



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*

Lord Forrest Olympic Pool is significant in that it is an excellent example of the Inter-War Functionalist (Art Deco Moderne) style of architecture applied to a swimming pool complex. It is a fine example of the regional style of modernism that evolved in Western Australia. (Criterion 1.1)

The design of the place was both innovative and creative, being the first Olympic standard swimming pool to be built in Western Australia. (Criterion 1.2)

The place is situated diagonally in its surrounding parkland, and addresses the corner of intersecting streets, and it thereby contributes a distinctive aesthetic to the streetscape of Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 1.3)

The place has landmark quality by virtue of its architectural style, its prominent situation, and its popularity as a recreational facility. The scale and style of the place is in keeping with the suburban housing area that surrounds it. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is significant in the evolution and pattern of history of Western Australia, as an outstanding symbol of the affluence, confidence and optimism of Kalgoorlie in the late 1930s, when its gold-generated wealth saved the State economy from collapse. (Criterion 2.1)

Lord Forrest Olympic Pool was built and opened in 1938, at a time of great prosperity in the town. It was a project that was remarkable for the unusual cooperation of the town council and the Chamber of Mines, which was involved in financing the project. (Criterion 2.2)

The architect for the place was W.G. Bennett, who, in the 1930s, was one of the principal exponents of 'modern' architecture in Western Australia. It is his architecture that largely defines the regional Western Australian style of a design movement that was highly popular in the late 1930s, in USA, Britain and many other countries. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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.

The place is associated with the careers of swimming and diving champions whose sporting careers originated in Kalgoorlie, such as swimmers Bert Nankiville, Percy Oliver and Kevin Duff, and divers Pat Treby and Harry Buckman. (Criterion 2.3)

The place was a showpiece of modern design, excellence of materials and workmanship, and contained the most up-to-date technology for water purification, lighting and pool hygiene. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place represents the forefront of technical achievement at that time, in water purification, health and cleanliness, and underwater lighting. The use of modern materials techniques and equipment was acknowledged as being the best available in Australia at that time. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is highly valued by the people of Kalgoorlie as their centre (1938 - 1998) for swimming as recreation, competition, and education. From 1938 to 1999, the place provided the population with welcome relief from the high summer temperatures. The pool contributes to the community's sense of place, as the focus for many memories associated with swimming. (Criteria 4.1 & 4.2)

The place has been the site of WA State Swimming Championships, and has served as a place of training and competition for many excellent swimmers and divers who competed at State and National levels. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The place is the only example in Western Australia of the Inter-War Functionalist (Art Deco) style applied to a swimming pool complex. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is significant in that it is representative of the Australian Inter-War Functionalist (Art Deco Moderne) style applied to a sporting and recreational swimming facility. (Criterion 6.1)

It is representative of the bold spirit of prosperity, modernism and optimism of the late 1930s in Western Australia, to build this swimming facility in a place where water was scarce and precious. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

There is general deterioration and general cracking, delamination and spalling to various concrete elements throughout the site. Steel reinforcement corrosion within the concrete, concentrated below the decking of the main/wading pool and the interior of the Plant Room, is unsound and in breach of existing concrete codes. The associated change rooms, stands, water slide and other pools also show signs of deterioration.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The integrity of *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* is moderate, having ceased operation as a swimming pool in 1999.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has moderate to high level of authenticity. The main fabric of the place is original.

A number of elements have been replaced or removed since 1938. Shade shelters have been added above the grandstand and awnings erected in the open recreational area.

The original lighting devices have been replaced and additional lighting mounts have been placed in the centre of the entry facade. The original steel-framed diving tower has been removed and replaced with a brick structure. The original pumps and filtration plant have also been removed and replaced with more up-to-date equipment. The original showers and footbaths in the changing rooms have also been removed, as have the exit turnstiles. The tiles of the wading pool and main pool have also been replaced, along with the exit ladders of the main pool.

The original kiosk within the entry has been removed, along with the caretaker's quarters, to provide additional office space. The terrazzo floor is still extant, although it is currently covered with carpet.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled, on an honorary basis, by Rosalind Lawe Davies, Councillor of the National Trust, Vyonne Geneve, Art Deco historian, and Ron Facius, architectural and industrial designer, with assistance from Valerie Simms, research assistant, as members of the Art Deco Society of Western Australia.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The city of Kalgoorlie developed to serve the rich goldfields discovered, in 1893, in a remote, desolate and arid situation east of Perth. Its development, whilst founded on gold, was dependent on an adequate water supply, which was established through the engineering achievement of the Goldfields Pipeline in 1903. Proposed by John Forrest, and designed and supervised by C.Y. O'Connor, the pipeline carried water from Mundaring Weir, outside Perth, to Kalgoorlie, to support the needs of a growing population. From the 1890s, the economy and development of Western Australia was heavily dependent on gold-based wealth.

