



## 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)

- 3.13 Developing an Australian Manufacturing capacity
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

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

- 306 Domestic activities
- 310 Manufacturing and processing

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Curdnatta* is a good example of a modest residence in the Federation Queen Anne style, displaying a predominantly hipped roof with gable features, pleasing scale and proportions, and a deep setback from the residential street where it is located. (Criterion 1.1)

*Curdnatta* constitutes an important element of the streetscape at the North Western, or Toodyay, entrance to the Town of Northam, which is dominated by the flour mill. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Curdnatta* is one of the finest houses in what was probably the first Northam suburban subdivision, the Leake Estate (Avon Location C), also called 'Burwood', a subdivision that occurred after 1892 and is situated on the North bank of the Avon River opposite the town centre. (Criterion 2.1)

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.  
For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

*Curdnatta* the place was built in 1911 for Ashton Hunter, a prominent employee, later manager, of the Northam flour mill, at a time when there was considerable investment in and expansion of the Northam flour mill, leading to the consolidation of Northam as the main flour milling centre in Western Australia. The place was occupied by prominent employees of the milling company W. Thomas & Co Ltd (later Weston Milling) from 1911 to 1969, and owned by the company from 1930 to 1954. (Criterion 2.2)

Ashton Hunter, for whom *Curdnatta* was built and who lived there until 1930, had a lifelong career associated with Australian flour mills, first in South Australia, then in Northam, as General Manager of W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Ltd from 1916 to 1929-30, and in Katanning as mill manager from 1936-37 until 1963, and served for many years as an important member and chair of the WA Millers Association. He also served as a Northam Town Councillor (1914-1921) and was Mayor of Northam from 1921 to 1923. (Criterion 2.3)

*Curdnatta* was designed by prominent Western Australian architect Edwin Summerhayes. (Criterion 2.3)

R. B. James, W. Thomas & Co Ltd's accountant, occupied *Curdnatta* from the mid-1930s to 1969 and owned it from 1954, and was active in Northam community affairs, holding office as a Town Councillor and serving as Mayor of Northam from 1949 to 1955. (Criterion 2.3)

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

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

*Curdnatta* is valued by the local community for its contribution to the built environment of Northam, as the home of two Mayors, and for its association with the most significant secondary industry in the Town. This is evidenced by its inclusion in Town of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criteria 4.1 & 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

*Curdnatta* a well-maintained example of a suburban house designed by Edwin Summerhayes, of which few have been identified, and is a good example of his later residential work in the pre-World War One period. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Curdnatta* is a representative example of an architect-designed dwelling for a person in a managerial position in the 1910s. (Criterion 6.1)

*Curdnatta* is a good example of a middle class 'suburban villa' type of house of the pre-World War One period. (Criterion 6.1)

*Curdnatta* is a representative example of the type of house built for a prominent person in a large and prosperous Western Australian town in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Curdnatta* is in good condition, although there is evidence of rising damp and drainage problems. The place is well maintained.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Curdnatta* has been a residence since it was originally constructed, and retains a high degree of integrity. The place has adapted to changing residential needs with minimal alterations to the structure.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

There is considerable evidence of the original fabric of *Curdnatta* although some change has taken place with the removal of original ceilings, kitchen floor and fireplace, windows on the north wall, fireplaces, and mantelpieces. *Curdnatta* has a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Bruce Bott, Historian, has compiled the documentary evidence. Laura Gray, Architect, has compiled the physical evidence.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Curdnatta*, is a single-storey brick residence with a corrugated iron predominantly hipped roof with gable features and stone foundations, designed in a Federation Queen Anne architectural style and constructed for Ashton Hunter [1911], designed by Edwin Summerhayes, Architect and built by Robert Millington, Builder.<sup>1</sup> The place is situated at 22 Newcastle Road, Northam.

Associated with the place are a separate prefabricated metal games room/studio and garage.

