



## 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.

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

As a precinct, the individual buildings have scale, massing and detail that are collectively of aesthetic value; the lack of any large scale twentieth century development is an important contributing factor to this visual cohesion. (Criterion 1.1)

The National Bank (fmr) (#214) facade is a good example of small scale, Moderne commercial architecture in Perth. (Criterion 1.2)

*Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224) is a good example of the 'Interwar Free Classical' style, which shows a competent use of classical elements and detailing. It has survived without major changes to its appearance both internally and externally. (Criterion 1.2)

There are notable examples of pressed metal lining in the street. These include interiors of the Perth Hostel (#194-198), *Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224), Baldwin Building shops (#260-264) and the underside of most awnings. (Criterion 1.3)

The buildings have landmark significance due to their location at the northern gateway to the city centre, enhanced by their intactness as a precinct. The Perth Hostel (#194-198) was an early landmark building that has retained this quality to some extent due to its location and relative height. *Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224) is a local landmark, enhanced by its central location within the streetscape. The buildings on the James/William Street intersection have become landmarks due to their location at the western entrance of the Cultural Centre. Following demolition of the Governor Broome Hotel (#168-176), the S. Chester building (#178-180) had gained some landmark value due to its prominent location and the vivid murals along its southern elevation. (Criterion 1.3)

The group of buildings south of *Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224) to James Street are a cohesive group within the streetscape; all were built between 1920 and 1925. From the right of way, these buildings are also visible as a particularly homogeneous group which have retained their original form and materials with no substantial alteration or addition. (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* North Ryde NSW, Angus & Robertson 1989.

The group of buildings north of the Baldwin building (#260-264) to Aberdeen Street form a particularly cohesive group, especially at first floor and parapet level, which represent all of the significant characteristics of *William Street Precinct*. This has been enhanced by the recent removal of signage and painting. (Criterion 1.4)

## 11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The buildings physically reflect the development boom which occurred north of the railway at the turn of the century, largely due to gold rush prosperity and the associated influx of migrants. The buildings on the southern portion of Y34 represent a secondary building boom which occurred in the area in the 1920s. Modifications over the century have been gradual and relatively superficial. They retain a sense of the past while also providing a history of building development in the twentieth century, through the various adaptations such as shopfront modernisation, removal of balconies and the development of awnings. (Criterion 2.1)

The buildings in the streetscape have retained a diversity of uses and mixed-use facilities which are indicative of the development of Northbridge over this century. (Criterion 2.1)

The ethnic diversity of the buildings' tenants is a recognisable element in the streetscape and is a strong characteristic of the area. (Criterion 2.1)

The buildings serve as an interesting contrast to the 'high' cultural pursuits of the educational and cultural facilities which developed over the same period of time in what is now the cultural centre precinct. The retention of a diverse social and cultural mix of people, as well as a variety of small commercial operations, enhances the potential for the street to offer an understanding of the occupation of the area by 'ordinary' people. (Criterion 2.2)

Collectively, the buildings represent the work of some of the most prominent architectural firms in the State. Well known Perth architects include Oldham and Cox; Oldham, Boas and Ednie Brown; Hobbs, Smith and Forbes; E Summerhayes and R Summerhayes; Hobbs Winning, and Harold Krantz. (Criterion 2.3)

*Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224) is directly associated with the Independent Order of Rechabites and represents the predominance of temperance and friendly societies in the 1920s and 1930s in Western Australia and the impact such societies had on the community of the time. (Criterion 2.3)

## 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The buildings represent traditional construction materials and methods used particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Collectively, there is a range of decorative pressed metal lining used, which form an historic record of this material. (Criterion 3.1)

The retention of the brick and timber rear shed at #178 - 184 William Street has the potential to contribute to an understanding the relationship between buildings on the street and outbuildings in the early twentieth century. It is the only substantial rear structure in *William Street Precinct*. (Criterion 3.1)

## 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The buildings have social value for their retention of residential facilities and especially for the retention of the Perth Hostel (#194-198) as an inner city residential hostel (#194-198) for disadvantaged persons. (Criterion 4.1)

*William Street Precinct* has social value for its continuing use by a variety of ethnic groups in the community. (Criterion 4.1)

*Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224), as 'an old-time dance hall...represents an early beginning to the entertainment function that characterises Northbridge in the late 20th century'. (*Rechabite Hall Conservation Plan*) (Criterion 4.1)

*William Street Precinct* makes a vital contribution to the character of Northbridge due to the diversity of activities and accompanying people. (Criterion 4.2)

The buildings' uses reflect influences from all of the adjacent areas: nightclubs, restaurants and cafes reflect the location of *William Street Precinct* within Perth's primary entertainment district; the Hall and artists' studios reflect the buildings' location within Perth's Cultural Centre; shops and other small businesses are an extension of the City's Central Business district (operating at a scale no longer prominent in the City); finally, the houses and mixed residential facilities are a reflection of the predominantly residential areas to the north of the Precinct. (Criterion 4.2)

A number of businesses have operated in the street for extensive periods of time and contribute to the character of Northbridge and the community's sense of place. For example, nightclubs have operated in the infill building at 230 William Street for over 25 years, Merizzi Travel has operated in the Noarlinga Chambers building (#208-212) for over 40 years and the Perth Hostel (#194-198) has operated at 194-198 William Street for over 70 years, prior to which it operated as the Perth Coffee Palace for nearly 20 years. Earlier, the 'Hang Lee' laundry operated for over 30 years on the corner of William and Francis Streets. A more detailed analysis of Post Office directories would give a clearer picture of how the buildings have been used. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

The precinct has significance due to its unique location between the Cultural Centre, Northbridge entertainment district, the City CBD and the northern suburbs. This is enhanced by its retention of physical features from each of these areas. (Criterion 5.1)

*Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224) is one of the few buildings of its style to be built north of the railway line. (Criterion 5.1)

The precinct is rare in that it successfully continues to operate as a commercial, residential, entertainment and cultural precinct. (Criterion 5.2)

William Street, between Roe and Aberdeen Streets, contains the largest group of turn of the century commercial buildings in the area untouched by large scale late twentieth century development. With the exception of the Taxation Department building, this includes both the eastern and western sides of the street. (Criterion 5.2)

*Rechabite Hall* (#22a-224), the only remaining Friendly Society building of four contemporaries that existed in the immediate area, is one of only a few remaining major buildings in the State by well known architect Edwin Summerhayes. (Criterion 5.2)

With the exception of two terraces on Museum Street, the houses on lots 1 - 4 of Town Lot Y55 are among the only remaining residential buildings on the street block. Prior to construction of the TAFE building, this block primarily contained residential buildings. (Criterion 5.2)

## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*William Street Precinct* covers an identifiable strip of buildings between Roe and Aberdeen Streets. The narrow shopfronts and mixture of retail outlets and small retail functions, that have become commercialised at a large scale in other shopping precincts, remains. These buildings have largely retained their street focus and public accessibility and are a good reflection of the original commercial development of the area. The various stages of development over the century are also represented in such a way as to retain the cohesiveness of the whole. (Criterion 6.2)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

Although the condition of these buildings varies, all are considered from superficial inspection to be structurally sound. Physical evidence gathered for the conservation plan in 1995 suggests that at this time the detailing and finishes of the buildings were mostly in fair condition, with selected areas in either poor or good condition. The condition largely reflects an unwillingness to spend money on buildings due to uncertainty over their long term retention. Maintenance has been ongoing, however this has been at the minimal level required.

However, it is clear that confidence has increased since 1995 and many of the buildings have had external maintenance works, which have greatly improved their appearance and condition.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

As has been shown by recent maintenance works to the buildings, there is considerable potential for increased understanding of the values identified as significant. The integrity of individual buildings varies considerably; however as a precinct the integrity of the place is high. This relates to the overall fair to good condition and high authenticity of the buildings and to the significance of the precinct which is greatly enhanced by the continued ongoing viability of the place. The Precinct has retained its integrity over a century of continued use and remains a multi-functional commercial strip. The variety of businesses operating within the Precinct represent the multicultural nature of Western Australian society.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The authenticity of each individual building is discussed in greater detail in Appendix G of the *William Street Conservation Plan*.<sup>1</sup> Fig 46 of the conservation plan shows graded zones of significance which provides a good indication of the levels of authenticity for each place. Overall, the authenticity of the buildings as a precinct is high in relation to all categories of significance (aesthetic, historic, social, scientific).

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1997, the levels of authenticity have not been greatly changed by any modifications made since the completion of the Conservation Plan in 1995.

A number of buildings have maintained their original residential use at first floor level and retain a high level of original fabric. At ground floor level, there are also a number of shops in near-original condition and many of the shopfronts are intact. The street elevations at first floor level are mostly original, however many that were originally face brick have been painted and none of the original verandahs are extant. Many awnings are original and have intact pressed metal lining.

At the rear of lot Y15 is a shed which appears to date from early this century and which is the only outbuilding in *William Street Precinct*. The forms of the buildings in this town lot and some original face brickwork have been retained - including two-tone bond on the S Chester building. Y34 has retained the original right of way from which the group of buildings on the southern half form a group of high authenticity - mostly through retention of original forms and materials (the face brickwork has not been painted).

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, based on Building Management Authority, 'William Street Conservation Plan: a heritage assessment and conservation policy for the buildings on the eastern strip of William Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets', Perth, November 1995. The BMA Conservation Plan is extensively quoted throughout this documentation.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

##### **13.1.1 Introduction**

The historical background *William Street Precinct* is presented in three sections. Section 13.1.2 shows chronological development of the Precinct. It is arranged in broad periods to give an overview of specifically relevant events.

The information presented in section 13.1.3 is largely the result of an examination of secondary sources.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this section is to provide a general overview of the development of Perth into the early twentieth century with particular attention to the development of the Hutt (William) Street area in the nineteenth century. Primary sources such as Rate books, Post Office Directories and Title Deeds have been examined for the purposes of this report and are discussed in this section.

