



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from "Conservation Management Plan Connor's Mill, Toodyay" prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004 with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.14 Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity
- 4.2 Supplying urban services
- 7.6.12 Conserving Australia's heritage

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 310 Manufacturing and processing
- 404 Community services and utilities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is an excellent example of an industrial building in the Victorian Georgian style, constructed of local stone and brick, with an imposing scale, balanced proportions and symmetrical presentation. (Criterion 1.1)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is a landmark as a substantial three-storey building situated in a commanding position in the main street of Toodyay, and impacts on vistas from many directions. (Criterion 1.3)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is an integral component of a cultural environment that demonstrates the rich history of the National Trust classified Historic Town of Toodyay, including St Stephens Church (1862, c.1950), Freemasons Hotel (1860, 1891), Connor's House (fmr) (c.1890, c.1950), all in the immediate vicinity, and is an integral part of the Stirling Terrace Heritage Precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

* 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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay was constructed in 1870 as a flour mill to service Toodyay and the surrounding agricultural areas, and was important in the nineteenth century establishment of the town (then known as Newcastle). (Criterion 2.1)

From 1917, *Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay* included a power house, and following the conversion of the mill in 1921 until Toodyay was connected to the State power grid in 1956, the place was the town's main electricity supply. (Criterion 2.1)

The place was saved from demolition in 1970, and from 1975 to the present (2005) it has operated as a tourist centre and museum, promoting the tourism industry in Toodyay, which has become an important element of the town's economy. (Criterion 2.2)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay was built with the assistance of convict labour by George Hasell, an expirée, for owner Dan Connor, also an expirée, and provides evidence of the importance of convicts in the development of the Colony. (Criterion 2.2)

From its construction in 1870 until Connor's death in 1898, *Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay* was owned by Daniel (Dan) Connor, an expirée who after receiving his ticket of leave in 1854 went on to become a prominent businessman, and property owner in the Colony. Connor established himself in Toodyay, being Chairman of the Town Council for over twenty years, and Chairman of the Board of Education, and in the 1880s and 1890s relocated many of his business interests to Perth, where he was at the time the largest single private landowner in the City of Perth. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The retention of *Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay* in the face of proposals for demolition is representative of a growing awareness of the value of buildings of cultural heritage significance in the State in the 1970s. (Criterion 4.1)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is highly valued by the community as an historic building, as demonstrated by the community support in the 1970s for its retention, its development as a tourist facility and museum with a valuable interpretive role in relation to the process of flour milling, and its ongoing role in the promotion of Toodyay since this time. Its inclusion on the Shire of Toodyay Municipal inventory demonstrates the community support for the place. (Criterion 4.2)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay contributes to the Toodyay community's sense of place through its association with agriculture, milling, the power station and tourism, and as a landmark in central Toodyay. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is the only remaining mill of three that were originally constructed in the Shire of Toodyay, and is an uncommon element in the townsite for its agricultural connections. It is a rare intact example of a three-storey brick and stone mill of the mid to late nineteenth century. (Criterion 5.1)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is rare as an example of an aspect of the nineteenth century agricultural industry, the milling of flour, that has changed considerably since 1870 when the mill was established. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is an excellent example of Victorian Georgian industrial architecture in a rural town, of which there are few remaining examples. (Criterion 6.1)

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay clearly demonstrates and represents a range of activities that have been important in a rural town since 1870, being steam driven milling, provision of electricity and the tourism industry. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay is in fair to good condition. The exterior walls show evidence of damage and repairs at various times, but they are stable and the place is maintained.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay has a moderate degree of integrity. Originally a mill (1870-1922), it was then converted to a power house (1922-1955), and since 1975 it has been a tourism facility, featuring a relocated steam engine and other mechanisms that interpret some elements of the milling process.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Connor's Mill (fmr), Toodyay overall has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The original 1870 structure remains mostly intact, although the roof cladding and structure is a replacement in its entirety, some floor has been removed at first and second floor levels, and the entire ground floor is now concrete. The workings are an amalgamation of items from other sources, largely relocated from Northam Flour Mill. While they are valuable interpretative elements, they are not an authentic aspect of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Supporting evidence has been taken from “Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004.

Key sections used: Documentary Evidence pp.5-19; Physical Evidence pp.21-25; Comparative Information pp.38-40.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to “Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004.

In November 1975, a caveat for the place was entered into between the National Trust and the Shire of Toodyay. This involved the National Trust being granted a restrictive covenant whereby works, maintenance, subdivision and commercial use at the site would require written permission from the National Trust.¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to “Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information, refer to “Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

“Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

For a discussion of areas for further research, refer to “Conservation Management Plan Connor’s Mill, Toodyay” prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, in association with Lynley Forgione, Historian, for Toodyay Visitors Centre operated by Shire of Toodyay, in June 2004, p.40.

¹ Caveat No. B063081. A copy of this caveat and its associated deed of covenant is on HCWA file P2567 together with an explanatory memo from HCWA’s land information officer.