



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)

- 3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages
- 3.21 Entertaining for profit
- 3.22 Lodging people
- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 8.4 Eating and drinking

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 106 Workers
- 311 Hospitality industry and tourism
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 407 Cultural activities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Railway Hotel is a good example of a single-storey hotel in the Federation Free style of architecture. (Criterion 1.1)

Railway Hotel is a landmark at the corner of Tydeman Road and De Lisle Street. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Railway Hotel is a remnant from the period of the early North Fremantle residential subdivision in what is now an area of primarily industrial land to the northwest of the hotel site. (Criterion 2.1)

Railway Hotel has associations with the early railway development in North Fremantle, having been constructed adjacent to the original North Fremantle railway station. (Criterion 2.2)

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

Railway Hotel has a long association with workers from the nearby wharfs and marshalling yards, having specifically catered for this local clientele by way of unusual opening hours to suit shift workers and services such as its barber shop. (Criterion 2.2)

Railway Hotel is one of two known extant examples of buildings designed by O.N. Nicholson, a prominent Fremantle architect of the Gold Boom period. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Railway Hotel is highly valued by the Fremantle community, and in particular its local clientele of workers from the nearby wharfs and marshalling yards at North Fremantle, as demonstrated by the strong public support expressed for Registration in 1999. (Criterion 4.1)

Railway Hotel is highly valued by a section of the wider community for the jazz sessions, held on Saturdays, that have developed a large following since they began in 1976. (Criterion 4.1)

Railway Hotel contributes to the Fremantle community's sense of place as a reminder of a way of life that is becoming less evident in this increasingly industrial area of North Fremantle. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Railway Hotel is a rare example of a single-storey hotel, constructed in the 1890s, in the Perth metropolitan area. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

Railway Hotel is in good condition. The place has had an ongoing program of maintenance and renovation, which has preserved the building fabric. The grounds are also well cared for.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The original intention of the place is intact. The original use continues and has demanded minimal changes to the fabric apart from an addition of a large lounge area at the rear (north side) of the building. The residential context in which the hotel was built has now been replaced with an industrial area associated with the port of Fremantle, and the place is flanked by major freight transport routes.

As the place is very little altered from its original construction and the additions do not impact negatively on the historic fabric, *Railway Hotel* has high integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The verandahs are reconstructed. The remainder of the original building fabric is largely intact, with an addition at the rear of the building having a minimal impact. Therefore, *Railway Hotel* has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The supporting evidence has been prepared by consultants from the Centre for Western Australian History. The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Railway Hotel is a single-storey brick and iron hotel building constructed in c.1898 for Frederick Mason to cater for the needs of the growing suburb of North Fremantle.

Originally, a large part of North Fremantle was allocated in land grants to the Pensioner Guards; however, physical remnants of this are no longer evident. The large influx of people into Fremantle during the goldrush saw the establishment of 'humpies' in the North Fremantle Railway Reserve.¹ These were temporary canvas tents that housed families who could not find accommodation. The 1890s was a period of expansion for the whole state. In Fremantle, the decade signalled a number of changes in boundaries, including the creation of North Fremantle as a separate municipality. Following a petition in 1894, the necessary steps were taken and in September 1895, the new municipality was gazetted.²

Rate records for 1888 to 1892 show that Lot P37 was an undeveloped lot owned by F. Mason, Jeweller.³ In 1893, a boarding house is described as being constructed and in 1894 the property is described as having three cottages 'at back' in addition to the coffee palace which is crossed out and Railway Hotel inserted. The property entry for Lot P37 in 1895 confirms this showing the Railway Hotel and a two roomed cottage 'at back' being owned by Frederick Mason, a four roomed cottage 'at back' owned by John Guer and another four roomed cottage 'at back' owned by John Irvine.⁴

Unfortunately no rate records are available for North Fremantle between 1896 and 1920. *Wises Post Office Directories* first list 'Railway Hotel' in the John Street (now Tydeman Road) listing in 1897, when there were only two or three other buildings on the street between De Lisle and Hall streets.⁵ Prior to this there is no street listing; however, from 1893-94, there is a listing for 'Railway hotel, W. Waldeck, Pensioner Rd, North Fremantle' in the Fremantle trades section.⁶

When rate records resume in 1921-22, Lot P37 is described as brick hotel and two shops, all owned by Bertha Pinbaum. This description remains the

¹ Melotte, Barrie, 'City of Fremantle Heritage Strategy: Heritage Assets' July 1990, p.82.

