



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*

The place has aesthetic value through the combination of house, mill, landscaping and mature trees in a coastal location. (Criterion 1.1)

The mill has strong landmark qualities and contributes to the aesthetic character of the landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

The house and mill, in their parklike setting, form a significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The house and mill together are significant in the development of Western Australia, as indicative of early settlement in the region and in particular the ultimately unsuccessful efforts to undertake wheat farming in the Busselton area. (Criterion 2.1)

The place was closely associated for over one hundred and twenty years with the Curtis and Chapman families who were important in the early European settlement of the region and its subsequent history. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The mill was a technologically ambitious venture in its experimental use of local materials, and certain of the timber working parts were later exhibited in England as examples of Australian timber. (Criterion 3.3)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Inlet Park and *Chapman's Mill* contribute to the community's sense of place. They are among the oldest extant structures in the region and are distinct landmarks. (Criterion 4.2)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian*

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

There are few surviving nineteenth-century windmills in Western Australia; and few other 1850s buildings in the region survive unobscured by later extensions. # (Criterion 5.1)

The original section of the house at Inlet Park remains largely intact and is thus rare in the district as a surviving example of 1850s rural domestic accommodation, (Criterion 5.1)

Wind-powered milling was tried for only a brief period in Western Australia and the few surviving mills are rare physical documentation of a technology no longer utilised. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The original section of the house is representative of 1850s rural domestic accommodation. (Criterion 6.1)

The mill is representative of 1850s rural industrial technology. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The house is in quite good condition but the mill is severely dilapidated (June 1997). There has been some loss of cultural heritage significance to the house due to extensions and modernisation, but adequate maintenance was undertaken when the house was vacated c. 1995. The mill had its sails removed a few years after construction, was harshly renovated in the 1960s, and in 1997 was suffering badly from moisture penetration and in urgent need of conservation work.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place has a high degree of integrity because the house remained in its original use as a private residence until c. 1995 and is capable of occupation. The mill was decommissioned after a few years but despite a number of subsequent uses and some loss of fabric and serious structural problems, its original use and form remain clearly apparent.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a high degree of authenticity because much of the original fabric survives, although the house has suffered from modernisation and the mill from deterioration.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The supporting evidence has been compiled by the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage, Curtin University. The documentary evidence has been compiled by Donna Houston, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Dr John Stephens, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Inlet Park and Chapman's Mill comprises a farmhouse built in two stages – c. 1850 and c. 1970¹ and the remains of a wind powered flour mill built about 1850.

The house and mill are situated on Sussex Location 2 which was assigned to Henry and James Chapman in 1832. The land was surveyed during 1839-40 and the title deed issued on the 2 November, 1841.

The European settlement of the Vasse region began with the arrival of the Bussell, Molloy and Turner families on the *Warrior* at the Swan River in March 1830. Due to the unavailability of land for the size grants that each of these families were seeking near the Swan, the settlers were encouraged to take up land at Augusta which had received favourable reports from Stirling. The settlers arrived at Augusta on 3 May 1830 and were immediately faced with difficulties. They experienced problems with clearing the heavily timbered land and since their only means of communication was via irregular ship services, they often found themselves lacking in essential supplies. Early in 1833, John Bussell set out on foot from Augusta in search of better land, it was on this expedition that he found a cow grazing on the banks of the Vasse River and believing it to be one which had strayed from his Augusta property, subsequently named the spot *Cattle Chosen*. The land at the Vasse provided good pasture with its relatively open land which was probably the result of fire-stick farming that was practised by local Nyungars.² In late 1833, John Bussell transferred his land grant at Augusta to the Vasse and in 1834, settled in the district with his family at *Cattle Chosen*. The Bussells were accompanied by several other families that had originally settled in Augusta and transferred their land grants to the Vasse. These included the Turner family, George Layman (who settled at Wonnerup along the Sabina River), Elijah Dawson (Marybrook) Colonel John Molloy (Fairlawn) and Henry and James Chapman who also took up land at Wonnerup and established *Inlet Park*.

