



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The homestead, with its stone walls, surrounding verandahs and windowless northern and southern elevations, is a good example of North-West vernacular architecture, designed to meet local climatic conditions. (Criterion 1.2)

The free stone construction of the shearers' kitchen is a significant achievement in stone construction. (Criterion 1.2)

The surrounding outbuildings contribute to the aesthetic value of the place as a related group of structures. (Criterion 1.2)

Cooya Pooya Station presents a landmark quality in the pastoral landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Cooya Pooya Station is associated with the development of the pastoral industry in the Roebourne region since the early 1880s. The place was a regular stop on the main thoroughfare through the region and was well known for the social events hosted there. (Criterion 2.1)

Cooya Pooya Station has close associations with many Aboriginal people who worked and lived on the property. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

Cooya Pooya Station has close associations with the W. S. Hall and the Lockyer and the Stove families, early pastoralists in the Pilbara who were prominent in the development of the North-West pastoral industry. (Criterion 2.3)

The place demonstrates the innovative and extensive use of concrete by Percy Stove, the 'Concrete King'. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

* 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 & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

The complex of buildings at *Cooya Pooya Station* contributes to an understanding of a way of life associated with pastoralism and the development of that industry in the North-West. (Criterion 3.2)

The free stone construction of the shearers' kitchen is a significant achievement in stone construction for the period and location. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Cooya Pooya Station is valued by the local community as a former pastoral station homestead and for its associations with people involved in the development of the North-West pastoral industry. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The freestone shearers' kitchen building is an exceptional example of stone construction. There are no other known examples in the region. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Cooya Pooya Station demonstrates the principle characteristics of a pastoral settlement in the early 1900s. (Criterion 6.1)

Cooya Pooya Station is representative the range of activities associated with pastoral development in the Pilbara, and of the activities of subsequent generations. The place demonstrates the development of the pastoral industry over a considerable period of time. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Cooya Pooya Station has been vacant since 1984. The condition of the place reflects the effects of the environment, vandalism and neglect since that time. The kitchen building has been vacant since 1950, and although the roof is no longer in place, the stone walls are intact. The homestead and shearers kitchen roofs are still largely intact. Overall, the condition of the place is poor.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Although the place is now vacant and unused, the original intent is still very clear. The place demonstrates a potential for restoration and has a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a high degree of authenticity, with the majority of the original fabric intact. The c. 1950s concrete additions also retain a high level of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been researched and compiled by Laura Gray, heritage and conservation consultant, with some primary research by Gillian O'Mara, archival researcher. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Cooya Pooya Station homestead and associated buildings are located 35 kilometres south of Roebourne, on the banks of the Harding River. The derivation of the name 'Cooya Pooya' is unclear. A pool nearby was named 'Cooa Pooyey' and it is likely that the name of the station was taken from this.¹

In 1861, an exploration party led by Francis T. Gregory, arrived at the cove at the head of Nickol Bay, landing near the site of what was to become the town of Roebourne. Gregory led an expedition inland reaching the area of the existing Millstream Station.² After the publication of Gregory's journal, in which he recorded the agricultural potential of the land, prospective settlers from the Swan River and Eastern colonies vied for pastoral leases in the area.

Thomas Lockyer, a Northam settler, and his four sons took up Table Hill Station (later Cooya Pooya) in 1882.³ It is assumed that the first stone homestead and the shearers' kitchen, were constructed during the first years of the Lockyer's tenure, c. 1883.⁴ William Shakespeare Hall ran the blacksmith shop, which was located to the east of the existing dry stone building (the shearers' kitchen).⁵ Hall had arrived in the area in the early 1860s and had worked on several stations in the area prior to seeking employment at Table Hill. Hall tended the Station's horses, as well as those of travellers passing through. He was well respected for the assistance he gave to new arrivals, including the Withnells, and is commemorated in the *Holy Trinity Anglican Church* in Roebourne.⁶

As the road to the hinterland passed through Table Hill, the homestead provided a regular stopping place for those travelling through the Pilbara. The road ran south of the shearing shed and across the flats to a causeway through Hick's Gap.⁷ Everyone who travelled inland passed through the

¹ Conversation with staff member, Geographic Names, DOLA, 29 April 1998. The pool was lost when the Harding River was flooded. A letter from the Library Board of Western Australia to the Roebourne District Tourist Association, dated 7 July 1982, states that Cooya Pooya was named Cooa Pooyey at some stage, HCWA File P3376.

