

# JIMBOUR HOUSE

## HERITAGE IMPACT REPORT



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DALBY

Prepared by  
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for the  
RUSSELL PASTORAL COMPANY

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report addresses heritage conservation issues related to the alteration of and addition to a large 19<sup>th</sup> Century rural homestead complex on the Darling Downs. The place is of cultural heritage significance and this report accompanies an application to develop under the Queensland Heritage Act.

Specifically, the subject site contains the house known as *Jimbour House* located 25km north of Dalby and approximately 250km north-west of Brisbane. The house has a strong association with the development of the Darling Downs and, in particular, with the Bell family (who built the current main house) and the Russell family (who have owned Jimbour since the 1920s and are responsible for restoring the once-derelict house).

The house is one of the grandest of Queensland's 19<sup>th</sup> Century pastoral residences and forms the centrepiece of an extensive complex of associated outbuildings, gardens and supporting pastoral infrastructure.

This report considers the existing site and setting conditions, the cultural heritage significance of the existing buildings and the nature of the proposed alterations and additions in assessing the impact of the proposed development on the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Throughout this report where reference is made to "the proposal", it shall mean the proposed development shown on John Walsh Architects drawings:

- 976-03-S03/E
- 976-04-S04/C
- 976-05-S05/B
- 976-06-S06/A
- 976-07-S07/A
- 976-08-S08/A
- 976-09-S09
- 976-10-S10
- 976-11-S11

This report has been prepared in accordance with principles set out in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) and the Guidelines to the Burra Charter.



## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



Figure 1

The focal point of the *Jimbour* property is the two-storey 1870s sandstone main house. Surrounding this main building is a variety of single-storey ancillary and support buildings located to the north and east of the main house. These include staff quarters, stores, workshops, garages and an aircraft hanger.

The area to the immediate south of the main house contains formal gardens including a large 1950s swimming pool. The formal arrival and entrance point of the house is via a western avenue which runs past an early stone store, church and large water tower. Figure 1 shows an aerial view of the main homestead in the 1980s.

As a working property, *Jimbour* has undergone a steady cycle of change as new pastoral activities have required new and changing facilities. These changes – together with a long and ongoing program of building maintenance and adaptation - have seen a large amount of new fabric introduced to the main homestead precinct's "back of house" areas. These changes are far less evidence in the western and southern "front of house" areas where much of the main house's late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century character has been retained as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2

Throughout the Russell family's period of ownership (since 1923), the *Jimbour* property has diversified its pastoral interest from sheep and cattle grazing into, at times, feedlots, piggeries, wheat growing, orchards and vineyards. The Russell family has also demonstrated a strong commitment to public access to the *Jimbour* property.

The swimming pool (built in the 1950s) has always been available for use by surrounding properties. The house and grounds have been regularly used for many years for Arts Council and other concerts which have led to the recent construction of a sound shell and amphitheatre on the lower flat to the south of the house. The grounds to the east of the house are available for functions. Excluding the interior of the main house, the grounds and outbuildings remain generally open to visitors.

In order to guide the future conservation management of *Jimbour*, a draft conservation plan was prepared by Allom Lovell Architects in July 2002. This plan acknowledged the ongoing conservation program of the Russell family and the adaptation of early outbuildings to allow *Jimbour* to better serve as a tourist destination.

Recent heritage approvals have related to the adaptation of the 1860s stone store building to Jimbour Winery's "cellar door" and the construction of a sound shell and amphitheatre on the southern flat.

Photographs of existing conditions are included with each item of proposed work in Section 4 of this report.



### 3 CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The cultural heritage significance of Jimbour House is well-established with the place being listed by the National Trust of Queensland and entered on the Queensland Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

A detailed assessment of significance is set out in Part 3 of the draft conservation plan and concurs with the statement of significance in the Queensland Heritage Register Entry. For the purpose of this report, the statement of significance set out in the Queensland heritage Register Entry is taken as the working statement of significance for the place. The statement of significance is set out below and the full Register Entry is set out in Appendix 1.

