



## 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.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 7.6.4 Dispensing Justice

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 403 Law and order

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Collie Court House* is of significance as a good example of a single storey brick and tile building designed in the Federation Free style. (Criterion 1.1)

As a well designed and constructed building, *Collie Court House* contributes to the aesthetic values of the setting in the vicinity of the intersection in Wittenoom and Pendleton Streets Collie. (Criterion 1.2)

As a substantial, distinctive building sited at a prominent open landscaped intersection opposite the Collie Senior High School, *Collie Court House* has landmark qualities within its environs. (Criterion 1.3)

*Collie Court House* and the Collie Senior High School, collectively form a streetscape of significant public buildings. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Collie Court House* is associated with the rapid development of Collie from the early 1900s and, in particular, of the need to improve the existing justice facilities by constructing a new permanent court house in 1913. (Criterion 2.1)

*Collie Court House* has been a symbol of the justice system in the Collie district since 1913 up to the present day in 2001 and has historic value for its association with establishing and maintaining law and order dating from this time. (Criterion 2.2)

*Collie Court House* is associated with the Public Works Department and in particular, with Hillson Beasley, the Chief Architect from 1905 to 1917. (Criterion 2.3)

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\* 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.

*Collie Court House* is associated with the many Resident Magistrates, Magistrates, Clerks of Court and other justice staff who have worked in the building since 1913 up to the present day (2001). (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Collie Court House* is valued as a place associated with the administration of justice and the processes of law and order in the Collie district since 1913 and up to the present day (2001). (Criterion 4.1)

*Collie Court House* is highly valued by the community for its historical associations with the development of Collie, and thus contributes to the community's sense of place. This is illustrated by its inclusion the National Trust's List of Classified Places. (Criterion 4.2)

*Collie Court House* is valued by the staff and the public associated with the place as a centre of administering justice from 1913 to 2001. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Collie Court House* is one of seven purpose-built court houses constructed prior to 1930 in Western Australia that are still operating as court houses. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Collie Court House* is a good example of a building designed in the Federation Free style and shares aesthetic characteristics with a wide variety of public buildings designed by the Public Works Department between 1900 and 1920. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Collie Court House* appears to be in good condition. It benefits from a regular programme of maintenance works.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Collie Court House* is of high integrity. The building continues to be used as a courthouse.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Collie Court House* has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The extensive additions constructed at the rear of the building have had little impact on the original part of the building. The fabric of the original part of the building remains largely intact apart from the replacement fixed furnishings and the suspended ceiling in the courtroom, and the recent fit-out of the Clerk of Courts office area.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Lucy Williams, Historian and Heritage Consultant. The physical evidence has been compiled by Alan Kelsall, Kelsall Binet Architects.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Collie Court House* is a single storey brick and tile building in the Federation Free style, which was constructed in 1913 with additions in 1950 and 1986.

Background information about the development of Collie is as follows:

On 23 November 1829, Lt. Surgeon Alexander Collie and Lt. Preston discovered the Collie and Preston Rivers. In March 1830, the area was explored further by John Septimus Roe and a part from the schooner *Eagle*; they traveled 10 miles up the river from Port Leschenault, then overland after the river became unnavigable due to fallen trees; subsequently the area was renamed Roelands. In his report, Roe spoke highly of the land, predicting its value for agriculture. The first pastoralists and shepherds arrived in the Collie district in the early 1880s, seeking improved pasture for their stock.

Coal was discovered by either Arthur Perrin or his shepherd, George Marsh in 1882-1883; however, it remained a secret for some years. The discovery was announced in November, 1889, by Sir Frederick Broome, naming as the discoverer an associate of Perrin, Bunbury businessman David Hay. It was to Hay's widow that the reward, offered to the finder of an adequate field of coal within 60 miles of a port to supply the colony's needs for indigenous fuel, was paid. From 1888 to 1889, Hay and his associates prospected further on the coalfields; a South Australian company was also prospecting there in this period. Further prospecting and a government drilling programme, as well as tests by the Railways Department to evaluate the coal as locomotive fuel, preceded the development of the coalfields.

