



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

Hammond Park Rotunda is a well proportioned and pleasing structure enhanced by a unique onion dome with a spire and crescent moon raised above the roof apex. The dome is Victorian in origin but probably inspired by Moslem architecture. The structure is further enhanced by its decorative cast-iron frieze, timber arches and infill, and columns that give the structure a light filigree character. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place has historic value as an important cultural and social meeting place for locals. (Criterion 2.1)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Hammond Park Rotunda has a high social value as an important cultural and social meeting place for Kalgoorlie residents and as a former focal point for local entertainment.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Hammond Park Rotunda is one of the largest rotundas of its type in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Hammond Park Rotunda is representative of the important role such a focal point played in the social life of the goldfields' community during the early years of this century. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Hammond Park Rotunda is in fair condition, but the rotunda structure and covering are in a dilapidated state requiring urgent maintenance.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Hammond Park Rotunda is no longer in the setting of a formal public park and gardens. The wishing well, small fountain, original litter bins, arches, and drinking fountain are no longer extant, thereby diminishing the integrity of the place. The rotunda is intact and individually retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Hammond Park Rotunda retains its original fabric; the pattern of the cast-iron frieze and dome base is original, the timber framing is intact although its condition has deteriorated and two posts have been replaced. Overall, the rotunda retains a high 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, Conservation Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Hammond Park Rotunda was originally part of the amenities of a public park. The land upon which it stands is now part of the grounds of a Home for the Frail Aged established by the Catholic Order of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Goldfield historians M. and A. Webb note that in Kalgoorlie the grassing and planting of trees in parks was an indication of civic pride and confidence in their future.¹ With the construction of the Rotunda, Victoria Park became a focal point in Kalgoorlie for outdoor social gatherings.

On 10 November 1903, the *Western Argus* reported on the formal opening of the Rotunda:

Friday night's weather was distinctly favourable so there was a big attendance at Victoria Park at the formal opening of the fine new band stand built there to the order of the Kalgoorlie Town Council. The formal opening was performed in well chosen and heartily applauded words by the Mayor, Mr Keenan, who indicated that the municipal authorities desired to help the citizens to enjoy healthy recreation and pleasure. An excellent programme of music, well played, was presented to the gratification of the large gathering. The Kalgoorlie Brass Band, under the direction of Mr A. Grieve, whose capabilities as conductor are being proved in the progress made by the band. In future, the band will occupy the Victoria Park rotunda on Sunday Evenings, to entertain the many people who will doubtless attend during the summer season, with very high class music.²

There are; however, conflicting reports as to the origins of the Rotunda. In notes provided by M. Dinham in 1993, it is claimed that Samuel Leslie Perkins commissioned the building of the Rotunda and paid for the material and labour. Dinham also links the building of the Rotunda to the Afghans, who were prominent on the fields using their camels to provide transportation:

they were also very good craftsmen and it is likely that Afghan carpenters built the Rotunda in Victoria Park, as it has an Islamic flourish, with its crescent moon and 'onion bulb' at the top.³

The construction of the Rotunda provided a venue for musical performances and Victoria Park became a popular place for family gatherings and picnics while listening to music recitals. Webb notes:

Victoria park was a showplace and of a Sunday from 1904 onwards the Kalgoorlie brass band held well attended open air concerts beneath its rotunda. Attendances could be as high as 3,000 people.⁴

In 1972, access to, and the function of Victoria Park changed when the land became the property of the Catholic Order of the Little Sisters of the Poor.⁵

¹ Webb, M. & A., *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia* (City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Kalgoorlie, 1993), p. 585.

² *Western Argus* 10 November 1903, p. 16. It should be noted that the November 1903 issue of the *Mining Building and Engineering Journal* is missing.

³ Notes provided by N. Dinham, May 1993. Held on National Trust of Australia (WA) file. Samuel Leslie Perkins was Dinham's grandfather.

⁴ Webb, p. 585.

An aged persons home, hospital and chapel have been constructed on what was once park land. The focal park in Kalgoorlie has now been taken over by Hammond Park.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Victoria Park Rotunda is a rotunda within the grounds of the Homes for Frail Aged at the south-east of Victoria Street between Croesus Street and Outridge streets, Kalgoorlie.

