



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

The design incorporates classical influences in the detailing of the eaves, whilst the cast iron windows and french door glazing pattern are of a Regency flavour. Together with the original shingled roofs, mellow brickwork and openness to the landscape (via the french doors and verandahs), *Upton House* is of an unusual and sophisticated, eclectic design. (Criterion 1.2)

Upton House, situated in extensive grounds and over-looking the estuary, is a prominent feature of the Australind district. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The building is surviving evidence of a failed settlement scheme that had aimed to develop the Australind district in the early 1840s. (Criterion 2.2)

Upton House is important for its long and close association with the Clifton family, whose members played a prominent role in establishing Australind and the early development of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

the place was the childhood home of daughters of Marshall Waller Clifton who were important artists in Western Australian arts history. (Criterion 2.3)

Upton House provides important evidence of the sophistication and skills available to early settlers in Western Australia, with respect to domestic design suited to local colonial environments, contrary to the more commonly observed makeshift and improvised dwellings of many settlers. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Upton House is valued by the local community for its contribution to community's sense of place; it being a place associated with early settlement of the district. A memorial erected by the West Australian Historical Society

and listing in local guidebooks and heritage trail brochure, attests to its value to the community. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Upton House is a relatively rare example of this two-storeyed housing form demonstrating a degree of sophistication and skill in its design and construction that were not readily available to the general community. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Following recent restoration work by a conservation architect, which included replacing a number of doors and windows, *Upton House* is in very sound condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Although there have been some additions and alterations to the building over the years, these reflect the natural expansion expected during long term occupancy of a building.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Restoration work carried out in 1990, returned the 1840s section of the house to its original form, while providing sympathetic additions to accommodate the needs of the owners. However, the fabric of the main, early, two-storeyed section of the house retains a high degree of authenticity and intactness. The fabric of the early dairy (now used as a garage) is authentic and in sound condition.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence was compiled by HCWA staff.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Upton House is a two-storey, atypical rural residence built in c.1844, on a prominent site overlooking Leschenault Inlet at Australind. The area around Australind was first explored in March 1830 from the sea and up-river, by Governor Stirling and others. As a result, Stirling took up a grant of 100,000 acres and Richard Wells (agent for Colonel Latour) took up 103,000 acres. In 1840, Latour's estate and 62,000 acres of Stirling's grant were purchased by the West Australian Company. Marshall Waller Clifton had been appointed Chief Commissioner of the Company, which had been established to set up a scheme in WA similar to the Bounty Scheme that had been operating in New South Wales since 1835.

Marshall Waller Clifton and his family had landed at Australind from England, in March 1841, aboard the ship *Parkfield*. The settlement's name, Australind (Austral-Ind), had been adopted suggesting "south of India" to appeal to investors in Calcutta.¹ In its widely advertised prospectus, the Company described its general purpose as the purchase and resale of land in a project aimed at carrying on colonisation on the Wakefield principle in W.A.²

The venture foundered soon after establishment, with a number of land purchasers remaining in England. Captain George Grey did not help the venture by continuing to expound the suitability of the Geraldton area for settlement, over that of Australind. Staples writes that it must have been clear to Clifton that the Australind Settlement had failed in 1843 when settlers were leaving the area.³ However, Clifton decided to remain at Australind after his dismissal, in preference to returning to England or retiring to Perth. Clifton retained positions of responsibility, in 1851 being appointed as a non-official member of the Legislative Council.⁴

Upton House was built for an absentee owner, Mrs Elizabeth Fry, the English prison reformer and cousin of Mrs Waller Clifton. Mrs Fry and her husband Joseph both of whom remained in London, also purchased other lots in the vicinity. However, after Mrs Fry's death in 1844/45, her husband sold *Upton House* to Mrs Clifton. It is reported that the name *Upton House* is derived from Mrs Fry's residence in Upton Lane, which skirts Upton Park, a short distance east of the centre of London.⁵

Mr A.C. Staples, author of a history of the Harvey Shire states, '... Waller Clifton said his son Pearce "has recently erected a very excellent brick house

¹ Staples, A.C. *They Made Their Destiny: History of Settlement of the Shire of Harvey, 1829 - 1929* (Shire of Harvey, 1979) p.68.

