



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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)

- 3.22 Lodging people
- 4.3 Developing institutions
- 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare
- 8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 306 Domestic activities
- 404 Community services and utilities
- 406 Religion

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Victoria Square Cottages Group is a good example of simple workers' cottages in which the individual component buildings have been enhanced by visually pleasing characteristics in the decorative treatment of their front elevations and the repetition of these elements across the group establishes a grander scale for the place than could be produced by a single entity. (Criterion 1.1)

The visual quality of the landscape is enhanced by the descending terracing of *Victoria Square Cottages Group*, which reflects the natural fall of the land away from the centre of the square and the dominant element of St Mary's Cathedral. (Criterion 1.3)

Victoria Square Cottages Group contributes to a precinct of nineteenth century structures associated with the Roman Catholic Church around Victoria Square and is also an extension of the eastern end of the Murray Street East Precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

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

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Victoria Square Cottages Group is part of the suburban residential development associated with the expansion of Perth at the turn of the twentieth century, which occurred largely as a result of the discovery of the gold in Western Australia in the 1880s and 1890s and the huge increase in population due to the goldrushes. (Criterion 2.1)

From the 1890s until the 1970s, *Victoria Square Cottages Group* served as rental accommodation for workers and their families. (Criterion 2.2)

Victoria Square Cottages Group has been owned by the Roman Catholic Church since 1906 and from the early 1970s began to be used by various of its social welfare and religious service organizations, demonstrating associations with the Church's development of Victoria Square that dates from the 1840s through to the mid twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

Victoria Square Cottages Group was completed for John Handran Smith in 1897-98 at Perth Building Lot A20, which was owned by members of the Smith family from 1849 to 1902, and was the result of the second of two different building campaigns at the property, both of which aimed at providing housing for workers and their families. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Since the early 1970s, *Victoria Square Cottages Group* has been associated with the provision of social welfare and religious services, such as the offices of the Catholic Mission and Catholic Immigration. (Criterion 4.1)

Victoria Square Cottages Group has social value as a remnant of the former residential nature of the immediate central Perth and East Perth areas, as evidenced by its identification in the City of Perth Heritage Inventory and its classification by the National Trust of Australia (WA). (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Victoria Square Cottages Group is rare as an example of a remnant nineteenth century residential group in the City of Perth. (Criterion 5.1)

Victoria Square Cottages Group is rare as an example of row housing, a style of residential development that was never as common in Western Australia as in other States. The repetition of matching elements produces the effect of terrace or row housing, although the dwellings were constructed as individual structures. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Victoria Square Cottages Group is representative of the sub-division of large land holdings in the city centre and subsequent sale to private owners for investment housing to service the sudden growth in population brought about by gold boom. (Criterion 6.2).

12.3 CONDITION

Victoria Square Cottages Group is in sound condition. Some deterioration is clearly evident to the brickwork (which displays some intrusive mortar repairs), and the masonry and cast iron front fence, which all require maintenance in the short to medium term. Roof sheeting and external timber work was repaired in 2003 and 2004-05. Internally, many of the rooms feature at least superficial cracking in the plasterwork with a few examples where the appearance is of a more structural nature and may require monitoring or further investigation. Walls at the rear of 23 Victoria Avenue require stabilisation works, as they are collapsing, but they are currently in a safe condition.¹

12.4 INTEGRITY

Victoria Square Cottages Group has moderate integrity. The original residential use has been adapted for office accommodation requiring the addition of new services and facilities. Although there have been modifications to the structure and fabric to accommodate this new use, the original layout of the dwellings is still discernible in varying degrees between the cottages and has been a mostly compatible function.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Victoria Square Cottages Group has moderate authenticity and is highly representative of their original form retaining a good degree of the significant fabric, which contributes to their aesthetically pleasing appearance.

¹

Structural engineers advice to Archdiocesan Finance Office, in letter from AFO to HCWA, 21 July 2005, on HCWA file P02121.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document is based on “Victoria Square Cottages, Perth, Conservation Plan” prepared by Naomi Lawrance, architect, for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Victoria Square, Perth and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in January 2003; with additions and/or amendments by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

Key sections used: Documentary Evidence pp.7-23; Physical Evidence pp.43-50; Comparative Analysis pp.74-76.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to “Victoria Square Cottages, Perth, Conservation Plan” prepared by Naomi Lawrance, architect, for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Victoria Square, Perth and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in January 2003.

In 2005, *Victoria Square Cottages Group* continues in use as offices for various services and departments of the Catholic Church. In 2005, the occupants of the cottages are the Archdiocesan Finance Office at numbers 23, the Catholic Migrant Training Centre at numbers 25 and 27, and Natural Family Planning and the St Mary’s Restoration Project at number 29.²

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to “Victoria Square Cottages, Perth, Conservation Plan” prepared by Naomi Lawrance, architect, for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Victoria Square, Perth and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in January 2003.

In 2003 works were carried out at cottages 25 and 27 to replace poor-condition roof cladding with Tuscan Red pre-painted corrugated galvanized steel, with repairs to stabilise existing barges, cappings and finials, and painting as necessary. In 2004-05, the same works were undertaken for cottages 23 and 29.³

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information, refer to “Victoria Square Cottages, Perth, Conservation Plan” prepared by Naomi Lawrance, architect, for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Victoria Square, Perth and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in January 2003.

Particular comparison should be made to the *Brookman and Moir Streets Precinct*. (P3992). It consists of two streets in Perth comprising 58 semi-detached residences and one detached residence in two types of the Federation Queen Anne style. They are constructed of limestone and brick with corrugated-iron roofs in 1897-98, and a shop at the corner of Moir Street and Forbes Road built in 1940. Brookman and Moir Streets are, relatively intact, modestly-scaled, inner city, residential streets from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with visual overlays reflecting adaptation through time by various owners.

² Clare Schulz, phone conversation with Teresa Carol of Archdiocesan Finance Office, 15 February 2005; letter from AFO, 21 July 2005, on HCWA file P02121.

³ Building applications and approvals on HCWA file P02121; Clare Schulz, phone conversation with Teresa Carol of Archdiocesan Finance Office, 15 February 2005.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

“Victoria Square Cottages, Perth, Conservation Plan” prepared by Naomi Lawrance, architect, for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Victoria Square, Perth and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in January 2003.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