#### **Significance**

*Jimbour House, as the main homestead on one of the earliest stations established on the Darling Downs, is important in demonstrating the pattern of early European exploration and pastoral settlement in Queensland. The place is associated with the development of the Downs and of the pastoral industry in Queensland and is important in demonstrating the wealth and ambition of early Queensland pastoralists.*

*Jimbour House was an ambitious house in terms of size, style and finish and was intended to support the social and political aspirations of Joshua Peter Bell, an important politician and businessman as well as grazier. It is unique in Queensland as the only really grand country house in the English manner to be built in this State. Other substantial stone homesteads of the era, such as Talgai, Glengallan and Westbrook, came nowhere near to rivalling Jimbour in either size or opulence.*

*As a hierarchy of residential and working buildings, the complex of buildings at Jimbour House has the potential to reveal information about the history of one of the earliest pastoral stations in Queensland, and about the nature of early pastoralism in Queensland, which will contribute to our understanding of Queensland's history.*

*While Jimbour House and its gardens and ancillary buildings are not typical of a Queensland homestead complex, the building techniques and materials used in their construction, together with the relationship existing between residential and working buildings, provides a good example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century pastoral station complex.*

*Jimbour House has outstanding aesthetic significance as a well designed and constructed house that is pleasing in form, materials and detail. It sits within notable gardens and is a landmark against the flats of the surrounding landscape.*

*Jimbour House is important for its association with early Darling Downs pioneers and Queensland politicians including Sir Joshua Peter Bell and his son Joshua Thomas Bell, and has special association for the Darling Downs community as a focal point of social life in the region for many years.*



## **4** *PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT*

The proposal involves a range of relatively minor works in and around the main house including:

- a. construction of a new kitchen block adjacent to the single-storey bluestone staff quarters;
- b. demolition of the existing kitchen (circa.1925) and shade house extension to the rear of the house;
- c. reconstruction of rear verandah to the house;
- d. reconstruction of french doors to the ground floor bathroom and renovation of the existing ground floor and first floor bathrooms to the house;
- e. reconstruction of french doors to ground floor rear verandah of the house (after demolition of kitchen);
- f. fitting out a new house scullery and flower room to the ground floor of the house;
- g. construction of a new covered walkway from the house to the new kitchen block;
- h. construction of new public toilet block (and removal of the existing temporary toilet block);
- i. extension of the existing 1990s garage;
- j. erection of a complying pool fence to the swimming pool.

The extent of these works is generally shown on the proposal drawings.

It is also proposed to install split system air-conditioning to part of the ground floor of the main house but this work is proposed to be carried out within the constraints of the Heritage Act's General Exemption and is not subject to this application.



- Construction of a new kitchen block adjacent to the single-storey bluestone staff quarters



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



- Demolition of the existing kitchen (circa.1925) and shade house extension to the rear of the house



Figure 9:



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

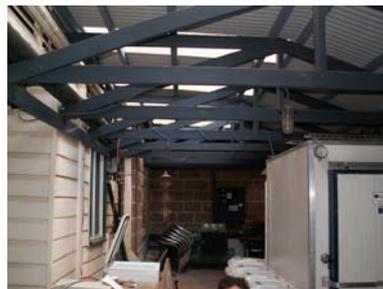


Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

- Reconstruction of rear verandah to the house





Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

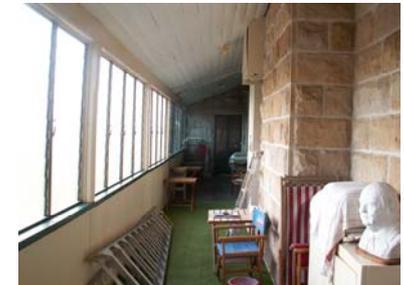


Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



- Reconstruction of french doors and renovation of existing ground floor bathroom to the house



Figure 28



Figure 29

- Reconstruction of french doors and renovation of existing ground floor bathroom to house



Figure 30

- Construction of new covered walkway from house to new kitchen block



Figure 31

- Erection of a complying pool fence to the swimming pool.



Figure 33



Figure 34



## 5 DISCUSSION OF IMPACT

The conservation policy for Jimbour House is set out in Appendix 2. At section 4.2 of the conservation policy, an approach to conservation is recommended whereby:

*It is expected that the Jimbour site will continue to be used predominantly as a pastoral property in the future and no evidence was found in the research for this report to suggest otherwise. The main house will continue to provide accommodation for members of the Russell family while other parts of the working property will continue in that role. Some ancillary buildings (of cultural significance) were converted for use as accommodation facilities some years ago.*

*Presently a scheme has been prepared to establish a tourism facility within the grounds. This scheme involves the construction of new buildings and the incorporation of some of the existing outbuildings into the new development.*

It is against this broad approach that the following assessment of impact of significance occurs.

