



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Palace Hotel (fmr) is significant as one of the most opulent examples of Federation Free Classical style architecture, although somewhat reconstructed, in Western Australia.# (Criteria 1.1 and 1.2)

Palace Hotel (fmr) has landmark quality due to its ornate and elegant style and its prominent corner location, and as the only building of its type and scale in St George's Terrace. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The site of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was the site of the first licensed premises in the Swan River Colony. Licensed premises operated on the site from 1829 until 1981. (Criterion 2.2)

The site was also the location of the first masonic lodge in the Colony established c. 1845. (Criterion 2.2)

Palace Hotel (fmr) built in 1895, is representative of a period of great development and growth in Western Australia during and after the 1890s gold boom years. The development which occurred on the site in more recent times is a reminder of Western Australia's economic boom and optimism of the 1980s. (Criterion 2.2)

Palace Hotel (fmr) represents the high level of opulence and comfort affordable to Western Australians and travellers as a result of the economic boom brought about by the gold rush. (Criterion 2.2)

The size of BankWest Tower was a result of the City of Perth granting the Bond Corporation and their joint venture partners, the R&I Bank, a bonus plot ratio in return for retaining the *Palace Hotel (fmr)*. The place was also the subject of the first heritage agreement in the State. (Criterion 2.2)

* 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.

Seddon and Ravine suggest that the style is Victorian Second Empire (similar to the Royal Hotel on Wellington Street). However, the absence of tall mansard roofs and the later date of construction of this building tend to place it more in the Federation Free Classical style than that of 'the Paris of Napoleon III'. See Seddon, G. and Ravine, D., *A City and its Setting: Images of Perth*, Western Australia, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1986, p. 165.

The National Trust of Western Australia was instrumental in ensuring that some of the fabric of the original Palace Hotel was retained during the 1980s development of the site. The Palace Hotel debate was a major issue which influenced the introduction of heritage legislation in Western Australia in 1990. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

Palace Hotel (fmr) was built for John De Baun, a well-known figure in Western Australia during the 1890s gold boom years as an entrepreneur and investor in real estate and builder of one of the finest hotels in the State. The Hotel was designed by architectural firm, Porter and Thomas. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is also associated with 1980s entrepreneur Alan Bond and with architects Ross Chisholm, Laurie Fuhrmann and Billy Wilkes of consulting firm, Cameron Chisholm and Nichol. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Palace Hotel (fmr) at the time of its construction, throughout the gold boom years, and even until its partial demolition, has been highly valued by the community of and visitors to Perth, as one of the most beautiful and elegant hotels in Western Australia. Its later appeal is evidenced by the formation of the 'Palace Guards' in 1974, and its inclusion on the Register of the National Estate and National Trust classified building list. (Criterion 4.1)

Palace Hotel (fmr) contributes to the sense of place of inner city Perth, as it operated as a hotel from 1897 to 1981. The site had been the location of licensed premises since 1829. (Criterion 4.2)

Palace Hotel (fmr) is a tangible reminder of the wealth, prosperity and resultant growth of Western Australia during the gold boom years and as such contributes to the community's sense of place. The development which occurred on the site in more recent times is a reminder of Western Australia's economic boom of the 1980s. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Without independent assessment of the rarity of this place and relying on J. M. Freeland's assessment, *Palace Hotel (fmr)* is the only hotel in Western Australia and perhaps Australia in its style which was designed and finished to such a high degree of opulence. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is representative of the efforts of the National Trust of Western Australia as the main heritage body active in preserving historic buildings in Western Australia prior to the introduction of heritage legislation in 1990. (Criterion 6.2)

Palace Hotel (fmr) is representative of the recreational and social needs and activities of the people of Perth, and reflects in its size and scale the importance and growth of the hotel industry during the 1890s gold boom and up until the 1980s. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Palace Hotel (fmr) is currently in good condition due to the extensive work carried out during the refurbishment of the building and the recent renovations still currently under progress. Recent repairs have included replacement of gutters which had failed, repairs to balconies as a result of water damage, and some areas of brickwork have been re-tuck-pointed.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Palace Hotel (fmr) is currently used as a bank and has two banking chambers on the ground floor, while the upper floors have been divided into office space and staff facilities. The original design intent of the external facade has been retained, although large sections of the interior have been altered.