² Ewers, J. K. *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle* 2nd edition, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1971, p.101.

³ City of Fremantle Rate Records 1888-1892, on Railway Hotel file (728.5) held at Fremantle Local History Collection.

⁴ City of Fremantle Rate Records 1893-1895, on Railway Hotel file (728.5) held at Fremantle Local History Collection.

⁵ *Wises Post Office Directories* 1897, p. 106; 1898, p. 102.

⁶ *Wises Post Office Directories* 1893-94, p. 83; 1894, p. 83; 1895-96, p. 264.

same until 1925-26, when the two shops are converted into the hotel and all are rated together and described as 'Hotel'.

Land records show that on 13 August 1897, Frederick Mason, jeweller, was issued the first Certificate of Title for subdivided Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 27 of North Fremantle Lots P37 and P38.⁷ This included the entire street frontage to John Street from De Lisle Street to Hall Street plus two adjoining lots running between dells and Hall streets. Mason then leased the land to Bertha Sophie Hillman for a period of six years at an annual rate of £364.

In May 1898, the leasing arrangement was formalised when Bertha Hillman (nee May) purchased a portion of North Fremantle Lot P37, being Lots 1 and 2 and parts of Lot 3 and 26.⁸

In September 1898, an article published in a special supplement on Western Australian in the *Melbourne Weekly Times* made particular mention of the *Railway Hotel* and the architect who designed it, Mr O. N. Nicholson.⁹ This article states:

The Imperial Chambers in Market St., The Sea View Hotel – a very handsome edifice and several very fine residences in the Gothic style of Architecture are among the structures that have been designed by Mr. Nicholson, and under his supervision another building which is in the course of construction at the present time from his plans is the Railway Hotel in North Fremantle which will be a fine and large structure.¹⁰

This information suggests that *Railway Hotel* was constructed in 1898-99 which coincides with the recent subdivision of North Fremantle Lots P37 and P38 and transfer to Bertha Hillman. The mention of *Railway Hotel* in the rate books as early as 1894 could refer to the conversion of the coffee palace to a hotel, prior to a new building being constructed in c.1898. It is unfortunate that there are no rate records to help verify this.

Originally from Sweden, Nicholson arrived in Australia in 1860 at the age of 17 and commenced business in Melbourne. He worked for the firm of Twentyman & Askew, Architects and Surveyors before setting up his own practice in Brunswick. After a number of years he took up a position with the Government as General Supervisor of Works for the Public Works and Railways Department. As such, he supervised the erection of many school buildings, railway stations and other buildings. When Nicholson first arrived in Western Australia, he was employed by the Government to manage the harbour works being carried out at Fremantle. He then returned to private work and became one of the leading architects in Fremantle.¹¹

In 1910, Bertha Sophie Pinbaum entered into a lease with the Castlemaine Brewery for a period of seven years, initially, at a weekly rate of £10.¹² This lease was extended in 1917 and again in 1924 for a period of 10 years.

⁷ Certificate of Title, Vol. CXI, Fol. 135, Office of Titles, DOLA.

⁸ Certificate of Title, Vol. CL, Fol. 41, 25 May 1898, Office of Titles, DOLA.

⁹ *Melbourne Weekly Times* 10 September 1898, held in Railway Hotel file (728.5) at Fremantle Local History Collection.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Certificate of Title, Vol. CCXI, Fol. 117, Office of Titles, DOLA.

