



## 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)

- 6.2 Establishing Schools
- 8.5 Forming Associations

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

- 402 Education and Science
- 407 Cultural Activities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Brookhampton Hall* is a simple vernacular building that exhibits characteristics of the Federation Bungalow style. With its large mass of roof, deep verandah and timber weatherboard cladding, it contrasts in an aesthetically pleasing manner to the culturally modified setting. (Criterion 1.1)

*Brookhampton Hall*, war memorial and the mature oak in front of the hall contribute significant aesthetic qualities to the culturally modified landscape setting. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Brookhampton Hall* is significant as a surviving example of a timber hall erected around the turn of the twentieth century to serve as a school and hall for an expanding rural community at Brookhampton. The building was later extended to provide a larger hall after its use as a school ceased and as the population of the district increased. (Criterion 2.1)

*Brookhampton Hall* was constructed in 1899, at a period when the population of the district had increased in the wake of the Homestead Act (1893) and conditional purchase scheme, and at the time of the short lived gold boom in the Donnybrook district. The place was altered and extended in 1922-24, in the early years of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, as the population of the district again increased. (Criterion 2.2)

From 1904, the place has been the home of the Brookhampton Bell Ringers, an activity which was not uncommon in the early twentieth century. However, the continuation of this activity by the group throughout the

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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.

twentieth century and into the twenty-first century is unusual. It is noteworthy that a number of the present ringers are descendants of the original group. (Criterion 2.2)

During World War Two, the place accommodated refugees from Singapore and Malaya, who were brought down from Perth to assist in harvesting the potato crop. At a later period, the place was taken over by the military to accommodate prisoners of war. (Criterion 2.2)

Henry Cain donated the land on which the place was built, served on the Building Committee and was one of the first Trustees appointed to take care of the place. Thomas (Tom) Miller was Chairman of the Building Committee, and built the place free of charge, with the assistance of Frank Miller. Both men continued their association with the place, with Tom Miller continuing to serve as Chairman for 21 years, and Frank Miller as one of the first Trustees. J. Griffith, Tom Clay, and H. E. Lloyd were responsible for additions and alterations to the place in the early 1920s. (Criterion 2.3)

Frank Young brought the hand bells from St. Andrew's Bell Ringers of Coolgardie to the place in 1904, and founded the Brookhampton Bell Ringers, who utilised the place throughout the twentieth century. The Bell Ringers have become an unique part of local history and the history of the South-West, and continue their association with the place into the twenty-first century. (Criterion 2.3)

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

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

*Brookhampton Hall* is valued by the local community, having served as the focal meeting place in their society since 1899; as the earliest school in this locality; the oldest public building in the immediate locality; and the site of the War Memorial. It is also valued by the wider community of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Municipal Inventory, and by the wider community of the State as evidenced by its classification by the National Trust of Australia (W. A.). The place is also valued by the community of the South-West as the home of the Brookhampton Bell Ringers from their inception in 1904. (Criterion 4.1)

It contributes to the community's sense of place as a landmark on Thomson's Brook Road since 1899 and for its aesthetic values as a pleasing building in a culturally modified setting. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12.. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

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### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Brookhampton Hall* is representative of simple vernacular building. (Criterion 6.1)

*Brookhampton Hall* provides evidence of a small community endeavouring to provide education for its young; of the community's social activities; and, of the community's effort to conserve the place. (Criterion 6.2)

### 12.3 CONDITION

*Brookhampton Hall* receives sufficient maintenance to keep it in reasonable order. The overall condition of the place is fair.

### 12.4 INTEGRITY

*Brookhampton Hall* remains in use as a community hall, one of the purposes for which it was constructed and its longest standing use. The school section has been incorporated into the overall hall and to the untutored eye is inseparable from it. The current uses are compatible with the heritage values of the place and are the best uses for sustaining the values. The place retains a high degree of integrity.

### 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

*Brookhampton Hall* retains original fabric representing all stages of its construction and evolution. Cumulative change has added to the size of the place and early sections have been modified in various ways to accommodate the hall function. Overall the place retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

## 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

*Brookhampton Hall* is a timber framed and timber weatherboard clad hall with a corrugated custom orb profile zincalume roof, and a verandah at one side. In 1899, the place was built by local residents for use as a school. It was altered and extended in 1922-24. In the 1990s, asbestos cladding was removed and replaced with timber weatherboard cladding to match the original hall on the exterior walls, and the toilet facilities refurbished.

