



# 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.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The place is a particularly fine and rare example of the Federation Warehouse style architecture in Perth. (Criterion 1.1)

The place is a dominant visual element in the Wellington Street streetscape to the west of the William Street intersection. The articulation of the façade sets the pattern for adjacent structures, such as the Wills building. (Criteria 1.3 & 1.4)

### 11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* was the long time administrative centre for the agricultural co-operative movement in Western Australia. This movement, and Wesfarmers more specifically, influenced the nature and development of primary industry in the state, and hence of the state's economy. *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is a physical representation of Wesfarmers' achievements in the primary industry sector. Its urban location as the administrative headquarters of the rural-based movement has contributed to the Western Australian community's awareness of the significance of the agricultural industry in the state's economy. (Criterion 2.2)

A number of Western Australia's most prominent businessmen and politicians have been members of the agricultural co-operative movement. Walter Harper, Hon. T. H. Bath C.B.E., Basil Murray, John Thomson and Sir Thorley Loton, all served as prominent board members and employees at the Wellington Street premises. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is associated with Wesfarmers' establishment in 1924 of 6WF, Perth's first radio station. The station operated and transmitted from the top storey of the Wellington Street premises. 6WF was the first broadcasting service in Western Australia, had a strong rural focus, and initially transmitted primary industry prices to rural farmers. Entertainment later complemented this early emphasis on rural programming. 6WF was sold in 1928 to the Australian Broadcasting Company, now known as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

The place was built by P & P Vincent & Son for Sir Frederick Thomas Sargood

\* 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.

Knight from Melbourne in 1898. Sargood, Butler, Nicol & Ewen used the building as warehouse space for Sargood Importers & Merchants, a general merchandising and trading company based in Melbourne, Victoria. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

*Wesfarmers Building* was designed by, and is a fine example of the work of, prominent turn of the century architect and soldier, Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is significant for its structural system of cast iron columns with capitals used both to decorate and support the beams and the complementary corbel brackets to support the beams at the side walls. Also of significance is the use of more slender cast iron columns on successive floors from the basement to the top floor, reflecting the lighter loads encountered on higher floors. (Criterion 3.3)

### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is of social significance to the rural community in Western Australia in particular, as the long time administrative centre for the agricultural co-operative movement in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is of social significance because of its association with Wesfarmers' establishment in 1924 of 6WF, Perth's first radio station, which is familiar to many in the West Australian community. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

The building is rare as a particularly fine example of the Federation Warehouse style. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The building is representative of warehouse Federation style architecture, having the characteristics of similar buildings found around Perth and Fremantle, but it is an unusually well articulated example. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The condition of the building is sound. The exterior surfaces appear without serious faults. The interior is unused and neglected in day to day housekeeping and the abandoned scheme has left unfinished work which detracts from the appearance of the place. Also there are some signs of water entry and termite attack. Overall the condition is considered sound.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

The original intention of the building is intact, but not used. Changes that have worked against this are the painting of the external brickwork, the introduction of the waste pipes and vent stacks to the interior spaces and the spraying of the basement ceilings and columns. These have all detracted from the integrity but not seriously challenged it. The integrity of the place is considered low to moderate.

## 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The original materials are largely in their original state. There has been damage done in some areas such as the ceilings and the stair balustrades and some of the materials modified with the painting of the external brickwork. The authenticity of the place is, on balance, considered moderate to high.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The supporting evidence has been prepared by consultants from the Centre for Western Australian History. The documentary, evidence has been compiled by Chantal Gurney-Pringle, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon, Architect.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is a four storey warehouse building with basement, of concrete and steel construction, in Federation Warehouse style.

*Wesfarmers Building* was designed by the prominent Western Australian architect Talbot Hobbs. Sir Joseph John Talbot Hobbs (knighted in 1918 as a result of his war command) was a prominent figure in the Western Australian architectural establishment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a profession he combined with great success with a military career. In the 1890s, the architectural profession in Perth comprised only nine members, amongst them Hobbs, and he soon distinguished himself. He was successful in winning a competition in 1891 for the design of the Weld Club and this led to a number of other commissions and projects. Of these, his most notable included Scot's Church and the Park Hotel in Fremantle, the Malthouse (1896), and the Swan Brewery (1897), as well as many of the new mansions built for the wealthy of South Perth and Peppermint Grove. *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* was one of these commissions.