While *Palace Hotel (fmr)* functioned as a hotel, it was refurbished several times, generally to modernise and extend the facilities. Quite extensive alterations were made to the interior of the hotel after the First World War in response to changes in the liquor laws. The present layout of the building does not reflect any of these changes. Rather, the reconstruction work that has been carried out on the ground and upper floors reflects the building as it was in 1897 and gives no acknowledgment to the alterations that were made as a result of changes to hotel operation and liquor laws.

The reconstructed dining room on the ground floor is currently used as a banking chamber and the area is sectioned off into small cubicles and reception areas. None of the partition walls used in these sections are fixed to the masonry walls and could be removed if desired. The area currently used as banking chamber on the western side of the building has undergone greater changes and the possibility of returning this room to an earlier layout would be more difficult.

The upstairs office areas on the first, second and third floors have an open plan layout with strategically located weight bearing concrete columns. Lightweight partitions are used as wall dividers. The original layout has been completely lost.

Palace Hotel (fmr) is considered to have a low degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Palace Hotel (fmr) has undergone extensive reconstruction work and in some areas it is difficult to determine what has been reconstructed and what has been restored. The external facade on the southern side of the building (St. George's Terrace) appears to be original (including the dome), while only the southern portion of the western facade (William Street) is original. The northern portion of the west facade and the northern and eastern walls (enclosed in the atrium space below the BankWest tower) are all new.

In the interior, the area referred to as the dining room (and now used as a banking chamber) has undergone extensive reconstruction and restoration. The colour scheme and detail has been almost entirely reconstructed; it is not known if the marble mantle-piece and the tiles in the fireplace are original.

The central staircase is original although it too has undergone some reconstruction and extensive restoration. The decorative elements which surmount many of the newel posts on the staircase and the coloured, leaded glass windows are apparently original, whilst the colour scheme is a meticulous reconstruction. The mosaic tiles used in the front entrance and the parquetry floor are original.

Due to the extensive alterations and reconstruction work that has been carried out on the building, the interior of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* is considered to have low authenticity. The exterior is considered to have a moderate to high level of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Helen Burgess, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Fiona Bush, Heritage Consultant. The assessment has been completed by Alice Steedman, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Palace Hotel (fmr), is located on the corner of St George's Terrace and William Street, Perth, on Perth Town Lot F10. The Federation Free Classical style three-storey brick hotel building was built in 1895.

The site of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was the site of the first licensed premises in the colony, being the 'King's Head Hotel' from at least 1830. It was owned by William Dixon until 1831 when he reassigned his land grant of lot F10 to William Leeder. The hotel became known as 'Leeder's Hotel'.

By 1833, 'Leeder's Hotel' had become one of the leading hotels in Perth, frequented by the gentry class of the new colony as well as civil and military officers, and was the scene of many grand dinners and celebrations, some of which were reported in the local paper:

Few, if any, of [the employed classes] enjoyed a table such as the gentry made merry with at Leeder's Hotel on the occasion of the King's birthday celebrations in August 1833, with nine types of meat and a choice of three deserts.¹

In 1845, additions were made to 'Leeder's Hotel', which by this time was known as the 'Freemason's Tavern', as it now contained the first masonic lodge in the colony:

The first stone of the new portion was laid on Friday last, and as part of the building is designed for a new masonic lodge (the first ever constructed in this colony), the stone was laid by the Hon. P. Broun, W. M. Lodge 712, and in the presences of the W. P. M. and most of the brethren of the Lodge, but without any of the masonic forms and ceremonies usual upon these occasions; the W. M. explaining that, for many reasons, these were designedly omitted.²

Such was William Leeder's popularity and that of his hotel, that when he died in 1845 patrons and friends rallied to support his widow in taking over the running of the hotel. A ball was organised and held in August 1845 to raise money and, to provide further income, it was arranged for a portion of the hotel to be tenanted by the Lodge of the Oddfellows, in addition to the existing tenants, the Freemasons.³

On 1 May 1848, Mrs Leeder, who still owned the 'Freemason's Hotel', transferred management of the hotel to Julian George Carr. Besides being a hotelier, Carr was also Chairman of the Perth City Council in the 1860s and member of the Legislative Council. Over the next 45 years, proprietors of the 'Freemason's Hotel' included Mrs James, who was the mother of Walter James - once Premier of WA and Chancellor of the University of WA, and

¹ *Perth Gazette*, 24/8/1833, in Stannage, C. T., *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*, Perth, 1979, p. 65.

