



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

The *Houghton Homestead* demonstrates the aesthetic characteristics of colonial vernacular architecture. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Houghton Homestead has historic value for its close association with the establishment and subsequent development of the Swan Valley and Western Australian wine industry. (Criterion 2.2)

Houghton Homestead has historic value for its long and close association with a world renowned Western Australian winery. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Houghton Homestead demonstrates the level of improvisation required by early colonial settlers when utilising local building materials. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Houghton Homestead contributes to the community's sense of history and of place because of its association with European settlement of the Swan Valley and the establishment of the district's wine industry. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Houghton Homestead is representative of a mid-nineteenth century rural vernacular building. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Restoration and maintenance work have recently been carried out, in keeping with the heritage values of the buildings.

Houghton Homestead is in a sound condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Although the recent restoration work has modified the fabric of the building, the work has been sympathetic to the heritage values of the building and the original intention of the buildings is still intact.

Houghton Homestead has a moderate degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Although *Houghton Homestead* has undergone some additions over the years, restoration work has been carried out recently. Overall the place retains a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Houghton Homestead comprises three buildings. The first building was converted into a cellar building in 1859. The second building, the main building, was built in 1863. The third building, which for the purpose of this assessment will be referred to as the stables/kitchen, is thought to have been constructed around the same time as the 1863 building.

The buildings stand on part of Revett Henry Bland's original colonial grant of 8,000 acres, situated on the left bank of the Swan River. Bland was a member of Stirling's original party which travelled upstream to select land. Bland, however, did not long retain the land. He had agreed to give half of his grant to Thomas Newte Yule, on the condition that Yule performed his grant obligations. The southern portion of Bland's grant came into the possession of Dr. Joseph Harris. On September 1838, Harris paid £200 to Bland and the sale of the lower of Swan Location 11 was registered.¹ Yule named the property 'Houghton'. In 1833, Yule moved to Houghton and made it his residence for some time.

Yule was acting on behalf of a syndicate consisting of himself and fellow army officers Lieutenant Ninian Lowis and Lieutenant-Colonel Richmond Houghton. There is no evidence that Houghton, after whom the property was named, ever came to the Colony. Both men were in service to the Honourable East India Company, in their Bengal establishment. Lowis took no part in the running of the venture, merely accompanying Yule to Fremantle, en-route for the eastern colonies. The syndicate was entitled to a grant of 29,200 acres, the first part of which was selected on the Canning River, and others at Beverley and Mt. Barker.

In August 1838, the position of Government Resident for Guildford was abolished. A new position of Government Resident for the Swan District was created.² The first appointee was Thomas Yule. At various times Yule filled many other official and honorary positions, including Secretary of the West Australian Agricultural Society, Acting Colonial Secretary and Police Magistrate.

In June 1855, Yule withdrew from the syndicate and the lands were divided and apportioned: Lowis and Houghton remained as joint owners of Houghton. In 1859, Lowis gave Wallace Bickley of Fremantle a conveyance in trust for the sale of lands described as Avondale and Houghton. Four days later, Bickley conveyed to Dr. John Ferguson the 322 acres at Houghton for the sum of £350. In 1863, Dr. Ferguson also purchased the Harris mortgage for £500, and took over the property called Strelley.

When Ferguson purchased Houghton, in 1859, it already contained a small vineyard, although most of the property was still in a virgin state. Further

¹ Smith, F. and Barrett-Lennard, D., *A History of Houghton* (no publishing details, n.d.) p. 13.

² Bourke, M. J. *On the Swan: A History of the Swan District of Western Australia* (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1987) p. 115.

vines were established. Around Yule's house and outbuildings, Dr. Ferguson established a wine cellar, incorporating Yule's house into the cellar buildings.

Although vines were established, wheat was initially the main crop for the Fergusons. The emphasis later changed to fruit orchards before it was finally resolved to concentrate on vines for wine and raisins.³ When it was realised some of their land was particularly suited to grape growing, new vines were planted. In 1859, the Fergusons had a first vintage of one quarter cask (approx. 33 gallons). As the Houghton wines became more popular, the Fergusons extended their operations. In 1903, they established a bottling and distributing works at the corner of Murray and Milligan Streets, Perth. By 1914, there were 150 acres at Houghton, planted with wine grapes and the vintage was 40,000 gallons.⁴ The property was one of three large vineyards in the area which were producing large amounts of wine for sale and export at this time.