The Chapman family (brothers Henry, James, George and sister Ann) arrived in Western Australia on *The Egyptian* on 13 February 1830 from Wiltshire, England.³ Ann Chapman married in Fremantle in April 1831 and the brothers were among the first settlers at Augusta. Sussex Location

¹ The National Trust assessment mentions that the house remained unaltered until 1970. This corresponds to the architectural style of additions. (National Trust assessment of Inlet Park 11.6.73).

² Collard, L, *A Nyungar Interpretation of Ellensbrook and Wonnerup Homesteads*, Edith Cowan University, Perth, 1994, p. 29.

³ Cammilleri, C. *Anthony Curtis: His Life in Western Australia 1830-1853*, Perth, 1963, pp. 64-68.

2 comprising of 3,000 acres (1,214 ha) was assigned to Henry and James on 13 July 1832 following their decision to move to the Vasse. It was Henry who developed *Inlet Park* at Wonnerup while James built a home in Busselton where he also kept a store. On 26 November 1833, in regard to his land application, Henry Chapman stated, 'We brought over £1,000 value and we had many hardships since we came to this unfrequented place'.⁴ The Chapmans did not take up their land at Wonnerup immediately upon arrival at the Vasse. It was not until spring 1837 that Henry established himself on the property. It is not known when construction of the mill first began, however, it has been suggested that construction took several years.⁵

Henry married Amelia Glindon, sister of Captain Anthony Curtis' wife, in 1849 and the couple settled into a small stone cottage which was located behind the present homestead.⁶ Presently, the site is marked by a bird bath built from the original building material, erected by Amelia Curtis in February, 1965. The present homestead, which has been significantly added to, was believed to have been built around 1850 after the completion of the mill. *The Inquirer* reported on 19 April 1850 that:

The inhabitants of the Vasse now rejoice in the acquisition of an excellent windmill, lately erected by Mr Henry Chapman. When in good working order, it is calculated to be of sufficient power to grind all the wheat in the District, even allowing for the increased quantity likely to be produced in consequence of the probable demand for cereal products.⁷

The mill is a circular structure made from stone quarried in the locality, with a domed roof which was originally covered with shingles. One source offers this description:

The mill was built by Chapman Bros. who came to the settlement with the Bussells. Building operations started 94 years ago, using stone quarried on the place and having to burn their own lime to make mortar. A close scrutiny of the masonry shows the work of three different men; first a good workman with indifferently squared stone, laid the foundations; then better work can be detected and finally, skilled masonry is seen at the top. But despite the changes of workmen and the fact that it was almost twenty years in the building, a recent examination by an engineer revealed that the structure did not depart from plumb by one hundredth of an inch. Considered as a whole, it is a triumph of engineering.⁸

Locally hewn tuart was used throughout the mill for the mechanisms. The wind wheel (which has now gone) was a massive four vaned structure which had an axle diametrically spanning the roof. The roof was laid on rollers of iron embedded in the top of the wall and together with the wind wheel, the axle could be swung around when a lusty pull was given to a pole which reached from the ground to the roof.⁹ The crown wheel was sent to the Wembley Exhibition in 1924 by Mr. Lane Poole,

⁴ *ibid*, p. 66.

⁵ *ibid*, p. 67.

⁶ Jennings, R. *Busselton Outstation on the Vasse 1830-50* South West Printing and Publishing Company Pty Ltd, 1983, p. 164.

⁷ *Inquirer* 19 April 1850, - Chapman's Mill - mention of erection at Vasse.

⁸ A. P 'A Relic' source and date unknown. Located in Battye Library Printed Record Collection PR8679.

⁹ Cammilleri, *op. cit.*, 67.

then Conservator of Forests. The wheel weighed four tons (4.06 tonnes) and was later sent to the British Museum.