The first gold rush of the 1890s was responsible for the initial rapid development of the town, and in 1899, surveyors set aside the area of Commonwealth Park as a reserve for the purpose of recreation. It was this area that the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Council selected for the building of *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* in 1937, to replace the 25-yard, unchlorinated pool in Victoria Park, which had been the only community swimming pool from about 1910.¹

¹ *Goldfields Sport: a century of heroes, heroines and happenings*, J. Terrell, Perth, 1993, p. 17. The author notes that swimmers Ned Friedlander and Harold Kingsbury trained in the

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Lord Forrest Olympic Pool was built during the second of the great goldrushes to the W.A. goldfields, following the Depression of 1929 and early 1930s. Indeed, it has been noted that:

The decade of the 1930s was when the gold in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia saved the State economy, and indeed the national economy, from collapse²

At this time, the population of Kalgoorlie and Boulder grew rapidly, as men flocked there to work in the mines. The gold price rose, and 'Kalgoorlie and Boulder buzzed with activity'.³ The affluence, population growth and optimism at this time is reflected in the drive by the Mayor and Council to build an Olympic standard pool. There was already a municipal swimming pool in Victoria Park, but Mayor Richard Moore proposed that a new, full sized pool be built in the north end of Commonwealth Park, today called Kingsbury Park after H. A. Kingsbury, swimming champion, town councillor, town clerk and valuer. It was, and remains, an acknowledged beauty spot in the town.⁴

Council agreed to the building of an Olympic pool on 16th August, 1937 and applied for permission to build the pool in Commonwealth Park, being Crown land.⁵ The application for the land was initially refused, but subsequent representations and negotiation resulted in approval being obtained. The commencement of the project was delayed, whilst approval was being sought. Today, the land remains a 'Reserve' for recreation.

The project required considerable research and planning: Councillor G. Bennetts visited the Eastern States twice in 1937 in order to research the project. He considered that the anticipated expense of £17,000 was small when the beneficial effects of the pool were considered. He said that 'We want something for the children and young people here in the way of recreation. At present there is nothing for them to do'.⁶

The matter was not without controversy, as both the cost and the necessity for a new pool were disputed by a group of ratepayers. This group considered that the proposed expenditure was extravagant, and that the existing, smaller pool situated in Victoria Park, was sufficient for the population. They put the motion that 'we consider the proposal an outrageous waste of money, and forbid this council from proceeding any further with the proposal and suggest that the council carry out the section dealing with the baths in its entirety, which reads 'review or repair the site'.⁷ The motion was not successful, and the building of the pool proceeded as planned.

The project represented an unusual cooperation between the Town Council and the Chamber of Mines.⁸ In January 1938, representatives of the Chamber of Mines met with the Council, and it was suggested that the Chamber either donate £20,000 towards the construction of the pool, or

Victoria Park pool, the latter winning both the Swim-through-Guildford, and the W.A. 220 yard freestyle title in 1911.

² Webb, M., and Webb, A. *Golden Destiny: the centenary history of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia*, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, 1993, p. 361.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24.12.38.

⁵ Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 1015.

⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24th December, 1938.

⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 22nd January, 1938.

⁸ Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 650.

donate half the maintenance costs each year. These suggestions were seriously considered, and at least one representative applied to his parent company to make funds available. The outcome of these suggestions is not documented, but it is claimed that:

The mining companies, without doubt, contributed generously in 1938, although how it was done is difficult to trace. In such matters they deliberately hid their light under a bushel.⁹

The commission to design the pool was awarded to the prominent Perth architect W.G. Bennett. The initial design that he proposed was at the forefront of modernism.¹⁰ The entry was to be asymmetric, of juxtaposed blocked forms, flat concealed roofing, and a curved wall on one side. There was a small tower form reminiscent of the cinema designs of the day. There is evidence that this ultra-modern design attracted criticism from the residents of Kalgoorlie, and the final design was a more conservative version of the Modernist style, being symmetrical and low, with a dominantly horizontal emphasis.¹¹ The style was more 'Mediterranean', and terracotta tiles on a hipped roof replaced the suggested concealed flat roof design.¹²

