



# REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

## 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

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

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

The group contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the streetscape by exhibiting classical detailing and lace-like decorative elements which are characteristics of the Federation Filigree style of building. (Criterion 1.1)

The group defines the corner of Catherine Street and Roberts Road and is a landmark because of its height, form and decoration. (Criterion 1.3)

The group is aesthetically linked to the row of two-storey Federation Filigree terrace houses at 18-32 Catherine Street, and contributes to the streetscape by exhibiting similar stylistic characteristics. This quality has been mimicked in new construction elsewhere on the street and elsewhere in Subiaco. (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The group is significant as a demonstration of the standard of residential accommodation constructed for investment purposes at the turn of the century. (Criterion 2.1)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Because of its unusual form and size, and prominent location on the corner of Roberts Road and Catherine Street, the group contributes the community's sense of place of Subiaco. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

The group is one of the few Federation Filigree terraces in Western Australia. The Federation Filigree style of building, which although common in terrace housing in both Melbourne and Sydney, was uncommon in Western Australia where housing was predominantly detached. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The group is a representative example of the standard of accommodation built for rental at the turn of the century in Perth. (Criteria 6.1, 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

Despite varying degrees of maintenance by individual owners of houses in the row, the group is structurally sound and generally in good condition.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The houses within the group continue to be used for residential purposes. The group of *Terrace Houses* retains a high degree of integrity.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Each of the houses in the row has undergone minor alteration to the interiors with the conversion of the original kitchens for use as bathrooms. All houses have been extended at the rear but the original construction is evident and intact. The character of the facade and the form of the terrace is intact. The replacement of the cast-iron filigree balustrading together with the rendered street elevations of the houses numbered 4, 6 & 8 diminishes the authenticity of some of the decorative elements of these houses. Overall, the group of *Terrace Houses* retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian.  
The physical evidence has been compiled by Kelly Aris, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Terrace Houses* is a row of four, two-storey, terraced houses constructed in 1905-06, to provide permanent residential accommodation for the growing population of Subiaco.

In 1882, despite the opening of Subiaco's railway in March, there were only a small number of individuals holding title to land within the area now defined as Subiaco. With the expansion of the Colony, it became apparent that the areas most in demand would be those nearest the town and readily accessible by river, road or rail.<sup>1</sup> In March 1883, the Commissioner of Crown Lands gave notice that the section of Perth Commonage west of Perth and south of the railway line would be surveyed, classified 'Suburban', and auctioned off. When a map was released seven months later, the new lots comprised all of the present day suburb of Subiaco and the residential portion of Shenton Park.

The surveyor for the project was George Rotton. In November 1883, the Commissioner announced that 115 Perth Suburban Lots between Thomas Street and the railway were for sale by auction. The area enclosed by the railway line seemed a logical extension of Perth, but during this period the need for residential expansion was not pressing. The newly surveyed lots would therefore be sold off, not as a proposition for home builders or small farmers but to investors.

Subiaco developed slowly, following the ebb and flow of the economy. During the gold boom years of the late nineteenth century, investors and developers made money sub-dividing and selling their land. The subdivision of lots within Rotton's framework provided Subiaco with its 'inner streets', the narrowness of which would be a major determinant of the area's distinctive character. In 1893, most of the land was privately owned. Spillman notes, '...while successive sales had yielded ..., the price of housing blocks was within the means of most working people.'<sup>2</sup>

With the influx of population associated with the gold boom, demand for accommodation continued to outstrip its availability, and land within Subiaco was at a premium. Lots continued to be subdivided and sold. By 1904, even though classed as a 'poorer' suburb, 59% of the houses in Subiaco were owner occupied.<sup>3</sup>

In 1905-06, when the row of *Terrace Houses* was constructed, Subiaco boasted most of the facilities and public amenities of a settled town.<sup>4</sup> At this stage, the architect and builder are unknown, though further research