A more detailed analysis of primary resources, also including drawings from the City of Perth Building Licences Register archive, is covered in sections 13.1.4, 13.1.5 and 13.1.6. These sections include summaries of documentary evidence for each of the three Town Lots within the Precinct. Appendix G of the 'William Street Conservation Plan' holds records for each building within the Precinct.

##### **13.1.2 Broad Chronology of Events**

Note: The buildings mentioned below are shown in Figure 1.

---

<sup>2</sup> C.T. Stannage, *The People of Perth*, Perth, Perth City Council, 1979; G. Seddon and D. Ravine, *A City and Its Setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

## Pre 1880

- c.1838 First plan of Perth prepared, signed by A. Hillman, Colonial Draftsman, shows William Street as a major road on the gridded plan, running from the Swan River and terminating at Wellington Street. Lake Kingsford occupied the future Central Railway Station site. William Street, named after King William IV was known as King William Street.
- c.1845 William Street extended to Ellen Street and named Hutt Street, after the second Governor of the Swan River Colony. However, Lake Kingsford prevented the road's construction.
- 1856 Perth constituted as a city; few suburbs exist. Old Perth Gaol completed.
- 1870 Representative Government granted.
- 1873 Thompson's Lake (Mews's Swamp), situated between Beaufort, Lake and Brisbane Streets, drained.

## 1880 - 1910

- 1880s Early development of Hutt Street. Buildings included the former Governor Broome Hotel and S. Chester building.
- 1880 The Fremantle to Guildford railway opened.
- 1889 Geological Surveys Offices and mineral collection located in Perth Old Gaol (opened as the Geological Museum in 1891).
- 1890s Goldrush development. Extant buildings along William Street, constructed during this decade are the single and double storey shops and shop/residences on Y15 and Y55, the Taylor's building on Y34 and houses on Y55.
- 1894 Barrack Street bridge constructed.<sup>3</sup>  
Perth Town Lot Y55 approved for subdivision into Lots 1-9.
- 1895 Site chosen for a cultural centre, near the existing Geological Museum. and 'Land reserved at the corner of Beaufort Street and James Street for the erection of a library, museum and art gallery'.<sup>4</sup>
- 1896 Part Perth Town Lot Y34 subdivided into Lots 1-6. Taylor's buildings on south-east corner of William and Francis Streets subsequently built on these lots.  
Perth Boy's and Girls' Schools on James Street completed (now *Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts*).
- 1897 Hutt Street re-named William Street.
- 1898 Drawings submitted to council for 'Business Premises' on part Lot Y15 (shops at #182-184 William Street).
- 1899 Jubilee Wing of Museum building opened.
- 1900s Extant buildings along William Street, constructed during this decade, include the Perth Coffee Palace (Hostel), Taylor's building on lot 1 of Y34, two storey shops and residences on Y55.

<sup>3</sup> J Stephens, 'Swan Barracks - Military Headquarters, Western Australia Conservation Plan', 1992, p. 10 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>4</sup> Battye, J. S. (ed.) *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Perth, Cyclopaedia co., 1912, vol. 2, p. 530; Stannage, op. cit., p. 320 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

- 1901 Federation.  
First stage of Art Gallery completed.
- 1903 Opening of the Horseshoe Bridge.  
State Library completed.  
Part Perth Town Lot Y15 subdivided to Lot 4.
- c.1906 c. 1906 building (#266-268 William Street ) constructed.
- 1908 Art Gallery - Beaufort Street Wing opened.
- 1910-1940**
- 1911 Major additions to 'Union Restaurant' on Lot 1 of Y15 (south-east corner of James and William Street) approved by council.  
George Temple Poole produced a concept plan for the Civic Place Project titled, 'Perth As It Should Be'.<sup>5</sup> The plan included an elaborate re-development of the Perth Railway Station, comprising an opera house, new town hall and post office.<sup>6</sup>
- 1913 *Hackett Hall* completed.  
c.1913 building (#278-282 William Street) constructed.
- 1917 Remaining Perth Town Lot Y34 subdivided into Lots 1-4.
- 1921 Drawings approved by Perth City Council for National Bank building on Lot 2 of Y34 (#214 William Street). Drawing shows existing house to be removed.
- 1923 Council approves drawings showing a block plan for Noarlinga Chambers on Lot 1 of Y34 (north-east corner James and William Streets).  
Rosen building approved for construction on Lot 3 of Y34 (#218-222 William Street).
- 1924 *Rechabite Hall* constructed on Lot 4 of Y34 (#224 William Street).
- 1928 Baldwin building constructed on Lot 5 of Y55 (#260-264 William Street)  
The first Western Australian Town Planning and Development Act was passed. The following year, the first Town Planning Commissioner was appointed.<sup>7</sup>
- 1930 The 'Boas Report' was produced. The report contained a concept plan for the development of a cultural centre.<sup>8</sup>
- 1934 Proposal for four new shops on Lot 4 of Y15 (#186-192 William Street) approved by council.

<sup>5</sup> D. Richards, 'Dead Centre', Fremantle Arts Review, February 1989, p. 3 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>6</sup> Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., p. 160 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> PCC Planning, Town Planning and PWD, 'Cultural Centre Precinct: Survey and Assessment', June 1977 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

## 1940-1970

1940s A number of shopfront alterations were approved during this decade.

1950s It appears that by the late 1950s, all verandahs and balconies had been removed from the street and replaced with awnings. New facades to the Perth Hostel and National Australia Bank date from this decade.

In the late 1950s, much of the immediate area was rezoned light industrial; however, William Street was largely unaffected in comparison to others.<sup>9</sup>

1955 The 'Plan for the Metropolitan Region: Perth and Fremantle' was produced. Commonly referred to as the Stephenson and Hepburn report, the plan revived the concept of using the area immediately north of Perth railway station as a cultural centre. Under this scheme, the cultural centre reserve which exists today was created.<sup>10</sup>

## 1970-1995

1970s - 1980s

Many of the lots within *William Street Precinct* reverted to Crown ownership. (See 'previous ownership' under Individual Buildings Appendix A of the 'William Street Conservation Plan'). It would appear the government acquisition of the buildings within the Precinct was part of the proposal to redevelop the Cultural Centre.<sup>11</sup>

late 1970s to mid 1980s

Several buildings within the Cultural Centre were demolished. For instance, the (1877) Girls' and Infants' School was demolished in 1979 to accommodate the new Art Gallery Building. Many other buildings were demolished in the mid-1980s to accommodate the Alexander Library building. As part of the construction works for the Library building, the Cultural Centre was altered dramatically by the re-leveling of James Street and its conversion into pedestrian paths.<sup>12</sup> Construction of the Central Metropolitan TAFE building similarly altered the area immediately north of the Cultural Centre. The only direct impact on the William Street frontage as part of these works was the demolition of the 1940s Noarlinga Chambers extension.

---

<sup>9</sup> See Building Management Authority, 'Rechabite Hall Conservation Plan', 1994.

<sup>10</sup> PCC Planning et al, op. cit.; and Seddon and Ravine, p. 187 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>11</sup> A 'Plan Showing Integration of the interim Transport Arrangements with the landscaped central area, the Perth Cultural Centre and the Central City Area' dated 16 March 1972, BMA Plan Set 74/1/26, shows that the buildings in the study area were to be demolished and the area landscaped. The section between James and Francis Streets was to be partially occupied by the proposed State Library building. PWD files support this proposal containing several letters on the need to demolish parts of the study area for the proposed State Library building. See PWD file 93/67, 'Offices - Perth, Alexander Library (New State Public Library) - Cnr James & William Sts', letters dated 7 June 1968, 20 November 1972, 'Planning data', no date, folio 99 and 28 April 1977 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>12</sup> Plaque in Perth Cultural Centre (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

### 13.1.3 Development of the Area in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

In 1829, the Swan River Colony was proclaimed and following this, in 1833, the townsite boundaries of Perth were determined.<sup>13</sup> Initial settlement of Perth was predominantly near the Swan River. The many lakes in the northern parts of town which were subject to flooding generally discouraged development in this part of Perth. An 1833 map shows that the layout of the town was guided by the many lakes to the north.<sup>14</sup> A map of the townsite dated 1838 shows that the area immediately north of Lake Kingsford, including the *William Street Precinct*, was marked out as building lots, some of which were situated on the various lakes. It is unlikely that such lots were developed at this time, but illustrate that it was intended to drain the area at a later time.<sup>15</sup>

An 1845 map of Perth shows Hutt Street immediately west of and parallel to Beaufort Street. The road ran between Roe and Ellen (now Newcastle) Streets. From the earlier 1838 map, it would appear that the road ran through building lots Y14, Y35 and Y56. However, it is unlikely that there were any buildings on these lots.<sup>16</sup> Lake Kingsford initially prevented settlement in this area and although a brick drain was completed in 1847, the lake was still susceptible to flooding.<sup>17</sup> Plans were the following year to drain the lakes to ensure further flooding would not occur.<sup>18</sup> However, this was not carried out until 1854.<sup>19</sup> The area was further drained in 1873 after severe flooding. The lakes were drained into Claise Brook, via a deep barrel drain.<sup>20</sup> Even well into the twentieth century, the area was still subject to flooding, often in basements of surrounding buildings.<sup>21</sup>

Although recognised as a thoroughfare from 1847, it is unlikely that Hutt Street was any more than a track. Stannage argues that by the late 1870s, most of the central roads in Perth had been macadamised, although it is unlikely that this included peripheral roads such as Hutt Street.<sup>22</sup>

In the late 1870s, plans to construct a railway were drawn up. Initially, Perth Station was to be located at what is now known as Weld Square (near Beaufort and Newcastle Streets). However, businesses fought to have the railway located further south, on its present site.<sup>23</sup> Also, the site of Lake

---

<sup>13</sup> M. Pitt Morison, 'Settlement and development: The Historical Context' in M Pitt Morison and J. White, (eds), *Western Towns and Buildings*, Nedlands, 1979, p. 19 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>14</sup> Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., p. 100, figure 6:11 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>15</sup> op. cit., figure 6:12; R. and J. Oldham, *Western Heritage*, Nedlands, 1980, p. 19, map by J.S. Roe (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>16</sup> Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., p. 101, figure 6:13 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>17</sup> Pitt Morison, op. cit., p. 32 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>18</sup> See Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., pp 102-106 for full details of the plans (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>19</sup> Pitt Morison, op. cit., p. 24 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>20</sup> Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., p. 106 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>21</sup> op. cit., p. 158 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>22</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 286 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>23</sup> Pitt Morison, op. cit., p. 42 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

Kingsford was the cheapest land available; a determining factor in the position of the railway station.<sup>24</sup>

Work commenced on the Fremantle to Guildford railway in 1879 and the first train ran on 31 August 1880.<sup>25</sup> The railway line effectively defined the town between north and south. Although there were major developments immediately north of the railway line, such as the Perth Gaol (1854) and Perth Girls' and Infants' School (1877), subsequent expansion of the area was slow, due in part to the presence of the railway. A photograph c. 1885 illustrates the scattered development of this area.

