

## Place No. 36 Mt Welcome Station Homestead Group



Mount Welcome House 2009, courtesy National Trust of Australia (W.A.)

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Mount Welcome Station Homestead Group
Other Name (1)	Mount Welcome House
Other Name (2)	Weeriana
Location/Address	
Street Number	64
Street Name	Hampton Street
Suburb/Town	Roebourne
Other Locational descriptor (text)	Opposite Roebourne Court House mE 514893 mN7702424 Longitude 117.1431 Latitude: -20.7779

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Mt Welcome Pastoral Co P/L c/o Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation	1 Padbury St Roebourne WA 6718	9182 1351		
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
241704	265	P220920/D432 18	2191/717	

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	2343
State Register of Heritage Places: (Y/N)	Yes
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	Yes
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	Yes
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
<b>Management Category</b>	<b>A</b>

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1864
Construction Date (2)	1872, 1937
Site Type (Place Type)	Individual building or group Other Aboriginal site
<b>Use(s) of Place</b>	

<i>Original</i>	FARMING/PASTORAL: Other - Pastoral Station
<i>Present</i>	SOCIAL/RECREATIONAL: Other Community - Hall/Centre
<i>Other</i>	
<b>Construction Materials:</b>	
<i>Walls</i>	6. METAL 606 Corrugated iron
<i>Roof</i>	6. METAL 606 Corrugated Iron
<i>Other</i>	
Condition	Evidence of vandalism and neglect; general lack of care and maintenance over the past years.
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	The place retains a moderate degree of integrity.
<b>Physical Description</b>	
<p>Mount Welcome Homestead Group is comprised of a group of single-storey timber-framed, corrugated iron buildings with barrel-vaulted roofs, constructed in the North-West Vernacular style. The buildings are arranged into two wings, joined by skillioned roofed verandahs. The wings are constructed of iron cladding over a timber frame. Several small iron buildings, which provided housing for the Aboriginal workers, remain on the site.</p>	
<b>History</b>	
<p>Mount Welcome was one of the first stations established in the district. It was established by the Withnell family in 1864, when John and Emma Withnell, their two young sons and other family members and servants arrived to take advantage of the opportunities in the north-west. They established themselves on the banks of the Harding River, at the foot of Mount Welcome, where they had access to a reasonable fresh water supply.<sup>1</sup> The Withnells initially built a single roomed house constructed of stone, mud bats and the remains of their cargo, with a spinifex roof.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>The Withnells took up 30,000 acres at Mount Welcome and an additional 100,000 acres at Sherlock Station.<sup>3</sup> In common with settlers throughout the north of Australia, they quickly recruited Aboriginal people to work on their properties as shepherds, labourers and shearers. Aboriginal women were also employed to assist in running the Mount Welcome homestead.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Other settlers followed and by 1865, the population of the Nickol Bay area had grown to about 200. Although many established themselves some distance from the Withnells, their homestead was regarded as the hub of the small community from the outset, being at a natural crossroads between the port at Cossack and the outlying stations.<sup>5</sup> The town of Roebourne thus grew up around Mount Welcome homestead.</p> <p>In 1872, a cyclone destroyed most of the buildings in Roebourne, including the Withnells' house. The rebuilding of Roebourne commenced soon after and John Withnell built his second homestead and store with walls of stone, pug and timber.<sup>6</sup> Magistrate Sholl purchased the property from the Withnells in 1878. The Stove brothers then took over in c.1907. In c.1937 the 1872 homestead was deteriorating and the brothers therefore built new sleeping quarters and a dining room adjoining the existing kitchen. The accommodation section replaced the 1872 house.</p> <p>Mount Welcome House and station were sold to the Federal Australian Government on 16 May 1974, for use by the Aboriginal community of the Roebourne area.<sup>7</sup> When Mt Welcome Pastoral Company Pty Ltd took over Mt Welcome Station, Mount Welcome House became the office with meetings being held there. Until 1996, caretakers lived at Mount Welcome House, but the place is now vacant<sup>8</sup>. Mt Welcome Pastoral Company Pty Ltd is part-owned by Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation.</p>	
<b>Archaeology</b>	

This site has significant archaeological potential. The site may contain a record of the evolution of the homestead and its use, of Aboriginal camps in contact and pre-contact period, and of the organisation of the sheep station with nearby yards and sheds.

<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	
<b>Historic theme (s)</b>	1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 107 Settlements  3. OCCUPATIONS 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying  6. PEOPLE 601 Aboriginal people 603 Early settlers
<b>Statement of Significance:</b>	FROM HCWA
<p>Mount Welcome Homestead Group, a group of single-storey timber-framed, corrugated iron buildings with barrel-vaulted roofs comprising a homestead and associated outbuildings, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the place has strong associations with the Withnell family, the first European settlers in the Harding River area. The town of Roebourne evolved around the Withnell house;</li> <li>• the place has associations with the Aboriginal community, initially as one of the first sites of contact with European settlers and later as a meeting place for the Ieramugadu Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• with its various components connected by verandahs and a breezeway, the place is a good example of North-West vernacular architecture, designed to meet local climatic conditions</li> <li>• the distinctive style of the place is a landmark in Roebourne, and contributes to the character of the town.</li> </ul>	

<b>ASSOCIATIONS</b>	
Architect/Designer (1)	The Withnell Family
Architect/Designer (2)	Stove Brothers
Other Associated Person(s)	Withnell Family Magistrate Sholl Stove Brothers Ieramugadu Aboriginal Corporation

<b>OTHER</b>	
<b>References</b>	
'Register of Heritage Places – Assessment Documentation Mount Welcome House', Permanent Entry on the State Register of Heritage Places, Heritage Council of Western Australia, 30 Oct. 1998.	
MHI 1996	Site assessed and Place Name Record Created
MHI Review 2012	Entry updated

<sup>1</sup> 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, p. 34; Gallaher, P. E., 'Early Days in Roebourne 1865-1866', unpublished manuscript, 1978, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Withnell, C., 'North West Pioneers: John and Emma Withnell', unpublished manuscript, 1968, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Extract from letter written by Emma Withnell, in Withnell, C., op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> De La Rue, K., *Pearl Shell and Pastures: The Story of Cossack and Roebourne, and their place in the history of the North West, from the earliest explorations to 1910*, Cossack Community Project, 1979, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> De La Rue, K., *Pearl Shell and Pastures: The Story of Cossack and Roebourne, and their place in the history of the North West, from the earliest explorations to 1910*, Cossack Community Project, 1979,

p. 17

<sup>6</sup> Withnell Taylor, op. cit., pp. 159, 162.

<sup>7</sup> CT. Vol. 451. Fol 184A.

<sup>8</sup> Register of Heritage Places – Assessment Documentation Mount Welcome House', Permanent Entry on the State Register of Heritage Places, Heritage Council of Western Australia, 30 October 1998.