The rotunda is set toward the Outridge Street boundary and is not easily seen from Croesus Street. A large tree in front of the rotunda restricts the vistas. A bituminised driveway off Croesus Street veers north away from the rotunda to a small carpark in front of the Homes for Frail Aged. The carpark and rotunda are separated by lawn. Neither signage or a path links the carpark to the rotunda. The rotunda is separated from the grounds of the Home by a wire mesh fence to the north of the rotunda.

The rotunda is surrounded by gravel with a small rose garden on the south and a small garden bed with native plantings on the north. A row of established trees partially screens the sheet metal fence behind the rotunda on the Outridge Street boundary. The fence destroys the vistas to the rotunda from Outridge Street. A super six fence extends along the south boundary. Neither fences reflects the character of the rotunda.

Hammond Park Rotunda is octagonal-shaped in plan with an octagonal roof which measures 24 metres in diameter. The roof is crowned with an onion dome erected on a polygonal base of decorative cast iron. A spire with a crescent moon at the top decorates the dome. The spire and moon motif can be seen above the boundary fence from Outridge Street. The dome is Victorian in origin but inspired by Islamic architecture.⁶ The crescent moon is a Moslem emblem.

The structure is supported at its perimeter by stop-chamfered timber posts with capitals, and intermediary supports of stop-chamfered timber posts on tapering timber piers. The intermediary supports form a central section which measures 14 metres across. The roof structure is a system of radiating rafters, king post and timber ties. A structural addition was made with steel ties at a lower level. The intermediary posts are braced by pointed timber arches with an infill of vertical timber slats. The roof is covered with corrugated galvanised iron and the dome is built of sheet metal. The underside of the roof is decorated by a cast-iron frieze and decorative cast iron brackets to each post.

Physical evidence remains of a square profiled timber handrail that ran between the intermediary row of posts. Two new posts have been erected that do not allow for a handrail.

The roof construction of the rotunda is exposed and the floor of the central section of the rotunda is concrete.

⁵ C/T 1323/634.

⁶ Onion domes are common in Eastern Europe and Russia. The use of chatris; umbrella-shaped domes found in Hindu architecture, and hybrids were common in British India, particularly in Madras, Bombay and Mysore. There are few examples in England; Royal Pavilion in Brighton, England (1818) is a confection of Islamic domes, minarets and screens.

The structure is in a dilapidated state requiring urgent maintenance. The roofing, the timber structure, and the water drainage system are all in need of conservation or replacing. The cast-iron frieze is also dilapidated. Sections of the frieze are missing and sections are loose. The frieze requires restoration before more damage or loss occurs.

In 1906, the park and gardens were extensive with established trees, garden beds and pathways.⁷ By 1909, a timber rail fence encircled the rotunda and inside, timber seats were positioned toward the rotunda as if to face a performance.⁸ The fence and seats are no longer extant. Four new timber park benches now face the rotunda. In 1910, a public drinking fountain was erected in the park. The drinking fountain was a gift from Mr G. P. Doolette to Kalgoorlie. The four metre tall fountain was imported from London. The fountain had a tall lamp on top of the basin which was mounted on an octagonal pedestal.⁹ The fountain is also no longer extant.¹⁰

Photographic evidence shows arches in the park which were covered with creepers.¹¹ As of March 1995, there are no arches remaining in the park. The date the arches were removed is unknown, but photographic evidence dates the arches as existing in 1938. Small fountains, a wishing well, timber seats and litter bins positioned around the park existed in 1950.¹² The park has lost its formal arrangement and the garden has deteriorated from either a result of natural aging or from the effects of changed social and economic conditions. Apart from *Hammond Park Rotunda*, the park's previous structures are no longer evident.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.

⁷ See photograph 12 in Richards, D. & Richards, O., 'Historic Gardens Study' (unpublished report prepared for The National Trust of Australia (WA), Perth, 1981).

⁸ *ibid.*, see photograph 14 .

⁹ *ibid.*, see photograph 19.

¹⁰ City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder files did not reveal what happened to the fountain.

¹¹ Richards & Richards, see photograph 23.

¹² *ibid.*, see photograph 25 and 26.