Around the turn of the century, there were other major developments in the immediate area that had an impact on the William Street area. In 1887, the Perth Gaol (located one block east of William Street between James and Francis Streets) closed and its prisoners re-located to Fremantle Prison. The former gaol became the Geological Surveys Office and the prison chapel housed a mineral collection; this opened as the Geological Museum in 1891. By the early 1900s, the area around the Old Gaol had been significantly developed.<sup>26</sup> Buildings were erected for the library, museum and art gallery in the late 1890s and early 1900s, as were the nearby Perth Boys' and Girls' School and the Perth Volunteer Drill Hall and Artillery Drill Hall.<sup>27</sup>

In 1890, Responsible Government was granted and the Swan River Colony became self-governing. During the 1890s, the resources of the state multiplied dramatically, due to the gold-rushes, and had a profound impact on the colony's economy. Commercial and residential development was rapid in all parts of Perth during this period. In 1891, there were 9,500 people in Perth; by 1901, this number had quadrupled to almost 44,000.<sup>28</sup> Due to this population explosion, land became a sought after commodity.

Hutt Street was one of many streets in Perth that was rapidly developed in the 1890s. The Ratebooks and Post Office Directories clearly illustrate the growth of the area. In 1884, Y15 had four portions to it, with only one shop on the lot. By 1888, there were five buildings on lot Y15; probably in part because of its position near Perth Railway Station. By 1897, there were ten buildings on lot Y15. In 1892, Y34 and Y55 only had one building on each lot. By 1895, Y34 had five buildings and by 1899, Y55 had eight buildings.<sup>29</sup> Similar development was taking place during this same period on the western side of Hutt Street.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Seddon and Ravine, op. cit., p. 118 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>25</sup> Pitt Morison, op. cit., p. 42 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>26</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 320 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>27</sup> Detailed information about the history of the school site can be found in, Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge, Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department for the Arts, May 1995 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>28</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 193 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>29</sup> Information based on Ratebook searches (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>30</sup> Information based on Ratebook searches and postal records (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

During this period, the majority of the buildings mentioned in the Ratebooks were shops, reflecting the commercial development of Hutt Street. Laundries, grocery shops, furniture dealers, fruiterers, butchers, tailors, blind manufacturers, and hairdressers were among the businesses mentioned in the Post Office records. There were also several residences including private boarding houses, although by the turn of the century, few of these remained on William Street south of Aberdeen Street. However, most of the two storey buildings were residential on the first floor and commercial on the ground floor.

As well as the social and economic effects of the, the growth of the area as a commercial centre can be partly attributed to the Railway Station which acted as a commercial 'magnet'.<sup>31</sup> Post Office records reveal that the area was settled by many Asian peoples. This settlement did not appear to be in isolated pockets, but generally interspersed with Anglo-Saxon and other nationalities throughout the northern edge of town.<sup>32</sup>

Although the William Street area had a reputation as a commercial centre, cultural centre and school site, the area was probably better known for its many brothels, especially along William, Roe, James and Aberdeen Streets.<sup>33</sup> It is thought that there were around forty-five houses used as brothels in this area in 1900 and by 1911, seventy-five houses had been identified as brothels by Police.<sup>34</sup>

In 1896, Perth City Council commenced numbering the buildings along Perth's streets. The idea was instigated by the Post Office and reflects the growing nature of the city.<sup>35</sup> In 1897, Hutt Street was renamed William Street, linking the northern and southern sections of the city.<sup>36</sup> The change of name was one of several changes of street names at the time. Lamb Street became Aberdeen Street and Limbo Street became Museum Street in the immediate area. Other streets were renamed to extend the arterial roads; for instance, Howick Street became Hay Street.<sup>37</sup>

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, there was a concerted attempt to improve services in Perth, including water connections, deep draining sewerage pipes and street lighting. These improvements occurred gradually. Lack of an adequate water supply, often contaminated water and lack of a deep sewerage system combined to spread diseases such as typhoid, and had long been a problem in Perth. By the late 1870s the need for such services was receiving increased media coverage, but it was not until the various governments assumed responsibility that the situation began to improve.<sup>38</sup> In 1908, Perth's water supply was declared 'free of injurious micro-

---

<sup>31</sup> I. Hocking, 'Growth and Change in Central Perth' in Pitt Morison and White, op. cit., p. 267 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>19</sup> Information based on Post Office Directories (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>33</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 262 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 289 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>36</sup> Based on Ratebook and Post Office Directory searches. Also, information from DOLA Geographic Names Section (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>37</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 289 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>38</sup> See S-J. Hunt and G. Bolton, 'Cleansing the Dunghill: Water Supply and Sanitation in Perth, 1878-1912', *Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 2, 1978, pp. 1-17 for details of the water and sanitation problem in Perth around the turn of the century (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

organisms'.<sup>39</sup> However, it took many more years for all the streets of Perth to be connected to water supplies and have deep drainage.

In 1899, electric trams commenced operation throughout Perth.<sup>40</sup> However, the first tram line north from the city centre to Highgate went up Barrack and Beaufort Streets, rather than William Street. A bridge over the railway had been constructed between Barrack and Beaufort Streets in 1894, a likely determining factor for the position of the trams.<sup>41</sup> Although a pedestrian crossing over Hutt Street was installed soon after the railway was constructed, it became known as a dangerous crossing for other traffic. By the mid 1890s, there were seven lines to cross and the crossing was often closed as the amount of railway traffic increased.<sup>42</sup>

The construction of the *Horseshoe Bridge* in 1903 had a major impact on the role of William Street as an arterial road. Although the bridge was unpopular in some circles, it provided a safe overhead crossing of the railway. It would appear that opposition to the bridge was principally because it was erected at the expense of the two pedestrian overpasses. The shape of the new bridge meant that pedestrians had to walk a great deal further to pass over the railway lines.<sup>43</sup> However, the bridge had a favourable impact on businesses in William Street as access between the northern and southern parts of the city was no longer dependent on railway traffic, and there were no more delays at the William Street crossing.

William Street underwent massive changes during the late nineteenth century. In the late 1880s, Hutt Street was on the periphery of the town with few buildings. By the turn of the century, William Street south of Aberdeen Street was a busy commercial district and an arterial road. (see Figs 8&9) The mixture of commercial, cultural and 'immoral' activities formed William Street's individual character. The present diverse social, cultural and commercial mix is a continuation of the developments at the turn of the century.

#### **13.1.4 Perth Town Lot Y15 - Roe Street to James Street**

The first record of ownership of Perth Town Lot Y15 was in 1882. In November of that year, the entire Lot was transferred to Robert Morgan Sutherland and Leonard Worsley Clifton 'Esquires' of Fremantle. In December of that year, ownership of the land was transferred to Stephen Henry Parker of Perth, 'Esquire', who sold the land in six portions between December 1882 and August 1886.<sup>44</sup>

The first of these portions was sold to Sydney Chester, a storekeeper of Guildford, whose name is visible on the two storey building nearest to the south-east corner of Roe and William Streets. This and the Governor Broome Hotel were among the earliest buildings recorded on the street.

---

<sup>39</sup> Stannage, op. cit., pp. 270-77 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Stannage, op. cit., p. 289 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>43</sup> *The West Australian*, 6 July 1904, p. 3 is one article showing the initial unpopularity of the bridge. Also, J. Gentilli (ed.), *Western Landscapes*, Nedlands, 1979, p. 367. (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>44</sup> Title Deeds, vol. 10, fol. 150 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

Rate Books show the initial development of Y15. In 1884 there was only one shop on the lot; by 1887, there was a hotel, two houses and two shops.<sup>45</sup> In 1897, there were ten listings on Lot Y15, all shops with the exception of the Hotel on the corner of Roe and William Streets.<sup>46</sup> In 1899, there were thirteen listings in the Post Office Directory for the eastern side of William Street between Roe and James Streets.<sup>47</sup> Most of the buildings presently on the site date from between 1880 and 1910, with the exception of a single storey structure built in 1934.

Post Office Directories indicate the type of commercial uses for the premises. These were varied, for example, in the year 1895-6, there was a chemist, scale maker, grocer and 'colonial tinware manufacturer' on Y15. By 1900, shops included a tobacconist, wine saloon, basket maker, furniture dealer, draper, fruiterer, dining rooms and pharmacy.

The names of occupants also give an indication of the make up of the society at the time and there is a notable number of women among them. Both the Governor Broome Hotel and the wine saloon addressees were women - Mrs Sarah Wiggett and Miss Mildred Keiley - and the furniture dealer was listed as a Mrs H Maynard. Of the eleven premises listed in this year (1900), four were occupied by Asian business people.

By 1914, there were sixteen listings for the street. The general range of uses has not changed, remaining varied, however there are now two wine saloons and an 'oyster saloon' as well as the hotel. New inclusions were the Perth Coffee Palace (now the Perth Hostel) and the National Bank; the latter indicating that occupation of the area was becoming well established.

