



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

York Hotel, with its ensemble of elaborate ornamentation, is a fine example of Federation Anglo-Dutch architecture. (Criterion 1.1)

York Hotel located opposite the *City Markets*, is a landmark building in Hannan Street, and contributes to the character of an important historic street and retail precinct. (Criterion 1.3)

The verandah, which extends over the footpath, abuts adjacent verandahs and continues the dominant streetscape element that was typical of the period. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Kalgoorlie's economic prosperity during the gold boom years is demonstrated in the *York Hotel*'s opulence. (Criterion 2.1)

York Hotel is significant for its close association with architect D.T. Edmunds, who designed the *City Markets* opposite, and with prominent local builder J. Crothers. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

York Hotel contributes to the community's sense of place in that it is an integral component of the gold boom architecture of Hannan Street. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

York Hotel is important as one of the few surviving, in this degree of intactness, examples of its style of hotel in the gold boom era. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12.3 CONDITION

The building interior and exterior is in sound condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

York Hotel continues to be used for its original purpose and the building retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The building retains much of its original fabric; however, some reinstatement of the exterior fabric to the street facade has been carried out and the interior lacks some original details. The building therefore retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

York Hotel is a two-storey hotel building constructed in 1900-01, and opened on 23 February 1901, to provide modern hotel facilities to the prospering Kalgoorlie community.

Following the discovery of gold in 1893, Kalgoorlie quickly developed from a makeshift mining camp to a thriving community boasting fine public buildings. The increasing number of people arriving in Kalgoorlie necessitated an increase in the various facilities that were available. The architectural style of this building boom was greatly influenced by the number of eastern states architects who came to the goldfields seeking work, due to the depressed economy in the eastern states at the time. It was in this economic climate, that the *York Hotel* was built.

It was built for Mr. Laslett who leased it to Mr. McLachlan. The architect responsible was Daniel T. Edmunds and the contractor J. Crothers. Edmunds was listed as in practice in Kalgoorlie between 1899-1912. While practising in Kalgoorlie it is known that he was also responsible for the *City Markets*, located opposite the *York Hotel*.¹

The opening of the hotel was reported in detail in the local newspaper providing the reader with a comprehensive description of the building, its facilities and its interior fittings:

To-day we will see the opening of the York, one of Kalgoorlie's newest hotels, and one that must be given rank with the best. It is a top-class house, and is in very good hands. This hotel is located in that part of Hannan-street, between Wilson and Cassidy streets which has been adorned with a number of admirable buildings, planned and designed by the architect for the York Hotel, Mr. D.T. Edmunds. In connection with this particular hotel the architect was given something like fair scope as regards the money available for the building, and the end result is a structure that externally and internally marks the advent of a new epoch in hotel-building, as against the primitive goldfields method of making bars the first and chief consideration. Elegance and comfort have received careful attention in the case of the York Hotel and in all departments artistic work is apparent.

The eastern main entrance brings the visitor to a luxurious lounge hall, from which rises the main staircase leading to the residential portion of the hotel. The staircase is built up in a remarkably artistic way, with a single flight to the first landing, two side flights, and above that a bridge. Over all is a very handsome circular dome which admits plenty of light.

In the decoration of the interior, money seems to have been lavishly spent, and to admirable effect. Among the most notable features is the wide variety of artistic design and beauty of colouring of the stamped metal ceilings. Rich-hued and finely carved wood work also calls for special mention. In no part of the hotel is there anything for simply garish display. The combination of tasteful artistic harmonies and contrasts seemed to have been arrived at. In its draperies and furniture each apartment appears to have been separately studied, with no stint of costly material.

The entire furnishing has been placed in the hands of the well and favourably known Bickford's Coliseum firm, of Perth, who have paid due respect to the climatic conditions

¹ Kelly, I., 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890 - 1915),' (unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991).
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that exist here. The admirable painting work, which includes even artistic flower paintings on the panels of the decidedly luxuriant upstairs sitting room, was done by Messrs. Beeler and Marnes, while Messrs. Bircher and Tatham carried out the installation of the electric light, and of the electric bell fittings throughout the hotel. Mr John Crothers was the contractor for the erection of this fine hotel, which is, of course, built of brick and stone, while for bases granite blocks have been employed.

It remains to be said that the York Hotel has been placed under the management of a well experienced gentleman, who should command success in business - Mr Peter McLachlan, for a considerable time manager of Phair's Hotel, Collins-street, Melbourne. He has engaged as Chef M. Binaghi, so the culinary department should be without fault.²

The hotel was well-appointed, providing numerous facilities for its patrons, including: a public bar, lounge hall, saloon bar, open air lounge, parlours, office space, a large kitchen, large dining room with its own lobby and associated serving and storage rooms. The first floor was designed to house a billiards room, entered via a separate stairway, four bedrooms with associated sitting rooms, smoking room and nearby liquor closet, and bathroom. There were also another ten bedrooms and the necessary store rooms and linen closets.

