



## 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)

- 3.7.1 Establishing postal services
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 7.6 Administering Australia

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 206 Mail services
- 401 Government and Politics
- 403 Law and order
- 408 Institutions

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are good examples of the Federation Arts and Crafts Style which was adapted and developed by George Temple Poole during his time as Superintendent of Works. They are well proportioned with pleasing massing, and as a result of their construction from local stone, blend well with the colours of the surrounding landscape. (Criterion 1.2 & 1.3)

The scale of the *Government Buildings, Marble Bar* and their situation on a prominent ridge overlooking Sandy Creek and the town of Marble Mar makes them a dominant feature in the townscape. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are historically significant for their association with the early gold and tin boom of the Pilbara and the town's rise to prominence, as well as the Western Australian Government's aspirations for the region. (Criterion 2.2)

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are good examples of Government architecture of the mid 1890s. Their similarity to other public buildings constructed in the gold fields during the 1890s demonstrates the volume of work which passed through the Public Works Department at this time. (Criterion 2.3)

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\* 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.

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are historically significant for their association with the operation of the Postal and Telegraph system, Mines Department and Police Department in outback Western Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criterion 2.4)

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

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* have the potential to reveal archaeological deposits which relate to the development of the buildings and the occupants. This material is beneficial in developing a more complete history of the buildings and their occupants. (Criterion 3.1)

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* provide an insight into the nature of incarceration and legal process in regional Western Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criterion 3.2)

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

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* have significance for the Marble Bar community in their continuing provision of government services to the region since 1896. (Criterion 4.1)

The river gums planted in front of the *Government Buildings, Marble Bar* have social significance as some of the first trees planted in the 1950s as part of the widespread townscape beautification and greening programme, initiated by Denis O'Meara (former Mines Registrar). (Criterion 4.1)

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are of high social significance to the community as the dominant structure of the town, and are a source of great local pride as a symbol of permanency despite the varying fortunes of the region. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are one of only three similar government structures built in the goldfields of Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* are representative of the late nineteenth century Arts and Crafts style that was adapted and developed in Western Australia by George Temple Poole, while he was Superintendent of Works and which was further developed by Hilson Beasley, Chief Government Architect. (Criterion 6.1)

*Government Buildings, Marble Bar* contain evidence of the nature of police, court, office and postal/telegraph building arrangements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

Although Marble Bar is not formally considered to be in a cyclone area, there is considerable historical, oral and physical evidence which demonstrates that the area and the Government Buildings in particular have been subject to extremely strong winds, resulting in damage to the structure. Government Buildings, Marble Bar are particularly exposed as the tall buildings are located on a ridge. Any future building works must take the possibility of high wind

velocity into account and address the relevant sections of The Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards.

White ant infestation has been noted historically and there is some physical evidence to suggest more recent infestations.

Marble Bar experiences consistently high temperatures which can considerably affect the potential use of certain portions of *Government Buildings, Marble Bar*. Modern air conditioning systems have largely eased these problems, although the older reverse cycle air conditioners are considered intrusive to the aesthetic value of the building, while some wall surfaces beneath these units have been damaged by water spillage. The planting of river gums along the eastern facade has assisted slightly by providing shade over and in front of the buildings.

#### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

The historical and physical evidence demonstrates that *Government Buildings, Marble Bar* have experienced a remarkably consistent use by government agencies since their erection in 1896.

#### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The most significant external alterations to the structure have arisen as a result of storm damage, starting with the removal of the clock tower, which had been damaged in successive storms, in c1931. By 1949 the cumulative damage, as well as the advancing age of the building, necessitated a period of major repairs and renovations. This included the removal of most of the chimneys, the masonry water tower above the Post Master's Quarters and many other attractive features (such as the original shaped barge boards and half timbered gables) when the whole building was re-roofed. A new balcony was also constructed at the rear, and it appears that almost all of the windows in the building have been replaced. To accommodate the installation of the rear balcony an additional 30 cm to 50 cm was added to the wall plate along the west wall and the pitch of the roof was changed in several places.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence, Palassis Architects, 'Government Buildings, Marble Bar, Western Australia: Conservation and Management Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services, October 1996.

Key sections used: Documentary and Oral Evidence (p7-24), 3.0 Physical Evidence (p25-52), 4.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence (p53-56)

#### **13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to Palassis Architects, 'Conservation and Management Plan, Government Buildings, Marble Bar, Western Australia', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services, October 1996.

#### **13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence, refer to Palassis Architects, 'Conservation and Management Plan, Government Buildings, Marble Bar,

Western Australia', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services, October 1996.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to Palassis Architects, 'Conservation and Management Plan, Government Buildings, Marble Bar, Western Australia', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services, October 1996. [very limited information, see further research suggestions]

### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

'Conservation and Management Plan, Government Buildings, Marble Bar, Western Australia', prepared by Palassis Architects for the Department of Contract and Management Services, October 1996.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

As one of a series of buildings built to a similar design, further comparative study of the Marble Bar, Cue, Coolgardie and other Poole's structures provides interesting contrasts in both the evolution of the design and possible regional variations. Previous studies of this nature have been primarily documentary in nature, without detailed examination of the physical evidence of the buildings. (Oldham 1980, Van Breman 1990)

Further research into the architecture of the buildings within the precinct may highlight particular rarities in the design that have not been previously identified. This would also require alteration to the Statement of Significance.

Archaeological investigations within the precinct or adjacent areas have the potential to provide significant information on the way of life of the occupants.