



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)

- 3.18 Marketing and retailing
- 8.5.5 Associating to pursue common leisure interests

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 407 Cultural activities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Glen Forrest Hall is an architectural curiosity and a unique example in the West Australian context of an octagonal Flemish bond brick and iron community hall. (Criterion 1.1)

The use of Flemish bond in the construction of the walls and the striking differences between the face and header side of the bricks has given the walls of *Glen Forrest Hall* an interesting dichromatic effect which has great aesthetic appeal. (Criterion 1.2)

The octagonal design of *Glen Forrest Hall* is very innovative and unusual. (Criterion 1.2)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Glen Forrest Hall is historically important to the local Glen Forrest community as it embodies the spirit of the early settlers who established homes and developed industrial and horticultural businesses in the suburb. It was the presence of these businesses that saw the community thrive and grow to the extent that they needed a hall and were able to attract a loan that would assist in building one. (Criterion 2.2)

Glen Forrest Hall was an important social venue for the people of Glen Forrest during the first decades of the twentieth century. The hall represented the only venue in Glen Forrest that could be used for dances and other community meetings. The building was also used to display local produce and it was constructed from bricks that were locally produced. (Criterion 2.2)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

Glen Forrest Hall is an example of a community hall built through the State Government's Grant in Aid Scheme, which assisted rural communities to develop facilities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criterion 2.2)

Glen Forrest Hall is closely associated with William McGlew, Jacob Hawter and Thomas Smith, influential early settlers in Glen Forrest. (Criterion 2.3)

Glen Forrest Hall is an innovative design for the period with roots that connect it to colonial settlement in India. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Glen Forrest Hall has been threatened with demolition on two occasions and on both occasions the people of Glen Forrest demonstrated the importance that the building has in the local community by their successful efforts to retain the building. The community quickly rallied round in 1913 to raise money to repair and pay off the initial debt. Again in the 1960s, even though a new hall had been constructed, residents again rallied to prevent *Glen Forrest Hall* being demolished. (Criterion 4.1)

Glen Forrest Hall plays an important part in today's community as a meeting place and its inclusion in the Shire of Mundaring's Municipal Inventory indicates that the community continues to feel strongly about the importance of this building. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Glen Forrest Hall is the only octagonal agricultural hall constructed in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Whilst *Glen Forrest Hall* is a unique design, it is representative of a class of building that was constructed by many community groups during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Western Australia. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The building is in good condition apart from a small section of rising damp in the southern wall near the secondary steps. The building is maintained by the Shire of Mundaring and the Western Australian Wildflower Society (Darling Range Branch).

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The building's current use as the headquarters for the Darling Range Branch of the Wildflower Society is considered to be a compatible use for the building. *Glen Forrest Hall* is also used by other community groups. The original layout of the building has been maintained. *Glen Forrest Hall* has a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Glen Forrest Hall has retained a high percentage of original materials with few alterations made to the building. The enclosure of the rear verandah area appears to have taken place shortly after the hall was first constructed and should be considered as an integral part of the development of the building. Certainly the 1913 reference to structural problems near the stage area and the repairs which were carried out, point to an early date for this extension. *Glen Forrest Hall* has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by Fiona Bush.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Glen Forrest Hall is an octagonal, brick building which was constructed by the community of Glen Forrest (or Smiths Mill as it was called at the time) in 1897. The building was used for social gatherings and meetings.

At the time of the building's construction, Glen Forrest had become a thriving community in the hills with various local industries that included a sawmill, brick making, vineyards, nurseries, gravel quarries and a small number of timber cutters. The settlement was known as 'Smiths Mill' after the local sawmill. The name 'Glen Forrest' was not adopted until October 1915.¹

The first person to settle permanently in Glen Forrest was Alfred Charles Smith. Smith, originally a farmer, established a small sawmill in the district in 1877.² This mill was originally referred to as the York Greenmount Sawmill, but in later years became known as Smith's Mill.³ The mill was a small operation in comparison to other mills that became established in the hills region. The completion of the eastern hills railway line in June 1885 (which passed within 100 metres of the mill) enabled the operation to become quite profitable.⁴ Alfred turned his milling operation over to his son Thomas in 1884. Thomas married and raised a family in a house he constructed near the mill. The mill closed c.1899 and Thomas continued to live in the district until his death in 1942.⁵

Agriculturalists were soon attracted to the area after reports of the fertility of the soil. Richard Hardey (who owned Peninsula Farm at Maylands) established the Glen Hardey vineyard in 1882⁶ and in 1887, Charles Lauffer and Jacob Hawter began developing the Helena River Nursery.⁷ Hawter later branched out on his own and purchased land to the west of Lauffer's, establishing the Darling Range Nursery.⁸

