



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES- ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

12. 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.

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The Kalgoorlie Town Hall and Council Chambers is an impressive Federation Free Classical building, in a city possessing many fine examples of exuberant "gold boom" architecture.

The building is a significant component within the Hannan Street precinct and strongly contributes to this famous streetscape.

The Council Chamber and Mayoral Office form an impressive suite of municipal rooms. They display a wide range of decorative details, particularly the pressed metal ceilings.

The interior of the Town Hall is a grand civic space. The proscenium arch is of particular interest due to its size, shape and scale.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

An imposing and substantial municipal building, the Kalgoorlie Town Hall and Council Chambers demonstrates the wealth and civic pride of a community thriving on the gold boom in the early 1900s.

For over eighty years the place has continuously been associated with the major municipal, civic, social and cultural activities of Kalgoorlie.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is held in high esteem by the Kalgoorlie community as the venue of all major civic, social and cultural activities in Kalgoorlie.

The building, located prominently at the corner of Wilson and Hannan Streets, has over the past eighty years acquired social value as a city landmark.

5. RARITY

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

CONDITION

In a report (1989) on the condition of the building John Pidgeon refers to several areas at the top of walls and on some of the ceilings where water stains are evidence of water penetration.¹ The Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council has proposed replacing the roofing and guttering to solve this problem.

A Report on the Stage Area of the Kalgoorlie Town Hall (Looten Kendall Engineers, 1990) highlighted a number of backstage installations requiring upgrading or replacement. However, these items are predominantly mechanical fittings related to theatrical operations, which have been introduced on an ad hoc basis. Their condition impinges on the heritage value of the building in so far as they limit the effective operation of the Town Hall.

INTEGRITY

Having been continually used for its original purpose., the integrity of the building is high,

AUTHENTICITY

Apart from the 'bio box', a later addition which intrudes in to the space of the upper level foyer, the building has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The construction of Kalgoorlie Town Hall and Council Chambers had an uncertain and controversial beginning. Tenders were first called for the proposed new town hall at a special meeting of the Kalgoorlie Council in July 1907. The tender of a Mr Fairweather was found to be the lowest, the price being £15,989. However, as the limit for the project was £12,500 no tender was accepted and plans for a new town hall and council chambers were deferred.²

"The collapse of the endeavours of the Kalgoorlie Council to obtain the building of a town hall and municipal offices from either a first (remarks a Kalgoorlie paper), second or third prize designs, has induced some members to turn their attentions to another scheme for the erection of a substantial edifice at the corner of Hannan and Wilson streets. It will probably come before the Council in the

¹ Pidgeon, J. Architectural Evaluation for the Western Australian Heritage Commission - Former Kalgoorlie Town Hall & Council Chambers, August 1989

² Western Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal, (WAMBEJ) 6 July 1907, p.19

form of a suggestion that the town surveyor (Mr. C.W.James) should be entrusted with the task of preparing plans for the construction of a town hall, without municipal offices, upon the site in question, and that the cost of the projected building should not entail an expenditure of £8,000 or £10,000."³

In the weeks that followed there were various submissions and complaints by architects asking either for amendments to their plans to be reconsidered or their plans returned.⁴ The problems that plagued plans for the town hall led to discontent within the community. "A number of the residents of Kalgoorlie do not appear to want the hall built and with the general unsatisfactory way in which the whole matter has been conducted, and the uncertainty of any tender being accepted, it is doubtful if contractors will trouble themselves to send in prices unless they have a definite assurance that the lowest tender will be accepted."⁵

James engaged Mr. Tom Roberts, an architect, as his assistant and proceeded in the preparation of new plans for the town hall. In an article in the Western Argus, details are given of Mr James' plans for the town hall and council chambers. Economic considerations played heavily on the design of the building and for this reason there was little embellishment. "The plans show that the Hannan-street front will be of the classic style of architecture, whilst the side elevation to Wilson-street will be of ordinary brick, worked with cement bands with the exception of a "return" in Wilson-street, just round the corner from Hannan-street."⁶ Tenders for the work closed on 9 September 1907.

In the second round of tenders for the construction of the hall, four quotes were received.⁷ The successful tenderer was Messrs.Williams, O'Donnell and Co., of Kalgoorlie, who agreed to complete the work in twelve months at a price of £12,296. This decision also controversial, as the tender price was not the lowest received. Mr Fairweather, of Subiaco, tendered a price of £12,227, to be completed in eleven months. The result being, "a strong protest is to be made about the action of the council and unless a very satisfactory reply is given the contractors on the coast will be very wary indeed of tendering for goldfields work."⁸

Even the decision about which bricks to use in the construction caused division. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council decided to utilise local labour and products wherever possible. This incurred the displeasure of the Builders and Contractors' Association of Perth and other people who had been pleased with the original decision.⁹ However, it was decided to go ahead using Kalgoorlie bricks, thus supporting local industry. The foundation stone of the Town Hall was laid on 6 November, 1907 by the mayor Mr Cummins in the presence of His Excellency the Governor.

