



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 *

Royal George Hotel is a typical example of a turn of the century, Western Australian gold boom, corner hotel. Its style is part of the style, identity and ambience of the Plympton precinct of East Fremantle, to which it is central. (Criterion 1.1)

Royal George Hotel is a good example of a Federation Free Classical style, typical of the ebullient confidence of the boom years. It is handsomely proportioned and well balanced about its corner tower/cupola, which strongly marks its corner site. The architect showed considerable skill in producing a coherent and notable building, in the style of the day, whilst successfully addressing the design problems of a difficult site. (Criterion 1.2)

Royal George Hotel is a strong landmark and one of the few large buildings in a mostly residential suburb. It is clearly visible from many approaches and main roads within East Fremantle. On its high location, it is the far point of the vista from both the east and west wards of George Street. (Criterion 1.3)

The Plympton precinct is an historic precinct, focused on the western end of George Street. It is a commercial strip which developed within a decade as the homes of the surrounding streets were built. *Royal George Hotel* is the largest and easternmost structure in this precinct. Over the last decade, efforts have been made to conserve and promote the Plympton precinct and its heritage buildings. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Royal George Hotel has functioned since 1900 as a central, social place which connected with the residential, commercial and recreational places in its vicinity, before and since the disruptions of the Stirling Highway extension. It is, therefore, an important part of the history of the locality. (Criterion 2.1)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

Royal George Hotel illustrates the turn of the century development boom in East Fremantle, as elsewhere in Western Australia, which resulted from the 1890s gold rush. (Criterion 2.2)

The hotel was built for the Mulcahy brothers, well-known hoteliers and pastoralists. (Criterion 2.3)

Royal George Hotel shows a high degree of technical accomplishment as it was constructed on a difficult site, skilfully utilising the design and engineering techniques of its day. It has remained in sound structural condition despite major adjacent earthworks. It demonstrates technical excellence in engineering design and construction. The design and fittings of the hotel are of high quality. *Royal George Hotel* is also symbolic of the commitment and achievement of local people in saving it during the highway extension phase. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Royal George Hotel shows a high degree of technical accomplishment as it was constructed on a difficult site, skilfully utilising the design and engineering techniques of its day. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The local community values *Royal George Hotel*, now the Royal George Arts and Community Centre, for its social and cultural associations as a meeting place whilst an hotel and as an educational, cultural, recreational and eating place since. The local community were instrumental in saving the building from demolition. (Criterion 4.1)

The building contributes to the community's sense of continuity, belonging and connection to past generations. It is presently a community centre for mostly artistic endeavours. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Royal George Hotel is comparatively rare in that it is a relatively intact, if partially reconstructed, gold boom period hotel within the metropolitan area. In its current use it is under minimal threat of redevelopment and, therefore, it is likely to become more rare as other hotels are converted or adapted to meet changing needs. The building has an unusual basement and foundation structure, two levels below the ground level public spaces. The ground floor entrance level is related to the high point of the site at the north-east corner of George and Duke streets and the corner entrance to the former public bar is the only entrance which directly relates to that level. The cupola is a rare example still in its original form and still capable of use. The basement coach house arrangements are unusual and possibly unique in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Royal George Hotel demonstrates a style of hospitality that no longer meets the expectations of hotel patrons and is rarely practiced. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Royal George Hotel has many common characteristics of Western Australian gold boom hotels. It is typical in the character, form and style of its public and private areas. (Criterion 6.1)

Royal George Hotel demonstrates the social customs of hotel patronage and the central role of the hotel in suburban Australia in the early and mid twentieth century. It is also representative of changing attitudes and tastes of the late twentieth century and community commitment to retaining older buildings. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Royal George Hotel is in sound structural condition generally. The concrete floors to the men's toilet area/storeroom/service area and to the kitchen verandah are in poor condition. The north facade and tower/cupola have water damage, as do walls and ceilings under chimneys, windows to the weather (west) facades and the walls adjacent to the south-west corner downpipes. Some stonework in the north basement area is in need of attention. The addition of the women's toilets have caused problems where beams are housed into limestone walls. There are problems in the bathroom and toilet areas where adaptations have not resulted in correct standards being maintained. Changes in use, function and fabric of the building have effected it in relatively minor ways. More sympathetic adaptation and upgrading could readily be carried out.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Royal George Hotel has a high level of integrity. The original intent of the building remains obvious. The Royal George Arts and Community Centre has operated for a decade with little conflict with the heritage values of the building that have been identified. In many ways, the current use allows the building to remain in its present form.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Royal George Hotel has a relatively high level of authenticity. Most of the original fabric is intact. The street verandahs are a reconstruction based on original documentation, apart from the column bases, and this reinstatement was part of the 1986 conservation works designed by Oldham Boas Ednie-Brown Architects and Planners. Kitchen, bathroom and toilet areas have had internal, and some external, renovations and, apart from their location, have a low level of authenticity. The other interior spaces of the building have medium to high levels of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Hocking Planning & Architecture and Adele Adelphi, 'Royal George Hotel Conservation Plan' (prepared for CAMS on behalf of Main Roads Western Australia, March, 1998).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Hocking Planning & Architecture and Adele Adelphi, 'Royal George Hotel Conservation Plan' (prepared for CAMS on behalf of Main Roads Western Australia, March, 1998).

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence refer to Hocking Planning & Architecture and Adele Adelphi, 'Royal George Hotel Conservation Plan' (prepared for CAMS on behalf of Main Roads Western Australia, March, 1998).

13.3 REFERENCES

Hocking Planning & Architecture and Adele Adelphi, 'Royal George Hotel Conservation Plan' (prepared for CAMS on behalf of Main Roads Western Australia, March, 1998).

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
