



HERITAGE
COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

1. **Data Base No.** 0330
2. **Name.** *Paisley Centre* (1886, 1893, 1901)
3. **Description of elements included in this entry.** Paisley Centre and the land on which it stands being Reserve 3753
4. **Local Government Area.** City of Bunbury
5. **Location.** cnr. Stephen Street and Arthur Street, Bunbury
6. **Owner.** Bunbury City Council
7. **Statement of Significance of Place (Assessment in Detail)**

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The former *State School*, now known as the *Paisley Centre*, is a single storey school building constructed in 1886 in Bunbury. The name *Paisley Centre* commemorates Mr W.T. Paisley, head master from 1894 to 1914 and school board member from 1914 to 1921.

In 1886, Bunbury was an important port supported by a hinterland producing sheep, cattle, horse and timber. From 1871, Bunbury had been a municipality and as an administrative centre, had responsibility for roads, drains, wharves, public buildings fences and sanitation. A telegraph service had been established in 1872 and a regular mail service in 1873. By 1886, a branch of the West Australian Bank was established and the Bunbury Building Society was about to be. In 1887, the rail link between Bunbury and Boyup was completed and Bunbury became a Mayoralty, although still subordinated to the Resident Magistrate as the Crown representative.¹

The *Paisley Centre* was originally known as *Bunbury Boy's School*. Bunbury had a school room established as early as 1850 with sixteen male pupils and a Mr C. Ommanney as school master. By 1855, girls were being taught also.² The *Government Gazette* of 20 March 1855 records: "The Bunbury mixed school...fall(s) somewhat

¹ Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application*. (City of Bunbury, December 1991) pp.38-9.

² *ibid.* p.4.

short of the mark for (its) respective locality"³ Land was allocated for a new school in 1885 and a plan for the school was drawn up by the Public Works Department in the same year⁴ and the building constructed by G.W. Floyd. The building was completed in November 1886 and the *West Australian* reported that "The new Government School Room has been handed over the Education Department and was taken possession of last week. The conveniences and comforts of the new building compared with the old are great and I trust that these will be the means of drawing more scholars."⁵ This proved so and in the years after the building's construction there were a number of expansions and improvements in response to an increasing number of students and the need for repair to the buildings.

After 1893, the school accommodated mixed-sex education which prompted the need for further expansion. In 1894, a contract to the value of £1279/13/6 was let to builders Robinson, Spicer and Thompson for major works including the construction of the school hall. Part of the school was designated as a Girl's School. It was at this time that T.W. Paisley became Headmaster of the School.⁶ Further classrooms were added in 1901 at a cost of £670/19/3, by builder F.T.T. Warner, and again, in 1902, for the sum of £374/12/6, by builder W. Brittain. Additions and alterations continued consistently through until 1916 including rooms allocated to a new Infants School.⁷

In 1917, the Girl's School was converted for use as a High School. Further developments of the school and the site, over the following years, included school sheds, toilet blocks, a home economics department and other minor associated school buildings.

Until about 1919, the *Paisley Centre* provided the only Government education in Bunbury and was the administrative centre for board-governed schools throughout the district. Membership of the board of the *Paisley Centre* was by appointment by the Governor of Western Australia and comprised prominent clergy, their wives or other eminent citizens.⁸

The school remained in use until 1962. As other more modern schools were completed (Carey Park School, 1955 and the Bunbury Central Primary, 1962) and when student numbers diminished, various parts of the school buildings (the girl's school, the home economics building, school sheds and toilet blocks) were demolished.⁹

In 1962, the *Paisley Centre* was taken over by the Bunbury Technical College to provide full time tertiary education in Bunbury. The Technical College had been associated with the place since 1942, when it had begun using the classrooms for

³ *ibid.* p.5.

⁴ A rough copy of the original plan is dated 11 November, 1885. held by the National Trust, cited *ibid.* p.5.

⁵ *The West Australian* 24 Nov. 1886 quoted Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *op.cit.* p.5.

⁶ *ibid.* p.30.

⁷ see *ibid.* pp. 8-31 for plans relating to change in the building's fabric and 31-35 for a chronology.

⁸ *ibid.* pp.37-8.

⁹ *ibid.* pp.34, 35; For a full discussion of the chronology of the site, together with a detailed description of the changes to the fabric and structure of the educational facilities within the school, see Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application.* (City of Bunbury, December 1991) pp. 30-35.

evening classes.¹⁰ The Technical College continued to use the school until 1972, after which time it relocated elsewhere and the *Paisley Centre* was no longer used for educational purposes. In 1973, the *Paisley Centre* became the Bunbury Tourist Office and a Dance School¹¹.

