



## 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)

- 7.6.1 Developing local government authorities
- 8.1 Organising recreation
- 8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

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

- 401 Government & politics
- 405 Sport, recreation & entertainment
- 407 Cultural activities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is significant as a competently designed and built two-storey building which, principally in its outline and massing, displays the aesthetic characteristics of the Federation Free Style, while the large areas of unrelieved white painted smooth rendered walling tend to give the building a more modern inter-war appearance. Later additions to the building were carried out in the Late Twentieth Century Post-Modern Style. (Criterion 1.2)

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is a landmark as a two-storey building without a verandah, constructed at the main intersection in the town. The white colour contributes greatly to its landmark qualities as it stands within a streetscape of mainly red coloured Federation period buildings with verandahs extending over the footpath (Criterion 1.3)

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* combines with other buildings near the intersection of Steere Street and Hampton Street, which contribute to the formation of a significant, largely intact, rural town streetscape developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* in 1935 is illustrative of the general feeling of optimism at the end of the Depression

as the world economy experienced a period of prosperity and growth. (Criterion 2.2)

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was constructed following an increase in population and consolidation of the Bridgetown district, which had occurred during the 1920s, due to the agricultural boom. (Criterion 2.2)

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was designed by W. H. Jefferis, architect of the Plantagenet District Hall, Boyup Brook Town Hall and Cunderdin Town Hall, and was constructed by W. & W. C. Moyes, whose family business, Moyes Hardware, operated in Bridgetown for many years. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

-----

### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is highly valued by the local community for its association as the Bridgetown district's social and cultural centre from 1935 to 2003 as a venue for picture shows, balls, dances, public meetings, displays, fundraising, wedding receptions and school concerts. (Criterion 4.1)

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* contributes to the local and wider community's sense of place as a landmark in the town of Bridgetown and for strong social and historical associations with the town. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is an uncommon example of a public building designed in an adaptation of the earlier Federation Free Style rather than in the Inter-War architectural styles popular at the time. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is good example of purpose built local government offices and hall constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is in good condition. The building benefits from a regular programme of maintenance work.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is of high/moderate integrity. The building continues to fulfil its original intended purpose as the offices for the local authority and a hall in providing community facilities such as the library.

The bank facility has been removed from the corner of the building due to the expanding requirements of the Shire.

## **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The overall authenticity of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is moderate/low. The level of authenticity varies throughout the building. Zones such the town hall and the south façade remain largely intact. On the other hand, areas of the building that were affected by the 1989 works have been changed almost completely. Although the new additions include references to the original building in their design, the additions have caused the loss of the original articulation of the west façade. This form of massing complimented the south façade and was one of the defining characteristics of the composition. It was a device used for fitting a large building into the scale of the existing streetscape. The new arrangement of the interior west part of the building, which provided the additional office space to that area, has overwhelmed the original arrangement of spaces.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Alan Kelsall, Kelsall Binet Architect.

The plans of the building and the Comparative Information refer to the Conservation Plan – Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre, draft 2002, prepared by John Pidgeon Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is a substantial two-storey brick and iron building (1936; 1982; 1989-90) constructed for the Bridgetown Roads Board in the inter-war period, blending some Federation Free Classical style characteristics with more contemporary motifs.

In 1852, Assistant Surveyor A. C. Gregory made the original survey of the Bridgetown area. By 1857, Edward Hester and John Blechynden had taken up large pastoral holdings in the district and in 1862, John Allnutt began to establish an orchard, which was to lay the foundations of the fruit growing industry in the area. In April 1868, a town site was surveyed and the town of Bridgetown was gazetted on 9 June 1868. The Bridgetown district came under the jurisdiction of the Resident Magistrate of the Wellington District until 1871, when the Wellington Road Board was formed with headquarters in Bunbury. Bridgetown, while in the Wellington Road Board District, had its own seven-member road committee.<sup>1</sup>

Public gatherings were held at the Blechynden family home, 'Bridgedale'. In 1871, a schoolroom was built on Steere Street on part of Lot 39, and meetings and Methodist and Anglican Church services were held there. The site, comprising 1.08 acres (4050 square metres) was gazetted Reserve 7244 on 19 October 1900.<sup>2</sup> By 1872, the town comprised a school, police station, a general store, a small hotel and two houses. The population increased slowly in the 1870s, with the pastoral industry and timber cutting the predominant industries. The fledgling fruit growing industry continued to have problems due to its distance from markets.<sup>3</sup>

The schoolroom soon proved too small for public gatherings, so fundraising began for a Mechanic's Institute. The site chosen was on the corner of Steere and Hampton streets, on a quarter-acre portion of the school site, Reserve 7244.<sup>4</sup> The foundation stone of the Mechanic's Institute was laid on 14 April 1878. The building, comprising a hall, reading room and library, was designed by the Government Engineer and built by local resident,

---

<sup>1</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, *Conservation Plan: Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, draft 2002, pp. 5-14; *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1968*, Shire of Bridgetown, 1968, p. 3-4; *Western Australia Government Gazette*, 9 June 1868.

