



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)

- 4.1.2 Making suburbs
- 4.4 Living with slums, outcasts and homelessness

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The place has aesthetic significance as a robustly detailed Federation Queen Anne style residential terrace. (Criterion 1.1)

The two-story limestone and brick terrace with a full width verandah to both floors has aesthetic value as a significant landmark building in the Northbridge area. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place reflects the diversity of housing opportunities in the city of Perth in the area north of the railway line. The place was built as three prestigious dwellings in the late nineteenth century, converted to smaller apartments during the 1920s-1930s and finally adapted for low income housing in the latter part of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.1)

The place reflects the expansion and development of residential and commercial buildings on the city fringes during the rapid population increase of the 1890's gold boom and the early years of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is important for its association with the architect Louis Bowser Cumpston, who owned and possibly lived in the building for a short time in the late 1890s. There is a strong possibility that Cumpston was the architect for the building. Cumpston, who had thrived in Melbourne designing inexpensive housing, designed similar low-cost housing in East Perth, Northbridge and the less expensive parts of West Perth. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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 was owned by the Green family, who were substantial property owners in central Perth, Northbridge and elsewhere (Criterion 2.3)

The place is important for its association with the Federick Darly North, who bought the building from Louis Cumpston in 1901. North was Secretary to the Premier Sir John Forrest, and Clerk of the Executive Council. He was also a brother-in-law to the Forrests having married Margaret Forrest's youngest sister Flora. (Criterion 2.3)

The building was named after Tom Burke in recognition of his involvement in community affairs, association with the Australian Labor Party, and contribution as Federal Member for Perth from 1943 to 1955.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is important for its role in providing low cost housing for residents in Northbridge. (Criterion 4.1)

The place is highly valued by those who live and work in the building. (Criterion 4.1)

As a building, which has remained largely unaltered despite the changes that have occurred in the area, the place has importance in contributing to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The place is rare as an example of a substantial two-storey late nineteenth century residential terrace still extant within close proximity to Perth City centre. (Criterion 5.1)

The place is significant as the only extant residential building of a former group of three buildings, built on adjoining lots and comprising two duplexes and one triplex, of which *Tom Burke House* is the triplex. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is representative as an example of a substantial residential building in the Federation Queen Anne style dating from the late nineteenth century. (Criterion 6.1)

The place is representative as an example of a residential building adapted for housing low income residents, in close proximity to the city centre of Perth. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The whole of the place is in good condition. Maintenance and alterations appear to have been carried out with sensitivity to the original building fabric.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The place remains in use as a residential building, although it no longer functions as three separate residences. 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 modifications to the place over time to accommodate changing needs, most of the original fabric is intact and additions to the fabric have only marginally obscured the rear of the building at ground floor level.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

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

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Number 191 Newcastle Street, known as *Tom Burke House*, was constructed c.1897-8 as a terrace of three residential dwellings. Early water and sewerage maps for the area indicate there were two other similar buildings, both duplexes and probably two-storied, located in the area to the east of No.191.¹ The three buildings were built across Perth Town Lots Y70/71, apparently for the Green family who owned these Lots from at least 1884.² The two duplex buildings, which were the first to be constructed, no longer exist and the area is now used as a car park. A number of structures once stood behind No.191 but these were removed during the 1980s when the building was renovated,³ and the 1990s when the Northbridge Tunnel was constructed.

From c.1899 to c.1907/8, the three dwellings that originally made up No.191, were numbered 129 to 133, after that date they were renumbered 191 to 195.

The post office directories and rate books suggest the possibility that Louis B. Cumpston, an architect and building surveyor who moved to Western Australia from Victoria in 1891, and who was responsible for several buildings in the Northbridge area, may have designed all three buildings.⁴ There is also the possibility that William Smith, the first resident of No.133 (later 195) was the contractor, though there is no supporting evidence for this assertion.