In February 1896, 102,000 acres of land was opened for selection on the coalfields. The leases and the proposed townsite were surveyed by J. Ewing, who settled in the town, serving on the Roads Board, the Municipal Council and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. By late 1897, in anticipation of the development of the coalfields, many miners had made their way to the town. The town of Collie was proclaimed on 13 December 1879. Construction of the railway to the port began late in 1897. It was completed on 1 July 1898; the railway station, named 'Coalville', opened on 1 November 1898. A short while later, it was renamed 'Colliefields', before the name of Collie was adopted on 1 December 1899, to conform with the name of the town.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the rapid development of Collie, several public service facilities were established to meet the needs of the town. By 1903, a bank, post and telegraph office, state school, government hospital, mechanics' institute, police station and court house were in operation.<sup>2</sup> No information has been determined about the first court house in Collie, other than the fact that it was constructed of timber.<sup>3</sup> By around 1910, the growing number of cases placed pressure on the court house and the community began to lobby for improved facilities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from the Heritage Council assessment for All Saints' Anglican Church (#552), prepared by Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths, February 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Hocking Planning and Architecture, 'Shire of Collie: Municipal Heritage Inventory', prepared for the Shire of Collie, October 1995, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 'Report of the Department of Public Works, 1913-1914', p. 25. This has been noted as an area for further research.

<sup>4</sup> *Collie Mail*, 13 December 1913.

A site plan dated April 1913 shows the proposed *Collie Court House* on the south-east corner of Wittenoom and Pendleton Streets. An amended site plan dated May 1913 shows the proposed building with an additional verandah to the back and a block of latrines, with separate cubicles for the court officers, magistrates, police and public, in the south-east corner of the site.<sup>5</sup>

A floor plan of *Collie Court House* signed by Hillson Beasley, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, indicates that behind the colonnaded public entrance was the court room with public gallery. On the west side of the court room were rooms for the Magistrates and the Clerk of Courts, incorporating a public counter. On the east side of the *Collie Court House* was a separate room for witnesses and a private room for the Principal Magistrate.<sup>6</sup> A passage between these rooms led directly into the court room. There was a railing in the public gallery to restrict public access within the building. In addition, the separate entrances into the Magistrates' room and Clerk of Courts room and the passage for witnesses and the Principal Magistrate reinforced the distinct roles associated with the justice system. Future extensions to the east side of *Collie Court House* were indicated on the drawing.<sup>7</sup>

On 17 June 1913 a contract was let to T. Hull of Subiaco to construct the new court house for the sum of £2,288. The contract contingency was used for lettering and electric lighting. The building contract was completed on 15 December 1913 at a cost of £2,229 4s 9d, slightly below the tender amount.<sup>8</sup>

*Collie Court House* was officially opened by the Attorney-General, Thomas Walker MLA, on 8 December 1913. While generally pleased with their new building, the absence of a foundation stone and footpath around the building were pointed out to the visiting Attorney-General by local officials.<sup>9</sup> The Attorney-General was noted to have commented that,

Justice required greater facilities by the erection of new Courts and Magistrates' residences. The speaker congratulated the people of Collie on having such a Temple of Justice in their midst, which from an architectural point of view was no disgrace to Collie, and the architect was to be congratulated on such an up-to-date Court House.<sup>10</sup>

The foundation stone was added sometime after the opening ceremony.<sup>11</sup> One of the first additions to *Collie Court House* was a new porch to the Clerk of Court's entrance. Hoods were also installed over the windows along the west elevation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Both plans have a PWD number of 17070, both are attached to plan set 5/517/0C, provided courtesy of CAMS.

<sup>6</sup> The drawings indicate 'PM's Private Room' – presumably this stands for Principal Magistrate.

<sup>7</sup> PWD drawing 17070, drawing no. 3, provided courtesy of CAMS.

<sup>8</sup> State Records Office, AN 7/14, Acc. 1124, Item 11 'PWD Contract Book April 1913-February 1915', contract #4902 and 'Report of the Department of Public Works for the Financial Year 1913-1914', p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> *Collie Mail*, 13 December 1913 and *Collie Miner*, 16 December 1913. Note: the two accounts of the opening are very similar.