*Curdnatta* is on portion of that parcel of land described as Avon location C, an allotment that consisted of 480 acres situated on the north side of the Avon River opposite to the Northam town site. Avon location C was granted initially to James Inkpen on 7 May 1831<sup>2</sup>, but he sold it to George Leake in 1836<sup>3</sup> and it was commonly known thereafter as the *Leake Estate*. In December 1892, Avon location C was transferred to R. F. Sholl, E. T. Hooley and A. R. Waylen, who appear to have been responsible for the subdivision which took place progressively after this time.<sup>4</sup> This was an early suburban subdivision for the area, preceding the trend towards subdividing rural properties to facilitate the expansion of the town which began in earnest from c.1900 for about thirty years.<sup>5</sup>

The new suburb was linked to the town by a new bridge across the Avon at Grey Street in 1897 and it was decided to call it '*Burwood*' or '*Burswood*' in 1899, but the name never caught.<sup>6</sup> It was to be largely a 'middle class' suburb in contrast to the 'working class' West Northam area developing over the same period though it was not as prestigious as the area on the hill above the eastern end of the town that contained the houses of most of the Northam elite.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Northam, building approvals 1902-1935, p. 3 [transcript held by Northam Historical Society]

<sup>2</sup> Garden, D. S., *Northam: An Avon Valley History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Memorial of a Deed of Conveyance, no. 417, Book 1, 21 June 1836.

<sup>4</sup> Pace, Garden, *Northam*...p.151, not Leake's descendants; Certificate of Title, Vol. 47, Folio 380, on deposited plan no. 774. was issued to Robert Frederick Sholl, MLA, Edward Timothy Hooley, merchant and Alfred Robert Waylen, Colonial surgeon, (all of Perth) on 28 December 1892.

<sup>5</sup> Garden, *Northam*...,pp.188-189.

<sup>6</sup> Garden, *Northam*...,p.151.

<sup>7</sup> Garden, *Northam*...pp.151-152.

In 1895, a parcel of over seven acres of the *Burwood* land was transferred to O. L. Bernard who further subdivided it.<sup>8</sup>

Different proprietors were registered for lots 8 and 9 of this subdivision and they were sold at different dates: Lot 8 to John Henry Matthews of Northam, contractor, in May 1897, and Lot 9 to Robert Mears of Northam, Blacksmith, in March 1898.<sup>9</sup>

Neither lot appears to have had buildings on it at this stage. Lot 8 was transferred to Rose Cameron of Northam on 26 August 1898, then to Ann Diamond of Northam, storekeeper, on 23 October 1901, and again to Auguste Black of Northam, married woman, on 20 October 1903.<sup>10</sup> Lot 9 was transferred to Delia Fishwick of Northam, married woman, on 28 June 1900.<sup>11</sup>

Some time prior to 1907, both Lots were purchased by Wentworth Darcy Uhr of Coolgardie, gentleman. However, it appears that Certificates of Title were not issued to him at the time of purchase, as he died 18 February 1907, but the Titles were not issued in his name until 14 March 1911, by which time the property was in the hands of his executors, James Nicholas and Charles Roger Herbert.<sup>12</sup>

On 11 April 1911, Uhr's executors sold both lots to Ashton Hunter who is described on the certificates of title also as 'gentleman, of Northam'.<sup>13</sup>

Although Ashton Hunter was only registered as the owner of two adjacent suburban allotments, lots 8 & 9 on 11 April 1911, he was granted a building permit by the Town of Northam on 22 March 1911 to construct there, a 'brick villa of 4 rooms, kitchen, bath, wash house and pantry': a building worth £650. The architect is recorded there as Edwin Summerhayes and the builder, Robert Millington, a local Northam builder.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 76, Folio 150, issued 13 November 1895 for portions 1 & 2 of section H on deposited plan no. 774. Bernard was Mayor of Northam from 1904-07, *Garden, Northam...*p.168.

<sup>9</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 83, Folio 172, issued 14 May 1897 for Lot 8, subdivision 2 of Section H on deposited plan no. 1490; Certificate of Title Vol. 147, Folio 42, issued 31 March 1898 for Lot 9 on deposited plan no. 1490.

<sup>10</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 83, Folio 172, issued 14 May 1897 for Lot 8, subdivision 2 of Section H on deposited plan no. 1490.

<sup>11</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 147, Folio 42, issued 31 March 1898 for Lot 9 on deposited plan no. 1490.

<sup>12</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 83, Folio 172, issued 14 May 1897 for Lot 8, subdivision 2 of Section H on deposited plan no. 1490; Certificate of Title Vol. 147, Folio 42, issued 31 March 1898 for Lot 9 on deposited plan no. 1490.

<sup>13</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 147, Folio 42, issued 31 March 1898 for Lot 9 on deposited plan no. 1490; Certificate of Title Vol. 483, Folio 171, issued 14 March 1911 for Lot 8 on deposited plan no. 1490. In extent, lot 8 was one rood and thirty two and five tenth perches and lot 9, one rood and twenty nine and seven tenth perches: metrically converted these would together amount to an area of about 3596m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Town of Northam, building approvals 1902-1935, p. 3 [transcript held by Northam Historical Society].