According to the City of Perth rate books, Lots Y71 and Y70 which extended from Newcastle Street (then known as Ellen Street) and Aberdeen Street (then Lamb Street) were owned by Mrs Green, a widow, prior to 1892. Members of the Green family maintained an interest in the properties variously as owners and residents until at least the 1930s. Evidence from the

¹ According to the Property Co-ordinator of Perth Inner City Housing, a former tenant had found a photograph, which they originally thought to be of No.191 because of its similarity with the existing building. It is now believed the photograph represented one of the duplexes. Unfortunately the tenant left the premises some years ago and took the photograph with him. No photographs of any of the three buildings in Newcastle Street could be found in the Batty Pictorial Collection.

² City of Perth Rate book for 1884, State Records Office (SRO)

³ Plan drawings, Upgrading of Lodging House at 191, 193 and 195 Newcastle Street, Perth, Homeswest, dated October 1987.

⁴ An unsuccessful search has been made of the City of Perth's archives for an original building licence and plans to verify the date of construction and the name of the architect and builder. Cumpston would become a prominent architect in Western Australia with a number of major buildings to his credit. These included the Ocean Beach Hotel, Cottesloe, the Collie Municipal Chambers, and in 1911 new premises in Perth for carriage builders Messrs Daniel White & Co. This was reputed to be the largest motor garage in the state. See the entry for Cumpston in the *Cyclopaedia* cited above.

Rate Book for 1898, together with the post office directories, suggests Nos 191-195 was constructed in 1897-1898 with occupants moving in during 1898-1899. The architect Louis Bowser Cumpston owned the terraces at 191-195 from at least 1898⁵. In 1901 portions of Lots 70/71, were transferred to Frederic Dudley North of Cottesloe.⁶ F.D. North was the Secretary to the State's Premier, Sir John Forrest (from 1891-1901) and Clerk of the Executive Council (1901), and also the Forrests' brother-in-law⁷. Sir John held the mortgage on the property.⁸ From 1903 ownership was taken over by Mr A.W. Wallder, a butcher by trade and a resident at No.125 (later 187), and progressed through members of his family.⁹ until it was transferred to the West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited, in 1963, and subsequently to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority in 1967¹⁰. A substantial part of Northbridge between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets and Lord and Fitzgerald Streets, was being resumed by the government for the future development of a northern city by-pass. No. 191-195 was part of this resumption.¹¹.

The 1890s gold boom in Western Australia brought tremendous growth in the economy and an urgent need for housing for a rapidly expanding population. The Northbridge area was highly attractive for investment purposes and, because of its proximity to the city and transport routes, the building of fine residences such as those constructed on Perth Town Lots 70/71.

In the city rate books for 1930 there is reference to stables at the rear of No.195. Whether stables had existed there for a number of years, or were recently erected is not known. In the 1935-6 post office directory No. 193 is listed as 'apartments'. This signals the significant change that would take place during the following decades to the residences along this section of Newcastle Street. In the 1947 post office directory Nos 191 to 193 are listed as apartment blocks, with a Mrs Catherine St John being listed as the resident of No. 195. Mrs Elizabeth Green is listed as the proprietor or manager of the apartments at No.193 and her husband as a resident. In the 1930s, in particular during the Depression, the creation of apartments or flats increased dramatically in the city of Perth and its immediate surrounds. Initially these flats were created through the conversion of large homes or two-storey

⁵ Cumpston is listed as the owner of Lot 70 in 1896, and 1898, but not 1897, leading the author to believe the 1896 entry is an error. On the reverse side to the Certificate of Title made out when the Title was transferred to Frederic North in 1901, the name of Daphne Norah Cumpston is given under Encumbrances. The entry is dated 31 July 1897.

⁶ Certificate of Title for Perth Town Lots Y70/71, Vol.222, and Folio 12, dated 29 July 1901. The reverse of the Certificate indicates a right of carriageway for the proprietor of portion Lot Y70.

