



The former Mine Manager's House, Batchelor

## Heritage listing for Batchelor

Minister Scrymgour recently announced the Heritage Listing of the former Mine Manager's House at Batchelor, which is associated with the former Rum Jungle uranium mine.

The Mine Manager's House is a reminder of a very different time, when Australia, with its cold war allies, was engaged in a nuclear arms race against the Soviet Union. The Rum Jungle mine processed uranium ore for supply to the United States and United Kingdom in the 1950s and 60s. The mine was the biggest single industrial enterprise in the Northern Territory during that period.

The Mine Manager's House was designed for the tropics. It used lightweight materials and made extensive use of louvre windows to maximise ventilation. It is one of only three remaining 'G' type tropical houses at the township and therefore has architectural significance.

The Rum Jungle mine has long since closed down, and the former Mine Manager's House is now an Historic Retreat. Owners Rob Hobbs and Barry Rowlands said that they were extremely happy with the heritage listing, and that they were pleased to see that the NT Government saw that both tourism and heritage were vital to the future of the Northern Territory economy.

## New member for Council



David Curtis

The Northern Territory's Heritage Advisory Council is not the sort of organisation that makes headlines, but it plays a vital role in managing the Territory's heritage.

The role of the HAC is set out in the Territory's *Heritage Conservation Act*, and is quite broad-ranging. One important function of Council is to assess the significance of places that have been nominated to the NT Heritage Register, and then to make

## No heritage listing for Rieff Building

Minister Scrymgour announced on 5 November 2004 that while she remained committed to protecting the Territory's valuable heritage assets, she had decided against a recommendation to heritage list the Rieff Building in Alice Springs.

The building, at the corner of Hartley St and Gregory Terrace, will be redeveloped into a \$5 million shopping/commercial complex, and is expected to create up to 100 jobs for the town's construction industry during development.

"I have examined and taken very seriously the advice of the Heritage Advisory Council, but on this occasion I decided against heritage listing," Ms Scrymgour said.

"This was a very difficult decision. But having looked at the information and personally inspected the building, I am not convinced that the heritage values are strong enough to outweigh the broader economic benefits to Alice Springs. ... I believe my decision will have the greatest long-term benefits to the people of Alice Springs."

Ms Scrymgour said she remained committed to protecting the valuable heritage of the Northern Territory – emphasising the NT Government's unprecedented \$1 million commitment this year for repair and maintenance on Government-owned heritage buildings.



Rieff Building

recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage as to whether those places should be declared as heritage places.

In recent months, this has seen Council considering assessment reports in relation to a great diversity of places, including a block of flats, a hotel, a shipwreck, churches, residences, homesteads, and nature reserves.

The HAC has nine members drawn from a range of backgrounds, and meets four times a year. The newest member of the Council, Mr David Curtis, was appointed by Minister Scrymgour late last year. Mr Curtis was the first Aboriginal person to be elected to the Tennant Creek Town Council and is a former ATSI Commission and chairperson of the Indigenous Housing Authority of the NT.



## From the Minister:

The last year or so as Minister for the Environment and Heritage has given me a renewed appreciation of the richness and diversity of the Territory's heritage.

Many people may not be aware that the *Heritage Conservation Act*, which I am responsible for, deals not only with European cultural heritage, but also natural heritage places, and places and objects relating to the past occupation of the Territory by Aboriginal and Macassan people.

Within each of these categories there is also great diversity. In the past year I have made decisions about places connected with many different aspects of the Territory's history – from the early settlement of Darwin by Europeans, to our railway history, the development of our mining and pastoral industries, World War Two, the 'stolen generation', and the post-war development of Darwin and Alice Springs. I have dealt with shipwrecks, an old railway locomotive, cemeteries, churches, a gaol, a flying boat, a Chinese oven, grand houses, and a steel hut. I have also dealt with Aboriginal rock art sites and other Aboriginal archaeological sites dating back thousands of years.

I was particularly pleased in the course of 2004 to make five important additions to the NT Heritage Register. You can read about several of these places in this issue of 'Heritage News', along with other interesting news about how the heritage of the Territory is being managed.

Marion Scrymgour

## Sandfly comes home

The historic steam locomotive, *Sandfly*, has come home to the Territory. On 14 December last year the locomotive was installed in its new home at the Stokes Hill Wharf, under the watchful eye of staff from the Office of Environment and Heritage.

