



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)

- 3.19 Marketing and retailing
- 4.1.2 Making suburbs

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 308 Commercial and service industries

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The place is a particularly fine example of an elaborately detailed building in the Federation Free Classical style, featuring unpainted face brickwork with stucco bonding, elaborately detailed parapets and pediments, and a cantilevered awning that appears to be original. (Criterion 1.1)

By virtue of its elaborate detailing and prominent corner location, the building has attained the status of a local landmark. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is important as an example of the type of substantial commercial building erected following the gold boom years in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

The place reflects the expansion of commercial and housing opportunities in the city of Perth in the area north of the railway line. (Criterion 2.1)

The place has some importance for its association with Dr William Trethowan, a Perth surgeon, who owned and developed that part of Palmerston and Newcastle Street. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

* 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.

The place is significant for its role in providing commercial services to the Northbridge community over the years. As a major supplier of wallpapers, the place was well known and patronised by a large number of patrons involved with interior decoration. (Criterion 4.1)

The place is highly valued by the community for its association with the history of Northbridge and for contributing to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The building is rare as an example of a two storey commercial building dating from the early twentieth century that was constructed in conjunction with an attached two-storey residence. (Criterion 5.1)

The place is a rare example of a commercial building featuring face brickwork with rendered bonds and extensive elaborate stucco decoration, which remains substantially as constructed. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12.3 CONDITION

The place is in fair condition. Lack of maintenance and security have resulted in damage to some of the external and internal fabric, in particular the doors and windows.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The place is currently vacant, however the place could be restored to its original purpose with comparative ease. The place has a moderate to high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. Although there have been some minor modifications to the place over time to accommodate changing needs, including early internal overlays, most of the original fabric is intact.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robyn Taylor, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Palassis Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

This two-storey commercial building on the corner of Newcastle and Palmerston Streets, with an attached residence in Palmerston Street, was constructed on former Lot Y164 (now Lot 34) in 1907. The shop and residence was part of the development of Lot Y164 along its Palmerston Street frontage which included two sets of three single storey terrace houses.¹ Over the

¹ See Metropolitan Water and Sewerage map, revised August 1950. Cons.4156, Sheet No.71, State Records Office.

subsequent decades the shop provided a range of goods and services to the local neighbourhood which in recent decades has largely dwindled in numbers due to the planned north of the city bypass and subsequent construction of the Graham Farmer Freeway and Northbridge Tunnel. The path of the Tunnel cuts through part of former Lot 164, which had resulted in the demolition of the first set of three terrace houses.² The shop and former residence has apparently been vacant for some time pending the redevelopment of those areas of Northbridge affected by the Tunnel's construction.³

According to the City of Perth rate books, Perth Town Lot Y164 belonged to the well-known merchant George Shenton until 1887 when James MacKay acquired the property in 1888. MacKay, whose occupation is listed as an 'Agent', then 'Mining Manager' during 1899 to 1902, had acquired other properties in the area such as Lot Y156 on the corner of Newcastle and Fitzgerald Streets. These boom years in the State's economy, triggered by the gold rushes of the 1890s, resulted in considerable land and property speculation in the area north of the city. The increasing demand for residential housing close to the city resulted in the erection of various types of dwellings from grand houses to modest terrace cottages and duplexes. These growing residential areas were to be serviced by a wide range of commercial enterprises located along major roads and intersections such as that which occurred on the corner site at 309 Newcastle Street.

In 1902, Lot Y164 was transferred to Dr William Trethowan, a surgeon. Dr Trethowan also acquired nearby Lot Y163 in 1905 and took up residence in the grand c.1892 house at No.162 (then listed as No.170) Aberdeen Street.⁴ At one stage in his career Dr Trethowan was President of the Western Australian Branch of the St John's Ambulance Association, which had been set up in 1891.⁵ This Association had its headquarters, or postal address, in a nearby residence, No.120 Aberdeen Street, which still stands today.⁶ Trethowan lived next door at No.122 before moving into in No.162 Aberdeen Street while his other property, Lot Y164, was being developed.⁷

In 1907, an elaborate two-storey commercial building was constructed on the corner of Newcastle Street with an attached residence at No.23 Palmerston Street. According to the rate books, it would appear the two sets of single-storey terrace houses along Palmerston Street, Nos. 11 to 21, were constructed at the same time. The remainder or part of Lot Y164, along Newcastle Street, was apparently being used as a yard by Australian Wood

² Officially opened by the State Premier the Hon. Richard Court, MLA, on 20 April 2000.

