



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

**DRAFT – Register Entry**

1. **DATA BASE No.** 2329
2. **NAME** *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham (c. 1868)*  
**FORMER NAME (or OTHER NAMES)** Woodbine
3. **LOCATION** 371 Mandurah Road, Rockingham
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**  
Portion of Lot 850 on Deposited Plan 415740 being part of the land comprised in Certificate of Title Volume 2972 Folio 966 as shown on HC Curtilage Map P2329-0.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Rockingham
6. **CURRENT OWNER**  
Trecap Pty Ltd.
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**

• Register of Heritage Places:	Interim	16/03/2001
	Indefinite Extension	27/09/2002
• National Trust Classification:		-----
• Town Planning Scheme:		-----
• Municipal Inventory:	Adopted	22/12/1998
• Register of the National Estate:	Indicative	-----
• Aboriginal Sites Register		-----
8. **ORDERS UNDER SECTION OF THE ACT**  
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9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**  
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10. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, an archaeological site comprising the ruins of a limestone cottage with a shingle clad roof in a vernacular interpretation of the Victorian Georgian style (1868), the ruins of a limestone masonry barn (1868), high

archaeological potential, and three peppercorn trees, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place is representative of the opportunities for the working classes in colonial Western Australia to advance from humble beginnings to land ownership, business success and respectability;

the place has potential to yield through archaeological investigation specific information relating to the domestic life of Western Australia's early settlers, particularly through comparison with other archaeological and heritage sites that represent different phases of Western Australian settlement from the nineteenth to twentieth century;

the simple vernacular construction of the cottage ruin, together with the barn ruin and peppercorn trees, makes it one of the more evocative and memorable ruined sites in the near vicinity of Perth, and a landmark along Mandurah Road;

the place is important for its close association with James Bell and his family who were pioneers of the district, in particular wife and mother Jane Bell (nee Green) who arrived in Western Australia as an orphan and came to the public eye in a legal case for the murder of her child;

the place is highly valued by Rockingham residents a tangible reference to the district's history; and

the place is representative of the passion and tenacity often expressed by local Western Australian communities in ensuring the retention of their colonial histories.



## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

### **DRAFT – Assessment Documentation**

#### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

##### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions
- 5.6 Working in the home
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 9.2 Growing up
- 9.3 Forming families and partnerships
- 9.6 Growing old

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

- 101 Immigration, emigration and refugees
- 106 Workers
- 107 Settlements
- 306 Domestic activities
- 602 Early settlers
- 605 Famous and infamous people

#### **11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, was one of the earliest land grants in the Rockingham region, and the cottage and barn ruins on the property are among the region's oldest built structures. The original spatial and functional characteristics of the place have largely been retained, providing important evidence of the area's development.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is important for its close association with James and Jane Bell and their children, whose lives have been significant within the history of the East Rockingham region, one of the early settlements in the Perth area.

The place is closely associated with 'Granny Bell', Jane Bell (nee Green), who came to Western Australia as an orphan sponsored by the Children's Friend Society. She came to the public's attention after she was charged with murdering her child which was conceived after her rape by the person in whose care she had been entrusted. Her case drew considerable interest in the young colony, and resulted in her brief incarceration on Rottnest Island where she was reportedly the first European woman to be sent to Rottnest in consequence of a criminal conviction.

**11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage**

The East Rockingham area, of which *Bell Cottage, Rockingham*, is a crucial part, is a rare almost intact collection of colonial buildings and recognisable sites of early settlement.

The archaeological potential of the site presents a rare opportunity for research into aspects of cultural heritage. *Bell Cottage, Rockingham*, is a rare example of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century former farm property with intact archaeological deposits associated with approximately sixty years of occupation by a single family.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is one of the more evocative and memorable ruins in the near vicinity of Perth. The apparently undisturbed state of the place is unusual and has made it a particularly fascinating subject for contemplation.

**11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;**

The ruins of both the cottage and the barn have the ability through archaeological and other investigation to reveal changes or obscured features within the buildings, and in so doing, reveal aesthetic characteristics of design, original features such as interior and exterior wall and other fixture colouring, and other original materials of the structures as well as potential evidence of alterations and additions.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, has value as a research site for cultural heritage. The site contains substantial evidence of material culture, including both building fabric and archaeological material that could usefully inform the study of European settlement in Western Australia. Because the property was established in the 1850s, and the cottage has not been inhabited since the 1930s, the objects of material culture found on the site have the potential to provide information relating to domestic life during an early period of settlement of which relatively few sites have survived. The amount of available historical documentation relating to the place further enhances its value to the historical archaeologist and architectural historian. The potential value of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, as a research or educational archaeological site is high.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, demonstrates the use of vuggy lacustrine limestone in the construction of both the cottage and barn, thought to have been sourced from the nearby quarry. Apart from the Cockburn Sound region, in which

the quarry is based, the limestone is not usually used for building purposes. The two ruins are among the oldest surviving buildings constructed of this stone type.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, has considerable potential to contain intact archaeological deposits associated with the construction and occupation of the cottage and barn, which would provide information regarding the farming settlements in Western Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The relatively short occupation of the place, and the lack of development on the property, means that the archaeological deposits associated with the place are likely to be very intact.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, has the potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of the European occupation of the locality and of the State, through comparison of the archaeology of the place with other archaeological and heritage sites that represent different phases of Western Australian settlement from the nineteenth to twentieth century.

**11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is a good example of a cottage built in the colonial vernacular tradition with influences of Georgian architecture, the predominant architectural style at the time. The fact that the building appears to have survived to the 21<sup>st</sup> century without modifications makes it a particularly authentic example.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is a representative example of farm buildings built from locally sourced stone within the Rockingham district during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Western Australia, and forms part of a recognisable precinct of buildings from this period.

The potential archaeological resource at *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* is representative of archaeological deposits and surface finds associated with dwellings and farming properties from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Western Australia.

**11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is valued by the community of Rockingham and descendants of the Bell family for its social and historical associations. The cottage is a tangible connection for the descendants of the family and the residents of Rockingham with these pioneers. Local residents, particularly those connected with Rockingham Historical Society, have fought for the preservation of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, and a number of other historic cottages in the area since the early 1970s.

The importance of the place to the local residents, having fought for its preservation for many years is representative of the passion demonstrated by local communities for the retention of evocative and tangible evidence of their colonial histories across Western Australia.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, is among a number of significant sites in East Rockingham which provide the district with a sense of history and place. The place is an important component of a clearly definable precinct, the East Rockingham Heritage Precinct, which comprises cultural and natural heritage sites associated with the nineteenth century settlement of the region.