- a. The proposed new kitchen block is a single-storey masonry structure with a hipped corrugated iron roof. It abuts the existing staff quarters to the north of the main house and is designed as a contemporary interpretation of the distinctive 1870s bluestone stone building by employing grey-coloured concrete blockwork as a reference to the adjacent bluestone walls and buff-coloured concrete blockwork sills and reveals as a reference to the sandstone quoining.

The new kitchen block is planned and orientated on the same east-west axis as the existing staff quarters. It is well-clear of the existing "bee-hive" wells and will not require the removal of any early or significant plantings.

It is recommended, however, that the new covered access roof linking the two buildings not extend beyond the southern wall line so that skillion verandah roofs of each building remain separate and disconnected. This approach will allow the different eras of building to be more-clearly-expressed.

The proposed kitchen block is sympathetic in style to the adjacent staff quarters, small in scale and will complement the long-established northern compound between the main house and the staff quarters.

- b. The existing kitchen is a small single-storey face brick structure with a hipped corrugated iron roof. It was built circa 1925 as part of the Russell family's initial restoration works. Prior to this structure, a gable-roofed covered walkway connected the main house to the staff quarters in the same location as the current kitchen. Part of this walkway was enclosed at the main house end and, presumably, contained the main house kitchen.



Originally, the brick kitchen ended as the house verandah edge but was extended across the verandah and up to the house wall at a later stage.

The existing kitchen appears to be a sound structure but has been modified over time by changes in fenestration and currently has a poor standard of internal fitout.

Stylistically, the kitchen and shadehouse are plain, utilitarian structures which do not complement the high aesthetic standard of the main house. The current extended plan form of the kitchen bisects the original northern verandah and currently frustrates the successful reconstruction of the northern verandah.

While the kitchen helps to demonstrate the Russell family's initial phase of restoration works and its demolition would result in some small loss of historical significance for that reason, the relationship of the open northern verandah is seen as contributing greatly to the aesthetic significance of the main house to a far greater degree as discussed below.

- c. The northern (rear) verandah of the main house was originally an open two-storey structure. At some time in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was enclosed with fibro and louvres and ceiled underneath the upper floor framing. This enclosure substantially detracts from the original design intent of Jimbour House and diminishes the aesthetic significance of the northern façade.

Sufficient documentary and physical evidence exists upon which to base an accurate reconstruction of the verandah. This outcome is shown on drawings S06 and S08 of the proposal.

It is recommended that the existing beaded soffit lining boards remain to the upper floor.

The only conjectural component of the proposed verandah reconstruction is the ripple iron soffit to the underside of the upper floor framing. While this was a common waterproofing detail for verandahs of the era, no evidence has been found to date of the previous existence of this detail. Regardless of this, however, it is desired to waterproof under the verandah floor. The proposed detail is considered appropriate to the building and is readily reversible.

Overall, the reconstruction of the verandah is highly-recommended and will have a positive impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place.

- d. Once the currently unsympathetic ground floor enclosures to the northern verandah are removed, the original cedar french doors from the ground floor bathroom to the verandah can be reconstructed in the existing opening. Currently, this doorway is infilled with a modern timber window assembly.

Reconstruction of this element will help retrieve the original form of the northern façade of the house and will have a positive impact on the aesthetic significance of the place.



No detail of the proposed bathroom fitouts is currently available for assessment.

- e. Once the current kitchen is removed, the original cedar french doors from the hallway to the northern verandah can be reconstructed in the existing opening. Currently, this doorway is infilled with a modern timber door assembly.

Reconstruction of this element will help retrieve the original form of the northern façade of the house and will have a positive impact on the aesthetic significance of the place.

- f. New partitions and benches are proposed to the north-east ground floor room to create a new house scullery, flower room and store. A bathroom currently exists in this space. No new wall penetrations are proposed and it is possible to attach partition framing and cabinetwork to the existing fabric with minimal damage. Provided any moulded detailing is undisturbed (e.g. plaster cornices, timber skirtings etc), this fitout should have negligible impact on significance.
- g. A new covered walkway is proposed between the house and the staff quarters/kitchen block. Such a structure existed up until 1925 in the location of the current kitchen. The timber post and curved corrugated iron roof design is considered sympathetic to the broad range of outbuildings to which it provides access and is of a small and visually-discreet scale.

At its intersection with the eastern verandah of the main house, the walkway floor slab is proposed to sit on top of existing stone stairs. It is recommended that the concrete walkway slab be cantilevered over these stairs so that the walkway floor is physically disconnected from the stone stairs.

