



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES**

### **Assessment Documentation**

#### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

##### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 6.3 Training people for the workplace
- 6.4 Building a system of higher education

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

- 402 Education and science

#### **11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history**

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* was the first residential education institution for the training of teachers in Western Australia. Operating between 1902 and 1990, it played a very important role in the development of education in the State throughout most of the 20th century.

#### **11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage**

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is rare as the first and only residential training institution for teachers in Western Australia from 1902 to 1955.

#### **11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

The College Building (1901) is an excellent and representative example of the Federation Gothic style used to execute religious and educational buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is an excellent representative example of the architectural work of the Public Works Department in the early 1900s, and the Government's commitment to the provision of public services, including education.

The War Memorial located in the grounds is good representative example of memorials in memory of past students who gave their lives in the Great War.

**11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;**

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is valued as the only teacher training college in Western Australia from 1902 to 1955, and as the main college for the training of primary school teachers until 1990. As a result of its programs, the place influenced the teaching of all children in Western Australian schools. The college also played an important role in the development of the state's education system.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* contributes to the local community's sense of place and is valued for its contribution to the character of Claremont. Local interest in development proposals shows particular value attached to the mature boundary trees (both those on the road verges those on College grounds) and grounds.

**11(f)<sup>1</sup> Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;**

The College Building (1901) is a well-composed example of an educational building designed in the Federation Gothic style.<sup>2</sup> The central three-storey tower flanked to the east and west by arcades, together with the crenulated roofline, creates a formal and imposing stone structure.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is a landmark due to the strength of architecture of the College Building (1901) and the visual qualities of the associated grounds. In addition, the mature Sugar Gums on Bay and Goldsworthy Roads contribute to the landmark qualities.

The landscaped grounds reflect changing design philosophies and use over time. The grassed area to the south of the College Building (1901) has been an open grassed Lawn (now Sports Oval) since the college was founded, and provides both a vista from, and an open setting for the building, providing it with a sense of permanence. This is reinforced by the lack of public road access to the front of the building and the retention of the original paving layout and simple circular plant beds.

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<sup>1</sup> For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> The building was officially opened on 31 January 1902 when finally completed and ready for use. The 1901 sign on the façade indicates the intention to have completed in that year. (Correspondence Ronald Bodycoat Architect to UWA, 22 July 2008)

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is associated with Cyril Jackson, Inspector General of Education in Western Australia, who established the college in 1901 after recognising that a Training College for Teachers was required to improve the state's education system.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is associated with many members of the Western Australian community including the various principals of the college who were responsible for the development of the campus and its educational programs, including W. J. Rooney (1903-27), Thomas Sten (1945-58) and Neil Traylen (1959-65). Many students went on to become prominent politicians, civil servants, artists and educationalists.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is associated with several prominent architects and landscape architects, including Hillson Beasley (Chief Draftsman, Public Works Department, 1905-16), W. B. Hardwick (Chief Architect, Public Works Department, 1917-27), and R. J. Ferguson and Associates, who were responsible for the 1980s buildings.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is generally in good condition.

**12.2 INTEGRITY**

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* retains a considerable proportion of original fabric. The College Building (1901) has been altered internally over the years to meet changing requirements, additional buildings have been added to the site, and the grounds have been changed due to various landscape schemes. As such, the place has moderate degree of integrity.

**12.3 AUTHENTICITY**

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* has moderate authenticity. Although still associated with educational purposes, it has not been used for teacher training since 1989.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document is based on 'Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan' prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals for Edith Cowan University, March 2003, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)*, comprises a complex of buildings including the original two storey limestone and donnybrook sandstone College Building (1901, extended 1908, 1924), with terracotta tiled roof and prominent three storey central crenelated tower, three storey former Water Tower (1901), timber framed former Cricket Pavilion (1914), three Prefabricated Classrooms (c.1917), and various educational buildings (1950-80s), and that retains uninterrupted views across the Sports Oval (original Lawn) and incorporates landscape elements including front Turning Circle and some mature trees, and War Memorial (c.1920).

Noongar *boodja* (country) covers the entire south-western portion of Western Australia from Jurien Bay to Esperance. Noongar people lived in family groups and those living in and around the Perth area were collectively known as the Whadjuk. The Whadjuk relied on the ocean, the Swan River and the freshwater lakes that once lay between the coast and the Darling scarp for food and moved seasonally through across the country<sup>3</sup>. This way of life was disrupted by the arrival of colonists from 1829 onwards who established farms and settlements, often to the detriment of Aboriginal people.

For a full discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (Fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', March 2003. A summary based on the Conservation Plan is provided below.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* was constructed from 1900 for use as Western Australia's first teacher training college. It operated for this purpose until 1989, during which time it expanded into a complex of buildings while retaining its expansive lawn (now sports oval) which enabled uninterrupted views towards the original building. Since the 1990s, the complex has been used for educational purposes by Edith Cowan University (1991 to 2003) and the University of Western Australia (2005 to present).