<sup>2</sup> DOLA, Reserves Index Enquiry, Reserve 7244.

<sup>3</sup> *Western Australia Government Gazette*, 16 June 1868; *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1968*, Shire of Bridgetown, 1968, p. 3-4; May, John, 'Recollections', *Blackwood Times*, 16 March 1934; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 8-12.

<sup>4</sup> Certificate of Title, Vol. 364 Vol. 65, 9 May 1896; DOLA, Reserves Index Enquiry, Reserve 7244.

Joseph Smith. It was constructed of locally made bricks with a shingle roof.<sup>5</sup>

Bridgetown continued to develop with a new police station and lockup constructed in 1880, a courthouse (mid 1880s) and a Post and Telegraph Office (1886). The town also had a large general store and two hotels. In 1887, the Boyanup-Bunbury railway line was constructed and the Nelson Roads Board District, with headquarters in Bridgetown, was formed from part of the Wellington Roads Board District.<sup>6</sup>

The Boyanup-Bunbury railway line was connected to the South West Line in 1893, and the line was extended to Donnybrook in 1893 and Bridgetown in 1898. A daily rail service provided reliable and rapid transport to market, which was necessary for the development of the fruit and dairy industries in the district, with the large goldfield market providing added impetus. The breaking up of the Nelson Road Board (later Bridgetown Road Board) into seven separate districts between 1890 and 1905, was an indication of the growth of the region during this period. A Roads Board office was built in Steere Street c. 1905, while in 1908, Sunnywest Dairies was formed by a group of farmers and the Mechanic's Institute hall was enlarged to double its original size.<sup>7</sup>

The 1900 to 1914 period was a time of major land settlement. Families continued to move into the district and farms and businesses developed, along with supporting facilities. Bridges were built over the Blackwood River, the railway line was extended south to Jardee, churches and a convent school were built and a new government school was constructed.<sup>8</sup> In the 1920s, there was another boom period for agriculture, as the world economy improved following the end of World War One and the Group Settlement scheme brought more settlers to the surrounding areas.<sup>9</sup>

The Mechanic's Institute was by now considered 'far outmoded and unsuitable for the needs of the district', and in 1926, the Road Board asked the trustees to consider building a new and larger hall on another site.<sup>10</sup> The trustees and members felt this was beyond their resources, and offered to hand over the property to the control of the Road Board. The transfer of the title to the Bridgetown Road Board required a special Act of Parliament - the *Bridgetown Lot 39A Act, 1927* - due to the terms of the original grant to the Mechanic's Institute. The one proviso was that a hall had to be built on the site.<sup>11</sup>

Perth architects Herbert Eales and Eustace Cohen were commissioned to draw up plans for the building in 1927, but the work was not undertaken at this time. On 17 November 1933, a referendum was held on the proposal

---

<sup>5</sup> *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1968*, op cit, p. 7; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J., *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 216-217; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J., op cit, pp. 216-217; *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1968*, op cit, p. 7; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 11, 14-16.

<sup>8</sup> This was built on the original school site, but whether the 1871 schoolroom was retained is not known at this time.

<sup>9</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 14-16.

<sup>10</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 11, 14-16; *Souvenir History of the Building: The Official opening of the renovations and additions to the Bridgetown Civic Centre*, Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, 4 December 1982.

<sup>11</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

that the Road Board borrow £6,000 for the purpose of a new hall and Board offices. This proposal was based on the Eales and Cohen plan and an alternative site, which they believed had better potential for future expansion. The proposal was defeated by 161 votes to 135.<sup>12</sup>

The Depression most likely played a big part in the outcome of the referendum and the Roads Board was not deterred by the result. The Board was also taking advice from retired Albany architect W. H. Jefferis, who suggested that the Mechanic's Institute site should be used but that the building be a two-storey construction. Jefferis drew up plans for *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* in 1935, and the Board advertised its intention of borrowing £7,000 for construction of the building, which was to include a hall, Road Board offices, restrooms and banking chambers for the Commonwealth Bank.<sup>13</sup> The Bank had offered to take a lease on the banking chambers for five years with right of renewal at a rental of £2-10-0 a week plus a ten shilling per week allowance toward the caretaker of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*. Kanzler Bros, who ran the picture shows in the Mechanic's Institute, offered to pay £3-10-0 for use of the hall on Saturday nights and £2-10-0 for any weeknight. The Road, Health & Vermin Boards were to be charged £2 a week for office accommodation and the Water Supply Department was to be charged ten shillings a week. These rentals were expected to cover most of the interest charges on the loan.<sup>14</sup>

Residents within the Bridgetown Road Board District were prepared to accept the new arrangements for construction of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, without recourse to another referendum. By this time, there were clear signs that the Depression was coming to an end and future prospects for the district were looking good. The dairy industry, which was a major industry in the district, was beginning to reap the benefits of State Government support and investment in the late 1920s, although this came too late for many who had gone into dairy farming in the Group Settlements on the eve of the Depression.<sup>15</sup>