An alternative, but inferior, approach would be to cast the floor slab on top of the stone stairs with a permanent separation layer between the two for future walkway removal.

- h. A new toilet block is proposed to the east of the existing garage. This is a small, timber and corrugated iron structure set out on the east/west axis of the northern outbuildings. In both its scale and location, it will be inconspicuous in relation to the main house and its immediate compound and will have no impact on the cultural heritage significance of Jimbour House.

The new toilet block will allow the removal of the unsightly temporary toilet building currently located immediately east of the formal gardens. This removal is supported.

- i. The existing 1990s "Titan" garage located east of the aircraft hanger is proposed to be extended in matching style. While this is an unattractive structure, its visual impact will be negligible.



- j. Since its construction in the 1950s, the swimming pool has been unfenced. This presents a hazard to young children by today's standards and it is proposed to erect a complying pool fence to three sides of the pool. The fourth (southern) side is considered inaccessible.

On the eastern and western sides of the pool, the surround merges with grapevine and other landscaping such that a standard plain aluminium pool fence of a dark neutral colour (eg. black or dark green) would be visually discreet.

The exposed northern surround engages with the formal garden and the main house. In this location, it is proposed to use a frameless toughened glass fence assembly located immediately in front of the low, sandstone garden wall. This arrangement is shown on proposal drawing S11 and is considered to be visually-neutral and of no impact on the cultural heritage significance of the garden.

In general, the various components of work which form the current application conform to the conservation policy for the place and retain the cultural heritage significance of the place set out in the statement of significance.

## **6** CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the works proposed in relation to Jimbour House which form the basis of this application will have no adverse impact on the cultural significance of the place.



## ***Appendix 1 Queensland Heritage Register Entry***

## Jimbour House

**Place ID** 600941

**Status** Permanent Entry

**Address** 86-371 Jimbour-Malakoff Road

**Town/Suburb** JIMBOUR

**LGA** WAMBO SHIRE COUNCIL

**Theme** Developing primary production

**Theme** Living in the country and rural settlements

**Theme** Promoting settlement

### *Significance*

Jimbour House, as the main homestead on one of the earliest stations established on the Darling Downs, is important in demonstrating the pattern of early European exploration and pastoral settlement in Queensland. The place is associated with the development of the Downs and of the pastoral industry in Queensland and is important in demonstrating the wealth and ambition of early Queensland pastoralists.

Jimbour House was an ambitious house in terms of size, style and finish and was intended to support the social and political aspirations of Joshua Peter Bell, an important politician and businessman as well as grazier. It is unique in Queensland as the only really grand country house in the English manner to be built in this State. Other substantial stone homesteads of the era, such as Talgai, Glengallan and Westbrook, came nowhere near to rivalling Jimbour in either size or opulence.

As a hierarchy of residential and working buildings, the complex of buildings at Jimbour House has the potential to reveal information about the history of one of the earliest pastoral stations in Queensland, and about the nature of early pastoralism in Queensland, which will contribute to our understanding of Queensland's history.

While Jimbour House and its gardens and ancillary buildings are not typical of a Queensland homestead complex, the building techniques and materials used in their construction, together with the relationship existing between residential and working buildings, provides a good example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century pastoral station complex.

Jimbour House has outstanding aesthetic significance as a well designed and constructed house that is pleasing in form, materials and detail. It sits within notable gardens and is a landmark against the flats of the surrounding landscape.

Jimbour House is important for its association with early Darling Downs pioneers and Queensland politicians including Sir Joshua Peter Bell and his son Joshua Thomas Bell, and has special association for the Darling Downs community as a focal point of social life in the region for many years.

### *History*

Jimbour House is a large stone house designed in 1873-74 by Brisbane architects Suter and Voysey and completed by early 1877 as the Darling Downs residence of Joshua Peter Bell, a

prominent Queensland pastoralist and politician. It was also the head station of one of Queensland's earliest pastoral properties.

Allan Cunningham, botanist and explorer of the Darling Downs in 1827, considered the discovery of this fertile pastoral land as one of his greatest achievements. In 1840, impelled by the push northward for grazing land, the Leslie brothers arrived on the Downs from the Clarence River district and took up Canning Downs, the first pastoral run in the district.

