



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)

- 8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sport
- 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Subiaco Oval Gates is a small scale well executed Inter War Art Deco style building. (Criterion 1.1)

Subiaco Oval Gates has a landmark quality at the corner of Haydn Bunton Drive and Roberts Road; and, as the main entrance to Subiaco Oval, the place has been a well-recognised landmark since its construction in 1935. (Criterion 1.2)

Subiaco Oval Gates contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the streetscape, providing a contrast in scale and in the materials employed with the nearby two and three tier grandstands. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Subiaco Oval Gates, the main entrance to Subiaco Oval, is significant as one of a small number of main entrance gates erected in the pre World War Two period to provide formal entry to a sports ground. (Criterion 2.1)

Subiaco Oval Gates contributes to an understanding of the cultural history of Western Australia; in particular, the history of Subiaco Oval, and of Australian rules football in this State, having served since its construction in 1935 as the main entrance to the sports ground at which all Western Australian football finals have been played. Similarly, it contributes to an

* 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.

understanding of the history and human occupation of the City of Subiaco. (Criterion 2.1)

The Municipality of Subiaco erected *Subiaco Oval Gates* in 1935, to commemorate the Jubilee of King George V. Following the improvements at Subiaco Oval, a year after the completion of the gates, the oval became the headquarters for the Western Australian National Football League. (Criterion 2.2)

Subiaco Oval Gates was designed by Architect A. R. Wright, and built by Builder F. Hahn. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Subiaco Oval Gates is highly valued by the community of Western Australia, and in particular all those associated with the sport of Australian rules football, for social and cultural reasons, for its role as the main entrance to Subiaco Oval. (Criterion 4.1)

Subiaco Oval Gates has aesthetic characteristics, which are appreciated and valued by the community, as evidenced in the nomination for the inclusion of the place in the State Register of Heritage Places. (Criterion 4.1)

Subiaco Oval Gates contributes to the community's sense of place, as the main entrance to Subiaco Oval, and as a well-known landmark at the corner of Haydn Bunton Drive and Roberts Road. *Subiaco Oval Gates* is a well known meeting place and enduring image of Subiaco Oval for thousands of football supporters. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Subiaco Oval Gates is one of a small number of sporting venue gates to be constructed in the Inter War Art Deco Style (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Subiaco Oval Gates is a well executed example of a small scale Inter War Art Deco style building. (Criterion 6.1)

Subiaco Oval Gates is a fine representative example of an Inter War sporting venue entrance gates. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The limestone fabric and roofs of *Subiaco Oval Gates* is in relatively good condition. Most of the brickwork is in good condition, but several of the piers are in poor condition with loss of jointing material and split brickwork in two instances. Overall the place is in fair condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Subiaco Oval Gates remain in use as ticket offices and turnstiles and should be capable of continuing their designed function. *Subiaco Oval Gates* retain a high degree of authenticity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The basic form and exterior appearance of the *Subiaco Oval Gates* remain close to their original format and interior changes are quite minor. Two of the original turnstiles remain intact and the remainder have been replaced. Overall the place retains a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect.

A suggested curtilage for inclusion in the Register is indicated on Figure 1.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Subiaco Oval Gates is the main entrance to Subiaco Oval. The two ticket offices and counting office in the Inter War Art Deco style are of limestone and brick construction, whilst the central portion is of brick, and with a roof of Marseilles tiles.

Subiaco Football Club was formed in 1901, with Mr. W. Monteath as inaugural President, and Mr. Harry Daghish as the first patron.¹

On 19 August 1904, A Class Reserve 9337 (Subiaco) Perth, Suburban Lots 406 and 446, was vested in the Mayor and Councilors of the Municipality of Subiaco in trust for recreation purposes, with the power to lease the whole or any portion of the said Reserve for a period not exceeding 21 years from the date of the lease.²

In 1908, football games were played at Mueller Park, nicknamed 'The Sooby Sand Patch'.³ In 1909, Lady Forrest officially opened Subiaco Oval and Pavilion.⁴ In 1923, a new pavilion at Subiaco Oval, constructed at a cost of £6,500 was opened.⁵

The turnstiles at Subiaco Oval were not adequate for the number of spectators, and through a period of years, numerous complaints were made to the Subiaco Council about the problem.⁶ Stop-gap measures were adopted in efforts to alleviate the problem; however, it continued.