³ The area most affected is between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets, from Fitzgerald Street in the west and Lord Street to the east. The eastern section is between Parry and Newcastle Streets.

⁴ Prior to this Dr Trethowan was living at No.122 Aberdeen Street. Post office directory for 1900 and 1904.

⁵ Cohen, B. C., *A History of Medicine in Western Australia*, Paterson Brokenshaw Pty.Ltd., Perth, WA, no date (1965 written in pencil on front page), p.120. Although the Association had been established in Western Australia in 1891, its formal recognition by Great Britain took place in 1892. Discussion with Kris Bizzaca 6 April, 2001.

⁶ Entry in the 1910 post office directory. Subsequent entries for the St John's Ambulance Association appear for this residence during the years up to 1930, and probably predate the 1910 listing. It was the home of members of the Campbell family, with R. Campbell being listed as Secretary in the 1924 post office directory. In 1921, the Association established its headquarters in Murray Street. Discussion with Kris Bizzaca 6 April, 2001.

⁷ City of Perth rate books.

and Coal.⁸ For many years this area would continue to be used as a timber yard.

The first tenant to occupy No.309 was Mr William H. Newman who ran a furniture business from the premises until the mid to late 1920s. It could be assumed that Newman, and some others who subsequently operated from No.309, lived on the premises as the upstairs and ground floor rear of the building reveals evidence of domestic facilities including a separate street entrance and set of stairs leading to the floor above. Also, no additional names of people residing at the address are listed in the rate books and post office directories. The first resident in the attached two-storey residence at No.23 Palmerston Street appears to have been Mrs Katherine Keogh who is listed in the 1908 rate book. Of some interest is the fact that above her name, which appears to be crossed out in the rate book, is the faint inscription of the name Carl Sporeu with 'Tea-room confection' written alongside. This suggests the possibility that the downstairs section may have once been used for commercial purposes. In 1914, ownership of the land along Palmerston Street and the corner of Newcastle Street was transferred to William and Elizabeth Pead, while Trethowan continued to be the owner of the land along Newcastle Street where Adam Martin operated a wood yard.⁹ In 1919, Martin acquired this site and continued to operate his business as a fuel merchant.¹⁰

Following Newman's departure in the mid to late 1920s, No.309 was used for 'mixed business'. From this time to 1949, the last year the post office directories were published, the various tenants listed as operating from the building included Frank Tricker, G. Foster Flynn, James W. Chandler (entered under his name is Winterbottom Motors Co. Ltd.) and G. N. Venevis.¹¹ The residence at No.23 Palmerston Street continued to be occupied by various tenants.¹² In 1946, ownership of the place including the houses along Palmerston Street was transferred to Waddy Waddy Co. Ltd, while the shop continued to operate as a mixed business under G. Venevis.¹³ The property was subsequently acquired by a number of people as tenants in common. Their surnames; Sparta, Robustellini, and Genovese, provide evidence of the investment in property in the Northbridge area by various migrants who had established themselves in Perth.¹⁴

During the 1960s and 1970s, following the release of plans to develop a north-of-the-city bypass, large tracts of land and properties between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets were resumed by the government.¹⁵ However, it would appear Lot 34, which included No.308 with the attached residence, and the

8 Post office directory for 1905. The address is given as No.259 Newcastle Street, however the street numbers were to change dramatically over time.

9 City of Perth rate book for 1914.

10 City of Perth rate book for 1919 and post office directories.

11 Post office directories from 1929 to 1949.

12 Further research would be required to determine whether the Town Planning Act of 1928, which set out specific zones for residential, commercial and other land uses, affected residential dwellings attached to commercial premises.

13 City of Perth rate book for 1946 and post office directories.

14 Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Some have their trades listed such as Tool Maker and two were electricians.