Although the nature and range of uses appears to have changed little during the first four decades of this century, the racial mix certainly varied. In the 1914 Post Office Directory, there was no record of Asian occupants, however eastern European names such as Rosmanich and Teplitskv were evident and by 1932-3, there was a 'Macedonian Home' listed at 178-180 William Street. This was listed as a club in later issues of the Directory.

The variety of uses diminished in the second half of this century, and there are presently only two of the street level shops not occupied by a restaurant or cafe. These premises are occupied by a photographic shop and real estate agent. Upper floors of buildings in the street are used for either residential purposes or as artists' studios.

### **13.1.5 Perth Town Lot Y34 - James Street to Francis Street**

Thomas Halliday, 'city supervisor' was the only person rated for the whole of Town Lot Y34 between 1884 and 1895. In 1893, Halliday has the only postal address recorded for Y34 but by 1894, and in 1895-6, there are five addresses listed; all of which appear to be residential. A lithograph of the area, c.1895, shows several buildings on the north east corner of James and William Streets which relate to these addresses.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Ratebook search, selected years (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>46</sup> Post Office Directory, 1897 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>47</sup> Post Office Directory, 1899 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>48</sup> Hocking, op. cit., Fig 12.5 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

The first subdivision to occur on Y34 was at the northern end. In 1896, this part was subdivided into six narrow lots. At the rear of these was a right of way.<sup>49</sup> It appears that the Taylor's building was constructed following this subdivision as building licences were issued for the lots in 1897.<sup>50</sup> Rate books also show R. Taylor as owner/occupier of 'new buildings' on Hutt Street, PTL Y34 in 1897.<sup>51</sup> A plan dated c.1905 shows the Taylor's building occupying lots 2 - 6, with the corner site vacant.<sup>52</sup> (See fig 7) In 1905, a licence was issued to J P McLarty for lot 1 of Y34 and it is assumed the existing building on the corner of William and Francis Streets was constructed after this date.<sup>53</sup>

Post Office Directories show that the shops within the Taylors buildings were used for a variety of commercial purposes. Most appear to have been short lived, however Hang Lee's laundry is listed in the Post Office Directories from 1897 to 1932-3 and another laundry, 'Yick Sam', is listed in the 1939-40 Directory.

The c.1905 map also shows what appears to be a residential building occupying the area between the Taylor's buildings and four buildings on the southern portion of Y34.<sup>54</sup> This building contrasted with those surrounding it as it was well set back from the street and had verandahs to the western and southern sides. A Mrs J. Slater is recorded as occupying the premises at 224 William Street in 1914.<sup>55</sup> The building was probably demolished prior to 1917 when the land was sold and subdivided.

On the 5 February 1917, ownership of most of the remaining southern portion of Y34 was transferred to Claude Edward Crocker. On the same date, the remaining portion of land, immediately south of the Taylor's buildings, was transferred to Walter Drabble. The land owned by Crocker was subdivided into four lots in October of 1917. The portion of land on which the current nightclub building exists, between lot 4 of diagram 4669 and lot 6 of diagram 1367, has therefore remained without a subdivision lot number. New buildings were constructed on these four lots between 1921 and 1925 and a building was constructed on the infill lot in the later part of that decade. This building reflects similar activity in the Northbridge area in the 1920s.

Post Office Directories from the turn of the century show premises in the street occupied by a dental surgeon, a boarding house, an estate agent, a medical practitioner, a grocer and a laundry.<sup>56</sup> By 1914, there were two boarding houses, a dressmaker, two private addresses, a picture framer, watchmaker, saddler, confectioner and fruiterer and furniture manufacturer as well as the laundry.

---

<sup>49</sup> DOLA Office of Titles subdivision plan 1367 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>50</sup> City of Perth Building Licences Register 8/96 and 314/96 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>51</sup> Rate Book, Central Ward, 1897, 2/3 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>52</sup> PWD WA Plan 5647 15 sheets 7 & 8, State Archives (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>53</sup> City of Perth Building Licences Register 380/05 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>54</sup> PWD WA Plan 5647 15 sheets 7 & 8, State Archives (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>55</sup> Post Office Directory, 1914 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>56</sup> Post Office Directory, 1900 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

This usage changes after the building boom of the early 1920s. In 1925, the Rosen building shops were occupied by a draper and picture framer, a second hand business and by Milne Dining Rooms. The National Bank of Australasia occupied no. 214 William Street and there was an 'Embroidery Works' in the Noarlinga Chambers. *Rechabite Hall* was listed in the directory by 1932-3, however both shops were recorded as vacant. There is also a Macedonian and Yugoslav Home listed in this year and four of the shops (including those in the Hall) were vacant, perhaps an effect of the Depression. By 1939-40, the Hall shops were occupied by Mooney's Cafe and the Braille Society.

Between 1939 and 1977, most alterations to the existing building were minimal. A single storey wing along James Street was added to the Noarlinga Chambers building in 1940 and extended in 1946.<sup>57</sup> A shopfront addition was also made to the corner shop in 1972.<sup>58</sup> New shopfronts were added to the Taylor's Buildings in 1939, 1945 and 1946 and extensions and alterations carried out in each of the following decades. The National Australia Bank was given a new facade in 1954 had extensive internal alterations in 1957.

*Rechabite Hall* was constructed in 1924 as headquarters for the Rechabite society in Perth. It was used as a meeting place, for annual conferences and for social events. In the late 1920s and 1930s the hall was popular for social functions, especially dances.<sup>59</sup> The building was then sold to the Commonwealth Bank and the showroom and north shop converted into banking chambers. Extensive alterations were carried out in 1952 and again in 1962.

Unlike the development of Town Lot Y15, the variety of uses of the buildings on Town Lot Y34 has been retained. For example, the original building licence for Noarlinga Chambers was issued for 'Shops & Offices' on the site. The ground floor has retained a commercial use, and in the last quarter of a century the upper floor has been used as a doctor's surgery, solicitors' office and now offices for a variety of Arts related uses. Merrizzi Travel have occupied the corner and central ground floor shops for over forty years.

Generally upper floors are not utilised, however, and those that are occupied are used as office space rather than for residential purposes. All of the multi-tenanted buildings have had some consolidation of users with businesses occupying two or more of the original individual shops. Only one of the premises - on lot 4 of the Taylor's buildings - utilises both upper and lower floors as office and shop space for a single business. Separate use of upper floors is difficult in most of the buildings as access is gained through the shop; only the corner buildings were designed to have separate entrances to their upper floors.

---

<sup>57</sup> PCC Planning et al, op. cit.; City of Perth Building Licences Register, 420/40 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>58</sup> City of Perth Building Licences Register, 502/72 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>59</sup> Research for the 'Rechabite Hall Conservation Plan' was largely based on Louise Young, 'Resurrecting Rechabite Hall: A Conservation Study', Curtin University Architectural Dissertation, November 1990. See Section 2.1 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

### 13.1.6 Perth Town Lot Y55 - Francis Street to Aberdeen Street

This Town Lot was subdivided in July 1894 and was the first of the three to be subdivided; the subdivision is shown on a map of the city dated 1895.<sup>60</sup> John Mews acquired the whole of Y55 in 1895, however he was rated as owner of a house and gardens on the corner of Hutt and Francis Streets from as early as 1884. There were no other buildings rated for Y55 until the 1890s.<sup>61</sup>

In 1894, two houses were rated on Hutt Street. In 1897, two shops were rated. These were occupied by a butcher and bootmaker and appear to be the two single storey shops presently on lot 7 (#270 - 272), which were probably constructed c.1896.<sup>62</sup> It appears that the two storey building immediately north of the shops was constructed following the issue of a building licence to James Ellery in 1897 (#274 - 276). This licence was for two shops on lot 8 of Y55.<sup>63</sup> Ellery was rated as owner of shops at 346 and 348 William Street in 1899 (since renumbered) with the premises occupied by Goon Goon laundry and Sun Thong Chong, greengrocer.<sup>64</sup>

By 1899, ratebooks also show that houses at 318, 322 and 328 William Street were owned by J C Mews.<sup>65</sup> It is likely that the first house was the building now concealed by shopfronts on the Francis Street corner (#246), and that the subsequent houses are the adjacent houses still standing on the site (#252 - 254 and #258). A plan dated c.1905 shows the three houses.<sup>66</sup> The first occupies lot 1, the second lots 2 and 3 and the third lot 4. There are also two pairs of buildings, on lots 7 and 8, shown on the map. Lots 5 and 6 are vacant, apart from a small structure in the south-east corner of lot 5, and lot 9 is vacant. The lot divisions are not shown on the plan. The only other buildings rated in 1899 were a shed and yards.

The building presently on lot 6 (#266 - 268) was probably constructed following the issue of a building licence to J J Holmes for lot 6 of Y55 in 1906.<sup>67</sup> It is assumed that the building on the corner of Aberdeen and William Streets (#278 - 282) was constructed in 1913, as the date '1913' is in relief on the building's parapet. Similarly, the Baldwin building (260 - 262) appears to have

---

<sup>60</sup> PWD WA 4108 531C State Archives (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>61</sup> The 1977 PCC Planning et al, 'Cultural Centre: Survey and Assessment' expressed the possibility of the house behind the building's shopfront as dating from the mid-1870s (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>62</sup> Rate Book, Central Ward, 1894 2/2, 1897 3/3, 1899 4/4. See also Title Deed, vol. 70, fol. 189 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>63</sup> City of Perth Building Licenses Register, 951/97 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>64</sup> Rate Book, Central Ward, 1897 3/3, 1899 4/4 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>65</sup> Rate Book, Central Ward, 1892 2/2, 1894 2/2, 1897 3/3, 1899 4/4 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>66</sup> PWD WA Plan 5647 15 sheets 7 & 8, State Archives (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>67</sup> City of Perth Building Licenses Register, 61/06. The 'Cultural Centre: Survey and Assessment' states that this building 'which has almost certainly been denuded of a verandah, is the work of Oldham & Cox. Boas was later to form a partnership with Oldham which was one of the foremost architectural practices in Perth, and also they were the architects for Bread House (E34)' (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

been constructed in 1928 as the parapet suggests; this is confirmed by the record of a building licence issued to Mrs A E Jones in 1928 for lot 5 of Y55.<sup>68</sup>

A selection of Post Office records in 1925, 1932-3 and 1939-40 show the uses for these premises as well as the other premises on Y55. In 1900 there were three private addresses, a butcher, a furniture dealer and a laundry. By 1904, there was also a wheelwright, painters and a baker as well as a fourth private address at 358 William Street.