Edwin Summerhayes was born in England in 1868<sup>15</sup>, the son of George Summerhayes, a building contractor, and Sarah Ann Clark. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, the Bluecoat School, and migrated to Melbourne with his parents and three siblings in 1884, before moving to Adelaide where he was articled to the architect James Hill.<sup>16</sup> In c.1889, he moved back to Melbourne where he took further articles with Hon. William Pitt, MLC, one of Melbourne's leading architects.<sup>17</sup> He remained there until 1894 but, like many others, was prompted by the general economic depression in the eastern colonies at the time to look further afield for work. He was attracted by the positive economic outlook in Western Australia, which followed the discovery of gold, to migrate to Coolgardie.<sup>18</sup> Summerhayes was responsible for many buildings erected during Coolgardie's boom years in the 1890s. From c.1896, he split his time between Coolgardie and Claremont, where he was elected to the Claremont Town Council in 1902, and remained a councilor until 1907.<sup>19</sup> He designed a number of buildings for the Piesse family, especially in Katanning,<sup>20</sup> and was well-known for his architectural designs in rural areas.<sup>21</sup> From 1913, Summerhayes worked in partnership with Harold Boas, trading as Summerhayes & Boas.<sup>22</sup> Following World War One, Edwin practiced together with his son Reginald Summerhayes until his retirement in 1934, and died in 1944 at the age of 77.<sup>23</sup>

Ashton Hunter returned to South Australia from Northam to marry on 11 May 1911. He and his new wife moved into *Curdnatta* upon their return to Northam soon after. Three children were born to them in *Curdnatta*, a daughter, born in 1912 who died of diphtheria in 1919 and is buried in Northam cemetery and twins born in 1917.<sup>24</sup>

Ashton Hunter had a lifelong career associated with Australian flour mills, first in South Australia and then in Northam and Katanning in Western Australia. He worked for W. Thomas & Co. at their Port Augusta, South Australia mill where his father, James Hunter was manager. He was born in

<sup>15</sup> 6 March 1868 at Greenwich. Summerhayes, G. E. Notes on the life and work of Edwin Summerhayes and Reginald Summerhayes. 1992, unpublished.

<sup>16</sup> James Hill designed among other buildings, Dunn Memorial Wesleyan Church and Port Augusta Town Hall. Summerhayes, Notes.

<sup>17</sup> He had designed the Treasury Buildings in Melbourne when just 19, a feat which earned him the epithet of 'little boy wonder' Summerhayes, Notes.

<sup>18</sup> Battye, J. S. (editor) *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia. vol.1*, The Cyclopedia Company, Perth, 1912, p.625.

<sup>19</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, pp.22 -23.

<sup>20</sup> Bignell, M. *A Place to Meet: A History of the Shire of Katanning, Western Australia*. University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1981, pp. 183; 187-188.

<sup>21</sup> Battye, *The Cyclopedia... vol.1*, p.625.

<sup>22</sup> Kelly, Ian, 'Architectural Biography, 1890-1915', submitted as part of Masters Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991 (no page numbers).

<sup>23</sup> Paterson Brokensha, *Leading Personalities of Western Australia 1950*. Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1950 p.88

<sup>24</sup> Lee, E. A. Personal communication, 1996.

Port Augusta on 29 June 1885.<sup>25</sup> His father, James Hunter, had worked in flour milling all his working life: first as an apprentice, then as an employee and finally as mill manager for John Dunn & Co in Bridgewater and Wilmington and at Port Augusta until the assets of that company were acquired by W. Thomas and Co. after 1899. James Hunter was then appointed to manage their Port Augusta operation.<sup>26</sup>

Ashton Hunter had shown such promise at the Port Augusta mill that the company provided him with incentives to come to Northam where he is first recorded in the company records in October 1910.<sup>27</sup>

Flour milling had been the most significant secondary industry in Northam since 1867, and the town has been a leading milling centre in the State since that time.<sup>28</sup> Encouraged by the bright economic prospects in Western Australia, W. Thomas & Co., who had substantial milling interests in South Australia, purchased Byfield's *Snowdrop Flour Mill*<sup>29</sup> in Northam in 1902 which they renamed *The Standard Flour Mill*. Major extensions were added in 1909, 1910-11 and 1914, including the construction of a new mill on adjacent land in 1910-1911, which employed 20 men in the off-season and 80 in wheat season.<sup>30</sup> The company brought across staff from South Australia and made considerable investments in the mill so that by 1914 it was the largest and most modern flourmill in Western Australia.<sup>31</sup> Until the 1930s, country mills had an unusual dominance over the flour milling industry in Western Australia because of their superior milling capacity. This was in contrast to the situation of the industry in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria where the metropolitan-based mills dominated much earlier.<sup>32</sup>