<sup>10</sup> *Collie Miner*, 16 December 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Site inspection, May 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Copy of PWD drawing 17070, date not established as a copy of the 1913 drawing was used to detail the building works but is believed to be soon after the construction, provided courtesy of CAMS.

In 1916, a section of the public counter was altered to accommodate use as a branch of the Government Savings Bank.<sup>13</sup> It would appear that no further alterations were carried out to the place until the 1950s.<sup>14</sup>

In March 1950, plans were prepared to replace the latrine block with a brick and terracotta tile toilet block. As with the previous latrines, separate toilets were provided for court staff and the public. The toilet block also incorporated a wood store and store room for the court.<sup>15</sup>

Accounts of the opening ceremony in 1913 indicated the local hope that further court accommodation would need to be provided in future to reflect the growing development of Collie.<sup>16</sup> However, apart from additional toilet and storage facilities in the early 1950s, the building was largely unchanged until the mid-1980s. Around March or April 1986 a fire occurred in *Collie Court House*.<sup>17</sup>

In April 1986, the Building Management Authority (successor to the Public Works Department) prepared plans for additions to the *Collie Court House*. The proposal included a security holding room (in the location noted on the original plans as 'future police room'), a new magistrates chamber, staff toilets, public toilets and a store on the south side of *Collie Court House*.<sup>18</sup> In designing the additions, care was taken to match original details such as windows, window hoods, the porch to the magistrates' chamber and gutters and fascias. The drawings do not include details of the fire damage that occurred.<sup>19</sup>

In 1993, the building was listed as having, '1 Stipendiary Magistrates (sic) chamber, 1 magistrate's court, 1 holding cell, an interview room, Managing Registrar's office, waiting area, store room, kitchen, and staff & public toilets'.<sup>20</sup>

*Collie Court House* was classified by the National Trust in 1988 and was entered in the Register of Heritage Places in 1992 on an interim basis.<sup>21</sup>

It does not appear that any major works have been carried out since 1986.<sup>22</sup> In November 2000, an application was made to the Heritage Council's Development Committee seeking approval for new floor coverings and internal painting.<sup>23</sup>

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13 PWD Drawing 17070, 'Collie Government Savings Bank', dated November 1916, provided courtesy of CAMS. Architectural drawings do not indicate how long the savings bank remained in the court house. Further research may indicate if this was a temporary or permanent measure.

14 PWD Drawing 32239, dated 10 March 1950, provided courtesy of CAMS.

15 PWD Drawing 32239, dated 10 March 1950, provided courtesy of CAMS.

16 *Collie Mail*, 13 December 1913 and *Collie Miner*, 16 December 1913.

17 *Collie Mail*, 1 May 1986, p. 22. While this indicates there was a 'recent fire', no details of the fire were found in this newspaper between March and May 1986.

18 Building Management Authority drawing 'Collie Courthouse', SK2, dated April 1986, provided courtesy of CAMS.

19 Building Management Authority drawing 'Collie Courthouse: Fire Restoration & Additions 1986: Site Plan, Floor Plan & Elevations', A1, dated May 1986, provided courtesy of CAMS.

20 Information from CAMS Heritage Database, premise number 1408, print-out obtained March 2001.

21 Heritage Council database.

22 Information from CAMS plans and Heritage Council files do not indicate any major development proposals have occurred.

23 Information from Heritage Council files.

In April 2001, the *Collie Court House* continues to be used as a court house. Research from the Heritage Council's database and the CAMS heritage database would suggest that there are nine court houses constructed prior to 1930 that are still operating as court houses.<sup>24</sup>

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Collie Court House* occupies the south east corner of the intersection of Wittenoom and Pendleton Streets Collie. The Collie Senior High School is opposite at the south west corner of the intersection.

*Collie Court House* is the only substantial building on the site. A free standing toilet block measuring about 10m x 5m stands near the south-east corner of the court house.

The site is bounded on its west and north sides by a low chain link fence. *Collie Court House* sits almost centrally within the site. The north part of the site is a bitumenised carpark and a bitumenised driveway runs down the east side of the building. The remainder of the east side and all the west side of the site are grassed.