**11(f)<sup>1</sup> Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* has a rustic aesthetic. The simple vernacular cottage is built of locally sourced materials that have, over many years of exposure to weather, acquired earthy tones, but there are vestiges of Georgian elegance in the ruins of the cottage. In its ruined state the cottage has developed an appealing rustic quality, making it an attractive subject for artist's renderings in the late twentieth century.

Located in an open field along Mandurah Road, *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, has come to be a well-known landmark for travellers passing through East Rockingham. Both the age of the structure and its unusually dilapidated state, draw attention to the place.

The place has considerable significance as an important component of a precinct of cultural and natural heritage sites in the East Rockingham area, including early farming settlements dating from the 1850s. The parapeted façade of the cottage, and the scoring on the rendered façade to imitate coursed ashlar are examples of the vernacular Victorian Georgian style exhibited in varying forms by other buildings within the surrounding precinct.

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

The Bell family, and James Bell in particular, are recognized for their pioneering work in the Rockingham region. James built the region's first school, and was the 'alert' witness who raised the alarm during the now famous Fenian escape from Fremantle gaol. Family members feature prominently in the establishment of Rockingham's earliest commercial enterprises and civic developments.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

The limestone cottage is in a state of ruin, although large sections of the external and internal masonry walls are extant. The roof over most of the building has collapsed consequent to being weakened by termite infestation, and much of the

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

fallen material is no longer extant. Some window and door frames are still extant and in fair condition. Traces of interior finishes may remain in the more sheltered parts of the building, although access to the interior rooms of the building may be hazardous. Ground disturbance to the interior area of the cottage appears to be minimal.

The barn is a ruin, and of the original fabric only portions of the western wall remain standing. A quantity of fallen timber and corrugated iron litter the site.

There is high to moderate potential for archaeological elements to be present across the breadth of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*.

## 12.2 INTEGRITY

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

The significant values identified for the cottage are related to its landmark qualities, its role in representing the area's early settlement, its compositional and textual qualities (partly related to its ruinous state), and its scientific value as a research site for cultural heritage. An inspection of the place in 2016 noted the deterioration of building fabric, and a change in setting as surrounding properties are in the process of being developed for industrial purposes.

A full restoration of the cottage is not appropriate and would detract from the aesthetic value of the place as a ruin. Any restoration would necessarily involve the partial removal of damaged original fabric, compromising the place's authenticity.

The barn has deteriorated to the point where restoration would in fact involve reconstruction of most of the fabric. At present there is insufficient evidence available to ensure that reconstruction work of this kind would be true to the original form of the building, particularly in relation to the interior.

It is highly likely that archaeological elements are present in the immediate area in and around the cottage. The lack of ground disturbance across the property after its abandonment circa 1950, suggests that below ground archaeological deposits are likely to remain intact. It is also highly likely that a low concentration artefact scatter exists around the perimeter, currently obscured by vegetation and building debris.

The overall integrity of the place is high. Both ruins are evocative of a former farming property in a rural landscape, and can be interpreted in this context.

## 12.3 AUTHENTICITY

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* has an exceptional degree of authenticity. No significant alterations have been made to the buildings since circa 1936, and most of the extant built fabric would appear to date from the building's original construction. The archaeological value of the site is greatly enhanced by the place's early and definite period of habitation (c.1855 – c.1936), and some areas, such as the sub-floor areas of the cottage, potentially contain undisturbed archaeological deposits dating to the period c.1868 to c.1936.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the 'Woodbine (also known as Bell Cottage) Conservation Plan' prepared for City of Rockingham by Kevin Palassis Architects in November 1999, with amendments and/or additions by Departmental officers and the Heritage Council. The discussion of physical evidence is based on the 1999 Conservation Plan by Kevin Palassis, 'Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham Conservation Management Plan' prepared for the owner by Hocking Heritage Studio in 2018, and the 2016 site inspection undertaken by Karina Williams and Daniel Holland.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* is a ruined vuggy limestone cottage and associated archaeological site located within a small former farming property off Mandurah Road in the East Rockingham district. The cottage was built by James Bell on his property around 1868, and, together with the nearby P2326 *Chesterfield Inn*, P2320 *Hymus House and Outbuildings* and other buildings and archaeological sites to the south and north of the property, forms part of a rare collection of buildings dating from the early establishment of the district.<sup>2</sup>

For a full discussion of the documentary evidence refer to the 'Woodbine (also known as Bell Cottage)' Conservation Plan prepared for City of Rockingham by Kevin Palassis Architects in November 1999. A summary is provided below.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* is located on Gnarla Karla Boodja. An archaeological and ethnographic survey was completed for the area and further detail can be found in 'Report of an Aboriginal Archaeological and Ethnographic Survey of the Rockingham Industry Zone', March 2012 prepared by Gavin Jackson Cultural Resource Management and Dr Edward McDonald on behalf of Amergin Consulting (Australia) Pty Ltd for Landcorp.

#### **Settlement in Cockburn Sound**

British settlement in Western Australia commenced with the establishment of King George Sound in Albany in 1826 and the Swan River Colony in 1829. Cliff Point Historic Site at Garden Island was the first site inhabited by Lieutenant Governor James Stirling's party when founding the Swan River Colony and was Western Australia's first official non-convict settlement.<sup>3</sup> The party occupied the site for two months in 1829 before moving to the Swan River settlement on the mainland.<sup>4</sup>

Settlement south of the Swan River/Perth area was first attempted in late 1829–1830 in an unsuccessful venture by Thomas Peel.<sup>5</sup> A range of factors including

<sup>2</sup> P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct comprises a discontiguous group of buildings and archaeological sites within the area, including the individually listed P2329 *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, P2326 *Chesterfield Inn*, P2320 *Hymus House and Outbuildings* and P2327 *Mead Homestead*, as well as P1434 *Sloan's Cottage*, P1433 *Smirk Cottage* and P24537 *Limestone Quarry* amongst others. The precinct is on the Heritage Council of Western Australia's (HCWA) Assessment Program.

<sup>3</sup> As a property owned by the Commonwealth Department of Defence (P18184) Cliff Point Historic Site is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List, and has not been considered for listing on the (WA) State Register of Heritage Places.

<sup>4</sup> (Commonwealth) Department of Environment, 2014 'Commonwealth heritage places in Western Australia — Cliff Point Historic Site, Garden Island'. Source: <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/19628#garden>. Accessed 6 February 2014.