In 1935, the Subiaco Council considered how the Jubilee of King George V might be commemorated in the town, and recollecting the continued problem of the inadequacy of the turnstiles at the Oval, resolved that 'the provision of a modern entrance to the Subiaco Oval would be an appropriate work.'⁷ In July 1935, the Report of the Works and General Purposes Committee of Subiaco Council included an item re the proposed new entrance for Subiaco Oval which was discussed before the Council approved a motion that the Works Committee be empowered to call tenders for the necessary work, which were to be submitted to the next

¹ *The Football Budget* 1 March 1939, p. 8.

² *Government Gazette* 19 August 1904, p. 8.

³ *The Football Budget* 1 March 1939, p. 8, and 13 May 1939, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid*, 1 March 1939, p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Spillman, Ken *Diehards: The Story of the Subiaco Football Club 1896-1945* (Subiaco Football Club Inc., Subiaco, 1998) p. 143.

⁷ Mayor's Report, 1935. Quoted in Spillman, Ken *Identity Prized: A History of Subiaco* (University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1985) p. 257; and *W. A. Footballer* 5 October 1935.

Council meeting.⁸ On 13 August 1935, the tenders were presented at the meeting of the Council; however, no details were recorded in the minutes.⁹

The location selected for the proposed entrance gates was at the south-west corner of the ground, at the corner of Townsend (now Haydn Bunton Drive) and Roberts Roads. The architect of the building was A. R. Wright, and the builder was F. Hahn.¹⁰ The two limestone ticket offices, with the brick entrance way between them, with concrete floors, and with a Marseilles tile roof, were constructed in the spring of 1935, at a cost of £1,000.¹¹ Twelve 'state-of-the-art' turnstiles were installed.¹²

On 5 October 1935, *The West Australian* announced:

New entrances to the oval have been erected on the corner of Townshend-road (sic) and Roberts-road (sic) and other gates will be closed. The Mayor of Subiaco (Mr. H. L. Downe) will declare the new turnstiles open at 1.30.¹³

The Mayor reported at the next meeting of the Subiaco Council on 8 October, that 'everything went off satisfactorily, the crowd being dealt with without the least congestion.'¹⁴ *Subiaco Oval Gates* served as the main entrance to Subiaco Oval until the construction of the new stands in the late 1980s.

By late 1935, Subiaco Oval was recognised as one of the finest sporting venues in Western Australia, and had hosted numerous football finals and interstate games.¹⁵ The Western Australian National Football League and the Subiaco Council negotiated to establish the headquarters of the League at Subiaco Oval. On 7 April 1936, they agreed that the Council would erect 'a Grandstand and Club premises', which would be leased on its completion to the League for 21 years, with an option of renewal, and also that the League would be granted a 'limited licence to use the playing oval'.¹⁶ It was 'the outcome of a long and cherished ideal to place the control of football, both socially and financially, on a basis commensurate with the greatness and popularity of Australia's national game.'¹⁷ The league headquarters and a new members' stand were erected. The new stand was used for the first time on the day of the semi finals, 19 September 1936, and the stand and headquarters were officially opened on Grand Final Day, 10 October 1936.¹⁸ The Western Australian National Football League was unique in Australia in the pre World War Two period, as the 'Only Football Authority with Its Own Headquarters'.¹⁹

⁸ Minutes Book, Subiaco Council, 1932-36, op cit., 9 July 1935. Note: as the report is no longer extant, it has not been possible to ascertain the details of what it comprised.

⁹ Minutes Book, Subiaco Council, 1932-36, op cit., 13 August 1935.

¹⁰ Plaque at *Subiaco Oval Gates*, site visit by Robin Chinnery, 19 August 1999.

¹¹ Spillman, Ken *Diehards ...*, p. 144.

¹² Spillman, Ken *Diehards ...*, p. 144.

¹³ *The West Australian* 5 October 1935, p. 10.

¹⁴ Minute Book, Subiaco Council, 1932-36. PROWA Cons. 1330 An 305 Item 39, 8 October 1935.