² *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 26/2/1845, p. 2.

³ *Perth Gazette*, 26/7/1845, p. 2.

George Towton, who was one of the State's best horsemen and a well-known hotelier.

In 1894, John De Baun purchased the 'Freemason's Hotel' from Mrs Leeder, but desired to build a new hotel as the existing one '...was long past its prime and totally out of character with his visionary ideas'.⁴ The poor condition of the 'Freemason's Hotel' at this time may have been due, in part, to a fire in 1888 which had started at the back of the hotel and destroyed all of the outbuildings (including the lamp-room, kitchen, cook's bedroom and bar parlour). The main part of the hotel was saved from destruction.⁵

John De Baun, originally from New Jersey, USA, came to Australia, first settling in Victoria in the 1880s. He later moved to NSW and eventually Broken Hill where he built his first hotel, the Garden Hotel, with the money he had made since arriving in the country. With the success of this hotel, De Baun went on to invest in the stock exchange, during which he experienced fluctuating financial success.

In 1892, De Baun came to Western Australia, firstly settling at Coolgardie where he became '...convinced of the gold bearing potential of the new field'.⁶ He then went on to invest in several business ventures, including some successful ventures in the stock market, which enabled him to pay his debts.

De Baun had arrived in Western Australia at a time of great economic and population growth owing to the discovery of gold. As part of this gold boom, the State, and Perth in particular, experienced a surge in building activity, not only to accommodate the increase in business activity and population, but also as a showcase to this newly found wealth. During the 1890s, the streets of Perth saw the erection of many buildings with heavily ornamented facades, opulent ironwork and balconies and domical vaulted roofs. J. M. Freeland, in his book *Architecture in Australia*, describes this period in Western Australian history as being very different to that being experienced in the eastern colonies:

Perth, Fremantle, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie blossomed with towers, domes, thumping arcades and twenty feet wide iron lace verandahs.... Consequently the buildings erected in the West while the rest of the colonies struggled to throw off the blight of depression have resulted in a concentration of High Victorian building which is a unique and marvellous treasury of style.⁷

De Baun decided to invest in real estate in Perth - buying land mostly along St George's Terrace as well as building two hotels in the city, firstly *Palace Hotel (fmr)* and then the Melbourne Hotel.⁸

The three-storey *Palace Hotel (fmr)*, was designed by architects Porter and Thomas and built with day labour at a cost of £64,000.⁹ The architects, Ernest Saunders Porter and Edmond Neville Thomas went into partnership in

⁴ Freeland, J. M., *The Australian Pub*, Melbourne University Press, 1966, p. 161.

⁵ *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 28/3/1888, p. 6.

⁶ Ball, J. D. Kelsall & J Pidgeon, 'Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939, Southern Region, Western Australia, Vol. I, 1997, 001H15-2114.

⁷ Freeland, J. M. *Architecture in Australia: a history*, F. W Cheshire, 1968, pp. 198-199.

⁸ Construction of the Melbourne Hotel commenced construction in 1895.

⁹ Ball, J. D. Kelsall & J Pidgeon, 'Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939, Southern Region, Western Australia, Vol. I, 1997, 001H15-2114.

Broken Hill in 1890 and designed many hotels.¹⁰ They, like so many architects of the time, followed ‘...their fortunes to the west indulged themselves in a veritable banquet of turgid, lavish decadence that only a depression had put a stop to in the east’.¹¹ Porter and Thomas first set up business in Coolgardie and then Perth, in 1894, their first Perth commission was to design *Palace Hotel (fmr)* for De Baun.¹²

Palace Hotel (fmr), though typical of this period, was one of the more flamboyant, even ostentatious, buildings, ‘...redolent of the bourgeois luxury and splendour of the Paris of Napoleon III’.¹³ *Palace Hotel (fmr)*, although slightly smaller in scale to some of its contemporaries, was ‘...in its day, as sumptuous a hostelry as any in Melbourne or Sydney.’¹⁴