⁷ Erickson, R., (Gen. Ed.) *Dictionary of Western Australians, 1829-1914*, Vol. 4, Part 2, UWA Press, 1985, p.1204.

⁸ Certificate of Title for Perth Town Lots Y70/71, Vol.222, and Folio 12, dated 29 July 1901.

⁹ Certificate of Title, Vol.222, Folio 12. Title is transferred to Mrs Sarah Ann Wallder. Registered 19 June 1903.

¹⁰ Certificate of Title, Vol.869, Folio 52.

¹¹ See 'Northbridge Urban Redevelopment Project, Conservation Report', undertaken by Kevin Palassis Architects for the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, 2000.

residences such as those in Newcastle Street, to be followed by purpose-built flats during the latter part of the 1930s.¹²

During subsequent decades No. 191-195 continued as a place to house a number of residents either as a hostel or lodging house.¹³ With the uncertainty of the future pervading the district, the planned north of the city by-pass having been released by the government in 1959,¹⁴ the properties between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets became run down and prone to vandalism. A number of places became temporary low budget hostels for back-packers and others seeking cheap housing. Charitable organisations and refuges were also located in this inner-city area, while large areas such as those to the east of No.191-195 were cleared of buildings and turned into car parks. The place was subsequently leased from the State Planning Commission by Homeswest (the State Housing Commission of WA) for a peppercorn rental and in 1987 upgrading of the building commenced.¹⁵ The building was to accommodate 21 people.¹⁶ By this time the route of the northern by-pass had been established and the building was one of those owned by the government that would not be substantially affected. The upgrading of this and other buildings in the Northbridge Tunnel area became part of the East Perth Project, which was managed by Landcorp.¹⁷

A number of photographs of the building were taken in 1987 before upgrading.¹⁸ These show a dilapidated building with the upper verandah filled in with openings of various sizes functioning as windows. The original balustrading to the top verandah was apparently still in place behind the sheets which enclosed the verandah. This had to be replaced, with the design

¹² See Gregory, J. and Taylor, R., 'Slums of Tomorrow' Architects, Builders and the Construction of Flats in Interwar Perth', in *Studies in Western Australian History*. Vol.XIV, 1992, pp.78-91.

¹³ Plans for upgrading the place in 1987 refer to it as a Lodging House. Further research is required to determine the history of occupancy of the building up to the early 1990s when it was sub-leased to the Perth Inner City Housing Association. The Ministry of Housing is currently searching its records regarding this. According to the City of Perth the rate books subsequent to 1946, the last year archived with the State Records Office, are difficult to access because of the manner in which they had been recorded for storage. The Rates officer is investigating if this material can be accessed.

¹⁴ *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.

¹⁵ Discussion with Ray Cox, Ministry of Housing, 20 December, 2000.

¹⁶ Invitation to Northbridge residents to inspect the building on the day of opening, 25 May, 1988. John Linton collection.

¹⁷ Discussions with Barry Tonkin, Ray Cox and Steve Blower, Ministry of Housing, 20 December 2000. Information on building plans and the invitation to residents of Northbridge.

¹⁸ According to those involved, it would appear these photographs were taken more out of interest than as part of government policy. Before and after photographs were taken by Steve Blower and Ray Cox from the Ministry of Housing and now form part of a folio of photographs and plans relating to the upgrading of government owned buildings in the Northbridge Tunnel precinct. Other photographs were taken by the architect John Linton, of Linton and Rose, who worked as Project Manager and Regional Architect for Homeswest at the time. Linton had developed a keen interest in 'heritage' buildings and indicated he had tried to preserve as much as he could of the original fabric and design of the buildings he worked on for Homeswest.

of the original balusters being used to make the new balustrading.¹⁹ Wooden screens on the ground floor verandah divided the three dwellings, while various corrugated iron structures were attached to the rear of the building.