In professional terms, Talbot Hobbs is worthy of note as the first treasurer of the newly-formed West Australian Institute of Architects in 1896 (he was president from 1909-1). In 1905, he was senior partner in the newly-established firm of Hobbs, Smith and Forbes, and this firm was responsible for many of Perth's gracious buildings erected during this period, including the Halsbury Chambers, Temperance and General Insurance Building, Surrey Chambers, W.A. Trustee building, Savoy Hotel and the Freemasons' Hall. His later works included St George's College at the University of Western Australia, completed in 1931, which he regarded as his best achievement. He was also commissioned to design the State War Memorial, dedicated in 1929. This building is an important symbol of Hobbs' two careers: architect and military leader. He served at high rank and with great distinction during the Great War. At various times he was also patron of Legacy, Chief Scout of Western Australia and warden of the Western Australian War Memorial. Hobbs died in 1938.<sup>1</sup>

Perth Town Lot V26 was purchased by the Swan Brewery Company Limited of Victoria in 1889.<sup>2</sup> The vacant lot changed hands in 1895 when it was purchased by John Murray Watson and Horton William Atkinson.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nairn, B & Serle, G (eds) *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Vol 9, 1891-1939 (Melbourne University Press, 1983) pp. 315-17; Lyall Hunt (ed) *Westralian Portraits* (UWA Press, Nedlands 1979) pp.152-158.

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of Title *Perth Town Lot V26*, 15/06/1889.

<sup>3</sup> Certificate of Title *Perth Town Lot V26*, 13/06/1895.

Sir Frederick Thomas Sargood Knight from Melbourne purchased Perth Town Lot V26 in 1898 and *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* was built by R & P Vincent & Son for Sargood, Butler, Nicol & Ewen.<sup>4</sup> Sargood, Butler, Nicol & Ewen used the building as warehouse space for Sargood Importers & Merchants, a general merchandising and trading company based in Melbourne, Victoria.<sup>5</sup>

Sargood Importer & Merchants traded at the Wellington Street premises for a period of nineteen years from 1898-1917.<sup>6</sup> In 1917 Perth Town Lot V26 was purchased by the Swan Brewery Company Limited.<sup>7</sup> The Westralian Farmers Limited purchased the Wellington Street property in 1918 and from this time, the history of the building is linked to the history of Wesfarmers..<sup>8</sup>

During the same co-operative farm movement, which saw the emergence of the Country Party as a rural political force, the Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited (or Wesfarmers) was founded in 1914. The co-operative farmers' movement was intended from the earliest days to serve as a commercial representative for Western Australian primary producers and its aims were twofold: to reduce the cost of goods through direct importation and to facilitate the export of local produce.<sup>9</sup> Wesfarmers itself was originally established as an outlet for farm merchandise and a buyer and broker for wheat, but its the activities soon expanded to include dairying, honey production, fruit exporting, production and marketing of superphosphate, cotton, and fat lamb and wool exporting.<sup>10</sup> One of Wesfarmers' major successes was the development of Co-operative Bulk Handling of wheat, which grew out of the depression years and remains a feature of the state's rural economy today.<sup>11</sup> As its sphere of interest extended, Wesfarmers moved into areas outside rural production and marketing, into shipping, freighting and road transport. By the 1950s, Wesfarmers' interests included the marketing of gas. By the 1960s, the services it provided to its rural membership included insurance, transport and cartage, taxation advice, printing, travel assistance, real estate and financier.<sup>12</sup> It also had an international representation in London.<sup>13</sup>

The co-operative farmers' movement was based on the twin principles of 'self-help' (members were shareholders) and 'help your neighbour'. Local co-ops were set up in country towns, on the basis of local shareholding, with each co-op an agent for Wesfarmers. These co-ops then bought wholesale through the parent organisation, creating strong consumer demand and significant buying and bargaining power which enabled Wesfarmers to out-buy, out-price and eventually swallow up or drown competitors.<sup>14</sup> In a state which was, until the mineral boom of the 1960s, almost entirely dependent on its rural economy, Wesfarmers and the co-operative farmers' movement has