The *York Hotel* has functioned continuously as a hotel. Work to the exterior having been carried out in 1974 and 1985, and internal restoration work likely to be carried out in the near future.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

York Hotel is a two-storey building built in Federation Anglo-Dutch.³ The building is located on the south-western side of Hannan Street and is sited at the building line.

The building is constructed of brick and stone on a granite base. The hipped roof is clad in corrugated iron and features a domical vault, with an iron cresting which contributes to the elaborate facade.

Symmetrically disposed about a central Flemish gabled pediment, the street facade is eclectic and fanciful, especially at the first floor level.

The facade has a recessed wall plane framed by an arched arcade to the balcony and a verandah over the street pavement.

The first floor features five stilted, corbelled arches with pronounced key stones (which emphasise the curved head) supported on corbelled masonry piers on brick pedestals. The arches are connected at their springing points by corbelled stone capitals. They form a one aisle arcade across the length of the facade. The arcade balcony is protected by a balustrade with iron balusters with highly ornate iron infill panels. A projecting viewing platform is located in the centre of the balcony. Two faceted bays break up the facade, separated by three central arches. Stucco infill in leaf motifs complete the central panel. The bays contain narrow stilted openings with double hung sash windows and fanlights. The openings are surrounded by bold rendered reveals.

² *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 23 February 1901, p. 2.

³ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, (Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989), pp. 112-115.

A brick entablature connects the two faceted bays which are crowned by cupolas. The entablature contains two semi-circular strip openings to each of its three facets surmounted by an ornamental frieze with festoon motifs and crowned with small triangular pediments and dentils. Italianate balustrading completes the entablature.

The recessed wall plane consists of seven evenly spaced openings at both levels. The lower level windows are long, recessed sashes of similar shape to the French doors on the level above. The rendered treatment of the lower level is plain in comparison to the upper level which retains its brick face.

The verandah extends over the street pavement and is covered by a curving metal roof supported on paired slender cast iron posts set into iron pedestals. The verandah is decorated with a cast iron valance. The verandah roof is highlighted by a central triangular pediment.

The interior comprises a public bar located on the ground floor with main entrances to the public and residential section of the hotel at the ends nearest Wilson and Cassidy Streets. From the western entrance, on the lower level, access is given firstly to the tap room of the bar, then to the parlours, located parallel to the street which are separated by the bar and central passage. The eastern entrance leads to the lounge hall from which rises the main stair to the residential area of the hotel. Offices are also located on the ground floor, off the lounge. Beyond the hall is the dining room with a storage and serving room at the rear, and with its own lobby flanked by amenities. The laundry is located at the extreme rear of the hotel. On the other side of the passage is the kitchen with its scullery and store room. Servant's hall and larder are located nearer the front of the building behind the bar.

The staircase leads to the billiard room on the upper level with a lounge and saloon bar behind. The stair is built with a single flight to the first landing, two side flights and a bridge above. The stairwell is lit within a semi-circular domed roof.

On the upper level there are 37 rooms comprising the former billiard room, parlours, drawing rooms and state rooms. Four bedrooms are located at the street front leading to the main balcony with a sitting room and smoking room with bay fronts intervening. At the rear of these bedrooms is room originally used as a liquor store and amenities on one side and the former billiard room on the other. There are ten further bedrooms on the western side of the building with storage cupboards and store rooms. Bathrooms are located at the rear.

As with the ground floor, a central passage runs the extent of the building with a rear balcony and servants staircase from the ground floor.

The internal spaces are largely intact and opulent in their decoration. The interior features a finely carved timber staircase and carved timber joinery, patterned pressed metal linings to ceilings and stair soffit, richly coffered ceilings and archways of semi-circular arches resting on Tuscan columns and pilasters some with fluted shafts to their lower sections, and decorative cornices and ceiling roses. Much of the interior is multi-coloured which is a striking contrast with a proportion of the upper level in its less ornate detailing and neutral colours.

The two cupolas with their frieze and pediments, and the large central triangular pediment were removed prior to 1974⁴ and reinstated with simplified detailing in 1989.⁵ The Italianate balustrading to the parapet, the cast iron verandah posts, curving verandah roof with its triangular pediment and valance, and iron balcony balustrade with its projecting platform have been removed. The balcony and parapet balustrading have been replaced with plain metal balusters, the verandah roof has been replaced with a skillion roof with pairs of stop-chamfered timber post supports prior to 1974, later to be replaced by single metal posts.⁶

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.

⁴ See photograph, file P1307, Heritage Council of Western Australia.

⁵ Smith, K. R., 'History of Geraldton Building Company', (work in progress).

⁶ Owner recalls the date to be 1991.