In 1914, there were only 8 postal addresses on Y55. The houses on lots 2-4 were listed as boarding houses and the premises previously at 358 William Street was no longer listed. In 1914, there were postal addresses at 246 and 252 William Street only. In 1925, addresses were listed at no's 246, 248, 250 and 252-58 William Street. This suggests that the three shops in front of the house on the Francis street corner (#246) were built before 1925.

The range of uses of the various commercial premises has changed little. In 1925 there were dining rooms, dryers and cleaners, a lodging house, laundry and massage business as well as the typical range of dealers, butchers and other shops. There was little change in the 1932-3 year, although three shops were vacant and there were also tearooms and two dressmakers. This is possibly a reflection of the effect of the Depression. There were no vacant shops in the 1939-40 year. The houses at 252-8 William Street were still used as lodging houses and Baldwin Flats were a new entry.

The City of Perth's Register of Issued Building Licences indicates most alterations and additions to buildings occurred in the second half of the century. A proposal to remodel the shopfronts of the c.1897 building was approved in 1940 and a building licence was issued in 1941 for the c.1896 shops at no. 270 William Street.<sup>69</sup> This may have been for new shopfronts also, as the adjacent shopfronts date from c.1940 and are very similar.

Substantial modifications were made to the building on the Francis Street corner (#246) in 1950 and 1966, for conversion to banking premises. Several other licences were also issued during this decade for various buildings. In the 1960s and '70s, various works were completed including kitchen alterations to the c. 1897 building on lot 8 (#274 - 276), a new verandah to the house on lots 2 and 3 (#252 - 254), substantial alterations to the house on lot 4 (#258) for conversion to banking premises, alterations to lots 5 and 6 (the 1906 and Baldwin buildings at #260 - 268). Major alterations to the street elevations of the 1906 and Baldwin buildings appear to have occurred following licences issued to DOLA in 1990 for various premises on lots 5 and 6.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

### 13.2.1 Introduction

The physical evidence for the *William Street Precinct* is presented in six sections. Section 13.2.2 discusses the physical setting of the Precinct within Northbridge and the Cultural Centre precinct. Section 13.2.3 discusses the Precinct within the context of the western streetscape of William Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets. The following sections 13.2.4, 13.2.5 and

---

<sup>68</sup> City of Perth Building Licenses Register, F8/28 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>69</sup> City of Perth Building Licenses Register, 236/41 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

13.2.6 describe each of the three Town Lots or street blocks in *William Street Precinct*.

A more detailed discussion of individual buildings is covered in Appendix G of the 'William Street Conservation Plan' which contains records for each building within *William Street Precinct*. Changes in the physical setting of the Precinct that have occurred since completion of the conservation plan in November 1995 are incorporated into these sections. Section 13.2.7 discusses changes that have been made to specific buildings within the Precinct.

### **13.2.2 Physical Setting - *William Street Precinct* and adjacent Northbridge and Cultural Centre Precinct**

*William Street Precinct* has remained as a relatively intact group since the last major construction phase which occurred in the early 1920s. Similarly, the opposite (western) side of the street has also remained largely intact and the whole of the William Street streetscape, from Roe Street to at least Aberdeen Streets, is a local landmark. Within this streetscape are buildings of particular landmark significance such as *Rechabite Hall*, the buildings framing the James Street Cultural Centre entrance and the site and building on the Roe Street corner.

The large scale developments within the Cultural Centre, especially the Alexander Library and also CMC TAFE building, have had a major impact on *William Street Precinct*. Both the TAFE building and Library are aligned with the Art Gallery (due north) and ignore the existing rectangular grid. The development in the Cultural Centre has also reduced the emphasis of this grid by the conversion of James Street into a pedestrian area with no buildings enclosing the former street.

The demolition of buildings for the construction of the late 1970s, early 1980s Cultural Centre development included those immediately west of William Street on Roe, James, Francis and Aberdeen Streets. Consequently, *William Street Precinct* has been retained as an isolated group of buildings, visually separated from their immediate context. From pavement level between street blocks this is not particularly evident, however it is highlighted at the major street intersections.

The buildings all address the street in a traditional manner and buildings at each intersection also address the corner and the intersecting street. William Street is a busy north-south arterial road and the only major road leading from the northern suburbs directly into the city.<sup>70</sup> Only short-term parking is encouraged and the pavement is of a width suitable for pedestrian movement but not for activities such as street stalls or outdoor cafe seating.

A clear hierarchy of streets is visible through this design method and consequently, all of the buildings bear little or no relation to the new development in the Cultural Centre behind them (to the east). The lack of a relationship between the buildings and the Cultural Centre is clear on Town Lot Y34, where the original right of way has been retained. To a lesser extent this occurs on Y55 where the original right of way has been relocated into the rear yards of the William Street buildings; however on Y15 the buildings are separated from the large scale development by vacant land and then the Arts House and PICA buildings.

---

<sup>70</sup> It has not been determined when the road became one way only.

## Y15

There is no development immediately east of the buildings between Roe and James Streets (on Y15). The next building east is Arts House, constructed between 1905 and 1914 as part of the former Perth Boys' and Girls' school. The area between Arts House and the Y15 buildings is currently used as car parking space. There is a change in level with the recently sealed southern portion at Roe Street level, the central portion is slightly higher and the northern portion, which has retained the slab from a former building, is at James Street level. All of the buildings have enclosed yards, with the exception of the two corner sites at the James Street entrance to the Cultural Centre.

These buildings, especially the rear extension to the c.1897 building, have a strong visual connection across James Street to the Y34 laneway. As the buildings all address William Street, the vacant lots reduce the definition of James Street. However, the face red brick at the rear of the buildings contributes to the visual cohesiveness of the group which includes Arts House and PICA. There is also a strong interface between the Roe Street portion of Y15 (currently visible from James Street due to the vacant land), the Horseshoe Bridge and the early twentieth century buildings on Wellington Street which are reflected across the railway.

Y15 has limited potential to link with the Cultural Centre at its southern end where it has a greater relationship with the Horseshoe Bridge and the City. At its James Street end there is potential for links to the Cultural Centre and Northbridge and a strengthening of the link between the two along James Street.

## Y34

The lots between James Street and Francis Street (on Y34) have retained their original right of way. On the southern portion of the right of way, the podium level of the Alexander library abuts its eastern edge; this is a sheer wall at about the height of *Rechabite Hall's* first floor. There are stairs down to the right of way which are located at the rear of the two nightclubs. The base of the stairs is also used as a rubbish bin storage area. At the northern end is a service entrance to car parking below the library. Three of the lots have buildings to the edge of the right of way (*Rechabite Hall* and the two nightclubs); the National Bank (fmr) (#214) is the only building which has a walled yard although the three northern most lots have a cyclone mesh fence enclosing their yards.

This southern portion of the laneway has retained a high degree of authenticity although at its James Street end it has lost definition due to the library carpark entrance. The rear courtyard of Noarlinga Chambers lends itself to a use that links the buildings with James Street and the Cultural Centre, and greater definition of the right of way would increase the visual link between the Y34 buildings and the northern buildings on Y15. This portion of the report provides the greatest interpretive opportunities and highlights the differences between early and late twentieth century development by its striking juxtaposition with the library building.

The character of the southern portion of the Y34 laneway is largely due to the high retention of detailing such as windows and doors, retention of face brick and lack of recent additions as well as a sense of enclosure provided by the Hall and nightclub buildings. Compared with the street frontage, the rear yards and elevations are low key utility spaces. At the northern end, these

spaces suffer from a lack of space for on-site parking and rubbish. Generally, security measures have been through ad hoc addition of mesh fences and gates which could be more sympathetically detailed.

#### Y55

The buildings between Francis and Aberdeen Streets (on Y55) have had their right of way relocated east of the original right of way. The lots have therefore had the size of their rear yards substantially reduced as a consequence. The western side of the new right of way has a custom orb fence on a brick retaining wall along most of its length. The right of way level is up to at least 1.5 metres above the floor level of the William Street buildings.

As a group, the three buildings on the Francis Street corner have retained their domestic scale and form, indicating the domestic origins of the Precinct and street block (also shown by the remaining Museum Street terraces). This sense of domestic scale is most apparent from the rear lane at the Francis Street end. The corner building is interesting as an example of the 1920s building boom when approximately five houses at the southern end of Y34 were demolished to make way for commercial development. This building has retained building elements from both periods.

The fence is intrusive as it detracts from a reading of the rear forms and break-up of the other buildings along Y55. A slightly lower fence, of more sympathetic materials would allow better interpretation of these buildings. There is the possibility of interpretation of the original spaces (ie. the fence should indicate that it is not the original right of way boundary and now encroaches on the rear yards of the Y55 buildings).

### **13.2.3 Physical Setting - William Street Western Streetscape: Roe to Aberdeen Streets**

It is important to note that as well as the streetscape of buildings covered in this report, the western strip of buildings along William Street are equally significant, contributing to a precinct of buildings that collectively form a major northern gateway to the city. The brief did not cover these buildings, however, and does not permit the same level of research and analysis for them.