The official opening of *Tom Burke House* (Homeswest Lodging House)²⁰ took place on 25 May, 1988, by the Premier, the Hon. Peter Dowding, MLA.²¹ Others in attendance included the Lord Mayor of Perth Charles Hopkins, Pam Beggs the Minister for Housing and Terry Burke, Chairman of the East Perth Project. Among the substantial list of those present or invited were representatives from the Salvation Army, the Jesus People, the Aboriginal Housing Board and St Vincent de Paul.²² The place was named after Thomas Patrick Burke (1910-1973) the father of Terry Burke and former State Premier Brian Burke. According to a newspaper article published at the time of his death, Tom Burke was 'a central figure in the post-war Labor movement'.²³ He had held the Federal seat of Perth between 1943 and 1955, and in 1954 challenged Dr Evatt for the ALP leadership and lost. From 1957, he was excluded from the State's Labor Party. In 1964, he appeared before the State's ALP Congress to appeal against this exclusion, but failed to gain Labor endorsement for the Perth seat in the new elections.²⁴ While no document could be found to establish why the house was named after Tom Burke, it could be assumed the honour was bestowed because of his past association with the Australian Labor Party, and for his involvement with community affairs. He was President of the Civil Rehabilitation Council, and for 17 years was president of the W.A. Slow Learning Children's Group. He was also employed by W. A. Newspapers Limited as its welfare and amenities officer from 1955.²⁵

In January 2001 *Tom Burke House* continues to operate as a lodging house in one of the city's less salubrious areas. According to staff who manage the building, the place is held in high regard by many of its longer term tenants. One tenant, who left some time ago, had undertaken to research the history of the building as a hobby. Unfortunately the man and his research, including an early photograph which is believed to have been of one of the adjacent buildings, cannot be located. Since c.1992-3 it has been sub-leased to the Perth Inner City Housing Association as a lodging house for men only.²⁶ In 2000, the Title to Lot 1, *Tom Burke House*, was transferred to the East Perth Redevelopment Authority (EPRA).²⁷ The Ministry of Housing is currently negotiating for the acquisition of the place from EPRA.²⁸

¹⁹ Discussion with John Linton, 23 January 2001. Linton is 'fairly certain' this is how they proceeded with replacing the verandah railings. 'The whole verandah was in poor shape and needed to be strengthened.'

²⁰ Invitation to 'Residents of Northbridge' to inspect the house, op.cit.

²¹ Plaque on front wall of the building.

²² Photographs and list of guests provided by John Linton. No publicity or media coverage of the event could be found in the local newspapers, or in *Labor Voice*, the official organ of the WA Branch of the Australian Labor Party.

²³ 'Tom Burke dies at 62', in *The West Australian*, 18 January 1973, p.10a-b.

²⁴ *The West Australian*, 9 December 1964, p.2b; 1 December 1965, p.8e and f.

²⁵ 'Tom Burke dies at 62', in *The West Australian*, 18 January 1973, p.10a-b.

²⁶ Discussion with Property Coordinator, Perth Inner City Housing Association, 09/01/2001.

²⁷ Certificate of Title, Vol.869, Folio 52, registered 30th June 2000. (DOLA)

²⁸ Ministry of Housing, telephone conversation with Planning Department, 20/12/2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The place comprises *Tom Burke House*, a two-storey masonry and iron residential building constructed in c1898.

Tom Burke House is situated on the southern side of Newcastle Street to the east of William Street. It is a free standing building set back approximately three metres from the street front. There is an area of grass planted with two gum trees to the front (northern side) of the building. Two concrete paths lead to the building through the grassed area. A brick front fence, approximate 300mm high, with a brick letterbox, has been constructed to the front boundary line. Approximately one metre from the rear of the building a temporary timber framed fence has been constructed and the remainder of the site to the south of this fence has been cleared for the construction of the Northbridge tunnel.

Adjacent to the western side of the place is a two-storey masonry commercial building, which addresses the corner of Newcastle and Williams Streets, and has a nil set back to the street front. This building has rendered masonry walls, a decorative parapet and cantilevered glass and steel verandah to the first floor.