¹⁵ Spillman, Ken *Diehards ...*, p. 144.

¹⁶ Indenture between Municipality of Subiaco and the Western Australian National Football League (Incorporated), 9 March 1936.

¹⁷ *The Football Budget* 4 May 1936, in Spillman, Ken *Diehards ...*, p. 144.

¹⁸ *The Football Budget* 1 March 1939; and Spillman, Ken *Diehards ...*, p. 144.

¹⁹ *The Football Budget* 22 July 1939, p. 31.

Subiaco Oval has continued in use as the headquarters of the League throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

In March 1938, Harold A. Krantz, Architect, drew plans for the Proposed Reconstruction of Subiaco Oval for Subiaco Municipal Council.²⁰ The plan shows *Subiaco Oval Gates* at the corner of Roberts and Townsend Roads, with paving slabs in the forecourt, a pair of gates to the south, with new fencing to be erected from the northern gatehouse to extend along the Townsend Road block, and an existing stone wall along Roberts Road from the aforementioned pair of gates.²¹

The Western Australian National Football League the Oval was leased to the League as agreed in 1936, and the indenture signed on 9 March 1937.²² The League became responsible for the repair and maintenance of 'the demised premises but more particularly all buildings thereon and all fences and gates appertaining to the demised premises'.²³ The WANFL commenced a programme to develop Subiaco Oval, with the aim 'In time ... to have adequate provision made for the handling of crowds up to 80,000.'²⁴

An undated photograph shows *Subiaco Oval Gates*, with the two limestone gatehouses unpainted, a brick construction middle section where the turnstiles are located, and the forecourt to the corner of Roberts Road and Townsend Road.²⁵

On 7 June 1968, it was advised in the *Government Gazette* that the Subiaco Council 'may lease portion of Reserve A9337 ... without calling public tenders.' This allowed the further lease of Subiaco Oval to the Western Australian National Football League.²⁶

At an unknown date, the limestone ticket offices and counting room, together with the brickwork entrance of *Subiaco Oval Gates* was painted.

In the mid 1990s, the master plan for the re-development of Subiaco Oval included the restoration of *Subiaco Oval Gates*.²⁷ In 1995-96, the paint was stripped, and the limestone and brickwork restored; however, there have been continuing concerns regarding the condition of the brickwork.²⁸ The moulded lettering over the central two turnstiles, which read 'Subiaco

²⁰ Harold A. Krantz, Proposed Reconstruction of Subiaco Oval for Subiaco Municipal Council, March 1938. PROWA Cons. 1901 AN 305 Item 1901/11.

²¹ Ibid. Note: there are later sewerage plans of the place held at PROWA, which are awaiting repair of the library's photocopier to be copied for this assessment.

²² Indenture between Municipality of Subiaco and the Western Australian National Football League (Incorporated), 9 March 1936.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *The Football Budget* 22 July 1939, p. 31.

²⁵ Subiaco Oval Gates in Subiaco Museum Collection. Note: the photograph is from *The West Australian*; however, no details are recorded, and it has not been possible to locate the original to date.

²⁶ *Government Gazette* 7 June 1968; and Secretary for Local Government to Town Clerk, Subiaco, 13 June 1968.

²⁷ Jeffery Ovens of Western Australian Football Commission, with Robin Chinnery, 19 August 1999.

²⁸ Ibid.

Oval', was removed in the 1995-96 works, as it was in poor condition.²⁹ The raised lettering was replaced with almost identical lettering to replace the original. The majority of the 1935 turnstiles were removed.³⁰ New ticket and turnstile fittings were installed in their place.³¹

On 12 January 1999, Swan Location 12732 on Land Administration Plan 19514, an area including the former Reserve A9337 (Subiaco Oval and *Subiaco Oval Gates*), was set aside as Reserve 41874 for the purpose of Sporting Ground, Telecommunications Facility, Entertainment and Ancillary or Beneficial Uses. The enlarged reserve was necessary for the continuing development of new grandstands at Subiaco Oval. The additional purposes took into account the presence of an Optus Tower, the operation of food vendors and other services during football matches, and allowed for occasional beneficial use of the oval. The care, control, and management of this new reserve was vested in the City of Subiaco, with the power to lease for any term not exceeding 99 years, subject to the consent of the Minister for Lands.³² Subsequently, the place was again leased to the Western Australian Football Commission Incorporated (formerly the Western Australian National Football League) for a period extending from 11 June 1999 to 22 August 2090.³³