<sup>5</sup> KTA Partnership, 1992, 'Heritage Report on East Rockingham Settlement' for City of Rockingham, Town of Kwinana, Landcorp, p. 2.



poor management, lack of resources and harsh conditions plagued the settlers camped at Cockburn Sound (now known as Peel Town Archaeological Sites<sup>6</sup>) and by 1832 the area was deserted.<sup>7</sup>

Land to the south of the Peel settlement was allocated to some of the settlers associated with Thomas Peel in 1829. It is inferred from documentary sources that 12 families and some single men moved away from Peel town to settle in the East Rockingham area. However, the locations of these settlements cannot be found.<sup>8</sup>

The first farmers to permanently settle in the district, attracted by the good grazing land and adequate water supply, chose to establish themselves close to the Mandurah to Fremantle track (Mandurah Road)<sup>9</sup> in what is now the City of Rockingham.

Some sources note that the permanent settlement of East Rockingham did not occur until the 1850s. However, it is likely that permanent settlement occurred earlier. Marshall MacDermott held the first two permanent allotments surveyed in the East Rockingham/Kwinana area, comprising Cockburn Sound Locations 17 and 18, which were surveyed by Thomas Watson in 1842.<sup>10</sup> MacDermott advertised the lease for the lots in May 1843.<sup>11</sup> Leases were taken up by William Curtis (c.1845), Kay (c.1850), and Adam Armstrong (c.1860). In 1852 and 1866, the lease for Location 17 was advertised and contained a '*...large stone house<sup>12</sup>...58 feet long 21 feet wide...with a verandah 10 feet wide<sup>13</sup>...*'. It is not known where this house was located on Location 17, however, a reference to a house can be seen in an early survey.<sup>14</sup> Surveyor Robert Austin also visited 'Curtis's Farm' in 1848.<sup>15</sup>

Curtis went on to own Location 42 after leasing MacDermott's land, south-west of Location 17, which was surveyed in 1854. The 1854 survey shows that it a house and garden had already been established on the allotment,<sup>16</sup> situated approximately 300m north-east of the extant P2329 *Bell Cottage (ruin)*.

The initial buildings constructed by the early settlers were predominately temporary constructions, located along the Mandurah Road track.<sup>17</sup> Many of the

6 Peel Town Archaeological Sites comprises the archaeological sites and artefacts associated with this settlement, located north-west of Hope Valley in the City of Cockburn. The site is on the HCWA Assessment Program.

7 KTA Partnership, op cit., p. 2; Palassis Architects 2003, op cit., p. 9.

8 Personal communication between Daniel Holland and Dr. Shane Burke, 16 April 2020

9 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999, 'Woodbine (also known as Bell Cottage) Conservation Plan', prepared for City of Rockingham, p.13.

10 Survey of M. MacDermott's 1842, 2 blocks 160 each situated eastward from Rockingham, Sheet 4, State Records of Western Australia, Cons 3869 item 132.

11 To be let, Inquirer, 3 May 1843, p. 6

12 Sale of real property, Perth Gazette and Independent Journal, 17 September 1852, p. 2

13 For Sale at Rockingham, Inquirer and Commercial News, 31 October 1866, p. 2

14 Cockburn Sound Locations in the vicinity of Rockingham as surveyed by Robert Austin 1842-53, State Records Office WA, Cons 3869 Item 021

15 R. Austin Field Book 3, State Records Office WA, Cons 3401 Item AUS/03

16 Cockburn Sound Locations in the vicinity of Rockingham as surveyed by Robert Austin 1842-53, State Records Office WA, Cons 3869 Item 021

17 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999, op cit., p. 13. Several accounts of the early buildings in Rockingham indicate that these buildings were of wattle and daub construction, however there is some debate as to whether clay was present for use by early settlers in the region. (Fiona Bush, personal communication, 24 February 2017)

homes began as small one or two room huts that were expanded as more children were born. These gradually developed into more substantial buildings constructed from locally hewn limestone.<sup>18</sup> The local limestone quarry<sup>19</sup> is believed to have been used as a source of building material for the local area.<sup>20</sup>

In 1865 the East Rockingham School<sup>21</sup> was built by members of the small community, including James Bell, to cater for the large number of children in the settlement.<sup>22</sup> By 1868, the East Rockingham settlement was well established with several of the family groups becoming closely related through marriage over the years, including the Mead, Day, Bell, Hymus, Key and Thomas families.<sup>23</sup>

When the Rockingham Roads Board was established in 1897, a number of its original members were residents of the East Rockingham area, including representatives of the Bell family, as well as those of the Thorpe (of Pines Cottage), Day (of *Day House*), Mead (*Mead Homestead*), and Hymus (*Hymus House and Outbuildings*) families.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Bell Family**

James Bell (1821-1911) arrived in Western Australia in 1845. The Lancastrian was a shipwright's apprentice and a member of the crew of the *HMS Driver* on its way to New Zealand, when he jumped ship on arrival in Fremantle. As a ship's carpenter, he easily found work in the colony as a boat builder, farm labourer and delivery man in Mandurah, Pinjarra and Fremantle. In 1847, he met and married servant Jane Green in Fremantle.<sup>25</sup>

Jane Green (1823-1909) had arrived in Western Australia from England in 1837<sup>26</sup>, aboard the *Eleanor*. Raised in an orphanage, she was one of many brought out by the Children's Friend Society to seek employment as indentured servants. As a sixteen year old, she was assigned to Captain Francis Whitfield's household in Newcastle (Toodyay). Captain Whitfield was also the local resident official responsible for the welfare of the local indentured servants in the region. Soon after her transfer to the Whitfield household however, Jane Green became pregnant as a result of her rape by Captain Whitfield. She delivered her child

<sup>18</sup> Heritage Council of Western Australia, Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation, P2327 *Mead Homestead* (1999), pp.6-7. KTA Partnership, op.cit., p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> P24537 Limestone Quarry, Rockingham, located within P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program); Taggart, N. 1984, *Rockingham Looks Back: A history of the Rockingham District 1829-1982*, Rockingham District Historical Society Inc, East Fremantle, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup> *Study of Conservation Options for Thorpe, Thomas and Bell Cottages*, Palassis Architects (1997), cited in State Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation for P2327 *Mead Homestead* (1999), p.7.

<sup>21</sup> P16042 East Rockingham School Site. Originally constructed of limestone blocks, the hall was destroyed by fire in 1966. A commemorative plaque marks the site, which is located within P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program).

