



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

A sense of enclosure is demonstrated by the courtyard form of development and strengthened by the covered verandah connections between the buildings via the covered verandahs linking all the important spaces. This is further reinforced by the services and surrounding gardens and activities located on the property such as market gardens and the bowling green. (Criterion 1.1)

The site is a recognised and important landmark which can easily be identified from the river and other areas around Melville Water. It has many important vistas to and from the Swan River. The vista from the escarpment towards the city illustrates the site's isolation from the city at the turn of the century and the vista across Melville Water and around the bay towards Fremantle illustrates a portion of the present suburban development of the metropolitan region and the encroachment of residential subdivision on this once remote location. (Criterion 1.3)

The buildings on the site generally display a high degree of homogeneity which collectively forms an historic precinct and significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Sunset Hospital is one of the largest intact early twentieth century public health facilities in the State and, through its site planning and building design, represents the health care policies and practices of the time and throughout its development. It is an important illustration of a State financed institution involved in the provision of services to the indigent poor, the elderly and the infirm. The various names of the site, and its predecessor, the Mount Eliza Depot, being the "Poorhouse", the "Old Men's Home", "Sunset Home" and *Sunset Hospital*, illustrate changing attitudes to both the elderly and infirm, and the range of care provided at the site. (Criterion 2.1)

While much of the written history of Western Australia is associated with wealth and periods of "growth" such as the gold rush, peak periods of economic downturn and unsuccessful gold diggers from the gold rush period resulted in the institutionalisation of inmates at *Sunset Hospital*. The complex

also housed one of the last convicts to be transported to Australia, Mr Samuel Speed, who died in 1939, ending a very significant period in Western Australian history. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

Sunset Hospital was one of the main facilities to house and treat veterans from the various wars. (Criterion 2.2)

The site is of significance for its association with prominent architect Hillson Beasley who, as Chief Architect at the Public Works Department, was ultimately responsible for the original site planning and building design. (Criterion 2.3)

Sunset Hospital is also important for its associations with individuals whose life works and activities have made a significant contribution to the development of the State, such as Sir Charles Court and former Master of the Home, Albert Rust, who agitated for the rights of the underprivileged and the elderly (particularly for old age pensions), and for an "open gate" policy at the home.

The original rock face ashlar buildings demonstrate the high level of professional competence, design expertise and workmanship of the Public Works Department. This is especially evident when examining the highly individual detailing used throughout the complex. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The site is of potential archaeological significance given its continued use as a residential health care facility since 1904. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The landmark qualities of *Sunset Hospital* contribute to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Sunset Hospital is a unique example of the type of government sponsored housing for homeless and vagrant men in the State in the early twentieth century. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

In general, all buildings appear to be in good condition with minimal rising damp in isolated places.

For a detailed discussion of the condition of individual buildings refer to Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Although the function of each building has predominantly remained the same, the evolution of the usage of the buildings has often required some adaptation for compatible uses. These modifications have been usually superficial and are illustrative of the changing demands upon the capacity of *Sunset Hospital*, improving technologies and revised health policies and regulations. Although extensive alterations and additions have occurred to some buildings, they have generally maintained their heritage integrity. Overall, *Sunset Hospital* has a high level of integrity.

For a detailed discussion of the integrity of individual buildings refer to Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The most substantial and continuous modifications to the built fabric have been the upgrading of toilet facilities and amenities. Installation and connection to the main city sewerage system in 1942 solved waste removal problems which had plagued the place since its inception. Many of the support services and facilities, such as sheds, workshops and garages, have been adapted, relocated, demolished or removed to other sites, but essentially, the major structures on the site are as originally constructed. Overall, *Sunset Hospital* has a high degree of authenticity.

For a detailed discussion of the authenticity of individual buildings refer to Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

The Doctor's and Staff Accommodation [a brick and tile building designated T in the Conservation Plan] is not included in this registration.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the physical evidence refer to Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).

The Doctor's and Staff Accommodation [a brick and tile building designated T in the Conservation Plan] is not included in this registration.

13.3 REFERENCES

Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd: 'Conservation Plan, Sunset Hospital' (prepared for the Building Management Authority in September 1995).