The Road Board authorised the calling of tenders on 28 June 1935.<sup>16</sup> The successful tenderer was Smallwood & Lawson, but their tender relied on recycling a certain amount of material from the Mechanics' Institute building, which had been valued by the Board at £430. The contractors found, on inspecting the existing building, that there was less re-usable material in the place than anticipated and after some negotiations with the Board regarding a revised price, they withdrew their tender. The second lowest tender was from local builder, W. & W. C Moyes, who were awarded the contract on 23 August 1935, with a tender price of £6,266.<sup>17</sup>

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was constructed in two stages. Kanzler Bros had requested that they be allowed to continue leasing the Mechanic's Institute building and that it be allowed to remain on the site until

---

<sup>12</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

<sup>13</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

<sup>14</sup> Bridgetown Road Board Minutes, 10 April 1935, SROWA, AN299/2, ACC 1317, Item 106, 30-9-1932 to 25-9-1935.

<sup>15</sup> Gabbedy, J. P. *Group Settlement*, UWA Press, Perth, 1988, Part 2, pp. 133-134, 268-270.

<sup>16</sup> Bridgetown Road Board Minutes, 28 June 1935, Item 106, op cit.

<sup>17</sup> Bridgetown Road Board Minutes, 9, 16 & 23 August 1935, Item 106, op cit.

the new hall was completed, or for as long as possible. This was agreed to by the Board, with the result that the hall of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, which was sited immediately east of the Mechanics Institute, was completed before construction of the remainder of the building commenced.<sup>18</sup> The initial function held in the hall was Kanzler's picture show on 22 January 1936. The hall was furnished to seat 450 people, with upholstered chairs arranged in a central row of fifteen seats wide and two outer rows, each five seats wide.<sup>19</sup>

The foundation stone for *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was laid on 6 February 1936, by Bridgetown Roads Board chairman, W. P. Scott. He read an address, which had been previously given by John Allnut at the laying of the foundation stone for the Mechanics' Institute additions in 1908. A copy of Allnut's speech had been found in a bottle under the building during demolition, together with several coins including one dated 1844, which had been placed under the building when it was first built in 1877.<sup>20</sup> The laying of the foundation stone marked the beginning of construction on the second stage of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*.<sup>21</sup>

Bricks for *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* were made locally by 'a Mr DeLandgraff' on the property of Don Walters. According to contractor William Moyes, they were the best bricks ever made in Bridgetown and a credit to the makers.<sup>22</sup> The final amount paid for construction of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was £6,773-15-7, due to extras. It was claimed that Jefferis:

[A]ppeared to design in fairly broad principle only and numerous points of fine detail became subject to dispute with the builders, evidenced by the many additions and alterations authorised by the Board during construction.<sup>23</sup>

The contract was a turning point for the Moyes family. Building work in Bridgetown had been slow during the Depression and the Moyes had decided to move to Manjimup to improve their employment prospects. With the contract for *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* in hand, they remained in Bridgetown, and fifty years later the family-run Moyes Hardware was still operating in the town.<sup>24</sup>

The official opening of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was held on 15 July 1936. W. P. Scott officiated and was accompanied by Hobart Tuckey MLC, C. I. Doust MLA, W. H. Jefferis, William Moyes and Roads Board vice chairman H. J. Machin. Alfred Doust of 'Woodlands' declared the place open. Children from the local State and Catholic schools were given a half-day holiday for the occasion. At 6.30pm, about forty official guests were entertained at a dinner at the Freemason's Hotel. This was followed by a grand ball in *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, at which music was provided by the six-piece Perth orchestra of Ron Moyle. Tables for bridge

<sup>18</sup> Bridgetown Road Board Minutes, 28 June & 23 August 1935, Item 106, op cit.

<sup>19</sup> *Nelson Advocate*, 17 January 1936, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Nelson Advocate*, 17 January & 7 February 1936, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> The exact date of demolition of the Mechanics' Institute has not been ascertained, but occurred sometime between November 1935 and early January 1936, according to advertisements and items in the *Nelson Advocate*.

<sup>22</sup> *Nelson Advocate*, 17 January 1936, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

<sup>24</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

and cards were available for those who did not wish to dance, and an excellent supper was provided, catering for six sittings.<sup>25</sup> It was claimed that *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* had been 'hurried to completion' to accommodate the wedding of Mr Malcolm Scott and Miss Ozanne. Malcolm Scott was later to represent Western Australia as a Senator.<sup>26</sup>

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* comprised Roads Board offices, a large Hall, a ladies rest room and a separate office on the ground floor corner. The corner office was provided with a strong room and was leased to the Commonwealth Bank. A large polished jarrah table was constructed for the Board Room by local craftsman J. Kalish, at a cost of £19.<sup>27</sup> There were problems with acoustics in the Hall, which required the assistance of a sound expert, and the acoustics were improved in the short term.<sup>28</sup>