<sup>22</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Palassis Architects, 2008, *Town of Kwinana Historical Thematic Framework & Municipal Heritage Inventory*, Town of Kwinana, Accessed <http://www.kwinana.wa.gov.au/Documents/Your-Property/Planning/2008-Municipal-Heritage-Inventory.aspx>, p. 12; Taggart, op.cit., p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct — Preliminary Review, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op.cit., pp. 17-19.

<sup>26</sup> A newspaper account of the anniversary of James and Jane Bell notes that Jane Bell came to the colony in 1930. The 1907 account (*Western Mail*, 23 November 1907, 'Diamond Wedding Mr and Mrs James Bell', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/37561903>, Accessed 29 December 2016) makes no other mention of Jane's past and possible attempts to conceal her early history in the colony are not surprising.

herself and the baby's body, with a wound to its throat, was found concealed in her bedroom by Mrs Whitfield.<sup>27</sup>

Jane Green was charged with the murder of her infant son, however the case caused a sensation and scandal in the colony. The Committee of the Children's Friend Society, amongst others, took up Jane Green's cause and provided her with financial support and legal assistance.<sup>28</sup> Richard West Nash, a well-respected barrister, undertook a spirited defence on her behalf at no charge.<sup>29</sup> In October 1840, Jane Green was found not guilty of murder but guilty of concealing the birth of the child.<sup>30</sup> She was sentenced to 'two years imprisonment, with labor suited to her years and sex'.<sup>31</sup> Although the incident caused a scandal, particularly for the Whitfield family, it did not appear to have any impact on the child emigration practices of the time.

Jane Green served her time in Rottnest Prison, where she may have been the only white prisoner.<sup>32</sup> On the completion of her sentence, she was employed as a seamstress in the household of the Reverend King at the Church of St John in Fremantle, where it is thought she met James Bell. After their marriage by the Reverend King in Fremantle in November 1847, James and Jane Bell established a home in Mandurah.

Between 1848 and 1855, the couple had four children, two daughters and two sons, before they moved to a 20 acre property in East Rockingham, purchased from Henry Mead.<sup>33</sup> Mead is not thought to have undertaken any clearance on the property prior to its sale.<sup>34</sup> The family originally lived in a small hut near the swamp.<sup>35</sup> They reared cattle and sheep for meat and dairy needs and grew and harvested wheat. They established a flourishing vegetable garden and cultivated a number of fruit trees.<sup>36</sup> By the late 1860s, with their farming ventures a success and the addition of four more children to the family, a more substantial dwelling was required.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Woodbine (Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham)***

- 27 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 17.
- 28 *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 8 August 1840. Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/642328>, Accessed 28 December 2016.
- 29 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 19.
- 30 The Defence argued that Jane Green had been unaware of her pregnancy and suffering confusion at the time of the birth, and also that the death of the child may have been caused during an attempt to remove the umbilical cord from around his throat. Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 19; *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 3 October 1840, 'Quarter Sessions'. Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article642423>, Accessed 28 December 2016.
- 31 *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 3 October 1840, 'Quarter Sessions'. Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/642423>, Accessed 28 December 2016.
- 32 The 1999 Conservation Plan notes that this claim, and another that Jane Green was the first white woman to be held at Rottnest Island, has not been fully substantiated and requires further research to corroborate it. (Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 19.)
- 33 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 19-21. 29: *Western Mail*, 23 November 1907, 'Diamond Wedding Mr and Mrs James Bell'. Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/37561903>, Accessed 29 December 2016.
- 34 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 41.
- 35 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 19-21.
- 36 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 23; Taggart, op cit., p. 94.
- 37 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 19-21.

In the late 1860s, James Bell began construction of Woodbine, now known as *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, Rockingham, close to Mandurah Road, north-west of the original hut. The stone and timber building is constructed from local limestone<sup>38</sup>, most likely taken from the local quarry to the southwest of the cottage, off Chesterfield Road, and a source of building material for the local area from at least 1850 to 1950.<sup>39</sup> The stone is described as 'vuggy lacustrine limestone' which was 'soft enough to be easily shaped when freshly dug, but hardens on exposure to air, and can also be known as swampstone, coral stone and lacustrine marl'.<sup>40</sup>

James Bell's carpentry skills were put to good use in the construction of his home.

The new house had milled timber rafters, well made door and window frames, plastered ceilings over battens, manufactured door locks, glass windows, board floor (later) and verandahs front and back. Jarrah shingles used for the roof and were split with a mallet and shingle knife.<sup>41</sup>

In 1971, James and Jane Bell's grandson 'Paddy' Alfred Turner was interviewed with regard to his life and time living at Woodbine between 1895 and 1900.

He described the Bell house as having a large kitchen, built on the back, with a trodden earth floor and open fires. A number of rooms had fireplaces with mantelpieces made by grandfather Bell himself. Bread was baked in a stone oven constructed at the back of the kitchen. On the verandah was an old pedal washing machine but no copper. Around the house there was a high picket fence, enclosing a pleasant flower garden, which can be seen in photographs of 'Woodbine'.<sup>42</sup>

There were four main living rooms and two verandahs, with the kitchen separated from the rest of the house by the rear verandah. Two additional rooms were added at the side.<sup>43</sup> Photographs taken of the cottage in the 1960s and 1970s clearly illustrate that the front verandah was, at least by the 1960s, a bullnose verandah of corrugated iron, although it was gone by the 1970s.<sup>44</sup>

A large stone barn for storing hay and the chaff cutter was built to the east of the cottage, and an outdoor two-seater limestone privy constructed to the north.<sup>45</sup> A locally famed flower garden was established at the front of the house, supplied by a stone lined well and hand pump located in the rear yard of the cottage,<sup>46</sup> the exact location of which is not clear from the secondary sources.

All the beds were edged with bottles, stuck bottoms up to form a border. This bottle border was evidently quite famous in the district. Mrs White, Walter Armstrong's daughter, remembers it as being a feature of Granny Bell's garden. Paddy's memories of the garden were, however tinged with a certain amount of bitterness, because every afternoon it was his job to water the garden. The water had to be raised by a hand

38 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 21.

39 P24537 Limestone Quarry, Rockingham, located within P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct.

40 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1997, Study of Conservation Options for Thorpe, Thomas and Bell Cottages, cited in State Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation for P2327 *Mead Homestead* (1999), p.7.