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<sup>1</sup> Spillman, K., *Identity Prized: A History of Subiaco*, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1985), pp. 61-75. Unless otherwise stated, all information regarding land development in Subiaco is taken from this fully referenced source.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Subiaco Rate Books, 1903/04 - 1908/09, north ward (Battye Library, Acc 1330).

may uncover this information. As a row of four, two-storey terrace houses, they were unusual in Subiaco (and indeed Western Australia) which favoured single, detached housing.<sup>5</sup> When the houses were first constructed they were owned by a Mrs M. Lloyd and the first occupiers were described in Subiaco rate books as a gentleman, two travellers and a housewife.<sup>6</sup> In the following year the houses were sold to the Bank of Australasia, Perth.

The row of *Terrace Houses* has been used continually as residences. During the 1950s and 1960s there was a population decline in Subiaco; however, the late 1970s, early 1980s saw the beginnings of a trend whereby, as outer suburbs were developing, '... although still fairly run-down, Subiaco began to be a young people's suburb'.<sup>7</sup> These people realised that, even aside from proximity to Perth, to the river and the beach, living in Subiaco had many advantages.

Associated with this trend was a desire by the local Council and community to help protect Subiaco's heritage and 'village' identity. By the early 1980s, perceptions of Subiaco were changing and the area's new 'trendiness' was linked with its history and distinctive landscape. As Spillman states:

The restoration of old homes and the construction of new residences and public buildings to the suburb's character contributed to Subiaco's image as a 'village' within a city.<sup>8</sup>

The character of Catherine Street, with its terrace houses, was used in a newspaper article to emphasise Subiaco's charm.<sup>9</sup>

In 1983, as part of the changes that were occurring within Subiaco, Catherine Street Terraces were strata titled. In October 1995, *Terrace Houses* continue to be used for residential purposes.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Terrace Houses* is a row of four, two-storey, terraced houses in the Federation Filigree style.<sup>10</sup>

The design is representative of a style of building, that was beginning to lose favour in Melbourne and Sydney, in which the Victorian fashion of cast-iron balustrades and brackets were the norm.<sup>11</sup>

The row of terrace houses is constructed to the building line of Catherine Street and is bounded by Roberts Road to the north, and two rows of two-storey terrace houses to the south. The group is aesthetically linked to the

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine Street also features another row of, more elaborate, terrace houses at Numbers 18-32.

<sup>6</sup> Subiaco Rate Books, 1905-06, north ward, entries 1003-1006, (Battye Library, Acc 1330).

<sup>7</sup> Spillman, p. 339.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>9</sup> *West Australian* 3 September 1983.

<sup>10</sup> 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. 108-111.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, (eds), *The Heritage of Western Australia, The Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (The Macmillian Company of Australia, Melbourne, 1989) p. 17.

row of terrace houses at numbers 18-32 Catherine Street, constructed in 1905, in the Federation Filigree style. The row of terrace houses immediately adjacent to *Terrace Houses* (10-16) is a reproduction of the Federation Filigree style, circa 1980. The terraced housing in Catherine Street is unusual in Subiaco as the area was predominantly subdivided for detached houses.

The group, in plan, is formed by one house on the north-east corner of Catherine Street and Roberts Road - the house addresses Catherine Street, and three houses that in plan mirror each other. The houses do not have access to a right-of-way and vehicular parking is restricted to Catherine Street. In 1994, the owners of house number 2 built a single car garage to the rear of the site with vehicular access off Roberts Road.

The group is built of red brickwork laid in english garden wall bond (stretcher bond to Roberts Road elevation) which is tuck-pointed and painted to the street elevation. The elevations of house numbers 4, 6 and 8 have been rendered. The houses are separated by rendered firewalls that are embellished on their ends, and which project above the height of the roof. Each house has a medium pitched hipped roof, clad in corrugated galvanised iron. Small projecting gables, in the centre of each house, and on the Roberts Road elevation, dominate the roof line. The gables have timber barge boards and a half-timbered effect on a stucco background (gable to house number 6 is missing). The roof also features wide rendered brick chimneys with roughcast tops.

