

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)

4.1 Planning urban settlement8.5 Forming associations

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

• 104 Land allocation and subdivision

• 408 Institutions

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Young Australia League building is a fine example of the Inter-War Free Classical style of the 1920s. The aesthetic value of the place is enhanced by the leaded and stained glass windows of the ballroom, and the entrance hall of the building which displays many fine examples of wood carving incorporating Australian flora and fauna. (Criterion 1.1)

The house at 55 Murray Street is a simple example of a two storey late nineteenth century residential building competently designed in the Federation Queen Anne architectural style. (Criterion 1.1)

Young Australia League Building and House defines the corner of Irwin Street and Murray Street and is an important component within the Murray Street East Precinct, which extends from Pier Street to Victoria Square. The strong verticality, unusual style and smooth exterior finish of the YAL building provides a visual contrast with adjacent mainly Government buildings in the precinct. (Criteria 1.3 and 1.4)

The house at 55 Murray Street is the only two storey residential style building extant at the east end of Murray Street. As such it provides a visual contrast with the adjacent mainly government buildings which characterise the Murray Street East Precinct and which generally date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criteria 1.3 & 1.4)

^{*} 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.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The house at 55 Murray Street was constructed as part of the second stage of residential development of the area east of the Perth central business district when wealthier citizens constructed large, often two storey homes in prestigious locations close to the city centre. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

The size and prominent position of Young Australia League building constructed on the site in 1924 demonstrates the importance of the Young Australia League movement in Western Australia in the first half of the twentieth century. Branches of the Young Australia League were established in all States of Australia and were influential in moulding the civic values of a generation of young men and women. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

The house at 55 Murray Street was the home of a prominent member of the Roman Catholic community, philanthropist, property investor and politician Timothy Quinlan. Quinlan was a member of the Perth City Council (1890 - 1892), Member of Parliament for West Perth (1890 - 1894) and member for Toodyay (1897 - 1911). While in Parliament, Quinlan acted as the Minister for Works, the Deputy-Chairman and Chairman of Committees, and also the Speaker of the House. He was a member of the Perth Public Hospital Board of Management, a Vice President for the Institute for the Blind and a member of the Committee of the Deaf and Dumb Institution. His dedication to the Roman Catholic Church was recognised by Pope Leo XIII. Together with his father—inlaw, Daniel Connor, he invested in significant land holdings in central Perth which from the 1890s became known as the Connor-Quinlan Estate. (Criterion 2.3)

The Young Australia League building has close associations with a number of prominent Western Australians, most notably J. J. Simons and Lionel T. Boas. Both Simons and Boas were leaders of the Young Australia League for almost fifty years from the League's inception in 1905. Simons also had substantial printing interests in Western Australia and was a leading opponent of secession. (Criterion 2.3)

The Young Australia League building also has a close association with prominent Western Australian artists H. H. Eastcourt and Arthur Clarke and, also, with the noted Victorian artist, Robert Prenzel. Renowned architect Walter Burley Griffin prepared a design for the building, however this design was superseded by the successful Oldham and Boas design. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Young Australia League has social value as a place closely associated with development of the Young Australia League's youth movement, and to the thousands of young men and women who participated in its programmes. (Criterion 4.1)

The Young Australia League also has social value as a memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and heroism of members of the Young Australia League who died in World War One. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The house at 55 Murray Street is now the only two storey residence dating from the nineteenth century in the Murray Street East Precinct and between Victoria Avenue/Victoria Square and the central city. The house is a unique residential element in what is primarily a precinct of government buildings in the Murray Street East area. It is one of only a small number of places of this type in the central city area. Residential buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are becoming increasingly rare as a result of current development pressures. (Criterion 5.1)

The Young Australia League building is a rare example of the Inter-War Free Classical style enhanced by an unusual facade with a two-storey colonnade and semi-enclosed court. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The house at 55 Murray Street is representative of the residences constructed in the nineteenth century which were once located in this part of the Perth townsite. (Criteria 6.1 & 6.2)

The Young Australia League building is representative of a philosophy which saw the development of a distinctly Australian nationalism. The development of the organisation into the 'largest boys club in the British Empire' reflects the inter-war use of Australian identities and Australian heroes to establish a set of Australian values calculated to contribute to the development of an 'Australian' national character. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally both the YAL building and the house are in a good to very good condition. Ongoing maintenance has ensured that the buildings have remained in use and have been well maintained.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The house has a moderate to high level of integrity. The original residential use of the building is clearly evident. The current use, which comprises professional and commercial offices at ground floor level and residential use at first floor level, is compatible and retains the integrity of the place. The alterations that have occurred have left clear indicators of the original intent and can be easily reversed. The integrity of the former cottage to the rear of the property is low.

Although, the original functions of some of the rooms of Young Australia League building have changed, the exterior and interior spaces remain largely intact, and the place is still the Headquarters of the Young Australia League. Young Australia League building retains a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The house at 55 Murray Street has a moderate authenticity. The site has developed over time however much of the fabric remains in its original state. The front verandah has been removed and a shop front created on the western side. Internally the planning of the original two storey house remains largely intact with some alterations evident at first floor level. The former cottage at the rear of the property has been incorporated with later additions and retains low authenticity.

The Young Australia League building retains a high degree of authenticity. Only minor alterations to the building fabric have been made. A high proportion of original exterior and interior fabric remains. Recent restoration of the feature stained glass windows has not diminished the authenticity of the fabric.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence for *Young Australia League Building* was originally compiled by HCWA based on a student report by Wayne Moredoundt. The physical evidence was compiled by Kelly Aris, Architect, based on Moredoundt's report and site inspection. *Young Australia League Building* was entered on the HCWA Register with permanent status on 13.12.1996.

The documentary evidence for *House, 55 Murray Street* was originally compiled by Kristy Bizzaca for HCWA. The physical evidence was compiled by Annabel Wheal for Heritage and Conservation Professionals. The place was assessed in May 2000 but did not proceed to registration at that time.