15 *The West Australian*, Advertising feature celebrating the opening of the Northbridge Tunnel, 20 April, 2000. '40 years in the planning', article by George Hackett, former Director, Strategic Planning for Main Road, p.5. Titles to properties were acquired either by the Main Roads Department or the Metropolitan Planning Commission.

houses along Palmerston Street, was not acquired by the government until 1987.¹⁶ The properties were then leased out by the government at a low rental. Apparently because the future of these properties was uncertain, little to no maintenance was undertaken.¹⁷ The premises were rented to Mr Stan Jarvis (presumably prior to the government acquiring the property) who ran a wallpaper business there for many years, then on his retirement the business was sold to Keith Riddle who continued to operate as a wallpaper specialist for the next fifteen years or so.¹⁸ During these years the attached residence was used for storage, although apparently Mr Riddle periodically slept in one of the upstairs' rooms, 'although this was illegal then',¹⁹ because of the distance he had to travel to get home. Following his death in the early 1990s, Mr Riddle's widow sold the business to George Elvin, a wallpaper specialist who established Wallpaper World in the building in c.1993. The business was closed down in c.1998.²⁰ Since 1998 the two places, No. 309 Newcastle Street and No. 23 Palmerston Street, have remained vacant.²¹

In June 2000, title to the place was transferred to the East Perth Redevelopment Authority.²²

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

309 Newcastle Street comprises an ornate two storey brick and iron commercial building with an attached residence, constructed in 1907.

309 Newcastle Street is situated on the southwest corner of the Newcastle Street and Palmerston Street intersection. On both the south and north sides of Newcastle Street in the vicinity of the place there are generally one or two storey commercial buildings. These buildings are constructed in a variety of styles and date from the late nineteenth century through to the late twentieth century. The more recent buildings are typically set back several metres from the front boundary to accommodate carparking. This section of Newcastle Street has concrete footpaths with no street trees.

On the north west corner of the intersection, opposite the place, is a two storey commercial building with a parapet and cantilevered awning to the front. At the corner, the façade is truncated at 45 degree to the street grid. On the north east corner is a two storey modern commercial building with carparking to the front. On the southeast corner of the intersection is a group of four single storey residential buildings dating from the late nineteenth century. These buildings have verandahs to the front and hipped corrugated

¹⁶ Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Transferred to the State Planning Commission on 23 March, 1987.

¹⁷ Discussion with Mr. Graham Mason, tradesman and wall paper specialist who frequented No.309 over a period of thirty years. Date 19 March, 2001.

¹⁸ Discussion with Mr. Graham Mason Apparently the place was one of the major suppliers of wall papers in Perth and therefore well-known to interior decorators and tradesmen. George Elvin who took over the premises in c.1993 believes it was Stan Jarvis who was responsible for papering the walls throughout the building. Subsequent practice was to mount displays in front of the walls.

¹⁹ Discussion with Mr Graham Mason. According to George Elvin, Keith Riddle and his wife lived in the building for a time before moving to another home.

²⁰ Discussion with George Elvin of Elvins Wallpaper Supermart which operates from Osborne Park. 7 April, 2001.

²¹ According to Graham Mason, he and George Elvin then cleared the place out, removing all the cupboards and fittings. George Elvin believes the removal of the sections of common wall between the two buildings was undertaken during Stan Jarvis's occupancy.

²² Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Transfer dated 30 June, 2000.

iron roofs. The residence sited on the corner has been adapted for use as a commercial building.

On the western side of Palmerston Street, adjacent to the place, is a row of three attached single storey brick residences. The residences are set back 4 metres and sit behind a timber and brick fence. A large area of land to the south of this building was cleared during the construction of the tunnel and is currently vacant. This section of Palmerston Street has concrete footpaths and grassed verges.

309 Newcastle Street comprises an elaborately detailed two storey commercial building and attached two-storey residence built in the Federation Free Classical style. The building has no set back along the eastern (Palmerston Street) and northern (Newcastle Street) elevations. To the rear (west) of the building is a yard, which is mostly covered by dried grass. The yard is enclosed by a corrugated fibro cement fence which has a metal gate located on the Newcastle street frontage. A brick garage with a skillion roof is located in the north west corner of the yard.

The walls are laid in stretcher bond brickwork with bands of render. The façade is truncated at the northeast corner for the entry to the shop. The entry comprises a panelled timber double door with an arched fanlight above. There is a large timber framed window on the north and east facades, to either side of the doorway. The windows are almost entirely covered by corrugated iron sheet although a decorative iron frieze is visible to the top of the window.

A bullnose profile corrugated iron awning wraps around the façade, above the ground level shop. The awning is painted in alternating brown and white stripes and is supported by iron brackets. There is a timber-framed section with flat pressed metal lining to the underside of the awning at the truncated corner. A metal sign of comparatively recent origin is fixed to the awning on the Palmerston Street side.