As a young man, George Layman was sent by Henry Chapman to Perth in order to select a miller. He brought back Jim Richardson who was popularly known in the district as 'Jim the Miller'. When a strong wind was blowing in a favourable direction, no matter what time of the day, the entire Chapman household roused themselves with Jim and got the machinery in operation.¹⁰ The mill was in operation for several years; however, Henry Chapman's confidence in the future of wheat production in the Vasse was misplaced as the district was more suited to rye and other coarse grains. With the erection of a more reliable water mill at Capel by George Payne, *Chapman's Mill* eventually closed down. It is believed the Chapman brothers lost £2,000 in the venture. It is possible that the mill may have been converted into a dairy for some years; however, there is no discrete documentary evidence to support this.

Henry and Amelia Chapman remained at *Inlet Park* until Henry's death in August 1859. Henry Chapman is mentioned in Wollaston's *Picton Journal* several times as *Inlet Park* was often a point of call for Wollaston and where he delivered his church services for the people at Wonnerup.¹¹ The property was inherited by Amelia Chapman's nephew William Curtis after her death in 1886 and remained in the family until 1995 when the property was transferred from Arthur George Glindon Curtis to Gabor Holdings of Peppermint Grove on 20 March 1995, at which time the homestead became unoccupied.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Inlet Park and Chapman's Mill comprises a farmhouse built in two stages – c. 1850 and c. 1970 and the remains of a wind powered flour mill built about 1850. This section, physical evidence, takes into account the existing house, mill and curtilage immediate to the house. The house was empty at the time of investigation.

The house and mill is sited in working farm land of approximately 86 hectares. The property is bounded by the Vasse Estuary to the north, the Sabina river on the west and the Bussell Highway to the south. Entry to the property is via a gravel track from the Bussell Highway. The property contains pasture and stands of tuart trees.

The house curtilage contains a number of large mature trees, a windmill, watertanks, well, and a shed constructed of stone rubble and asbestos cement. Also extant are a weatherboard garage and a memorial to the original homestead located to the north of the house.

The external form of the house clearly displays the two-stage development of building. The form of the c. 1850 building can be clearly traced through the roofline and the external brickwork. The roof maintains the original pitch and is roofed with corrugated iron. It is probable that the original roof was covered with shingles – however there is no physical confirmation of this. The verandah form is intact on the east and south,

¹⁰ Jennings, op. cit., p. 165.

¹¹ Wollaston, Rev. J. *Picton Journal* Paterson Brokensha Pty Ltd, p. 250.

but has been subsumed by infilling on the west and additions on the north. The two brick chimneys servicing rooms 5 and 6, and room 2 appear to be original and intact. Any timber verandah floor that might have existed has been removed and replaced with red coloured grano concrete.

The brick walls to the 1850s building are clearly seen on the south, east and west. Walls are constructed of red brick with lime mortar in English bond. A render dado approximately nine courses high runs the full length of visible external wall of the 1850s building. Each of the four visible corners is clad with decorative quoin work in the same render. This decoration also surrounds the window to room 6 and room 2. Both of these windows are double hung. Remaining windows to rooms 5, 4 and 1 are casement framed. The two styles of window may indicate two stages of development although there is no other physical evidence to support this. Decorative render is not carried above the pitching line of the verandah which may indicate application later than the original building.

The south-east corner of the verandah has been enclosed with timber framing and corrugated plastic sheeting. The only external door in the 1850s fabric is on the south serving the passage (9). The verandah on the south faces a brick paved courtyard with a fibreglass swimming pool and lean-to shelters.

