



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Meerilinga has importance to the people of Western Australia because it is a prominently located and particularly fine example of the widely appreciated Federation Queen Anne architectural style. The building's fine aesthetic qualities are specifically related to its elaborately decorated two-storey verandahs, circular spired turret, finely proportioned fenestration and unusual crown of slate roof tiles. (Criterion 1.1)

Its fabric, both internally and externally, reflects a superior level of material and finish. (Criterion 1.2)

The building and its associated trees are distinctive and form a strong identifying composition (landmark) on the Hay Street streetscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place is important for its role in the development of the Kindergarten movement in Western Australia. It is also important in demonstrating aspects of the development of West Perth as a suburb, being one of the first substantial buildings erected in the area. The origins of some West Perth street names are closely related to the place, for example Richardson Street and Emerald (Hill) Terrace. (Criterion 2.2)

Significance may also be derived from the site's association with prominent persons in Western Australian history. These persons include the first owner, Frederick Illingworth who was a prominent Parliamentary and business figure, subsequent owners, the Dymes family, and other well-known identities of Perth society such as Bessie Rischbieth and Harold Boas. (Criterion 2.3)

The building is a fine example of a substantial residence erected at the height of the Western Australian gold boom, and displays the high level of craftsmanship that was characteristic of this period. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Meerilinga is associated with the foundation of the Kindergarten movement in Western Australia and other operations related to early childhood work. The long association of the Kindergarten movement to the site and the vesting of the building to the children of Western Australia has strongly identified the building with that area of work. The place has a strong social significance to a large number of Western Australians who are presently associated with the place or have been in the past. (Criterion 4.1)

Further value may be attributed to the importance of the place with respect to development of West Perth's social character. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Meerilinga possesses exceptional architectural qualities. The building is considerably refined in its presentation, though was at the time of its construction definitely not unique in this respect. However, the loss of many comparable old buildings in Perth has heightened the value of those grand residences of the gold boom era in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Meerilinga is able to demonstrate in a tangible way certain aspects of West Perth's former character, specifically the presence and early consolidation of upper class residences. As such it is valuable in terms of the public's interpretation of the historical development of West Perth, and is particularly assisted in this function by its prominent location. (Criterion 6.1)

Intrinsically, the building is a fine example of a substantial residence erected at the height of the Western Australian gold boom. Its design and detailing are demonstrative of a lifestyle enjoyed by the upper-class in this State at that time. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Walls and roof are generally in good condition, although there is evidence of minor local failures. Window frames in the lee of the verandah are in fine condition, those on the north fair, and those on the exposed western wall generally poor. Interiors are generally well maintained, and little damage from water penetration or vermin is reported.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The overall integrity of the building is high, the fabric of a large percentage of the place surviving into the present time. The present functional requirements of the place are not greatly dissimilar to the former domestic functions, so the majority of internal modifications made have been reasonably sympathetic or reversible. Of note is the fact that some elements are missing, including mantelpieces identified as being of exceptional significance and door furniture, of considerable significance.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Throughout the building a large proportion of original fabric survives. However, the finish of this fabric has mostly been altered to a non-original state.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Palassis Architects: 'Conservation Plan Meerilinga, West Perth, Western Australia' (prepared for Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc, August 1996).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Palassis Architects: 'Conservation Plan Meerilinga, West Perth, Western Australia' (prepared for Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc, August 1996).

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence refer to Palassis Architects: 'Conservation Plan Meerilinga, West Perth, Western Australia' (prepared for Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc, August 1996).

13.3 REFERENCES

Palassis Architects: 'Conservation Plan Meerilinga, West Perth, Western Australia' (prepared for Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc, August 1996).