There have been concerns in the community regarding the future of *Subiaco Oval Gates*. The Subiaco Past Players' Association and the Officials' Association wrote to the Heritage Council of Western Australia in early 1999, requesting that the place should be considered for entry in the State Register of Heritage Places.³⁴ Tom Dixon, President of the Subiaco Past Players' Association, wrote:

It is my belief that the old Subiaco entrance gates have a type of beauty and architectural design which at the same time reminding us all of the wonderful bygone days also supply a beautiful contrast with the not so beautiful "modern concrete stands".³⁵

On 4 March 1999, the Mayor of Subiaco, Tony Costa, voiced his support for the inclusion of *Subiaco Oval Gates* on the Register, stating 'The Gates are a physical reminder of the ever increasing importance of the Oval and associated facilities with sporting events in Western Australia.'³⁶

The Western Australian Football Commission recognises that Western Australians 'identify the historical significance of the gates and want them retained.'³⁷ The Commission foresees that at some future point in time, the fences at either side of *Subiaco Oval Gates* may be removed, and the concept of spectators purchasing their tickets and proceeding through

29 Ibid.

30 Wayne Bradshaw with Robin Chinnery, 19 August 1999.

31 Ibid.

32 Certificate of Crown Land Title, Swan Location 12732 on Land Administration Plan 19514, Vol. 3093 Fol. 159, 12 January 1999.

33 Certificate of Crown Land Title, Swan Location 12732 on Land Administration Plan 19514, Vol. 3093 Fol. 159, Second Schedule, 11 June 1999.

34 Tom Dixon, President of Subiaco Past Players' Association, to the Manager, HCWA, February 1999.

35 Ibid.

36 Tony Costa, Mayor of Subiaco, to Maurice Owen, Chairman HCWA, 4 March 1999.

37 Jeffery Ovens with Robin Chinnery, 19 August 1999.

Subiaco Oval Gates may be realised.³⁸ The Commission would like to include signage on *Subiaco Oval Gates* indicating the present name of the Oval, whatever that might be at any given time in the future.³⁹

Subiaco Oval Gates continue in use at Subiaco Oval for Westar Rules games.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Subiaco Oval Gates is the main entrance to Subiaco Oval. The two ticket offices and counting office in the Inter War Art Deco style⁴⁰ are of limestone and brick construction, whilst the central portion is of brick, and with a roof of Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles.

Subiaco Oval Gates is located in the south-west corner of Subiaco Oval on the corner of Haydn Bunton Drive and Roberts Road. The gates are located on the diagonal facing south-west. Haydn Bunton Drive is a divided two-way pair road with a narrow raised median, central Main Roads style pole mounted street lights. Golden Ash (*Fraxinus spp.*) trees are planted both sides of the Haydn Bunton Drive and in the median. Subiaco Road is a one way pair road with kerbside parking and Queensland box trees (*Lophostorum conferta*) planted on either side of the road. *Subiaco Oval Gates* is set well back from the corner with a large area of concrete slab paving in front of the gates.

Subiaco Oval Gates is sited across the south west corner of the site. The two and three storey grandstands constructed 1979 onwards provide a large scale backdrop to the gates. There is no trace of earlier toilets, spectator banks or original fences. *Subiaco Oval Gates* are flanked by brick pier and mild steel construction picket fences and there is a transportable cabin located to the north of *Subiaco Oval Gates*. The area immediately around the gates inside the grounds is paved with bitumen. Temporary pipe rail construction races extend from the face of the races into the street.