No expense was spared for *Palace Hotel (fmr)*, with many of the best materials being imported. Northcote bricks - which were dense, hard, machine made bricks, and superior to the contemporary local bricks, were brought in from Melbourne. Imported cedar was used for the central staircase, the doors of the main entrance (which were intricately carved), bar and wall panelling (the bars having the State emblem of the swans carved around the top). Marble for the fireplaces was imported from Italy as well as Roman mosaic floor tiles for the main entrance and bar-room floors. Ceilings were pressed metal in a variety of patterns. No effort was spared on the detail of the finish to the hotel:

A unique fleur-de-lis-patterned cast-iron balustrade was affixed to the edge of a wooden, bracketed, roofless balcony at first-floor level, elliptical-headed windows in delicate, lace-like draped scalloped lead-lighting were inserted in the walls, a fine wrought-iron grille gate with scroll and arrowhead design guarded the main entrance, and beautifully detailed and carved cedar doors set with the name and badge of the hotel and gleaming brass handles complement the equally fine cedar panelling inside.¹⁵

When *Palace Hotel (fmr)* opened its doors for business on 18 March 1897 it was considered ‘...one of the most beautiful and elegant hotels in Australia’.¹⁶

In 1901, the hotel was leased by Mr J. T. Glowrey. Glowrey carried out the first of many additions and refurbishments to the hotel, including the addition of the north and east bedroom wing. A photograph taken in the 1920s shows this addition as having continuous covered balconies at both first and second storey level set back in line with the external wall of the original building rather than being in line with the existing balconies. The northern parapet wall wraps around to the western elevation to form a three-storey corner piece with parapet entablature to match the original building.¹⁷

¹⁰ It is likely that Porter and Thomas met De Baun in Broken Hill and designed his first hotel, the Grand Hotel. Other buildings by Porter and Thomas include the Union Bank, Coolgardie (1895); rebuilding of Railway Hotel, Perth (1906); as well as hotels and the racecourse in Kalgoorlie (c1898).

¹¹ Freeland, J. M., *The Australian Pub*, Melbourne University Press, 1966, p. 161.

¹² Porter and Thomas later designed the *Railway Hotel (fmr)* (1929), Barrack Street, and the *Fitzgerald Hotel (fmr)* (1925), Fitzgerald Street.

¹³ George Seddon and David Ravine, *A City and its Setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986, p. 165.

¹⁴ Freeland, J. M. *Architecture in Australia: a history*, F. W. Cheshire, 1968, pp. 198.

¹⁵ Freeland, J. M., *The Australian Pub*, Melbourne University Press, 1966, p. 161.

¹⁶ Kimberly, W. B., *History of West Australia: a narrative of her past, together with biographies of her leading men*, Victoria, 1897, pp. 191- 192.

¹⁷ Batty Library Photograph BA 533/27 Palace Hotels 1920s 51861P.

An advertisement in the 1903 Christmas edition of *The Western Mail*, describes the hotel as the finest hotel in the State, with 130 bedrooms, a number of suites of private apartments, a writing room and library, fine dining hall, a grand vestibule, electric light and electric elevator and large sample rooms.¹⁸

On 24 December 1911, John De Baun died and probate of his will was granted to the West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited.¹⁹ The lease to Glowrey was maintained.

After the First World War, changes began to occur in services and facilities needed to be provided by hotels, not only in Perth but all around Australia. These changes were precipitated by both the increase in adult population and beer consumption, as well as the introduction of the 6 o'clock closing time for all hotels, which resulted in crowding of hotels for the concentrated drinking period. To accommodate the changing needs of hotel facilities and patrons' drinking patterns, existing hotels were expanded and refurbished. J. M. Freeland, in *The Australian Pub*, describes the changes this meant physically for existing hotel buildings:

From 1920 to 1925 was the period in which the Australian pub swung away from being a building in which the bars were physically only a small part of whole to the present situation where they form by far the greater part, occupying practically the whole of the ground floor and often the basement area as well. Very few old buildings escaped the change which, more than any other development, gave the pub its present characteristics. Hotels such as...the Palace in Perth...which had found their tiny bars adequate for anything from twenty to a hundred years, now had to be disembowelled to make room for the herds pressing for a place at the bar.²⁰