Soon afterwards, in 1841, Henry Dennis claimed a run of about 3,000,000 acres on behalf of Richard Todd Scougall who owned Liverpool Plains. The area was then known as Jimba or Gimba and the boundaries of this vast run were described as between the Bunya Mountains and the Condamine River. By 1842, when the penal settlement at Brisbane closed and the area was thrown open to free settlement, a cluster of huge pastoral runs had claimed most of the productive land on the Darling Downs. At this time Jimbour was stocked with approximately 11,000 sheep and 700 cattle. Financial difficulties caused Scougall to sell the Jimbour run in 1843 to Thomas Bell of Parramatta, for £3200. At that time the area comprising Jimbour Station was reduced, though it remained one of the largest properties on the Downs. In 1844 explorer Ludwig Leichhardt stayed at Jimbour, at that time the most northerly station on the Downs, preparing for his trip to Port Essington. Dennis, who had been retained as manager of Jimbour by Thomas Bell, accompanied Leichhardt on the first two days of his journey north. Following Dennis' death in 1847 Thomas Bell's sons Joshua Peter and John Alexander arrived to manage the property for Bell & Sons, the family business that comprised Thomas, Joshua Peter and John Alexander Bell. Soon, however, the entire management fell to Joshua, the eldest son. Although only 21 when he took control, Joshua built on the foundations of previous managers to develop Jimbour as one of the best conducted stations on the Darling Downs, running sheep principally. He married Margaret Miller Dorsey of Ipswich in 1861, and at Jimbour they raised their family.

JP Bell began the association of the Bell family and Jimbour with Queensland politics. In 1860 he ran unsuccessfully for the first Queensland Parliament, but was elected as Member for West Moreton in 1862. He remained involved in politics for the rest of his life and held several cabinet posts, being first appointed as Treasurer in the Herbert ministry in 1864. In 1868 he was returned for the Northern Downs, a constituency that included his own property (Jimbour), and held the seat until he was appointed President of the Legislative Council in 1879. In 1880 he acted as administrator of the Colony for nine months, reflecting the high public esteem in which he was held, and was appointed KCMG in 1881.

In 1864, utilising their pre-emptive purchase rights, Thomas Bell, Joshua Peter Bell and John Alexander Bell acquired title to 4786 acres (pre-emptive portion 1) of the Jimbour holding as tenants in common. This pre-emptive purchase included the head station site. In the same year they commissioned architect Benjamin Backhouse to design a substantial stone store at Jimbour. A small dwelling formerly used by Dennis had been

supplemented by a house built for Scougall that the Bell brothers occupied when they first arrived. This burnt down in 1868 and was replaced by a two-storeyed house built of bluestone.

As with most large pastoral properties, a small village settlement developed around the main residence, the buildings including a butcher and smithy, and accommodation for a large number of employees, including a manager and overseer. A timber chapel was constructed in 1868, and this also served as a provisional school in the 1870s. The Jimbour shearing shed was built some miles away from the homestead complex and could handle 250,000 sheep during the season, illustrating the size of the Jimbour pastoral enterprise. Following Thomas Bell's death in September 1872, the Jimbour freehold was transmitted to Joshua Peter Bell, John Alexander Bell and a third brother, Marmaduke Bell, as tenants in common.

In 1872 Joshua Peter Bell became a founder member and director of the Queensland National Bank. This was the first and most successful of Queensland's three indigenous 19th century private banks and attracted widespread Queensland patronage. In 1879 it secured the whole of the government's banking business. By 1880 it held 40% of deposits in the colony and dominated the Queensland economy.

The decade from the mid-1850s to the mid-1860s had been a boom period for wool prices and as squatters gained secure tenure of their runs, they began to build handsome houses. About 1873 fashionable Brisbane architects Richard Suter and Annesley Voysey, in partnership from January 1872 to September 1874, were commissioned to design a new sandstone house, handsome and ambitious in scale and quality, as the main residence at Jimbour. These architects had designed homesteads for other prominent Darling Downs pastoralists, including East Talgai Homestead near Allora for Hon. George Edward Clark in 1868 (Suter), and in partnership as Suter and Voysey, Euston at Drayton for William Kent in 1873, and Westbrook Hall near Drayton for Mrs William Beit in 1873-76. These were substantial residences, but none rivalled the scale and grandeur of Jimbour, which appears to have been the largest, grandest and most expensive private house constructed in Queensland in the 1870s.

Work on Jimbour House commenced in late 1874, and was completed by early 1877. With the exception of the Welsh slate used to clad the roof, all the construction materials were sourced locally. Timber included cedar, hoop pine, bunya pine, satin wood, ironbark, spotted gum and blue gum.