In 1910, a change in management warranted a write up in the *Evening Mail*:

The Railway Hotel – perhaps no man in the community is so well known to all classes as Mr. Wm Smith, the new proprietor of the Railway Hotel, North Fremantle, who was for so many years the popular purser on the Zephyr. During the short period of the new management, wonderful changes have taken place in the appearance of the hotel. It has been re-painted, renovated and re-furnished throughout. The billiard room has been re-fitted and the table (one of Alcock's best) is now in first-class order. Mrs Smith has charge of the catering and household affairs, so the comfort of boarders and patrons of the dining rooms is assured. Mr. Smith deserves every success in his enterprise, no expense having been spared in his endeavours to make the house popular, and so far the results have been highly gratifying. The hotel is just opposite the railway station, and anyone who feels disposed to break his journey to drop in and have a drink and chat with the genial proprietor will have no cause to regret it.¹³

In more recent years, the development of industrial uses has been the principal determining factor in the shaping of North Fremantle. This has been supported by the development and expansion of the port and railway and associated activities.¹⁴ The establishment of the oil storage facility for the Port in the late 1920s was also significant. It is interesting to note that the residential land subdivision from the 1890s has been maintained even though the houses have been removed and the area is now fully used for oil tank purposes.¹⁵ The severance of *Railway Hotel* and the late Victorian dwellings from the remainder of residential North Fremantle by the insertion of the railway reservation into a developed area is an example of the impact of the railway on the existing community.

On 10 May 1945, Bertha Pinbaum died and in February 1946, probate of her will was granted to Minna Gateman.¹⁶ The official transfer occurred in June 1947. In 1948, the property was transferred to Vincent Sidney McMullen, a hotel keeper in Northam.

In August 1972, North Fremantle Town Lot P37 being Lots 1 & 2 and part each of Lots 3 and 26, were transferred to Vincent and May Tippetts and Douglas Shave.¹⁷ In 1975, the undivided half share of the Tippetts was transferred to Douglas Shave became the sole proprietor.¹⁸

In 1975, City of Fremantle provided planning approval for the establishment of a car park on the south-east corner of the land, with access from De Lisle Street.¹⁹

Railway Hotel is a hotel with two very different 'characters'. On weekdays, it is primarily the local hotel for North Fremantle wharfies and truck drivers, as it has been for many years. On Saturdays, however, it has become well-known for traditional jazz, developing a strong following amongst jazz enthusiasts. When North Fremantle was a thriving suburb, *Railway Hotel* depended on the support of local residents. With the transition to an

¹³ *Evening Mail* 12 May 1910.

¹⁴ Melotte, op. cit., pp. 32-40.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁶ Certificate of Title, Vol. CCXI, Fol. 117, Office of Titles, DOLA.

¹⁷ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1328, Fol. 913, Office of Titles, DOLA.

¹⁸ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1328, Fol. 913, 12 December 1975, Office of Titles, DOLA.

¹⁹ City of Fremantle Planning & Development file, T15/44, 'Railway Hotel'.

industrial area it became popular with dock workers. However, as the numbers employed on the wharves declined, the management of the Hotel decided to expand into other areas. As a result, Saturday jazz sessions were introduced in 1976 and have proved a major draw card ever since.²⁰

In February 1981, City of Fremantle provided planning approval to reconstruct the street verandah, making use of posts.

In December 1981, planning approval was provided to extend the hotel with the extension of the lounge area at the rear. The additional area was required due to the popularity of the jazz sessions.²¹

In October 1989, the property was purchased by the company Arrowdale Pty Ltd.²²

In the 1990s, *Railway Hotel* was under threat from proposals incorporated in the Fremantle Regional Strategy. These included the establishment of a railway loop to service the north wharf and grain terminal.²³ In 1995, as part of the same strategy, *Railway Hotel* was considered to be in the way of proposed realignment of Port Beach Road.²⁴ Despite this the owner of *Railway Hotel* continued to maintain and improve the hotel and it remained a popular place for local workers and jazz enthusiasts.

In December 1997, planning approval was provided to repaint the hotel. Selection of an appropriate colour scheme was carried out in conjunction with the City of Fremantle and was completed in 1998.

