



## 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

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is built of limestone quarried on the site. With the nearby *Sanford's House*, the *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* reflects the use of natural materials in an isolated setting. The buildings demonstrate the result of sophisticated work with limited materials and human resources. (Criterion 1.2)

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* has a landmark quality. The place is a dominant feature in the landscape on the edge of the plain in which it is sited. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* has historic value. Although in a ruined condition, the place is an important example of convict hiring depots in Western Australia. It clearly demonstrates the organisational relationship of various buildings and the use of space between them. (Criterion 2.1)

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* demonstrates the role of ticket-of-leave men and how they were organised as part of the penal system. (Criterion 2.1)

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is illustrative of the failed efforts of the colonial government to encourage the settlement of the Port Gregory area. (Criterion 2.1)

#### 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* has scientific value as a research site, likely to reveal information about government support of rural settlement in the mid-nineteenth century. It was recently investigated by students of archaeology in January 1993, prior to the preparation of a report for the National Trust. (Criterion 3.1)

#### 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is indicative of a period in Western Australia's history when social and legal values were different from those of today. The connection to the convict era gives the place social value. The place is highly valued as a tourist attraction by the current owners. (Criterion 4.1)

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* has a high social significance as evidenced by the high degree of local community support for its retention and the success of recent fundraising for its conservation and preservation. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is a rare example of a convict hiring depot in Western Australia. Despite its deteriorated condition, it is the best known example of how convict depots were constructed and organised. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2. REPRESENTATIVENESS**

Because of the number of extant buildings, *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* provides a representative example of the components of a convict depot. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3. CONDITION**

The condition of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is that of a ruin. Stabilisation and repair was done to *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* in 1993 under an NEGP grant, but there is still work to be undertaken to prevent further deterioration. For information please refer to *Final Report. Lynton Conservation Works 1993* (prepared by Northampton Historical Society Property Management Committee, December 1993); Bodycoat, R. *Lynton: A Study of the Convict Hiring Depot at Northampton, Western Australia* (Duncan, Stephen and Mercer Architects for the Shire of Northampton, June 1982) and Lilley, I. and Gibbs, M. *An Archaeological Study of the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* (prepared for the National Trust (W.A.), January 1993).

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

The ruins of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* have a high degree of integrity. It is not feasible to reinstate or recreate the original buildings; however, the ruins of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* are, with limited interpretation, capable of expressing the form and function of the place.

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

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* has a high degree of authenticity as the ruins of a convict hiring depot. There is little or no introduced material and the current conservation of the place is being undertaken in accord with the principles of the Burra Charter.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

### **13. 1. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

Lynton is situated about five hundred kilometres north of Perth in the Shire of Northampton, in close proximity to the Hutt River. It was surveyed by A. C. Gregory in 1853 and comprised 1280 acres.

The site chosen for Lynton was ten kilometres east of Port Gregory, close enough to facilitate food supplies, but far enough inland to give shelter from coastal winds and to provide better soil for cultivation.<sup>32</sup> The site was also selected for the deposits of limestone, which could be used for construction of depot buildings, and for the local rushes that could be used for thatching.<sup>33</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the site

---

<sup>32</sup> Lilley, I. and Gibbs, M. *An Archaeological Study of the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* (prepared for the National Trust (W.A.), 1993) p. 39.

was also chosen for aesthetic reasons, as was the site of Port Gregory, 'because it was so picturesque.'<sup>34</sup>

The townsite comprised fifty-seven lots reserved for private land as well as crown land for the purpose of public buildings such as a church.<sup>35</sup> *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was built on subdivision 'L', in close proximity to the townsite and nestled in a small valley. Captain Henry Ashford Sanford, Superintendent of the depot, built a substantial two storey stone residence, *Sanford House*, on lot 10 of the town, away from the depot, on an open rising site facing out across the coastal dunes to the Indian Ocean.<sup>36</sup> It was intended that occupants of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* would provide a founding population for the town and construct a road between Port Gregory and the Geraldine lead mine.<sup>37</sup>

The first inhabitants of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* were sixty ticket-of-leave men and pensioner guards who arrived at Port Gregory on 22 May 1853.<sup>38</sup> The ticket-of-leave men were convicts who had served sufficient of their sentence to be released into the community to work. The pensioner guards were retired military men who came out to Western Australia by free passage with the promise of work and regular wages. The guards were a cheap source of labour for the government and were regarded as a positive moral influence on those they supervised because of their conformity, and loyalty to the government.<sup>39</sup>

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was built between 1853 and 1856. The buildings were designed by Lt. Crossman although Lilley and Gibbs (1993) argue it is unlikely that he supervised the construction of the buildings.<sup>40</sup> Local and imported materials were used in the construction of the buildings. Dates of the construction of each building can be estimated from the reports of progress tabled for parliament in the years the depot was in operation.<sup>41</sup> Progress in building was slow, because of the time taken to cut limestone, the lack of structural timber locally, and the few skilled labourers at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*.<sup>42</sup> The wrecking of the *Mary Queen of Scots* in February 1855 also hindered construction of the buildings as part of her cargo was shingles intended for *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*. Eventually, around 8,000 of the 12,500 shingles were salvaged and used at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Bodycoat, R. *Lynton: A Study of the Convict Hiring Depot at Northampton, Western Australia* (Duncan, Stephen and Mercer Architects for the Shire of Northampton, June 1982) p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> Bodycoat, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*; National Trust Assessment Exposition.