In September 1916, J. Sibbald resigned as WA manager of W. Thomas & Co. following his short-lived appointment as chairman of the State Wheat Board and Ashton Hunter succeeded him as General Manager at this

<sup>25</sup> Lee, Elizabeth Ashton (Mrs.) (nee Hunter) daughter of Ashton Hunter and born in *Curdnatta* in 1917. Various personal communications, 1996-1999; 'Curdnatta' or 'Kurdnatta' were the Aboriginal names for Port Augusta and mean 'place of shifting or drifting sand' in the local language.

<sup>26</sup> Burgess, H. T. (editor) *The Cyclopedia of South Australia*, vol.2, The Cyclopedia Company, Adelaide, 1909 pp.600-601. Article on Thomas Hunter.

<sup>27</sup> Lee, E. A. Personal communication, 1996. Some of these incentives are also recorded in the company records and included a return trip to Adelaide for his marriage and honeymoon and cheques written for the architect's and tradesmen's fees for the house. Records of William Thomas & Co. Ltd. and W. Thomas and Co. (WA), MN 664; acc 2664A, State Library of Western Australia, Battye Library.

<sup>28</sup> Garden, *Northam...*, pp. 76, 146, 248.

<sup>29</sup> James Byfield presumably used the money from the sale to build the two storey house with a tower on the corner of Gordon and Chidlow Streets soon after. That house was known subsequently as *Byfield's House*. Garden, *Northam...* p. 152 citing *The Northam Advertiser* for 31 August 1901; 6 December 1902; 13 December 1902.

<sup>30</sup> Garden, *Northam...*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>31</sup> Lang, E. *Grist to the Mill: A History of Flour Milling in Western Australia*. Goodman Fielder Mills Ltd.; Weston Milling, North Fremantle; Kewdale, 1994, p.164. In 2003, the mill remains the largest in the State. From 1982 there were only 3 operating flour mills in the State. (see HCWA assessment for P3645 *Great Southern Roller Flour Mill, North Fremantle*.)

<sup>32</sup> Lang, E. *Grist...* pp. 42-43.

time.<sup>33</sup> Hunter was also a prominent member of the Northam community, serving as a Town of Northam Councillor from 1914 to 1921 and Mayor of Northam from 1921-1923.<sup>34</sup>

In 1927, Hunter presided over W. Thomas & Co's expansion and reorganisation in the State, purchasing the *Eureka Flourmill* at Cottesloe from the creditors of the financially strapped F. & C. Piesse of Katanning.<sup>35</sup> In October 1927, W. Thomas & Co. (W. A.) was incorporated, although W. Thomas & Co. in Adelaide remained the principal shareholder. The *Standard Flour Mill* at Northam was sold to the new company, which also acquired the *Eureka Cottesloe Mill* and *Ockerby's Mill* at Kellerberrin.<sup>36</sup>

Ashton Hunter, as manager of W. Thomas & Co.'s WA operations, was appointed General Manager of W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Ltd in 1927, but for reasons that are not entirely clear, appears to have retired prematurely in 1929-30 and sold *Curdnatta* to the company.<sup>37</sup> Leslie Haining succeeded Ashton Hunter as manager of W. Thomas & Co (WA) in 1930. He had previously been the company's accountant, and lived on the opposite side of Newcastle Road to *Curdnatta*, on the corner of Mitchell Avenue (a site now occupied by the Shell Service station)<sup>38</sup> before moving to Cottesloe when the company shifted its headquarters there.<sup>39</sup>

Ashton Hunter was very sorry to leave *Curdnatta* and took the bronze house name sign *Curdnatta* with him when he left.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent owners were unaware that the house had ever had a name.<sup>41</sup> After leaving Northam in 1929-30, Ashton Hunter spent some time on the eastern goldfields before he is recorded as managing the Katanning Flour Mill in 1936/37. He served for many years as an important member and chair of the WA Millers Association.<sup>42</sup> He retired from his position at the Katanning Mill in 1963, when he was 78, and he died on 13 May 1966.<sup>43</sup> Despite his long period of residence in Katanning, *Curdnatta* in Northam was the only house he ever owned. His daughter recalls him saying that 'people who build houses are foolish for they do it only for others to enjoy'.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lang, E. *Grist...* pp. 61-63.

