



# 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.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Army Vehicle Workshop (fmr)* has industrial aesthetic value as a very large, by volume (2,500 square metres and approximately 25 feet high), example of a timber framed and jarrah weatherboard clad building. It is a World War Two building displaying some of the characteristics, including defects, of a structural design resulting from the introduction of special war time timber structural code supplements. (Criterion 1.1)

The frame of the building is essentially pre-fabricated, built in Perth and transported to the site, unusual for a building of this size in the timber medium of construction. The building is the second built in Western Australia by the Public Works Department utilising the European *ring grip* system. (Criterion 1.2)

The size and the industrial aesthetic qualities of the building in a wheatbelt townsite gives it a landmark quality. (Criterion 1.3)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Army Vehicle Workshop (fmr)* remains the most visible and physically significant remnant in Nungarin of a self contained operational World War Two Base Ordnance Depot. It stands above ground in a precinct originally comprising a comprehensive, fully equipped, costly for its time, Ordnance Depot. There are extensive, but less visible and less intact, ruins of other components of the original complex in the immediate vicinity. The remaining timber building serves as a remnant symbol of the layout and general extent of the components. (Criterion 2.1)

The building is a symbol of the elevation of the strategic importance of the township of Nungarin through the presence of the Depot during and after World War Two, and of the subsequent decline of the Depot. (Criterion 2.1)

---

\* 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.

The place is of local, regional, state and national significance for its role in the National Defence Strategy of the Australian Army during World War Two, as an ordnance depot. (Criterion 2.2)

The cost of this complex was considerable, not only in terms of money, but in the dispersal of resources during a period of hardship. Of interest is the execution of this very large building in timber. (Criterion 2.4)

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

By its very size and because of the materials utilised in its construction and their resultant performance over a fifty year time span, the place has the capacity to demonstrate the performance of timber as a building material under specific highly stressed conditions. (Criterion 3.1)

The place has the potential to show, as a social history topic, the effect of the introduction of wartime personnel and their social needs and skills to the district, and to the subsequent and continuing interaction. (Criterion 3.2)

The place is significant in demonstrating a degree of technical achievement under the specific and strategic requirements prevailing during wartime. (Criterion 3.3)

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

The place is a marker of a variety of social and sporting events and recreation in Nungarin, events which are unlikely to have occurred without the presence of the Base Ordnance Depot in the town during and after World War Two. The value of the place to the Nungarin community is demonstrated by the interest and active participation in the conservation of this major industrial building. (Criterion 4.1)

The original development of this very large and important base, and the remaining building at Nungarin serves as an important reminder to the community of one of the major chapters of the history of the town and of the participation by local families during World War Two. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

The building is one of few remaining pre-fabricated timber structures in generally unmodified form located in rural Western Australia. It is probably one of the largest timber framed and weatherboard clad buildings extant in Western Australia, particularly in terms of volume enclosed, and is one of very few remaining large volume, timber, military buildings (as opposed to structures) built during World War Two by the Public Works Department of Western Australia for the Commonwealth. (Criterion 5.1)

The building represents a phase of heavy timber design, construction and cladding no longer extensively practised. The place is one of few remaining examples built specifically to World War Two Structural Codes no longer practiced and is also a demonstration of some of the shortcomings of that Code. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The place is an important demonstration of a World War Two Army Workshop as a component of a fully operational Ordnance Depot designed to maintain and store the resources to supply the Army to defend the State against invasion during World War Two and later. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

With so much of the original fabric left, the condition of the building has been diminished only to a modest degree through the lack of a persistent maintenance programme. Heritage values have not materially and significantly been diminished. The condition of the place is therefore good.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Relatively little physical replacement work is required to the components of the place. Assuming the availability and application of sufficient resources, restoration of the exterior fabric finish is possible and practicable in the short, medium and longer term. Accordingly, it is considered that the heritage integrity of the Workshop is of a high degree.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

With the exception of the loss of the north west lean-to annex to ground (or plate on plinth) level and the associated metal ribbed wall cladding, camouflage paint on roof and external surfaces, electrical and workshop fittings, changes to the glazing in the sawtooth roof lights, changes to the overhead cranes and internal changes to the annexes to facilitate the use of the place as a museum, the fabric is authentic. The losses are considered to be minor or reversible.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by David Kelsall Architect: 'Conservation Plan Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum' (prepared for Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum, June 1995).

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the documentary evidence refer to David Kelsall Architect: 'Conservation Plan Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum' (prepared for Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum, June 1995).

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the physical evidence refer to David Kelsall Architect: 'Conservation Plan Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum' (prepared for Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum, June 1995).

#### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

-----

#### **13.4 REFERENCES**

David Kelsall Architect: 'Conservation Plan Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum' (prepared for Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum, June 1995).

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

-----