The architecture of the place reflected the design style applied to earlier swimming pools in other States. In particular, it links to the classical symmetry of the smaller Manuka swimming pool (1931) in Canberra, with its arcaded portico, pair of square lead-light windows, stepped facade parapet, and balanced placement of structures at the poolside.¹³ However, the facade of *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* is more elaborately decorated with horizontal and vertical features. The style of decoration reflects the development of modernism from a 'stripped classical' style to the 'streamlined' style of the late 1930s. The architecture of *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* was distinctly different from that of the only other Olympic standard pool in Australia, the North Sydney Olympic Pool (1936). The latter presents an arcaded screen to the Sydney harbour, and has a tall entry pavilion with decorative glazing. Stylized decorations of swordfish and frogs are featured on the arcaded screen, and other surfaces within the complex.¹⁴

Lord Forrest Olympic Pool featured a 'modern' entry that addressed the intersection of Cassidy and McDonald streets. The symmetry of the entrance was matched in the arrangement of office spaces set back from the entry. This balance was maintained throughout the complex of buildings, arranged on either side of the central swimming pool and wading pool. These buildings consisted of male and female changing rooms, two grandstands and a concealed plant room. Spaces between the buildings were dedicated to sunbathing; the original plans show them as segregated 'sun bathing courts'.¹⁵ A 10 metre diving tower made a strong focal point at the far end of the main swimming pool. A wall enclosed the remainder of the area, rising to a parapet feature at the rear of the diving tower. Outside that wall, and underground, was the plant room, in which were housed the pumps, filtration plant and chlorination plant.

⁹ ibid.

¹⁰ *Daily News*, 13th August, 1938.

¹¹ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 22nd January, 1938.

¹² Van Daele, P. and Lumby, R., *A Spirit of Progress: Art Deco architecture in Australia*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1997, p. 59.

¹³ ibid. p.182.

¹⁴ ibid. p. 182.

¹⁵ Refer to W.G. Bennett floor plan in HCWA file PD 3511.

The pool itself was designed to conform to the conditions for competitive swimming laid down by the Amateur Swimming Association of Australia, affiliated with the Internationale de Natation Amateur. These conditions required the pool to be 50 metres (165 feet) long, 60 feet wide and to have a depth of water of 3 metres (14 feet 6 inches) underneath the diving platform. An additional shallow wading pool was added expressly for the use of families with small children.¹⁶ Both pools were fully lined with white tiles, and the main pool had 8 lines of black tiles to mark the swimming lanes.

An important feature of the pool was the steel frame diving tower, holding two diving platforms at heights of 5 metres and 10 metres from the water level. It was situated at the end of the main pool, furthest from the entrance. There was an additional 3 metre spring board on one side of the pool. This structure was designed and built by structural engineer, A. T. Rogers, who also designed and constructed the original 'pipe and netting fences which lend a finish to the pool'. The tower was framed against the rear parapet wall, and its strong vertical form echoed that of a mining poppet head. The diving tower was dismantled c. 1980 for recoating, but has not been reconstructed. It remains stored at the Council depot.¹⁷ The removal of the original tower results in the loss of the strong vertical feature that formed a focal point at the end of the pool.¹⁸

The hygiene of the pool was of central concern. The Health Inspector researched the matter of chlorination and filtration in other States, and submitted details for consideration by the Council. The Medical Officer of Health, was also consulted and reported that the modern methods of water purification could be recommended, and that 'the benefit to health, particularly of the younger generation, would be incalculable'.¹⁹ The system was designed to fill the pools from the main town supply, so that water entering the sump in the pump room was automatically filtered before passing into the pools. From there, the water was circulated through the filtration system continuously, additional water being needed only to make up for evaporation.²⁰

The filtration system was supplied and installed by the Filtration and Water Softening Company from Melbourne. The original filter was a six-unit sand filter installed in the pump room. Water entered the pump room and filled the main sump, at which point heavy pollutants would settle. The water then passed through the sand filters, was chlorinated, and entered the pool through a system of floor grates. Water then rose to the surface and flowed to the sides of the pool, where it was drawn into return channels, and thereby returned to the main sump.²¹ The purification plant was able to operate constantly during the swimming season, and was designed to turn over the entire water body of the pools every nine hours. It was claimed that 'The

¹⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24th December, 1938.