² Withnell Taylor, N. E. *A saga of the Northwest Yeera-muk-a-doo; The first settlement of north-west Australia told through the Withnell and Hancock families 1861-1890*. Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1987, pp. 16-22.

³ Table Hill Station was originally part of Springs Station. D Garden, *Northam: An Avon Valley History*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1979, p 95. Unnamed, undated research titled 'Cooya Pooya Station', BL; discussion with members of the Stove family.

⁴ The original homestead is no longer extant.

⁵ 'Cooya Pooya Station', op. cit.; discussion with members of the Stove family.

⁶ Correspondence, 5 June 1993, Daphne Gratte to G. MacGill, HCWA File 3376.

⁷ Hicks owned Spring Station. The gap is also known as Lockyer's Gap.

Station until the 1950s, when the route was diverted through Pyramid Station.⁸

In the mid-1880s, the Lockyers employed an average of 15 European and Chinese, and 50 Aboriginal, workers.⁹ By the early 1890s, the Aboriginal population had increased to 45 males, 39 females and 12 children under five years of age. The Aboriginal people were employed under 12 month agreements to do all manner of station and domestic work, and received rations and clothing in lieu of monetary payment.¹⁰

The Lockyers ran sheep on the property, pasturing them on the tableland and Upper Fortesque areas of the extensive property during the wet season; they were driven back to the homestead run for shearing. The Lockyers also ran stud sheep, cattle and horses near the homestead. Thoroughbred horse breeding formed a moderate contribution to the property's income.

In the early 1900s, Samuel L Burges took up the lease on Table Hill and changed the name to *Cooya Pooya Station*. Circa 1907, Burges had a homestead built on *Cooya Pooya Station* by Bunning Bros., who had established themselves in the Pilbara before moving to Perth.¹¹ The Stove brothers, Thomas, Percy and Arthur, of Mt Welcome Station leased Cooya Pooya in partnership with J. H. Church, the local member of Parliament, in the name of Harding River Pastoral Company on 1 April 1918.¹² By 1920, other leases comprising *Cooya Pooya Station* had been acquired by the Company.¹³

Percy Stove and his wife Daisy (nee Fisher of Mt Fisher Station) made Cooya Pooya their home when they married in 1921, and Percy took over the Station management for the Company.¹⁴ Percy Stove was a member of the Roebourne and Tablelands Roads Boards and a member of the Roebourne Race Club, as well as an amateur jockey.¹⁵ On 9 July 1925, the remaining Cooya Pooya leases were transferred to J. H. Church, and the Stove brothers.¹⁶ That year, part of the *Cooya Pooya Station* homestead roof was ripped off in a cyclone, resulting in the cracked mortar that has not been replaced.¹⁷

By the late 1930s, the Harding River Pastoral Company had taken up Daniels Well Station on the Tablelands and Church had independently acquired Mt Florence Station. Circa 1939, the decision was made to disband the Company, with Church taking the Stoves' interest in Daniels Wells in exchange for his interest in *Cooya Pooya Station*. The first transfers took place on 1 April 1939,

⁸ Correspondence, 26 October 1993, Daphne Gratte to G. MacGill, HCWA File 3376.

⁹ *The West Australian* 29 March 1886.

¹⁰ Public Records Office, AN 1/1, Acc 4951, Box 1, 762/92. Reports from C M Staker, Protector of Aboriginals.

¹¹ *Reflections of the Pilbara* 1988, p. 10, held by Karratha Community Library; Correspondence, 5 June 1993, Daphne Gratte to G. MacGill, HCWA. Bunning Bros. also built Roebourne Post Office (1887).

¹² Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

¹³ 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, held by the Karratha Community Library Local History Collection.

¹⁴ Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

¹⁵ 'Death of a Pioneer' undated newspaper article held by Karratha Community Library Local History Collection.

¹⁶ 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, op cit.