41 M. Regehr, Bell Descendant, cited in Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 21.

42 Summary of interview undertaken between 'Paddy' Alfred Turner and Nora Taggart of the Rockingham Branch of the Royal WA Historical Society, cited in Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 21.

43 Taggart, op cit, p. 93.

44 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 20, 22.

45 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 21-23, 42; Taggart, op cit, p. 94.

46 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1997, Study of Conservation Options for Thorpe, Thomas and Bell Cottages East Rockingham, Western Australia, Commissioned by The National Trust of Australia (WA), Landcorp, p.11; Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 42; Taggart, op cit, pp. 93-94.

pump at the back of the house, and, as he emphatically said, “carried around the house, not through it”.<sup>47</sup>

James Bell gradually acquired adjacent surrounding lots to expand his farm, which continued to flourish.<sup>48</sup>

In 1907, the Bells celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. The couple individually began their lives in Western Australia in the lower working classes. Jane in particular overcame her tragic past and together they established a successful farm and livelihood in East Rockingham and were involved in many aspects of the local community. Jane Bell passed away in 1909, followed by James two years later, who left Woodbine to their son John Bell. John’s nephew, Edward Bell, son of James Jnr (son of James and Jane) and his wife Lily, lived with John in Woodbine until John’s death in 1936. As John died intestate, the property was sold in 1937, with the proceeds divided amongst his relatives.<sup>49</sup>

The cottage and surrounding property was purchased by Joe Stokes, owner of the adjacent former Hymus property, and was subsequently occupied by various tenants over the following decade.<sup>50</sup>

In the early 1950s, the State Government began resuming the surrounding lands for a proposed rail line and marshalling yards. A portion of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* (Location 64) was resumed under the Public Works Act. In 1964, the remaining portion was resumed by the State Government for the West Australian Railways under the *Kwinana-Mundijong-Jarrahdale Railway Act 1961* and the Public Works Act. The railway was constructed through the eastern portion of Location 64, to the east of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*. No maintenance was undertaken on the cottage and barn, as it was expected that both would be demolished in the construction of the railway marshalling yards for the projected railway to the Garden Island naval base, although this never eventuated.<sup>51</sup>

Although it is visible in 1960s aerial imagery, by the late 1970s and early 1980s<sup>52</sup>, the limestone privy to the north of the cottage was no longer extant and in 1999 a physical inspection of the site did not identify its location.<sup>53</sup>

The masonry of the cottage apparently began to degrade around this time. Photographs of the cottage in the early 1980s suggest that the roof was still present at that time.<sup>54</sup> However aerial images indicate that between 1985 and 1995 the condition of both the cottage and the barn deteriorated, and all or part of the roofs of both buildings were lost.<sup>55</sup> The close proximity and visibility of the place to Mandurah Road allowed public access, and from at least the 1970s, the site was a popular spot for amateur and professional artists and featured in a number of

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47 Taggart, op cit., pp. 93-94.

48 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p.29.

49 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 23 : Taggart, op cit, p. 119.

50 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 23-25, 31.

51 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 9, 42; Taggart, op cit, p. 119.

52 Landgate (Land Information Authority), Aerial imagery for the Perth Metropolitan Area 1953; 1965; 1974; 1977; 1979; 1981; 1983; 1985; 1995.

53 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 21-23.

54 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 30.

55 Landgate (Land Information Authority), Aerial imagery for the Perth Metropolitan Area 1953; 1965; 1974; 1977; 1979; 1981; 1983; 1985; 1995.

sketches and paintings, some of which have recorded the features of the garden, cottage and barn over time.<sup>56</sup>

In 1996, Westrail sold *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* and surrounds to a private developer who intended to subdivide the property and establish industry on the site.<sup>57</sup> It was sold the following year to the current owner.

In the late 1990s an Urgent Works Report for *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* was prepared, which noted that only a small part of the roof in the south western corner of the cottage and kitchen remained. Roof timbers, window frames and curtain rail hooks were also missing.<sup>58</sup> A 1997 assessment of the condition of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* noted that the majority of missing timber had been removed from the site since 1995 and that a nearby resident had been apprehended by local residents removing timber to use as firewood.<sup>59</sup>

In 1999, the City of Rockingham commissioned Kevin Palassis Architects to prepare a Conservation Plan for Woodbine (*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*). The barn ruins do not appear to have deteriorated significantly since the 1999 inspection of the site. Substantial remnants were still present in 2016. The locations of both the toilet and the barn are within the curtilage of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*.

In 2002 the grounds were in use by a riding school.<sup>60</sup> The fields to the north were used by a camel farm.

In 2016 an inspection of the site was undertaken by Departmental staff to inform an update to the assessment. In 2016, the cottage ruin and barn are located within a vacant field in an area that has been zoned for industrial use. The surrounding properties include workshops, construction sheds and other features of light industry. The railway constructed in the 1960s is located to the east of the curtilage of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*.

In 2018, a Conservation Management Plan was prepared by Hocking Heritage Studio. Archaeological investigations carried out by Extent Heritage for the CMP revealed the locations of the privy and well and unearthed artefacts likely associated with the occupants of the place.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a full discussion of the physical evidence refer to the 'Woodbine (also known as Bell Cottage)' Conservation Plan prepared for City of Rockingham by Kevin Palassis Architects in November 1999 and 'Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham Conservation Management Plan' prepared for Trecap Pty Ltd by Hocking Heritage Studio in 2018. The following information is based on the Conservation Plans and the 2016 inspection by Departmental staff.

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* comprises two ruins, that of a colonial vernacular limestone cottage, formerly known as Woodbine (the cottage) and a limestone

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<sup>56</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., pp. 9, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 43.

<sup>59</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1997 op cit., p. 21.

<sup>60</sup> Bell Cottage & Barn (ruin) – National Trust of Australia (WA) Historic Places Assessment Form

masonry barn ruin (the barn). The cottage is set back approximately 80 metres from Mandurah Road, although the view from the road is obscured by three large peppercorn trees (*Schinus molle*) located at the southwestern corner of the cottage. *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* is bound to the north and south by vacant fields, and with the exception of the peppercorn trees and one acacia tree to the east, the site has no remnant vegetation. The north-south Alcoa railway line cuts through the rear of the former Bell property.