¹⁷ Grant Cooper, conversation with Vyonne Geneve and Ron Facius, memo, HCWA file PD3511, 21st December, 1998.

¹⁸ The files held by the Kalgoorlie City Council are incomplete, and do not go back to this time, and in any case do not hold documents relating to any changes to the pool, other than those effected in 1996/97 when new pumps and filter systems were installed.

¹⁹ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24.12.38.

²⁰ Kingsbury, H.A., *Brief Early Day History of Kalgoorlie and Information concerning the Olympic Swimming Pool*, Municipality of Kalgoorlie, 1945, p. 17.

²¹ *Daily News*, 13th August, 1938.

water will be safely pure at all times, excelling by far the standards set down for drinking water'.²²

Cleanliness of the pool was enhanced by the compulsory footbath and shower.²³ Patrons entered through a turnstile at the entry, and went along an enclosed passageway to a dressing room. Entry to the pool could only be effected by going through a footbath of treated water, over which was a constant shower of warm, treated water. Swimmers returning to the change room passed through a one-way turnstile that bypassed the footbath area.²⁴

Further innovations to the pool were the lighting systems. There was a series of 24 powerful floodlights recessed into the walls of the main pool, below the water line. There were 10 on each side of the pool, and four at the deep end. The wading pool was provided with overhead spotlights on the top of the two changing rooms. Floodlights to the whole area were mounted on top of the diving tower. New lights stand on poles at the front corners of each grandstand, to replace those lost when the diving tower was demolished.

The pool cleaning system was also at the forefront of technology. It was of great concern that the dust blowing off the goldfields would settle on the floor of the pool. The operation of the cleaning system was described fully in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*:

[The suction cleaner] is rubbed over the floor of the basin and it immediately sucks up any silt it meets and forces it out into the filters....The workman has no need to get into the water when he cleans the pool. He merely stands on the edge, using the long cleaner, which is like a punt pole.²⁵

It was anticipated that there would be strong demand for use of the pool. The capacity of the pool was considered to be about 700 swimmers at one time, or with swimmers and spectators, about 2,000. The Council retained the power to limit the use of the pool to one hour per person on days of exceptional demand 'to allow everyone to benefit from a bathe'.²⁶ In addition, entry fees were kept low, (adults 6d and children under 14 years 3d) as the Council 'was guided by the fact that this was warranted by the rigours of the goldfields climate and the entire absence of such amenities as a beach or river'.²⁷

Building commenced in June 1938, with an expected cost of £15000 for construction, and £5000 for the chlorination and filtration plant.²⁸ The work was supervised by a special baths committee of the Kalgoorlie Council, who decided to carry out the work by 'day labour' from plans prepared by the architect William G. Bennett, and under his supervising architect. The costs eventually rose to £23,000.

The completed pool was regarded with great pride by the Kalgoorlie community. It was reported that the pool 'is not surpassed, and only in rare cases is equalled, by anything of a similar nature in Australia'.²⁹ It was also noted that 'only the best of materials and the best of workmanship were used

22 *ibid.*

23 *Daily News*, 24th December, 1938.

24 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24th December, 1938.

25 *ibid.*

26 *ibid.*

27 *ibid.*

28 *ibid.*, 28th May, 1938.

29 *ibid.*, 24th December, 1938.

in constructing this perfect pool'.³⁰ Bricks were manufactured in Kalgoorlie by T Bridges, and Ridge and Co. The filter shell, the welded iron seats and cast iron pipes, were all made by local craftsmen, and installed by the Kalgoorlie Foundry Ltd. The innovative lighting, together with other electrical systems, was installed by a Kalgoorlie electrician. Timber, including jarrah, was supplied by Bunnings Ltd, from Perth, and earthenware pipes were also manufactured in Perth by Hume Pipe Co, and transported to Kalgoorlie. The tiles for the pools were imported from England by Drabbles and Co. of Perth. The entry area was painted cream and green, a colour scheme that was extended to the uniforms of the cashiers.

The opening of the pool on Christmas Eve, 1938 was an important occasion.³¹ It was opened by the Mayor, Richard Moore, at a widely advertised opening ceremony. The architect W.G. Bennett, travelled by rail to Kalgoorlie for the occasion, and flew back to Perth a day later. The opening was given extensive newspaper coverage by the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, *The West Australian* and the *Daily News*, Perth.