In 1924, *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was sold to Mr Charles Atkins (Atkins Brothers Pty Ltd) for £48,000.²¹ However, the hotel continued to be leased to James Thomas Glowrey until 1930 when it was transferred to a James Henry Glowrey, also a hotelkeeper (and younger relation to James Thomas Glowrey).²²

By 1930, the trend for enlarging bar areas in existing hotel buildings had an impact on *Palace Hotel (fmr)*, when extensive work was carried out, under James Henry Glowrey's instruction. These works included the pulling down of ground floor walls to accommodate more bar space, the billiard room in the basement was converted into a bar, separate bathrooms were added to a number of the bedrooms, and new toilet facilities built for the bar areas. This work cost approximately £15,000.²³

In 1935, external renovations and painting was carried out to *Palace Hotel (fmr)*, the architects being the prominent firm of Eales and Cohen.²⁴ Similar work was again carried out only four years later, in 1939, by Mr J. W. Niche for £257/12/6.²⁵

Palace Hotel (fmr) continued to operate successfully after having been modernised to suit the changing needs of patrons and hotel services,

18 *The Western Mail* 'Christmas Number', 25/12/1903, p. 76.

19 CT Vol. 241, Fol. 56. The land was then transferred to Copley's Bank Ltd in 1921, CT Vol. 690, Fol. 151

20 Freeland, J. M., *The Australian Pub*, Melbourne University Press, 1966, p. 176.

21 *The Australian Home Builder*, March 1924, p. 45; & CT Vol. 822, Fol. 83.

22 CT Vol. 822, Fol. 83. J. H. Glowrey leased the hotel until 1949.

23 *Building and Construction Journal*, 7 March 1930.

24 *Building and Construction Journal*, 13 November 1935.

25 *Building and Construction Journal*, 1 September 1939.

however, after another 20 years, the time had come again for modernising and renovating the hotel. In 1959, the hotel was renovated and extended, the designs done by F. G. B. Hawkins and Sands, with A. Solarski as architect-in-charge, the work costing £160,000:

Separate bathrooms installed in bedrooms and air-conditioning have brought twentieth-century standards to a nineteenth-century hotel. The plaster plinth at footpath level...has been sheeted in solid granite, the rotting timber balcony was sympathetically replaced in cantilevered concrete, and aluminium castings made of missing sections of the iron balustrade and the roof was recovered.²⁶

More bedrooms were also added at this time, with acoustic tile ceilings and flush panelled doors, and the Saloon and Basement Bars were remodelled which included new bar fittings.²⁷ Unfortunately, these alterations resulted in the finely-incised 'De Baun's Palace Hotel' lettering at the front of the hotel being covered for the first time.

As early as 1972, the future of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was under threat by the surrounding large scale development and purchase of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* and neighbouring buildings by the Commonwealth Banking Corporation:²⁸

Before 1972 the Corporation had intended to rebuild on the opposite side of William Street. The Palace Hotel site was bought when it was realised that the earlier mistake of the R and I Bank would have been repeated through not building on St George's Terrace between William and Barrack streets.²⁹

On 11 June 1973, *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was classified by the National Trust (WA), a move which was supported by J. M. Freeland:

This is a most important building for the history of Australian architecture, being an extreme example of High Victorian architecture. There were never many hotels of its standard in Australia and to my knowledge this is the last of them.³⁰

However, the classification did not prevent *Palace Hotel (fmr)* being placed under increasing threat. This continued to grow to such a degree that, in March 1974, a group known as the 'Palace Guards' was formed which was committed to the preservation of the hotel.³¹ Gordon Stephenson in his 1975 study, *The Design of Central Perth*, also discussed the future of the hotel and importantly the limitations of the building:

A building should have a function if it is to survive. The *Palace* must continue to be a hotel. Because of the site value of the properties purchased by the [Commonwealth] Bank, the *Palace* cannot remain as it was - a charming but relatively small hotel.³²

The hotel was, however, given a reprieve. The then licensee of the hotel, Frank Riley, was able to continue to operate the bars, dining room and

²⁶ Freeland, J. M., *The Australian Pub*, Melbourne University Press, 1966, p. 162.

²⁷ *Trust News*, February 1982, Edition 116.

²⁸ CT Vol. 822, Fol. 83.