The previous separate assessments for *House, 55 Murray Street* and *Young Australia League Building* have been combined and edited by Carmel Given and Rosemary Rosario, of Heritage and Conservation Professionals to provide the supporting evidence for the combined assessment, *Young Australia League Building and House*.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

From the foundation of the Swan River Colony in 1829 up until the 1880s, there was a slow steady period of growth in the area that had been chosen for the Perth townsite. John Septimus Roe produced the first survey for the site in 1829, which was followed by a more detailed town plan by Alfred Hillman in 1838. Subdivision and land allocation soon followed, however it was the arrival of the first convicts aboard the *Scindian* in 1850 which saw Perth's built form take shape. The introduction of convicts to Western Australia brought about many changes to the infrastructure of the colony; the convicts had building trade skills that could be utilised and provided the labour to build roads, bridges and public buildings. In the period from 1850 to 1880, public buildings were constructed, the houses of prominent colonial officials, business men and professionals were built along St George's Terrace, businesses were established and, in the outlying sections of the town, various industries were founded and workers and their families settled.¹

The development of Perth was hugely impacted by the discovery of gold, first in the Kimberley region in the 1880s, then in the Murchison and Kalgoorlie regions in the late 1880s and 1890s.² The granting of Responsible Government to Western Australia in 1890 also affected the growth of Perth. Sir John Forrest's new State Government was able to access monies from loan sources to finance major public works programs, including the building of roads, railways, and public buildings.³ The physical nature of the city changed dramatically with the increase of population as a result of the gold rushes and the monies made available for land and building construction. Perth, prior to the gold rushes, consisted mainly of residences and low-lying shops and factories. By the turn of the century, the city was transformed by

_

Bosworth, M., 'City of Perth: Thematical Historical Framework', c. 1992, pp. 4 – 14.

Stannage, C.T., *The People of Perth*, Perth City Council, Perth, 1979, pp. 193.

Moore, B., From the ground up, UWA Press, 1987, pp. 11.

elaborately styled multi-storey buildings and was surrounded by developing suburbs.4

The first owner of the block of land on which *Young Australia League Building* and *House* are located, Perth Town Lot A14, is recorded as Thomas Helm, who was granted the land on 8 December 1840. After Helm's death circa 1879, the land was eventually sold by the trustees of his will to Daniel O'Connor [sic] on 2 September 1884.⁵ In 1884, Daniel Connor was recorded as the proprietor of Perth Town Lot A14, bounded by Goderich (Murray) Street and Howich (Hay) Street to the north and south, and Irwin Street to the east.⁶

By 1887, two houses were situated at Perth Town Lot A14. Mrs Giblin, boarding house keeper, occupied one residence at Irwin and Goderich Streets. The other, located at Howick and Irwin Streets, was occupied by C. J. Gaham, Post Master General.⁷

In 1892, four houses were located on Connor's land. John Rosey, painter, occupied the house formerly used by Mrs Giblin. Doctor Michael O'Connor lived in a residence at Howick and Irwin Streets and Harry Woodward, Government Geologist lived at Irwin Street. The year 1892 was the first year that Timothy F. Quinlan was listed as the occupier of a residence at Goderich Street. This residence was the extant house at 55 Murray Street.

Born at Borrisokane, County Tipperary, Ireland, in 1861, Timothy Quinlan arrived in Western Australia with his parents in 1863. After the death of his parents within a short period of their arrival, Quinlan was raised by J. T. Reilly, later proprietor of *The Northam Advertiser*. He was employed by Messrs. J. H. Monger & Co. and then Messrs. McRae & Co., before becoming the proprietor of the Shamrock Hotel and having various land and mercantile interests in Perth and Fremantle. Quinlan married Teresa, daughter of the Daniel Connor, owner of Perth Town Lot A14, in 1883.8

In 1890, Quinlan was elected unopposed to the Perth City Council, a position he had up until his retirement in 1892.9 Also in 1890, Quinlan was elected to represent West Perth in the first Parliament and held this position up until 1894 and later, in 1897, he returned to Parliament representing Toodyay until 1911. During his time in Parliament, Quinlan acted as the Minister for Works, the Deputy-Chairman and Chairman of Committees, and also the Speaker of

⁴ Stannage, C.T., op. cit., pp. 193-194.

This information regarding the early ownership of Perth Town Lot A14 is found in Young Australia League Inc., *The Boomerang: The League Building*, Perth, August 1993, p. 2. **Note**: This issue of *The Boomerang* is a compilation of past articles published in this serial that refer to the development of the YAL Building. (Reference will be made to the past article as cited in this 1993 issue.)

⁶ City of Perth Ratebooks, Central Ward, 1884.

⁷ City of Perth Ratebooks, Central Ward, 1887.

Battye, J.S.(ed.), *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 1, Hesperian Press, Second Edition, 1985, pp. 359 - 360.

⁹ ibid.

the House. He was also a Justice of the Peace for the State and a Police Magistrate.¹⁰

Timothy Quinlan was very prominent in the Roman Catholic community and was closely involved in various Church organisations and with its administration. His dedication to the Roman Catholic Church in the State was recognised in 1899 when Pope Leo XIII bestowed the title and insignia of a Knight of the Order of St. Sylvester. Quinlan was a member of the Perth Public Hospital Board of Management, a Vice President for the Institute for the Blind and a member of the Committee of the Deaf and Dumb Institution.¹¹

In the 1890s, Quinlan and Daniel Connor formed a partnership investing in central Perth real estate. By the late 1890s, the Connor-Quinlan estate included Perth Town Lots F18, F19 and F20 with frontages on Murray, Hay and Barracks Streets. Quinlan also owned Perth town Lot F1 which was located on Wellington Street. By the 1900s, the central business district had developed to the extent that the blocks owned by Connor-Quinlan 'were tenanted by over eighty shopkeepers, businesses and hoteliers.'12

An 1897 PWD drawing shows Timothy Quinlan's residence on Goderich Street, with two large outbuildings located also shown on the property. (One of these outbuildings is located at the south-eastern corner of the property on the site of what is now the Young Australia League building.)¹³

In 1897/1898, Goderich Street (up to west of Victoria Square) was renamed Murray Street.¹⁴

In 1900, T. F. Quinlan was recorded at 49 Murray Street in *Wise's Post Office Directory*. ¹⁵ The following year, Quinlan moved to an Adelaide Terrace address and the Murray Street residence was run for some years as a boarding house by Mrs C.G. Westhoven. ¹⁶

On 29 August 1903, Catherine Connor, Michael O'Connor, Maurice Connor and Timothy Quinlan were registered as the owners of Perth Town Lot A14, as executors of the will of Daniel Connor. 17 At this time, the land was said to be the location of the extant house at 55 Murray Street and 'the site of a fruit garden and vineyard bordered by pine trees'. 18 In 1905-06, the place was the residence of Kenneth Philp, a road contractor. 19

ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, 1901–1904.

ibid.

