



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)

- 2.5 Promoting settlement on the land through selection and group settlement
- 3.2.4 Looking for land with agricultural potential
- 3.4 Developing sheep and cattle industries
- 6.2 Establishing schools

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 402 Education and science
- 602 Early settlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Alverstoke is a homestead complex, which contains a large collection of rustic farm buildings in a landscaped setting, bounded on two sides by a meandering watercourse and large native trees, and for the rest by open fields. (Criterion 1.1)

The older buildings on the *Alverstoke* property have considerable value as examples of vernacular building forms typical of the nineteenth century. As a collection, *Alverstoke* demonstrates the physical qualities of a well-developed homestead complex containing buildings of several generations. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Alverstoke comprises an extensive and relatively intact collection of farm buildings and associated features that illustrate aspects of building construction, animal farming and horticulture over an extended period of time (1840s to the present). Some of the practices illustrated by the fabric are no longer in practice in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

Alverstoke is one of the original properties allocated to settlers of the Australind scheme and the first property to come under cultivation in the

* 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.

Brunswick Junction region. The property has retained its original boundaries, contains evidence of the earliest European structures on the site, and remains in the ownership of the family to whom it was originally granted. As such, it provides important evidence of the history of human occupation in the region and the State. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

The property is important for its association with Marshall Waller Clifton, the Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Company, to whom the land was originally granted and whose descendants have owned it continuously since the 1840s. (Criterion 2.3)

The property has a history of superlative achievement in terms of its productivity and use of technology. It was one of the first properties under the Australind scheme to come under cultivation, it is said to have been the first in the district to use wire for fencing, and under Algernon Clifton's management, the property had one of the largest and finest dairy herds in the district. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Alverstoke has value as a research site for cultural heritage. The homestead complex contains substantial evidence of material culture, including both building fabric and archaeological material, which could usefully inform the study of early European settlement and culture in Western Australia. In Western Australia, there has been limited physical investigation of this place type. (Criteria 3.1 & 3.2)

An area on the banks of the Brunswick River immediately north of the homestead complex is known to have been an Aboriginal campsite until the early 1900s, and is likely to contain material evidence of this occupation. As such, the site has archaeological potential to yield information regarding this aspect of the region's history. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place has established a local reputation for its scenic qualities, and frequently hosts wedding parties and other events for which the photogenic qualities of the setting are important. (Criterion 4.1)

Alverstoke is the original parcel of land allocated to Marshall Waller Clifton and, although he never lived there permanently, the place has acquired an informal reputation of being the ancestral home of the Western Australian Clifton family. The place has always been owned by descendants of Marshall Waller Clifton. Members of the extended Clifton family have shown a keen interest in the place, as has been demonstrated by the positive response to a recent family reunion hosted at *Alverstoke*. (Criterion 4.1)

Clifton School is highly valued by a small sector of the community because of its educational associations, having served the locality for over 50 years. In the three years since it has been relocated to *Alverstoke*, a considerable number of past students have visited the building and expressed interest in the schoolroom display. The building has a special affinity to the Clifton family, as in the past many Clifton children were enrolled there, and Emily Clifton (who lived at *Alverstoke*) was a teacher at the school for over 40 years. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Alverstoke is one of a very small number of farms in the South-West region, established in the first two decades of European settlement in Western Australia, which has survived with its original acreage intact. The substantial collection of buildings and associated landscape elements document gradual development of the place from its earliest years. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

The split slab buildings at *Alverstoke* are examples of a construction technique no longer practiced in Western Australia. Buildings of this type are rapidly being lost through neglect and acts of vandalism, and only a small number are presently in a sustainable condition. (Criterion 5.1)

The nineteenth century dairy and barn at *Alverstoke* are uncommon structures. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

In a limited sense, *Alverstoke* is representative of the larger scale farming properties in the South-West that were established by relatively wealthy settlers during the earliest decades of the colony. Typically, these farms comprise several generations of farm houses, a range of outbuildings and other cultural features such as old trees, fences or bridges. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

The property and its buildings are subject to regular maintenance and an ongoing program of conservation works. Considerable conservation work has been undertaken since 1992, and the old timber buildings have been consolidated and mostly re-roofed. Wherever possible, the original structural and cladding timbers have been preserved. Badly deteriorated external wall cladding has also been replaced. The homestead is in the process of being conserved, and work completed to date has involved improvements to the site drainage, installation of a damp proof course, replacement of the roof sheeting and reconstruction/repair of the verandahs. Some of the brickwork is badly fretted, but the cause of the problem appears to have been rectified. The new dairy (1965) has been renovated and adapted for use as a function centre. The caretaker's cottage is in an excellent state of repair and occupied. The school is in excellent condition, having been conserved immediately after being relocated to the site in 1996.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The integrity of the place is mainly dependant on the property remaining intact with its original acreage, the collection of farm buildings being appropriately conserved, and the property remaining in the ownership of descendants of Marshall Waller Clifton. All of these aspects are sustainable, and resources are presently being directed to the conservation of the buildings on the place.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The *Alverstoke* homestead complex has until recently been a working farm, but since 1992 the pasture has been leased and buildings have been conserved for public display. Documentary evidence indicates that the property has

undergone a steady process of development and change, and this continued up until the present time, although no longer in response to the requirements of farming activities. Further adaptation of the nineteenth century outbuildings has been avoided, and effort has been directed to preserving as much of the existing fabric as possible. Some alterations have been made to the twentieth century buildings, including replacing asbestos cement sheet cladding with weatherboard (in some cases this has been an exercise in reconstruction).

Besides the change in use, some changes that have been made with the object to enhance its visual appeal have detracted from its authenticity. Kikuyu grass around the buildings has been carefully cultivated and maintained as a lawn, transforming the farmyard from a previously rugged appearance.

New elements that would not normally be found in a farmyard have been introduced, namely an extensive rose garden and a school building. The new dairy has also been renovated and adapted for use as a restaurant. Although incongruent with the place's historic use as a farm, these changes are not deemed to be visually intrusive.

In summary, it may be said that the nineteenth century buildings have been conserved in a largely authentic state, the pasture and natural vegetation around the watercourses has seen no discernible change over the past half a century, but the overall character of the homestead complex has been considerably changed under the recent management.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Palassis Architects, 'Alverstoke, Brunswick Junction, WA Conservation Plan', for J.E & M.J. Clifton, March 2000.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'Alverstoke, Brunswick Junction, WA Conservation Plan' prepared for J.E & M.J. Clifton, March 2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'Alverstoke, Brunswick Junction, WA Conservation Plan' prepared for J.E & M.J. Clifton, March 2000.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Palassis Architects, 'Alverstoke, Brunswick Junction, WA Conservation Plan' prepared for J.E & M.J. Clifton, March 2000.

13.4 REFERENCES

Palassis Architects, 'Alverstoke, Brunswick Junction, WA Conservation Plan' prepared for J.E & M.J. Clifton, March 2000.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