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* was constructed after the Inspector General of Education in Western Australia Cyril Jackson recognised that a Training College for Teachers was required to improve the state's education system. It was the first teacher training college to be constructed in Western Australia, and remained the only facility of its kind until 1955.

The College Building (1901) is an impressive two storey limestone building with prominent three storey central crenelated tower that incorporates decorative Donnybrook sandstone elements. It was originally topped with a slate roof, but this was replaced with tiles in 1952. It was designed by the Public Works Department under the direction of Hillson Beasley, Assistant to the Chief Architect who later

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<sup>3</sup> Kaartdijin Noongar – Noongar Knowledge, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/> downloaded on 17 October 2019

became Chief Architect in 1905.<sup>4</sup> The building incorporated classrooms for teaching, a lecture theatre, as well as residential facilities for its students including dormitories on the first floor. It was noted for enjoying views of Freshwater Bay across its magnificent grounds, and incorporated the front turning circle as part of the original design.

The College officially opened in 1902, with a total of forty one students, the majority of which were women. It operated in collaboration with the neighbouring East Claremont Practising School (built 1905, corner of Princess and Bay Roads, outside of the curtilage for this place), where student teachers would practice teaching children in from of their peers and teachers.

Over the years, further additions and alterations were undertaken to meet the growing requirements of the College. This included additions College Building (1901) itself (1908 dormitory and science room addition, 1925 dining room addition), as well as the construction of buildings on the site. Three c.1917 timber Prefabricated Classrooms remain on site in 2020.

By 1918, for the first time, the College supplied all the trained teachers required by the State.

In c.1920 a War Memorial was erected on the grounds dedicated to the teachers and student teachers that had served in World War I.

Between 1931- 1934, the college was closed due to a surplus of trained teachers. In 1942, the College was taken over by the Australian Women's Armed Services, and the entire training program and students were transferred to the University of Western Australia. The Campus reopened in 1944.

After World War II, student numbers increased due to the enrolment of ex-servicemen and women under the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Training Scheme. The resultant lack of accommodation was addressed by another program of demountable and prefabricated building construction from the 1950s to 1970s.

In 1964, John Oldham, landscape architect for the Public Works Department, drew up a landscape plan for the site that incorporated planting of lawns, shrubs, construction of paving and pathways. The works were considered to result in considerable improvement for the site, and in 1973 it was noted that: 'The parkland setting of the college is one of its major assets'.

In 1967, a Secondary Teacher's Training College was established at Nedlands, and the Claremont College focused on the training of primary school teachers. In 1981, the college became the Western Australian College of Advanced Education (WACAE) under the Colleges Act 1978-1980. The restructure resulted in some 'modernising' works to the Claremont College site, including the construction of a series of new concrete buildings, designed by R.J. Ferguson and Associates.

By 1987 it was recognised that the Claremont College was too costly to continue operating, and it was closed for teacher training in 1989.

In 1991, WACE was upgraded to university status, and became known as Edith Cowan University and plans were made for the reoccupation of Claremont College.

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At the time of construction, John Grainger was the Public Works Department's Chief Architect, and has often been credited for the design of the College Building. The original 1900 plans are signed by Hillson Beasley's, and he is now understood to be the architect responsible for its design.

A series of conservation works were undertaken at this time, and in 1992 the entire Claremont Teachers' College Reserve was entered on to the State Register of Heritage Places.

By 2002, the Claremont campus was deemed surplus to requirements, and was considered for disposal under the Government Heritage Property Disposal Process. In 2005 the University of Western Australia took over management of *Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)*.<sup>5</sup>

In 2020, *Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* continues to be used for educational purposes by the University of Western Australia.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)*, comprises a complex of buildings including the original two storey limestone and donnybrook sandstone College Building (1901, extended 1908, 1924), with terracotta tiled roof and prominent three storey central crenelated tower, three storey former Water Tower (1901), timber framed former Cricket Pavilion (1914), three Prefabricated Classrooms (c.1917), and various educational buildings (1950-80s), and that retains uninterrupted views across the Sports Oval (original Lawn) and incorporates landscape elements including front Turning Circle and some mature trees, and War Memorial (c.1920).

The physical evidence below is based on Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (Fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', March 2003, and a physical inspection of the place by Department Officers in 2016.

*Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* comprises a site of approximately 39,155m<sup>2</sup>, bounded by Princess, Goldsworthy and Bay Roads on three sides, with the north east corner being a separate Reserve and excluded from the boundary.

It comprises a complex of buildings that includes structures from its original construction in 1901, structures from its expansion during the 1910s-1920, and later buildings dating from 1950-1980s.

1901 structures:

- College Building (1901, extended 1908, 1924) – a two storey limestone and donnybrook sandstone teachers' college building with terracotta tiled roof and prominent central crenelated tower. The building is noted to be in the Federation Gothic style. The imposing scale of the main building has landmark qualities.
- Former Water Tower (1901) – three storey limestone tower. Original water tank was removed in 1952 and roof added.