From the date of completion, *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* immediately became the most important social centre of the district and was in almost constant use. One of the main uses was for the showing of motion pictures, and a full house was not uncommon. The biggest box office success in the district was Bill Haley's 'Rock Around the Clock', which was held over for a second week, and the biggest single movie night was 'A Town Like Alice', starring Peter Finch, when 700 people packed the hall. Organisations such as the Red Cross, St John Ambulance Association and the Country Women's Association rented the Hall for their functions. Functions and events including balls, dances, public meetings, displays, fundraising, wedding receptions, repertory club performances and school concerts were held in the Hall, while the affairs of the district were managed in the local government offices. The caretaker of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* for almost forty years was Mrs Nan Hardie.<sup>29</sup>

After World War Two, large areas of new land and some larger farms were acquired by the State government and subdivided for Soldier Settlers under the War Service Land Scheme. This Scheme was generally more successful than the Group Settlements of the 1920s, and coupled with post-war migration, significantly increased the population of many rural areas of Western Australia. The 1950s were also a period of high produce prices, similar to the agricultural boom of the early to mid 1920s that followed World War One.<sup>30</sup>

Under the *Local Government Act, 1961* Bridgetown Roads Board became Bridgetown Shire Council. The Shire continued to occupy the offices in *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, but was in serious need of more office space. In 1963, when the Commonwealth Bank broke its lease of the corner office three years before the lease was due to end and moved into their own building in Hampton Street, the Shire was happy to take over the vacated rooms.<sup>31</sup>

---

25 *Nelson Advocate*, 24 July 1936, p. [9].

26 *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

27 *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

28 John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 20. No date is known for this installation.

29 *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 20; *Nelson Advocate*, various issues.

30 Ghosh, R. N., 'Economic development and population growth in Western Australia since 1945', In Stannage, C. T. (ed) *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, 1981, pp. 267-293.

31 *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 20.



When Bridgetown celebrated its centenary in 1968, the population of the town had reached 1,600.<sup>32</sup> In 1971, the Bridgetown and Greenbushes Shires amalgamated, creating the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes with headquarters in Bridgetown. With an increased area to administer, the offices in *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* were in need of modernising and enlarging, and the entire building was in need of upgrading. Problems of lack of space, lack of parking and access had to be overcome. Various proposals were considered but cost or other considerations meant they were not proceeded with. Demolition of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was not one of the options. One proposal was to demolish the old courthouse on the adjoining site (east) and build new offices for the joint occupation of the Shire and the Public Works Department (PWD). The courthouse had occupied part of the school buildings in 1956, after the State School moved into new premises in another part of town. There had been other additions to the school site over the years, including premises at the rear occupied by the Lands Department (1911), and the site was also occupied by the R & I Bank and the Water Supply division of the Public Works Department after 1956. The Bridgetown Public Library occupied the old courthouse for some years prior to 1982.<sup>33</sup>

After lengthy negotiations, the PWD withdrew from the proposal for new joint offices on the site and the Council asked the Government for control of the entire site from Hampton Street east to the railway line. This was granted and a Crown Grant in Trust was issued for the land, which was designated Bridgetown Lot 888 with an area of 2,964 square metres.<sup>34</sup>

The buildings on the old school site were demolished and architectural firm Iris Rossen and Associates was engaged to design extensions and alterations to *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*. A contract for the work was let to Bunbury firm, Perkins Bros, with a tender price of \$214,800. The work was carried out under foreman Bevan Buswell. The main work included a new Lesser Hall, Gallery, toilets, restroom and kitchen adjoining the main Hall and on the same level. *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was completely renovated, with conversion of the original Lesser Hall, kitchen and restroom into offices for the Shire. The former Commonwealth Bank offices were converted for the occupation of the library, which had been using temporary premises rented from Wesfarmers since having to vacate the old courthouse. On the first floor of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, the Council Chambers were enlarged, renovated and refurbished. A Committee Room, for committee and informal meetings of the Council, was constructed where the original Council offices (former Roads Board offices) had been situated.<sup>35</sup>

A car park for approximately 40 cars, with landscaped surrounds, was established on the eastern side, and landscaping and paving were installed on the north side of the site. This work was undertaken by the Shire, and other local tradesmen were involved in specific works. The polished jarrah

---

<sup>32</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 22-23.

<sup>33</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit; Certificates of Title Vol. 364 Fol. 65, 3 June 1982 & Crown Grant Vol. 1639 Fol. 240, 9 March 1983; DOLA, Reserves Index Enquiry, Reserve 7244; John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

table, made for the Board Room in 1936, had continued to grace the Council Chambers and in 1982 it was extended and repolished by another Bridgetown craftsman, David Derrin.<sup>36</sup>

The newly renovated *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was opened on 14 December 1982 by the Deputy Premier, the Hon. E. C. Rushton, MLA, Minister for Transport and Emergency Services. The official opening was followed by afternoon tea and in the evening a Gala Opening Ball was held, with supper provided by the Anglican Ladies Guild.<sup>37</sup>