Subiaco Oval Gates is designed in the Inter War Art Deco style. The façade is arranged in an A, B, A, C rhythm and the central bay is further divided into major and minor bays. The principal flanking elements are the symmetrical ticket offices, which are limestone clad with a limestone plinth, plain raised corner stops and a stepped parapet. The limestone is pillow faced and tuck-pointed. The parapets carry timber flagstaffs fixed to the limestone with decorative metal brackets. Street facing planes have pairs of ticketing windows with extended sills supported on corbels. Over these windows there are three arch head windows en-chain. The two ticket offices are linked by six major and two minor turnstile races. The lower portion is made up of brick piers and concrete ring beams are set over the top of the piers. Each race opening is infilled on the street side with pipe framed link mesh infilled gates and there are brackets on the inside face that suggest that there may have been interior gates as well.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ 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. pp188-191

Above the concrete ring beams, the brickwork extends up in a pier panel arrangement of brickwork and the panels are scalloped between the piers. The top of the brickwork is finished with a rendered coping. The centre of the parapet wall above the gates has a recessed panel with the words 'Subiaco Oval' in bas-relief. The panel is flanked by pairs of blind niches.

The counting office is set back from the ticket office plane at the southern end of the gatehouse complex. On the streetside of the counting office, the elevation has a pair of arched head window en-chain, with a wide sill supported on corbels. The windows are separated by a stylized stone pilaster with an Art Deco styled version of a Corinthian capital. A bronze opening ceremony plaque is set to the right of the windows.

All sections of the roof are covered with Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles. The ticket office sections have box gutters behind the parapets and there are quad eaves gutters over the turnstile races. Windows are timber framed double hung sashes with cant brick sills. Doors are framed and boarded.

Subiaco Oval Gates is laid out with a single room ticket office at each end of an 8 bay turnstile race, with a single room counting office and lightly constructed strong room. The ticket offices have carpeted timber floors with quad moulds and timber door sills, the latter being in poor condition. Interior walls are painted brick and the ceilings are plasterboard, with cover strips and cove cornice mouldings. There are crude shelves and concrete benches cantilevered off the ticket window wall.

The turnstile races have concrete floors, unlined soffits and dividing timber frames that once supported screens along the length of the races. One of the frames at the northern end of the arrangement still retains picket screen. There are eight modern turnstiles and two original turnstiles located near the southern end of the races.

The counting office is similar to the ticket offices, except that there is a single-skin brick construction strong-room with a corrugated iron roof and a lightly constructed steel clad door.

The alterations include the addition of minor elements of shelving, re-pointing of the limestone, removal of screens in the turnstile races, removal of the inner gates, the addition of modern signage and the pipe construction extensions to the turnstile races.

Timber sills, areas of pointing and the brickwork to several of the piers are in poor condition. The joinery all requires repair and repainting. Overall the place is in fair condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Formal entrance gates to metropolitan area sporting venues constructed in the pre World War Two period, which are extant in 1999, include the gates to Gloucester Park, *Perth Oval* and Bassendean Oval. Gloucester Park Gates are elaborate and highly decorative.

Perth Oval gates are the largest of the pre-Second World War football ground gates that remain. These are designed in a more exuberant rendering of the Inter War Art Deco style and are larger in plan. The

central element is the main ticket office flanked by a series of 4 arched races on either side, with all of these elements drawn together under an elaborately stepped parapet. The façade then steps down to accommodate a further 4 flanking flat arched races and then the whole composition is completed by further ticket offices with curved facades and stepped parapet walls. The whole of this building is made of brick, which has been rendered and painted. Here the roofs have been concealed from view, more in keeping with the international Art Deco style, but the tiled roof displayed at *Subiaco Oval Gates* is a common approach to the style in Western Australia.

Other football ground entrance gates are either utilitarian or are post World War Two construction. Most of these are simple shelters devoid of architectural styling. The exception to this is the 1985 entrance gates at the north west corner of the Fremantle Oval on Parry Street.⁴¹ These were given a styling that made historic references to surrounding structures, rendered in an asymmetrical arrangement.

13.4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Exhaustive searches by the City of Subiaco have failed to locate any plans of the place, and it appears unlikely that they have survived.

The City of Subiaco is currently unable to locate the Mayor's Reports. If they are re-located in the future, they may provide useful information about the place.

⁴¹ The Fremantle gates replaced earlier (1914) brick gates which were demolished for the Parry Street extension. These were of similar scale to Subiaco Gates.