---

4 Certificate of Title *Perth Town Lot V26*, 29/11/1898.

5 City of Perth, Plaque on front of 569 Wellington Street.

6 *ibid.*

7 Certificate of Title *Perth Town Lot V26*, 1/10/1917.

8 Certificate of Title *Perth Town Lot V26*, 17/04/1918.

9 Sandford, John *Walter Harper and the Farmers* (Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited Printing Works, 1955) p.25

10 Smith, Kevin, P. *A Bunch of Pirates - The story of a farmers co-operative - Wesfarmers* (Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited, 1984) pp.1-4.

11 *ibid* pp. 83-4.

12 *ibid* pp.1-4.

13 *ibid* p.6.

14 *ibid* p.53.

always been a major player in the local and export economy.

The movement grew rapidly. Within twelve months of the commencement of trading, Wesfarmers and its eight staff members were forced to seek larger premises, moving from their original location in Howard Street to 332 Murray Street, and soon expanding from one to two storeys of that building. By 1917, despite the impact of the war on the local economy, Wesfarmers' growth necessitated, and their profits enabled, a shift to larger premises. Wesfarmers company records indicate that the Wellington Street building was used as their central business base for the organisation from 1918, they soon occupied four whole floors and the basement of the warehouse building.<sup>15</sup>

Henceforth the two separate strands of the co-operative movement in Western Australia developed in tandem: the co-operative units in the country, each a company in its own right with its own body of shareholders; and Wesfarmers, situated in Perth, with branches in various country centres and shareholders throughout the State. Through Wesfarmers and their Wellington Street premises have developed wheat pooling, Co-operative Bulk Handling and the co-ordination of the whole co-operative movement.<sup>16</sup>

Once established in Wellington Street, Wesfarmers soon entered another new field, of great significance for their rural membership. With their headquarters located in Perth, Wesfarmers needed to seek a method of rapid and widespread transfer of information to rural areas. They also recognised the importance of communicating the 'co-operative' message and generating membership. Thus Wesfarmers entered into a pioneering attempt at mass communication. John Thomson, under the direction of Walter Harper as Chairman, was largely responsible for this initiative. In 1924, making use of the space facilities available in the top floor of their Wellington Street premises, Wesfarmers established the state's first broadcasting service, radio 6WF (for Wesfarmers). The station was officially opened on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1924. It was seen as providing something of real benefit to the rural community: reports on wheat, stock and wool sales, agricultural news, live music, theatre recitals and sports broadcasts. As well as transmitting, Wesfarmers also manufactured and sold so-called 'Mulgaphone' radio sets.<sup>17</sup>

The 6WF studio, situated on the top floor of Wesfarmers' Wellington Street office and warehouse, was divided into two studios, the smaller used for news broadcasting, the larger for music and entertainment. The studios were fitted with the latest equipment, the wall cavities filled with sawdust for soundproofing.<sup>18</sup> The 6WF installation had a transmitting range of six hundred miles, enabling a very extensive penetration of Wesfarmers' membership.<sup>19</sup>

However, costs were high and hard to recover in the days before mass radio advertising, an adequately organised system of licence fees and pre-recorded music. Economic necessity led Wesfarmers to offer the station to what became the Australian Broadcasting Commission, although it was hoped it would still meet the needs of rural listeners. General Manager of Wesfarmers J. Thomson stated:

---

15 Sandford op.cit. p.39

16 ibid p.51.

17 Smith op.cit. p. 189; Sandford, p.81.

18 *The Western Wireless*, 11/6/1924, p. 3.

19 ibid.