²⁹ Stephenson, Gordon, *The Design of Central Perth: Some Problems and Possible Solutions*, a study made for the Perth Central Area Design Coordinating Committee, UWA Press, 1975, p. 70; The R&I had constructed its new building in Barrack Street adjacent to Perth Town Hall.

³⁰ Freeland, J. M., letter to National Trust, April 1973; in *The Architect*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1974, p. 20.

³¹ The Palace Guards inaugural meeting was held on 27 March 1973 at the Palace Hotel. National Trust 'Palace Hotel File' No. A.

³² Stephenson, Gordon, *The Design of Central Perth: Some Problems and Possible Solutions*, a study made for the Perth Central Area Design Coordinating Committee, UWA Press, 1975, p.70.

function rooms, but not the accommodation facilities. As a result, the hotel became a tavern. However, through the efforts of the National Trust (WA), in consultation with the Licensing Court, the name 'Palace Hotel' was retained.³³

Riley also commissioned minor refurbishments to the hotel in the mid-1970s. A photograph taken of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* in 1974 shows the verandah of the northern addition almost fully enclosed and the brickwork appears to have been painted.³⁴

In 1978, the Bond Corporation purchased both *Palace Hotel (fmr)* and the adjacent Terrace Arcade property from the Commonwealth Banking Corporation. Although it was always the plan to build a tower block on this site, initially the Bond Corporation wished to retain the hotel and keep it operating, and '...instituted an upgrading operation which included re-painting the outside of the building and redecoration of bars, foyer, lounge and dining room'.³⁵ The architects for this work were Summerhayes and Associates.

In 1980, the Bond Corporation revealed its plans, which had been approved by the Perth City Council, to build a tower block on the north-east corner of the site. Negotiations for the redevelopment of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* then began in earnest between the National Trust, the Bond Corporation, consultant architects Cameron Chisholm and Nicol³⁶, the Commonwealth Banking Corporation and Australian Heritage Commission. As a result of these negotiations, certain conditions were imposed upon the new development. The development plans for *Palace Hotel (fmr)* were summarised in the *Trust News*:

The erection of a multi-storied, multi-use tower block on the North East corner of the site; retention of the Palace Hotel structure on the South West corner; development of a covered concourse between the two structures linking William Street with St George's Terrace.

This will require: demolition of the structure housing the Terrace Arcade; demolition of the eastern accommodation wing of the hotel; dismantling and reconstruction of the northernmost portion of the William Street façade; [and] dismantling and reconstruction of the dining-room.³⁷

The facade and some of the interior of the hotel were to be retained, including the staircase, and a complete archival record of the hotel was to be

³³ *Trust News*, 12 August 1981, Edition 113, p. 2.

³⁴ Battye Library Photograph BA690/38 Palace Hotel 1974.

³⁵ *Trust News*, 12 August 1981, Edition 113, p. 2.

³⁶ The architectural firm of Cameron, Chisholm & Nichol, responsible for the design of shopping centres in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney, was prominent in Western Australia in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Amongst a range of works in WA, the firm designed a number of school buildings for the Education Department, as well as commercial properties on St George's Terrace. Their most notable works include the Read Library, UWA (1965), South Fremantle High School (1986), and Allendale Square (1977). The firm also designed several office buildings for Multiplex in the East Perth in 1981.

³⁷ Initially the dining-room was to be retained, but owing to the construction requirements of the tower, the dining-room had to be dismantled. However, this was only agreed to by an exact replication of the room being carried out, which, despite this not being in keeping with best conservation practices of the time (i.e. as outlined in *The Burra Charter*), it was seen as the only practical and feasible alternative. In *Trust News*, 12 August 1981, Edition 113, p. 2.

undertaken by the Bond Corporation.³⁸ Demolition works commenced in August 1981. Only the original facades of the hotel and its central core beneath the dome were retained.

On 29 September 1981, *Palace Hotel (fmr)* was entered on the Register of the National Estate as a first-class example of the quality of building at the time of the gold rush.

The restoration of the remaining original hotel was carried out by a joint venture between Bond Corporation and the R&I Bank, in partnership with a team of restorers from West Germany led by experienced restorer, Radi Tatic. The restoration and construction works were completed in 1989. Billy Wilkes, a senior architect at the local architectural firm of Cameron Chisholm and Nichol, was responsible for overseeing the work. Ross Chisholm, a principal of the firm, was involved in the total development of the place, as was Laurie Fuhrmann, also an employee of the firm. An atrium was formed by covering the internal open space with an acrylic canopy, linking *Palace Hotel (fmr)* with the new office tower.