By 1875, there were 22 European settlers in the Donnybrook area, which increased to 101 by 1898, with other pockets of settlement established at Thomson's Brook and Brookhampton.<sup>1</sup> Thomson's Brook took its name from the Thomson Brothers, Mervyn ('Bon') and John, who had large cattle runs in the area extending from Brookhampton to Wilga, which were later resumed by the government, with the brothers given first selection.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1890s, following the Homestead Act (1893) and introduction of the conditional purchase scheme, homestead blocks in the area were sold at £3 10s, conditional upon a home being erected within a certain period, and conditional purchase blocks were made available at 10s per acre.<sup>3</sup> This development led to an increase in the local population, and with it the need for a school and a meeting place. In 1898, pioneer European farmer, Henry Cain, donated a triangular block of land, one acre two perches in area, part of Wellington Location 582, to be used as a hall site. A building committee was formed, comprising Henry Cain, Frank Miller, John Thomson, Charlie

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien Planning Consultants 'Donnybrook/Balingup Heritage Inventory', August 1995, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, June (Ed.) *The Brookhampton Hall 1899-1999* (The Brookhampton Progress Association, 1999) Introduction (no page nos.) Note: Extant Minute Books were the text's major reference.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*; and Crowley, F. K. *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia from the first settlements to modern times* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1960) p. 104

Fowler, and Thomas (Tom) Miller, Chairman, in which capacity he served for 21 years.<sup>4</sup>

Fund raising began, but progress was slow as the settlers had little to spare. Tom Miller approached the Forest Department with a proposal to obtain the necessary timber for the proposed hall from an 'A' Class Reserve, which adjoined *Three Troughs*. Agreement was reached, and the W. A. Timber Company was granted permission by the Department to cut timber from the Reserve, provided that all the dressed timber required for the building of the hall was first produced and delivered free of charge to the hall site.<sup>5</sup> The site was gazetted as Reserve 7736 for the purpose of "Hall Site".<sup>6</sup>

The construction of the railway from Bunbury to Donnybrook and later to Balingup encouraged development; and, following the discovery of gold in 1899, the district experienced a short-lived boom around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> In the late nineteenth century, land use in the district was predominantly agricultural, including stock, grain production, potato growing, and apple and grapes were introduced. There was also some timber milling, and quarrying of Donnybrook stone.<sup>8</sup> The Preston Roads Board was established, and public buildings erected.<sup>9</sup>

In the latter half of 1899, *Brookhampton Hall* was built free of charge by Tom Miller, assisted by Frank Miller, who had taken up land at Thomson Brook c. 1897, who was 'well known as a very able "bush carpenter."<sup>10</sup> The commencement of building was marked by a ceremony at which Florence Emma Cain (aged seven), daughter of Henry and Charlotte Cain, drove the first nail. 'Only the very best timber was to be used. The flooring, cut from boards six inches wide by one inch thick, was particularly beautiful.'<sup>11</sup> The place was built to serve as both a hall and as a school, as indicated also by the purpose for which the site was reserved.<sup>12</sup> The hall was constructed of timber with a corrugated iron roof.<sup>13</sup> The exterior walls of the place were of jarrah weatherboards, and the interior walls were lined with jarrah timber boards. This original hall building comprises the southern end of the present hall, i. e. stage and two dressing rooms.<sup>14</sup> The front door to the hall faced the track to Donnybrook, as evidenced by scarring on the existing wall.<sup>15</sup> The timber structure in a state of disrepair at the rear of the building may have been an early water closet.

The hall was completed in late 1899, and Thomas Clifford, Henry Cain, and Frank Miller were appointed Trustees to take care of the place.<sup>16</sup> On 6 December 1899, a provisional school opened at Brookhampton with an

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4     ibid, 'The Building of the Brookhampton Hall'.

5     ibid.

6     Certificate of Title Vol. 3103 Fol. 604.

7     O'Brien Planning Consultants op. cit.

8     ibid.

9     ibid, p. 8.

10    Scott, June (Ed.) op. cit.; and Rainer Winkler, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 30 May 2001.

11    Scott, June (Ed.) op. cit.

12    O'Brien Planning Consultants op. cit., Place No. 29, p. 2.

13    National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment, August 1980; and Certificate of Title Vol. 3103 Fol. 604. Note: the Assessment gives the date of construction as 1904; however, a plaque at the place records the year of construction as 1899.