During 1889 and 1890 the remaining Crown Land around Smiths Mill was sub-divided and bids made for the new blocks. William McGlew, an iron-founder, wheelwright and builder purchased a number of blocks. In 1892, he constructed a house, 'Springside', on his property. McGlew became a very

1 Elliot I., *Mundaring: A History of the Shire*, Shire of Mundaring, Mundaring, 1983, p. 181.

2 Ibid, p. 157.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid, p. 43.

5 Ibid, p. 160.

6 Ibid, p. 161.

7 Ibid, p. 165.

8 Ibid, p. 166.

successful businessman and became quite an influential man in the Glen Forrest community.⁹

During the 1890s, extensive gravel beds were found in the hills region. The Glen Forrest gravel beds were first exploited by William and George Burkinshaw.¹⁰ They ran a thriving business, transporting their gravel down to Perth by rail.¹¹ A by-product of this activity was the discovery of useable clay beds beneath the gravel. By 1897, George Burkinshaw and his brother-in-law William Wood had established the Vulcan Brickworks. The Bunning Brothers, in partnership with Joseph Millard, also opened a brickyard. In 1901, Thomas Statham and William Burton established the Darling Range Quarries, FireBrick and Gravel Co.¹²

By the turn of the century 'Smiths Mill' had a Post Office, hotel, school, shops, numerous small residences as well as thriving industries.

The site for the agricultural hall was donated by William McGlew in March 1896.¹³ The 'Smiths Mill' community applied for and received a loan of £250 from the State Government.¹⁴ The State Government had established a Grant-in-Aid system, which could be used to assist with the erection of public buildings such as 'Agricultural Halls, Mechanics Institutes and Kindred Buildings.'¹⁵ A maximum of £250 could be borrowed 'for a building, the total cost of which must not be less than 400 pounds.'¹⁶

Tenders for the hall were called by the Department of Public Works in January 1896. None was accepted.¹⁷ A local committee, which included the Hon. Josceline. Amherst, Thomas R. Smith and William McGlew, organised the construction of the hall and local resident, Henry Eltze-Victor, provided the unusual design.¹⁸ Eltze-Victor was a civil engineer who had lived in India during the 1850s prior to migrating to Western Australia. While building a section of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, he had built for his family a house that resembled a large cage. 'An octagonal design with barred windows which afforded protection as well as uninterrupted vision all around.'¹⁹ The cost of the hall exceeded the original £250 and McGlew, Smith and Jacob Hawter stood as guarantors for a further £100. The hall was opened on 16 March 1897. The bricks used in the construction of the hall came from Burkinshaw's brickyard.²⁰ The residents of 'Smiths Mill' christened the hall 'Forrest Hall' in honour of Sir John Forrest.²¹

Over the years the hall was used by local growers to display their produce each week, dances and community meetings were held and for a short time it was the official meeting place of the Greenmount Roads Board.²² Local

9 Ibid, pp 167 – 168.

10 Ibid, p. 163.

11 Ibid, p. 163.

12 Ibid, pp 170 & 177.

13 Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Files.

14 Ibid.

15 Agricultural Halls – General (ACC 689, AN7, Item No. 1884, year: 1926). State Records Office.

16 Ibid.

17 Elliot I., p. 170.

18 Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Files: information supplied by Eltze-Victor's great-granddaughter, Patricia Shotter.

19 Patricia Shotter.

20 Elliot I., p. 170.

21 Ibid, p. 171.

22 Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Files and Elliot I., p. 180.

legend has it that *Glen Forrest Hall* was originally constructed with a central post to support the roof. This post often got in the way of dances and one night a bet was taken up to see whether the roof would fall down if the post was removed. A local sawyer sawed partially through the post at the top and bottom, attached a rope to the saddle of his horse and pulled. The post came away and the roof remained.²³ The date of this event is not recorded, although Patricia Edwards (great granddaughter of William McGlew), remembers using the central post as a maypole. Mrs Edwards arrived in Glen Forrest in 1931 when she was thirteen years old.²⁴

Although *Glen Forrest Hall* was used extensively by the local community it was found in 1913, when a new committee was formed to approach the Government over a loan to build a new hall, that the initial loan had not been repaid. By 1913, the overdraft had increased until the interest had exceeded the initial loan.²⁵ Residents were calling for a new hall as *Glen Forrest Hall* was considered to be structurally unsound. Apparently there were large cracks around the stage area. Due to the outstanding overdraft, the residents were refused any further funds to construct a new hall. Instead, after a public meeting, the majority of the residents voted to retain their hall and fund-raising activities were held to raise the necessary money required to repair the hall and repay the overdraft.²⁶