Despite this, the eastern strip can be used as a basis for formulating policies which apply to the whole of a William Street precinct. The following description aims to give a broad understanding of the type of development characterised by the western streetscape and to indicate its similarity to the eastern streetscape that has been covered in greater detail.

#### William Street - Roe Street to James Street (western side)

The buildings between Roe and James Street form a cohesive group. They are predominantly single storey buildings with a double storey building on the James Street corner. This building is of a simple design, with no decorative detailing between awning and parapet; photographs dating from the first decade of this century show it with a verandah and balcony (see fig 9). The parapet has simple recessed panels and raised pediments with its name, 'Busy Bee Arcade' and plaster relief bees within the triangular pediments. There are also urns sitting on raised square bases at the centre and ends of the elevation.

The early photographs mentioned above also show single storey buildings between this building and Roe Street. The building presently on the Roe Street corner is a new building which has used design elements based on those in the existing street elevations. The building immediately north of this is very similar in detail to the 1898 shops directly opposite and adjacent to this is a building with parapet detailing similar to the Rosen building and *Rechabite Hall* building which dates from the early 1920s. It has unpainted bricks and contrasting rendered details which are also unpainted. The only other example of this is the less prominent parapet to the c.1896 shops on Y55.

The fifth building in the streetscape is of a mid century early Modern style with a simple rectilinear parapet in unpainted brick and concrete shading hoods surrounding the windows. This building, like the National Bank (fmr) (#214) building, is not an intrusive element in the street. At ground floor are the typical range of small commercial premises with shopfronts having varying a variety of detailing types.

#### William Street - James Street to Francis Street (western side)

The *Brass Monkey Hotel* occupies the site on the north-west corner of William and James Streets. It was built in 1897 as the Great Western Hotel and has retained its dominance as a streetscape element. A National Trust assessment in 1978 stated that the building is

a very good and virtually intact example of a Gold Rush period hotel. Its handsome balconies, with cast iron decoration, and corner tower surmounted with a pointed dome enhance and give prominence to its corner location. It is one of several notable hotels occupying corner positions along William Street both north and south of the railway line.<sup>71</sup>

Immediately north of the *Brass Monkey Hotel* are two sets of single storey shops which match those on the eastern side of the street which date from c.1896 and 1898.

On the south-west corner of Francis and William Streets is the recently built Taxation Department building. The building is set back from the street corner, unlike each of the remaining intersections which are reinforced by buildings. This corner has been highlighted by a bell tower, reconstructed from the Lorretto convent site in Nedlands.

At pedestrian level, the Taxation building has several shopfronts, currently occupied by small commercial operations. The building has an awning to match other is the street above which is a further two storeys with large reflecting glass openings. The elevation picks up the parapet line of the single storey shops and has some vertical elements. However, its scale and lack of variety in its materials and detailing make it an intrusive addition.

#### William Street - Francis Street to Aberdeen Street (western side)

The Britannia Hotel occupies the site on the north-west corner of William and Francis Streets. It was also built in 1897. A National Trust assessment in 1978 stated that the building

is another of the fine hotels of William Street again distinguishing a corner site with an octagonal tower and spire. This hotel is large, occupying half the

---

<sup>71</sup> Assessment Form, The National Trust of Australia (WA), "C" 7/3/78 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

length of a street block, with a handsome four storeyed facade which is a notable element of the streetscape.<sup>72</sup>

The hotel is currently used as a youth hostel and has separately leased shops at street level.

Adjacent to the hotel is a two storey building of similar size, proportion and detailing as the *Rechabite Hall* on the opposite street block. It does not form as distinct a street element as the Hall, however. North of this is a single storey building which also appears to be an early twentieth century addition to the streetscape. Along the ground floor are a series of small commercial premises similar to those along the eastern side of the street.

### **13.2.4 Physical evidence - William Street Roe Street to James Street (eastern side)**

There are six separate buildings and one vacant site between Roe and James Street which are referred to in the text as follows:

#168 - 176 William Street	Governor Broome Hotel site
#178 - 180 William Street	S. Chester Building
#182 - 184 William Street	1898 Building
#186 - 192 William Street	1934 Building
#194 - 198 William Street	Perth Hostel
#200 William Street	c.1897 Building
#206 William Street	c.1907/1911 Building

#### External - street elevation

The six buildings which comprise this section of the streetscape vary in style and form, however there is an overall cohesiveness about the grouping which is aided by the run of metal awnings which extends from the southernmost building across the four adjacent buildings. The line of the awnings is also suggested in the two corner buildings in the different treatment given to first and ground floors and the canvas awnings over the corner building's windows. Generally, the cohesiveness is aided by the elevations at first floor level being substantially more intact than below the awnings.

At street level, there is a range of different shopfronts. These vary in condition and authenticity. The most intact shopfront is to the souvenir shop (# 186) in the 1934 building (#186-192) (internally, the shop has also retained its spacial layout and original joinery - including the window display cases). The parapet level of this shop appears to be as originally designed and the awning also appears to be original (1934), retaining a central detail that is imitative of the parapet. The remaining three shops within this building (#188 - 192) have been extensively modified, and externally the shopfronts have been removed and replaced with solid walls. This eliminates any street focus to this section of the strip of buildings.

The two adjacent single storey shops (#182 - 184) were built approximately 35 years earlier, however the horizontal lines of the two are consistent at both ground and parapet level. The shopfronts may be original as they have moulded timber frames which appear to be an earlier detail than the adjacent 1934 shop. The awning replaced an original verandah.

---

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

The two storey Chester building (#178 - 180) terminates the strip at its southern end. It shares an awning with the single storey shops at 182 - 184 William Street. This awning dates from 1957 and replaced a two storey verandah and balcony. Subsequently, the upper floor windows were not provided with shading. This is also the case with the three storey Perth Hostel building (#194 - 198) which was altered internally in the late 1940s. Prior to these changes being approved by the City, it was required that the 'dilapidated' verandahs and balconies be removed. The present facade, although showing a restrained use of Art Deco detailing, dates from the early 1950s. The proportion and horizontal emphasis relates to existing height lines from the adjacent two storey building. The street level of this building also dates from these alterations and externally are relatively authentic to this date. The large, stylised, brass door handles are notable details. The southern shopfront is in the process of being restored to its 1951 detailing.

The three storey corner building (#206) and adjacent two storey building (#200) were both used as a single premise for many years and although the corner structure appears to have been built ten years later, they have some similar detailing. They have also been painted in the same colours. The corner building was originally tuckpointed face brick. Neither building has shading to its upper floor windows and there is no awning to the two storey building.

The corner building is unusual in its design as it is the only building in the streetscape without a parapeted street elevation. Like other corner buildings, however, it has a truncated corner, at 45 degrees to the street grid and a corner entrance at ground floor.

#### External - rear elevation

The eastern side of these lots is exposed at the south and northern ends of the Town Lot. At the southern end, the loss of the Governor Broome Hotel and former government stores buildings (which were located on Y16, immediately east of Y15), has contributed to this exposure, especially from the horseshoe bridge, from which a clear view of the Cultural Centre's south west corner can be had. This corner is now mostly carparking space, recently sealed, which covers the foundations of the former structures and has been built up above the ground level of the William Street buildings.

At the rear of the southern two buildings (#178 - 184) is a shed, dating from around the turn of the century. It is of brick and timber construction and its eastern elevation is clad in sheets of galvanised iron which appear to have replaced an original brick eastern wall; the foundations of the wall were recently uncovered, nearly 1 metre below the newly bituminised parking area. This structure has unusual, curved ventilation pieces at either end of the roof. The end walls are face brick as are the north and east elevations of the Chester building. These latter walls were constructed in flemish bond with alternately dark and light header and stretcher bricks, forming a distinctive dichromatic pattern. A roller door has been placed into the southern end of the shed since 1995 and a timber framed toilet block has been constructed inside the shed to serve the restaurants at #182-184.

The 1934 building (#186 - 192) has had extensive modifications to the rear section which include roofing most of the yard, sealing it and providing transportable cold stores for the restaurant. The original toilet block is still standing against the rear fence which is internally clad in corrugated metal and externally of horizontal timber boarding.

From the James Street entrance to the cultural centre, the rear sections of both Perth Hostel and the buildings north to James Street are visually dominant. The rear of the corner building (#206) has been painted to match the street elevations and steps down from three to two and then a single storey volume. In contrast, the adjacent building (#200) has a southern two storey wing that extends to the rear of the lot, as does the hostel building. These buildings are face brick and the eastern elevations are unadorned parapeted walls which are visually striking. The rear of the hostel is enclosed by these walls, whereas the corner buildings have no enclosed rear areas and open onto a car parking space left by a previous building that fronted James Street.

### Internal

As mentioned in the documentary section, most of the ground floor shops have been converted for restaurant use; in most cases this means that the rear rooms have been extended and extensively modified to provide commercial kitchens. There are presently only three of the street level shops not occupied by a restaurant or cafe. These shops are occupied by a photographic business, a souvenir shop and an Asian supermarket and have the most intact ground floor interiors. The photographic shop (#196 - central shop to the Perth Hostel building) is a single room, which has a pressed metal ceiling and carpeted timber floor; shopfittings date from the 1950s adaptations to the building. The souvenir shop (#186 - south shop of the 1934 building) appears to have had few changes since its construction in 1934. It has retained the original spaces; along with timber joinery and the original shopfront displays with pressed metal ceilings and cabinet doors. In 1995 this room had a battened plaster ceiling however a new suspended ceiling has been installed since this time. Internal partitioning is from a later date, however.

There is a store room at the rear of the Perth Hostel building which appears to date from the turn of the century when the building was constructed. It has timber floors, plastered walls and a ripple iron ceiling. Evidence of the original roof light also remains. This store opens onto the southern shop of the Hostel building. The shop has had its ceiling removed (July 1997) to expose the original high ripple iron ceiling and roof light. The shopfront is in the process of being restored to its 1951 detailing.