In addition to the two building ruins, *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* comprises several known surface scatters or concentrations of artefacts and sub-surface remains. Archaeological investigation in 2018 revealed that the place comprises the remains of a privy and a well. Artefacts were also retrieved in test pits around the site likely associated with construction and occupation of the place by the Bell family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### ***The Cottage***

The western façade of the cottage faces Mandurah Road. Although now a ruin, the former alignment, layout of the cottage, and the method and materials used in its construction remain discernible. Limestone walls divided the main part of the dwelling into eight rooms, with the two largest parlours located in the central front portion, each originally covered by the hipped roof. The remaining six rooms, comprising five bedrooms and a dining room (later kitchen), were roofed by skillions that extended off the hipped roof. The roof was originally constructed of pit-sawn hardwood rafters and battens, with split sheoak shingles, covered by galvanised corrugated iron.<sup>61</sup> In 2016, only a portion of the roof remained, over the southwestern bedroom. Five cross beams and some evidence of the shingles are still present in this area.

The façade of the cottage originally concealed the line of the skillion roof behind a parapet, although the parapeted façade wall, and a significant portion of the northern wall no longer remain. No evidence of the front (west) verandah remains in situ, although sections of corrugated iron are scattered in the debris along the western exterior line of the cottage.

All exterior walls have been rendered with a lime mortar. The facade of the cottage, although somewhat dilapidated, retains sections of rendered wall that was lined to imitate coursed ashlar. Scoring is also visible on extant walls along the northern elevation. Fractures in the masonry and render are visible in the façade and along the wall of the southern elevation, the remnants of which do not exhibit scoring.

Some interior features are still evident and, with condition varying from fair to good, include the front timber door frames, window features and the fireplace and chimney in the front northern parlour. The mantles and timber lintels over the four fireplaces are no longer present. The chimneys and fireplaces in the southern parlour and dining room are in poor to fair condition. The three limestone chimneys remain a prominent element of the former Bell home.

The depth of debris and ground vegetation obscured ground visibility at the time of the survey and it is unclear what remains of the floors. The 1999 inspection noted that floor boards remained in the 'main room'<sup>62</sup>, but it was not possible in 2016 to

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<sup>61</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 35.

<sup>62</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 39.

determine if these are still present, although ground disturbance appears to have been minimal. The 2018 Conservation Plan notes that jarrah floorboards were visible in bedroom two.

There is no evidence of the rear (east) verandah, although the ground in this area is relatively flat and even, compared to the uneven and rubble strewn area to the east of the cottage ruin. Large vuggy limestone blocks, approximately 50-70cm in width, are scattered to the fence line surrounding the cottage, although partially obscured by long grass and weeds.

A semi-detached kitchen and store is appended at the south-east corner of the building. The roof was clad in galvanised corrugated iron, and was unlikely to have had shingles. Three sheets of corrugated iron remain over the southwestern corner of the kitchen, although these appear to be very unstable. The rear wall of the dry store has completely collapsed, and the interior spaces of the dry wall and the kitchen are covered in rubble and roof materials. A cast iron Metters oven is still in situ, although partially covered by limestone rubble. Remnants of the galvanised corrugated iron roof and the limestone wall are also scattered around the eastern end of the building.

The remains of a timber post fence with barbed wire extends from approximately 3 metres north of the eastern end of the store room at the southeastern corner of the cottage in an easterly direction, approximately 50 metres past the barn ruin.

### ***Barn Ruin***

The Barn ruin is located 41 metres to the east of the cottage ruin. Although the footprint of the building is still discernible, only two portions of the western wall of the Barn remain standing, constructed of rubble limestone masonry, and standing approximately 2 metres high.

The surrounding ground surface is completely obscured by long grass and weeds, and the interior of the former building and surrounds are littered with rusted corrugated iron sheeting, iron fragments, limestone rubble, discarded car tyres, timber posts and roof timbers. The nature of the debris and vegetation made confirmation of the condition or type of floor surface impossible, however it appears unlikely that there has been ground disturbance within the barn footprint.

The remains of a rainwater tank is located along the former eastern wall of the structure, comprising the remnants of corrugated iron sheeting surrounding a tank reinforced by a cement and chicken wire base. A dip, or hole, approximately 50cm deep by 50cm wide, is located approximately two metres from the south east corner of the building.

### ***Archaeological Assessment***

Archaeological test pits excavated in 2018 revealed the locations of the well and privy, and retrieved artefacts likely associated with the place. Outside of the areas excavated, the potential for surface and sub-surface archaeological material to be present at *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham* is likely to range from high to low. Archaeological material (artefacts and deposits) may be highly significant for its potential to provide information regarding the construction and occupation of *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham*.

#### ***Sub-surface archaeological deposits***



Archaeological investigation involved the excavation of five test pits. These were located 3.5m west of the cottage, 9m west of the front wall of the cottage, within the footprint of the barn, and within the locations of the privy and the well. The results of this investigation revealed the location of the privy, well and barn footings and unearthed artefacts, such as bottle glass, nails, animal bone, and ceramic. The limited nature of the investigation, and that the inside of the cottage was not excavated, contributed to no personal artefacts being retrieved.

The remains of the privy are located approximately 21m to the north-east of the cottage and comprised of limestone foundations measuring 1.8mx2.5m.

The remains of the well are located approximately 11m east of the cottage and included several limestone blocks arranged in a circular pattern.

There is considerable potential for sub-surface archaeological deposits to exist within the rooms of the cottage and the barn. Often archaeological materials located within buildings can be disturbed and/or removed during repair, reconstruction and development of the place over time. However, the abandonment of both the cottage and barn following the cessation of occupation is likely to have prevented any significant disturbance of the sub-surface deposits.

The cottage was occupied by the Bell family between the 1860s and circa 1936, which means that artefacts and deposits are likely to date to this short time frame, and have the potential to reveal information about the domestic life of one family over a significant period of development in Western Australian history. The history of the Bell family is well documented and can inform any excavation or archaeological investigation.<sup>63</sup>

The site has, in general, been left relatively undisturbed, and in 2016 the ground surface in the cottage rooms is covered in grass, weeds and debris from fallen walls and roof materials. The extent of ground cover suggests that any extant below ground deposits would be largely undisturbed. The internal room deposits would be expected to include artefacts associated with the use of the house, including small domestic items or fragments that may been lost underfoot.

Archaeological deposits are often found around the doorways of dwellings as a result of the practice of sweeping internal house debris out of the doorway. The areas around the doors on the eastern and western elevations of the cottage are highly likely to contain archaeological deposits associated with the occupation of the cottage, as all debris would be likely to have been swept out via these entrances, onto and from the verandahs.

The presence of building rubble across the former floor of the barn structure is also likely to have protected any surface and below ground deposits associated with its use by the Bell family. Any archaeological deposits or artefacts associated with the barn, which is thought to be roughly contemporary with the cottage, may provide further information on the farming techniques, methods and practices of the Bell family.