The *Sandfly* arrived by ship in Darwin in 1886. It was built by locomotive manufacturer the Baldwin Company in Philadelphia USA, a legendary producer of great trains in the Age of Steam. Soon after its arrival at Port Darwin it was christened *Sandfly*, apparently because of the area it worked in (near the mangroves at the harbour's shore) and its small size. The small locomotive worked the Top End's narrow gauge railway connecting Darwin with the Pine Creek goldfields for over 60 years.

The *Sandfly* was severely damaged by Japanese bombers in 1942, but was repaired and put back into service. It was retired from service in 1950 and then sent to South Australia, where it was restored and put on display, most recently at the Adelaide Rail Passenger Terminal Keswick.

The *Sandfly* has been generously gifted to the Territory by Great Southern Railways. It is expected to be a popular addition to the attractions of the Darwin City Waterfront in its new location at the Stokes Hill Wharf.

The third engine used on The Ghan is called *Sandfly II* in honour of the historic locomotive.



The Sandfly in 1939 (Territory Images, Hodder Collection)

If you have any queries about 'Heritage News' please contact Michael Wells at the Office of Environment and Heritage on 8924 4141, email michael.wells@nt.gov.au

## Heritage Week in Alice

The opportunity is around the corner for local residents and visitors alike to enjoy some special insights into the heritage of Alice Springs.

The McDouall Stuart branch of the National Trust is organising a range of exciting activities for Heritage Week in Alice Springs, to be held from 17 to 24 April. The theme for this year is 'Community and Heritage'.

The old Alice Springs Telegraph Station will come to life for Heritage Week, with re-enactments showing what life would have been like at the Station a century or more ago. Visitors will be able to see morse code messages being sent and see displays of spinning, blacksmithing, sheep shearing and more.

There will be a nostalgic night at the flicks, with special screenings of old movies at the Pioneer Theatre open air cinema. Open days will be held at a number of historic properties not normally open to the public. One building getting special attention will be the Hartley Street School, since this is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the School.

For more information about the final program, phone Warwick Marsh of the National Trust on 8952 5950.



Blacksmithing display,  
Alice Springs Telegraph Station

## Cathedral Precinct protected

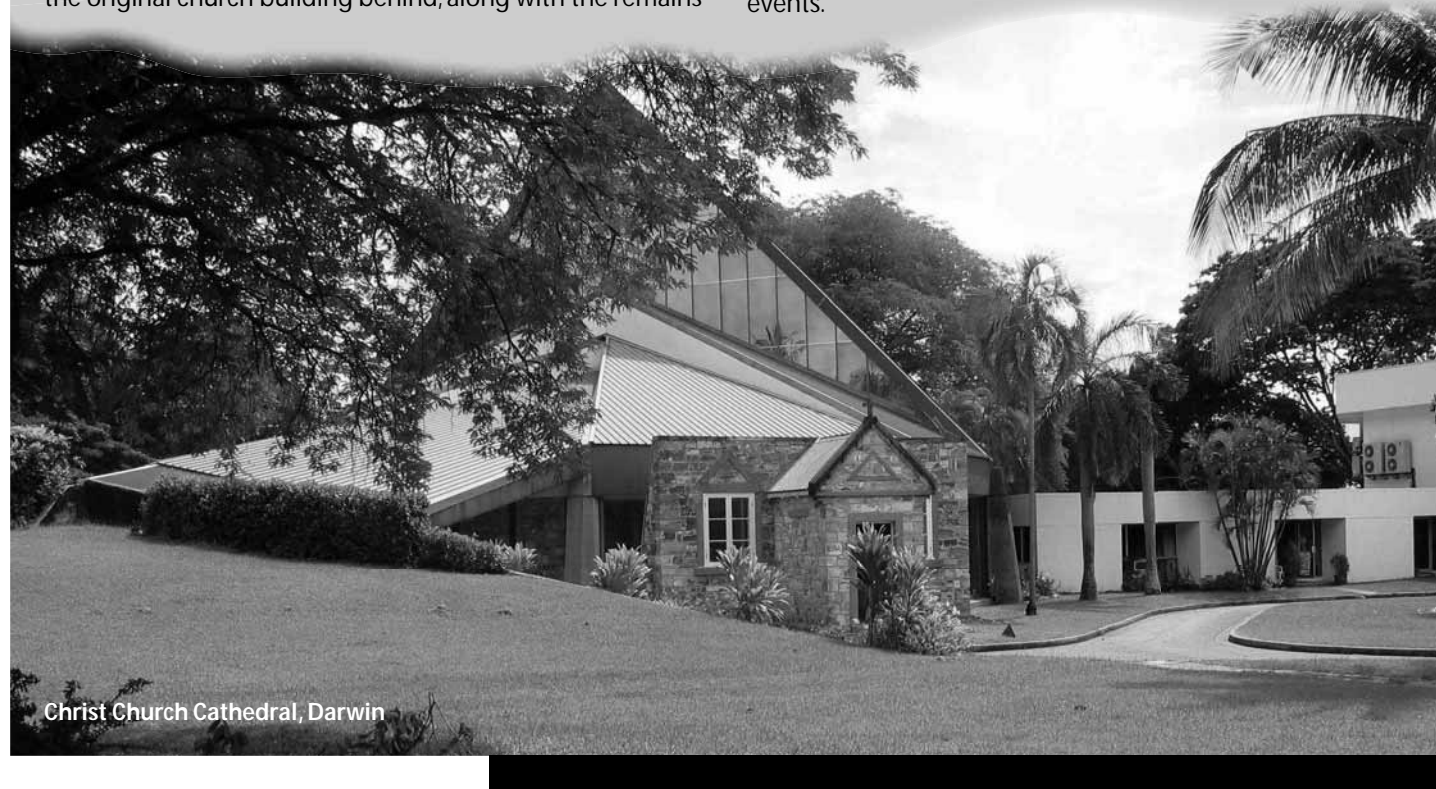
The striking geometry of Christ Church Cathedral makes for a distinctive landmark at the end of Smith Street in Darwin.