The facade to each house has asymmetrical fenestration. The upper level fenestration is protected by a balcony with a separate lean-to roof, that is also clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The windows on the lower level are two heavily recessed, double-hung sashes and are protected by a verandah. The verandah and balcony on house number 2 returns around the corner to meet the end of the Roberts Road elevation. The entry doors to all houses are panelled with timber and leaded and stained glazing, with a simple fan light. Each house has one french door on the upper level with access to the balcony. The rear of the houses have double-hung sash windows. House number 2, in its corner location, has glazing along the Roberts Road elevation (north elevation). This additional glazing allows more light into the interior giving the appearance of greater floor area than the other houses. All openings are devoid of decoration.

The balconies are supported by stop-chamfered timber posts (the post in house number 8 has been replaced with a turned timber post). The timber balcony floors are also supported by stop-chamfered timber posts which sit on low boundary walls that stretch across each house. Each verandah and balcony is screened with decorative cast-iron balustrading, comprising common cast-iron panels, friezes and brackets (most iron work has been replaced over the years, especially house numbers 4, 6 and 8). The cast-iron treatment gives the terrace a light filigree character.

A low brick wall with iron palisade between brick piers with pyramidal tops (piers are additions), that frame the entrance gate and the boundary of each house, is constructed along the building line. This fence defines the forecourt to each house. Forecourts to house numbers 2 and 8 are tiled, and the forecourts to house numbers 4 and 6 are covered in concrete. The

iron palisade fences are replacements, the fence to house number 6 is missing.

The interior of each house comprises a side hallway behind the front door and a staircase that leads to the upper level. The ground floor level comprises a living room with a fireplace, and a dining room and kitchen behind. The upper level comprises three bedrooms, one of which opens onto the balcony and one with a fireplace. Single-storey lean-to additions with laundry/toilets were at the rear. No 2, because it is located on the corner, has a different floor plan to that of houses 4 to 6. Number 2 has a stair case located immediately to the left (rather than immediately behind the front door) as one enters which is oriented north-south rather than east-west as in 4 to 6. The ground floor of 2 has a dining room and a living room both with fireplaces and behind these rooms is a bathroom (ex-kitchen) and a kitchen/family room (new addition). The first floor has three bedrooms with two fireplaces. These bedrooms do not access the balcony.<sup>12</sup>

With the exception of moulded skirting boards and precast plaster ceiling roses, some of which are missing, the interiors of the houses are constructed without decoration (the decorative cornices in house number 4 are recent fixings). There are timber floorboards throughout and stairs feature carved timber newel posts.

All houses have been extended at the rear and, upgraded internally. Kitchen and living areas have been added to the rear of each house. The original kitchens have been converted for use as bathrooms. In the early 1980s, additions of a kitchen and living area were added to house number 6.<sup>13</sup> In the early 1990s, additions of a kitchen and living space were built to the rear of house number 4.<sup>14</sup> In 1994, previous rear additions to house number 2 were demolished and a new kitchen, living area and garage were constructed in limestone blocks.<sup>15</sup> House number 8 was extended into a north facing courtyard thereby creating a new passage and extending the interior living space.<sup>16</sup>

### 13.3 REFERENCES

Royal Australian Institute of Architects (WA Chapter), *An Architectural Guide to Subiaco through Peppermint Grove to Fremantle* (Wescolour Press, Fremantle, 1984).

Spillman, K., *Identity Prized: A History of Subiaco*, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1985).

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from owner of number 2 dated 10 January 1996. Held on HCWA file 3800

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ms A. Bell, owner of house number 6, 16 October 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Ms D. Shanahan, owner of house number 2, 16 October 1995.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Ms A. Bell, owner of house number 6, 16 October 1995. Date of alterations is unknown.