At the time of opening, the pool was named the 'Kalgoorlie Municipal Olympic Pool'.³² On 22 August 1947, it was renamed *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool*, to commemorate the centenary of Lord John Forrest's birth.³³ The new name was installed over the entrance in lettering that matched the original style.

Acknowledgement of the excellence of the pool complex was not only local. In May 1939, the place was inspected by the Adelaide City Engineer. This gentleman made a special trip to Kalgoorlie in order to study the latest technology prior to modernising the Adelaide pool. He said that:

The Kalgoorlie Olympic pool compared favourably with other pools in the Eastern States and its planning was of a remarkably high standard....From my inspection I have gained much valuable information that will assist me in the rebuilding of our pool. Your council is to be congratulated for undertaking a scheme which will do much to promote the well-being of its citizens and provide them with healthy recreation.³⁴

Alterations to the entire complex have been few, and are commensurate with a place that has served its community continuously, and evolved to meet changing safety regulations and technology. Of necessity, the pumps and filtration machinery have been replaced when necessary, the latest machinery being installed in 1996/97. The original filtration boxes remain in the plant room. There is no longer a kiosk within the entry section, this space, together with the caretakers quarters, now being taken by reception and offices³⁵. Other alterations were the erection of shade canopies above the grandstands, and replacement of the overhead lighting at unknown dates.

The pride taken by the local community in *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* is evident. A photograph of the pool entrance was chosen as the symbol of Kalgoorlie, when it advertised 'Back to the Goldfields' celebrations in 1950. It was also

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *The West Australian, Daily News, Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24th December 1938.

³² Photograph reproduced in Souvenir Brochure, 'Back to the Goldfields Celebrations', 1950.

³³ Webb, p. 650.

³⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 9th May, 1939.

³⁵ Pat Archibald (nee Treby), conversation with Rosalind Lawe Davies, memo HCWA file PD 3511, 22nd December, 1998. Mrs Archibald advised that the kiosk closed quite early in the pool's history, as it contributed to a litter problem around the pool.

entered as a 'Place of Historical Interest and Natural Beauty' on the Town Planning Scheme in 1991.

The place was documented by the Art Deco Society of W.A. (ADSWA) in 1988 and 1993, prior to National Trust (WA) listing. It has also been recommended to the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) as worthy of listing in a national context. The Kalgoorlie City Council recommended *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* in 1991, and ADSWA included it in an Inventory of 20 Significant Buildings in Western Australia, as requested by the AHC in 1998.³⁶

The social importance of the place is attested by statements made by Kalgoorlie resident Phil Hodges (member of Eastern Goldfields Historical Society)³⁷ and Kevin Duff (Kalgoorlie-born national and State swimming coach)³⁸. Mr Hodges recalled that on hot days there was 'standing room only in the pool, it was so popular'. Mr Duff recalled that 'it was the only recreation we had up there...at weekends you couldn't move'. On those days, the diving tower had to be closed for the safety of swimmers.

The swimming carnivals held in the place were outstanding events of entertainment. The competitive swimming events were only one part of an aquatic carnival, being supported by dancing, singing, water ballet, acrobats, clown diving, water polo and a duck hunt.³⁹

Being the only Olympic pool in the State, the place was important in the training and preparation of many excellent swimmers and divers. Bert Nankiville won numerous State swimming titles, training first in the small Victoria Park pool, and later in the Olympic pool. Percy Oliver, an Olympic representative in 1936, moved to Kalgoorlie from Perth in order to train in the new pool for later State and national events.⁴⁰ He later became a prominent State and national swimming coach. Kevin Duff, another State Champion swimmer, went on to become an elite swimming coach for State and national athletes. He recalled that every year, one of the State Swimming Carnivals would be held in Kalgoorlie, and a team of swimmers and divers from Perth would travel there for the occasion. All other competitions were held in the river baths in Perth. If swimmers wished to make an attempt on a record that would be recognised nationally and internationally, they travelled to Kalgoorlie to do so.⁴¹

'Goldfields divers dominated the sport in WA until Perth's Beatty Park was opened for the Commonwealth Games in 1962'.⁴² Pat Treby held the State highboard diving title for 16 consecutive years from 1946 to 1962, and she represented W.A. in the Australian championships on eight occasions, gaining

³⁶ Correspondence of Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council; NHC sponsored National Register Discussion Group of Art Deco Societies and Royal Australian Institute of Architects' National Estate Grant Programme Projects in Sydney on 1st May 1998.