¹² Stannage, C. T., op. cit., p. 226

PWD, City of Perth & Suburbs, PWD 5647, Sheet No. 7, 1897.

Wise's Post Office Directories, 1897 & 1898.

ibid, 1900.

¹⁷ Certificate of Title, Vol. 282, Fol. 102.

The Boomerang: The League Building, p. 2. During the course of the erection of the YAL Building, contractors unearthed the basement of a previously exiting building on the corner of Irwin and Murray Streets. When information was called for on this building, a number of stories were received and among them reports that the prior building had been haunted. The Boomerang, 21/11/1923, cited in The Boomerang: The League Building, pp. 26 & 27.

Wise's Post Office Dorectories, 1905 & 1907.

A PWD Sewerage Plan dated 1906 shows the buildings located on Perth Town Lot A13. Quinlan's brick residence is shown situated on the western boundary of the property, with a verandah on the Murray Street frontage. A verandah at the rear of the residence was connected to the verandah of a small brick building, also located on the western boundary. A galvanised structure is shown at the south-western corner of the property, and other outbuildings include a brick structure and a galvanised iron structure.²⁰

In 1908, Perth Town Lot A14 was subdivided. On 18 September 1908, ownership of part Lot 1, the corner of Murray and Irwin Streets, was transferred to Timothy Quinlan.²¹ At this time, a Mrs A. Genge was resident in the house, then from 1909 through to 1919 it was utilised as offices by a variety of government agencies.²²

In 1920, members and administration of the Young Australia League (YAL) showed much interest in the construction of a 'League Headquarters which will form a fitting form for the organisation.'23

In August 1920, *The Boomerang*, the official organ of the YAL, reported that the block of land, on the corner of Murray and Irwin Streets, had been purchased from Timothy Quinlan for £3,500.24 The article went on to state:

There is a substantial two storeyed 9 roomed building erected on the property, and this has been converted into four self contained flats, to be rented until such time as the building scheme has been complete. The architectural plan will incorporate the existing rooms as part of the general scheme without any substantial alteration in the present structure excepting the extension of the front rooms in alignment with the new portion [the first phase of the new headquarters].²⁵

The Young Australia League was registered as the owner of portion of A14 on 1 July 1921.26

The YAL was a patriotic, independent, non-political, non-sectarian youth organisation founded in Western Australia by John Joseph ['Boss'] Simons [1882-1948] in 1905. Originally a branch of the West Australian Football Association, of which the charismatic Simons was the secretary from 1905-1914, the League organised intra and interstate tours of young Western Australian football players to promote the code of 'Australian Rules' football as part of a broader nationalist agenda. By 1910, the sporting component of the League was subordinate to Simon's wider purpose of inculcating in Westralian youth a vigorous sentiment of Australian nationalism within the framework of Empire.²⁷

According to long-time President Lionel Boas, 'the main idea of the League was to make its members lovers of their own country, and of their homeland,

²⁰ PWD, Sewerage Plan No. 12794, Sheet No. 24, December 1906. The brick building to the rear of the main residence has a verandah on both the northern and eastern sides of the building

²¹ Certificate of Title, Vol. 282, Fol. 102; Certificate of Title, Vol. 429, Fol. 23.

²² Wise's Post Office Directories, 1908-1919.

²³ The Boomerang, August 1920, cited in The Boomerang: The League Building, p. 6.

²⁴ ibid. Timothy Quinlan actually donated £100 towards the erection of the new YALbuilding.

²⁵ The Boomerang, August 1920, cited in The Boomerang: The League Building, p. 6.

²⁶ Certificate of Title, Vol. 429, Fol. 23.

²⁷ 'Education by Travel', Evening Mail, 1/2/1909.

and to express that love in a patriotism that was all-embracing'.²⁸ The YAL conducted overseas tours in 1911, 1915, 1924 and 1929, representing Australian nationalism to great acclaim, as well as serving to expand the intellectual horizons of the boy tourists. The beneficial effect of these tours on impressionable youth was widely appreciated. According to Prime Minister William Hughes,

'Education may begin in schools but it does not end there...[real knowledge came] from mingling in the university of the world... insularity was fatal to men who aspired to govern a continent...let us compare the lot of others with our own'.²⁹

Activities such as education tours, literature, debating, sport, theatrical productions and band music were subordinate to Simons' wider purpose of inculcating in Westralian youth a vigorous sentiment of Australian nationalism within the framework of British Empire.³⁰ Branches of the YAL were also formed in other states from the 1920s with these branches adopting similar programs to those established by Simons in Western Australia.

Band music was an especially important aspect of the League's public face, both in raising funds through performances and through the band's appearance at public celebrations. Up to sixty thousand people a year attended the various fund-raising entertainments sponsored by the League in Perth.³¹ Approximately 50,000 people toured with the League during Simons' lifetime, an indication of the influence the YAL had in popularising its mission of 'education through travel'.³²

There were a number of plans drawn for the new YAL headquarters by different architects including William G. Bennett and noted American architect and landscape designer Walter Burley Griffin. All plans took into consideration the demolition of the house at 55 Murray Street to make way for the second phase/extension of the headquarters.³³ Even the eventual July 1923 plans for the YAL headquarters by Western Australian architects Oldham and Boas, showed the second phase of the building extending along Murray Street.³⁴ However, the YAL maintained that 'the remaining 33 fee[t] is occupied by the building which is not proposed to disturb at present'.³⁵

The YAL building was constructed in 1924 as a memorial to perpetuate the memory of the members of the YAL who died in the First World War as well

²⁸ *The Boomerang*, 1/12/1924, p. 2.

