



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardships and failure

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 303 Mining (including mineral processing)

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is a prominent landmark as an industrial site, comprising gold processing equipment and buildings on the southern outskirts of the town of Sandstone, viewed from the Sandstone-Menzies road, and contributes to the goldfields character of Sandstone. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone provides evidence of the infrastructure associated with gold mining, which has been crucial to the development of the State, having been constructed in 1908 to facilitate the ongoing development of the Murchison Goldfields (opened 1891), and in particular the then booming area of Black Range. (Criterion 2.1)

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is illustrative of State Government policy to provide ongoing financial assistance to the development of the mining industry in Western Australia in the 1890s and the early 1900s, in this case by way of the establishment of gold ore batteries. (Criterion 2.2)

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone operated continuously from 1908 to 1982, providing valuable assistance to small miners and prospectors on the East Murchison Goldfield in order to make mining ventures in the area viable. (Criterion 2.2)

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For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone provides evidence of the industrial processes of gold extraction and the technological changes that have occurred over the place's seventy-four year operating life to facilitate this continued function. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is highly valued by the local and wider community as an identifiable cultural environment associated with the district's gold mining history, which initiated European settlement in the region and has been important to its economic survival since the 1890s. (Criterion 4.1)

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone contributes to the community's sense of place as a significant landmark connected with the gold mining history of the area, as evidenced by its inclusion on the Sandstone Heritage Trail, the preservation of the place by the Shire of Sandstone, and by its listing on the local Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is rare as one of six significantly intact State Battery installations remaining from the peak of around forty operating in 1913, and a total of 73 that opened across the State between 1899 and 1958. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is a representative example of an industrial complex associated with the gold mining industry. (Criterion 6.1)

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is an excellent remaining example of a State Battery in the goldfields of Western Australia, demonstrating changes in fabric and equipment that resulted from the continual functioning of the place between 1908 and 1982. Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is in fair to poor condition. Portions of the Battery are unsafe as structural members require repair and/or refixing. The place is being preserved by the Shire of Sandstone, as the Shire recognises its heritage value and the social significance of the place to the community.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone has a moderate degree of integrity. The place is not being used for the original purpose for which it was designed, although it has not been used for any other purpose. The likely long-term sustainability of the values identified and their ability to be restored is assured, given that there is adequate documentary and physical evidence of the original form and fabric of the place.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

State Battery (fmr), Sandstone is largely intact, and the extant fabric of the building retains a high degree of authenticity. The changes to the building form that have occurred, including changes to machinery, demonstrate evolution of use over time.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document is based on “Conservation Plan for Sandstone State Battery (fmr) (1908)” (prepared by John Taylor, architect, for the Shire of Sandstone in December 2003), with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

Key sections used: 2.0 Documentary Evidence (p20-35), 3.0 Physical Evidence (p43-47), and 4.0 Comparative Analysis (p62).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to “Conservation Plan for Sandstone State Battery (fmr) (1908)” prepared by John Taylor, architect, for the Shire of Sandstone in December 2003.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to “Conservation Plan for Sandstone State Battery (fmr) (1908)” prepared by John Taylor, architect, for the Shire of Sandstone in December 2003.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information, refer to “Conservation Plan for Sandstone State Battery (fmr) (1908)” prepared by John Taylor, Architect, for the Shire of Sandstone in December 2003.

Between 1899 and 1958, the Colonial and then State Government opened 73 batteries across Western Australia. The majority of these treated gold, although a small number were also used for lead, copper, tin or tantalum bearing ores. A site survey in 1999 concluded that the infrastructure at a majority of these batteries had either been removed or was in various stages of decay. Only six were considered to have infrastructure preserved to a degree that retained their heritage value. Eight of the batteries were occupied in 1999, and nine had been rehabilitated. Tailings and accumulated rubbish were common on most of the sites. Approximately half were considered dangerous on account of abandoned underground workings associated with them.¹

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

“Conservation Plan for Sandstone State Battery (fmr) (1908)” prepared by John Taylor, architect, for the Shire of Sandstone in December 2003.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

¹ Adamides, N.G. ‘Inventory of State Battery Sites in Western Australia’, prepared for Geological Survey of Western Australia, 2000.