



# 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 \*

-----

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is located on an early pastoral lease issued in the Kimberley region in 1883. (Criterion 2.1)

The cave structures were established as a response to war time threat but were utilised later for educational purposes. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is closely associated with the Emanuel family who pioneered the lease in 1883 and also held leases over Christmas Creek, Cherrabun and Meda. (Criterion 2.3)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

-----

### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Gogo Cave School contributed to the educational needs of the community and was reputedly the first school to be established on a cattle station in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.1)

---

\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *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**

The use of man-made caves for educational purposes is unusual in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

Gogo Homestead is representative of a north-west station plan, with centre core and surrounding verandahs.

### **12.3 CONDITION**

Gogo Homestead is in good condition although the building requires general maintenance. The long term structural sustainability of the caves is uncertain.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Gogo Homestead has moderate integrity. The place continues to fulfil a residential purpose although a new homestead has been established at a separate site. The caves are no longer used.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Overall the place has moderate authenticity. There have been alterations to the fabric principally in the verandah enclosures.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Tanya Suba, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Taylor, Architect.

The curtilage includes the homestead and immediate surrounding area including the caves, but not the six other buildings to the east mostly in ruins and of lesser significance.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Gogo Homestead and Cave School*, near Fitzroy Crossing, consists of a concrete block house built in 1918, and several nearby caves handcarved in c.1940.

The Kimberley Region of Western Australia was opened up and settled in the early 1880s largely due to Alexander Forrest's expedition of 1879. Forrest explored a portion of the Kimberley Region south of the King Leopold Ranges, and his enthusiastic reports of well watered and pastured land were received with great interest in Western Australia and the Eastern States. Pastoral leases were subsequently issued; the first being to G.J. Brockman in 1879.

Many pastoralists and investors in the eastern states were tempted to take up leases in the Kimberley following Forrest's descriptions of fertile pasture land and wide flowing rivers. Among the pastoralists eager to secure some of the land was Patrick Durack of Thylungra, Queensland, who encouraged his friend Solomon Emanuel to consider the Kimberley venture as well.<sup>1</sup>

The Emanuels had settled in Goulburn, New South Wales in the 1830s and soon became involved in a wide range of businesses, including ownership of land and pastoral concerns.<sup>2</sup> Interested in securing land in the Kimberley for his two sons, Sydney and Isadore, Solomon Emanuel suggested that if Patrick Durack and his brothers were to organise a private journey of exploration, then he would share in financing it. At an estimated cost of £4,000 the 1882 expedition was led by Patrick's brother, Michael, and included Sydney Emanuel.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime 'map speculators', also referred to as 'map graziers', in the Eastern States were already claiming huge areas of the Kimberley sight unseen.<sup>4</sup> Concerned that the best land might have been taken up by the time the expedition arrived in the region, Patrick Durack and Solomon Emanuel claimed a holding of 1 million acres on the Fitzroy River in West Kimberley and a similar amount on either side of the Ord River in East Kimberley.<sup>5</sup>

Durack's expedition returned to Sydney in 1883, having inspected, and been satisfied with, most of the land they had claimed. It was agreed that

---

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, P. *Pastoral Properties of Australia* Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p.160.  
<sup>2</sup> Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H., 'The Emanuels of Noonkanbah and GoGo', in *Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society*, Vol 8, Part 4, 1980, p.6.  
<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p.7; Taylor, P. *Op Cit*; Durack, M. *Kings in Grass Castles* London, 1959, p.190.  
<sup>4</sup> Durack, M., *Op. Cit.*  
<sup>5</sup> Taylor, P., *Op. Cit.*

the Duracks would settle on the Ord River to the east, whilst the Emanuels would take the land on the Fitzroy River.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, most of the good land in the Kimberley was occupied and 'adventurous pioneers were taking mobs of cattle overland.'<sup>7</sup>

The Emanuels, who had already invested considerably in the West Kimberley venture, acquired two further blocks of country, one on the May River to the north of Derby, and the other on the Fitzroy at Lower Liveringa, for which they had to pay £1,200 to a man who had taken up the lease as a speculation. Both these properties were selected for easy access to Derby, where the Emanuels also invested quite substantially in town blocks.<sup>8</sup>