<sup>37</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> Bodycoat, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Bolton, G. C. 'Who Were the Pensioners?' in *Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 14, 1981, p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 41.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* pp. 48-92.

<sup>42</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 31. Lilley and Gibbs suggest that skilled labourers were quickly hired out privately upon arriving in Fremantle, p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* pp. 42-43.

Living conditions at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* were severe. In addition to the isolation and harsh climate, there were problems with drawing water from the wells. In 1854, a report to Parliament stated that one well had to be relocated as the water was too brackish.<sup>44</sup> The limited rainfall in the area also meant that vegetables could be grown only in some months of the year and the depot was largely reliant on goods from Port Gregory.<sup>45</sup> Crops failed in consecutive seasons, further contributing to existing problems.<sup>46</sup> The occupants of the depot suffered from a number of diseases, including scurvy.<sup>47</sup> Sanitary arrangements at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* were minimal and earth closets were not constructed until at least eighteen months after the depot was established.<sup>48</sup>

Although the capacity of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was for eighty men, it appears that the number at any given time was well below this figure.<sup>49</sup> Records from the Colonial Secretary's Office show the number of men to be anywhere between one and fifty, but generally around thirty with a rapid decline evident from the beginning of 1856.<sup>50</sup>

In December 1856, not long after the last buildings were completed, *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was closed. There were three reasons why *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was unsuccessful. Firstly, the expense in maintaining the depot was great, because of the distance between Lynton and Fremantle which was the source of building supplies. Secondly, the need for labour in the area was limited as the surrounding pastoral district was in its early stages of settlement. Thirdly, the nearby Geraldine mine had already recruited labourers before *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* opened and did not use the hiring station as frequently as was initially thought by the depot's organisers.<sup>51</sup> A report tabled for Parliament in 1857 stated that the depot had 'altogether...failed in the object for which it was originally established, and is a source of considerable and useless expense.'<sup>52</sup>

After *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* closed, the remaining ticket-of-leave men were transferred to Champion Bay or sent to work on the Wannerooka road party.<sup>53</sup> The pensioner guards remained at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*, and although the Colonial Secretary expressed regret at the harsh conditions they were enduring, it was not until January 1858 that the guards and their families were transferred into allotments at Greenough Flats, sailing from Port Gregory to Champion Bay on the *Les Trois Amis*.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p. 58.

<sup>45</sup> Bodycoat, p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>47</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Bodycoat, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> British Parliamentary Papers, 14;1, 3/1/1857, cited in Lilley and Gibbs, p.

33.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* p. 32; Bodycoat, p. 40.

Captain Sanford stayed on at Lynton and established a pastoral station, called Lynton Station. He utilised the depot granary and store for station buildings. The other depot buildings appear not to have been used after this period although *Sanford's House* remained in use as a residence until the 1940s.<sup>55</sup>

The area including *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* and *Sanford's House* was bought by Mr and Mrs Simkin in 1963. The Simkins recorded the deterioration of the buildings and took interim preventative measures to protect the buildings. After a period of heavy rainfall in the 1970s, which resulted in soil movement, the Simkins placed refuse in the gully to prevent further movement.<sup>56</sup> National Estates Grants Programme funding for some maintenance to *Sanford's House*, was made in the 1980s.

In 1991, it was proposed to vest *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* in the National Trust of Australia (W.A.). In 1993, the Trust decided against acquiring Lynton but supported the vesting of the place in the Shire of Northampton.<sup>57</sup> In the interim, the National Trust obtained funding, in 1992, from the Australian Heritage Commission for an archaeological dig at *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*. In 1992, the Heritage Council of Western Australia allocated a total of \$11,000 to Lynton, \$4,000 for conservation planning and \$7,000 for emergency stabilisation works and with the help of the Shire of Northampton, emergency works were carried out under the supervision of architect Bill Wilkes. This consisted mainly of propping and buttressing areas of the floor, joinery and part walls of the *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* in danger of collapse.