In 1998, *Railway Hotel* was a finalist in the Australian Hotels Association Western Australia Awards for Excellence, in the 'Best Redeveloped Hotel' category.²⁵

In 1997, the owner incorporated a limited hours barber shop into an under utilised lounge area of the Hotel. The refurbished chairs came from the barber's shop that used to be next to the Fremantle Town Hall. Opened in August, the barber shop provided nearby workers with a quick haircut.²⁶

In January 1999, *Railway Hotel* continued to be used for hotel purposes, including accommodation. The ten available rooms were used by local workers who paid board on a weekly basis. In addition, a limited hours barber shop operated from the premises. Stan Lenton owned the place in the name of Arrowdale Pty Ltd.

Following the Interim Registration of *Railway Hotel* in April 1999, which had proceeded with the support of the both the local government and the owners, the Heritage Council received a petition of 430 signatures in favour of Permanent Registration of the place. At the same time, objections were raised by Fremantle Port Authority and Main Roads WA, as plans for road

²⁰ *Sunday Independent* 29 July 1984.

²¹ Stan Lenton, owner, conversation with Julia Ball, 25 January 1999.

²² Certificate of Title, Vol. 1851, Fol. 765, Office of Titles, DOLA.

²³ *Herald* 2 September 1994, p. 24.

²⁴ *Fremantle Gazette* 10 January 1995.

²⁵ Certificate held by Mr Stan Lenton.

²⁶ Stan Lenton, owner, conversation with Julia Ball, 25 January 1999.

and rail realignment in the area relating to the expansion of the port would require the removal of the hotel.²⁷

In 2001, Stan Lenton died, and ownership of the hotel passed to Brett and Margaret Lenton, Stan's brother and sister-in-law.²⁸

From 2002, discussions regarding the expansion of the port included a realignment of the railway to loop around the north of the hotel, allowing for its retention.²⁹

In March 2004, the place continues to operate as a hotel, offering a small amount of accommodation, and is owned by Brett Lenton and Andrew Gill.³⁰ Saturday jazz sessions continue to be held.³¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Railway Hotel, a single-storey Federation Free Style hotel, stands on the north side of Tydeman Road. A flat area of carpark wraps around the north and west sides of the building with steep banks rising up to higher land in each direction. To the west and north of the building are open areas used for storage of containers. Opposite on the south side of Tydeman Road are the fences of the Port Authority land.

The carpark is entered on the alignment of what was De Lisle Street and the plan of the hotel follows the acute angle formed by the alignment of the two streets.

The south and west elevations have parapeted cement red painted rendered brick walls concealing the corrugated iron roof. Each of these elevations is sheltered with a bullnosed corrugated iron clad green and ochre striped verandah roof supported on timber posts. Above the verandah roof is an ochre painted cornice and above that a plain parapet with a small coping. The parapet bears the hotel name in green lettering.

The north elevation consists of the rear view of the bedrooms and toilets recessed back on the left, the lattice enclosure of the beer garden in the centre, and the high wall of the latterly built lounge topped with a cornice with a small verandah return on the extreme right.

The main entrance is through timber framed glazed doors with sidelights and fanlight in about the centre of the south elevation. The entrance leads onto a hall measuring 7.0 x 2.0 metres with pilasters with plaster capitals supporting an arch with moulded voussoirs at the northern end.

To the west, the hall is open to the bar measuring 7.0 x 5.8 metres. This area has wide jarrah floor boards, red painted walls with a jarrah boarded dado, a timber bar counter and a pressed metal ceiling with a evaporative air cooler consol protruding from the centre.

²⁷ Correspondence from 1999 on HCWA file P2927.

²⁸ Memo, 27 August 2001, on HCWA file P2927.

²⁹ Correspondence on HCWA file P2927.

³⁰ *Fremantle Gazette*, 30 March 2004, p.2

³¹ Al Lakstins, regular jazz patron, phone conversation with Clare Schulz, March 2004.

The bottle shop lies west of the bar at the south west corner of the building. The room tapers according to the angle of the original streets and measures 7.0 metres by an average of 5.3 metres. The timber framed windows have steel security bars fixed to the inside face. The ceiling is pressed metal and the floor is of wide clear finish jarrah boards. There is a trap door at the south east corner of the room opening onto a timber ladder leading down to the cellar. The north wall is lined with the glass doors of the coolroom cabinets.