¹⁷ Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

and less than six months later the final leases were exchanged.¹⁸ At the same time, Percy decided to leave the partnership with his brothers and acquired sole ownership of *Cooya Pooya Station*.¹⁹

Percy soon made alterations to the homestead, using concrete for many construction and repair jobs in a bid to guard against cyclone damage. So prolific and innovative were his concrete renovations, that Percy was locally known as 'the Concrete King'.²⁰ He removed all the termite damaged timber floors and replaced them with concrete. The ceiling timbers were also replaced with rail irons and a 150 centimetre thick reinforced concrete slab. The design of the pressed metal ceilings was imprinted onto the new concrete ceilings; the original being in place for the process of pouring the concrete bucket by bucket through the manholes.²¹ Concrete dividing walls and seats were also built in the shearers' kitchen.

In the homestead, the rooms comprised the master bedroom, dining, lounge, spare room and the boys' room. The two verandah rooms were the girls' room, on the south-eastern corner, and the office on the north-western corner. In a bid to obtain cooling cross flow ventilation, all rooms opened onto the verandah. A room on the verandah next to the boys' room was set aside for the use of visitors. Metal tie downs on the 22-gauge corrugated iron roof provided against lifting during a cyclone. Mrs Stove maintained a beautiful garden at the homestead and was known for the quality of her vegetable produce.²² A coolhouse was built to store the vegetables and this was later utilised by the women seeking respite from the afternoon summer heat.²³

In the separate kitchen building, at the back of the wash house, Percy constructed a big hot water system made of 44-gallon drums for the bathroom. The cook's room was located next to the kitchen, which had a No. 4 wood fired stove.

In the 1950s, the Stoves made further alterations to the homestead and abandoned the kitchen building. The office was converted to a bathroom, and the main bedroom became the kitchen.²⁴ The Stove's twin sons, Mervyn and Doug, made lattice for the length of the kitchen verandah, and helped Percy build the cement garage at the end of the verandah. Percy installed railway irons through the garage's cement roof, with the intention of adding a verandah for a sleepout. This did not eventuate.²⁵

In September 1960, Percy and Daisy Stove sold *Cooya Pooya Station* to Roy Denley Freeman and William A. McGillivray, having already retired to Perth. R. D. Freeman of South Australia became sole owner of *Cooya Pooya* in July

¹⁸ 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, op cit.

¹⁹ Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, op cit.

²² Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ The original kitchen was considered too labour intensive, as Aboriginal domestic staff were no longer employed on the Station.

²⁵ Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

1965.²⁶ The following year, Freeman sold the *Cooya Pooya Station* leases to H. Gratte and B. Patterson.²⁷ The Pattersons, who had previously been at Mt Enid Station, managed *Cooya Pooya Station* and lived in the homestead until 1982, when the Water Corporation purchased the property.

The Water Corporation purchased the leases comprising *Cooya Pooya Station* as the property was in the catchment area of the Harding River Dam project, a major component of the West Pilbara Water Supply. Building the dam involved constructing a main dam embankment across the Harding River within a gorge near the *Cooya Pooya Station* buildings.²⁸

The Roebourne Tourist Bureau launched a fight to save the station buildings from vandalism and the waters of the Harding River Dam scheme. The Bureau accepted responsibility for the place after the Pattersons departed, and staff members often camped at the homestead on overnight and weekend stays. The Bureau attempted to organise caretakers but after a brief and unsuccessful tenancy, the place remained vacant and fell into rapid disrepair and deterioration.²⁹

In late 1994 and early 1995, restoration of *Cooya Pooya Station* homestead was mooted and several local groups and Government Departments became involved in the negotiation process.³⁰ The Pilbara Development Commission agreed to provide financial support for the preparation of a Conservation and Management Plan. This did not eventuate.³¹ In August 1995, the Water Authority expressed concern about the future of tourist development in the water catchment area and 'decided to develop an alternative homestead at Old Woodbrook'.³² That proposal did not come to fruition either.

In 1997, the place remains vacant.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Cooya Pooya Station consists of a number of buildings scattered over an area of several acres within the *Cooya Pooya Station* property. The buildings include the homestead, the kitchen, the shearers' kitchen, meat house, poultry shed, stables, shearing shed and shearers' quarters. The buildings considered to be of considerable heritage significance are the homestead, kitchen, and shearers' kitchen. However, the other buildings on the site contribute to the aesthetic value and understanding of the place. The homestead and associated buildings are vacant and neglected and signs of vandalism are evident.

