



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)

- 4.3 Developing Urban Institutions
- 6.2 Establishing Schools

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 402 Education and science
- 404 Community services and utilities
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Individual elements within *Subiaco Primary School* are intrinsically significant in terms of their aesthetic qualities. The Senior School building in particular has an architectural character that is appreciated by sectors of the community. (Criterion 1.1)

The Senior School building is a fine example of the Federation Arts and Crafts style featuring asymmetrical elevation compositions, half-timbered gables, vented dormers, tall chimneys with distinct cornices, turned timber posts and brackets, restrained but carefully detailed porch masonry, and distinctive but traditional roof massing. The interiors of the 1897 building are also of exceptional design quality. (Criterion 1.2)

Subiaco Primary School's building and landscape elements are integral components of the Subiaco municipal reservation, and their form contributes positively towards this character. Several elements within the school site possess landmark qualities, particularly the Senior and Infants School buildings and the Sugar Gums along the Bagot Road frontage. (Criterion 1.3)

Within the confines of the *Subiaco Primary School* site, a significant cultural environment is created by the intact collection of late 19th and early 20th century educational buildings and their contemporary plantings. (Criterion 1.4)

* 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.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The opening of *Subiaco Primary School* was the first civic development within the locality, and its early history is closely interwoven with the establishment of adjacent civic amenities such as the first Post Office, Library, Council Offices, Municipal Gardens and water and electricity supplies. (Criterion 2.1)

Evidence of *Subiaco Primary School's* rapid growth subsequent to the Gold boom is reflective of the development experienced by Subiaco as whole during this period. (Criterion 2.2)

Subiaco Primary School is associated with one of the most prominent architects in the history of Western Australia, George Temple Poole. The architecture is derived from the standard school designs used by the Public Works Department under both Poole's and Hillson Beasley's leadership. (Criterion 2.3)

Subiaco Primary School is also significant in achieving the organisation of the first Parents and Citizens Association in Western Australia in 1922, and also for installing a school swimming pool, also the first in this State. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Subiaco Primary School's grounds have some scientific value for their potential to yield archaeological deposits associated with the occupation and use of the site. Particularly the western end of Reserve 5691 may yield materials associated with occupation by itinerant tent dwellers around the turn of the 20th century. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Subiaco Primary School is highly significant to local residents and past pupils because of its educational and sporting achievements, also providing a deep-rooted sentimental attachment with the community. Several socially prominent persons attribute their early education to the school, building up a sense of school tradition. The community continues to use the school and grounds for cultural and sporting activities, and maintains an active participation in the school's operation through its Parents and Citizens Association. (Criterion 4.1)

Subiaco Primary School is also important for its contribution to the community's sense of place. The siting of the school is both a comment on, and the cause of, the spread of settlement in the area. The ongoing use of the place as a school and retention of its heritage building stock have maintained a tangible link with the past. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Although *Subiaco Primary School* is generally representative of a particular era of school building in this State, certain elements of the Senior School building possess a measure of rarity value. The ornately turned eaves brackets, truncated ceilings with pressed metal linings, and sculpted entrance portico are uncommon architectural features that set this school apart from others of the era. A number of trees within the school grounds also have a degree of importance for their uncommonly mature age, particularly the Sugar Gums and Moreton Bay Fig trees. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The planning and architectural details of Subiaco School's early building stock is representative of Public Works Department (PWD) design for Government school buildings built between the years 1895 and 1915, particularly the influences of George Temple Poole and Hillson Beasley. The design of the Senior School building's is a variation on the PWD standard "School for 200 Scholars" current under George Temple Poole's leadership, although it is understood that the work was administered by architects Wilkinson & Smith. Later work, the Infants and Intermediate Schools, reflects the design approach of the PWD under Hillson Beasley's direction. In general, the architecture reflects the high level of creativity of the goldboom era's architects and craftsmen. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The place was found to be in good physical condition generally. All buildings are regularly maintained and have benefited from a major refurbishment in 1996. Maintenance of internal areas has been ongoing but, particularly in the Infants and Intermediate Schools, not always sympathetic to the building's heritage character. The following items were noted as requiring attention: within the Infants School, chimneys on the east side require repointing of brickwork, sections of some downpipes are missing, areas of the east wall require repointing of brickwork, and the hall floor is springy in parts. In the Intermediate School, there are signs of damp on the internal face of the north wall, sections of some downpipes are missing, there are signs of termite infestation and there are signs of rusting of lintels. Landscape elements have generally been maintained with the objective of upholding public safety. Some tree management difficulties have been identified, and involve some unsympathetic pruning and ground usage that have had a detrimental effect on historical plantings.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Overall integrity of the school site is high, having retained a large proportion of its original building stock and landscape elements. Few structures of importance have been demolished on the site, and fabric of the three main buildings has sustained only minimal in terms of unsympathetic finish, accretions, new structures or landform modification. The present features of the place are easily related to historical documentation, allowing for clear historical interpretation.