Speech by Hughes at the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone of the YAL Building on 23/4/1922, quoted in *The Boomerang*, 23/5/1922.

³⁰ 'Education by Travel', *Evening Mail*, 1/2/1909.

³¹ *The Boomerang*, 27/5/1924, p. 2.

Lyall Hunt, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 11 1891-1939*, [ed.], Geoffrey Serle, Melbourne University Press, 1988, pp. 608-609. By the 1960s more than 100, 000 people had participated in League activities. See, Victor Courtney, *Perth and all this! A Story about A City*, Perth, 1962, p. 2O.

³⁸ *The Boomerang: The League Building*, pp. 8, 11- 12, 21 - 23.

Original plans for the YAL Memorial Building, Oldham and Boas Architects, held by HCWA.

The Boomerang, 29/1/1923, cited in The Boomerang: The League Building, p. 22.

as to serve as a clubhouse and base for the rapidly expanding activities of the League at that time.³⁶

The construction of the building was commenced with a ceremonial laying of the foundation stone by Prime Minister William M. ['Billy'] Hughes on April 23, 1922. The crowd of 6000 people was also addressed by the Lord Mayor, Sir William Lathlain, Acting Premier Colebatch, opposition Leader Collier and former Premier, Sir Walter James, with the whole proceedings captured cinematically by Westralian Films. In September, 1923, F. J. Deacon successfully tendered to construct the building for a sum of £17,500.37

The first section of the YAL building, being two thirds of the original plan, was officially opened by Governor Sir William Robert Campion on 23 November 1924.³⁸ Also present were Western Australian senators Pearce and Lynch and E. A Mann, MHR. The *West Australian* lauded the sentiment behind the building's construction as

'a tangible and permanent expression of a great idea...a fine example of what may be accomplished by earnest souls in the purposeful pursuit of a worthy objective'.³⁹

Somewhat more metaphysically, the *Sunday Times* thought the building

'symboliz [ed] the desire to climb out of the lower planes of material desire into the rarefied air of intellectualism, good fellowship, sincerity...the institution can be made a great centre of inspiration for our youths, and if 'Jack' [Simons] would only emulate Socrates...he would immortalise the YAL temple as the old Greek philosopher did the shades of the Athenian groves'.

News reports at the time noted the extensive use of Western Australian materials throughout the building, and drew particular attention to the use of stained glass windows in the memorial hall. The central window, the much commented upon creation of Perth artisan H. H. Eastcourt, featured a life-size figure of Sir Galahad, based on Watts painting of the knight featured in Tennyson's well-known poem. For the YAL, Galahad represented 'knightly valour, chivalrous thoughts and purity of purpose', a figure 'undaunted and unchanged, the eternal boyknight whose heart is pure'- 'a very excellent theme for a memorial building'.⁴¹ Surrounding Galahad, on the other walls, were to be created eight full-size bust portraits 'fairly representative of the various national phases of Australian life'. These windows, featuring Dame Nellie Melba, Sir Edmund Barton, Captain James Cook, Alfred Deakin, Sir John Forrest, Henry Lawson, General Sir John Monash and C. Y O'Connor, the work of Bayswater artist Arthur Clarke, were installed between 1924 and 1928.⁴²

³⁶ *The Boomerang*, 10/10/1921, pp. 1, 12.

³⁷ The Boomerang, 31/3/1922, pp. 2-3; 23/5/1922, p. 6; 20/6/1923, p. 7; 18/9/1923, p. 8.

West Australian, 24/11/1924, The Boomerang, 20/6/1923, cited in The Boomerang: The League Building, p. 25.

³⁹ *West Australian*, 24/11/1924.

⁴⁰ Sunday Times, 30/11/1924, p. 4.

The Boomerang, 24/9/1924, p. 5; 1/12/1924, p. 8.

⁴² *The Boomerang*, 24/9/1924, p. 5.

Early twentieth century concerns and insecurities centred on the ability of Australians to establish and maintain a prosperous and independent nation far from the heartland of Western culture were addressed by Simons in his creation of the Young Australia League.⁴³ The League, as a youth organisation, and especially through its program of 'education by travel', was meant to develop an ideal type of citizen capable of 'steering the ship of State...in times of crisis' if need be, as well as focusing on their 'Australianness' at all other times. ⁴⁴

Housing the 'largest boys' club in the British Empire', the building was the Australian headquarters and main site for the inculcation of a range of Australian patriotic values in Western Australian youth, an issue that was widely regarded as critically important in the successful development of the Australian nation. ⁴⁵ The building was to embody 'all those influences that go to making up of a true type of citizen...an Australian home for Australian boys, representing Australian ideals, and calculated to contribute to a clean and healthy citizenship'. ⁴⁶

Photographs of the YAL Building at the time of its opening in 1924 show a portion of the house at 55 Murray Street. These photographs show three original chimneys and a two storey front verandah, with detail of timber post and balustrade, and the use of canvas awnings at a first floor level. The building appears flush against the YAL Building and it is possible that there could have been some kind of link between the two buildings at the rear of the property.⁴⁷

No documentary information has been found as to why the second portion of the YAL building was never built. However, the house at 55 Murray Street appears to have been used primarily as a rental property, functioning either as residential apartments or offices.

Lack of office accommodation at the adjacent government offices at 57 Murray Street prompted negotiations between the Department for Works and Labour and the YAL regarding the leasing of the house as offices. In 1946, the lease was agreed and, after various alterations to the building, the Accounts Branch of the Chief Secretary's Department and the Public Health and Medical Department moved into its new offices.⁴⁸ The lease of the building ended in April 1951.⁴⁹

For a discussion of these issues, see White, R., *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1788-1980*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, pp. 125-39.

From a speech by Prime Minister Hughes on 22/4/1922, quoted in *The Boomerang*, 23/5/1922.

⁴⁵ See White, R, op. cit., pp. 76-84.