In 1989-1990, further additions were made to *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*. This work was designed by Lynne Sheen & Associates and Perkins Bros again undertook the construction work. Structural engineers were Scott Furphy Pty Ltd. A second floor was added on the Hampton Street side of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, with extensive alterations to the administration areas and closure of the corner entry to the building. These additions were opened by Ian Taylor, MLA in 1990.<sup>38</sup>

Other changes to *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* include the installation of a strip metal acoustic ceiling in the Hall and the addition of the town clock, which faces the intersection of Hampton and Steere streets, and was added in memory of Mr and Mrs L. E. Walter of 'Peninsula'. The date of these changes is not known.<sup>39</sup> Alterations since 1990 include the installation of a ramp to the Steere Street entrance for disabled access; removal of one canopy from the corner of the building, where it had formerly covered the corner door, and two from the Steere Street frontage from above the entrance to the Shire Offices and the entrance to the Town Hall; and, the more recent addition of a lean-to roof over the first floor balcony facing Hampton Street. A carport has been erected at the rear of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* for the use of senior Council staff.<sup>40</sup>

The projectors in the bio-box were restored by Trevor Mudge and films were shown regularly in the Hall in the latter years of the twentieth century, which was part of the general revival in movie going in the 1990s. The Hall has also been used by community groups for aerobic classes and badminton.

In 1996, *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was entered on the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places. Management recommendation for the place is given as 'high level of protection appropriate'.<sup>41</sup>

In 2002, the Art Deco Society presented the Shire with a heritage award for its care and maintenance of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, defined by the Society as an art deco heritage building. This could be a reflection of the 1989-90 additions, which 'give a sense of belonging in the Inter-War Functionalist style'.<sup>42</sup> The Shire is currently considering options to

---

<sup>36</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

<sup>37</sup> *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

<sup>38</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 24. Exact date of this opening has not been ascertained.

<sup>39</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 20. No date is known for this installation.

<sup>40</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 24.

<sup>41</sup> Heritage and Conservation Professionals, *Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places*, May 1995, Entry no. 12, pp. 71-73.

<sup>42</sup> John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, p. 76.

relocate their offices, as *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* no longer fulfils Council needs.<sup>43</sup> The Council has commissioned John Pidgeon Architect to prepare a conservation plan for *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*.

In 2003, *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* continues to function as the Shire offices and public and community centre of Bridgetown.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is a substantial two-storey masonry building that is now the offices and community hall for the Shire of Bridgetown/Greenbushes, constructed in the inter-war period, blending some Federation Free Classical style characteristics with more contemporary motifs.

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* stands at the corner of Steere and Hampton Streets, the main intersection in Bridgetown. The south side of the building faces across Steere Street to the two-storey Freemasons Hotel and a parade of shops with verandahs that cover the footpath. The western side of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* faces across Hampton Street to the two-storey Bridgetown Hotel. This hotel also has shops beside it. The Federation period post office stands to the north of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*.

In the vicinity of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* both streets slope, in Steere Street from east to west, and in Hampton Street from south to north. The sloping site was a significant factor in the planning of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*. The slope of the site particularly affects the arrangement of the entrances that serve the various parts of the building.

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is the only building on the site. The façade of the building is modulated by the use of recessive bays, but generally the building is set against the rear edge of the footpath. A new Lesser Hall was erected in 1982 and this addition stands to the east of the original building. The addition is attached to the original building by a glass-roofed corridor that runs between the two buildings for the length of the original hall.

A bituminised car park stands on the eastern end of the site between the new Lesser Hall and the railway line.

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is a two-storey building which in its outline and massing displays some of the aesthetic characteristics of the Federation Free Style. However, uncharacteristically, the surface treatment has been simplified, particularly by large areas of unrelieved white painted smooth render, which give the building a more contemporary, Inter-War, appearance. Later additions to the building were carried out in the Late Twentieth Century Post-Modern Style. The 1982 Lesser Hall is a simply composed rectangular building. It has red coloured, face brick walls and a corrugated iron gambrel roof. The roof has extended overhangs on the

---

<sup>43</sup> *Manjimup-Bridgetown Times*, 20 February 2002.

south and east facades which act as integral sunshades for the windows on these sides.

When built in 1936, the building had a 'U' shaped plan consisting of an east and a west wing separated by a narrow light well, connected at the south end by a narrow wing containing the entrance lobby. The building fulfilled a range of functions, each housed in a different part of the building. To a degree, the building was designed to give each section its own identity while achieving unity through the consistent use of materials throughout. The building was articulated in its massing with the three connected blocks clearly expressed. The double height hall was housed in the east wing or block. The central block, which stood at the intersection of Steere and Hampton Street, contained a branch of the Commonwealth Bank on the ground floor and the Roads Board Offices above. The northwest block, which formed the end of the west wing, contained the Lesser Hall, which was the equivalent of one and a half stories high.