In February, 1993 a \$20,000 National Estates Grants Programme grant was made to the Northampton Historical Society to prevent further deterioration and to undertake initial conservation of the place. A conservation plan titled *Final Report Lynton Conservation Works 1993* was prepared by the Northampton Historical Society Property Management Committee, in December 1993, as part of the funding. Works carried out include repairs to the stone work of the lock-up, replacement of the roof structure and substantial repairs to the walls and roof of *Sanford's House*. The works completed have stabilised the buildings, but no reconstruction is otherwise being attempted.<sup>58</sup> The granary has been partially restored and the store is in use as a farm shed for Lynton Station.

Community support for the retention and conservation of Lynton as a place of historic significance to the Northampton region was enthusiastically supported by local fundraising and tour programmes.<sup>59</sup> In October 1994, the Northampton Historical Society was awarded the Heritage Council's Certificate of Merit in 'recognition of it's work in preserving the Hiring Depot and Sanford's house. In

---

<sup>55</sup> *Final Report. Lynton Conservation Works 1993* (prepared by Northampton Historical Society Property Management Committee, December 1993) no pagination. Appendix Three; Lilley and Gibbs, p. 36.

<sup>56</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 38.

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report Lynton Conservation Works 1993* (by Northampton Historical Society, Property Management Committee, December 1993) pp. 3, 4.

<sup>58</sup> Heritage Council file note I93/5 dated 17 May 1993; *Final Report. Lynton Conservation Works 1993* (prepared by Northampton Historical Society Property Management Committee, December 1993) no pagination, circa pages 1, 27.

<sup>59</sup> *Final Report ...* pp. 3, 4.

January 1995, the State Government granted \$30,000 from the Lotteries Commission's Heritage Program for the preparation of a conservation and repairs to *Sanford's House*.

The site of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* is part of a reserve in the Northampton Shire and is a popular tourist destination.<sup>60</sup> At present the site, although in a ruined condition, still shows the form and layout of a convict depot. It has been described by the National Trust as 'Western Australia's only intact Convict Hiring Station.'<sup>61</sup>

### 13. 2. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* comprised no fewer than seven buildings, including quarters, lock-up, depot, commissariat and other utilitarian buildings. Though the buildings of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* are in ruins, enough of the structures remain to determine their original use and the layout of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* can be determined from a drawing by Captain Wray in 1855.<sup>62</sup> Parallel with the original road were the quarters to the west and commissariat buildings to the east. Behind these to the north was a well and behind this well the main depot building. Further north, and in line with the commissariat building, were the bakehouse and blacksmith's buildings. Directly behind the depot building was the lock-up and, adjacent, the lock-up yard. Next to the lock-up, and also behind the commissariat building, was the hospital.<sup>63</sup>

Lilley and Gibbs have collated a rough chronological guide as to when the buildings were built. In 1854, the quarters and commissariat building and two pensioner cottages were built. The main depot buildings and roofing were completed in 1855 and the rest of the buildings were constructed in 1856.<sup>64</sup> Bodycoat, in his report of 1982, suggests that Wray's plan was a record of the buildings after their construction, rather than a plan for buildings to be constructed.<sup>65</sup> He also mentions a plan of proposed buildings, a police barracks, police stables and school house to be erected, dated October 1856; however, *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* closed in December 1856 and the buildings were never constructed.<sup>66</sup>

*Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* was built by ticket-of-leave men.<sup>67</sup> The buildings were constructed from local limestone and the mortar made from limestone fired in a kiln.<sup>68</sup> Structural evidence shows that some of the buildings had timber gables but the high cost of transporting timbers, in conjunction with other archaeological evidence, suggests that it is more likely that some buildings had skillion roofs.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Lilley and Gibbs., pp. 3, 37.

<sup>61</sup> National Trust (W.A.) *Trust News*, no. 182, June 1993, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> Lilley and Gibbs p. 7. (Captain Wray's plan reproduced)

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* pp. 38-39. It is not stated which buildings these are.

<sup>65</sup> Bodycoat, p. 90.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* p. 92.

<sup>67</sup> Appleyard, R. T. 'Western Australia: Economic and Demographic Growth, 1850-1914' in Stannage, C. T. (ed.) *A New History of Western Australia* (Nedlands, U.W.A. Press, 1981) p. 213.

<sup>68</sup> Lilley, and Gibbs, p. 42.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 43.