The style of the 1850s building has the feeling and characteristics of Victorian Regency as described by Apperly¹² and Hocking.¹³ This is particularly pronounced on the south elevation with symmetrically placed windows around a centrally placed external door and the use of casement sash windows.¹⁴

The 1970s addition obliterated what was probably the original house front. This addition extends to the south of the 1850s building and includes, a bathroom, bedroom, kitchen and living area and a garage. A lean-to carport is a later accretion. The 1970s addition is roofed at the same pitch as the 1850s building and in the same material. Brick walls are laid in stretcher bond with lime or white mortar. Windows are timber framed with small glass panes to match older windows. Surrounds to front windows are dressed with cement render quoins to match those on the older structure. The front door (to the entry - space 11) has Georgian style sidelights and fanlight. The back verandah (3) is enclosed in brick and is glazed. The front verandah, which has turned posts and a recent cement Italianate balustrade, is quite out of sympathy with the older building. Although there has been some attempt to marry the new building with the old this has largely failed - mostly due to the insensitive verandah and garage. The enclosure and additions to the rear (west) also mask and detract from the 1850s structure.

¹² 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.

¹³ Hocking, I. and F. Bush. 'Influences on Architectural styles and Building Materials in the South West and Great Southern Regions of Western Australia', Hocking Planning and Architecture, Perth, 1995.

¹⁴ A 1940s photo of *Inlet Park* shows that the north elevation had symmetrically placed projecting bay windows which further enhances the Victorian Regency character.

The main rooms of the 1850s home (rooms 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6) are symmetrically grouped around a central passage (9), corresponding to a Georgian or Regency four-square planning layout. There are fireplaces in rooms 2, 5 and 6. The fireplace in room 5 is covered over (temporary plywood cover) and the mantle has been removed. However timber mantles and cast iron register grates remain in rooms 2 and 6. Room 1 leads off room 2 and was probably a dressing room. Ceilings throughout the 1850s building are 3.95 metres high, constructed from plaster lath with no cornice. All walls have been papered - probably quite recently. Skirting throughout is a simple robust design. There is a rustic built-in cupboard in room 5 which is probably quite early. With the exception of the removal of bay windows to rooms 2 and 6 (for the 1970s extension), the 1850s interior fabric is highly intact and well demonstrates the functions of the older home.

The 1970s addition extends in a logical fashion from the north elevation of the 1850s building and contains a bathroom, bedroom and living areas.

Ceilings are much lower than in the older building and are decorated with fibrous plaster cornices. The open plan design of this wing of the house is typical of 1960s and 1970s domestic modernism but does not greatly feel out of place with the older building. The garage is cavernous and commensurate with the needs of a working farm. Room 14 appears to be the result of ad hoc planning and is constructed in lightweight framing.

Despite being empty for a number of years the structure is in good condition and maintains a good appearance. There has been vigorous termite activity in room 13 which has been treated. The rest of the building appears to be termite free at present.¹⁵ Whilst there is little deterioration at present and the building is regularly checked, long term vacancy of the building may not be in the best interests of the structure.

The mill is constructed of local calciferous stone laid in coursed rubble. There are three floor levels framed in timber - possibly tuart. Each level is serviced by a doorway and windows. The original shingle roof has been replaced with a galvanised corrugated iron polygon roof structure. The timber ring beam, which may have been part of the original roller mechanism, is tied down with steel rod ties placed on the outside of the structure. The mill building structure appears to be basically intact although it is difficult to tell whether some internal timbers have been replaced. As indicated in 'Documentary Evidence the mechanisms which drove and ground grain have been removed.

The exterior condition of the structure is good with little evidence of deterioration. Stonework walls and the corrugated iron roof appear to be sound and in good repair. However there are potential problems in the interior. Internal timberwork is basically sound but water is leaking through the walls - particularly at points where timberwork and stone adjoin. The result is continually wet timberwork which is beginning to rot and grow fungus. If left unchecked this situation will hasten timber deterioration and may result in an unsafe structure.

13.3 REFERENCES

¹⁵ Conversation with the manager of the property, Phil Lukin on 9 June 1997.

National Trust assessment of *Inlet Park* dated 11 June 1973. National Trust of Australia (WA).

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Opportunities for further research include a detailed history of the owners, and milling in Western Australia. Archaeological investigation around the mill could be of value.