#### *Surface archaeological material*

Historically, the area encompassed within the curtilage of *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham* has undergone very little disturbance. Artefacts exist in scatters

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<sup>63</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op.cit., p. 50.

around the place including fragments of ceramic ware, bottle and other glass, and other household artefacts.<sup>64</sup>

During the December 2016 site inspection much of the area within *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham* was covered in high grass and weeds, with nearly zero ground surface visibility. The 2016 inspection of the site noted the presence of ceramic and glass fragments scattered in an area approximately one metre square, approximately 25 metres to the southwest of the front (eastern) elevation of the cottage ruin. It is highly likely that the scatter extends further beneath the surrounding ground cover. It is possible that the glass fragments may be associated with the 'Granny Bell's' famed flower garden in front of the house, which was reportedly edged with bottles.<sup>65</sup> Evidence of bricks and other building rubble were also noted amongst the peppercorn trees in the same area. The 2018 archaeological investigation also noted artefact scatters around the place, particularly in the front garden area.<sup>66</sup>

It is considered highly likely that a low concentration artefact scatter is present between and around the perimeters of both the cottage and the barn. Depending on their location, archaeological artefacts may provide further information about the different uses of the rooms, such as kitchen debris located on the eastern side of the cottage, children's items located near the verandah or bedrooms; or items associated with farming activities located in the vicinity of the barn.

Concrete blocks and bricks were also identified in the vicinity of an *Acacia* tree located approximately 30 metres from Mandurah Road, between the road and the cottage ruin. Given the lack of disturbance across the site and the extent of ground cover, it is considered likely that artefacts and archaeological deposits are present across the wider area of *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham*.

#### *Other potential archaeological features*

There is no evidence that a rubbish dump is present on the site, however it might be expected that the Bells did have place for disposing of their rubbish. Should a refuse pit or a bottle dump be present on the site, both would be considered highly significant for their potential to provide more information regarding the date of earliest occupation of the place and the way of life of its occupants.

#### *Zones of Archaeological Potential*

It is highly likely that further household artefactual material, as well as building materials are present on the surface and in below ground deposits in and around the cottage and the barn structures, as well as between them. The archaeological deposits or artefacts associated with the cottage ruin and the barn are likely to have considerable contributory significance to the place as a whole. The archaeological potential of the cottage ruin, barn ruin, well, and privy sites are considered high.

Evidence of the agricultural activities and incidental artefacts (such as nails, implements, personal items) associated with the Bell family might also be expected to be found across the wider area of *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, *Rockingham*. Areas of

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64 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999, op. cit., pp. 33-35; Hocking Heritage Studio 2018, 'Bell Cottage (ruin) Conservation Management Plan', prepared for Trecap Pty Ltd, p. 151.

65 Taggart, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

66 Hocking Heritage Studio 2018, 'Bell Cottage (ruin) Conservation Management Plan' prepared for Trecap Pty Ltd, p. 237

moderate archaeological potential have been identified in the front yard area of the cottage, including the location of the former flower garden, the expanse of land to the west of the cottage, and the area to the south of the barn.

The archaeological deposits and artefacts associated with the privy and well have considerable contributory significance to *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* associated with its scientific value and potential to yield information regarding the nineteenth and twentieth century settlement and occupation of East Rockingham.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

#### Archaeology

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* comprises two c.1860 ruins and areas of high and moderate archaeological potential. The place is highly likely to contain intact archaeological deposits associated with the construction and occupation of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As an archaeological resource, the place also has the potential to contribute to a wider understanding of the cultural history of the East Rockingham district and of the State through comparison with other archaeological and heritage sites that represent different phases of Western Australian settlement from the nineteenth to twentieth century.

A search of the Historic Heritage database for individual buildings or groups that include archaeology returns 133 places, not including *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*. Of these, 22 are entered in the State Register and 14 are on the Assessment Program. The following examples are most relevant in comparison with the period of occupation, and farm cottage and settlement type of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*.

- P2325 *Chesterfield Inn (fmr)* (c.1857)
- P32 *Strawberry Hill Farm & Gardens, Albany* (free-settlement after 1831)
- P533 *Manning Estate, Hamilton Hill* (1866-1982)
- P1693 *Mahogany Inn, Mundaring* (1854-1989)
- P4112 *Edward's House & Archaeological Sites, Henley Brook* (1830-1850)
- P4216 *Lynburn Homestead and Shearing Shed (fmr)* (1872-2004)
- P2494 *Spring Park* (1839-1954)
- P2494 *Oakover, Middle Swan* (1835-1921)
- P4604 *Yowangup Homestead Group, Moojebing* (1860-1862)
- P12874 *Glentromie Farm Group* (1850-1880s)
- P18184 *Cliff Point Historic Site at Garden Island* (1829)
- P17868 *Peel Town Archaeological Sites* (1830)

The establishment of P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct represents the next phase of settlement and development in Western Australia.

The potential archaeological resource at *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* comprises a wealth of information regarding the early settlement and growth of the East Rockingham Precinct. Furthermore, the place was occupied for a relatively concentrated period of time prior to its abandonment, and is highly likely to contain intact archaeological deposits associated with its construction and occupation by the Bell family, who were important figures in the history of East Rockingham. Places of this type and period are not well represented on the Register and provide a comparative site complex that enables a better understanding of how early Western Australian settlers, and their descendants, adapted through time to their changing circumstances, and in light of their increasing knowledge of the conditions prevalent in the State.

The place is a relatively rare example of an archaeological site spanning a period across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that has both representative and scientific values for its potential to provide information regarding *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* and other archaeological sites in Western Australia.

The values of *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* are also demonstrated and enhanced by the range of buildings and archaeological sites within the East Rockingham Precinct, which includes *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* within its curtilage. The East Rockingham settlement, which was established predominantly between the 1850s and 1900, included all the buildings and facilities which are commonly considered to comprise a town; residences, a hotel/inn, a school, a Roads Board building, and a cemetery. Examination of the group is likely to provide a more detailed picture of settlement in Western Australia at that time.

