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Name: 'Aberfoyle' Victorian Summer House
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 10922
Municipality: Central Coast Council
Date Listed: 18/04/2007

Location Addresses

14 MAIN RD, PENGUIN 7316 TAS

Title References

247904/1

Property Id

6759691



Untitled

Untitled

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Setting: 14 Main Road is a substantial late C19th house set amidst large grounds on an elevated street corner at the junction of Mission Hill Road and Main Road, toward the western end of the township. The elevated position provides sweeping views of Johnsons Beach, Beecraft Point and Penguin Beach, from which locations the house and landscaped grounds is a prominent landmark. The building is screened by tree plantings and a high fence with stone foundations along the eastern boundary.

Description: Aberfoyle is a substantial single-storey Victorian residence. The major facades of the house address the ocean views to the east and north, along which the originally open verandahs have now been enclosed. General stylistic characteristics are demonstrated by the medium pitch roof of hipped forms, the overall building form and layout of windows including a bay window on the north elevation, chimney capping and eaves bracket details. The original ornate verandahs were rebuilt mid C20th as enclosed rooms, whilst the overall form appears predominantly intact. The eastern side foundations and floors are reported to be subsiding along with some decay of exterior weatherboards (J Bennett: PC 2007). Outbuildings are reported to include remains of the original servants quarters to the rear of the house (J Bennett: PC 2007). The steeply sloping front garden is highly developed as a cottage garden with mature exotic trees, flowering shrubs and lesser plantings. A mid C20th painted paling fence enclosed the property with a font gate on Main road and a side entrance off Mission Hill Road. The substantial front garden would be decorated with a Christmas tree annually for a time and would have been a well known landmark in the town.

History: Originally granted to Edward Beecraft in 1862 the land at 14 Main Road Penguin was purchased originally by Alexander Clerke in 1867. William Henry Davies Archer (1836-1928) of Brickendon, owned land and a hut on this site from 1893 to 1899. In 1899 Archer built a substantial house to be used as the family summer house on this site. His wife Aphra Gertrude nee Clerke was the sister of Alexander Clerke and daughter of Alexander Clerke (sen), a prominent family in northern Tasmania. The Archer children who would have spent time at the house included Joan Frances Clerke Hoskins (1885-1964), William Fulbert Archer (1880-1952) and Aphra Caroline Gatenby 1885-1964 (Roy Arthur Sterry Archer had died in 1887) and their numerous children. WHD Archer (1836-1928), son of William Archer and Caroline Harrison, was known as Harry. He was a graduate of Cambridge, barrister and farmer of Brickendon and Waterhouse. He was the holder of many public and civic positions including: Director of the Tasmanian Permanent Executors and Trustees Association Ltd; Councillor for 22 years and Warden for 1881-1889 of the Municipality of Longford; Chairman of the Longford Road Trust, Fruit board and Water District, Board of health, Board of Advice and Rabbit Board; JP; Coroner; Territorial Magistrate for Tasmania; Member of the Royal Commissions on Penal Discipline and Public Education; Secretary of the Northern Agricultural Committee and the Longford Show

Society; Member for Norfolk Plains and Chairman of the General Sessions of the House of Assembly ; Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society; Commissioner to the Paris Exhibition. (Chick: 1991, pp.30-31, 48, 104-108, 128-134 & Cyc of Tas Vol 2 1900:p.208).

Archer leased the property to James Cole Ellis in 1903. Mr JC Ellis was the part proprietor (with Atkin and Hudson, local Penguin farmers) and Manager of the Tasmanian Iron Company whose mine was located three miles from the Penguin township. In 1900 it was considered an important field of specular iron ore (Hematite) which extended the whole length of the property. Mr J.C. Ellis, born in 1842, migrated to Australia in 1853, was an ex MLA and MLC of NSW, shipping entrepreneur owning the largest privately owned fleet of ships in Australia, timber miller, German and Spanish Consul and well known figure, who supervised the development of the mine (Parnell:1986) A 2ft gauge tramline was constructed to connect the mine with the Penguin port with 250 tons of high grade hematite exported interstate. It was the first company to develop an export trade in iron ore in Tasmania and was of a superior grade than any found in Tasmania up to that time . The total production of iron ore in 1908 was 3600 tons, valued at 1600, and was all raised by the Tasmanian iron mines at Penguin. (Year Book Australia, 1910, np). The construction of the part wooden and part iron horse drawn tramway in 1898 was supervised by Ellis. The tramway and mine closed in 1909 amid controversy between Clerke and Ellis over easement. (Branagan, 1997: pp. 119-120 & Parnell: 1986). Ellis lived at Aberfoyle with his wife Marie nee Kramer who as a young soprano in Europe who had sung before royalty. She was fluent in four languages and was a staunch public figure in NSW public charities. She would erect a large Christmas tree in the garden for the local children every year. She died suddenly in 1907 and is buried in the Penguin cemetery. Ellis closed the mine in 1901 because of disputes involving the easements (see Parnel, R, The Battle of the Penguin Tramway for more details) for the tram track and finally returned to NSW. He died in 1930. He had created Tasmanias first large scale iron ore industry . (Parnell 1986:p.87)

