cart or buggy shed a short distance to the east and aligned roughly on the same north-south axis as the stables.

The drying shed is located north-west of the stables and west of the location of the buggy shed referred to in the documentary evidence. The drying shed is a gabled roof building, on a frame of irregular bush poles of around 5" (125mm) in diameter on average, linking timber plates and standard timber rafter and purlin framed roof, with corrugated iron roof cladding, and an earth floor. There is little to distinguish between the two sections of the structure other than the age and condition of the timber and in nailing. There are the remains of fixings that indicate where the drying racks were once fixed, in a small number of locations. The sheds are generally in fair to good condition and are used for equipment storage and general storage.

### **Metal Sheds**

There is a metal framed and clad shed on about the locations of the former barn and buggy shed, immediately north of the stables and a further metal framed and clad shed and garage further north again, which is located over archaeological sites, according to the photographic evidence.

### **Archaeological sites**

In addition to the sites of demolished buildings mentioned above, archaeological scatters are located at and near the sites of Smithers' and Morley's 1830s cottages, and further archaeological investigation is likely to identify below-ground evidence of these residences.

## **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

Few places of the period remain in the Swan Valley. A small number of early cottages built in the 1840s and 1850s remain at places such as Hadrill's House (Place no. 2493 in West Swan Road), House and Archaeological Sites, Millendon (Place No. 2533 in Olive Road Upper Swan) and Springvale (Place No. 13055 in George Street, West Swan)<sup>118</sup>. The outbuildings to these places in the Swan Valley have been removed. *Spring Park* differs in that it retains a working building in the form of the stables.

Many of the early working buildings have been lost. There is a set of two-storey stables at the Johnson Complex (Place No. 02465) in Guildford, constructed in the 1860s. These are also constructed in brick, with a hayloft. However, almost all trace of their function as stables has been removed. The Johnson Complex is a Registered Place. The stables at the Johnson Complex had a soft burnt brick floor at the time of the assessment, but most of them were removed for adaptive re-use. The stables at *Spring Park* offer a much clearer and close to authentic example of stables, where all functions are readily apparent. The wood blocks or cheeses at *Spring Park* feature round shapes that are sawn log sections, and rectangular blocks.

The buggy sheds and stable at Glengarry Station at Moonyanookya, a Registered Place (Place No. 3726), had timber cheese floors. Some of these floors remain, some have been removed, or partly replaced with stone. All of the timber floors are the sawn log or cheese shape.

Drying sheds were a common phenomenon in the Swan Valley. The main product was sultana. Changes to the industry including scale of production made small scale production uneconomic and alternative products were cultivated including viticulture for wine production, market gardening and in more recent times the development of the hospitality industry in the Swan Valley. Drying sheds are by nature ephemeral construction and are easily removed. Many have been removed as part of alternative land use. There are few examples remaining in the Swan Valley.

## **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

National Trust Assessment, January 1977

## **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may reveal additional information about the place, including the whereabouts of William and Mary Minchin's 1880s homestead and the schoolhouse.

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<sup>118</sup> *Hadrill's House* and *Springvale* are on the State Register of Heritage Places; *House and Archaeological Sites, Millendon* has not been included in the State Register.