An original roof light has also been retained in the single storey shops built in 1898 (#182 - 184). This is a roof lantern lined with vertical timber boarding. It appears to be the only significant detail remaining in these shops.

All remaining ground floor premises have been modified to varying degrees; however, most retain a sense of the original spacial layout and some have retained timber flooring. Many have contemporary ceilings which may conceal earlier ceilings. An example of this is the shop in the Chester building (#178 - 180) which is reported to have a panelled timber ceiling beneath the present suspended ceiling. Since 1995, this shop has been modified from a restaurant to a supermarket, the commercial kitchen fittings have been removed and the kitchen opened to the former restaurant. Evidence of mid century modifications are also visible in the street - a notable example being the retention of the bank safe in the corner restaurant (#206).

Upper floors of buildings in the street are used for either residential purposes or as artists' studios. As with their elevations, the upper floors of these buildings have had far less modification than the ground floors. The Chester building (#178 - 180) has retained most of its original timber joinery, including a moulded timber stair balustrade, fire places, skirtings, architraves, doors

and door hardware. The original upper floor layout has not been changed apart from minor modifications to the entrance hall and bathroom.

The Perth Hostel (#196) was altered mid century. Details remaining from this are most evident in service areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. Individual rooms do not appear to have retained original detailing and have recent plaster ceilings with simple cornices. Most original detailing is evident in the hallways which have pressed metal ceilings, timber skirtings, moulded dado and most door and window joinery. The internal stairs have retained their moulded timber balustrading and have ornate pressed metal undersides.

The two buildings on the corner of James and William Streets (#200 & #206) both have restaurants at ground floor and these spaces have been extensively modified. The corner building has retained the former bank safe as a dry food store. The buildings are internally connected at first floor level. The first and second floors are comprised, like the hostel building, of a series of rooms with central corridors. Many of these rooms have had internal dividing walls removed to create larger spaces, however. The majority of the joinery appears to be original and of the same detail in both the 1897 and 1911 buildings; there are also timber panelled roof lanterns in each section. The rooms are in fair to poor condition only, however. As the rooms are leased as artists' studios, there are murals on many of the walls and ceilings.

At the rear of the c.1897 two storey building (#200), there is a projecting wing known by the tenants as the 'old stables'. The internal brickwork is bagged and painted and there are concrete floors at ground floor with timber floors above. Door and window joinery appears to be original and there is a timber staircase between the two which has been boarded over and is not in use.

### **13.2.5 Physical evidence - William Street James Street to Francis Street (eastern side)**

There are seven separate buildings between James and Francis Streets which are referred to in the text as follows:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| #208 - 212 William Street  | Noarlinga Chambers            |
| #214 William Street        | National Australia Bank (fmr) |
| #218 - 222 William Street  | Rosen Building                |
| #222a - 224 William Street | Rechabite Hall                |
| #234 William Street        | Nightclub Building            |
| #232 - 240 William Street  | Taylor's Buildings            |
| #242 William Street        | c.1905 Corner Building        |

#### External - street elevation

The buildings comprising this section of the streetscape are double storey, with the exception of the National Bank (fmr) (#214) which is single storey. Until c.1995, the infill nightclub building (#230) was also single storey. Most of the buildings have metal awnings of a similar style, again with the exception of the National Bank (fmr) (#214) which has no form of cover for pedestrians. The nightclub building has had an awning constructed since 1995. Unlike the awnings on Y15, there is a variety in the levels of these awnings due to the fall in the level of the street.

At street level, there is less differentiation between the buildings than at first floor level. The entrance to Rechabite Hall has retained a strong link with the upper section of the elevation, however. Most of the shopfronts have been modified to varying degrees although there are some examples which appear to have retained their original form and detail such as Noarlinga Chambers (#208-212) and the southern shop in Rechabite Hall (#222a).

The four buildings, on the southern half of Y34, were all constructed within a five year period in the early 1920s. They all employ very different styles yet form a cohesive group. Noarlinga Chambers (#208 - 212), the Rosen building (#218 - 222) and Taylor's buildings (#232 - 242) have single businesses operating in two or three of the original shops. In each case, one or more of the original entrances has been removed and a single entrance provided. In most cases, the full height glazing has been retained which ensures a retention of focus on the street.

Noarlinga Chambers (#208 - 212, 1923) is one of the only buildings covered in this report which has an elevation of face brickwork with contrasting plaster detailing. The curved profile of its parapet also contrasts with the largely rectilinear form of other buildings along the street. Since 1995, the shopfronts to Noarlinga Chambers (#208-212) have been restored. Paint has been removed from the stone facing at the base and stripped from the copper window frames. Signage has been removed from the glazing which is clear with textured glass highlight windows. The timber joinery and pressed metal underside of the awning has been painted.

The National Bank (fmr) (#214, 1921) has had the original facade replaced and is now of a Modern (1950s) design. The original street elevation was similar in design to the Rosen buildings (#218 - 222) and its retention would have strengthened the cohesiveness of this group of buildings. Despite this, the facade of the National Bank (fmr) has clear vertical and horizontal elements which reflect those of adjacent buildings.

The first floor elevation of the Rosen building (#218 - 222, 1923) has recently had brick and plaster work painted with contrasting detailing of red brickwork and cream plaster; it is likely this was originally face brick also. Its division into two double storey sections with a central single storey section highlights the vertical rhythm of the street as do its pairs of narrow window openings.

Rechabite Hall (#224) dominates this section of the streetscape. The dominance is aided by the building's central location and by its height as well as its ornate detailing. The elevation has a symmetrical composition of classical components. The facade is designed with four square ionic pilasters. The strong blocking of the pilasters contrasts with the flat stucco finish of the ashlar block walling. The balconette, above the main entrance, is framed by circular ionic columns and a large blocked arch. The windows on either side of the balconette are centrally positioned between two pilasters. The large parapet at the top of the facade is now blank.<sup>73</sup> The building can be described as a good Western Australian example of an 'Inter-War Free Classical c.1915 - 1940' style.<sup>74</sup> This building has also recently been painted in

---

<sup>73</sup> Building Management Authority, 'Rechabite Hall Conservation Plan', December 1994, p33 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>74</sup> Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to the Identification of Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Sydney, 1989, p158. They note that the 'growing emphasis on technology and functionalism created a climate that was not especially conducive to scholarly understanding of the classical orders' and this style 'was

subtle contrasting creams with brown timber joinery. Paint has been stripped from the base to reveal a granite cladding.

Rechabite Hall's entrance is set back from the pavement and has retained its original ticket windows in concave bays on either side of the door. The northern shopfront was replaced c. 1960s with distinctive stainless steel framed glazing, and black mosaic tiling was also added to the base and columns of the shopfronts. This shopfront has been removed since 1995 and replaced with black powdercoat aluminium frames. The mosaic tiling has also been removed and paint stripped from the base revealing granite. The southern shopfront is largely original although it is not in good condition.

Adjacent to Rechabite Hall on the northern side is an infill nightclub building (#230). The street elevation has been entirely altered from the original - until c.1995 it was single storey only - and it is of a clearly contemporary style. The external wall finish and colours have changed a number times in the last two years and an awning has been added which continues the awning line between the buildings either side of it. The parapet of this building is aligned with the Taylor's building, however it does not relate to Rechabite Hall (#224) on its southern side. The upper floor openings also bear no relation to existing horizontal detailing.

The oldest of the remaining buildings are the Taylor's buildings (#232 - 240) and the building on the Francis Street corner (#242) which have identical parapet detailing. The Taylor's building is divided into individual portions which correspond to the subdivision lots. The portion of the Taylor's buildings on lot 4 (#236) and the corner building, have retained the most original detailing to the upper floors. All others appear to have had modified window openings at first floor level. The Taylor's buildings and corner building have recently been painted in contrasting dark red and cream colours. The upper level of lots 5 (#234) and 6 (#232) have had nearly all plaster detailing removed and have been painted a single dark colour. There is also a large, visually dominant, exhaust duct between the two window openings.

Both of the corner buildings of this street block are truncated at 45 degrees to address the intersection of streets. The corner building at Francis and William Streets (#242) has had its entrance converted into a display window and its upper floor has no opening. The building extends along Francis Street but is devoid of ornamental detailing after one bay. A former doorway allowing access to the upper floor has been blocked in. There is a single storey shop further east which is located in an extension of this building. Noarlinga Chambers (#208-212) has a stronger link with the street at the intersection and along James Street. It has retained a corner entrance and display windows along James Street. At its eastern edge, there is an entrance to the upper floor.

#### External - rear elevation

Noarlinga Chambers is exposed on its eastern side to the Cultural Centre, as are the buildings on the south-eastern corner of William and James Street (#200 - 206). All four of the 1920s buildings (#208 - 224) are constructed of red brick which forms a homogenous group along the right of way. At the rear

---

ebullient and self-confident and expressed society's growing prosperity. It displayed stimulating variety and surprise within the general language of classical architecture. It often showed a tendency to simplify classical idioms' (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

of Noarlinga Chambers is a clearly defined courtyard which is at a lower level than the right of way. Adjacent to this is the rear of the National Bank (fmr) (#214). This building has been enclosed by a wall at its eastern edge, most of which dates from the building's construction date, including a small window opening. The rear of the building has been extended and fills most of the lot. The traditional gabled roof is all that is visible of the building.

At its rear, the Rosen building (#218 - 222) appears to have had no substantial modification although since 1995, an enclosed linking bridge has been constructed between the north and south first floor. The north and south sections have retained the same details and have clearly defined forms which have been slightly reduced by this link; however the link is glazed on either side and not visually intrusive. Fences and gates detract from the sculptural quality of these forms. Similarly, at the rear of Rechabite Hall (#224), barbed wire, gates and fencing have been added. The Hall space is a single form which dominates the right of way. The first floor is level with the Library podium across the right of way.

