



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

Nurses' Memorial Centre is a fine example of a Federation Queen Anne style residence in Perth. (Criterion 1.1)

Nurses' Memorial Centre is important for its quality of architectural detailing and the craftsmanship demonstrated, particularly for the opulence of the interior of the ballroom and the use of terracotta accessories on the exterior of the buildings. (Criterion 1.2)

Nurses' Memorial Centre makes an important contribution to the streetscape of Kings Park Road because it is one of only two similar residences and provides a domestic scale and set back. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Nurses' Memorial Centre has a close association with contractor, William Henry Vincent who was a prominent member of Perth society at the time of the building's construction. The family firm (R. P. Vincent & Son) was involved in building a number of important public buildings in Perth, including *Supreme Court* (1901), extensions to *Government House* (1864, 1899), *Horseshoe Bridge* (1903) and *Royal Perth Hospital* (fmr *Nurses' Quarters*, 1909). (Criterion 2.3)

Nurses' Memorial Centre has a close association with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation who has occupied the building since 1960. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Nurses' Memorial Centre contributes to the West Perth community's sense of place as it is representative of the suburb's development in the early 1900s, after its initial subdivision in the 1880s. The suburb contained many fashionable and large houses for the wealthy including *Craigmore* in Kings Park Road and *Kendenup* in Hay Street west, which have since been demolished. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Nurses' Memorial Centre is one of only two intact examples of Federation Queen Anne domestic architecture remaining on Kings Park Road. (Criterion 5.1)

Although the buildings no longer serve their original domestic function, *Nurses' Memorial Centre* is a rare example, on Kings Park Road, of a way of life experienced in the fashionable residential area of West Perth at the turn-of-the-century. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Nurses' Memorial Centre is representative of the Federation Queen Anne style, common in Australian domestic architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

The buildings are in good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Alterations to the interior spaces of the buildings are minimal and, although the buildings no longer serve their original function, they retain a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Although part of the verandah to the residence has been enclosed, the enclosure does not interfere with the original timberwork of the verandah and could be easily removed. The buildings retain a high proportion of original exterior and interior detailing and have a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Nurses' Memorial Centre comprises two, single-storey buildings. The residence was constructed in 1899 as a family house, and the smaller building in 1910.¹ They were both built for Mr W. H. Vincent, contractor.²

The site was originally owned by Harry Ogborne who, in the 1880s, had one of Perth's largest liveryies which was located in St. Georges Terrace.³ Presumably Ogborne bought the land when the Altona subdivision, comprising lot H95, was first established, and then subdivided it and sold off lot 42 and portion of lot 43 to William Henry Vincent in August 1899.⁴

In the 1890s, farming, pastoral and mining wealth provided a prestige character to parts of the inner suburbs like southern East Perth and the high land of West Perth. The new architecture of the 1890s-1910 occurred in a context of change and saw the introduction to Western Australia of telephones, gas, lighting, electricity, reticulated water supply, sewerage, electric lifts, trains, trams, and the private motor car as well as, in building, a wide range of new building materials and construction techniques.⁵

The area of West Perth received a development boost when two large loans were taken out in 1896, by Perth City Council. With these two large loans the Council, on the recommendation of the City Engineer, began to remake all the existing roads, for it was felt that patching would no longer suffice. New roads were built to join West Perth to Subiaco, the most important of which was Brooking Road which was extended down the back of Mt. Eliza to Thomas Street. With Hay Street (west) it formed a major link between the town centre and West Perth and Subiaco. In 1901, on the occasion of the Duke of Cornwall's visit to Western Australia, Brooking Street was renamed King's Park Road, a fitting change, for at about the same time Perth Park on the top of Mt. Eliza was renamed King's Park.⁶

Residences such as those constructed for Mr W. H. Vincent held a particular place in Perth society. Such examples include J. F. T. Hassell's *Kendenup*, built in 1904-05 (demolished), in Hay Street west and the de Pledge family home *Craigmore* (demolished), on Kings Park Road. These larger houses

¹ Perth City Council Building Licence Ledger; Perth City Council rate books.

² Perth City Council Building Licence Ledger.

³ Stannage, C. T., *People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*, (Perth City Council, Perth, 1979), p. 133.

⁴ DOLA - C/T CXXXV/53.

⁵ White, J. 'Building in Western Australia: 1881-1939' in Pitt Morison, M and White, J (eds) *Western Towns and Buildings*, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979), p. 111.