⁴⁶ Daily News, 24/11/1924, p. 8.

Photograph of YAL Building, 23/11/1924, courtesy *Sunday Times, The Boomerang*, 1/12/1924, cited in *The Boomerang: The League Building*; YAL Building, c. 1924, Phonotone Colonial Library, held by HCWA.

Allocation of office accommodation at the buildings, File 57/1922, Chief Secretary's Department Records, Acc. 752, AN 120/1, State Records Office [SRO].

Allocation of office accommodation at the buildings, File 57/1922, op. cit.

During 1984, the demolition of most of the existing buildings on the government owned land at Perth Town Lots A13 and A14 was proposed, to make way for the development of a new Lands Administration building. Although this did not impact directly on the YAL owned property, all buildings located on the adjacent Lots, with the exception of St George's Hall façade, 57 Murray Street and the former Civil Service Association Building (1959), were demolished at this time. 50

The YAL building was included in the Register of Heritage Places on 16 August 1996. The registration included the whole of portion of Lot A14 described in Certificate of Title Volume 1049 Folio 81, including the extant house at 55 Murray Street.⁵¹ The assessment documentation did not however include any information pertaining to the house.

The ownership of the YAL property was transferred to Bellridge Nominees Pty Ltd and Ausclan Holdings Pty Ltd on 28 May 1998.⁵² On 23 June 1998, Perth Town Lot A14 was subdivided. Later that year, on 9 July 1998, Jonathon and Keryn Ann Lagdon were registered as the proprietors of Lot 102 of Perth Town Lot A14, on which the extant house at 55 Murray Street is situated.⁵³

In 2002, the extant house at 55 Murray Street is occupied by a travel company and the first floor is occupied as a residence by the owners.

Although in recent decades the YAL has experienced a substantial decline in active membership, parts of the ground floor of the YAL building are still used for League activities. The remainder of the building is let to a variety of commercial tenants, in particular Gilkison Dance Studio, who have leased the memorial hall for the last few decades.

A number of prominent people have been associated with the development of the Young Australia League since its inception in 1905. The League's founder J. J. Simons, in addition to his work with the League, was also involved in a variety of other political, sporting, charitable and business activities in Perth. He campaigned prominently against conscription in the plebiscites of 1916-17 and was an unsuccessful Labor candidate for Fremantle in the 1917 Federal elections. His political views forced his resignation from a position as the salaried secretary of the West Australian State School Teachers Union in 1917. In 1921, Simons won a Legislative Assembly seat for Labor in East Perth, resigning in 1922 after offending local union officials. In a non official capacity, Simons significantly contributed to debates about female suffrage in

National Trust Files, Perth File 11, No. 146; National Trust Files, St George's Hall, No. 83; West Australian, 22/2/1986. Plans for the new Lands Administration building did not go ahead. In 1988/1989, the development of A13 and A14 was again proposed for the construction of a new magistrates' courts. These plans were also never carried out. In 1999/2000, it is proposed to redevelop the Government owned land at Lots A13 and A14 (now Perth Lot 981) for the Ministry of Justice as the new Co-located District Courts.

⁵¹ HCWA Database.

Certificate of Title, Vol. 1049, Fol. 81. Subsequent titles: Certificate of Title 2135, Fol. 200; Certificate of Title, Vol. 2134, Fol. 710; Certificate of Title, Vol. 2134, Fol. 711; Certificate of Title, Vol. 2135, Fol. 664.

⁵³ Certificate of Title, Vol. 2135, Fol. 665.

California in 1911 and the nature of military organisation in Canada during the same period. While touring the United States in 1914-15, Simons worked assiduously to draw America into the war effort on the side of Britain and the Allies. He was also an advocate of industrial self-reliance and an organiser of 'Buy Australian' campaigns. ⁵⁴

In the area of sport, Simons was instrumental in consolidating Australian Rules Football in Western Australia through his position as the secretary of the Western Australian National Football League [1905-1914]. He also worked to popularise Australian Rules Football in the United States during the early decades of the twentieth century. As well as these activities, Simons was involved with the local racing industry as a life member of the Western Australian Trotting Association, of which he was secretary from 1913-14.55

From 1906, Simons was involved in journalism, writing for, editing and publishing the *Australian Junior* [1906-11], the *Australian,* in conjunction with the Australian Natives Association- of which he was State president [1910-11] from 1910-14, and *The Boomerang*, the official journal of the YAL, from 1914 on. In 1918, Simons, along with Victor Courtney, founded the weekly *Call.* From 1921, they published the weekly *Mirror,* a paper which soon developed a substantial circulation as well as a certain notoriety in Western Australia. In 1935 Simons, Courtney, Claude de Bernales and others bought the *Sunday Times,* with this forming the centre-piece of the Western Press, of which Simons was appointed managing director. Under the direction of Simons, the paper reversed its previously influential secessionist stance. From 1943, the paper supported the Federal Labor government and its attempts to win greater Commonwealth powers.⁵⁶

Other prominent Perth citizens were also involved with the YAL. Long-time politician and former State Premier, Sir Walter James, was treasurer of the League until 1915. Lionel Boas, secretary of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board 1903-47, secretary of the Kings Park Board 1918-37, Subiaco Councillor from 1906-42 including Mayor from 1917-20, was the YAL President for forty years until his death in 1949. Boas was also prominently associated with the Australian Football League and the Subiaco Football Club for almost fifty years as well as with other sporting organisations, particularly the Subiaco Bowling Club. In addition, he was a life member of the RSL, secretary of the Save the Children Fund, a Director of the Grand Lodge of Druids and President of the charitable Ugly Men's Association.⁵⁷ V. L. Steffanoni, who was Senior Valuer with the Taxation Department in Perth served as treasurer

For information about the life of Simons, see Victor Courtney, *The Life Story of J. J. Simons: Founder of the Young Australia League* YAL, Perth, 1961; Ron Davidson, *High Jinks at the Hot Pool: The Mirror Reflects the Life of a City*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1994, passim; Simons' entry in *ADB*, The wide-ranging influence of Simons is evident in the condolences from prominent people from all areas of Australian life that flooded into the YAL at the time of Simons' death in 1948. See, *The Boomerang* Special Memorial Tribute, 30/10/1948.