1910s-1920 structures:

- Cricket Pavilion (1914, relocated 1992) – a simple single storey timber framed building with horizontal weatherboard cladding, on timber stumps and with a half gable hipped corrugated iron roof.

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<sup>5</sup> Management Order J300786 XE, Reserve 46794, to University of Western Australia, 27 May 2005.

- Prefabricated Classroom [6] (c.1917) - a simple single storey timber framed building with horizontal weatherboard cladding, on timber stumps and with a gabled corrugated iron roof.
- Prefabricated Classroom [7] (c.1917) - a simple single storey timber framed building with horizontal weatherboard cladding, on timber stumps and with a gabled corrugated iron roof.
- Prefabricated Classroom [8] (c.1917) - a simple single storey timber framed building with horizontal weatherboard cladding, on timber stumps and with a gabled corrugated iron roof.
- War Memorial (c.1920) – constructed of limestone, surrounded by stone steps.

#### 1950-1980s structures:

- Academic Staff Association (c.1950) – a simple single storey brick building, with clay tiled roof.
- Gymnasium (1962, extended 1978) – a double volume brick building with steel portal frame, fibre cement sheeting with a low pitch gable roof topped with terracotta tile and corrugated asbestos sheets. The building is noted to be in the Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional Campus Style.
- Library (1974, altered 1991) – a two storey concrete and terracotta tiled roof building, with reinforced concrete frame and off form concrete walls. It has a lantern located in the centre of its roof.
- General Teaching (1980) – a two storey concrete and tiled roof building, with a steel and concrete verandah. The building is noted to be in the Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional Campus Style.
- Neil Traylen Building (1985) – a two storey concrete and terracotta tiled roof building, with reinforced concrete frame and off form concrete walls. The building has steel framed sunshade devices attached externally. The building is noted to be in the Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional Campus Style.
- Gardener's Store (1983) – a simple single storey brick building with corrugated asbestos roof.
- Garages (1983) – a simple single storey brick building with corrugated asbestos roof.

#### The place also includes the following important landscape features:

- Sports Oval (original Lawn) – remnants of the original design for *Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)*, the area is a grassed lawn with a gentle rise from Aggett Road in the south up to the College Building (1901). No buildings have ever been erected (even temporarily) on this lawn, which has ensured the protection and maintenance of the vistas towards the building, and from the buildings to Freshwater Bay.
- Turning Circle – part of the original landscape design for the place, no longer used for vehicles, but is now paved for pedestrian use. The interior of the turning circle accommodates some plantings.

- Mature trees – various mature trees are located across the site, including Norfolk Island Pines, Sugar Gums, Camphors.<sup>6</sup>

When inspected in 2016, the buildings noted in the 2003 Conservation Plan remain extant and appear to be well maintained and in good condition.<sup>7</sup> In 2020, there has been no significant change to the place.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a full discussion of the comparative see Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (Fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', March 2003.

Additional comparative information

There are 48 places in the Historic Heritage database that have the Use :Educational: Tertiary Institution. The most comparable is:

- Perth Technical College (1910) part of *old Perth Boys School and Perth Technical College* [RHP] established in response to the increasing need for trained tradesmen during the boom years of the 1890s, this Federation Gothic building designed by Hillson Beasley also incorporated a distinctive tower.

Although built during the inter-war period, the following buildings that form part of the University of Western Australia are also somewhat comparable in terms of their tertiary education function and high levels of architectural design:

- *Park Avenue Building* [RHP] (1923-25) – a two storey red brick and tile building that was the first permanent building erected by the University on its Crawley site.
- *Hackett Memorial Buildings* [RHP] (1930-32) – a profoundly influential set of exceptionally well designed buildings that form the administrative and ceremonial core of the University.

There are 27 educational buildings on the Historic Heritage database associated with Hillson Beasley, 22 of which are on the Register. Of these places, two are designed in the Federation Gothic style:

- P02242 *Hale School (fmr)* [RHP] – a single storey brick and tile school building constructed in 1914, including a two-storey boarding house in the Inter-war Romanesque style.
- P2116 *Perth Technical College* – mentioned above

Conclusion

In 2020, *Claremont Teachers' College (fmr)* is rare as a purpose built tertiary education institution dating from the pre-war period in Western Australia, albeit there were few institutions of this type constructed at this time. Although the place

<sup>6</sup> For a full list of tree species (in 2003), see: Tree Audit Appendix in Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (Fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', prepared by , Heritage and Conservation Professionals in ,March 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (Fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', prepared by , Heritage and Conservation Professionals in ,March 2003, pp 107-108.



is no longer used as a teaching college, it retains its educational role as a campus associated with the University of Western Australia (UWA).

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Edith Cowan University Claremont Campus (fmr Claremont Teachers' College) Conservation Plan', prepared for Edith Cowan University, March 2003

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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