In 1989 the building underwent major alterations so that the ground floor of the west block now contains the reception areas and the library. The works also included the enlargement of the upper level to provide accommodation for the Shire offices. These new works extended above the original Lesser Hall, that had been located in the north west corner of the building. This extension caused the demolition of the upper part of the original Lesser Hall, including the removal of the gabled wall that had originally formed part of the west facade. The original articulation of the west façade was largely lost because of the 1989 works.

The south façade of the building is largely original and is composed of the corner block and the south face of the east wing (the hall). The two elements are separated by a slightly recessed central bay. The end wall of the hall has a parapetted gable buttressed at the corners by tower like forms. These towers are topped by brick balustrading set between smooth rendered piers capped by a face brickwork soldier course. The wall is divided horizontally by two bands of materials: a face brickwork base about 2700 mm high and the upper part of the wall, which is of painted smooth render. The parapet has a brick coping and areas of patterned terra cotta tiling embellish the area of otherwise unrelieved render. A set of double, tongue and groove, timber doors are set on the centre line of the hall. The bio-box for the hall is located directly above the doors. The bio-box projects about 900 mm from the face of the building. The original projecting section was removed recently and replaced by the current element, which is of lightweight construction with a band of aluminium windows.

The main entrance to the building is housed in the central bay of the facade. Because of the sloping site, the entrance is raised about a metre above the level of the footpath. There is a set of steps and a ramp leading to the door. These run across the façade and are faced by a low brick balustrade wall. The entrance contains two pairs of timber, stained lead light, glazed doors. The entrance doors are housed within a recessed porch that is given prominence by a slightly projecting first floor balcony. The balcony is supported on two pairs of stylised rendered columns standing on brick plinths. At first floor level the balcony is edged by brick balustrading set between rendered piers with soldier course copings. The door opening to

the balcony contains a single door with side light windows and a fanlight. The door is timber panelled with a glazed upper panel.

The corner block of the building is truncated, with slightly projecting bays on the west and south sides and another at the splayed corner. Each bay is articulated by a narrow panel of walling. The entrance to the former banking chamber was set within a recessed opening in the corner bay. The recess is formed partly by the entrance, which is set back within the bay, and partly by the portico that is applied to the face of the building. The upper part of the portico incorporates a small balcony that is similar in detail to the balcony above the main entrance. Because of the 1982 alterations to the building there is no longer an entrance in this location and the former doorway now contains a fixed window. The steps that used to serve the entry have been removed. The base of the block rises to ground floor windowsill level. The base consists of red coloured face brickwork sitting on a plinth of sandstone rubble. Above the base the wall is white painted smooth render. The walls are parapetted with face brick copings. The parapet of the central bay repeats the motif of the balustrading.

Most window openings within the block are rectangular and contain double side-hung casements with top hung awnings above. The one exception is the small timber framed, lead light awning window set in the wall above the windows of the former banking chamber.

The northwest block was originally composed so as to express the gabled west end of the Lesser Hall. This part of the building underwent extensive alterations and additions in 1989 that included the removal of the gable; this change coupled with the addition of new stylistic elements has given the façade a strong Late Twentieth Century Post Modern Style appearance.

The west façade of the building progresses down Hampton Street in a series of projecting steps. The north west block steps forward of the corner block by about 1.5 metres and the bay within the south west block steps forward a further 1.5 metres. There are two entrances to the north-west block from the footpath. In addition, there is a covered walkway that runs along the north side of the building formed by the overhanging upper floor. This is supported at the outer edge by concrete columns. The balustrading to the stairs is typical of the brick balustrading used throughout the building.

One of the entrances to the northwest block is set within the south-facing wall, formed by the step in plan. An external staircase leads up to the entrance doors, which are under a stylised portico consisting of square rendered piers and a flat fascia with a face brick coping.

The façade of the northwest block is informally composed. The main element, a projecting bay, is located towards the north end of the block. The south corner of the bay forms an entrance porch and is reached by a set of steps placed against the south side of the bay. The steps are similar in design to other external stairs and balconies on the building. The first floor of the bay forms a balcony, which has a lean-to roof. The roof is of timber construction and is supported at the outer edge by three pairs of timber posts, standing on a solid balustrade. A pair of double timber framed glazed doors open onto the balcony.

A stylised form of aedicule is applied to the wall to the south of the projecting bay. This aedicule is formed by pilasters supporting an entablature that has above it a thin form of pediment. The lower part of the aedicule is original. There is a circular-headed window opening, set between the pilasters, at ground floor level. A semicircular window is contained within the pediment. All other window openings within the block are rectangular and house either double or triple side hung casements with top hung awnings above.

The wall construction of the block is consistent with other parts of the building and comprises a face brick base, which includes a stone plinth, and smooth finished painted render wall above. The render is enriched by a number of patterned terracotta tiles. The wall has a flat parapet with face brick coping. A moulded stringcourse runs at parapet level. A form of broken stringcourse runs at, approximately, the sill level of the upper floor windows.