<sup>34</sup> Illuminated address presented to Ashton Hunter, 1923 in possession of Northam Historical Society; plaque on wall in Town of Northam offices.

<sup>35</sup> Lang, E. *Grist...* p. 135.

<sup>36</sup> Lang, E. *Grist...* p. 135.

<sup>37</sup> Transfer of land no. 7914/1930 registered 31 October 1930; a new Certificate of Title was then issued as vol. 1022, folio 15.

<sup>38</sup> Stone, Winsome (Mrs.) (nee Haining), (daughter of Leslie Haining, a successor to Ashton Hunter as manager of W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Limited), Personal Communication, 17 September 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Burton, L. C. *A History of the Cottesloe Flour Mill*. Weston Milling, [Kewdale, WA], 1995, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Lee, E. A. Personal communication, 1996.

<sup>41</sup> Macaboy, N. Personal Communication, 12 September 1995.

<sup>42</sup> Lang, E., *Grist...* p. 88. ; Great Southern Herald, *Katanning's Jubilee*. Great Southern Herald, Katanning, c.1939, p. 16, states '...the first manager of the company was Mr. W. J. Cobb, upon whose death Mr. Ashton Hunter took over the reins of management.'

<sup>43</sup> Lee, E. A. Personal communication, 1996.

<sup>44</sup> Lee, E. A. Personal communication, 1996.



W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Ltd relocated their headquarters to the *Eureka Cottesloe Mill* in 1930 and, as they therefore had no need of a house in Northam for their manager, rented it to various persons associated with the mill.<sup>45</sup> In August 1963, George Weston Foods Ltd. acquired a controlling interest in the company and by November 1969 they had become the sole owners. In 2003, the company is known nationally as Weston Milling and in Western Australia has offices in Kewdale and at the Northam mill with all milling operations being concentrated at Northam.<sup>46</sup>

W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Ltd's accountant, R. B James, rented *Curdnatta* from the mid 1930s until 1954, when he and his wife Mary Methven James purchased the house from the company.<sup>47</sup> R. B. James was Commanding Officer of Northam's Volunteer Defence Corp battalion during World War Two, served on the Town Council, and was Mayor of Northam from 1949-1955.<sup>48</sup> In 1963, Lots 8 and 9 were combined into a single land parcel.<sup>49</sup> This was then subdivided in May 1965 to form separate lots facing Newcastle Street and Christmas Street. *Curdnatta* was contained within the Newcastle Street land parcel, Lot 32, with an area of 1834m<sup>2</sup>, which remains the size of the place in 2003.<sup>50</sup>

On 14 August 1969, *Curdnatta* was purchased by Raymond Maurice Fraser, civil servant, and his wife Doreen Phebe Mary Fraser, who also lived at the place. Three years later, in December 1972, Eric Charles Molyneux, Shire Clerk, and his wife Kathleen Miriam Molyneux purchased the property. They owned the place until May 1975, when it was sold to Alan Hewett, Farmer, and his wife Isobel Mary Hewett, of Kalanni. In March 1980 the house was sold again, to Mary Philomena Foster, who also resided at the place.<sup>51</sup>

In 1980, a new double brick bathroom and laundry extension were added, and the kitchen was also remodeled.<sup>52</sup> A separate pre-fabricated metal games room/ studio was also constructed in 1980, at the rear of the site.<sup>53</sup>

Richard James Godley, District Supervisor and Marion Sue Goodley, married woman, purchased the property in March 1988, and took up residence.<sup>54</sup> The north side verandah was converted into a sunroom in 1988, connected to the house through the kitchen by removal of a window

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<sup>45</sup> The Post Office Directories record the occupant of the house from 1929 to 1932-33 as F. M. Turton and the house as vacant in the Directory for 1933/34. In those for 1934/35 and 1935/36 Frederick Harris, (occupation, miller) is the occupant. R.B. James (of James & Co.) is first recorded as occupant in the Directory for 1936/37.

<sup>46</sup> Lang, E. *Grist...*p. 135-136.

<sup>47</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1022, folio 15, transfer of land no. 19254/1954 registered 27 September 1954; Macaboy, Nancy (Mrs.) (nee James), daughter of R. B. James, occupier of the house from the mid 1930s to 1954 as lessee to W. Thomas & Co. (WA) Limited and then owner to 1969, Personal Communication 12 September 1995.