In 1863, Dr. Ferguson's sixteen-year-old son, Charles William Ferguson was put in charge of the property at which time the present large homestead was erected. Charles Ferguson eventually transferred the property to two of his sons, John Viveash and Donald Henry on 10 August 1920. The two brothers expanded the property by purchasing part of the neighbouring Swan Location 10, known as Oakover. In 1950, the Emu Wine Company purchased 352 acres of this property, including the cellar building and part of the Oakover section, thus separating *Houghton Homestead* from the rest of the Houghton property. The unsold part of Location 10, including the Oakover homestead and farm buildings, was retained by D. H. Ferguson. J. V. Ferguson retained that part of Location 11 originally sold to Dr. Harris, together with *Houghton Homestead* and a small surrounding area. After working with his uncle for many years, Donald Barrett-Lennard inherited J. V. Ferguson's property in 1966. In 1976, the South Australian winemaking Hardy family acquired the stock of the London based Emu Wine Company, and with that purchase became owners of Houghton; however, it was not until late 1980 that the Hardy family purchased *Houghton Homestead* and surrounding acres, thus bringing the property back under single ownership.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Houghton Homestead comprises simple farmhouse buildings, constructed circa 1863 for the Ferguson family as part of their expansion of the Houghton property into a wine producing concern.

The buildings are sited on extensive grounds, either side of Dale Road, a turn-off of the Great Northern Highway. To the north are the *Oakover* farm buildings (c.1840-c.1880) and to the south the *Strelley* farm buildings (1860s).

The design of *Houghton Homestead* is derived from that of the traditional Scottish crofters farmhouse of that time and it was constructed from

³ Houghton Winery, *The Houghton Homestead* (pamphlet, n.d.) p. 2.

⁴ cited in: Smith and Barrett-Lennard, p. 24; Houghton Winery, p. 1.

materials available on the site - bricks made from local clay, sheoak roofing shingles spilt on the property and pit sawn jarrah floor boards.⁵

The main building, originally five rooms in a row, was built on a north-south axis and surrounded by narrow verandahs. Within a few years of construction, an additional wing (on the south west end) was built. From photographs taken over the next 20 years it appears likely that the second wing was not added until the turn-of-the-century.⁶ The nearby stables/kitchen building originally consisted of a large kitchen (complete with both open fire and bake oven), meat room, store room, and a stable with a hay loft above in the centre of the building. On the eastern end there were rooms for a sulky and a buggy, and there were also two tiny bedrooms for staff.

Over the years, the 1863 building and in particular the kitchen wing were badly damaged by earthquakes and only limited repairs were made. The stables/kitchen building was in an advanced stage of deterioration when planning for a full restoration began.

In 1987/88, Ron Bodycoat, conservation architect, was commissioned by Houghton Wines to restore the buildings. The architect's brief required restoration of the original fabric and character of the homestead and stables/kitchen and rehabilitation of the buildings for use as the administrative offices suiting the prestige of the wine maker.⁷ The design involved totally rebuilding the stables/kitchen, adding a new end bay to it, repairing damage to the 1863 building, and constructing a 'new link' between the two buildings.⁸

The restoration program involved replacement of the corrugated iron roofing with western red cedar shingles, rebuilding of walls where necessary, concrete slabs being removed and replaced with brick paving and air-conditioning ducts being placed in the floor. Enclosures have been carried out in a manner that distinguishes the 'new' work from the original form. For example, the weatherboarding used to enclose the stables is within the construction vocabulary of the era but also makes it easy to imagine the form of the stables as it was originally.

13.3 REFERENCES

Smith, F. and Barrett-Lennard, D. *A History of Houghton* (no publishing details, n.d.).

Fan, R. 'The Houghton Homestead: Conservation Case Study', (unpublished student report, Architecture & Culture, Curtin University, September 1988).

Houghton Winery, *The Houghton Homestead* (pamphlet, n.d.).

National Trust Assessment Exposition, n.d.

⁵ 'Bunnings Awards', *The Architect* Summer 1988, Vol. 29, No. 4, p. 28.

⁶ Houghton Winery, p. 2.

⁷ *The Architect* p. 28.

⁸ Fan, R. 'The Houghton Homestead: Conservation Case Study', (unpublished student report, Architecture & Culture, Curtin University, September 1988), p. 2. Refer to attached plans, indicating the work carried out.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.