The integrity of the overall site is enhanced by its ongoing use as an educational facility. The original school building (Senior School) has retained its central role on the site, and continues in its original function as a primary school, although some of the front classrooms are now used for administrative functions, following works completed in 1997. The Infants School has been adapted to meet a new role as a District Education Department Office, and in doing so has retained close associations with teaching. The Intermediate School was adapted from its original use early in its history, and its function has changed numerous times since although it has always maintained links with education.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity must, in this case, consider that constant change is a basic characteristic of a school. The measure of originality in terms of extant heritage fabric should be based on a particular element's state, within its

historical and physical context. In this way, elements that are of a relatively recent nature (and there are many such items) may be considered 'authentic' if they are a true reflection of the school's changing requirements.

Much of the external building fabric has a high degree of authenticity. Interiors of most areas have undergone repeated refurbishment, and in places minor structural modification (not necessarily associated with major building additions). Significant alterations, such as modifications to fenestration or building additions, are identifiable by comparison to historical documentation. Most work of this kind may, however, be credited with a degree of authenticity. In most cases non-authentic internal fabric is readily evident, although knowledge of the former state has largely been lost.

The overall contour of the site has sustained limited modification during the century of European occupation, however specific areas have consciously been transformed. That work which has occurred reflects contemporary requirements, and includes: terracing behind the Presbyterian church to create tennis courts, level grading of the oval, raked grading of the Bagot Road playground, excavation and subsequent infill of a drainage sump, and excavation and mounding of the swimming pool yard. These modified landforms retain a high degree of authenticity with the exception of the former tennis courts that appear to have been further levelled.

Landscape elements within the site are in a state of constant evolution. Generally speaking they reflect of the school's present and past requirements. Authenticity varies for specific elements dependant on the level of change that had occurred. A high degree of authenticity is sustained by a large number of historical plantings on the site.

In 1997, a series of works was completed, in accordance with the Burra Charter. These included relocating the administration area to the front rooms of the original Senior School building, construction of a new library resource centre between the Senior School and Infants School buildings, internal modifications to provide toilet facilities for a new Pre-Primary Centre in part of the Senior School building, construction of a covered assembly area behind the Infants School building, and conversion of the Education Department District Office back to classrooms.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Palassis Architects, 'Subiaco Primary School Conservation Plan', for the Education Department of Western Australia, Department of Contract and Management Services and Oldfield Knott Architects Pty Ltd in November 1996; and diagrams by Oldfield Knott Architects showing works completed in 1997.

Key sections used: 3.0 Documentary and Oral Evidence (p9-44), 4.0 Physical Evidence (p45-76), 5.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence (p77-88).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'Subiaco Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared for the Education Department of Western Australia, Department of Contract and Management Services and Oldfield Knott Architects Pty Ltd in November 1996

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'Subiaco Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared for the Education Department of Western Australia, Department of Contract and Management Services and Oldfield Knott Architects Pty Ltd, in November 1996

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a Comparative Analysis refer to Palassis Architects, 'Subiaco Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared for the Education Department of Western Australia, Department of Contract and Management Services and Oldfield Knott Architects, in November 1996.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Palassis Architects, 'Subiaco Primary School Conservation Plan', prepared for the Education Department of Western Australia, Department of Contract and Management Services and Oldfield Knott Architects Pty Ltd, in November 1996.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