The retention of the Palace Hotel was used as a claim for a bonus plot ratio by Bond Corporation to substantially increase the lettable area of the site. The end result was the present Tower. However, on completion it was found that the lettable area was in excess of City of Perth approval. As some space could not be let and occupied, this had a resultant effect on the value of the Tower. The matter was finally resolved when the Government purchased the R&I Bank site in Barrack Street.³⁹ In 1994, the provisions of the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990* were used to transfer the plot ratio from Barrack Street to the R&I Tower (now BankWest Tower), via a heritage agreement, the first in the State.⁴⁰

Further works to repair the concrete balconies, storm water disposal system and rendered decoration of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* commenced in October 1998. The contractors for this work were Resolve Engineering.

In 1999, *Palace Hotel (fmr)* and BankWest Tower are owned by AMP (70% share) and Unisuper (30% share). BankWest is the only tenant in *Palace Hotel (fmr)*.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Palace Hotel (fmr) is situated on the corner of William Street and St. George's Terrace in the Central Business District of Perth. The original three storey façade of the building sits firmly on its corner location however, it is dwarfed by the tall tower blocks which surround it on all sides. Its diminutive size, is further emphasised by the multi-storey BankWest tower that has been constructed at the rear of the building, incorporating the rear additions of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* into its atrium on the ground floor.

Palace Hotel (fmr) is a Federation Free Classical Style building with facades extending along St. George's Terrace and William Street. The exterior features tuck-pointed brick walls punctuated with elliptical headed windows

³⁸ This record has not been located as part of this assessment.

³⁹ Maurice Owen, information provided to the Heritage Council dated 11 October 1999, HCWA File P2114.

⁴⁰ 'Heritage Agreement R&I Bank Buildings 54-58 Barrack Street and 593 Hay Street WA between Heritage Council of Western Australia and Bank of Western Australia Ltd and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and City of Perth', prepared by Freehill Hollingdale & Page Solicitors, 1994; *The West Australian*, 27 July 1994, p. 56.

and is skirted by open balconies at the first and second floor. Visual interest is provided by rendered details that emphasise the entrances, corners, balconies and the parapet. The main entry door is centrally located on the St George's Terrace façade.

A small triple arched arcade defines the main entry. The two side arches contain doorways that are currently unused. The central arch leads up a small flight of steps to the main door which is set back from the street. Two large wrought iron gates, with arrow-headed and scroll design, are set within the main arched opening.

The balconies above the main door have concrete balustrades that are supported with curved concrete brackets. The central bay of windows on the first and second floors project out onto the balconies immediately above the central entry. These windows, and the doors which access the balconies, are flanked by engaged, rendered piers. A concrete balustrade tops the bay of windows on the second floor and creates a small balcony access at parapet level.

A dome rises above the parapet. The base of the dome is constructed in rendered brickwork and creates a large square headed pediment facing St George's Terrace. A doorway in this pediment accesses the balcony at parapet level. The dome is clad in lead sheets and is surmounted by a rectangular observation platform that has a cast iron balustrade and a flagpole. The remainder of the roof is hipped and covered with corrugated zincalume sheets.

The two entries at the eastern and northern ends of the building and the central entry on the William Street façade are treated in a similar manner, although on a smaller scale. The balconies do not have projecting bays of windows or balconies at parapet level. Additional detail on the parapet consists of single pediments above the end or corner pieces and a simple raised section above the central door.

Two entries are located at the corner of William Street and St George's Terrace. The entire corner piece at ground level is rendered. Decoration is restricted to simple curved drip moulds over the two doors and central window. The drip moulds have small keystones and foliated stops. Rendered attached piers flank the windows and doors on the two floors above the entry. The parapet is raised over the entry and has small pediments facing both St George's Terrace and William Street.

Open balconies with cast iron fleur-de-lis pattern balustrades continue across the remainder of both façades, set between the concrete balconies of the other entrances at first and second floor level.

