



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)

- 3.17 Financing Australia
- 3.3.3 Mining
- 4.3 Developing urban institutions

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 401 Government and politics
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The 1896-99 administration building of *The Perth Mint* and its setting have a high level of aesthetic value. Designed in the Federation Romanesque style, it is a handsome and robust building in planning and in detail whose impressiveness is reinforced by its setback behind an open forecourt with gardens and lawns, similarly styled gatehouse lodge and wrought iron railing. (Criterion 1.1)

It proclaims its importance as the State's Mint and as a major building of the prosperous gold rush era. The building is well proportioned, symmetrical in design, with evidence of fine craftsmanship in its stonework and carved stone dressing. (Criterion 1.2)

These aspects together with the visually interesting forms and textures of the Factory Buildings including its collection of chimneys, roofs and towers endow the western part of the place with a complex townscape of considerable importance within the city of Perth. (Criterion 1.3)

The limestone clad façade of GoldCorp House reinforces to some degree the forecourt space giving it an eastern wall in a material chosen with some regard to the administration building. (Criterion 1.4)

* 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, 1989.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The Perth Mint is closely associated with the history of the gold rush era of the 1890s which brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity to the State. Its history of development closely followed the economic fortunes of the State, in particular as it related to the gold mining industry. (Criterion 2.2)

The place contains evidence from both early and recent development phases. Substantial evidence remains of the physical apparatus of a British imperial mint from the period of self-government in WA and Federation until 1970 and its subsequent adaptation in the 1980s and 1990s for use directly by Gold Corporation, a statutory authority of the Western Australian Government. (Criterion 2.1)

The place has remained in use as a mint from its establishment in 1899 to the present day and is now the oldest mint established as a branch of Britain's Royal Mint still operating on its original site. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

The Perth Mint was designed by George Temple Poole, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department was his last design in that role. (Criterion 2.3)

The Perth Mint demonstrates various associations to the establishment and use of the Mint, including the effect of the values and skills of individuals and organisations on shaping the place. Principally these include the former Premier Sir John Forrest, George Shenton (former President of the Legislative Council and vendor of the Mint's land to the Crown), John Henry Grainger (Poole's successor), Horace Seymour (former Deputy Master of the Royal Mint), John Francis Campbell (first Deputy Master and Controller of the Perth Branch of the Royal Mint), Frank Ernest Allum (second Deputy Master), and Messrs Atkins and Law (who were responsible for the first building works). (Criterion 2.3)

The Perth Mint is also associated with other individuals and organisations, including Francis Mousley (first Assayer of the Mint), Hugh Annan Corbet (third Deputy Master), Raoul Kahan (who, when seconded from *The Perth Mint*, went on to make the Rand Refinery the world's biggest), later Deputy Masters and Directors, the 1980s Western Australian Development Commission, and those who have worked and lived in the place or have been associated with the place through prospecting and other ways. (Criterion 2.3)

The place has been associated with the Royal Mint in London in its establishment and operation as a branch mint. *The Perth Mint* is the most intact and longest lasting of the three nineteenth century branches of the Royal Mint established in Australia (Sydney and Melbourne being the other two) and the only one to continue in its original use. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The factory buildings demonstrate industrial processes and design including 19th century processes of refining and assaying, and current processes of coining. (The plant of the factory and specific industrial fabric has not been assessed here. For further information on the factory buildings refer to R. McK Campbell, 'The Perth Mint Factory Buildings Conservation Report', 1990.) (Criteria 3.1 & 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place has considerable social value for those who have worked, or continue to work there, and for those families who lived in the residences.

Furthermore, it is significant through association with communities within the resources sector in Western Australia (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The place has remained in use as a mint from its establishment in 1899 to the present day and is now the oldest mint established as a branch of the British Royal Mint still operating in its original premises. Even Britain's Royal Mint moved from its original site in London to South Wales in 1968. (Criterion 5.1)

The Perth Mint is the most intact and longest running of the three nineteenth century branches of the Royal Mint established in Australia. It is the only one still operating as a mint. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Main Building and Gatehouse are representative of the Federation Romanesque style. (Criterion 6.1)

The place is representative of the public institutions established during the gold rush by the Forrest government of Western Australia. (Criteria 6.1 and 6.2)

The whole of the place but particularly the factory represents minting processes and functions. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The place is in good condition and is better maintained than many other public buildings of this age and significance. It provides an effective facility of historic use and continues to be attractive to visitors. There is little evidence of ongoing deterioration to the fabric due to environmental factors. Work in the past has, however, included changes to fabric without recording or understanding potential heritage values of the fabric removed or concealed resulting in mechanical damage to the fabric.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The place has high integrity. The earliest intention, including use and layout of the complex and much of the original fabric is intact. This use has retained compatibility with identified heritage values in the past through modification of some fabrics and spaces as well as the relocation off-site of the refining process. Were the coining process relocated, it would be likely to significantly compromise several of the identified heritage values.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Externally the place has high authenticity in relation to the early and original development of the place from 1896-1911. Internally the authenticity varies from high to low. The Main Building has an internal configuration which is moderately authentic and an internal fitout of low authenticity to that earliest development stage.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Palassis Architects, 'The Perth Mint: Conservation Plan', commissioned by Contract and Management Services for Gold Corporation in June 2000.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'The Perth Mint: Conservation Plan', commissioned by Contract and Management Services for Gold Corporation in June 2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Palassis Architects, 'The Perth Mint: Conservation Plan', commissioned by Contract and Management Services for Gold Corporation in June 2000.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Palassis Architects, 'The Perth Mint: Conservation Plan', commissioned by Contract and Management Services for Gold Corporation in June 2000.

13.4 REFERENCES

R. McK Campbell, 'The Perth Mint Factory Buildings Conservation Report', 1990.

Palassis Architects, 'The Perth Mint: Conservation Plan', commissioned by Contract and Management Services for Gold Corporation in June 2000.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The physical material of the place includes structures and contents as well as sub-surface deposits, some of which may be significant. Possibilities include any remains which may confirm the early demolished section of the factory or any remnants of the woodblock paving of the Gatehouse Lodge.

If excavation is necessary it should be accompanied by planning. Archaeological advice should be sought if major works are proposed or if evidence of development and use is found so that any significant finding is recorded.

There is a considerable amount of documentary material relating to the Mint held both within its archives and with the State Records Office. All documentary material relating to the Mint should be catalogued and made available to researchers. If original material held with private individuals is not obtainable then copies of that material should be procured. All documentary material could be used, with the help of people associated with *The Perth Mint*, to tell the stories of its past.