The steady progress of the construction of the Hall was interrupted by damage caused by a severe storm, which hit Kalgoorlie around the 24 February, 1908. By this time, 80,000 bricks had been laid and the focus of attention was construction of the stage. The walls of the stage had been brought up to a height 60 feet (18.5m) and the girders were in position. However, the storm caused the collapse of this back wall. The wall had to be rebuilt and the additional cost forced the

³ WAMBEJ, 6 July 1907, p.19

⁴ WAMBEJ, 13 July 1907 p.20 and WAMBEJ, 3 August 1907, p.19

⁵ WAMBEJ, 31 August 1907, p.19

⁶ WAMBEJ, 7 September 1907, p.19

⁷ WAMBEJ, 14 September 1907, 19

⁸ WAMBEJ, 14 September 1907, 19

⁹ WAMBEJ, 28 September 1907, p.20

contractor to seek financial assistance from Kalgoorlie Municipal Council in completing the contract. The contractor and the council could not come to terms over the cost over-run and subsequently, the council resolved to complete the contract. The council engaged Mr. W.Park to act as supervisor.¹⁰

Tenders accepted for the furnishing of the building included Messrs. McKenzie and Co for linoleum at £83.15s., Messrs. J.W.Fimister and Co. for hair carpet for the hall at 8s.6d., per yard, and Messrs Montgomery Bros. for the dress circle carpets at £45.19.8 were accepted.¹¹

The Kalgoorlie Town Hall and Council Chambers was officially opened on 8 September, 1908.¹² As with the Boulder Town Hall, the opening ceremony of the Kalgoorlie Town hall was attended by a large section of the community. His Excellency Governor, Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford, again officiated at the opening of the Hall, an indication of the economic and political status of the Goldfields. As a commemorative gesture, the mayor presented the Governor with a specially finished gold key. A newspaper reported the opening as being a spectacular event. "At a given signal the electric lights, which flood the building with their brilliant rays, were turned on and the plush stage curtain was raised, revealing a splendid scene. The handsomely decorated interior was thronged with spectators. The stage was set as a drawing-room. Just as the curtain rose West's Orchestral Band struck up the National Anthem and everyone present stood up until the strains had died away."¹³

The Governor, in his speech, made mention of the benefits of the newly erected facilities, "I am sure the councillors and officials will reap the advantages of comfort in the transaction of business in their new offices, while the general public will be enabled to enjoy the conveniences for viewing the entertainments to be provided by the artists visiting here, who will also have facilities to assist them in their work."¹⁴ At the conclusion of the formal speeches afternoon tea was served and a musical program enjoyed.

Over the years the Kalgoorlie Town Hall has been the venue for all manner of musical, vaudeville, and variety performances. Dame Nellie Melba and Percy Grainger played to Goldfields audiences in the Town Hall. Theatrical productions of the Melbourne based J.C.Williamson company, travelling to Perth by rail, stopped over at Kalgoorlie to entertain the Goldfields population. The Town Hall was the home of the Goldfields Musical Society from 1927 to 1953, and in the fifties Edgley and Dawes regularly toured theatrical companies in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.¹⁵ Throughout its existence the Town Hall has continuously hosted important Goldfields civic and social events.

Although the staff of the City of Boulder-Kalgoorlie now work in a different municipal office, the Town Hall continues to be used for Council meetings and the Mayor maintains the mayoral chambers, thus continuing the municipal function of the building.

¹⁰ Kalgoorlie Miner, 9 September 1908, p.6

¹¹ WAMBEJ, 22 August 1908, p.20

¹² WAMBEJ, 9 November 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 12 September 1908, p.20

¹³ Kalgoorlie Miner, 9 September 1908, p.6

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Information provided by theatrical archivist at HMT, Ivan King (Fax, 27/8/93)

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The design and layout of the town hall and council chambers, by Mr. C.W. James and Mr. Tom Roberts, are described in detail in an article in the Western Argus. Particular features are described below:

- "The entrance to the theatre, or rather principal hall of the building, is made the main feature of the front. Piers of Ionic capitals are conspicuous on the ground floor, with piers of Corinthian capitals on the second, the whole terminating in one large pediment."
- "The main hall is 77ft. (23.6 m) in length, 56ft. (17.2m) in width, and 34ft. (10.4m) from floor to ceiling. The walls are picked out in wood mock panels, with plaster cornices and other ornamental designs. The ceiling is "coved" at the sides, with a centre cove in the ceiling to afford ample ventilation during the hot months of the year, the latter being the movable portion of the roof. The ceiling is of stamped steel. The opening for the proscenium is no less than 28ft. (8.6m) in width and 24ft. (7.35m) in height. It is in finished steel."
- "At the corner of the building, on the top floor is the Council Chamber, 36ft.8in. (11.25) by 21ft.7in. (6.6m) by 18ft. (5.5m), with a "coved" ceiling for ornamental effect."
- "The main vestibule, crush lobby, and corridors' flooring is laid down with granolithic, whilst the major portion of the rest of the building is in jarrah. The yard and escape passages and the conveniences at the rear of the hall are also laid down in jarrah. Kalgoorlie-made bricks will be mostly employed in the construction of the edifice. Coolgardie bricks only being used in special parts."¹⁶

The biograph box, introduced at the back of the dress circle, intrudes into the space of the upper foyer, but generally the interior of the building remains largely intact.

Paddy Hannan's Statue

Housed in the foyer of the Kalgoorlie Town Hall is the famous statue of Paddy Hannan, which has particular aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value. (see separate documentation attached) The statue, commissioned in 1929 to commemorate the finding of the first nugget of gold on the Golden Mile by Paddy Hannan, was originally located on the corner of Hannan and Wilson Streets, Kalgoorlie. However, in May 1982 it was decided that the statue required restoration and protection. To ensure its survival the statue was positioned in the Town Hall foyer and a bronze replica replaced the original in its Hannan Street location.

13.3. References

¹⁶ Western Miner, quoted in WAMBEJ, 7 September 1907, p.19 Further details of the construction are to be found in this article.

Western Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal, (WAMBEJ) 6 July 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 6 July 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 13 July 1907 p.20

WAMBEJ, 3 August 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 31 August 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 7 September 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 14 September 1907, 19

WAMBEJ, 14 September 1907, 19

WAMBEJ, 28 September 1907, p.20

Kalgoorlie Miner, 9 September 1908, p.6

WAMBEJ, 22 August 1908, p.20

WAMBEJ, 9 November 1907, p.19

WAMBEJ, 12 September 1908, p.20

Kalgoorlie Miner, 9 September 1908, p.6

Information provided by theatrical archivist at HMT, Ivan King
(Fax, 27/8/93)

Western Miner, quoted in WAMBEJ, 7 September 1907, p.19
Further details of the construction are to be found in this article.

Pidgeon, J. Architectural Evaluation for the Western Australian Heritage Committee - Former Kalgoorlie Town Hall & Council Chambers, August 1989

DOCUMENTATION OF PLACES
FOR ENTRY IN THE
REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

1. **Data Base No.** 1282
2. **Name.** Paddy Hannan's statue
3. **Description of elements included in this entry.** Life size statue of Paddy Hannan seated with a water bag which was designed as a water fountain.
4. **Local Government Area.** City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
5. **Location.** Town Hall foyer. A bronze replica stands on the original site, corner of Hannan and Wilson Streets.
6. **Owner.** City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
7. **Statement of Significance of Place (Assessment in Detail)**

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The statue was commissioned by the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council to commemorate the finding of the first nugget of gold reputedly by the prospector Paddy Hannan in 1893 on what was to become the famous Golden Mile.(1) Hannan died in 1925. The statue was unveiled on Foundation Day 1929, the centenary of the foundation of Western Australia and is located on the Town Hall corner of Hannan and Wilson streets.

The sculptor responsible for the statue was John Dominic McLeod (also referred to as MacLeod). Born in Victoria, McLeod came to Western Australia in 1906. Various reports indicate that he was active in the arts community, giving art lectures and exhibiting paintings. McLeod was also responsible for designing the plaque on Perth's Town Hall which represents the scene of "The Foundation of Perth painted by George Pitt Morison. The plaque was also unveiled on Foundation Day 1929.(2)

McLeod had originally designed a statue of Hannan standing on a plinth holding a piece of gold-veined quartz in one hand and pointing with the other to the site where the nugget was found. However, this plan did not eventuate as the council appointed a citizens committee to hold a contest to determine the best design. "It was won by a schoolboy who suggested a drinking fountain with the water coming from Paddy's water-bag, and Hannan was to be seated on a lump of quartz from the lowest level of Kalgoorlie's deepest mine."(3)