<sup>48</sup> Garden, *Northam...*,pp. 236 & 250.

<sup>49</sup> Certificate of Title, vol.1272 folio 415.

<sup>50</sup> Certificate of Title vol. 1298 folio 413.

<sup>51</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1298, folio 413,

<sup>52</sup> Town of Northam building license no. 430, 19 May 1980.

<sup>53</sup> Town of Northam building license no. 436, 23 May 1980.

<sup>54</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1792 folio 588.

and addition of a timber frame enclosure.<sup>55</sup> A timber frame pergola was added adjacent to the sunroom in 1990.<sup>56</sup> A metal sheet garage was built in the northeast (rear) corner of the site in 1995.<sup>57</sup>

In October 1995, Bruce Kenneth Hammond Bott and Janet Doreen Bott purchased the place as joint tenants.<sup>58</sup>

In September 2003, *Curdnatta* continues to be occupied by the Botts and used for its original purpose as a private domestic residence.

## 13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Curdnatta* is located on the east side of Newcastle Road, and number 22, on the northern side of the town of Northam, only a few hundred metres from the Avon River. Set into the side of a river valley rise, *Curdnatta* takes in views of the York Mill and parts of the Northam town. *Curdnatta* faces due west, has a scalloped gothic picket fence across the front boundary, and gates to the access driveway on the north side of the property. It is setback further than its residential neighbours, attesting to the original site being more extensive than the existing site.

The site slopes down across the south side. The front garden is set out with a semi circular drive (c.1980) that is currently being redesigned together with the entire garden concept that is mostly a recent development. The only mature plantings are a marri (*Eucalyptus calophylla*), and some orange trees (*Citrus sinensis*) and lilly pillys (*Acmena smithii*), from the 1930s, while some larger plantings are c.1970s, and the remainder more recent.

At the east end of the driveway is a metal sheet garage, and adjacent, on the east side at the rear of the residence is a studio of similar form and materials. Both of these outbuildings area modern, utilitarian additions.

*Curdnatta* displays characteristics the Federation Queen Anne style of architecture.

*Curdnatta* is a single-storey brick construction on a stone foundation, with a corrugated iron roof. The face brick is laid in stretcher bond and is tuck-pointed with decorative rendered quoins on the corners, the stone foundation has brick quoins. The verandahs around the front and two sides have a separate skillion roof, hipped on the corners. The verandah roof is supported by 0.150 metre (6 inch) turned timber posts with arched decorative timber valance featuring vertical details, and several full infill bays of original diagonal timber lattice on the north west corner. The verandah floors are not original, 0.125 metre (5 inch) jarrah boards. The main access to the verandah, and the dwelling, on the south side, is a brick staircase alongside the verandah, with rendered low baluster. Part of the front and most of the north verandah are at ground level.

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<sup>55</sup> Town of Northam building license no. 1742, 15 November 1988.

<sup>56</sup> Town of Northam building license no. 2056, 6 July 1990.

<sup>57</sup> Town of Northam building permit no. 2940, 5 May 1995.

<sup>58</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1792 folio 588.

The main predominantly hipped roof and verandahs, are clad with short sheets of painted corrugated iron, the skillion extension roof is clad with custom orb colorbond sheets, and the north extension roof has polycarbonate clear sheeting beyond the original verandah roof. The symmetrical front (west) gables and south gable are detailed with recessed vertical timbers on a roughcast, with decorative bracketed eaves and bracketed gable on the west, and bracketed faceted roof over the bay window. The tall face brick chimneys feature decorative render and corbelling.

The north verandah extension is a timber framed glass enclosure and the rear extension is a face brick construction.

The footprint of *Curdnatta* is square in form, with verandahs to both sides and the front, and an extension at the rear. The entry is on the south side wall at the termination of the south verandah, where the bay window overlooks the town and mill to the south (side). The entry door opens into a corridor that accesses the two front rooms (dining room and bedroom 1) on the left (west) and the living room on the right (east), and smaller room (bedroom 2) ahead (north), before turning at 90 degrees to the right, with pantry, and kitchen on the left (north) and living room on the right. At the end of the corridor is access to the exterior, and on the right, to the bathroom and laundry extension. The north verandah, on the north side of the kitchen, has been enclosed to form a sunroom within and beyond the alignment of the original verandah.