While Sydney Emanuel took over the management of the family livery stables in New South Wales, Isadore Emanuel became managing partner of the West Kimberley pastoral leases in 1885. It soon became apparent that the May River property was not ideally suited as a sheep station; it being low-lying coastal country. Furthermore Lower Liveringa was considered to be too small for profitable working. Consequently the Emanuels began to consider acquiring additional pastoral leases further inland up the Fitzroy River. In 1886, Solomon Emanuel bought a five-thirteenths shareholding in Noonkanbah Station and the following year took up country south of Fitzroy Crossing.<sup>9</sup> Although this property was named Margaret Downs, it being located at the junction of the Margaret and Fitzroy Rivers, it subsequently became known as Gogo; the reason for the renaming described below:

It was managed by a stockman of such relentless energy that the Aborigines soon took to calling the property 'Gogo', and it has remained 'Gogo' to three generations of Kimberley cattlemen.<sup>10</sup>

In the meantime the Emanuels had diversified into both sheep and cattle and were in a good position to capitalise on the increased beef market during the Halls Creek goldrush in the late 1880s. Diversifying into cattle also meant that the Emanuels survived the huge drop in wool prices in the early 1890s which had such an impact on other pastoralists in the region. By 1892, the Emanuels, having become the largest single leaseholders in the Kimberley, were well placed to benefit from the gold discoveries of the early 1890s. Gogo Station, stocked with heifers purchased from the Duracks, contributed to the success of the Emanuels during this period.<sup>11</sup>

Seeing an opportunity to capitalise on the Kimberley livestock trade from Derby, the firm of Forrest, Emanuel & Co. was formed in 1894, with Sydney Emanuel coming over from New South Wales as one of the partners. With the population of Western Australia having quadrupled during the 1890s, the demand for beef increased accordingly. It was not

---

<sup>6</sup> Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H., Op. Cit., p.7.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, P., Op. Cit.

<sup>8</sup> Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H., Op. Cit., p.8.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, pp.8-9.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p.9 & Oral History interview with Cecil Kelly by Michael Adams, 1982/3, OH540, p.450.

<sup>11</sup> Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H., Op. Cit., pp.9 & 12.

long before Forrest, Emanuel & Co. had secured a significant control of the shipping trade of livestock from the Kimberley to Fremantle. This soon gave rise among goldfields journalists to much angry controversy about the 'meat ring', a combination of politicians and dealers masterminded by Forrest, Emanuel & Co. to keep the prices high and exploit the consumer. Despite controversy and criticism the company continued to thrive and, following the death of Alexander Forrest in 1901, the Emanuels became the sole owners of the company, dropping Forrest's name from the title of the firm.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, the Emanuel brothers continued to expand their pastoral holdings so that by c.1902, they either solely or in partnership controlled more than 20,000 square miles in the Kimberley and the adjacent part of the Northern Territory. The size of Margaret Downs (Gogo) increased to cover over 2 million acres (1 million hectares), taking in the outstations that would subsequently become Christmas Creek and Cherrabun.<sup>13</sup>

Continued criticism about the high cost of meat and the activities of the 'meat ring', combined with an imminent election, resulted in the Newton Moore government appointing a Royal Commission in 1908, to inquire into and report on the meat supply. In his testimony to the Royal Commission during which he refuted the existence of a 'meat ring', Isadore Emanuel stated that they had seven million acres and turned off 4,500 cattle a year.<sup>14</sup>

Although the results of the Royal Commission spared the Emanuels from any further criticism, the changing political climate brought about by the rise of the Labor Party resulted in a proposed policy of northern development which would break up the big pastoral empires. Labor won the Federal elections of 1910, and in October 1911, Labor won the State elections in Western Australia, shortly after which they introduced legislation on passed Acts, prohibiting individuals from 'owning' (leasing) more than a million acres.<sup>15</sup> As a result Isadore Emanuel, who moved to London in 1912, was obliged to sell many of his 'properties' (leases). However, he was unable to find buyers for his Kimberley cattle stations and was therefore allowed to keep them.<sup>16</sup> Emanuel retained Gogo, meeting the requirements of the Land Act by dividing it into three stations, Margaret Downs, Christmas Creek and Cherrabun. Continuing to closely administer his pastoral investments from overseas, Emanuel hired excellent managers such as Ted Millard, who ran Gogo from 1921, until his death at the age of seventy-six in 1953.<sup>17</sup>

After Isadore Emanuel died in 1954, his son Sydney took over. He had been born in Perth in 1903, and was only seven when the family moved to England. Although he made frequent visits to the Kimberley, he continued to run the stations from England. When he took control, Sydney's son, Tim Emanuel, brought the management of the stations back

---

<sup>12</sup>     ibid., pp.13-15.