³⁷ Pat Archibald, conversation, op. cit.

³⁸ Phil Hodges, conversation with Rosalind Lawe Davies, memo, HCWA file PD 3511, 3rd December, 1998; Kevin Duff conversation with Rosalind Lawe Davies, memo HCWA file PD 3511, 8th December, 1998.

³⁹ Written memoir of Pat Archibald (nee Treby), 20th December, 1938, and an undated (early 1946) newspaper article from the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, featured in Mrs Archibald's scrapbook/album. The article was written by a 'Visitor from the Eastern States' who commented on the 'wonderfully varied entertainment' and 'a swimming carnival which might well be taken as a pattern of perfect aquatic entertainment'. He further noted that 'Nothing so far has been done in this way in the East'.

⁴⁰ Pat Archibald, conversation, op. cit.

⁴¹ Kevin Duff, conversation, op. cit.

⁴² Terrell, op, cit., p.20.

a second place (1947) and third place on four occasions. She also trained a number of young divers, so that in 1956, Kalgoorlie divers won five of the six State championship diving titles held in the Crawley baths. Other divers of note were Harry ('Sos') Buckman, Steve Mosconi, Jim Donkin, Judith Lynch and Pat Lee.⁴³

Water ballet was also a popular sport for young women from 1946 until about 1957.⁴⁴ Ena Watson formed the first troupe, and the sport was continued under different local leaders, including the diver Pat Treby.⁴⁵ The Kalgoorlie water ballet group stimulated the formation of a similar group in Perth.

In early 1999, the place was still popular, being a facility to 'play and stay'. In addition to normal recreational purposes, it was used by individuals and groups for functions and barbeques. Attendance at the pool was 140,000 per annum, in a population of 30,000.⁴⁶

A concrete condition report, which considered the main pool and wading pool, the water slide, fountain pool and connecting river ride to the spa, was prepared for the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder in mid-1999. The report concluded that there was general deterioration and general cracking, delamination and spalling to various concrete elements throughout the site. Steel reinforcement corrosion within the concrete, concentrated below the decking of the main/wading pool and the interior of the Plant Room, was found to be unsound and in breach of existing concrete codes. It was found that the associated Change Rooms, stands, water slide and other pools also showed signs of deterioration.⁴⁷

Lord Forrest Olympic Pool closed at the end of the 1998/9 summer season and is not to re-opened. The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is currently considering a number of alternative recreational uses for the site, with an emphasis on providing recreational facilities for the local youth. A new pool is planned at an alternative site.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Lord Forrest Olympic Pool consists of a unified complex of linked buildings arranged in symmetrical manner about the main swimming pool and shallow wading pool. A corrugated steel perimeter fence encloses the rear faces of the built constructions. The buildings consist of a main entrance, for reception and offices, male and female changing rooms, and two grandstands. There is also an underground pump room at the rear of the complex. The whole group is located in Kingsbury Park, oriented on the diagonal axis and angled to face the street corner at the junction of Cassidy and McDonald Streets. From the pool complex there is direct access to the Kingsbury Park aquatic complex of fountains, ponds and waterfalls, created in 1982.

The buildings of *Lord Forrest Olympic Pool* are constructed in brick, with cement render overlaid to the main buildings. The main entrance to the pool

⁴³ ibid. pp. 18-20.

⁴⁴ ibid. p. 16.

⁴⁵ Pat Archibald, conversation, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Grant Cooper, conversation, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Farinha, P & Dryka, J, 'Summary Report for Concrete Assessment Works carried out on the Lord Forrest Olympic Pool Facility, Kalgoorlie', for the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder by Extrin Consultants, May 1999, p. 2. See the document for more detailed description and recommendations.

complex is designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style (Art Deco Moderne) typical of the Modernist movement in the 1930s.⁴⁸ It has a symmetrical facade, surmounted by a raised parapet to partially conceal the tiled roof and suggest a 'moderne' flat roof design. The parapet features a typical stepped 'ziggurat' motif descending to frame the entrance portico, which is divided into three equal spaces by two distinctively 'modern' chamfered square columns. A pair of octagonal columns is placed on either side of the portico. The concrete portico floor is slightly elevated with two broad, shallow steps leading to it, and in recent times a concrete ramp for wheelchair access has been added on the right hand side of the entrance, with a steel pipe handrail. Flanking the entry, and on the same plane as the columns, are wall areas which feature incised horizontal banding from top to bottom, and a centrally placed vertical, recessed window. The timber framed windows are divided into 5 panes by horizontal mullions, which are aligned with the wall banding. Above the windows are 'ziggurat' shapes on the parapet, each supporting a flag pole. The vertical line of the flag poles is emphasized by strong vertical sculpted lines. At this point the vertical lines divert the horizontal banding of the facade.