The north façade is composed as two distinct parts. The west half is rendered and shares the same aesthetic characteristics as the alterations carried out on the west side of the building in 1989. The upper part of this façade is walling containing equally spaced windows. The ground floor consists of the colonnading, supported on a row of stylised columns that is set under the building. The east half of the facade is formed by the gable end of the town hall. The wall is of face brickwork and the length of the wall is divided into three bays by brick buttresses.

A new Lesser Hall building was constructed in 1982. This building runs along the east side of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* causing it to partly obscure the east side of the town hall. It is a single-storey brick and iron construction freestanding building that stands to the north of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*. A glazed walkway runs along the north face of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* and abuts the side of the Lesser Hall building. The walkway serves as the main entrance and as an antechamber for the town hall of *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* and the Lesser Hall. The east wall of the town hall is arranged as a series of six bays formed by brick piers. The four inner bays contain high-level windows.

The main entrance to *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is off Steere Street and is set within the central bay of the south façade of the original part of the building. The entrance doors lead into the entrance foyer. The foyer measures about 5.5 by 6.5 metres with a ceiling height of about 2.9 metres. The east wall of the room contains a set of double doors that lead through to the town hall. A carpeted ramp on the west wall leads northward down to the library located at the Hampton Street level. There is a dogleg staircase against the north wall. The half-landing level of this staircase is at the level of the Shire offices, which are above the ground floor level library. The staircase then continues up to the council chambers, which are at the corner of the building. A niche in the southeast corner of the foyer contains a cast-iron spiral stair, which used to lead to the bio box that is at high level on the south wall of the town hall. The top of the stair has now been closed off.

In the foyer, clear finished jarrah is used in the construction of the stair balustrading, a display cabinet in the northeast corner and a Word War Two honour board at the south end of the east wall. The ceiling is lined out in

panels with painted battens and is edged by a decorative art-deco cornice. The ceiling contains a rectangular ceiling rose.

The ramp from the foyer descends to the reception area for the ground floor offices and to the library. The library is a modern fit out and stands in the northwest part of the building. The room is 12 metres by 8.5 metres with a 2.75 metre ceiling height. The foundation stone of the Mechanical Institute (1903) has been mounted on the south wall. A series of five metre wide offices overlook the colonnade that runs along the north side of the building.

The reception area is off the west side of the base of the ramp. There is a door in the south wall that opens into the office area, situated in what used to be the banking chamber. The former banking chamber is rectangular in plan with an indentation corresponding to the truncated corner at the southeast corner of the building. The former bank strong room is against the south wall of the room. The original plaster ceiling, complete with decorative moulded elements, remains.

The upper floor offices are a modern fit out. The area is planned with an open central area edged by offices arranged around the external walls of the building. The office area measures about 16 metres by 15 metres and has a 3.16 ceiling height. The walls are of painted plaster. The ceiling is of suspended acoustic tiling with flush mounted fluorescent light fittings. The floor is carpeted and the partitioning is of plasterboard on studwork.

The Council Chambers is in the southwest corner of the building. An opening in the east wall of the room contains a vinyl concertina door leading to the Committee room. The ceiling height is 3.12 metres. The walls are of painted plaster with a clear finish jarrah picture rail. Doors and windows are generally painted except for the entry door, which is of clear finished jarrah. The door leading to the balcony at the southwest corner of the building is leadlight glazed. The ceiling is of suspended acoustic ceiling tiles with flush mounted fluorescent light fittings. The concrete floor is carpeted. The walls are of painted plaster.

The Committee Room measures about 6 metres by 4.25 metres and the southwest corner of the room contains a strong room. Finishes are the same as the Council Chambers. A door in the south end of the east wall opens onto the catwalk that leads around to the bio-box situated in the south wall of the town hall.

Double doors off the east side of the entrance foyer lead to the town hall. The town hall can also be entered on the east side from the glazed walkway that runs between the town hall and the new lesser hall.

The town hall is 30 metres long, including the stage area, by 13.5 metres wide. From the proscenium to the back wall the stage is 6.5 metres deep. The stage is at the north end of the room. There are small dressing rooms in the northeast and northwest corners of the stage area. The proscenium arch has a decorative frieze.

The springing line of the acoustic metal strip ceiling is 5.5 metres above floor level. The ceiling has a faceted profile; the sides lined on the rake and the central portion is flat.

The walls have a painted plaster finish. Acoustic material has been applied to the south wall of the room above door head height. The floor is of 110 mm wide, clear finished jarrah boarding.

The bio box is located at high level centrally within the south wall of the room and projects about 1.5 metres into the room. The bio box is reached by the catwalk that leads from the doorway in the committee room. The bio box contains early film projection equipment.

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* has undergone two major programmes of work. The 1982 work involved the construction of the new Lesser Hall and a glass roofed walkway running along the east side of the town hall. This work also involved the conversion of the self-contained unit at the southwest corner of the building that had been occupied by the Commonwealth Bank into the library.

The 1989 work was extensive and involved alterations to the ground and upper floors. Most significant was the addition of a second floor above the northwest corner of the building and the former light well. The work also included the relocation of the library to the position it currently occupies.