There are no structures to the eastern side of the place – the area comprises a bitumen carpark and vacant lots. A bitumen driveway to the east of the building has been fenced with cyclone wire fencing.

Across the street, on the northern side of Newcastle Street, there are single storey residential buildings interspersed with vacant lots. These buildings, dating from the early twentieth century, are set back by approximately five metres from the street front. There are concrete paver footpaths and grass verges on both sides of the street.

Tom Burke House is a two-storey brick and limestone masonry building in the Federation Queen Anne Style with a hipped, corrugated iron roof and prominent gables facing the street. The gables are located to either end of the façade and have paired timber vents framed by red brick quoining. Tall, face brick corbelled chimneys feature towards the front of the building. Shorter, less elaborate chimneys with capped metal pots are located at the rear. Single storey, brick additions to the rear of the two-storey structure have gambrel, painted corrugated iron roofs. The eaves to the main roof are timber batted while the eaves to the rear additions are lined.

The front elevation comprises limestone coursing and red brickwork quoining with decorative rendered string courses to the arched door and window openings. Each of the three timber framed window openings to both the ground floor and first floor comprises a central casement window with a fixed pane to either side and an arched fanlight above. Located to the east of the façade, between two of the door openings, is a plaque commemorating the official opening of the hostel on the 25th May 1988.

There is a timber-framed verandah to the full length of the front, under a separate skillion roof, situated below the main roof line. The verandah is divided into nine bays. The bays are narrower and slightly recessed where they coincide with the three door openings. The verandah is supported by ornate, turned-timber posts and both the ground and upper levels of the verandah have timber balustrades with chamfered timber balusters. The ground level only has a timber valance of the same design as the balustrading. Both levels of the verandah have timber decking supported by joists and bearers. The verandah rests on a limestone block plinth. Three sets

of concrete steps are located to the front of the verandah, coincident with each of the door openings.

The side and rear walls are of face brick and lack the ornamentation of the front façade. Windows are timber framed double hung casements with rendered sills. Two bays, each double storey with hipped roofs, project from the rear elevation. The bay located to the east is twice the width of the western bay. A steel fire escape stair is located between the two bays. A single storey section to the eastern end of the rear elevation has skillion roof and a painted brick wall to the south elevation.

The single storey, red face brick additions to the rear have timber framed door and window openings. Concrete paved courtyards are located to the west and east of these additions and a temporary timber fence has been erected to the rear of the additions.

The building is divided up into three sections, originally three separate residences, which have been modified to accommodate its use as a hostel. The plan of each former residence is essentially the same, the central and eastern sections being a mirror image of each other.

Entry is via three recessed doorways. Each of the timber-framed doors has sidelights and a fanlight. The sidelights have textured glass panes to the top half and a timber panel below. Aluminium security doors have been fitted to each of the doors. Each of the front doors opens on to a passageway, which is divided by archways with ornate plasterwork. The rooms of the building are arrayed in a linear fashion to the one side of each of the passageways.

The front rooms of the western and eastern section are presently used as sitting rooms whilst the front room of the central section is used as a bedroom. The front rooms are typically more ornate in their detailing and feature elaborate plaster ceiling roses, plaster cornices and moulded timber skirting boards.

The front room of the eastern section has timber framed boarding to the opening in its southern wall. Decorative plaster consoles, visible in the adjacent room frame this opening. This room also features a fireplace with an ornate carved timber mantle piece incorporating glazed tile surrounds flanked by timber caryatids. The fireplace has been sealed up and now houses a small gas fired heater. The hearth has been removed.

Beyond the archway to the passages, the staircases of each section lead to the upper level. The staircases are of a dog-leg configuration with turned timber newel posts and balusters and a curtail step. The easternmost staircase is distinguished by its elaborate design, which features a distinctive carved timber panel running between the handrail and balusters.

Beyond each of the staircase, the kitchens are entered from the rear of the passageways. They are fitted with laminated benches. There are unframed window openings to the external passageways, which lead to the rear ablutions.