⁵⁵ ibid

⁵⁶ ibid

Information about Lionel Boas from Battye Library archives [PR 4223, PR 5505, PR 8410].

of the YAL for many years. Well-known Perth barrister and solicitor, Fred Curran, acted as the President of the YAL after the death of Lionel Boas.⁵⁸

As the headquarters of an Australia-wide organisation, the building had an indirect association with, and was an inspiration for, a number of prominent people from other states. For example, in NSW the League had as its foundation President the eminent academic, Professor Sir T. W. Edgeworth David, while its Vice Presidents included among their number the State's Director of Education, the president of the GPS Schools' Headmaster's Association and the president of the Public School Teachers' Federation.⁵⁹

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Young Australia League Building and House are located on the south west corner of the intersection of Murray and Irwin Streets. The YAL building (1924), located on the eastern part of the site adjacent to the intersection, is a three-storey structure in the Inter-War Free Classical style. The adjacent house (1992) at 55 Murray Street is a two storey domestic building. Located to the rear of the two storey building is a single storey earlier cottage which has been surrounded by later additions and is now connected to the two storey front section of the building.

Young Australia League Building and House is an integral element in the Murray Street East Precinct. The buildings are located on the south side of the street, between Irwin Street to the east and the Chief Secretary/Public Health Department Building (fmr) at 57 Murray Street to the east. The precinct runs from Barrack Street to Victoria Square inclusive and contains a number of significant places including St Mary's Cathedral, Archbishop's Palace, Salvation Army Fortress, Government Stores Building (fmr), Chief Secretary/Public Health Department Building (fmr), Young Australia League Building, Perth Chest Clinic, Government Printing Office (fmr), Royal Perth Hospital Administration Building, and Royal Perth Hospital (Kirkham House).

House, 55 Murray Street

The house at 55 Murray Street is a two storeyed building in the Federation Queen Anne style, constructed of rendered and painted brick with a corrugated iron roof. The house has an asymmetrical façade, a central front door set back from the protruding bay of rooms on the western side. The lower western front room has a protruding bay window and double doors that are part of a shop front adaptation to the original building. There is no verandah, although the style of building indicates that a two storey verandah would have originally extended across the street façade. The pavement extends to the front façade of the eastern side of the building.

The ground floor of the building contains a central passage with two large rooms to the east and two large rooms and a stairwell to the west. The first

_

Leading Personalities of Western Australia. 1950, Perth, 1950, pp. 59, 160. [author unknown].

⁵⁹ *The Boomerang*, 24/9/1924, p. 5.

floor level contains a self contained flat comprising a living/dining area, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and combined toilet/laundry.

At the southern end of the main ground floor passage, a door leads through to a later infilled area. Within this infilled area is a single storey brick structure which is probably the remnants of a much earlier cottage. This single roomed cottage has been incorporated under the roof of the later single storey additions to the rear of the two storeyed main house. A corridor leads along the eastern side of the former cottage. In the length of the corridor are four steps down to a staff toilet and a garage. The garage has a metal roller door, opening to the south, to the bitumised parking area and right of way access to Irwin Street.

A narrow, open, bitumised area is located at the rear between the house and the adjacent Young Australia League building, while the two buildings are connected at the front. There is a steel post, timber rail and CGI fence to the rear of the western boundary of the site extending to the western wall of the cottage. A narrow path runs from the rear along the western side of the building to Murray Street with decorative metal gates at the street. The path and gates are part of the adjacent *Chief Secretary/ Public Health Department Building (fmr)* property located at 57 Murray Street. The western walls of the house are decorated with a large amount of colourful graffiti.

The front elevation of the building is set back from the adjoining building to the west with a concrete paved area to the west and a grassed area to the east. The YAL building to the east has the adjoining part set back in line with the house and the eastern portion set forward.

The front elevation has a central front door with sidelights and a fanlight. A central timber framed window with sidelights and fanlights is located above to the upper floor. This window replaces a door that originally led onto the upper floor verandah which is no longer extant. To the east of the front door is a group of three double hung sashes with fanlights and a striped canvas awning above. The windows above, to the first floor are the same. The windows to the west of the front door to the ground floor are in a bay window configuration with a later pair of doors to the central bay. The upper floor has two double hung sashes with fanlights.

Four original chimneys are visible from the front elevation. The chimneys are of face brick with rendered corbelling.

The rear elevation of the two storey section is of painted brickwork on a painted stone plinth. There are steel bars to the ground floor windows and security grilles to the upper floor windows. The two hipped sections of the roof and the central box gutter are visible from the rear. Eaves gutters are ogee profile and down pipes are generally round. There are several exposed PVC pipes from the recently renovated first floor kitchen and bathroom.

The infill sections to the rear of the ground floor are generally of painted fibre cement sheet to the walls and CGI to the roof. The garage attached to the rear is of red face brick and a skillion CGI roof. The exposed brick walls of the

former cottage have painted brickwork and a hipped CGI roof. A face brick chimney with brick corbelling is located at the rear of the cottage.

Internally the four large rooms to the ground floor of the two storey section of the building have original lathe and plaster ceilings, deep moulded cornices and elaborate ceiling roses, painted plaster walls and 200mm high timber skirtings. The floors are generally carpet on timber floor boards. There are no fireplaces to the ground level and the lights are generally batten mounted fluorescent strips.

The passage also has a lathe and plaster ceiling with a deep moulded cornice to the front section and no cornice to the back section. The walls are painted plaster and there is a 300mm high timber skirting. The door to the rear of the hall is the original back door with obscure glass side and fanlights. The door is timber panelled and has the original door furniture. The doors to the four rooms are original 4 panel timber doors, two with original door furniture. The front door is timber framed with four timber panels, sidelights and a fanlight. The opening to the stairwell has been enclosed with a stud partition inside the original arch. A decorative arch is located halfway down the hall defining the front and rear sections of the two storey section of the building.