The cellar occupies the area below the bottle shop. The walls are of rubble limestone, the floor of rough concrete and the ceiling is the soffit of the bottle shop floorboards supported on 300 mm deep jarrah joists. At the west wall is a steeply sloping race contained in a niche with brick quoins set in the stonework at the corners. The cellar accommodates cooling motors.

The coolroom lies to the south of the bottle shop and opens onto a triangular space to the north which in turn opens onto the added-on lounge further north and onto the drive-in facility under the verandah roof of the bottle sales drive-in constructed on the west elevation. To the east of the triangular area are toilets.

To the east of the entrance hall are two rooms which have been thrown into one area by the removal of walls each side of a fireplace and chimney breast which now stands in the centre of the combined area. The area has clear finished jarrah floors, jarrah boarded dados, four panelled doors and a timber fireplace surround and metal firebox. The area is set up as a barber shop.

Through the arch to the north of the entrance hall is a passage running east-west with the kitchen and an office opening off it to the north. The walls are painted red with a brown marbled dado and the ceiling is lath and plaster without cornices. Wrapping around the west and north sides of the kitchen is a lounge area open to the bar on the south side and the added on lounge to the north. Between this area and the bar are the upper parts of walls which once formed the continuation of the east-west running passage. The area has wide boarded timber floors, red painted walls with jarrah boarded dados and Inter-War cornices.

At the east end of the east-west running passage is a door leading out onto a court with a lean-to verandah roof on the east, west and south sides sloping down to meet the walls of a brick toilet block in the centre. To the south of this court a door leads to a short passage serving four small bedrooms. This passage terminates in an unusual V shaped plan created by the truncation of the two southern most rooms. At the south-west corner of the court is a door leading into a continuation of the east-west running passage. This serves three larger bedrooms on the south side and three small bedrooms with attached bathrooms on the northern side.

The added-on lounge has a vinyl covered floor, red painted walls with a jarrah boarded dado plaster board ceiling with a scotia cornice and timber framed doors and windows. The area leads out onto a beer garden under a timber pergola on the east side. The beer garden has a brick paved floor

and brick barbecues. To the south of this area (north of the court) are more toilets.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The 'Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939, Southern Region, Western Australia' prepared for the National Trust of Australia (WA)³² identified only seven single-storey hotels within the greater Perth metropolitan area, all of which are located in the outer areas:

- Coogee Hotel, 1898, cnr. Cockburn Road and Beach Road, Coogee (solid limestone walls and corrugated iron roof); (P3648, Registered Place)
- Mahogany Inn, 1839, Great Eastern Highway, Mahogany Creek (rendered brick and iron); (P1693 Registered Place)
- Mount Helena Hotel, 1902., Keane Street, Mt Helena (rendered brick and iron); (P8562 Below Threshold April 2004)
- Oxford Hotel, 1908, Thomas Street, Chidlow (brick and iron); (P8563 Backlog 'No' January 2003)
- Sawyers Valley Tavern, c.1937, Great Eastern Highway, Sawyers Valley (face brick and rendered walls and Marseille terra cotta roof tile); (P8576 Backlog 'No' January 2003)
- Jarrahdale Tavern, 1886, Jarrahdale Road, Jarrahdale (iron stone footings walls, brick walls and corrugated iron roof); (P8491 MI Recommends RHP)
- Bullsbrook Hotel, n.d. Great Northern Highway, Bullsbrook (rendered brick and iron). (P14913)

The only other place in the HCWA database noted as having been designed by O.N. Nicholson is P0931 *Dalkeith House* in High Street, Fremantle, an excellent and intact example of a Federation Queen Anne style mansion with fine detailing. It is likely that examples of his work as a government architect also survives, but has not been identified as such.

13.4 REFERENCES

Ball, J. Kelsall, D. & Pidgeon, J. 'Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939 Southern Region, Western Australia', prepared for the National Trust of Australia (WA), November 1997.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is needed to accurately identify the date of construction.

³² Ball, J. Kelsall, D. & Pidgeon, J. 'Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939 Southern Region, Western Australia', prepared for the National Trust of Australia (WA), November 1997.