The first floor level is similar in layout to the ground floor with rooms to one side of the passageway and double doors opening to the first floor verandah from each of the passageways. A short flight of stairs leads to rear bathrooms and bedrooms. A steel fire escape has been constructed between the two rear, two-storey bays.

Floors throughout are finished with a tiled vinyl covering with the exception of the front room of the western section, which has polished timber floorboards. Doors are four panelled with timber architraves. Most of the

internal joinery has a paint finish. The walls are painted plaster and the ceilings are generally painted, flush plaster. There are timber skirtings throughout.

Furnishings are minimal in nature and comprise beds, wardrobes, tables and chairs. The place had been rewired and the light fittings are generally ceiling mounted, although some suspended light fittings are extant in the front rooms and passageways.

Generally the place remains as constructed, although there have been some modifications to accommodate changes in use. In general these changes have been limited to new internal partitions and openings to provide additional bedrooms and access between the three sections. The rear kitchens have been remodelled and a single storey passageway and ablutions have been constructed to the rear.

The whole of the place is in good condition. The place is well maintained and alterations appear to have been carried out with care and sensitivity to the building fabric. Identified defects are of a minor nature and include white ant damage to the easternmost verandah post, moderate cracking to external render to the front elevation, some loss of pointing to the limestone and deterioration of the verandah timber boards at front steps.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Comparisons may be made between *Tom Burke House* and residences of a similar scale, style and age and two-storey terrace houses of a similar age within the Perth region.

There are a number of residences of a similar scale and detailing, dating from the late nineteenth century in Perth. The following two places are listed in the Register of the National Estate.

No. 14 Chester Street, Claremont, built circa 1900, is a two storey red-brick building with a hipped corrugated iron roof incorporating gables. The building has a timber verandah to both storeys under a separate skillion roof. The verandah features ornate timber balustrading, verandah posts and brackets. The building rests on a limestone plinth.

Macaulay House, Cottesloe, is a substantial two storey red-brick building constructed in the 1890s. The house is enclosed on three of its sides by a double height timber verandah. The verandah is supported by ornate turned timber posts and features decorative timber balustrading, valances and brackets. The building has a hipped corrugated iron roof with gables and sits atop a limestone plinth.

Comparisons can also be made between *Tom Burke House* and two-storey terrace houses of a similar age within the Perth region. Two-storey terrace houses are rare within close proximity to the Perth City centre. The following place is listed in the State Register of Heritage Places.

1 Museum Street comprises a pair of houses built in 1897. They are two, two-storey houses constructed of stone, brick, and iron in the Federation Queen Anne style in 1897 with a richly detailed roofscape, cast iron balustrades and fine brick and stonework on the front and return facades

Both of the following places are listed in the Town of Vincent Municipal Inventory (April 1995).

225-227 Beaufort Street comprises two double-storey terrace houses with red-brick walls and a hipped corrugated iron roof with prominent gables to the

front. The gables have decorative rendered pediments. The two residences are separated by a firewall. There is a double height verandah to the front under a separate skillion roof. The verandah has ornate timber balustrading, turned timber posts and decorative valances.

Baker's Terrace, 156-184 Lake Street, is a row of 15 two-storey terrace houses dating from 1897. The building has red brick walls with tuck-pointing and stucco bands to the façade. Each of the terraces are separated by firewalls embellished with classical detailing. A decorative rendered parapet with pediments runs across the façade. There is a double height verandah to the front with cast-iron balustrading, valances and brackets. The terraces are in good condition and have retained their original uses as residences.

Tom Burke House differs from the above mentioned terraces in that the division of the building into separate residence is not expressed externally by means of a firewall.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

An unsuccessful search has been made of the City of Perth's archives for an original building licence and plans to verify the date of construction and the name of the architect and builder. Further research may confirm whether Cumpston, who would become a prominent architect in Western Australia with a number of major buildings to his credit, designed the place.