The Cathedral is actually only one element within a Precinct which has some fascinating connections with some key events in the history of Darwin. This Precinct has now been declared as a heritage place by Minister Scrymgeour.

The Precinct includes the ruins of the first Anglican Church built in Darwin in 1902. The Church was all but destroyed by Cyclone Tracy in 1974, leaving only part of the front wall of the original church building behind, along with the remains

of a portico which was added to the Church in 1944 as a memorial to those who died whilst on active service in the Northern Territory during World War Two.

The new Cathedral, completed in 1977, is symbolic of the determination to rebuild after Cyclone Tracy. It is also a good example of the types of Church designs produced in Australia in the 1970s as a result of the Movement for Liturgical Change within the Anglican Church, which began in the late 1960s. It serves a continuing role as the major Church for the Anglican congregation in the Northern Territory, and is close to the heart of many Territorians as a place of quiet refuge, and a venue for important community events.



Christ Church Cathedral, Darwin

## 'Hidden Heritage' in Smith Street

Darwin City Council has recently completed work on a major upgrade of the eastern end of Smith Street, Darwin. Some 'hidden heritage' was discovered along the way.

Just prior to work starting on site in mid 2003, the Office of Environment and Heritage discovered that the stone kerbing in this part of Smith Street dated from the 1880s, and was one of the last remaining examples of its type in Darwin.

It was agreed with the City Council that pieces of stone kerbing which were still in reasonable condition should be lifted and relaid within the new footpath, in their original alignment, and that the additional costs involved with this work should be shared by the NT Government.

After work started on site an unexpected discovery was made, in the form of a kerbstone with a Chinese character clearly marked on it. This confirms the belief that the kerbstones were quarried and laid by Chinese labourers. No-one so far has been able to say what the character means.

Another interesting discovery that was made during the course of the work was that the two Milkwood trees in front of historic Brown's Mart were almost as old as the stone kerbing, having been planted in the 1890s by V V Brown, after whom Brown's Mart was named. Darwin City Council has not only preserved the trees, but taken steps to improve the health of the trees and to protect them from motor vehicles.



Above: Chinese character found on old kerbstone in Smith Street  
Below: Brown's Mart and Milkwood trees



Above: The remains of the old homestead at Owen Springs  
Below: The remains of the yards at Owen Springs



## Owen Springs Homestead protected

In March 1861 famous explorer John Stuart recorded "a large hole of beautiful water, with bullrushes growing round about it" on the Hugh River, south-west of what was to become the Town of Alice Springs. Stuart wrote: "...this water I have named 'Owen Springs' after William Owen, Esq., M.P."

By the 1870s a homestead had been established on the site, one of the very earliest structures to be built by Europeans in Central Australia. Those original buildings are gone, but today you can still see the remains on site of various structures built in the 1880s – including the main house, kitchen, smithy, harness shed, and yards.

This important site provides valuable information about the nature of contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people, and the way in which early European settlers adapted to a remote, harsh environment. It provides examples of different stone construction techniques, of the use of bush timber framing and of yard construction. Many of these techniques are no longer practiced.

The site is also associated with the Hayes family, who made a substantial contribution to the development of the pastoral industry in the Territory.

In October last year Minister Scrymgeour declared the Old Owen Springs Homestead Complex a registered heritage place.