The quarries at Bunjinnie, a few miles distant from the homestead, provided the sandstone. 10 stonemasons, 9 carpenters and a number of labourers were employed on the house, and nearly 200 men were employed in stone cutting and timber getting and carrying.

The completed residence had a floor space of about 23,000 square feet.

The rooms on the ground floor contained the public spaces, including a large dining room, drawing room and morning room. The upper floor contained the bedrooms. Most rooms had fireplaces, and there were also fireplaces in the hallway on both levels. Water, and gas manufactured on Jimbour, were laid on, an exceptional luxury for a rural property at the time. A four-storey timber water tower was constructed to support a large tank and provide water pressure. When the new mansion was complete, the 1868 bluestone residence was converted into a kitchen and staff quarters, connected to the main house by a covered way.

In 1881 a shortage of working capital led the Bell brothers to merge their financial interests in Jimbour with those of Premier Thomas McIlwraith and JC Smyth, forming The Darling Downs and Western Land Company. In October 1881 most of the Jimbour freehold was transferred to the Company, but an area of 100 acres (sub 1 of pre-emptive portion 1), containing the house and most of the outbuildings, was retained by the Bell brothers as tenants in common. JP Bell died suddenly in December 1881 and his family commissioned a memorial obelisk that was placed to the west of the main house, near the water tower and church. At this time JP Bell's interest in Jimbour House was transferred to his wife Dame Margaret Miller Bell, Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer and Boyd Dunlop Morehead as Trustees. In 1886 JP Bell's Trustees, John Alexander Bell and Marmaduke Bell raised a mortgage on Jimbour House from the Queensland National Bank.

Following JP Bell's death Dame Margaret travelled to England with her children to further their education and did not return to Jimbour until 1889. In the interim, the Darling Downs and Western Land Company experienced financial difficulties and the Queensland National Bank foreclosed on the company in 1884. Jimbour House continued as the principal residence of Dame Margaret and her eldest son, barrister Joshua Thomas Bell, following their return to Queensland in 1889. JT Bell became a director of the Darling Downs and Western Land Company, and served as private secretary to Premier Sir Samuel Griffith 1890-92. Following the collapse of the Company in the early 1890s, it is understood that the Bell family assigned their interest in the Jimbour freehold to the Queensland National Bank, on the condition that the family was allowed to occupy Jimbour House, which they did until 1912.

JT Bell entered the Queensland Legislative Assembly, serving as Member for Dalby from 1893 until his death in March 1911. He served as Secretary for Lands 1903-1908 and briefly as Secretary for Public Lands and Railways from 6 February to 3 July 1907, during which time he introduced land reforms under the Closer Settlement Act 1906, and paved the way for environmental reform with the State Forests and National Parks Act 1906. He served as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from mid-1909 until his death in 1911. In 1899 Jimbour still comprised close to 130,000 acres and ran about 100,000 sheep. Merino and Lincoln studs were kept, and sheep and cattle from western properties were fattened at Jimbour.

In 1907, during JT Bell's control of the Public Lands portfolio, the Queensland Government purchased 121,061 acres of Jimbour land from the Queensland National Bank, under

the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act 1906. This land was released for farm selection between 1907 and 1910. The Bank retained 6000 acres of Jimbour land adjacent to Jimbour House. Also during his period in office, JT Bell lobbied for construction of two branch railway lines through the newly opened Jimbour lands, to transport the new wheat crops. The first line, opened in 1906, ran from Dalby to the new town of Bell, named after JP Bell, and the second, opened in 1914, was constructed from Dalby to Jandowae, passing through the new town of Jimbour.

In 1903 JT Bell had married Catherine Jane, widow of Rockhampton solicitor Sydney Jones and daughter of John Ferguson. With JT Bell heavily occupied with his political career, they resided much of the time at their Graceville home, Rakeevan, with Bell returning to Jimbour House when Parliament was not sitting. Following the death of JT Bell in 1911, the contents of Jimbour House were auctioned in July 1912 and Dame Margaret retired to Brisbane. Through the remainder of the decade the house was occupied by Messrs Thomas and Ryder of Jimbour Station, although they did not acquire title to the house site. In the early 1920s the house on its 100 acres was sold by order of the mortgagee, the Queensland National Bank, with title transferred in the association of the Russell family with Jimbour House commenced in the 1920s when Roma pastoralist Wilfred Adams Russell purchased the property from Whippell. Title was transferred to Russell in January 1925. WA Russell was born in Queensland in 1874 and educated in New South Wales, where he later acquired pastoral and agricultural interests. In 1909 he acquired an interest in Dalmally Station near Roma and took up residence there in 1910. He further extended his pastoral interests with the acquisition of properties at Cunnamulla and Jimbour Station.