The west facing (street) frontage has two window/door openings on the dominant façade, symmetrically located, they are the same, with a full length door, semi glazed, adjacent to a double pane casement window with matching fanlights above, both with original green glass. The living room features a 'bachelor' full height double hung window on the west frontage, bay window on the south, with casement windows and original amber glass fanlights above, as well as a small fixed glass window on the east wall with replacement glass. The door and window openings are detailed with a three-course header flat arch header detail and the windows have decorative moulded sills. The main entry is a paneled door with glazed panels, fanlight and side lights, all of which have been replaced with clear glass there is also a timber framed fly wire door. The rear extension has aluminium framed sliding glass windows, and a similar window has been installed on the rear wall of the kitchen.

In the interior, the original 0.150 metre (6 inch) tongue and groove jarrah boards remain intact except for the kitchen that has been replaced with concrete. The original moulded timber skirting boards and architraves remain in place, with 0.300 metre (12 inch) high skirts in the main corridor (north/south) living room and two front rooms, with 0.230 metres (9 inch) skirts to the remainder. The walls are hard plaster. There is a picture rail in the living room and bedroom 2. The original six panel interior doors and hardware are still evident throughout. The corridor has a decorative plaster archway after the corner. The 3.7 metre high ceilings are mostly replacement; the living room has a 1950s deco style centerpiece and

cornice. The remaining rooms have recent ceiling replacements, possibly gyprock, and the dining room has a centre rose.

There are fireplaces in the four main rooms, and the kitchen fireplace has been removed. Only one mantelpiece is original (in the bedroom), the remaining mantels and fire surrounds are more recent installations, and the living room surround is c.1950s face brick. The kitchen has a 1980 fit out. The 1980 bathroom and laundry extensions have tiled floors over concrete, hard plaster and tiled walls, and gyprock ceilings.

The original external north walls of the dwelling, now enclosed within the 1988 sunroom extension, have a dado wall lined with timber paneling. The original verandah form and posts have been retained and the ceiling lined with timber boards on the rake. The floor is 0.075 tongue and groove timber. The original windows on that north wall; in the kitchen and bedroom 2, have been removed and French doors have been installed.

*Curdnatta* is generally in good condition, although there is evidence of rising damp and drainage problems.

Some change has taken place, in the kitchen alterations, bathroom and laundry extension, and sunroom extension, mostly to facilitate the continued and continuous residential function of *Curdnatta*. It has retained a high degree of integrity.

The place is mostly intact, although there is evidence of change to original fabric, in ceiling replacements, living room fire surround, removal of kitchen fireplace, window and timber floor, the removal of windows on the north frontage, and the replacement of original glazing in some windows. *Curdnatta* demonstrates a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Edwin Summerhayes migrated to Coolgardie from Melbourne in 1894<sup>59</sup> In Coolgardie, he developed a very lucrative practice and designed a number of buildings, none of which are extant in 2003.<sup>60</sup> In 1896 he married, purchased a block of land in Bernard Street, Claremont and built a house on it where his son, Reginald Summerhayes was born in February 1897.<sup>61</sup> As Coolgardie declined, Edwin Summerhayes spent an increasing amount of time in Perth and commuted between Claremont and Coolgardie. He designed *Pine Lodge* at 42 John Street Cottesloe, a single-storey Federation Queen Anne style brick and iron residence, for furniture manufacturer William Zimpel in c.1909 (P3682 – Permanently Registered). He also won the contract to design offices for the Claremont Town Council

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<sup>59</sup> Battye, J. S. (editor) *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia. vol.1*, The Cyclopedia Company, Perth, 1912, p.625.

<sup>60</sup> 1895 Turkish Baths; 1895 Presbyterian Church; a wooden frame building clad in weatherboards in gothic style; 1895-96 the first Jewish Synagogue in Western Australia opened on 6 November 1896 by Dr. Boas, the Chief Rabbi of South Australia; the Coolgardie International Exhibition building which was opened on 21 March 1899. Summerhayes, Notes.

<sup>61</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, p. 6, 20 Bernard Street, Claremont. It still exists (January 2003). Its exterior is in rather a dilapidated state with its external brickwork painted.

and the foundation stone of this building was laid on 24 March 1899.<sup>62</sup> Apart from his house at 20 Bernard Street, Claremont, he built his second home also in Bernard Street at number 27 in 1904 and two investment houses there at numbers 5 and 7 Bernard Street.<sup>63</sup> All these houses still remain in 2003.

