



## 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.

Art Gallery Administration Building and Centenary Galleries are significant elements in their own right as well as contributing to the complex. Values relating only to these elements have not been included in the following section.

For a discussion of the significance of Art Gallery Administration Building, refer to Register of Heritage Places – Permanent Entry and Assessment Documentation for P2025 Art Gallery Administration Building (20/05/03)

For a discussion of the significance of Centenary Galleries, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999, pp.141-149.

For a discussion of the significance of the Perth Cultural Centre Precinct, of which *Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex* is a part, refer to HCWA assessment documentation for Perth Cultural Centre Precinct, compiled by Jacqui Sherrieff, Historian, Annabel Wills, Conservation Architect, and Peter Woodward of Blackwell and Associates, Landscape Architects, in July 2004.

All the above elements are also included within the curtilage of P4278 *Perth Cultural Centre Precinct*, which is currently (2005) being considered for entry in the State Register of Heritage Places.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 41.5 Developing city centres
- 8.10 Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences

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

- 307 Intellectual activities, arts and crafts
- 407 Cultural activities
- 506 Tourism

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

Main Gallery Building is a fine example of the Late Twentieth Century Brutalist style. The aesthetics of the interior spaces are of a high order providing a variety of visual experiences and their functionality has been much applauded. The fountains and reflective ponds are an integral part of the setting. (Criterion 1.1)

Gerhard Mack's *Der Rufer*<sup>1</sup>, erected near the pond, is a fine individual artwork that is well known due to its prominent location and contributes to the overall setting of *Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex*. (Criteria 1.2 & 1.3)

*Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex* is a cultural landscape consisting of fine examples of Late Twentieth Century Brutalist, Federation Romanesque and Federation Second Empire style buildings, and is an integral component of the wider Perth Cultural Centre. (Criterion 1.3)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Main Gallery Building was built to replace its predecessor in Beaufort Street, which was part of the historic museum, art gallery and library complex, and marks the second mineral boom and the maturing of the State and its cultural institutions. (Criterion 2.1)

The construction of Main Gallery Building from 1977 was made possible by improved economic conditions resulting from the mineral boom of the 1970s and the impetus provided by the State's impending Sesquicentenary in 1979. The Alexander Library, also part of the Perth Cultural Centre, was commenced in the same year. (Criterion 2.2)

Main Gallery Building was designed by Public Works Architect K (Charles) Sierakowski, structural engineer Philip Nadebaum and private architectural firm, Summerhayes and Associates. Sierakowski followed the Bauhaus house precept that form follows function, accounting for the excellent internal spaces and Brutalist exterior. This design principle was popular in European galleries at the time and Sierakowski had previously used the principle in the design of London's Hayward Gallery. (Criteria 2.3 & 2.4)

*Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex* is closely associated with Art Gallery Director, Robert Bell, who was the first Curator of Craft in Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex* is highly valued for its function as a cultural institution. The internal spaces, collections and experiences, offered by the Art Gallery and which take place in the building, are valued by the community. (Criterion 4.1)

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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.

<sup>1</sup> Gerhard Macks, 1889-1981, *Der Rufer* (The Caller), 1967 bronze, 292 cm high, donated by CRS Limited, 1982.

Main Gallery Building's receipt of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' Architecture Design Award in 1979 is evidence of the esteem in which the architectural profession held the place. (Criterion 4.1)

The institution, collections and building itself contributes to the community's sense of place as part of the Perth Cultural Centre. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

Based on available information (no comprehensive survey of art gallery design in Australia is readily available), the planning principles employed at Main Gallery Building are unusual. (Criterion 5.1)

The use of the slab and shear head column system in Main Gallery Building was innovative in Western Australia at the time and remains an uncommon construction form. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Art Gallery of Western Australia Complex* was conceived as part of the Perth Cultural Centre complex which was developed in the 1970s. Main Gallery Building is representative of the State's maturity and of the second wave of development of the State's cultural institutions following post World War Two recovery and the 1970s mineral boom. (Criterion 6.2)

Main Gallery Building is a fine representative example of the Late Twentieth Century Brutalist style, and succeeds best within this idiom with the quality of the interior spaces. (Criterion 6.2)

*For descriptions of the condition, integrity and authenticity of Art Gallery Administration Building and Centenary Galleries, refer respectively to the Register Entry and Conservation Plan pp.146-147, as previously indicated.*

### **12.3 CONDITION**

Overall, Main Gallery Building is in fair to good condition.

Internally, levels 1 and 2 of the building are in good condition. Level 3 is generally in good condition, with some minor defects associated with movement and moisture ingress. Level 4 is in fair condition. The bituminous built up roof and paving units over it are in poor condition and there are instances of cavity tray failure.

There is evidence of serious deterioration of the face blockwork due to mortar failure and the expansion of joint reinforcement. The exposed exterior ply faced doors at roof level are also in an advanced state of deterioration.

The fabric roof of the café has reached the end of its design life and needs to be replaced.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Main Gallery Building has remained in use for its intended purpose since construction and therefore has a high degree of integrity.

## **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

Main Gallery Building has had few major changes in the years since completion, notwithstanding minor adaptive changes to levels 1, 3, 4 and 5. Level 2 has had a major reorganization of retail and public service functions, without impinging on the major gallery spaces and overall presentation.

Overall, the place has a high degree of authenticity.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Supporting evidence has been taken from:

Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd with Erickson & Taylor, 'Art Gallery of Western Australia: The Main Gallery Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, April 2000.

Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Administration Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in September 1999.

Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the documentary evidence relating to Main Gallery Building, refer to 'Art Gallery of Western Australia: The Main Gallery Building Conservation Plan', prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd with Erickson & Taylor for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, April 2000, pp. 1-46.

For a discussion of the documentary evidence relating to Art Gallery Administration Building, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Administration Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in September 1999, pp.1-63.

For a discussion of the documentary evidence relating to Centenary Galleries, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999, pp.1-88.

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the physical evidence relating to Main Gallery Building, refer to 'Art Gallery of Western Australia: The Main Gallery Building Conservation Plan', prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd with Erickson & Taylor for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, April 2000, pp. 47-93.

For a discussion of the documentary evidence relating to Art Gallery Administration Building, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Administration Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in September 1999, pp.64-100.

For a discussion of the physical evidence relating to Centenary Galleries, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999, pp.89-131.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a comparative analysis relating to Main Gallery Building, refer to 'Art Gallery of Western Australia: The Main Gallery Building Conservation Plan', prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd with Erickson & Taylor for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, April 2000, pp.96-100.

For a discussion of the documentary evidence relating to Art Gallery Administration Building, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Administration Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in September 1999, pp.105-110.

For a discussion of the comparative information relating to Centenary Galleries, refer to Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999, pp.136-140.

### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd with Erickson & Taylor, 'Art Gallery of Western Australia: The Main Gallery Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, April 2000.

Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Administration Building Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in September 1999.

Considine & Griffiths Architects with Erickson & Taylor 'Art Gallery of Western Australia Centenary Galleries Conservation Plan', prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in December 1999.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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