In May 1984, a lease was signed with the Bunbury Musical Comedy Group Inc. and the building was converted for use as a theatre. It retains this use today. As a theatre, the *Paisley Centre* provides low cost theatre space and, as part of the conditions of lease, allows for community use for such events as schools plays and musical evenings providing a venue midway in ambience between that of the modern school hall and the new Regional Arts Centre (1987).¹²

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The *Paisley Centre* building is a single storey school of red brick in the Victorian Rustic Gothic style comprising a school hall, and a wing containing classrooms.¹³ It was built for the Public Works Department on part of land that was originally the Convict Depot. In 1885, the north west corner of the land was alienated for school use. Other parts of the site, bounded by Stephen, Arthur, Stirling Streets and the railway reserve, continued to accommodate a variety of uses including the Police Department, the Rechabites Hall (later PWD depot), and a pound.¹⁴

The *Paisley Centre* is typical of many schools built in Western Australia between 1850 and 1900.¹⁵ The basic building - the school hall and the central westward extending wing - exhibits the accepted official approach to school architecture of the period - a fairly austere rendering of the symbolically appropriate Gothic revival style, characterised by tall masonry walls, lancet windows with stone quoining, a steeply pitched roof, prominent gables, strongly modelled chimneys, and irregular roof massing.

Materials employed were those easily produced locally: brick walls, timber floors, timber framed double sash windows, timber frame roof and sheoak shingle cladding. The roof, carried by timber trusses, was originally of shingles, later covered by corrugated iron and then, later again, by corrugated asbestos sheeting.¹⁶

After 1890, the influence of the Gothic style in educational architecture waned, and the additions to *Paisley Centre* from 1894 onwards take on a more simple style. Within the building, the remains of the school hall still allow a sense of how the focal point of the school would have appeared in its earliest period of development. Of particular interest is the upper wall, corbels, timber and steel arched roof trusses and timber lined ceiling, together with high level windows.¹⁷

¹⁰ *ibid.* pp.7, 34, 38.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.33.

¹² *ibid.* pp.34-5; *Bunbury Art Galleries* (brochure, n.d., circa 1989/90; For further information see Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application.* (City of Bunbury, December 1991).

¹³ 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) pp.90-93.

¹⁴ Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *op.cit.* p.5.

¹⁵ *ibid.* p.36.

¹⁶ National Trust Assessment Exposition

¹⁷ Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *op.cit.* p.51.

The construction and subsequent modifications to the roof structure are also of interest. The steel arched trusses supporting the various extensions to the roof demonstrate a competent and confident resolution of some difficult roofing problems posed by the programme of continual expansion of the school. The additions avoided box gutters and employed a series of bastard valleys and hips to retain the original design sense.¹⁸ The *Paisley Centre* has a dominant massing of sharply pitched roofs, gables and chimneys together with interesting Arthur Street elevations which reflect both the earliest and latest period of development of the building. The remaining lancet windows combined with the steeply pitched gables survive and typify the earliest period of the building's design. Unfortunately, succeeding developments have irrevocably obscured the Gothic treatments to the north and south elevations of the main hall, although some of the upper level windows survive, albeit blocked up.¹⁹

Use of the *Paisley Centre* in the 1970s, as a tourist bureau and dance hall saw relatively little change to its fabric. In 1984, subsequent to the leasing of the place to the Bunbury Musical Comedy Group Inc., the building underwent the last and probably most extensive physical change to accommodate theatre requirements, including major internal changes affecting many walls and internal features. The external fabric, apart from the intrusion of one door on the south side and the removal of windows and addition of two doors to the north side remained reasonably intact. Some other minor modifications affected the northernmost entry porch on the west elevation.²⁰

In 1974, the land was vested in the City of Bunbury as a B class reserve.²¹ By 1990, most of the associated school buildings had been demolished and car parks surrounded the building, substantially altering the physical and historical context of the building.²²

For a full discussion of the chronology of the site, together with a detailed description of the changes to the fabric and structure of the educational facilities within the school, see Considine and Griffiths, *Architects: Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application*. (City of Bunbury, December 1991) pp. 30-35.

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.

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The *Paisley Centre* is a competent and confident example of educational architecture in the Victorian Rustic Gothic style.

18 *loc.cit.*

19 *loc.cit.*

20 *ibid.* p.7, 35.

21 *ibid.* pp.34-5.

22 *ibid.* p.35.

The *Paisley Centre* exhibits interesting Arthur Street elevations which reflect both the earliest and latest period of development of the building.