² cited in Staples, A.C. *ibid.*

³ Staples, A.C. *op.cit.* pp.77-78. Clifton made his last report as Commissioner at the beginning of 1843.

⁴ Adult Education Board, *Significant Names in W.A. History - Marshall Waller Clifton 1787 - 1861* (Battye Library PR 10845/5)

⁵ Staples, A.C. *op. it.* p.97.

in Koombanah Crescent" a statement written in November 1844.⁶ The materials for the house were transported to the settlement in one of the early ships as cargo and used for ballast. This included eight sets of french windows and twelve sets of cast iron windows. Pearce Clifton constructed the home with the use of locally cut jarrah and nails manufactured at Australind.⁷

As mentioned, the building was passed to the Clifton family in 1844/45.⁸ Marshall Waller Clifton and his wife did not actually move into *Upton House* until 1847 when his son Pearce and wife moved out. A.C. Staples writes:

During the next summer Pearce and his wife Annette moved out of Upton House, making way for his father who commenced the new volume of his Journal on May 16th 1847 with the heading "UPTON HOUSE, AUSTRALIND". On the 17th he records "Engaged in completing the move".⁹

After moving into *Upton House*, Marshall Waller Clifton set about establishing a garden on the flats below the hill. A description is provided of the garden as it was in 1858:

after great and continued expense and labour I have a garden (walks planted with vines) which now produces the finest grapes and vegetables and is the wonder and admiration of the whole colony.¹⁰

However, the garden was destroyed by salt water in the flood of 1862.

Marshall Waller Clifton died in April 1861 and the property was passed onto his son Robert William Clifton, who died in April 1879. Robert had a family of 13 and additions were made to accommodate them.¹¹ Robert's son Joseph Bingham Clifton took possession of the property until his death in 1941 and at the end of World War II Robert Bingham Clifton (Joseph's son) returned from active service with the RAAF and occupied the property until his death in February 1991.

In 1844, in addition to the 13 or so farms in the district, *Upton House*, together with two other buildings, formed the earliest beginnings of settlement in the area, that can be connected to the present. They were built a year or so earlier and are still in use today. Probably the oldest is a timber structure, built for William Dacre Williams and operated by him as the 'Prince of Wales Hotel'. Today it has been restored. In comparison with *Upton House*, it illustrates the results of improvisation with local materials. The building is known as 'Henton Cottage'. The second building is located nearby, originally a small timber cottage it was built by William Narroway on his arrival in 1844. In the 1850s it was converted into an Independent Chapel, in later years being purchased by the Anglican Church and consecrated the 'The Church of St

⁶ quoted (no reference) in Staples, A.C. *op.cit.* p.96.

⁷ information supplied by current owner, Mrs F.M. Clifton.

⁸ The current owner, Mrs F.M. Clifton states in a letter dated February 1992, that the receipt of the transfer document is dated 1844 and is on file in the records at *Upton House*.

⁹ Staples, A.C. *op.cit.* pp.103-104.

¹⁰ Clifton, R.B. *The Story of Upton House* (unpublished, n.d.) The quote is likely to be taken from the diary of Marshall Waller Clifton, a copy of which is held in the Battye Library, Acc 698A (microfilm) Robert Bingham Clifton, who was born in and died in the house, was for many years the "curator" and "historian" of the family records and developed an extensive archives.

¹¹ McGillivray, R. 'Many Features in Old Upton House' in *South Western Times* 27 April 1971, p.3.

Nicholas.¹² *Upton House* was the other residence and it proved to be focal point in the lives of the Clifton family, remaining in the family to the present day.