14    Scott, June (Ed.) op. cit.

15    ibid; and site visit by Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, 21 May 2001.

16    Scott, June (Ed.) ibid.

enrollment of 18 children, under the first teacher, Mrs. Clarkson, who boarded with the Cain family.<sup>17</sup> The place served as a school until 1903, and it was used also for Methodist Church services and for dances in this period.<sup>18</sup>

Early plantings at the place included at least two oak trees of which one large specimen survives in 2001.<sup>19</sup> It is not known at what date the second tree was removed.

In common with most country halls, the place became the focal point of social life in the district. A sports ground was established on level ground in proximity to the place.<sup>20</sup>

In 1903, Frank Young and his family came to live at Brookhampton. In 1904, he joined the Thomson's Brook Musical Club, where he taught some of the members to play the bells brought from St. Andrew's Bell Ringers of Coolgardie when they disbanded. Soon they were entertaining people throughout the district, and farther afield, performing in the Lyric Theatre at Bunbury in 1905. *Brookhampton Hall* was used for the bell ringers practice sessions, and the Bells were housed in the hall until the 1970s.<sup>21</sup> The Brookhampton Bell Ringers have continued to entertain the communities of the South-West throughout the twentieth century, and 'are a unique part of local history'. In 1999, many of the group's 12 members were descendants of the original bell ringers.<sup>22</sup>

In 1905, the present cricket pitch was established on land from *Killarney*, which had been donated to the community by Alf Clifford, and which had been in use as a picnic ground since c. 1900. It has served as the recreation ground since 1905. Annual sports days were held there on New Year's Day until 1928, 'great affairs' with special trains bringing people from other centres to Brookhampton for the occasion.<sup>23</sup>

The first decades of the twentieth century saw the introduction of irrigation along the Preston River, enabling expansion of agriculture in the district, in particular fruit growing. In the same period, the Cheese Factory at Balingup and the butter factory at Boyanup shortened the transport distances for dairy producers.<sup>24</sup> In the post World War One period, the introduction of the Soldier Settlement Scheme brought an increase in population.

On 22 June 1922, the Hall Committee resolved to 'run' the original hall into a stage and dressing rooms, to build a verandah 9' wide on the west side, which was to be 'boarded in' and timber floored for use as a supper room.<sup>25</sup> In July, J. Griffith was contracted to carry out the additions and alterations to the place at a cost of £115. However, Griffith was unable to complete the contract within the specified period, and so it was completed by Tom Clay by

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17 *ibid*; and Report of the Education Department for the year 1899, in *Votes and Proceedings* 1900, p. 21 and p. 47.

18 Scott, June (Ed.) *ibid*; and Rainer Winkler *op. cit.*

19 National Trust Assessment *op. cit.*

20 *ibid.*

21 O'Brien Planning Consultants *op. cit.*

22 Scott June (Ed.) *op. cit.*

23 Scott, June (Ed.) *op. cit.* Note: O'Brien Planning Consultants *op. cit.*, Place No. 29, p. 3, state a tennis court, cricket pitch/football oval were established as part of the school facilities.

24 O'Brien Planning Consultants *op. cit.*, p. 14.

25 Scott, June (Ed.) *op. cit.* National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment (August 1980) recorded the exterior wall of the additions were constructed of asbestos.

September 1922 at a cost of £58 6s 10d, with timber supplied by the timber corporation at a cost of £33 13s 8d.<sup>26</sup>

In July 1923, a chimney and fireplace were built in the supper room, and a copper 'bricked in' in the kitchen.<sup>27</sup>

In March 1924, the Hall Committee called tenders for the extension of the hall by 16', which was carried out by H. E. Lloyd at a cost of £34. The extension is indicated in the extant fabric of the interior by the differences in the skirting boards on the eastern wall of the auditorium. The interior walls of the hall had a mini orb steel dado with a wide a jarrah chair rail, and tongue and groove jarrah boards to the upper walls and the ceiling. In September, as the original floor of the hall had been ruined by rollerskating, Lloyd replaced it with a new floor throughout the hall, other than the stage area, at an additional cost of £4. On 24 October, the additions to the hall were officially opened by Mr. G. Barnard, MLA, at a community dance at the place.<sup>28</sup>

These works may have been implemented around the period at which the War Memorial was erected at the site, to the south-east of the hall. On the War Memorial are inscribed the names of those who served and those who died; and the inscription reads:

For King and Empire

To honour and perpetuate the memory of those brave men who enlisted from Thomson's Brook