Summerhayes was also executing important work for members of the influential Piesse family at this time. Bignell<sup>64</sup> refers to the Summerhayes-designed store for F & C. Piesse in Katanning in 1901 and his 1902 house *Kobeelya* for the Hon. F. H. Piesse. *Kobeelya* overlooked the town of Katanning and was constructed on a grand scale not exceeded by any other of his residential buildings. Summerhayes also designed two houses in Clive Street, Kattanning (1905), of which at least one (8 Clive Street) remains, Shops and Offices for Piesse in Wagin (1906), additions to hotels in Kojonup and Wagin (1907), business premises in Katanning (1907) a warehouse in Katanning (1909-10), a large residence in Broomehill (1910) the St Andrews Church Hall, Katanning (1911), and the King George Hostel, Katanning for Piesse (1913) as a working man's hostel for mill workers<sup>65</sup>

It was Summerhayes' Coolgardie successes (and probably his work for Piesse) that brought him to the attention of the then Sir John Forrest, for he was asked to design extensions to Forrest's Perth home, *The Bungalow*, in 1904 and, also in 1904, the four storey *Forrest Chambers*, which, until it was demolished in 1980, was adjacent to where London Court now stands.<sup>66</sup> In 1904 he designed a large woolshed for David Forrest on *Mindaroo Station* on the Ashburton near Onslow and in 1910, at roughly the same time as *Curdnatta* in Northam for Ashton Hunter, a station homestead at *Cubbine* near Quairading, for Kimberley Forrest.

Between 1904 and 1913, Summerhayes is known to have designed suburban residences at Congdon Street, Claremont (3 houses, 1904), Brisbane Street, Perth (semi-detached, 1904), Chelmsford Rd, North Perth (1906), Cottesloe 9Zimpel House, 1909), North Perth (1909), Subiaco (1912) and Ellesmere Rd, Mt Lawley (1912). It is not known whether these residences are extant in 2003.<sup>67</sup>

In relation to Summerhayes' country work, Battye<sup>68</sup> states that '...in the country towns and districts he has a very large connection, much public and private work being placed to his credit. He has designed and erected numerous public buildings for Roads Boards, Municipal Councils, and other bodies at Katanning, Wagin, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie and comfortable homesteads and villas for which he was architect abound in all parts of Western Australia'. No other extant residential buildings designed by

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<sup>62</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, pp.22 -23.

<sup>63</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, p.27.

<sup>64</sup> Bignell, M. *A Place to Meet: A History of the Shire of Katanning, Western Australia*. University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1981, pp. 183; 187-188.

<sup>65</sup> Kelly, op.cit.

<sup>66</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, pp.24; 26.

<sup>67</sup> Kelly, op.cit. Street numbers and, in places, street names are not provided for these places.

<sup>68</sup> Battye, *The Cyclopedia... vol.1*, p.625.

Summerhayes have been identified in country towns in the research completed for this assessment.

From 1913, Summerhayes designed many Perth suburban residences in partnership with Harold Boas, including a large number in Mount Lawley. Between 1913 and 1916, at least 16 residences in the suburb are known to have been designed by Summerhayes & Boas.<sup>69</sup> It is not known how many of these residences survive in 2003.

War service interrupted Summerhayes architectural practice, but his grandson has identified a house at 7 Grange Street Swanbourne, built in 1923 as an example of his postwar residential work in the city. The Claremont war memorial, designed in 1922 and situated on the corner of Bay View Terrace and Stirling Highway, and the Rechabites' Hall in William Street, Northbridge, erected in 1923, are examples of his other postwar work.<sup>70</sup> The Grange Street house has been so modified (2003) as to bear little relation to its original design and appearance.

*Curdnatta* probably retains the most authentic visible exterior of the remaining examples of the domestic architecture of Edwin Summerhayes, together with *Kobeelya*, and the house on the corner of Broome and Salavado Street in Cottesloe. The exteriors of most of the other houses that he designed and that have been identified have been painted or otherwise modified, often quite extensively.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

No key references.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further work on the buildings and significance of the work of Edwin Summerhayes is warranted: especially his work in regional Western Australia and their condition. Further research may identify additional examples of extant pre-World War One Summerhayes-designed residences.

Further work on the buildings constructed by the Millington family in Northam and other places is also warranted.

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<sup>69</sup> Kelly op.cit. No street addresses are given for the Mt Lawley residences.

<sup>70</sup> Summerhayes, Notes, pp. 35-36.