In 1948, the hall passed out of the control of the local trustees and was vested in the Shire of Mundaring.²⁷ The needs of the community gradually exceeded the available space in the hall and the absence of adequate toilets also became a problem. The building was closed in 1959²⁸ and a new hall was opened in March 1960. Due to public support for the retention of *Glen Forrest Hall*, the Shire of Mundaring repaired the building and leased it to the Glen Forrest and Mahogany Creek branch of the Country Women's Association on 23 June 1967.²⁹ The Glen Forrest and Mahogany Creek branch disbanded and vacated the building on 23 February 1987.³⁰

On 23 March 1987, the Western Australian Wildflower Society (Darling Range Branch) was permitted to take over the lease of *Glen Forrest Hall*. Their members currently use the building as their headquarters.³¹ They continue to hold the lease on the property and sub-let the building to other community groups. During the early 1990s, the Wildflower Society applied for a grant from the Shire of Mundaring to carry out superficial works to the hall. These works included re-fitting the kitchen with modern appliances and replacing the old wood-burning stove with an electric one. They also constructed a concrete access ramp on the northern side of the building and a path around to the rear.³²

23 Elliot I., pp. 170 – 171.

24 Telephone conversation held between Patricia Edwards and Fiona Bush 19/01/01.

25 Elliot I., p. 171.

26 Ibid.

27 Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Files.

28 Ibid.

29 Shire of Mundaring Records.

30 Ibid..

31 Telephone conversation held between Sylvia Garlick (fmr member of Wildflower Society) and Fiona Bush 18/01/01.

32 Telephone conversation held between Sylvia Garlick (fmr member of Wildflower Society) and Fiona Bush 18/01/01.

The exact dates of alterations to the hall have been difficult to determine. Additions were made to the rear of the building and the colour of the brickwork and the presence of the stage all point to a date fairly early on during the life of the hall. At present it is not known when the roof was re-clad or when a toilet was added at the rear. Patricia Edwards has confirmed that when the C.W.A. used the building there was a toilet.³³ The Shire of Mundaring has not retained any records regarding repair work carried out on *Glen Forrest Hall* prior to leasing it to the C.W.A. in 1967. However, given that the building was apparently in a dilapidated condition during the 1960s, extensive repairs must have been made prior to leasing the building. Some of these repairs probably included the installation of a toilet and recladding the roof.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Glen Forrest Hall is an octagonal shaped, single storey, brick building constructed for the residents of Glen Forrest (formerly Smiths Mill) in 1897.

The building is located in a residential area on the western side of McGlew Road on a block that slopes down to the east and south. To the north of *Glen Forrest Hall* is the Glen Forrest Post Office (1901), whilst on the southern side is the Glen Forrest Uniting Church.

The front boundary (eastern) of the property is defined by a stone (undressed granite) wall. The granite blocks have been capped with a rounded concrete coping into which pieces of blue metal have been imbedded. Concrete bollards are located at regular intervals along the wall and have a metal chain strung between them. Two tube-framed gates, covered with wire mesh, provide access to the site. A pedestrian gate is located in the centre of the wall, while a wider gate, which permits car access, is at the northern end of the wall.

Glen Forrest Hall has been constructed approximately at the centre of the block and the area between the front of the building and the front boundary has been rather unsympathetically sealed with black bitumen. Garden beds, with native plants, have been established along the eastern, southern and northern sides of the property. Garden beds are also located around the front of the hall.

The main access to the building is via a set of undressed, granite steps on the eastern side of the building (front) which lead up to the verandah that extends around five sides of the building. The steps have a pipe balustrade on either side. The verandah floor is paved with concrete and sits on a foundation of undressed laterite topped with two courses of cream brickwork laid in stretcher bond. A secondary set of steps, constructed from the same materials, is located on the southern side of the building. A concrete ramp permits wheel-chair access on the northern side. This path continues around to the rear doors.

Glen Forrest Hall has a hipped, Zinalume roof, which has not been fitted with gutters. The surrounding verandah roof is also Zinalume with no gutters, except for a short section of guttering above the main steps. This roof is attached to the walls below the main roof and is supported on timber, stop-chamfered posts. A timber handrail is set between these posts. The roof cladding, verandah floor and timber posts are not original. The roofing timbers that support the verandah are also not original.