Over the years, however, the statue has suffered at the hands of vandals and through general wear and tear. Ironically, McLeod had wanted the statue mounted on a plinth to protect it from this very problem. In May 1982, it was decided that the statue required restoration and protection. To ensure its survival, it was moved to a position in the Town Hall foyer and a sculptor was commissioned to produce a bronze replica that could replace the original in its Hannan street location.(4)

Cottesloe sculptor Peter Gelenscer was commissioned to carry out the work. The refurbishment of the original included having its arms and other parts removed to undertake inside repairs and strengthening, a boot flattened out by people climbing on his knee was filled out, a dent in his right shoulder was taken out and the original colour of the statue restored.(5)

Casting of the bronze duplicate was done in seven pieces in Fremantle's E & G Foundry and is substantially heavier than the original.(6) The replica was placed on a chunk of schist as the original stone, taken from the 600 metre level of the Mt Charlotte mine, was also moved to the Town Hall foyer. The official ceremony marking the return of the original statue, and its replica, to Kalgoorlie was carried out on 15 February 1983.(7)

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The production of the original statue was carried out by the Wunderlich company in Perth. The process is described in Building and Construction. "From the clay model, matrix have to be taken in plaster of Paris - in this case dozens were taken and from these matrix dies have to be made from which in turn dies are cast. At this stage, Wunderlich craftsmen shape the heavy sheet bronze roughly into each metal die so as to ensure that the metal is not stretched, thus depriving it if its thickness. After this process each die is placed under the drop hammer, a matrix is cast in hard lead and antimony alloy and the final stage of shaping is then reached by thunderous blows of the drop hammer. When each piece had under gone this process, they are trimmed to a fraction of an inch so that when assembled no joints are visible and the result is a perfect copy of the original clay model, so perfect in fact that the canvas of the water bag, the weave of the hat band, boot laces etc., are as pronounced in the heavy metal as in the real thing."(8)

Other statues by Wunderlich using similar methods include the South African War Memorial in Kings Park, the AMP group designed by Pietro Porcelli which now stands in the Hall's Museum, Guildford, and the Fremantle Soldiers Memorial.(9)

The Perth branch of the Wunderlich company came into existence in May, 1909, when the local manufacturing establishments of Massey & Co., and Splatt, Wall & Co. were acquired, and a Wunderlich plant for the production of Art Metal Ceilings and Architectural Metal Work was installed at East Perth.(10) The company became well known not only metal ceiling manufacture, but also for works produced in wrought and hammered bronze. Shopfront installations also became an important part of Wunderlich's work. The expertise of the Wunderlich Company meant that a whole range of work was able to be carried out in Western Australia. No longer did work have to be sent overseas if an elaborate or difficult design was required.

The use of the statue, as a water fountain, highlights the importance of water to the continuing existence of the goldfields, as distinct from the more usual heroic statues of persons on pedestals.

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.

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The statue has a high degree of significance as it has become a recognised and well-known landmark in Kalgoorlie, and the State in general.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

The statue can be seen as a celebration of the discovery of gold and of the life and times of the goldfields.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The Paddy Hannan statue possesses a high degree of scientific value with regards to technical achievement. The construction process utilised methods that required a high degree of specialised skill, usually only available overseas.

4. SOCIAL VALUE

Paddy Hannan's statue has a high degree of social value in that it is representative of the discovery of gold in the area and thus contributes to the community's sense of place.

5. RARITY

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

CONDITION

Because of the softness of the metals, the statue became worn and dented and also the subject of vandalism. A decision was made to have the original statue 'refurbished' and moved into the foyer of the Town Hall and a replica made in bronze. The restoring of the statue and the bronze replica was undertaken by Perth sculpture Peter Gelencser in 1982.

INTEGRITY

The refurbishment of the original statue and its re-location to the Town Hall foyer have ensured its continued protection.

AUTHENTICITY

It should be noted that the original statue is no longer in its original location. A bronze replica is now on the original site.

REFERENCES

National Trust - Recorded 01/02/76

1. It should be noted that there is some dispute as to who actually first discovered gold in what was to become Kalgoorlie. Hannan was with two friends, Tom Flanagan and Dan Shea on the day when gold was first found in the area. Various reports attribute the discovery to each of these men.
2. Information held by Robyn Taylor - Art Historian
3. West Australian, 9 April 1983, pp.34-35
4. Daily News, 11 February 1983, p.3
5. *ibid.*, and West Australian, 14 February 1983
6. Daily News, 11 February 1983, p.3
7. West Australian, 14 February 1983
8. Building and Construction, 13 September 1929, p.23
9. *ibid.*

10. Forty Years of Wunderlich Industry 1887-1927, Wunderlich Publicity Department, Sydney, 1927, pp.179-180