In 1938, the Western Australian Historical Society erected a memorial near *Upton House*, where the settlers would have first arrived, in recognition of those first Europeans who came to settle and develop the area.¹³ The memorial bears two bronze tablets; one telling of the formation of the West Australia Company in England and the first ships sailing to the area in 1840; and the second tablet bears a plan of the layout of the city to be - Australind.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Upton House is a simple, two-storey building constructed in c.1844, one of the earliest houses in the newly established European settlement of Australind. It was built for English social reformer, Mrs Elizabeth Fry and sold soon after to the Clifton family as Mrs Fry died before leaving for Australia. The house is sited upon Lot 78 and is surrounded by Lots 12, 13, 77 and 79, all in the same ownership. At present the extensive, surrounding land is fully grassed and very well maintained.

Upton House is constructed with imported bricks and plaster and as such is an atypical rural residence. The majority of rural houses constructed in this era relied primarily on utilising inferior local materials which often required a certain amount of improvisation. A number of features in particular, distinguish *Upton House* from other more improvised buildings of the era: the ventilated eaves design; importation of fine-profiles cast iron window casements and glazing; solid wall construction; locally sawn timber production and recognition of native timber qualities; and, very finely designed and crafted joinery in the French doors and internal staircase.¹⁴

The style of *Upton House* followed in the tradition of architecture in the east. The colonisation of New South Wales began when the late Georgian or, after 1800, the Regency style prevailed in Britain, and since there was little major change until after 1840, Western Australia had its share in the same architectural heritage. The typical Georgian house was most often a brick box, although in some areas it would be in stone, even timber; it was nearly square on plan with a pitched roof, usually hipped. The door was centrally placed in one of its long sides, with a window above and equal number flanking it. 'Such was the basis for our earliest houses, as at Minninup near Capel, Upton House at Australind and the Old Rectory at Albany.'¹⁵

The original portion of the house was two-storeyed with two rooms on each floor. Bedrooms were upstairs and downstairs was a dining room and sitting room. In early times many outbuildings in the grounds were used for cooking and other services.¹⁶ By 1962, the additions that had been built over

¹² Staples, A.C. *op.cit.* p.96.

¹³ Clifton, Marshall, 'Upton House: A Radio talk given by Marshall Clifton' 1 August 1945, p.2.

¹⁴ information provided by conservation architect, Mr Ian Molyneux, 13 January 1994. See attached details of windows.

¹⁵ Pitt Morison, M and White, J. (eds), *Western Towns and Buildings* (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979) p.190.

¹⁶ see Appendix A. Measured survey by Marshall Clifton, dated November 1958

the years had fallen into disrepair. While the original two-storeyed portion was restored, the decaying timber extensions were replaced with new brick work and some of the outbuildings disappeared.¹⁷ During the 1960s a weatherboard addition on the eastern side of the building was removed and replaced with a small brick extension, part of which is still intact today. Also during that renovation, the main verandah roof in the original home was removed and replaced with a flat roofed verandah.

The interior differs from others houses of the period. The custom of a fireplace in every room has not been followed, there being fireplaces in only the sitting room and main bedroom. The house has the unusual feature of having a surrounding verandah, but the upper floors do not have balconies.

In 1990, Robert Bingham Clifton engaged a conservation architect who carried out a survey of the condition of the building.¹⁸ As a result, a portion of the original extension of the 1960s was removed and a large main bedroom and en-suite was constructed, primarily to cater for the owner who was experiencing difficulties with the stairs. The flat roofed verandah of the 1960s was removed and a new verandah, at the original pitch, was constructed. In addition, the verandah now also surrounds the 1990 extension and thus the original building was returned to its former design.

13.3 REFERENCES

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.

Staples, A.C. *They Made Their Destiny: History of Settlement of the Shire of Harvey, 1829-1929* Shire of Harvey, 1979.

¹⁷ see Appendix B. Contract drawing of additions of 1960 by unidentified draftsman for unidentified builder. (Source: Mr R.B. Clifton)

¹⁸ see Appendix C. Measured survey: floor plans, elevations 1989; contract drawings for additions 1990; section and elevations - verandah reconstruction, August 1989; floor plan of extended house after 1990 additions; site plan, July 1991. (attached)