Like the Bells before him, WA Russell of Jimbour became involved in local politics. He served as an alderman of the Dalby Town Council and as the member for Dalby in the Queensland Parliament from 1926 until his death in 1932. At the time of Russell's purchase, Jimbour House was derelict, with several of the ceilings collapsed and only parts of the building habitable, and the gardens were a wilderness. In 1924-25 WA Russell commenced a major programme of restoration and repair. Ceilings were replaced; a new kitchen was added behind the house, incorporating part of the former covered way between the 1870s house and the 1868 bluestone house; and the gardens were redesigned and extended by Brisbane landscape designer Harry Stokes. The bluestone building was badly damaged and parts of the upper floor had crumbled so it was decided to salvage the ground floor as a single storey building and use this as men's quarters.

On 21 November 1925 Jimbour House was formally re-opened with a fund raising fete for Dalby Hospital. This commitment to work for the well being of the community has been continued by the Russell family.

Wilfred Russell died in 1932, and the management of Jimbour passed to his son Charles Russell and Charles' wife Hilary. Continuing the connection between Jimbour and Queensland

politics, Charles Russell was elected as a Wambo Shire councillor in 1936 and served as the Member for Dalby in the Queensland Parliament from 1947 to 1949. From 1949 to 1951 he held the Federal seat of Maranoa. In the 1930s, two large wooden pergolas over the drive at each end of the house and four smaller pergolas in the rose garden were erected, and the rose garden was divided into the four quadrants that now define it. In 1938 the drive was constructed from the front gate to the water tower, and Jacarandas and shrubs were planted along both sides.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Russells developed agriculture (especially wheat) in conjunction with livestock at Jimbour, and new facilities were constructed such as stores, grain silos, feedlots and piggeries. Work on the early buildings and the garden also continued. In 1950 a large swimming pool and wading pool were constructed in the front grounds of Jimbour House and children from surrounding properties were welcome to visit Jimbour and use the pool during the summer months. An airstrip was established at the rear of the house in the 1950s. In 1956 the timber water tower was converted into a four-level residence for the gardener. In the 1960s, the 1864 stone store was converted into two flats with the construction of a mezzanine level and the insertion of dormer windows, and a citrus orchard was planted to the east of the swimming pool. Charles Russell died in 1977, but Jimbour House remains the property of the Russell family. In the late 20th century a stone fruit and pomme fruit orchard was established to the west of the swimming pool and avenues of trees (planted by distinguished visitors) were commenced on the eastern and western sides of the garden. A vineyard was established on Jimbour land in the late 1990s, but this is not included within the heritage boundary.

### ***Description***

Jimbour House is a rural homestead complex located in open country on the Darling Downs north of Dalby and approximately 250 kilometres northwest of Brisbane. The main residence is situated on a slight rise but is now masked by the mature trees of the surrounding garden. The complex includes a substantial two-storeyed sandstone residence set in extensive gardens and a number of auxiliary buildings and structures, some of which predate the main house.

The house is approached along a drive planted with mature Jacaranda trees. Beyond the entrance gates, the house is surrounded by a large formal garden, laid out and largely planted in the 1920s, with a curved gravelled driveway wrapping around a circular garden bed divided into four sections with a fountain at the intersection of the bisecting paths. The gardens feature planting out beds and large mature trees including a number of Queen palms (*Arecastrum nomanzofflanum*), and furniture of substantial construction. A low stone wall marks the southern boundary of the 1870s garden. Beyond this there is a swimming pool (1950) to the south of the front circular drive and a productive kitchen garden at the rear of the main house.

Main House (1874-77 Jimbour House comprises three bays; two longitudinal projecting end bays with a central transverse bay, lined on the principal façade with an open terrace on the upper level supported on Doric order columns on stone plinths, paired in some places. Centrally located on the principal façade is a semi-circular projection, apparent in the roofline and through both storeys.