There are arched timber framed double hung windows on the first floor with label moulding. A timber double door with an arched fanlight is located to the corner. The roofline is concealed by an ornate rendered parapet with a deep cornice which incorporates egg and dart moulding. At the truncated corner the parapet is surmounted by an elaborate pediment with a triangular head.

At western end of the northern elevation the parapet drops in level and is finished with a simple rendered capping. At the western end of the parapet is a rendered chimney with carbelling. This elevation terminates in a single storey skillion section with a simple rendered parapet.

The attached residence is located to the south side of the commercial building and has no set back from the front boundary. There is a double height verandah to the front with a corrugated iron roof supported on timber posts. The upper level of the verandah has a fibro cement balustrade. A brick fin wall is located to the southern end of the verandah. There is a shingle-clad awning above the ground floor level supported on curved timber brackets. The verandah has been in-filled with timber boards and a row of small aluminium framed windows below the awning. The upper level façade comprises tuck-pointed stretcher bond brickwork with bands of render. There are three timber framed double hung windows with rendered lintels. Above the verandah is a rendered parapet with a deep capping and ornate pediment.

The eastern half of the southern elevation is built to the boundary line and comprises a blank façade of face brickwork laid in a stretcher bond. The western half of the southern elevation is set back one metre from the boundary line and is set under a corrugated iron skillion roof. There are several timber framed double hung windows and a doorway on the ground level, which has been boarded up. The windows have rendered sills and arched brick lintels comprised of header courses. This elevation is largely obscured by a group of mature Cape Lilac trees planted along the southern boundary.

The rear of the residence extends beyond the attached commercial building and comprises face brickwork with a window opening to each level. The window openings have been boarded up with sheet metal. The parapet to the skillion

roof has galvanised metal flashings.

To the rear of the shop is a single storey section with a corrugated iron skillion roof and a door and window opening, both of which have been sealed with metal sheet. Adjacent to the doorway is a ceramic sink. The brickwork to the upper level of the rear elevation is mostly painted white.

The ground floor plan of the shop comprises a large, open room addressing the street corner. Beyond the front room is a separate entrance and hallway with the staircase to the first floor. There are two rooms beyond the hallway. All rooms have carpeted timber floorboards and walls lined with a variety of patterned wallpapers. Ceilings typically have a pressed metal lining. There are moulded timber architraves to doorways. In the front room there is a large square headed opening in the party wall between the shop and residence. A doorway at the southern end of the west wall leads through to the hallway and stairwell. The staircase has turned timber balusters and newel posts and a carpet runner. The staircase terminates at a landing where there are two flights of stairs branching off to the front and to the rear of the first floor.

Beyond the hallway is a room partitioned by a timber and ply shelving unit, which reaches almost to ceiling height. The north side of the shelving unit is lined with wallpaper. A fireplace with a tiled hearth is located in the northwest corner. The mantle piece has been removed although its outline is still visible on the wall. On the west wall of the room is a panelled timber door with fanlight above. The door opens on to the rear skillion section, which has painted plaster walls and an unlined ceiling. The room is fitted with a modern stainless steel sink. A timber framed double hung window and a panelled timber door are located on the west wall. Adjacent to the door is there is a small section of presses metal wall lining. The doorway opens directly onto the rear yard.

The first floor plan comprises two front rooms and two rear rooms to either side of the staircase. The ceilings to these rooms are pressed metal with a simple timber cornice. All the rooms have moulded timber skirtings and architraves. The front room addresses the corner, by means of double timber-framed doors, and has painted rendered walls, which are lined with a variety of wallpapers to the picture rail. The timber floorboards are covered with carpet. A fireplace is situated in the southern wall. The mantle piece has been removed although its outline is still visible on the wall. A square headed opening has been formed in the party wall between the shop and residence. The other room to the front section of the building has carpet to the floorboards and wallpaper lining to the walls. The door to this room is a flush panel door, which has been fitted to the outside of the architrave.

The landing to the rear rooms has 145mm wide timber floor boards. The floorboards are also visible in the small room situated over the stairwell. Elsewhere in the rear rooms the floorboards are covered in vinyl. The walls are rendered and painted. Some plumbing fixtures and an enamel bath remain in the room immediately west of the landing. The other, larger room to the north of the landing has a fireplace in the north west corner. The mantelpiece has been removed, although its outline is still visible on the wall.