*Collie Court House* is a single storey brick and tile building. The building is now almost square in plan. The front two thirds of the building is original while the rear was added in the 1980s. The original part of the building is designed in the Federation Free style<sup>25</sup> and shares its aesthetic characteristics with a wide variety of substantial buildings designed by the Public Works Department between c1900 and c1920.<sup>26</sup> The late 1980s addition was built in a manner that matched the style of the original.

The front façade has a tripartite form that is symmetrically composed around the dominant central block with ancillary blocks set on its east and west sides. The court room is housed in the central block, the west wing contains the public reception area and the Clerk of Courts office, and the east wing comprises the witnesses' room, the interview room and the holding room. The central block is given appropriate dominance within the composition by being of a greater height and also by being set slightly forward of the ancillary blocks.

The front of the central block of *Collie Court House* is a subsumed entrance colonnade. The facade of the central block is symmetrically composed with rusticated piers at the outer edges and one centrally placed pier, similar in appearance but twice the width of the outer piers. Circular arched-headed openings are contained between the central and the outer piers. The block has a gambrel roof with the ridge running in a north/south direction. A cupola vent sits at the mid-point of the ridge.

The walls of the central block are constructed of a reddish brown coloured brick in stretcher bond with cut and struck pointing. The plinth for the walls is of Donnybrook sandstone and is raised slightly higher at the base of the piers

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<sup>24</sup> Information from the CAMS and Heritage Council databases do not indicate the number of court houses constructed prior to 1930. Of the nine current court houses operating from buildings constructed prior to 1930, seven were purpose-built. The court houses at Broome and Geraldton were not constructed as court houses. The remaining seven, including Collie Court House, are located in Albany, Fremantle, Northam, Roebourne, Wagin and the Supreme Court in Perth.

<sup>25</sup> Apperly, et. al., op. cit..

<sup>26</sup> Hilson Beasley was Chief Architect of the Public Works Department from 1905 until 1917. The Collie Court House was built during this time and the drawings bear his signature.

at the main entry. The front façade is embellished with rendered decorative elements which includes the lining and keystones to the circular arches. A render stringcourse is set seven courses below the level of the soffit lining to form a frieze containing rendered lettering forming the words 'COURT 1913 HOUSE'.

The British Coat of Arms with the lion and unicorn sits on a projecting table that is supported by an elongated corbel bracket applied to the central pier just below the level of the frieze. The complete element is finished with render.

The soffit of the eaves is lined with spaced timber battens set between corbel brackets projecting from the heads of pilasters and extending to the timber fascia at the edge of the roof. The gutter is of pressed galvanised iron in the 'sheerline' profile.

The roof is of Marseilles pattern terra cotta tiles. The ridge tiles have decorative finials and scrolls where they terminate above half gables. The half gables have fixed timber louvered vents.

The front facades of each ancillary block contain two timber framed multi paned double hung sash windows, separated by a brick pier. These sit on a continuous rendered sill and support a continuous rendered lintel that spans the rusticated piers at the inner and outer edges of the façade.

The walls of the ancillary blocks are of the same construction as the central block. The roof of each of the ancillary blocks is a composite gambrel with the main ridge running in a north/south direction and terminating at the south end as a half gable. The roofs abut the walls of the main block to form valley gutters. At the north end of the blocks a subsidiary ridge runs in an east/west direction. This subsidiary ridge abuts the wall of the central block just below the wall plate level at one end and terminates as a half gable at the other end.

The east and west faces of the ancillary blocks mask the sides of the central block.

The side facades of the ancillary blocks are simply composed. The brick walls have rusticated piers at each end and the wall stands on a brick plinth. The door and window openings in these walls are located to suit the requirements of the layout of the rooms behind. The south end of each block has been extended in a manner that matches the front.

Doors to these facades are typically timber four panelled. The panels are flush beaded. The door on the west face of the building is sheltered by timber construction porch set on a limestone plinth. The outer edge of the porch is supported on twin posts. The posts have incised lines at the tops and infill balustrading between them. The tiled lean-to roof of the porch is extended to form an integral sunshade for the window situated beside the door. The other two windows on this façade have timber and tile sunshades.