<sup>13</sup>     ibid., p.15.

<sup>14</sup>     ibid., p.16.

<sup>15</sup>     ibid., p.18 & Taylor, P., Op. Cit.

<sup>16</sup>     Taylor, P., Op. Cit.

<sup>17</sup>     Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H., Op. Cit., p.19.

to Western Australia, controlling the four million acre leaseholdings from Perth.<sup>18</sup>

The 1918 Gogo Homestead, located on the side of a stony hill, is built of cement blocks and has a two room centre surrounded by wide verandahs, some of which have been built in to form four bathrooms and a kitchen.<sup>19</sup> The original French doors to the central core have been replaced with windows.<sup>20</sup> Cecil Kelly, who worked on Gogo in 1934, describes the 'new homestead - now men's quarters' which could indicate that a previous homestead had existed. Kelly further describes the kitchen, cookhouse and manager's quarters being built of timber and iron.<sup>21</sup> In 1988, the homestead was still occupied by station staff and continues to be used for this purpose today.<sup>22</sup> The current homestead group is of more recent construction and located a few kilometres to the south of the older homestead group.

In the rocky cliff behind the Gogo Homestead a simple network of caves, comprising three large openings, was hand carved out of the rock. This work was carried out by Ken Garcia in c.1940, when the threat of a Japanese invasion intensified during World War Two.<sup>23</sup> The tunnels, which housed station stores and equipment as well as providing for a precautionary air raid shelter, originally ran some 20 or 30 metres into the hillside.<sup>24</sup> The cave was used to house the first school at Gogo, opened in 1956, and reputedly the first in Western Australia to be established on a cattle station. In 1960, the schoolmaster was Mr Roy Corker.<sup>25</sup>

In 1956, serious flooding caused damage, but in March 1983, the flooding was even worse (2 metres higher).<sup>26</sup> Since then there have also been floods in 1984, 1986, 1991 and 1993, the levels of which are marked on one of the outbuildings located near *Gogo Homestead and Cave School*.

Managers continued to operate the Emanuel's pastoral leases with Vic Jones managing Gogo in the 1960s and Len Hill taking over in 1982.<sup>27</sup> Early in 1985, the Emanuel family sold the remaining four of its stations to the Western Australian Government's Export Import Agency for \$8.5 million. The sale of Gogo, Cherrabun, Christmas Creek and Meda Stations represented the end of a 102 year involvement by the Emanuel family in the Kimberley pastoral industry.<sup>28</sup>

*Gogo Homestead and Cave School*, located on pastoral lease 3114/1115, was classified by the National Trust of Australia (W.A.) on 4 June 1985.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, P., Op. Cit., pp.160-61.

<sup>19</sup> The identity of the manager at Gogo in 1918 is not readily discoverable.

<sup>20</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 04/06/1985.

<sup>21</sup> Oral History interview with Cecil Kelly by Michael Adams, 1982/3, OH540, p.476.

<sup>22</sup> Kelleher, P. *Historic Buildings in the Kimberley Region of WA* 1988, p.130.

<sup>23</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 04/06/1985.

<sup>24</sup> Kelleher, P., Op. Cit., p.132.

<sup>25</sup> *Boab Babbler*, Vol 11, No 3, 6 March 1992, p.1.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, P., Op. Cit., pp.157-58.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p.164.

<sup>28</sup> Kelleher, P., Op. Cit., p.130.

<sup>29</sup> National Trust Assessment Exposition, 04/06/1985.

A memorial to Isadore Emanuel is located on Mt. Talbot on Meda Station.<sup>30</sup>

In 1997, the place is used as a pastoral station, operated by Gogo Station Pty Ltd.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Gogo Homestead and Cave School*, is located on an elevated flat area to the northern side of a long stony ridge. The (former) main homestead was built in 1918, and has been replaced by a more recent and much larger homestead group located further to the south-east on the other side of the ridge. As the relative importance of the house has declined in relation to the overall station property, it is apparent that maintenance and care levels have correspondingly declined to the former homestead location. The house is now occupied by transitional station staff who do not have a proprietorial interest in the place, and the condition of the homestead reflects this level of care. The various outbuildings to the east of the homestead are in ruins, with the roofs removed from the majority of the buildings. Adjacent to the homestead are three caves that have been excavated from the cliff face of the stony ridge. These caves are partially filled with discarded materials and household goods.