There is a self contained apartment on the first floor level of the house. The apartment has a living/dining area, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and combined toilet/laundry. The finishes are generally plaster ceilings with original lathe and plaster ceilings to some rooms. The walls are painted plaster with a timber moulded picture rail to the living and front bedroom. Skirtings are generally original 200mm high moulded timber and there are scotia cornices. The floors are 165mm side timber T&G floors with evidence of some boards having been replaced.

Doors to the main living room include four panel painted timber framed doors leading to the bedrooms with some original door furniture. There is a fireplace in the living room with a replacement surround.

The front bedroom has an open brick hearth with a timber surround and the back bedroom has a blocked fireplace with a timber surround.

The kitchen has been recently refurbished and includes stainless steel benches with timber doors. The bathroom, toilet and laundry have also been recently refurbished with glass mosaic tiles to the floors and tiles to the walls. An original swinging door has been converted to a sliding door to the toilet/laundry.

The staircase has timber trees, a timber handrail and timber balustrade. There is a double hung sash window with glazing bars to nine panes to each sash.

Through the door at the rear of the ground floor passage is an infilled space between the two storey building and the original cottage. This room has a 'v'shaped plaster ceiling, painted and unpainted brick walls and timber boards of varying widths to the floor. This area has a timber ledge and braced door leading to the outside alley between the house and the YAL building and a

small casement window to the other elevation. A tea preparation area with a sink and an urn is located in the east of this room.

The former cottage has a lathe and plaster ceiling, painted plaster walls, wide timber floorboards and a 150mm high timber skirting. There are two timber double hung sash windows. There is evidence of a blocked fireplace with no surround and built in timber shelving.

A passage area leads from the infilled room down steps to the garage and toilet. The toilet has a plaster ceiling, painted rough rendered walls with 150x150 white wall tiles to some areas and 200x200 grey ceramic tiles to the floor. The door is a flush panel hollow core door and there is a small timber framed wired glass window with a fixed vent.

The garage has a plastered ceiling, painted plaster walls, a concrete floor, metal roller door and a flush panel hollow core door to the passage.

Alterations and additions to the building include: infilling between the former cottage and two storeyed house; removal of verandahs and conversion of upper level verandah door to window; alteration of the façade on the western side at ground level to create a shop front; door infill to stairwell arch; replacement of windows to front bay window; addition of staffroom and toilets to rear of cottage, conversion of staffroom toilet extensions to garage and toilet; removal of internal walls to infilled space; refurbishment of upper floor apartment including kitchen, bathroom, toilet and laundry fitout.

Generally the building is in a good condition and authenticity is moderate.

Young Australia League Building

The Young Australia League building is a three-storey building of the Inter- War Free Classical style, sited on the west corner of the intersection of Murray and Irwin Streets.

As with other buildings in the Murray Street East Precinct, the YAL Building has been constructed close to the boundaries of its site, with a frontage of approximately 18 metres to Murray Street and 43 metres to Irwin Street. It has, however, an entrance portico set back some distance from the front of the property, which would have formed the central element of a symmetrical building design if the intended west wing of the structure had been constructed. This section of Murray Street in the area of the YAL building is notable for a number of buildings consistent in materials and scale and representative of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings in central Perth. The YAL building is distinctive within the streetscape because of its plain surfaces and height which contrasts with the adjacent buildings in the eastern end of Murray Street.

The original plan for the building included, on the ground floor, a gymnasium with associated facilities, that could also be used for theatrical or cinematic productions, as well as a shop space that opened onto Irwin Street and which could be let to bring in valuable income for the League. Also on the lower level were various administrative offices. Above the gymnasium was to be an ornately decorated and spacious assembly hall as well as library and writing

rooms, the latter area opening onto an arch-enclosed verandah. The top floor was to be used for club rooms as well as accommodation for visitors from country areas, interstate or overseas. 60 The entry from Murray Street opened onto a reception room which featured a 'bold baronial fireplace carried out in rough masonry' as well as the varied and unique presentation gifts gathered on overseas tours. The atmosphere of the room was fittingly described as 'somewhat Bohemian'. 61 Press reports at the time described the building as 'imposing...a noble and distinctive addition to the architecture of our city...a magnificent memorial'. 62

Aspects of the YAL building reflect other structures in the vicinity, especially in the use of stone in the building's imposing portico as well as the use of decorative columns and arches. An unusual feature of the building is the setback of the entrance from the street with an arched colonnade running along the ground and first floors. This design feature was probably an attempt at a continuation of Burley Griffin's highly original plan which saw a landscaped courtyard in the central portion of the site onto which various rooms on all levels of the building opened, allowing in fresh air and light.63 The basically conservative design of freely interpreted classicism by Oldham and Boas, however, has a minimal forecourt that serves little useful purpose. Straitened circumstances prevented the construction of the West wing of the building that would have provided symmetry to the Murray Street frontage, and also prevented the commissioning of a life-sized bronze figure of the winged 'Victory' that would have been dramatically positioned above the Doriccolumned entrance portico built from Donnybrook stone.64

The Memorial Hall of the building contains a series of round stained glass windows of important Australian historical figures as well as a large rectangular window featuring the figure of the League's mentor, Sir Galahad. These windows are important as an example of Western Australian artistic and design excellence. The entrance hall of the building also displays many fine examples of wood carving incorporating Australian flora and fauna and other themes commissioned by the League and undertaken by noted Victorian artist, Robert Prenzel.

The principal facade of the YAL building and the main entrance is on Murray Street with a secondary entrance off Irwin Street.

The building is constructed of brick that has been rendered, with concrete floors supported on reinforced concrete girders. The building is 'L'-shaped in plan and has a raised forecourt accessible from steps at the street level. The steps lead to a portico over the main entrance.

The portico is distinguished by the use of Donnybrook stone and features a heavy pediment supported on twin doric columns either side of the entrance.

⁶⁰ *The Boomerang*, 20/6/1923, p. 7; 22/8/1923, p. 11.

⁶¹ *The Boomerang*, 20/6/1923, p. 7.

⁶² 'The Young Australia League', West Australian, 24/11/1924.

⁶³ *The Boomerang*, 31/3/1922, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁴ *The Boomerang*, 18/9/1923, p. 8.

The building was intended to be symmetrical to the Murray Street elevation; however, the west wing was not built.65

A parapet, with a perforated pattern to some sections, runs the length of the building. The side wall to the forecourt features colonnading in a roman style with semi-circular arches supported on Tuscan columns on the ground floor level, and semi-circular arches supported on composite columns on the first floor level. The ground floor walls are differently treated to the upper walls. This style of architecture is reminiscent of Italian sixteenth-century architecture whereby lighter orders (composite columns) rested on the heavier (Tuscan columns), and the whole system on a rusticated base. The base of the exterior walls of the YAL building is articulated while the upper walls are smoothly rendered

The windows are different on every level. At the front of the Murray Street elevation and on the Irwin Street elevation, there are oriel windows on the first and second floor levels flanked by rectangular windows at the first floor and circular windows on the second floor. The circular windows complement the arches on the ground floor. There is a vertical emphasis to the building which is in contrast with the heavier appearance of adjacent buildings in Murray Street east.

Through the main entrance on Murray Street is a reception area which features an imposing fireplace in rough masonry. The room displays varied and unique presentation gifts gathered by members on overseas tours. The ground floor level also comprises administration offices and a retail shop with access from Irwin Street. Stairs lead to an upper basement comprising a bar, originally a small kitchen/servery ('Kookaburra' stove remains) and dining area, and a side exit to the car parking area and right-of-way. Another flight of stairs leads to the lower basement with a gymnasium, now used as a hall, with a band room and two dressing rooms either side of the stage, and toilets on the other side of the room. The first floor level comprises a ballroom or memorial hall which features a series of large round leaded and stained glass windows, depicting distinguished Australians, and a large rectangular window featuring the figure of the League's mentor, Sir Galahad. The ballroom is two levels high and the upper storey is supported on plaster covered beams which span in two directions terminating on pilasters around the room. Both the beams and pilasters are ornately decorated with classical mouldings in a roman style. A verandah along the west elevation of the ballroom overlooks the car park. Curved balconies on the upper level overlook the ballroom. A secondary entrance off Irwin Street allows direct access to the ballroom.

The second floor comprised a writing room, library, and a rehearsal room, the areas are now used for private dancing lessons. A small stage and a partitioned dressing room are no longer evident. A costume room, now converted for use as a kitchen, leads to the balconies overlooking the ballroom that once operated as a function area, now used for storage. A

⁶⁵ The Boomerang, 18/9/1923, p. 8 as cited in 'Young Australia League' (unpublished student report, Curtin University of Technology, n.d.).

small staircase leads to the third floor which contains residential accommodation of kitchen, bathroom living area and two bedrooms.

The interior finishes of the building are simple with the exception of the decorative plaster work in the ballroom, and decorative cornices and dentils in the former function area. There are timber floorboards throughout, some covered in carpet and linoleum. The main entrance features tessellated floor tiles, and a leaded and stained glass fanlight with a kangaroo motif. The interior walls of the reception area are lined with ashlar limestone.

In the 1950s, the balcony overlooking the gymnasium was enclosed for use as three offices. The kitchen/servery area in the upper basement level was upgraded, a new counter and cupboards were also installed.⁶⁶

In the 1970s, Gilkison Dance Studio carried out alterations to the building: toilets were added to the first floor area adjacent to the ballroom, and the verandah along the west wall of the ballroom was enclosed and converted for use as a bar and offices.⁶⁷ In the 1980s, Gilkison Dance Studio converted the writing room, library room on the second floor to a rehearsal room by creating two openings in the wall that divided the spaces, and removing a partition that subdivided the library from the writing room and, removing the library shelves. Mirrors and ledges were installed along the wall surfaces.⁶⁸

In the late 1970s/early 1980s, a doorway was created from an original opening in the former costume room to the balconies overlooking the ballroom.⁶⁹ The balconies were enclosed with glass.⁷⁰

In 1988, the stained glass windows were removed and restored by Ken Wildy.⁷¹ External window protection has been installed to the stained glass windows.⁷²

In 1993, iron gates were installed at the ground floor landing, and an electronic security system was installed to increase security.⁷³

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

No comparative information has been compiled for the YAL building. Other known places constructed for use by the YAL include Chalet Healy at Araluen designed by William G. Bennett and constructed as the YAL's country retreat

Interview with Mr. P. Savill, Young Australia League Inc. with HCWA, 11/10/1995. File note held in HCWA file PD2052.

Interview with Mr. P. Savill, op. cit.

⁶⁸ ibid.

⁶⁹ ibid.

Date of enclosure is unknown.

For details of the restoration appeal including background of the Australians the stained glass represents, see 'Restoration Appeal' (brochure for the Young Australia League Inc 1905-1988) held in HCWA file PD2052.

The date of installation is unknown.

Interview with Mr. P. Savill, op. cit.

in 1936/37. Chalet Healy however is a timber structure built in a naïve, rustic style, quite unlike the Murray Street building.⁷⁴

The house 55 Murray Street is an example of a substantial nineteenth century residential building that remains extant in the area immediately east of the Perth city centre. Residential properties were once common in the area, however as a result of the development of the city over time there are now few extant examples remaining. The house at 55 Murray Street is probably the closest residential property to the city centre that remains extant. Other former residences of similar style and construction date extant (as of February 2001) at the eastern end of the city include 254 Adelaide Terrace (Café Cilento), 257 Adelaide Terrace, 259 Adelaide Terrace, 49 Bennett Street, 266- 268 Hay Street (attached pair), 277 Hay Street and Hills Residence (fmr) at 292 Hay Street. Of these only 292 Hay Street, Hills Residence (fmr) has been included on the Register of Heritage Places (No 03235).

13. 4 REFERENCES

Young Australia League Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet, 18 May 1978.

Young Australia League Building; Documentation of Places for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places; 13.12.1996.

House, 55 Murray Street; Documentation of Places for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places; May 2000.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Conservation Plan, Chalet Healy, Araluen Park, prepared for Dept Planning & Urban Development, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, April 1993.