The homestead faces Table Hill and Hicks' Gap. A hill rises on the western side and the land undulates in other directions. The existing stone homestead was built c. 1907 and is a typical North-West vernacular house. It

²⁶ Unnamed, undated research titled 'Cooya Pooya Station', BL; discussion with members of the Stove family; 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, op cit.

²⁷ 'Cooya Pooya Station', information compiled from Lands & Surveys Pastoral Lease Section, op cit.

²⁸ *Robe River Roundup* June 1982, p. 8.

²⁹ *Trust News* August 1982; *Pilbara Advertiser* 14 October 1982.

³⁰ Various articles in *The West Australian* and *North West Telegraph*, 1994/5.

³¹ *North West Telegraph* 4 January 1995.

³² Memo, HCWA File 3376, Brian Hoey, Cossack manager to Ian Kelly, HCWA.

is a long rectangular building with surrounding verandahs, thick stone walls, and a corrugated iron roof. The place does not conform to any particular style but it does display some characteristics of the Victorian Georgian style, in the broad interpretation of a freestanding rural homestead.³³

The rectangular plan form of the homestead comprises a series of interconnecting rooms all of which open onto the verandahs on the northern and southern sides to facilitate ventilation. The homestead was constructed of stone from the surrounding hills, mortared and tuck pointed by craftsmen. All rooms open onto the surrounding verandah, which is paved with the remains of massive water washed slabs of ripple stone from the old Springs Station site, a few miles from the Cooya Pooya homestead. Opposite corners of the verandah were built-in to form rooms. Cyclone proof steel framed and clad doors open outwards from each of the rooms onto the verandah. Original French doors remain in place on only one of the door openings behind the steel cyclone door.

Circular hollow steel verandah posts, approximately two metres apart, support the timber verandah roof structure. The hipped corrugated iron roof extends over the verandah at a break pitch from the main roof. Cyclone battens are still in place on the roof.

The original timber floors and pressed metal ceilings have been replaced by concrete; the original ornately moulded ceilings remain evident in the impressions on the concrete ceilings. The round manholes, formed using drums, are still evident in the ceilings. The internal walls are hard plaster finished, with paint and graffiti on most.

The original kitchen building is a separate structure, situated at the rear of the homestead in an elevated position. It has not been used since the early 1950s, and is in a state of ruin with no roof. The exact layout of the building, which comprised the kitchen, bathroom, laundry and storeroom, is unknown. The stone construction is similar to the main homestead building, with render on the face lined in black. The remains of the concrete verandah on the southern elevation which faces the homestead, are still in place. Although the railway iron posts are in place, the verandah roofs and the lattice panels have collapsed. One of the steel doors and the 44-gallon drum hot water system remain in place.

The shearers' kitchen is a substantial structure of snecked dry stone walls with a barrel vault corrugated iron roof which replaced the original hipped roof. The snecked stone work demonstrates the highest quality tradesmanship and the strongest type of stone wall construction. Timber lintels are in place over the only door entry and other openings which have timber shutters. Some areas of the external walls show signs of render and other interventions. Most of the stone walls interiors have been white washed, and some internal walls were constructed of concrete c. 1950. The floor is ripple stone slabs as for the homestead verandah. The ceiling is flat corrugated iron. Part of the rear wall has been demolished and lies in a pile. Concrete fixtures and fittings remain to indicate the block seat and iron table brackets where the pool table top was placed. Concrete and steel benches remain in a smaller room and there are

³³ Apperly, R., op cit, p. 45.

two adjoining rooms at the far end. The small rooms have stone internal walls, indicating they are original. In the larger space (west end), steel props are in place supporting the ceiling structure.

To the east of the shearers' kitchen are the remains of the meat shed, a timber framed square building with a hipped iron roof. Two long barrel vaulted concrete structures which were the poultry shed, and the stables are located east of the homestead.

The large, timber framed and iron clad shearing shed is located to the west of the shearers' kitchen, and north-west of the homestead. The corrugated iron roof was removed for another building not on the Station and has not been replaced. In the same vicinity are the remains of a c. 1950 ironclad shearers' accommodation and facilities building and the power house. A well is located on the side of the hill.

13.3 REFERENCES

Memo, HCWA File 2343, 20 May 1997, L. Gray interviewing Doug Stove.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