The northern end of the William Street façade is not original. This new section is an exact replica of the original facade with the exception that the bricks in the new section have not been tuck-pointed. The additional windows, rendered balconies and parapets have been finished to match those found above the secondary entries on William Street and St George's Terrace.

The original northern and eastern walls have been replaced with new brick walls. Both of these walls are incorporated within a glass atrium which functions as the entry point to the BankWest tower. Although the rear section of *Palace Hotel (fmr)* has become incorporated into the tower complex, the remaining southern section, which includes the original sections of the external facade, is completely separate from the tower complex.

The internal building layout is centred around the main staircase located inside the main entry off St George's Terrace.

The main stair hall represents the opulence of what was formerly *Palace Hotel (fmr)*. This area has undergone extensive refurbishment and reconstruction. The entry hall features the original mosaic pavement (patterned with a stylised floral border) and the original parquet floor immediately beneath the dome. The walls in this area are lavishly decorated to imitate marble columns with gold leaf applied to raised plaster reliefs. In the north-west corner of the entry hall is the original joinery of reception area. The walls of the staircase are decorated with simple a stencilled pattern which features palmettes in the corners. These have been picked out in gold leaf. The staircase's timber balustrade and newel posts are essentially quite simple, however they have been given added importance by the placement of various ornaments at strategic locations. These ornaments (which include a cherub holding a fish, decorative urns and a Cavalier holding a lamp) may be original or they could be copies of originals. The top newel post has an ornate metal candelabra.

The stairwell is lit by stained and leaded glass windows located on the north, west and eastern sides. The windows are flanked by engaged pilasters which are decorated with stencils and gold leaf. Between the windows is a stencilled frieze and above this is a very deep cornice with raised ribs which are covered in gold leaf. The ceiling is coffered and the ribs (which divide the ceiling into their coffered sections) are also covered with gold leaf. Each coffer is individually decorated with a stencilled design. The cornice and the ceiling appears to be pressed metal and could be original.

Access to the top of the dome is via a small timber staircase located to the south east of the main stairwell. The room immediately below the top of the dome is covered with a highly decorative wall paper. The narrow timber stairs which lead up to the dome appear to be original.⁴¹

To the north of the main stairwell is the area which was once the dining room. This space is currently used for public banking purposes. Like the entrance and staircase, this area is also extravagantly decorated and has liberal applications of gold leaf. The walls are divided into arched bays with a elliptical headed window filled the arched space. The ceiling is also divided into sections and features decorative roses from which ceiling fans are suspended. The highly ornamented ceiling was apparently made from pressed metal. The current ceiling is apparently a plaster copy of the original.⁴² At the northern end of the room is a marble mantle piece with a tiled surround and metal fireplace. These items are thought to be original.

On the first and second floors, immediately to the south of the stairwell, are two rooms which currently function as sitting rooms. Both rooms have timber floors, marble mantle pieces with tiled surrounds and metal grates and a decorative plaster ceiling. It is not known if the details found in these rooms are original.

The eastern and northern wings of the building contain office space and staff facilities. Where there was originally only two upper floors, the building now contain three floors within the same exterior wall height. The uppermost

⁴¹ It is still possible to gain access to the viewing platform of the dome, although BankWest Property Manager, Peter Reagan, advised that the door giving access to this area is extremely heavy. Site inspection note 16 April 1999.

⁴² Information booklet published by R and I, *Bringing Back to Life: The Palace, Perth*. n.d., probably 1989.

floor – concealed behind the parapet contains a staff gymnasium, recreation area and change rooms. Generally the office space has been opened up by partially removing interior walls and separate office space has been achieved through the use of movable partitions. There are no original features in these areas.

The ground floor of the northern wing which extends down the length of the William Street facade is a public banking chamber. This area features a new false ceiling, with a coffered pattern which imitates the stairwell's ceiling. The timber joinery used in the tellers' area has also been designed in a style reminiscent of late nineteenth century joinery. Original features in this area include the window joinery and the exterior wall.

Access to the basement area was restricted due to security reasons however this area has been completely refurbished.

A mezzanine floor has been constructed at the rear of the original *Palace Hotel* in the atrium space of the BankWest tower. This area is accessible from the first floor and contains a museum display relating to BankWest and original *Palace Hotel (fmr)* memorabilia.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