The central parapet, above the entry, displays the name and function of the place, and the date of construction. The lettering is a graphic style typical of the period, being simplified, geometric and in bas-relief. Similar lettering is found on the Raffles Hotel, and the Piccadilly, Windsor and Como (Cygnet) Theatres. At the central point of the parapet there is a down-light and a second light supported on a vertical pole. The first serves to illuminate the name, and the second to illuminate the steps. These added elements are somewhat intrusive, masking the clean lines and horizontality of the parapet. The entry is currently painted in muted shades of pink, green and ivory. Viewed from the pool, the entry and adjacent diagonal walls are painted cream, with a decorative snake-like design in red, black and yellow referring to the traditional colours of Aboriginal art. This element has been added recently to welcome Aboriginal patrons to the pool.

Overall, the entry displays a pleasing balance of horizontal and vertical elements, which is typical of the Modernist style of the 1930s. Horizontal lines dominate, giving a 'streamlined' effect through the series of horizontals in the stepped forms, the strong horizontal band that unites the whole frontage, the incised banding and the entry steps. Vertical elements that offset these lines occur in the flagpoles, the raised vertical bands below the poles, the ziggurat steps and the entry columns. Diagonal lines occur in relation to the corner setting, the connecting walkways, and the chamfered shapes of the framing pillars. It is a classic symmetrical geometry of 1930's modernism.

In the recess of the porch are three sets of double doors giving patrons entry to the place. The doors are of timber, with glass 'windows' to match those on the exterior, displaying the same horizontal mullions. Such unity of design, extended to every feature, was also typical of the Modernist style. Internally, access is controlled by one-way turnstiles either side of the attendant's counter and supervision area with a viewing window to the pool.

Recessed behind the entry statement, and placed symmetrically on either side of it are two office areas which display the hipped tiled roof, with no disguising pediment. The width of the front walls of these areas is slightly

⁴⁸ Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: styles and terms from 1788 to the present*. Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, p. 184.

less than those on the front. The wall surface is plain, with no incised banding, but the windows are placed centrally in the space, and recessed in the same manner as in the entry facade. They also display the same horizontal bands. This pair of office structures is in total unity with the entry facade, but they are less decorated and more residential in their rendered 'brick and tile' appearance .

From the rear of those office spaces extend a matching pair of walkways, with high, brick, rendered walls angled diagonally to meet the front facing walls of the changing rooms. These are a matching pair of buildings, of residential scale, also constructed of rendered brick with a hipped, tiled roof. Each has two high small square windows at either end of the building. Those facing the front of the complex are situated outside the perimeter wall. Inside the wall, facing the front, is a door giving entry to the changing room from the walkways. Facing the pool area are a pair of doors, one designed to give entry to the two pools, and the other designed to allow patrons to return directly to the changing room through one-way turnstiles. The turnstiles have since been removed. The hipped roofline presents a triangular shape to the front approach, enhancing the clean geometric lines of the total design.

Beyond the changing rooms are broad open areas for recreation and sunbathing. These are flat open spaces which are enclosed by a brick balustrade linking the adjacent structures of changing rooms and grandstands. The western area leads via steps and a ramp to the Kingsbury Park water slides and pools and gives access to the clubrooms under the west grandstand. Over this area is a new shade canopy. The eastern area has steps leading down to an open cemented sun bathing court with access to similar rooms under the east grandstand. This court is bounded on the exterior by the perimeter fence of corrugated steel decking, which extends to enclose the whole of the rear of the site but with service access gates at the rear from a right-of-way.

Behind the court areas are a pair of grandstands. The grandstands were designed to accommodate 750 people, and each is a brick structure painted externally and set back from the pool, presenting from the side view, a simple diagonal line that rises to the perimeter of the complex. Contained within plain wall structures are seven broad tiers on which spectators may sit. The central section of each grandstand is sheltered by a simple flat topped steel roof cantilevered on plain steel pillars that rise from the rear of the grandstand. Further shade roofs have been added more recently, made of shade cloth supported on steel pipe stanchions and covering the rest of the grandstand either side of the steel roofs.