The directors of Westralian Farmers Limited do not care who owns the station (6WF) provided it gives service. If some company would undertake to give equal or better service, no one would be more delighted than we would be in getting right out of it; but it must continue to give service. As a company we have other interests in the State to consider, and we can wink at the certain amount of loss in order to provide a service to the outback farmers.<sup>20</sup>

Subsequently Radio 6WF was sold to the Australian Broadcasting Company in 1928 and became the ABC's first Western Australian station. It was relocated from Wellington Street to the ANZ Bank Building at 938-940 Hay Street between 1930 and 1937, and eventually transferred to the ABC's own premises. In fact the sale was precipitate since, shortly afterwards, radio advertising began to generate greater profits and a number of private stations began to open up. It is a tribute to the significance of Wesfarmers and a reminder to the public of the radio's rural origins, that the ABC station still bears its original name.<sup>21</sup>

Since World War Two, Wesfarmers has continued to grow. The 1950s and 1960s saw the co-operative greatly expand into diversified internal and external markets and the company continues to grow today. As Wesfarmers operations continued to spread in both size and scope, the ability to control operations from a centralised headquarters ceased. The decentralisation of Wesfarmers into numerous divisions and sister companies led to the sale of the Wellington Street building in 1981. Jandakot Pastoral Pty Ltd purchased the property in 1981 with a view to redeveloping the site as inner-city apartments. The Wellington Street building has been empty since the sale by Wesfarmers in 1981. Dragon Properties International Ltd recently purchased the property and today the building remains vacant.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is a four-storey building with basement situated on the south side of Wellington Street between King Street and Queen Street. *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is one of the few extant intact examples of the Federation Warehouse style.

The ground floor level is half a storey up from ground level at the Wellington Street facade and the basement half a storey down. Due to a gentle rise of the ground level from north to south, the ground floor level and the level of the ground are the same at the rear of the building.

To the west of the building is Wills House, 573 Wellington Street, which, at five storeys above a similar basement, has a taller facade on Wellington Street than that of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)*. The higher facade of the Wills House overlaps and sits on top of the crowning cornice of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* for the thickness of the party wall between the two buildings. Although differing in design, the facade treatments expressing the basements and the first floors of the two buildings are in alignment. The inter-floor solids between the first and second floors of each building also align but at the higher levels the fenestration of Wills House is more squat so that although one storey more, its height is only slightly in excess of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)*.

The facade treatment of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is of red painted brick with contrasting cement rendered mouldings, with rustication, pediments and dentils, expressing tall and narrow voids separated with columns and pilasters

---

<sup>20</sup> ibid, 21/1/1925, p.1

<sup>21</sup> Smith op.cit. p. 189, Sandford op.cit. p.81.

and collimating at the top in round arches supporting a heavy entablature. The Wills building by contrast is plain cement rendered solids with rectangular voids and one unadorned string course above the ground level. The facade is topped with a thin cornice with small dentils. Under this cornice, the building name in bold lettering is the most prominent feature of the facade.

The next building west is two storeys, also of white painted render but decorated with classic motifs. The horizontal elements are not aligned with those of its neighbours. Further west, on the far side of the King Street intersection, are two and three storey buildings together with the multi storeyed Telecom building.

To the east of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)*, on the intersection of Queen Street, is a car parking structure which, although of five levels, only reaches up to the top of the third floor of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)*. The facade of the carpark is a series of cream, vertically ribbed, cement block clad balustrades. On the east side of Queen Street is a row of two storey nineteenth century facades leading up to the taller Royal Hotel on the corner of William Street, with its lively attic infested mansard roofs.

On the north side of the broad dual carriageway of Wellington Street is the ground hugging, colorbond clad bus terminal opposite *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* and stretching east to the Horseshoe Bridge, carrying William Street over the railway lines behind the terminal. To the east is open space with the railway beyond with the great mushroom of the Entertainment Centre some five hundred metres distant. East of this are carparks and the vacant land of the demolished City Markets.

*Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* measures approximately 15 metres along the Wellington Street frontage by 72 metres going southward. The construction of the building consists of load bearing brick walls at the perimeters and the division between the compartments and cast iron columns spaced down the long north south axis of the building supporting beams spanning across from the load bearing walls each side.