The east façade of the building is composed in a similar manner to the west facade. The four doors are housed within flat-headed openings with rendered lintels. Three of the doors have three paned fanlights above them. The two windows are also housed in flat-headed openings with rendered lintels. Both windows are timber framed multi paned double hung sash type.

Both the east and west wings of the building extend about four metres beyond rear wall of the central block. The rear façade is composed of these two wings and the infill block with a lean-to roof set between them. The extensions of the east and west block have gambrel roofs, terminating as half gables at the southern ends, whereas the infill block has a lean-to roof. The

ridge of the lean-to roof is set just below the sills of the three circular windows set at high level within the south wall of the courtroom. The south wall of the west wing contains a door and a window sheltered by a porch. All closely match the similar arrangement on the west façade of the building.

The entrance colonnade of *Collie Court House* is approached through the two round arch headed openings. A steel disabled ramp provides access through one of the openings. The public entrances to all parts of the building are off this colonnade. The colonnade is about 2.4 metres deep and has face brickwork walls with rendered dressings. All windows and doors in this area are within round arch headed openings. A rendered stringcourse runs at the impost level and continues around the head of each opening. The floor is finished with terra-cotta coloured quarry tiles.

The entrance to the courtroom is central within the south wall of the colonnade. The courtroom has a set of double doors leading to it while the other two are single doors. Doors are of timber construction with each leaf having three panels with bolection mouldings. Each door has a semicircular fanlight above it. A window is set to each side of the double doors. Each window has a semicircular upper part, which is subdivided by an intermediate semi-circular frame and radiating mullions. The lower part of each window contains four multi paned casement sashes.

The door off the west side of the colonnade leads into the Clerk of Courts room which in turn leads into an office. A door at the rear of the office leads to a corridor that serves the magistrates chambers, a store and the staff toilets that are all located within the rear addition of the building.

The door off the east side of the colonnade leads into the Witnesses' Room. This room can also be approached from the south from the corridor that runs from the courtroom to the exterior.

Public toilets are located in the south east corner of the building. The doors to these toilets are external and are located in the wall on the east face of the building.

The courtroom is a rectangular room measuring about 11 metres long by 7 metres wide with a 6 metre high ceiling. The entrance doors lead into a wind-lobby, which does not appear to be original. Two windows in the south wall open onto the colonnade. Three circular arched windows within rectangular frames are located at high level in the south wall of the room and a further three, two paned, awning sashes are at high level in the east wall.

The public gallery is at the north end of the courtroom and the bench, dock and witness stand are on a raised area at the south end. A crest is mounted on the south wall. The fittings do not appear to be original.

The floors are carpeted. The timber skirting is about 350 mm high and has a moulded top. The walls are plastered and have a run flush moulded trim at dado level. The fireplace has been bricked in. A picture rail runs around the room about 300 mm below ceiling level. The ceiling is a suspended ceiling comprising acoustic tiles on an exposed grid, with integral recessed fluorescent light fittings. The new ceiling seems to be have been installed just below the level of the original. The stack ventilation system has thus been sealed off.

The door openings have fanlights. All doors are four panelled type. Door hardware appears to be original.

Most rooms in the building are finished in a similar manner to the courtroom. The fireplaces in the Witnesses' room and the interview room remain open

and have clear finished timber surrounds. The Security Holding Room has bars on the inside of the window and the concrete floor is finished with a sheet vinyl covering.

The interior of the west wing appears to be a recent fit-out. The reception area has a curved counter and above it is an area of lowered ceiling that matches the outline of the counter. The floor finish is sheet vinyl. The fireplace has been bricked up.

The rear part of the building is of recent construction. Typically this area has sheet vinyl covered timber floors with 90 mm high bullnosed skirtings. The walls are plastered and the ceilings are of plasterboard with coved cornices.

The rear part of the building was built in the late 1980s.

The Clerk of Courts area has had a recent fit-out.

The fittings with the courtroom are not original.

*Collie Court House* appears to be in good condition. It benefits from a regular programme of maintenance works.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

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### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

Architectural drawings held at Contract and Management Services (CAMS).

National Trust files.

Heritage Council files.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

The location and construction details of the previous court house should be researched.

Further information about the extent of fire damage in 1986 needs to be ascertained.