### **Victorian Georgian style Cottage**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* was constructed in a vernacular interpretation of the Victorian Georgian style. The Conservation Plan prepared for the place noted that the planning of the cottage was 'characteristic of contemporary dwellings built in the vernacular tradition.'<sup>67</sup>

The placement of the kitchen as an attachment to the rear of the dwelling, while not a feature of English building of the same period, has been observed in other contemporary Western Australian dwellings, including P4015 *Day Cottage* (1855-85)<sup>68</sup> and P2327 *Mead Cottage* (1895)<sup>69</sup> in the East Rockingham area, as well as others in Rottnest Island, Busselton, Vasse and Quindalup.<sup>70</sup> The practice is thought to reduce the risk the hazards kitchen fires potentially held for shingled roofs. The kitchen and dry store of Woodbine did not appear to have the roof shingles in use elsewhere in the cottage, which supports this theory.<sup>71</sup>

The Conservation Plan notes that the formal parapet across the façade of the cottage, and the scoring of the render on the two public elevations are 'typical of

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67 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 47.

68 Also known as Ellendale, *Day Cottage* is permanently registered on the State Register of Heritage Places; also part of the East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program).

69 Also known as Lealholm, *Mead Cottage* is permanently registered on the State Register of Heritage Places; also part of the East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program).

70 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 47.

71 Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 47.

the special treatment afforded to the façade of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Western Australia'.<sup>72</sup>

The formality of the façade, including the fenestration, use of parapets and rendered treatment is similar to that of the high architecture of that period which in the case of domestic buildings was predominately a Georgian derivative. It stands to reason that the fashions of the elite, as expressed in the buildings of regional centres such as Perth and Fremantle (also Rottnest), would have some influence on the local vernacular building traditions. James Bell would have been familiar with the buildings of Fremantle and Rottnest and, being a capable building, would conceivably have incorporated in his cottage features not commonly found in domestic buildings of the vernacular tradition...<sup>73</sup>

...At Rockingham, several other buildings incorporated the parapet features, it is not improbable that Bell's cottage was an influence in this regard.<sup>74</sup>

Examples of contemporary buildings with parapets include P2525 *Chesterfield Inn (fmr)* (1855)<sup>75</sup> and P2327 *Mead Cottage* (1895)<sup>76</sup> in the East Rockingham area, as well as P1693 *Mahogany Inn, Mundaring* (1854).<sup>77</sup>

A search for places in the Historic Heritage database for single storey residences built in the Victorian Georgian architectural style between 1850 and 1900 returns 189 entries, including 42 on the State Register of Heritage Places and 20 on the HCWA Assessment Program.

P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (Assessment Program) comprises a number of these buildings including the examples given above. The precinct is considered a representative example of an early settlement group which retains its original rural setting. It comprises a number of residences and other buildings and archaeological sites that are indicative of the settlement of the East Rockingham district by European settlers from the early 1850s. The sites are associated with a number of prominent local families, who were the first to settle and establish residences in the East Rockingham area. The precinct comprises:

- P2329 *Bell Cottage (ruin)*, Rockingham (1868)
- P2325 *Chesterfield Inn (fmr)* (1855)
- P4015 *Day Cottage* (1882-85)
- P3145 East Rockingham Cemetery (1842)
- P16042 East Rockingham School Site (1865)
- P2320 *Hymus House and Outbuildings* (1895-1905)
- P3316 Key Cottage (c.1854)
- P2327 *Mead Homestead* (1850)
- P12088 Paradise Cottage (c.1870)
- P12089 Pines Cottage (1854/5)
- P19937 Rockingham Road Board Site (1905)

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<sup>72</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 48.

<sup>73</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 48.

<sup>74</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit., p. 49.

<sup>75</sup> *Chesterfield Inn* has an indefinite extension to interim registration on the State Register of Heritage Places, and also forms part of the East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program).

<sup>76</sup> Also known as Lealholm, *Mead Cottage* is permanently registered on the State Register of Heritage Places; also part of the East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (HCWA Assessment Program).

<sup>77</sup> *Mahogany Inn* is permanently registered on the State Register of Heritage Places.

- P1434 Sloan Cottage (1911)
- P1433 Smirk Cottage (1905)
- P4624 Tasker's Cottage (Wheatfields) (1856)

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham*, both as a place within the precinct, and as a heritage place in its own right is a comparable example of the Victorian Georgian style with vernacular characteristics that relate to its construction by a capable and skilled builder/owner.

### **Limestone construction, Hope Valley & East Rockingham**

*Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* was constructed in local 'vuggy' limestone, thought to have been supplied from the local quarry<sup>78</sup>, located across Mandurah Road at Chesterfield Road. A number of other limestone cottage ruins have been identified within the East Rockingham area, including Paradise Cottage (c. 1870) and Pines Cottage (c. 1854), which, like *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* and Limestone Quarry, are located within P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (Assessment Program). Frederick Postans' Cottage, Hope Valley (c.1900), is a later example, located in the nearby suburb of Hope Valley.

Intact examples of cottages from the same period include P2325 *Chesterfield Inn (fmr)* (c.1855–1862), P2320 *Hymus House and Outbuildings* (1895–1905); P4015 *Day Cottage* (c.1882–1885, 1970s); P12089 Pines Cottage (c. 1854); P1433 Smirk Cottage (c.1902); P4624 Tasker's Cottage (c.1856); P3316 Key Cottage (c.1854) and P4692 Paradise Cottage (c. 1870).

Nineteenth century cottages built from local Rockingham stone are well represented within the local area, most of which are located within the P3841 East Rockingham Heritage Precinct (Assessment Program). As a contemporary example, now in a ruinous condition, *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* contributes to the collection of similar buildings, but is no longer a good or rare example of the use of local stone.

## **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

Palassis Architects, 'Woodbine (also known as Bell Cottage): Conservation Plan', prepared for the City of Rockingham, November 1999.

Hocking Heritage Studio, 'Bell Cottage (ruin) Conservation Management Plan' prepared for Trecap Pty Ltd, 2018

## **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further archaeological investigation of the place may identify a range of artefacts and deposits associated with the Bell's occupation of the land, which would contribute to the significance of the place.

The 1999 and 2018 Conservation Plans prepared for *Bell Cottage (ruin), Rockingham* identify traces of coloured pigment in various locations, including window frames, door joinery, and areas of interior and exterior walls of the cottage.<sup>79</sup> Analysis of the colours and types of pigment used in the cottage may

<sup>78</sup> P24537 Limestone Quarry, Chesterfield Road, East Rockingham

<sup>79</sup> Kevin Palassis Architects, 1999 op cit, pp. 49-50; Hocking Heritage Studio 2018, 'Bell Cottage (ruin) Conservation Management Plan', p. 165

determine the original colour scheme of the cottage, and any changes made over time.