The ground floor plan of the residence basically comprises a linear strip of rooms accessed via a passageway to the north side. The ground level verandah has been fully enclosed and lined with wallpaper. The front doorway, located at the northern end of the façade, has a timber frame with a fanlight and sidelight, the door and glazing having been removed. The residence is now accessed via the front room of the shop, through an opening in the party wall.

The front two rooms of the residence are larger than the other rooms and feature moulded timber skirting boards, picture rails and plaster cornices and ceiling roses. Both rooms have fireplaces that have lost their mantelpieces.

Beyond an ornate plaster archway the passageway widens to accommodate a staircase which leads up to the first floor. The staircase has turned timber newel posts and balusters and a pressed metal lining to the underside. An opening has been formed in the party wall immediately beyond the stairs to provide access to the hallway and entrance to the shop.

Past the staircase, the passageway turns at a right angle to the south. At the

end of the hall is a panelled timber door with a fanlight that opens to exterior of the building. A panelled timber door on the north side of the passageway leads to a room fitted with a wood fired stove. The room has floorboards with a vinyl covering and a moulded timber skirting board. Walls are painted plaster with scribed dado run moulding. To the rear is a smaller room, which is finished in a similar manner. These rooms to the rear of the ground floor residence have pressed metal ceilings.

The first floor plan of the residence is similar to the ground floor, with rooms arranged in a linear strip to the south side of the passageway. Typically the timber floorboards are carpeted throughout and the walls lined with a variety of wallpapers. There are moulded timber skirting boards and architraves throughout. The plaster and lathe ceilings are visible in the front passageway and the second room from the front. The ceiling to the front room has been lined with foam. Other rooms have been lined with a ceiling tile. There are plumbing fixtures and an enamel bath in the first of the rooms to the rear of the staircase and some kitchen fittings in the next room. The verandah to the first floor has timber floorboards and timber posts. It is not accessible from the first floor at present because the doorway has been boarded up.

The place is largely as constructed. There have been minor alterations to the internal layout and details to accommodate the use of both the shop and residence as commercial premises. These changes are limited to the creation of two openings in the party wall on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The use of the rooms for the display of wallpapers and some ceiling linings is mostly superficial and has not resulted in changes to the fabric.

Generally the place is in a fair condition. There is some evidence of cracking to the rendered walls in the rear rooms and of patching to the external face brick mortar. There is evidence of years of neglect and the place is in a poor state of repair. Most of the glazing has been broken and the gutters and roof cladding are in a deteriorated condition. The prolonged period of vacancy has left the building susceptible acts to vandalism and the stripping of timber fittings for use as firewood. In particular, most of the mantlepieces and internal doors have been removed. Some external damage has occurred to the doors and windows, which are now boarded up to prevent further break-ins.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Commercial building and attached residence, 309 Newcastle Street can be compared to commercial buildings within the Perth region of a similar age and scale, which are sited on street corners.

The following are examples of such buildings extant within the Perth region, which are entered on the Heritage Council database.

476 Beaufort Street, Highgate, comprises a two storey commercial building with an elaborate rendered parapet that incorporates arched pediments. A bowed corrugated iron awning wraps around the façade, above the ground floor shop. There is a verandah to the first floor with turned timber posts and a cast iron filigree balustrade. The corner of the shop façade is truncated to accommodate the entry. The building is in good condition and the façade appears to be substantially intact.

150-154 Oxford Street, Leederville, comprises a two-storey commercial building constructed in 1904. The façade is truncated at the corner and is surmounted by an elaborate pediment with rendered balusters and ball motif finials. The entry to the corner shop is located on the truncated façade. There is a cantilevered metal awning above the ground floor level shops. The original verandah has been removed and the ground floor shopfronts have been modified.

265 Newcastle Street, Northbridge, comprises a two storey commercial building with a rendered façade and cantilevered awning to the front. The corner of the façade is truncated and the roofline is concealed by a rendered parapet with a deep cornice. There have been substantial modifications to the façade including the removal of the corner entry. There is an unsympathetic modern addition to the side of the building. At the present time the building is vacant.

In the above cases the first floor level of the building would have originally been used as a residence. Examples that incorporate an attached two-storey residence have not been located.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is required to find out the names of the architect and builder, and when changes were made to the common wall between the two buildings.