This defines the principal entrance. The roof is steeply pitched, hipped over the three bays of the building and clad with Welsh slates. Dominating the roofline are four large brick chimneystacks with corbelled caps. Projecting from the two ends of the building are classically-inspired single-storeyed wings with parapets concealing their rooflines. The terrace on the upper level of the house has been built in at the rear and there is a single storeyed brick kitchen block below it. The interior of the house has a wide hall running for most of its length on both levels. The lower level hall has a fireplace on one wall, reminiscent of the galleries in English country houses used as winter promenades. The joinery is of a high quality. The ground floor contains reception rooms, a billiard room and a large, square entrance hall with the main bedroom opening off it. The upper floor echoes the layout of the ground floor and has an open paved terrace, bedrooms, and suites of rooms. One bedroom has two hunting scenes frescoes (drawn directly onto the plaster of the walls) dated 16/11/1879.

Bluestone Building (1868 residence, remodelled in the 1870s as a kitchen and staff quarters and in the 1920s as men's quarters To the rear of the main house and separated from it by a garden area, is a single-storeyed, low-set bluestone building with sandstone quoins, rectangular in plan, which was formed from the lower storey of the 1868 main homestead residence. It has a hipped roof clad in corrugated iron. The wall at the eastern end of the building is of weatherboards with bricks infilling between the quoins, following the removal of an adjoining wing.

The rooms are arranged in a linear fashion, each opening onto a verandah along the southern side. The interior has fibrous cement linings and battened ceilings. One room has a brick fireplace. Several working buildings are set low to the ground around an open area to the rear (north) of the bluestone house. These include a timber and corrugated iron stables and garage that shows variations in building methods and materials corresponding with the various historical stages of construction. A workshop, situated between the stables and the bluestone house, is of timber construction with a gabled roof clad in corrugated iron, a verandah along the front (western) elevation, and a later lean-to extension along the rear (eastern) elevation. It contains a shaft and drive belt from a shearing machine. This group of ancillary buildings also includes a small timber cottage, originally two-roomed, relocated from the site of an early woolshed complex to the north of the airstrip. It has a gabled roof clad in corrugated iron and an attached verandah. To the east of this small building is a metal arched hangar of the 'igloo' type, and beside this is a small timber framed and corrugated iron clad fuel store, with a gabled roof. The airstrip is located to the north of the outbuildings.

#### Chapel (1868)

At some distance west from the main house and north of the main drive is a simple timber chapel set on low stumps. It is rectangular in plan with the sanctuary under a separate roof at one end and a porch at the other. The main roof is clad with late 20th century tiles and has a small belfry. The roofs of the belfry, sanctuary and porch are clad in corrugated iron. The porch roof has been raised to accommodate a small film projection room above the door, illustrating the multi-functioned use of this building. Small projection windows perforate the wall into the church. Inside, the main roof is supported on scissor trusses and is ceiled with timber. The nave is lined with composite board and is lit by small lancet windows with coloured glass.

There are carved altar rails and font and timber pews.

Water Tower (1870s, converted 1950s into residential use)

West of the chapel and the main drive is a tall timber tower, 4 storeys in height and square in section, with walls sloping inwards, supporting a large, square, cast iron water tank. The framing is of trimmed tree trunks and hand hewn timber, clad externally with weatherboards dating to the 1870s.

The interior now accommodates residential use and is lined with fibrous cement sheeting and timber cover strips. The ground floor has modern metal-framed sliding doors and windows and contains a visitors' centre and gift shop. The top storey room is decorated with several naïve paintings, executed between 1924 and 1956 by a former employee at Jimbour. From this level, there is external access via a timber ladder to the water tank above. A single storey timber extension has been added to one side.

#### Bell Memorial (c1881)

The Bell Memorial is located to the south of the water tower. Modern metal railings surround the memorial, which comprises a painted masonry obelisk decorated very simply with a border of acanthus below the plinth on which the shaft rests. The memorial below this is square in section with a plaque to each face, two of which are inscribed in memory of Sir Joshua Peter Bell who died in 1881 and of his son Joshua Thomas Bell who died in 1911. The other two faces are blank.

Stone Store (1864; converted 1960s into residential flats)

To the west/southwest of the main house is a large, rectangular building of pecked sandstone blocks, which now accommodates residential accommodation on two levels. Originally constructed as a store, evidence remains of the massive barred windows and catshead to the upper level.

The building has a gabled roof with close eaves, clad in corrugated iron, into which dormer windows have been inserted. The end walls have arched openings on the upper level, which are now glazed. One of them has a small balcony. The building has sash windows and one of the external doors has a mail hatch from the days when this building was used as a post office. Partition walls and some ceilings inside are timber. One of the rear rooms has a blue-green lime wash finish that is believed to be early.

Adjacent to the store is an underground tank or silo and to the north is an early underground water tank or well.

## ***Appendix 2***   *Conservation Policy*