Facing Wellington Street, the facade of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* is richly detailed. The base, taking in the basement height above pavement and ground floor, is divided into four bays with rusticated cream coloured, cement rendered pilasters capped with rectangular foliated capitals and standing on a 1500 mm high dark painted rock faced stone footing. These support a deep unadorned string course masking the floor structure behind.

The bays between the rusticated pilasters have cement rendered walls punctured with shallow arched heads. In the upper region of the opening the bay at the western end of the façade, a chunky rendered masonry hood with a scrolled pediment, underlined with close spaced dentils, supported on each side with moulded masonry brackets and thrusts forward of the general plane of the facade, to herald the main entrance to the building. Above and below the hood is glazing and at pavement level is the three metre high dark painted panel doors in two leaves and each fitted with a long chrome D handle.

The shallow arched openings to the bays to the east of the front doors are foreshortened with masonry sills at 2.5 metres above the pavement, which conceal the floor structure behind. Underneath these sills are scrolled brackets each side of openings lighting the basement area. The centre opening of the three openings east of the main entrance is occupied with a traffic door accessing a ramp sloping down to the basement floor. The

flanking openings have aluminium window frames and painted over glazing.

The first and second floor windows are contained between red painted brick columns in line with and repeating the width of, the rusticated rendered pilasters of the ground floor. The windows of each bay at each level are divided with two carved timber mullions and a timber transom 2.5 metres above the floor to create six panels. Between the first and second floor windows are rendered masonry panels, set back from the face of the red brick shafts, with triangular pediments in the centre sitting above a panel of foliated mouldings. Above the second floor windows, the brick shafts become rendered and present Ionian capitals above small string mouldings. Here the shafts continue above the capitals to a projecting cornice. Continuing above the cornice, the shafts roll into the voussoirs of the semi circular arches containing the third floor windows. Between the second and third floor windows and the rendered part of the shafts, are recessed masonry panels. These have string mouldings and a scroll in the centre at the bottom, a further string moulding over to line with that at the top of the capitals and the projecting sill of the third floor windows over that. The arches of the third floor windows are divided with two timber mullions.

Over and around the moulded voussoirs of the arched windows is red painted brickwork, topped with a rendered entablature. The entablature is finally topped with a projecting cornice underlined with closely spaced dentils.

The east elevation, facing the lane, is of red painted English bonded brickwork. The elevation is 72 metres long and the ground level rises to the south. A series of openings, running up from pavement level to shallow arches at the top of the building, contain timber-framed windows, with cream painted brick panels between floors. There are blank panels at each end of the elevation and at the stairwell. The windows are six panels as for those of the Wellington Street facade. Steel platforms carrying air conditioning equipment are bracketed from the wall, two at the Wellington Street end, one near the centre and one near the south end. Various pipes and vents are fixed to the wall.

The south elevation is rendered, painted a cream colour and punctured with rectangular openings containing timber-framed windows of four panels. The openings to the third floor have shallow arched heads. Over these is a timber louvre vent in a half circle opening located centrally within the brick gable. The pattern of four window openings per floor is broken at the ground floor level where the two central openings are doors and the openings flanking the doors are smaller than the windows above and are set at different heights. At second floor level steel platforms are bracketed out from the windows to carry air conditioning equipment. At all levels waste and supply pipes run horizontally and vertically.

The basement is divided into three compartments divided by masonry walls. The compartment off Wellington Street has seven bays marked by columns and beams. The other two compartments to the south have four bays each.

Entering off Wellington Street the ceiling is 2.4 metres above the floor. Progressing south, the floor ramps down one metre and at the bottom of the ramp the ceiling steps down to two metres above the floor. This low ceiling height is maintained for the rest of the basement. The ceilings to the front two compartments are sprayed with a fireproofing substance, which also covers the beams projecting below the ceiling and the cast iron columns. In the rear compartment the cast iron columns and the steel beams are exposed showing the way in which the column capitals are extended to provide bearing for the

beams. The deep jarrah floor joists spanning between the beams can also be seen. In the sidewalls reversed arches can be seen under the subterranean windows. The basement area has stairwells and a lift shaft but are otherwise open.

At the southwest corner of the northern compartment of the basement and at each floor level is a two and a half metre square strong room.