⁶ *ibid.*, Stannage, p. 291.

were designed to reflect and symbolise their owners' eminent place in Western Australian society.⁷

William Henry Vincent was born in 1862, in Victoria, and he arrived in Western Australia in 1896 with his parents. Prior to his arrival he worked in his father's building firm (R. P. Vincent & Son) in Victoria and in the USA between 1886-88. In Western Australia, the family firm was involved in building the *Supreme Court* (1901), extensions to *Government House* (1899), *Horseshoe Bridge* (1903), *Royal Perth Hospital* (fmr Nurses' Quarters, 1909), and other commercial buildings. Vincent moved back to Victoria in 1914; however, he returned to Western Australia when his brother died and became managing director of McLeans, a company the family firm had bought. Vincent had a high standing in the community, being President of Master Builders' Association, Chairman of Children's Hospital Board and a member of the Weld Club, WA Club and WA Turf Club.⁸

Vincent's residence, constructed in 1899, comprised 'nine habitable rooms' and was 2,594 sq ft in size. The ballroom addition of 1910, the cost of which was £500, was designed by architect George McMullen.⁹ The two were linked by a roofed breezeway.

Since 1899, ownership of *Nurses' Memorial Centre* has changed hands four times: in 1919 to John Hubert Church and then to his wife after his death, in 1943 when it was sold to Harold Norman James who used it as a residence until he sold it, in February 1960, to the Royal Australian Nursing Federation who used the buildings for office accommodation.

This change of usage, from residential to commercial, was part of a wider change that saw the fashionable Perth residential districts, especially East and West Perth, decline as the central city changed its function and visual character. Residential buildings made way for commercial retail buildings, especially in St. George's Terrace. The central city became a less desirable residential area and affluent city dwellers moved to more salubrious areas such as Crawley Bay and Mount Lawley. The larger houses were often converted into commercial offices and in the 1960s and 1970s many were demolished to make way for multi-storied office buildings.

In 1994, *Nurses' Memorial Centre* continues to be used by the Australian Nurses' Federation as office accommodation and as a records repository for other nursing associations.

⁷ *ibid.*, Stannage, p. 186.

⁸ Erickson, R (ed), *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829 - 1914*, Vol. 5, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1986), p. 930.

⁹ Perth City Council Building Licence Ledger.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Nurses' Memorial Centre comprises two, single-storey buildings in Federation Queen Anne style.¹⁰ The original building, on the western boundary, was built as a residence, and an addition of a ballroom, housed in a separate building on the eastern boundary, was built eleven years later. The site also comprises an addition to the rear (c.1970) that does not form part of this assessment.

The buildings address Kings Park Road, a major arterial entry to the city centre. Formerly a prestige residential street, Kings Park Road is a wide, landscaped, four lane road that bounds Kings Park on the south and professional offices of the West Perth commercial precinct on the north. The site of *Nurses' Memorial Centre* is bounded by a right-of-way to the north and is surrounded by modern multi-storied commercial buildings. The two buildings comprising the *Nurses' Memorial Centre* occupy a smaller proportion of land that is typical of the surrounding redeveloped properties. They are set back from the building line, creating a forecourt which is now a bituminised car park servicing the Centre.

The buildings are asymmetrical in form, of red face-brickwork on limestone foundations with an ensemble of varied roof shapes. The buildings are linked by a roofed breezeway.

The exterior of the buildings features stucco dado bands with tuck-pointed brickwork to the street facades. The roof is covered in slate and its complex roof shape comprises ridges and hips with prominent subsidiary flying gables, over projecting bays to the street facade, and tall chimneys with brick corbels and potted terracotta tops.

Terracotta motifs decorate the ridge, hip caps and finials, and terracotta gargoyles feature as gable end accessories. Dormers echo the main gables with bargeboards and half timber and rough cast infill in the gable ends. The residence (1899), features two stucco battlemented parapets to the south and east elevation.

The buildings are protected by wide verandahs with turned timber posts, ornamental brackets and notched timber beams. The verandah to the residence is approached by stone steps with a stone balustrade. The breezeway connecting the verandahs features lattice infill. Carved vertical timber balusters decorate the verandah balustrades. The verandah floor is covered with terracotta tessellated tiles.

The windows are double hung, paired to the main south gable with leadlight fanlights. The windows of the smaller building feature decorative

¹⁰ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture, Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, (Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989), pp. 132-135.

leadlight panes to north, south and west elevations. Both buildings feature finely detailed entrance doors in timber panels. The entrance door to the residence features leadlight side lights and fanlight.

Timber trims feature throughout the interiors of the buildings. The detailing in the ballroom is more elaborate with fluted pilasters with composite columns and a moulded mantle piece to the fireplace. The hall features a decorative plaster frieze, at door head height, from which springs a curved ceiling finishing in the centre in a large, flat, ornamental section. The lintel soffit to the opening between the hall and the adjoining room is decoratively coffered.

In recent years, security screens have been fitted to all windows, and part of the verandah of the residence has been enclosed with aluminium windows. Since the building's occupation by the Australian Nurses' Federation, minimal alteration to the interior and exterior fabric has occurred with the building's conversion from residential accommodation to office accommodation.

The buildings are in sound condition and are currently occupied by the Australian Nurses' Federation as office accommodation.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition.