



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)

- 3.3.3 Mining
- 3.13.2 Using Australian materials in construction
- 4.5 Making towns to serve rural Australians
- 7.5 Developing local government authorities

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 105 Exploration and surveying
- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 303 Mining
- 403 Law and order
- 404 Community services
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is of aesthetic significance to the people of Coolgardie and the State because it is a good example of the architecture of the gold rush period of the 1890s. The design of the building in Federation Academic Classical architectural style, its formal proportions and grand scale and design, represent the prominent position of government agencies in the developing Goldfields in the late 1800s. The existence of buildings, such as *Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie*, in largely deserted town centres such as Coolgardie, provides a particular aesthetic incongruity which is typical of former Western Australian gold mining centres which have long ceased to prosper. This aesthetic quality is valued by the Western Australian community as typical of a major period in the history of the State. (Criterion 1.1)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is of aesthetic significance as an example of a building designed by the Public Works Department under the direction of Chief Architect John Grainger. Both in terms of the planning of the building and the design of the elevations, the building is of high architectural quality. The building is a good example of Federation Academic Classical architectural style. (Criterion 1.2)

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

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is of aesthetic significance as a landmark in the main street of the town of Coolgardie and within the Eastern Goldfields region as a whole. (Criterion 1.3)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie together with the former public buildings constructed in 1895, forms a significant precinct of government buildings in Bayley Street, Coolgardie. The buildings together form a precinct because they are located on the same original reserve, are designed by the Public Works Department to provide accommodation for government departments and are all constructed of local stone. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is historically significant because it represents the period of prosperity and development in Coolgardie in the 1800s that resulted from the discovery of gold. The *Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie* has throughout its one hundred year history accommodated the requirements of the mining leases court in the town and has therefore been associated with the changing fortunes of the area. (Criterion 2.1)

The construction of grand and formal buildings in towns associated with the Western Australian gold rush of the late nineteenth century, of which *Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie* is one, represents for the State as a whole the confidence of the period and the general expectation that the period of prosperity would continue. *Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie* is historically significant for associations with the discovery of gold and the development of Coolgardie and the State in the gold boom years of the 1890s. (Criterion 2.2)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is of historic significance for its associations with Warden Finnerty who held the position of Mining Warden from 1894 to 1900 when the fortunes of the town were eclipsed by the development of Kalgoorlie, and with John Grainger, Chief Architect with the Public Works Department of Western Australia at the period. (Criterion 2.3)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is a good example of the use of Federation Academic Classical architectural style for a public building in Western Australia in the late nineteenth century. It is also significant in terms of the development of construction technology in the 1890s, illustrating the use of a cavity in the external wall, the use of brick for the main structural components of the building with stone facing, the use of concrete for footing and the use of a damp proof course. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the history of the development of construction technology in Western Australia, as the methods used by the Public Works Department in Coolgardie in 1898 represent the stage of development of construction technology at that time. (Criterion 3.1)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie has the potential to contribute to a wider understanding of the history of the gold boom in Western Australia in the 1890s and in Coolgardie in particular. The building contains original mining registers which may through research provide valuable information on the history of gold mining in the region. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is of social significance for the current role of part of the building as the Coolgardie Museum and Tourist Bureau. The Coolgardie Museum and Tourist Bureau is highly valued by the town's community and contains extensive displays depicting the development of the town as a gold mining centre. (Criterion 4.1)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie contributes to the Coolgardie community's sense of place because it is the largest building and a landmark in the main street of the town. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is a rare example of a large public building designed in the Federation Academic Classical style in Coolgardie and in Western Australia as a whole. (Criterion 5.1)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie represents the way of life characteristic of the Goldfields in the 1890s and, as such, is of exceptional interest to the region and the State. The place is of particular interest in the context of the renewed interest in gold mining in the region in recent years and the different approach to the industry taken today, as compared to the one of the late nineteenth century. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is a representative example of a building designed in the Academic Classical architectural style by the Public Works Department at the period of prosperity associated with the gold boom in Western Australia, and is also a representative example of the development of construction technology in Western Australia in the 1890s and early 1900s. (Criterion 6.1)

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is a representative example of a building associated with the development of the gold mining industry in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie is in generally fair to good condition. The former courtroom in particular is highly intact. (For details refer to attached photocopies of the Physical Evidence, which discuss condition and authenticity for individual features of the building.)

12.4 INTEGRITY

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie has very high levels of integrity.

The most substantial change to the building, however, is the change of use of the original courtroom to a museum and the adaptation of a smaller area in the north western section of the building to court purposes.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Warden's Court (fmr), Coolgardie has very high levels of authenticity. The former courtroom in particular is highly intact.

Comparison between the documentary evidence for the building, including drawings from the period of construction and early photographs, and physical evidence indicates that the exterior and interior fabric of the building remains substantially intact and as constructed. External door and window openings, and doors and windows are extant. Original red Marseille tiles are extant with some replacement tiles to match the original profile. The original tiles are marked to indicate their original importation from France. There have been some alterations to the verandah at the back of the building including the introduction of steel posts, steel stairs and a section of asbestos sheet panelling to the face of the balcony. A balcony to the eastern elevation, which is indicated on the original drawings and on early photographs, is no longer extant. (For details refer to attached photocopies of the Physical Evidence, which discusses condition and authenticity for individual features of the building.)

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence, prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Coolgardie Warden's Court (Coolgardie Government Building): Conservation Plan', for The Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Land Administration, October 1998.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Coolgardie Warden's Court (Coolgardie Government Building): Conservation Plan', for The Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Land Administration, October 1998.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Coolgardie Warden's Court (Coolgardie Government Building): Conservation Plan', for The Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Land Administration, October 1998.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Coolgardie Warden's Court (Coolgardie Government Building): Conservation Plan', for The Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Land Administration, October 1998.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Coolgardie Warden's Court (Coolgardie Government Building): Conservation Plan', prepared for The Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Department of Land Administration, October 1998.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Documentary evidence indicates that a large water storage tank was originally located underground to the north of the building. This was common practice for public buildings of the period. Physical evidence has not substantiated whether or not this remains extant.

Further comparative research is needed to establish where the building fits in terms of the development of construction practices and to document fully the introduction of modern construction technology. However generally throughout the 1890s, probably as a result of migration of architects from Eastern Australia and the increase in public building activity, techniques such as concrete strip footings, cavity walls and the use of damp proofing were introduced.

The place contains original mining registers, which may through research provide valuable information on the history of gold mining in the region.