The main entrance doors lead into a five metre by two metre hall where a full width flight of stairs climbs to first floor level. Here, double doors lead to a second hall, four metres by four metres, which gives access to the first floor areas and to a stair leading up to the first floor level in straight flights with a landing midway. The stairs are contained on the east side with a gyprock partition and has a carved dark stained timber balustrade with turned newel posts and balusters.

Along the Wellington Street windows is a raised floor level to give headroom to the basement entry below. Down the centre of the area, on the north south axis are the cast iron columns with the capitals supporting the steel beams as for the basement construction. The steel beams project below the ceiling and are boxed in timber and lined. At the sidewalls the beams are supported on shaped metal corbels projecting from the wall. The columns are repeated at each floor level, however, the diameter of the columns diminishes at each floor level progressing up the building. The ceiling is painted matched pine boards with a mould at the abutment of the boards. The floor is of timber boards with an exposed sprinkler system attached underneath. From floor to ceiling are PVC waste pipes from an abandoned scheme to install toilets for a proposed hotel once intended to be set up in the building.

At first floor level, the northern part of the building is set up as partitioned offices with reception area, bathroom with spa. The rest of the first floor area is open and unused. Along the south wall are un-partitioned remnants of toilets with vitreous china urinal and WC pans, one of them smashed, standing against the rear window. The PVC waste pipes of the abandoned scheme are present.

The third floor is open and unused with PVC pipes running from floor to ceiling. In the north west corner of the area some white ant damage has occurred.

The top floor is similar to the floor below. Here the PVC waste pipes have become vents running up through the ceiling. The ceiling to the northern compartment of the building is concrete poured between steel beams which run straight over the cast iron columns. In the southern compartment the ceiling is of vault formed of corrugated iron segments with concrete poured over the top. The vaults span between closely spaced secondary beams running north south. The exposed sprinkler system is suspended below these ceilings. Next to the strong room in the south west corner of the northern compartment of the building is a narrow timber stair leading to the roof space where a timber cat walk leads to the lift motor room over the lift shaft. Heavy timber trusses support the corrugated asbestos roof cladding. The roof is a gable with vented hips at each end.

Part of the carved balustrade has been removed from the top of the stairs, although the newel post still stands. The concrete and vaulted ceilings have numerous holes punched through. The general state of the interior is one of abandonment. The exterior condition of the place is good.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Warehouse and office buildings of around the construction period of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* are: the Warehouse complex, 34-45 Cliff Street Fremantle (c.1900); Mills and Wares warehouse 2-4 Croke Street Fremantle (1890-1905); Lionel Samson's Building, 31-35 Cliff Street Fremantle (1833-1898); Lilleys Building, 34-42 Cliff Street Fremantle (c.1835); and 4-6 Adelaide Street Fremantle (1914, J. McNeece and Son Architect). These buildings have facades with characteristics common to *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)*, such as the use of classical orders in the pilasters, the use of semi-circular arches with label moulds, entablatures with balustrades at the top of the facade and sometimes a rustic treatment at the base. However, such buildings fall more into the Free Classical Style where the pilasters are restricted to the height of one storey and are based on continuous spandrels, whereas the facade of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* has the ground floor and part basement expressed as a base with the pilasters of the upper floors rising through the building to the strongly emphasised arches at the top storey, the spandrels being recessed. These characteristics set the building apart from the general surviving stock as Federation Warehouse style; as such it is rare.

The emphasis of the pier and the suppression of the spandrels is maintained on the long east elevation of *Wesfarmers Building (fmr)* where classical detailing is abandoned in favour of an unadorned brick warehouse facade.

Contributing to the rarity is the method of construction of the place using cast iron columns, diminishing in diameter as they rise up through the building and supporting the steel primary beams on decorative extensions of the column capitals. This mixture of function and decoration is rare.

### 13.4 REFERENCES

Sandford, John *Walter Harper and The Farmers*, Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited Printing Works, 1955.

Smith, Kevin, P. *A Bunch of Pirates - The story of a farmers co-operative - Wesfarmers*, Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited, 1984.

*The Western Wireless*

### 13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

-----