The *Paisley Centre* defines the corner of Arthur and Stephen Streets. The building is an unusual and interesting element in the townscape relative to the city centre.

The *Paisley Centre* is a minor landmark building familiar to everyone in Bunbury.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

The *Paisley Centre* was the first substantial school building on the site. It is now the last remaining evidence of nineteenth century state education in Bunbury.

The *Paisley Centre* has a close association with the development of education in Bunbury and demonstrates the importance of Bunbury as a regional educational centre.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The *Paisley Centre* demonstrates, in fabric form, a pattern of educational growth and changes in teaching patterns over the period 1886 to 1914.

4. SOCIAL VALUE

The *Paisley Centre* is significant through its social and cultural associations because of its long association with all phases of education in Bunbury.

The *Paisley Centre* contributes to the sense of place and historical identity in the community. The *Paisley Centre* is valued by the community as a remnant of the earlier built fabric of Bunbury and as evidence of a continuity of the provision of educational services to the city. The National Trust (WA) and Australian Heritage Commission have also formally recognised the heritage value of the place.

The *Paisley Centre* has, more recently, attained a high degree of social significance as a venue for community use and recreational activities in the City of Bunbury.

5. RARITY

The *Paisley Centre* is uncommon. The design and subsequent modifications and re-use represent a distinctive historical development of educational architecture and use. Although not rare as a type, *Paisley Centre* developed its own particular architectural character in response to supply and demand forces experienced in Bunbury.

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

The *Paisley Centre* is representative of a small number of substantial school buildings of its time and it incorporates, in fabric form, responses to social change.

CONDITION

The existing structure is in a reasonably sound condition given its age. The external brickwork requires appropriate re-pointing but is essentially sound, although there may still be some areas of rising damp which remain of concern.

According to Considine and Griffiths, the replacement fibro cement roof has reached the end of its useful life and now seems to have reached a stage of unacceptable friability and needs replacement, the rainwater goods should be replaced and attempts at painting the chimney stacks are also beginning to fail as are other paint requirements.²³ Most of the interior is of sound condition, with the possible exception of some minor areas where there is evidence of possible rising damp problems that require further investigation.²⁴

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the building remains good despite the recent interventions. The building is still recognisable as a school building of the late nineteenth century in its form and internal layout. Although the creation of car parking around the east and south sides, together with some unkempt planting, detracts from the context of the place, essentially the building still reads as a school house in the townscape.

Internal integrity is impaired by the most recent interventions, although the school hall area itself maintains enough of its integrity to remain significant. Interventions in the fabric are unlikely to be removed or able to be recovered.²⁵

AUTHENTICITY

The majority of the external fabric retains its essential appearance reflecting the 1886 to 1914 period of development. The arrangement of the southern rooms has been substantially altered to make provision for a stage but the use of the original school hall as the auditorium has retained the authenticity of the school hall. Other rooms still open out from this central space reflect a size of rooms similar layout to that of the original.

The interior leaves little to suggest the main period of development other than hall walls, timber arched trussed roof structure, timber lined ceiling and some high level windows.²⁶

²³ *ibid.* p.46.

²⁴ For further discussion of the condition of the place see Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application.* (City of Bunbury, December 1991).

²⁵ For further discussion of the integrity of the place see Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application.* (City of Bunbury, December 1991).

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Paisley Centre* has cultural heritage significance for the following:

the place defines the corner of Arthur and Stephen Streets. It is an unusual and interesting element in the townscape relative to the city centre and it is a competent and confident example of educational architecture in the Victorian Rustic Gothic style;

the place was the first substantial school building on the site. It is now the last remaining evidence of nineteenth century state education in Bunbury;

the place demonstrates, in fabric form, a pattern of educational growth and improvement in amenity over the period 1886 to 1914. The place has a close association with the development of education in Bunbury and demonstrates the importance of Bunbury as a regional educational centre;

the place is recognised by the community for its contribution to the sense of place and historical identity in the community; and,

the place is representative of a small number of substantial school buildings of its time.

8. Register of Heritage Places

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| Interim Entry | 08/06/1993 |
| Permanent Entry | 01/03/1994 |

9. Conservation Order

10. Heritage Agreement

11. References

National Trust Assessment Exposition

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet

Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application*. (City of Bunbury, December 1991)

²⁶ For further discussion of the authenticity of the place see Considine and Griffiths, Architects: *Paisley Centre, Arthur and Stephen Streets, Bunbury: Heritage Assessment and Heritage Funding Application*. (City of Bunbury, December 1991).