For service in the Great War 1914-1918.<sup>29</sup>

The Memorial was erected by Peters and Gillies, as recorded on the base of the Memorial; however, the date at which it was erected is not recorded at the place.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, the place served also as the district library.<sup>31</sup>

In the early years of World War Two, dances continued to be held at the hall to raise money for the local Comforts Fund. An acute shortage of labour to dig the potato crop was overcome by bringing refugees from Singapore and Malaya to assist, and they were accommodated at the place. Later in the war period, the place was taken over by the military to accommodate prisoners of war, and fell into disrepair for a period. The timber floor in the main body of the hall was 'ruined' by the POWs.<sup>32</sup> It has not been possible to ascertain at what date it was subsequently replaced.

Following World War Two, an additional stone was added to the War Memorial at the place, 'dedicated to those who paid the supreme sacrifice in World War II 1939-45', inscribed with the names of H. D. Cain, L. W. Cain, C. P. Leach, and D. H. Padman.<sup>33</sup>

In August 1979, the place was assessed by the National Trust of Australia (W. A.); and subsequently, on 4 February 1980, the place was Classified.<sup>34</sup> At that

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26     *ibid.*

27     *ibid.*

28     *ibid.*

29     Site visit by Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, 21 May 2001.

30     Site visit *op. cit.*

31     Scott, June *op. cit.*

32     *ibid.*

33     Site visit *op. cit.*

34     National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment *op. cit.*

date, it was in good condition, and the two oak trees were extant.<sup>35</sup> The Assessment did not record whether the original floor was extant at this period. The floor was replaced at an unknown date in the second half of the twentieth century.

On 24 January 1994, a Memorial was registered on the Certificate of Title under the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990, when the place was entered on the Interim Register of Heritage Places.<sup>36</sup> In November 1994, the Brookhampton Progress Association received a heritage grant of \$20,000 from the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia to carry out conservation works at the place.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, the asbestos additions at the rear of the place were removed and replaced with timber weatherboards to match the original hall construction; the washroom facilities were refurbished; a new timber partition and door were fitted at one side of the kitchen area; and repairs and maintenance were carried out to the roof, verandah, and walls.<sup>38</sup>

In August 1995, the place was included in the Shire of Donnybrook/Balingup Heritage Inventory.<sup>39</sup>

In November 1996, the place was vested in the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup.<sup>40</sup>

In 1999, a memorial plaque mounted on Donnybrook stone was placed by the entry to the place, inscribed 'This plaque commemorates the Centenary of the Brookhampton Hall 1899-1999.'<sup>41</sup>

In 2001, the place continues to be used as a hall by the local community.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Brookhampton Hall* is a timber weatherboard clad hall and ancillary rooms with a custom orb profile zincalume roof, with a verandah to the north-east side and timber framed additions to the rear, and set in an open culturally modified landscape, with plantings of exotics and native trees. The south-eastern section of the place is the stage area and the blocked windows in this section indicate that this was the part of the place that was used as the classroom. The north western section was clearly designed as a single space of much larger proportions, indicating that this was the section built as a hall. The hall has a later toilet addition to the rear on the western corner, a commemorative centenary plaque at the front, and a granite construction war memorial to the south-east of the hall.

*Brookhampton Hall* is set well back from Thomson Brook Road on its south side, on a triangular piece of land. The land falls gently away from the road, and is fenced along part of its perimeter, with a truncation to the apex of the triangle. The fence lines are planted with Eucalypts, Grevillea, Willows, and one or two self-sown oaks. The perimeter fences combine timber posts,

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35 *ibid.*

36 Certificate of Title Vol. 3103 Fol. 604.

37 Lotteries Commission Community Funding, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 11 June 2001.

38 Rainer Winkler *op. cit.*; and site visit *op. cit.*

39 O'Brien Consultants *op. cit.*, Place No. 29, p. 2. Note: The Inventory records the dates of construction as (1) 1890 and (2) 1904, with modifications comprising new floor, SEC, and weatherboard.

40 *Government Gazette* 15 November 1996.

41 Site visit *op. cit.*

wires and galvanized steel strainers. There is a cattle-loading ramp on the northern corner of the site. The Thomson Brook Road surface is bitumen paved.

The key visual elements in the setting are the *Brookhampton Hall*, notably the original classroom and later hall sections of the building, a mature oak planted between the hall and the road, and the granite construction war memorial, with its perimeter granite pier and pier rail fence. Plantings around the war memorial include Oleander and Diosma.