The 1918 homestead is constructed using concrete blocks for the walls on a concrete floor. The top course of the walls to the two central rooms has open sections to assist in ventilating the rooms. The two large central rooms (lounge and bedroom) form a 10 m x 6.5 m central core which was surrounded by a 3 m wide verandah. According to documentary sources (Kelleher) the verandah was once lattice enclosed and covered with vines. Kelleher states that French doors to the two core rooms have been replaced by windows, and the concrete block infill panels below the window sills to the rooms support this statement. The verandah has been enclosed over time as various rooms have been added. A kitchen, meals area, and bathroom have been constructed across the rear or west side verandah. Two 'sleepout' bedrooms and a laundry have been placed along the north side verandah enclosure. The walls of these rooms have been constructed using stud framing and then clad with 'corrugated iron' sheets and asbestos fibre cement sheet panelling internally. A toilet constructed using masonry walls and curved 'corrugated iron' sheet roof is located to the rear and to the south west of the homestead. A paved area at the rear of the house may have had a pergola or similar covered structure over as post and beams are extant that could have supported such a structure.

The roof of the homestead is of relatively low pitch and is 'corrugated iron' clad on timber roof framing. The ceiling linings to the core rooms are of pressed metal, with sheet ceiling linings to the enclosed verandah rooms. Joinery is generally of timber, however the verandah posts are of steel tube.

The three caves adjacent to the homestead are each approximately three metres wide, about two metres high at the highest point, and run about five to six metres into the hillside. Masonry dividing walls have been built

---

<sup>30</sup> Conversation John Taylor & Tanya Suba with Jean, Housekeeper at Gogo Station citing information provided by Stan Webb, Magistrate at Halls Creek, 16 July 1997.

between each cave, and it is possible these side walls once supported extended roof cover of some kind to the caves.

There are six other buildings to the east of the homestead, now mostly in ruins. On the hillside to the south of the six buildings are two remnants of walls of which the original use is not readily determinable. The most intact and least significant of the buildings is a corrugated steel shed which is the furthestmost to the east of the whole group. The remaining five 'outbuildings' are constructed using masonry walls rendered and painted both sides, and probably had 'corrugated iron' roof sheeting which has been removed. The five masonry buildings were almost certainly staff quarters and facilities. One small building housed a bath, another a toilet. A small accommodation block is located just to the east of another accommodation block with three divided rooms, documentary evidence states that these blocks housed various full blood Aboriginal, half caste, and 'white' stockmen. The floors in the rooms are large washed river/creek stones. The largest of the 'outbuildings' has a toilet and shower in the north east corner, concrete floor, and the remnants of a steel roof framing structure. The larger area of this building may be consistent with the station hand's 'mess' and kitchen - as a large 'Metters' stove is located just outside of the building.

The homestead could be described as of an Inter-War Bungalow style<sup>31</sup>, although this would simply classify the place by time (Inter-War c.1915 - c.1940) and external shape (Bungalow - a single storey building with commodious verandahs). A more complete style description of the homestead would perhaps include the word **tropical** (Inter-War Tropical Bungalow).

The homestead is in sound condition. Lack of proprietorial care is now likely to eventually result in significant deterioration of this building, and the significant fabric of the building has previously been greatly altered and removed. The caves do not show signs of recent collapse, although it would be advisable to exercise extreme care in entering the area under cover. The condition of the 'outbuildings' classifies them as ruins.

### 13.3 REFERENCES

Bolton, G.C. & Pederson, H. 'The Emanuels of Noonkanbah and GoGo', in *Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society* Vol 8, Part 4, 1980.

Durack, M. *Kings in Grass Castles* London, 1959.

Kelleher, P. *Historic Buildings in the Kimberley Region of WA* 1988.

Taylor, P. *Pastoral Properties of Australia*, Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1984.

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 04/06/1985.

Oral History interview with Cecil Kelly by Michael Adams, 1982/3, OH540.

---

<sup>31</sup> Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. pp.206-209. Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1994.



#### **13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

-----