At the far end of the pool complex there is a stepped parapet brick wall that rises to frame the end of the pool area, and joins the front edge of the grandstands. The stepped form provides a unifying element with the entry design.

The present diving structure is constructed of brick, and presents a broad mass in front of the parapet wall. The front surface is painted. The diagonal sides of the steel stairs to the two 3 metre diving boards are not symmetrical, being a simple line on the left side, and a 'stepped' pair of diagonal lines marking on the right. The new construction is wider than the original welded steel tower base, but the diagonal lines echo the original form.

The pump room is situated underground, outside the rear parapet wall. Access to the pump room is from ground level, outside the main swimming

area. The pump room contains the filtration equipment and pumps, with the original filtration boxes still in position.

At the centre of all these constructions lies the Olympic swimming pool, and the wading pool. These are placed in such a manner that the shallow wading pool lies behind the main entry, and between the changing rooms. It is divided from the Olympic pool by a flat passage area, of the same width as that framing the remainder of the pool. The wading pool is an elongated octagonal shape, and the Olympic pool is rectangular.

The wading pool is 60 by 30 metres, with a depth ranging from 18 to 30 inches. It is tiled throughout by white tiles, with an added black edge. The tiles are no longer original, having been replaced in 1996.⁴⁹

The Olympic pool is 165 feet (50 metres) in length and is 60 feet wide, accommodating eight swimming lanes, in accordance with the 1938 requirements of the Amateur Swimming Association of Australia and the Internationale de Natation Amateur. The depth of the pool is 3'6" (1 metre) at the shallow end, situated nearest the wading pool, sloping gradually to 5'6", and then shelving steeply to the diving area with a final depth of 14'6" (3 metres), also in accordance with contemporary regulations. The pool is lined throughout with white tiles, interrupted by eight lines of black tiles which mark the centre of each swimming lane. The edge of the pool is now lined with black tiles, unlike the original all-white. Original semi-circular exit ladders in steel have been replaced with modern stainless steel ladders and rails.

New light poles are situated at the front corners of each grandstand, probably erected in the early 1980s when the floodlights on the diving tower were dismantled. The underwater lighting which was a special feature of the original design has since been removed, as it was thought to possibly contribute to the dangers of meningococcal infection.⁵⁰

The interiors of the buildings are simple, and the rooms in regular use are in good order, although some cracking of brickwork is evident. The original terrazzo floor still exists, but is currently covered with carpet. Other floors are of painted cement. The original entry turnstiles are positioned on the left side, and there is one large exit turnstile on the right. On one side of the lobby is a plaque honouring the national and state champion swimmer Bert Nankiville.

The changing rooms are large simple spaces in what appears to be the original layout and materials. There is no evidence of the original compulsory footbath and shower, and the one-way turnstile for access from the pool has been removed.

None of the changes detract from the cultural heritage values of the place. All changes reflect the evolution of technology, of social and cultural expectations, and of health and safety regulations that have taken place over the past sixty years. Changes and additions reflect the history of the place in this time period.

The condition of the place is generally sound and well maintained, in full functional order. There is some cracking evident in the walls of all buildings, but these are not structurally serious and can be repaired. The pool itself is

⁴⁹ Phil Hodges, conversation, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Grant Cooper, conversation, op. cit.

sound and there is no leakage.⁵¹ Concrete cancer is evident in portions of the pump room, but this does not appear to be such that it cannot be remedied with modern treatment.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

Kingsbury, H.A., 'Brief Early Day History of Kalgoorlie and Information concerning the Olympic Swimming Pool', Municipality of Kalgoorlie, 1945.

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 1995.

Souvenir Brochure, 'Back to the Goldfields Celebrations', 1950.

See also:

Peter Farinha & John Dryka, 'Summary Report for Concrete Assessment Works carried out on the Lord Forrest Olympic Pool Facility, Kalgoorlie', for the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder by Extrin Consultants, May 1999.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is recommended in two areas. First, the history of the title and uses of the land reserve may be obtained from DOLA file 10493/97. Second, assessment of the condition of the concrete and brick structures could be obtained from an independent engineer.

⁵¹ ibid.