To the rear of the building at its south-eastern end, there is an early timber water tank stand with a corrugated iron tank, a later tank on a sleeper construction tank stand, and a steel framed tank stand with a polyethylene tank. A short distance away from the building, there is a timber framed building in a ruined state, with a concrete floor, stud framed walls, timber weatherboard cladding and an iron roof. Its function is not immediately apparent and the interior is currently filled with debris, but it may have been an earlier water closet.

The main section of the hall has a rectangular plan with a verandah along most of the front side, a chair store at the southern end of the front side, and a series of ancillary rooms along the south-western elevation, including toilets, bar, kitchen, and store.

The style of the building is typical of simple timber halls, and employs the restrained motifs of the Federation Bungalow style. The roof is gabled and is clad with custom orb profile zincalume, and the pitch line is broken over the verandah. The barges have all been replaced with plain zincalume sheet profiles, and the gutters are colonial profile on the north side and Sheerline on the south side. The windows are two pane double hung sashes to the earlier sections and short glazed fixed lights to the later toilet facilities. There are locations on three elevations where windows have been removed and boarded over and all of these are in the section that was formerly a classroom. The external doors are all framed ledge and braced, with tongue and groove board cladding. A feature of the rear of the building is the brick construction hearth and flue, which extends up well above the roof's ridgeline.

The timber frame and floor of the verandah is all comparatively recent material, with square timber posts. Timber framed ramps have been provided at both ends of the verandah and to the rear of the building.

The hall's centenary plaque is a bronze plate set into a rough-hewn piece of Donnybrook sandstone, set near the southern end of the north-eastern elevation.

The hall is generously proportioned, with the auditorium at the north-western end and a raised stage at the south-eastern end, with most of the ancillary rooms arranged along the south-western side of the hall.

The hall has 4" (100mm) jarrah floors, with a mini orb profile painted galvanized steel dado, wide jarrah chair rail, and moulded dado rail. The upper walls and cathedral profile ceiling are clad with 3" (75mm) tongue and groove boards. Lateral and vertical tie rods occur at intervals down the length of the hall. The hall is lit with fluorescent strip lights and tungsten lights in enamel finished shades. Doors leading off into the late addition toilets are four panel types.

There are male and female toilets at the northern end of the hall, with all contemporary finishes, plasterboard walls and ceiling, floor and wall tiling,



vitreous china and stainless steel fittings. The whole assembly is part of the 1990s works.

The old kitchen appears to have been divided into two sections with a jarrah clad partition between the two sections. The open bar section is all fitted out with plastic laminate clad and stainless steel benches.

The partitioned off section of the kitchen was locked and could not be inspected.

The stage has a chamfered profile proscenium arch and 4.5" boards on the floor, with a room either side of the stage.

The exterior of the structure is generally in fair condition and the interior is in good condition.

The war memorial consists of a perimeter fence made up of granite piers and plinths, with a pipe rail threaded between the piers, and a wire gate giving access from the road. A concrete path leads to a rough hewn granite obelisk structure rising from a stepped granite base and rising to a corniced pyramidal cap. The rock-faced stones have smooth margins, and the obelisk itself is cut smooth with the names of those who served and those who fell inscribed on it. The maker's name, Peter and Gillies, is inscribed on the north-west face of the monument. A stone has been added to the plinth to accept the names of those who served in World War Two. There is an improvised galvanized pipe flagpole to the rear of the enclosed area. The war memorial is in good condition.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

The one room classroom was once a common phenomenon in small country communities. Many were removed to other centres away from their original sites, while others were left to the community or were simply abandoned. The Alma School near Northampton was a single room timber school, which became a country tennis club and remains in use today. Other single room timber construction country schools have been retained as part of a larger school development, while others remain in their communities and have alternative uses.

Some one-room schools were more substantial. St Marks Anglican Church, Upper Warren and St Thomas Church, Dingup, were built as schools in masonry construction and were used as churches and community meeting places also, later becoming churches.

No other examples of schools becoming community halls with large additions were identified in this assessment process.

### **13.4 REFERENCES**

National Trust of Australia (W. A.) Assessment, August 1979

Scott, June (Ed.) *The Brookhampton Hall 1899-1999* (Brookhampton Progress Association, 1999)

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may provide additional information regarding critical dates in the history of the place and its various uses through the twentieth century.