Lilley and Gibbs found evidence to suggest that the original roofing was thatched but was replaced by the salvaged shingles.<sup>70</sup>

The quarters comprised two single rooms. One room was for the officer in charge and the other room was for a non-commissioned officer. This building has collapsed with only remnants of the walls remaining.<sup>71</sup> The commissariat building was built in stages over almost two years. Though construction of the commissariat building commenced in 1854, it was not until 1855 that it was finally thatched.<sup>72</sup> The building had four rooms and Lilley and Gibbs suggest that they were used as a commissariat store, commissariat office, depot office and as a depot store.<sup>73</sup>

The building where the ticket-of-leave men slept was one of the last built and the men had to sleep in tents for the first two years of the depot's existence.<sup>74</sup> The depot building was used by ticket-of-leave men as sleeping quarters until they were hired out or employed in the area. The building next to the depot building was not noted on the plans as having any specific purpose; however, Lilley and Gibbs suggest that it could have been used as a dining room or as the overseer's quarters although there is no evidence to support these hypotheses.<sup>75</sup>

There is no date of construction of the bakehouse but it was probably built after December 1854 as the need for a bakehouse was mentioned in a parliamentary report bearing this date.<sup>76</sup> The central feature of this building was the oven, with the cookhouse and bakehouse to either side of this.<sup>77</sup>

According to a letter to the Colonial Secretary, the hospital was nearly completed by May 1855.<sup>78</sup> Before this date, the hospital was housed in tents.<sup>79</sup>

There were no perimeter fences surrounding the depot. The idea of the depots was to house ticket-of-leave men, rather than imprison them, therefore walls or perimeter fencing were not deemed necessary; although, the geographic isolation of *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* acted as a natural barrier to deter possible escape.<sup>80</sup> Fences and walls enforced the social and legal demarcation of space between the ticket-of-leave men and the guards within parts of the depot. According to Lilley and Gibbs, there were waist height fences at the front of the quarters and commissariat buildings, while the rear walls of the other buildings at the depot were nearly the full height of the buildings.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* p. 42.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.* pp. 48-49.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p. 51.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* p. 60.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* pp. 58-60. An Overseer was involved in the administration of the Hiring Depot.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p. 73; (Colonial Secretary's Records 322/157. 11 May 1855).

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.* p. 45.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* p. 44.



The lock-up, as a facility for punishing offenders, did have high walls and a high walled exercise yard but it was one of the last buildings to be completed, and before the lock-up was built, prisoners were housed in a timber prison of unknown dimensions. In March 1855, it was reported that, 'the cells are now ready for roofing in, and are a good piece of mason work.'<sup>82</sup> The number of cells in the lock-up is uncertain as the lock-up building has deteriorated over the years. Photographs taken of the site in the early 1980s, show the number of cells to be at least five.<sup>83</sup> Bodycoat suggests that there were six to eight cells.<sup>84</sup> A reconstructed plan based on archaeological evidence by Lilley and Gibbs suggests that there were six cells.<sup>85</sup>

*Sanford's House* was constructed away from the main buildings of the depot. It was a substantial limestone home with a single storey at the front and a double storey at the rear, with a surrounding timber verandah under a broken back roof and interesting crenellation details to the roof line at the sides. The rear of the property overlooked the sea, and the rear of the house had french doors which opened onto a timber veranda from which the view could be enjoyed.<sup>86</sup>

After the departure of the pensioner guards in 1858, *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* does not appear to have been used except to provide outbuildings for Lynton Station.<sup>87</sup> Photographs of the buildings taken at intermittent intervals from the 1930s, reveal the gradual decay of the buildings.<sup>88</sup> In the 1930s, the buildings were largely intact but many were already missing roofs and timbers. In the 1940s, photographs reveal that the smaller buildings, such as the depot closet, had greatly deteriorated and other buildings were visibly damaged.<sup>89</sup>

Today, Lynton Convict Hiring Depot is a stabilised ruin. In 1993, the NEGP funded conservation works to prevent the collapse of *Sanford's House* and to further stabilise the remaining ruins of the *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot*.

### 13. 3. REFERENCES

Bodycoat, R. *Lynton: A Study of the Convict Hiring Depot at Northampton, Western Australia* (Duncan, Stephen and Mercer, Architects for the Shire of Northampton, June 1982).

Lilley, I. and Gibbs, M. *An Archaeological Study of the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* (prepared for the National Trust (W.A.), January 1993).

---

<sup>82</sup> Colonial Secretary's Records 321/198, 31 March 1855, cited in Lilley, I. and Gibbs, M. *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>83</sup> Photographs in possession of the Heritage Council of Western Australia, taken in 1981.

<sup>84</sup> Bodycoat, p. 62.

<sup>85</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 74.

<sup>86</sup> Photograph 25239P Held in Battye Library, c. 1920s (copy held on HCWA file 1915); also photograph in Campbell, R. M. 'Building in Western Australia' in Pitt-Morison, M. and White, J. (eds) *Western Towns and Buildings* (UWAP, 1979) p. 97.

<sup>87</sup> Lilley and Gibbs, p. 36.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* p. 37.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

National Trust Assessment Exposition on *Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* July 1982.

*Final Report. Lynton Conservation Works 1993* (prepared by Northampton Historical Society Property Management Committee, December 1993).