



# 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)

- 6.2 Establishing Schools

### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 402 Education and Science

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The northern end of the Main Building has aesthetic significance for its materials, massing of its roofs, interior volumes and as an example of the work produced by the Public Works Department under the control of George Temple Poole at the end of the nineteenth century. (Criterion 1.1)

*York Primary School* provides an integrated design incorporating buildings of various periods united by a commonality of form, purpose and materials. (Criterion 1.2)

*York Primary School* makes a positive contribution to the historic townscape of York. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The progressive additions and alterations to *York Primary School* reflect demographic changes in the state, and in York specifically, caused by prosperous economic times of the gold boom years. (Criterion 2.2)

The Howick Street site is the location of the first purpose built school in the district of York (demolished 1896). (Criterion 2.2)

*York Primary School* represents the development and provision of public education in country towns in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

The former teacher's quarters are significant as an example of on-site accommodation provided to teaching staff in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century at government schools. (Criterion 2.2)

The northern end of the Main Building is significant for its original design, which incorporates the standard planning of hall and gallery schools in Western Australia of the late nineteenth century. (Criterion 2.4)

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\* 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, NSW, 1989.

### 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

*York Primary School* has the potential to yield information pertaining to the development of York and education in the state, which contributes to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Western Australia. (Criterion 3.2)

The northern end of the Main Building demonstrates some degree of technical innovation in the roof structure over the main hall. (Criterion 3.3)

### 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*York Primary School* has a long and close association with the local community. Most members of the York community have been students, parents, teachers and/or members of the P & C Association. This value is demonstrated in the publication of the book, *From Early Beginnings – a History of York’s Schools* by the York District High School Parents and Citizens Association in 1981. (Criterion 4.1)

The place contributes to the community of York’s sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

The authenticity of the northern (1896) section of the Main Building of York Primary School is uncommon, demonstrating aspects of planning, detailing and internal fixture no longer practiced or used in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

### 12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The northern end of the Main Building is representative of Western Australian Government hall and gallery schools constructed from the 1890’s to World War One. (Criterion 6.1)

The place as a whole is representative of the progressive development of schools established in the nineteenth century to cater for increased populations and new methods of teaching. (Criterion 6.2)

The place represents the work of the Public Works Department from 1896 to the mid-twentieth century. The northern end of the Main Building is representative of Public Works Department design supervised by George Temple Poole. (Criterion 6.2)

### 12. 3 CONDITION

Overall the *York Primary School* group is in fair condition and from an external investigation, appears to be structurally sound. Although the place is vacant, it seems that some routine yard maintenance may have been undertaken in recent times, but no building maintenance is evident.

The main building is in fair to good condition on the exterior. The paint is flaking off the painted corrugated iron roof and the gutters, but otherwise the roof seems to be sound. The fleche appears to be in good condition. The bargeboards are weathered and in some parts the timber is rotted. The render detail on the chimneys is deteriorated and damaged and some elements are missing. The timber verandah posts are also weathered and have rotted at the juncture with the concrete base. The face brick walls are in

good condition except for some surface deterioration on the front of the entry, evidence of inappropriate mortar replacement in a few small areas, damage from a service intrusion in a small area on the north wall, and a significant vertical crack between a window and ground level on the west wall. The timber window frames are weathered, particularly on the north wall, and the paint is flaking off the rendered windowsills. The concrete verandah floor on the north end of the east frontage shows evidence of significant cracking and previous repairs, and there is movement in the ceiling linings of the verandah in that vicinity.

The ablution block is in poor to fair condition. The roof is fair. The gutters and downpipes are in very poor condition being rendered unusable by extensive rust and debris. Rising damp is evident around the perimeter of the building to a height of approximately 0.900 metre. There is also evidence of previous mortar repairs in that area, with the grey cement mortar exacerbating the problems. The rear (west) wall has been rendered to a height of 0.900 metres.

The lunch shed is in a fair condition. The roof is fair. The gutters and downpipes are in very poor condition being rendered unusable by extensive rust and debris, and the lack of discharge outlets at ground level. The perimeter support posts are weathered and the timber bases of some posts have rotted at the juncture with the concrete base, particularly where there is no outlet for the associated downpipes. The rear (west) wall shows evidence of replacement fibro sheet lining.

The cottage is in a fair condition. The roof is fair. The gutters and downpipes are in very poor condition being rendered unusable by extensive rust and debris, and the lack of discharge outlets at ground level. The verandah posts are weathered and rotted at the bases. The replacement timber verandah floors have subsided around the outside edges. The brick walls are in fair condition although there are cracks under one of the front windows. The weatherboard walls are weathered, and there is graffiti on the rear (west) wall.

The hall is in a fair condition. Roof sheets need refixing, and the gutters and downpipes are in poor condition with evidence of rust and debris, and several elements of the downpipes missing in various locations. The walls are in fair condition with evidence of vertical cracks from most windows, cracks in the render at the rear (west) and the face of some of the bricks on that wall disintegrated. The timber window frames and other timber elements, including the doors, are weathered throughout. The timber-framed flywires on the windows are mostly damaged.

The classroom at the rear of the hall is in very poor condition. It shows extensive evidence of vandalism and most of the window and door openings are boarded over. Remaining panels of asbestos wall cladding are smashed. Graffiti is evident on most surfaces of the exterior. There is also evidence of fire damage on the verandah floor.

#### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The original intention of the place as a school was lost when the school was relocated in 1998. It is currently unused. There are a variety of uses that might ensure its security and viable conservation while being compatible with the place's significance. The place has a moderate degree of integrity.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The fabric of the northern end of the Main Building and the former Principal's Quarters are authentic to the late nineteenth century period as in close to its original state-accretions and redevelopments have been confined to small areas of the early structures and there are only minimal accretions. Other structures were developed later. The original land the school occupied is significantly smaller than the extent the place now occupies. The place has a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Conservation Plan York Primary School and Former Convent School (York Public Library)', prepared for the Building Management Authority in April 1995.

Key sections used: 2.0 Documentary Evidence (p10-62), 3.0 Physical Evidence (63-90).

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Conservation Plan York Primary School and Former Convent School (York Public Library)', prepared for the Building Management Authority in April 1995

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Conservation Plan York Primary School and Former Convent School (York Public Library)', prepared for the Building Management Authority in April 1995

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

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### **13.4 REFERENCES**

Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Conservation Plan York Primary School and Former Convent School (York Public Library)', prepared for the Building Management Authority in April 1995

Kevin Palassis Architects, 'York Primary School Conservation Plan' prepared for Contract and Management Services on behalf of Education Department of Western Australia, Draft, October 2000.

Condition report provided by Laura Gray, May 2001.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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