In 1909 the property was sold to Thomas Bessell who in turn sold it to the Methodist Church in 1912. From 1912 to 1925 Aberfoyle was the Manse for various Reverends of the local Methodist Church including Rev JC Freeman, Rev Henry Yeo, Rev WT Abbott, Rev MDougall, Rev Churchward and Rev FJ Butler. The Methodist Church was prominent in the district with the first Methodist Church being erected in 1866 (the first church to be erected between Emu Bay and Forth) at the site of the current Uniting Church built in 1902-3 at 50 Main Road Penguin. Both Primitive Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists worshipped at this church until the Primitive Methodists built a separate church at 10 Main Road Penguin situated on Mission Hill facing the Bass Highway and half way between The Mission Hill road previously known as Pine Road and Deviation road. However in 1901 these two groups united culminating in the construction of the new Church. (PHG records various & Advocate, various dates). The Uniting Church is one of the iconic listed buildings in Penguin illustrating the Methodist presence in Penguin over a long period.

The property subsequently passed into private ownership. In the late C20th the house was proposed for demolition to make way for the rerouting of the Bass Highway but unlike nearby Coroneagh Estate of the Clerke family, it survived.

Statement of Significance:
(non-statutory summary)

No Statement is provided for places listed prior to 2007

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

The building at 14 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance as it is important in demonstrating the evolutionary pattern of the Central Coast district. Its origin as a summer beach house for the Archer family reflects the lifestyle of the well-to-do and transport limitations of the 1900s period. Subsequent use as a stately Manse serving the Methodist Church at 50 Main Rd, reflects the prominence of this Church in the early C20th, whilst the passing of the house into private ownership reflects social changes through the mid C20th.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

14 Main Rd Penguin is of historical cultural heritage significance as a residence of a family with political and social connections in Tasmania's elite. It is a rare example of a summer house where a family spent their holidays and that retains evidence of the division of labour and living arrangements between masters and servants.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

The building is of historic cultural heritage significance for potential archaeological remains of the site as the summer beach house of the Archer family. Potential for the building fabric and any remnant domestic artefacts to demonstrate the division of labour and living arrangements between masters and servants, are important for their ability to provide insight into a rare aspect of Tasmanias social history.

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

14 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance because it is important as a representative in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of cultural places. Through its form, materials and detailing it has the ability to demonstrate the principal characteristics of a moderately-sized Victorian house, whilst its prominent sitting at an elevated street corner overlooking the waterfront make it one of the more notable landmarks within the township.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

14 Main Road, Penguin is of potential historic cultural heritage significance to the local community as the home of the Methodist minister for a number of years, as a place where people sought religious counselling, and through the inclusion of Aberfoyle in the Buildings Past & Present, Exhibition and Book published by Penguin Historical Group and being a feature of historical Walks within the community.

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

14 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance because it has a close association with the Archer family, of nationally and recently international significance connected to the Brickendon property near Longford. Family connections with Clerke of Longford are also significant. A further link with the JC Ellis Manger of Tasmanian Iron Company provide links to the Australian story of an entrepreneur who spent time in Tasmania developing Penguins mining resources for export and building a tramline that was for many years an integral part of the landscape of Penguin. Associations of local importance include being the residence of JC Ellis, Manager of Tasmanian Iron Company and an entrepreneur who developed Penguins mining resources for export and building a tramline that was for many years an integral part of the landscape of Penguin, and also having an important association as the Manse/residence to the Methodist Church at 50 Main Road.

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.