³³ Telephone conversation held between Patricia Edwards and Fiona Bush 19/01/01.
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The walls are constructed with soft-fired bricks laid using Flemish bond. The stretcher side of the bricks are a pinky cream colour, while the header ends of the bricks are a rust colour, acquired during firing. The alternating bands of dark and light lend a pleasing pattern to the building. Stylistically the building does not readily conform with any of the styles listed in Apperly, Irving, & Reynolds' book.³⁴ The building has a simple elegance, which could be said to have its roots in the Regency style, or it could even be considered to be vernacular. As the Arts and Crafts movement had its roots in the vernacular form *Glen Forrest Hall* could be defined as an example of Federation Arts and Crafts.

The five front sides of the octagonal shape feature alternating door and window openings. The double doors are ledged and framed with tongue & groove boarding. The main entrance is on the eastern side. The long windows in the alternating walls are fixed, three paned and glazed with obscure glass. Both the doors and windows have arched, brick lintels with a metal arch bar. The windows have concrete sills.

Windows have also been placed in each of the eight sides below the main roof. These fanlight windows are also fixed with three panes (clear glass), brick lintels and timber sills. Several of the lintels have been repaired with an inappropriate concrete mortar.

A large, visually intrusive meter box has been placed next to the front door.

Two extensions have been added to the hall, at various times, both on the western (rear) side of the building. The first extension involved the enclosure of the verandah area around the three rear walls. The new walls follow the eight-sided pattern. The walls are constructed from cream coloured bricks, which are very similar to the bricks used to construct the original exterior walls. They are laid using stretcher bond, although portions of the rear wall have been laid using Flemish bond. Some sections of the walls have been repaired using light coloured bricks. The skillion roof is Zinalume with extruded aluminium gutters and down-pipes.

The new walls at the end of the verandah on the northern and southern sides of the building have been fitted with four panel exterior doors. Two of the walls have casement windows while the rear wall has been fitted with double, ledged and braced doors which are similar to those previously described. They appear to be copies.

At a later stage, a toilet was added to the rear of the building. This extension was built using cream coloured bricks laid in stretcher bond. These bricks are hard-fired with a banded pattern on the face of the brick. The toilet has a skillion roof that is covered with Zinalume. There are no gutters. The toilet door is located in the northern wall and there is a louvred window in the western wall.

The interior is a large open space with jarrah floorboards. The ceiling is unlined and it is possible to see how the roof joists come together at one point around a central, vertical post. The walls are painted and have a plaster dado, approximately 1.2 metres high and a jarrah chair rail. Original metal doorknobs have been retained on the interior sides of the doors. The area is illuminated with modern light fixtures.

Directly opposite the front door is the area that was once used as the stage. The jarrah floor is stepped up at this point. The wide opening is supported

³⁴ 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.

with an 'T' beam above which is a course of stretcher bond bricks. The skillion ceiling is plaster and battens with modern light fixtures. The three rooms in this portion of the hall represent the spaces created with the enclosure of the verandah.

On the northern side of the stage area is an office. The wall separating the office from the stage area constructed with cream coloured bricks laid in stretcher bond. The office has carpet laid on a timber floor, rough plastered walls (the wall shared with the main hall is painted brickwork), plaster and batten skillion ceiling with modern light fixtures.

On the southern side of the stage area is the kitchen. The wall dividing this room from the stage area is constructed from bricks similar to those used for the toilet extension. The timber floor is covered with lino, the walls are plastered and the ceiling is the same as the office. All the furniture fittings in this room are modern.

The building is in good condition although there is evidence of rising damp on the southern side of the building near the secondary steps. The cause is probably due to several factors: the concrete verandah floor, the southerly aspect coupled with the presence of a down-pipe, which expels water onto a flat concrete pad set into the ground. As water is not directed away from the wall, the ground in this area probably becomes heavily saturated during winter.

At the rear of *Glen Forrest Hall* are some modern Zinalume clad sheds. They do not have any heritage value at present.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Agricultural halls were constructed throughout the State in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of these halls were constructed utilising the Grant-in-Aid scheme and funds raised by willing residents. An example of this is Cunderdin Hall, which was constructed in 1910.³⁵ The Toodyay Valley Farmers' Club also obtained funds for their Agricultural hall in the same way. This hall was opened in May 1899.³⁶ Together with numerous other halls built in Western Australia, the only aspect that *Glen Forrest Hall* has in common with these other halls was the manner in which funds were raised and the Grant-in-Aid Scheme. Stylistically *Glen Forrest Hall* appears to be unique in the State and certainly no other agricultural halls were designed in this style.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment 10 November 1997.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

³⁵ Research Institute for Cultural Heritage, Conservation Plan for Cunderdin Hall, prepared for the Shire of Cunderdin, 1999 unpublished report, p.12.

³⁶ Erickson, R., *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*, Shire of Toodyay, 1974, p. 329.