The masonry external face of the bio-box was demolished in the late 1990s and was rebuilt of lightweight construction

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is in good condition. The building benefits from a regular programme of maintenance work.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Local government offices and halls are almost invariably situated on prominent intersections in the centre of their respective town, and *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* conforms to this pattern. It occupies the site formerly used for the Mechanic's Institute, which was itself the main social venue for Bridgetown for many years.

Public halls and Roads Board offices formed part of a single structure in many country towns, the office requirement being comparatively modest at the turn of the twentieth century. This combination continued in many towns when new halls and offices were built. As a measure of community pride, a single substantial building, with the convenience of town administration and event facilities under one roof, was preferred over several lesser buildings.

The State Register includes a number of public buildings constructed around the turn of the twentieth century which contain hall and office functions, including: *Albany Town Hall & Council Chambers* (1888, Place 01306); *Menzies Town Hall & Shire Offices* (1896-1901, Place 01559); *Kalgoorlie Town Hall & Council Chambers* (1908, Place 01306) and *Boulder Town Hall & Offices* (1908, Place 00184). These places are all from an earlier period of development to *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*.

Following the struggles to become established, interrupted by World War One, rural economies flourished in the 1920s, with many local government offices and halls built or enlarged at this time. The construction of some others, including *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, was delayed by the Depression.



*Bruce Rock Council Chambers* (1929, Place 0323) was constructed as a two-storey Road Board Office at the front of the 1920 hall and replaced the smaller 1920 Board offices. The place was built as a two-storey brick structure in Inter-War Georgian Revival style. In 1971, the hall at the rear was replaced with new administration offices and a new hall constructed on the adjoining site.<sup>44</sup> *Bruce Rock Council Chambers* is in good condition, and has a high level of integrity and low to moderate level of authenticity.<sup>45</sup>

Other municipal halls and offices built during the inter-war period include *Katanning Town Hall Buildings* (Place 3960), a complex of buildings in various styles and periods. The two-storey Katanning Town Hall building was constructed in 1927 in Inter-War Chicagoesque style and has offices on the upper floor. The place is in good condition, and has moderate to high integrity and high authenticity. The place is entered on the State Register and is classified by the National Trust.

*Beverley Town Hall* (1938, Place 00154) comprises offices, main and lesser hall and former picture garden. It was built in Inter-War Functionalist style. It is a single-storey building with double-storey bio box. The place is in good condition, and has retained a high degree of integrity and authenticity. The place is interim listed on the State Register and classified by the National Trust.

Mullewa Town Hall and Shire Offices (1936); Morawa Town Hall and Lesser Hall (1937), Narembeen Public Hall, Mukinbudin Memorial Hall (1935) and Nungarin Shire Office (1936) were all built in the 1930s and are entered on their respective municipal heritage inventories.<sup>46</sup>

The majority of these buildings are designed in the Inter-War styles popular to the period in which they were constructed, while *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* was designed in Federation Free style, considered to be a reflection of the period in which the architect, W. H. Jefferis, had trained.<sup>47</sup> Jefferis also designed several other local administration buildings and halls.

*Plantagenet District Hall*, Mt Barker (1927, Place 02281), is of similar design and size to the Hall in *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, but has no attached offices. Both the Plantagenet and Bridgetown halls have a stage at the north end and a bio box on steel columns over the entrance at the south end. *Plantagenet District Hall* had a new foyer and toilets built across the front (1952), which cover the lower part of the original façade. The vaulted ceiling profile, although lined with strip metal for acoustic purposes, can still be seen in the *Plantagenet District Hall*, while this profile has been lost in *Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* due to later work.<sup>48</sup> The *Boyup Brook Town Hall* (1936, Place 00224) is a single-storey construction with attached offices but only one hall. Architect John Pidgeon has described it as 'more akin to the mechanics institute and earlier road board buildings'.<sup>49</sup>

---

44 *Bruce Rock-Corrigin Post*, op cit, 11 January 1929.

45 Heritage Council assessment documentation.

46 Heritage Council database.

47 *Souvenir History of the Building*, op cit.

48 John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 73-78.

49 John Pidgeon Architect, op cit, pp. 73-78.

*Plantagenet District Hall* and *Boyup Brook Town Hall* are in generally good condition and have high integrity and moderate to high authenticity.

Another W. H. Jefferis design is the single-storey *Cunderdin Hall* (1910, Place 00654), the design of which was the result of a competition. The façade is in Inter-War Free Classical style. *Cunderdin Hall* has undergone various stages of development, in 1922-23 and 1956, to fit a variety of uses as public hall, Roads Board office, library and film venue. It is in fair to good condition with high integrity and moderate to high authenticity, and is entered on the State Register.

*Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre* is one of the more substantial buildings constructed in Western Australia incorporating local government offices and halls, and is an uncommon example for its original design in Federation Free Style in the 1930s.

#### **13. 4 REFERENCES**

John Pidgeon Architect, *Conservation Plan: Bridgetown Civic and Community Centre*, draft 2002.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

-----