North of Rechabite Hall, the infill nightclub building (#230) and adjacent section of the Taylor's building (#232 - 234), also used as a nightclub; both extend to the ROW as does the eastern elevation of the Hall. Both buildings are two storeys and of the same width and height. The exposed northern elevation of the Taylor's building extension is red brick, in colonial bond whereas the nightclub building is painted at ground floor and has a salmon brick first floor. The east elevation of the Taylor's building extension has been painted a dark colour. Along with the Hall, these two buildings give definition to the ROW. The salmon and painted brick detract from the homogeneity of the typical red brick, however.

Unlike the buildings south of Rechabite Hall, all buildings north of the hall have had various extensions and most have been painted or rendered. There are also numerous air conditioning units mounted externally. The rear of the lot 4 section of Taylor's buildings (#236), adjacent to the nightclub extension on lots 5 and 6 (#232 - 234), has had a recent brick extension. It is well set back from the ROW and has a brick paved parking area. The brick is of a red-brown colour which is obviously new yet not visually dominant.

The remainder of the Taylor's buildings, on lots 2 and 3 (#238 - 240), have large openings, all of which have galvanised iron flat sheeting covering the glazing. The upper floor section of the corner building (#242) also has a covered opening and no openings at ground level. The buildings appear in a poor state of repair, the yard is bituminised but in poor condition and is enclosed by a steel mesh fence. At the rear of the yard is a small toilet block which appears to be an early addition; it is in poor condition and has partly painted salmon brick walls either side.

The right of way itself is bituminised but in fair condition only. On its eastern side is a stair leading to the Alexander Library podium. At the base of this stair, the pavement area is used by the nightclub buildings and Rechabite Hall as a rubbish storage area.

### Internal

Most of the ground floor shops have retained their original use as commercial premises. Noarlinga Chambers (#208 - 212) has retained the highest level of authenticity in both its first and ground floors. The first floor has retained most of its original layout and much original detailing, including timber floors, skirtings, architraves, doors and staircase with balustrading. It has also

retained original lath and plaster ceilings. The ground floor shops have had internal modifications but remain within the original space - there has been no extension into the rear courtyard. The corner and central shop has not retained any original detailing whereas the northern shop has. The original space appears to have been simply detailed with little decoration.

The Rosen building (#218 - 222) has retained a similar level of authenticity to Noarlinga Chambers although the detailing is less ornate. At first floor level, this building was originally residential. The northern side has retained its original layout, with simple joinery and detailing that appears original also. There is a hierarchy of detail, such as skirtings, which indicates different levels of importance for various rooms. In 1996 a glazed link was constructed between the north and south sections at first floor level. Two sections of wall have been removed from the northern section, however this is reversible. Bathroom fittings have been retained and the rooms generally repaired and painted (including repair of the lath and plaster ceiling in the front room). The northern shop and ground floor rooms at the rear of the shop have also retained their original layout and some detailing.

In contrast, the southern and central shops, used by the same business, have had internal modifications. They have retained the original spaces, although the dividing wall between the two shops has been removed. There is also a partition wall and new stair along the southern wall, allowing access to the upper floor from the street. Since 1995, these shops have been upgraded internally. The upper floor was converted into an office space c.1995. Some of the detailing has been retained, especially in the front room, the original stair has been retained, but the layout has been modified to accommodate the new entrance stair and a reception area.

Internally, the layout and detailing of the National Bank (fmr) (#214) dates from the 1957 bank alterations. No fittings from this period such as furniture or partitions have been retained, however there is some 1950s joinery, lighting and hardware. Similarly, both nightclub premises have been extensively altered and refurbished a number of times; both have entirely contemporary layouts, fittings and finishes. The ground floor shop on lot 5 (#234), part of the Taylor's buildings, has also been extensively modified and converted for use as a cafe/restaurant.

Rechabite Hall (#224) is the most notable internal space. The first floor rooms and hall have retained a high level of original detailing including hardware, pressed metal ceilings and timber joinery. Evidence of the fire is visible and there has been some severe damage to the hall finishes. Since 1995, the hall has been cleaned of smoke stains and the pressed metal ceilings appear in good condition. There is evidence of later intrusive alterations. The northern shop and basement have had internal modifications which are superficial but do not allow a reading of the original spaces. The southern shop, however, has retained most original detailing, including its spacial layout, and has shopfittings dating from the 1950s.

The remainder of the Taylor's buildings have also had substantial internal modifications. Some sense of the original layout has been retained, however most finishes and fittings are new. The shop on lot 4 (#236) has recently been fitted for use and is the only building which makes full use of both upper and lower floors by the same occupant. Extensions at the rear of the building have provided a split level with new toilets between first and ground floor. The stairs are not original.

The building on the Francis Street corner (#242) is joined to the Taylor's buildings on lots 2 and 3 (#238 - 240). At ground floor, the three shops have been opened up to form one large shop. There is some evidence of the original divisions. Access to the upper floors is through the shop but is not used and it was not possible to view these spaces.

### **13.2.6 Physical evidence - William Street Francis Street to Aberdeen Street**

There are eight separate buildings between Francis and Aberdeen Streets which are referred to in the text as follows:

#246 - 250 William Street	Former Commercial Bank building
#252 - 254 William Street	Former house
#258 William Street	Former house
#260 - 264 William Street	Baldwin Building
#266 - 268 William Street	1906 Building
#270 - 272 William Street	c.1896 shops
#274 - 276 William Street	c.1897 Building
#278 - 282 William Street	1913 Building

#### **External - street elevation**

The buildings comprising this section of the streetscape vary greatly in style and height. There are only three double storey buildings in this streetscape and there are two former houses which break up the pattern of buildings. These two structures are freestanding and set back from the street pavement. Simple hipped roofs indicate their residential nature; however substantial modifications to the verandahs and removal of chimneys signals their commercial and office use.

The single storey former bank building on the Francis Street corner (#246) is also free standing. Like other corner buildings, it is truncated at a 45 degree angle to the streets and has a corner entrance. The parapet has a series of projecting pediments and columns which gives a strong vertical rhythm to the building. This is not carried through to the street level, however, as the facade has been remodelled and simplified. Consequently, the building's street focus has been lost.

The buildings north of the houses (#260 - 282) form a coherent group. The four buildings on lots 5 to 8 are all of equal width and, with the exception of the single storey shops (#270 - 272), are of equal height. This strengthens the cohesiveness. All of the buildings except the 1906 building (#266 - 268) have metal awnings with pressed metal undersides in different patterns. This gives a horizontal continuity which is interrupted by the set back of the two houses but picked up at the Francis Street corner by the former bank building (#246).

Although almost identical in width and height, the three double storey buildings are of very different styles. The Baldwin building (#260 - 264), at first floor level, has retained most of its original detailing. It has been described as having Spanish Mission influence. However, it might better be described as 'Inter-War Mediterranean' with its rounded arch loggia, rendered walls and timber windows with sashes divided into small panes. This style has been described as avoiding 'the more blatantly Iberian features

of Spanish Mission; indeed, it often tends towards Georgian rectitude'.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, it sits well with the adjacent 1906 building (#266 - 268) which has a simply detailed first floor with the broad characteristics of what has been called 'Inter-War Georgian Revival', although this style was generally not used in Australia until after the First World War. The style is characterised by 'Symmetry. Regular repetitive fenestration. Plain wall surfaces of fine face brickwork or stucco. Classical elements...'.<sup>76</sup>

The c.1897 building (#274 - 276), at first floor level, has a balustraded parapet; it has a central raised pediment with a curved profile, rolled brackets either side and urns at either end. The 1995 conservation plan describes severe cracking along the upper section of balustrading; however this building has since been repainted and cracking is no longer evident. Beneath this, the elevation has no decorative elements. The upper floor, is painted brick and there are two pairs of narrow windows. Since 1995, signage has been removed from the first floor level. It is possible that both this and the 1906 building (#266 - 268) originally had verandahs and balconies.

The single storey building between these three (#270 - 272) is comprised of two shops. Both shopfronts are relatively intact and they are the only pair of matching shopfronts on the street. The parapet level of the buildings is of a simple design and the southern parapet is finished in unpainted concrete render with the section between the string courses is face brick. This is the most original parapet detail in *William Street Precinct*.<sup>77</sup> The northern parapet has been rendered and painted and is almost entirely covered by a large sign board. The awning is similar to others on the street but has a highly ornate pressed metal underside and is possibly original.

The 1913 building on the Aberdeen street corner (#278 - 282) is also single storey and has a simply designed parapet. There is a raised pediment with a curved profile above the central shop however which is flanked by raised spheres and there are raised spheres at the corners and either end which emphasise this building. Like the building on the Francis Street corner (#246), it is truncated at 45 degrees to the intersecting streets and has a corner entrance.

At ground floor level, the shops to the strip of buildings north of the houses have been modified to varying degrees. As discussed above, the 1960s alterations to the former bank building on the Francis Street corner (#246) have removed all original elements, although have retained piers which indicate the division between the three original shops. The shopfronts have lost their street focus as a consequence.

Similarly, the shopfronts to both the Baldwin (#260 - 264) and 1906 (#266 - 268) buildings have been substantially modified by the addition of brick infill. Only the southern shop of the Baldwin Building has retained full height glazing although this is not within original frames. The two shops and upper floor of the Baldwin building originally shared a recessed entry; this has been modified also, although the alterations are not irreversible. The 1906 building originally had access to the upper floor from the street, however this entrance has been converted into a display window.

---

<sup>75</sup> Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to the Identification of Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Sydney, 1989, p. 172 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* p. 152 (as cited in the BMA 'William Street Conservation Plan').

<sup>77</sup> There is another building with this finish on the western strip of William Street, between Roe and James Street, which is a more prominent example.

As discussed above also, both shopfronts to the single storey c.1896 building (#270 - 272) are relatively intact and are the only pair of matching shopfronts on the street. They have timber frames which have a square profile with little detailing (unlike those to the 1898 shops at 180-182 William Street). These may be original. The northern shop has clear glazing with textured glass highlights. The southern shop has had the entire elevation painted a single colour. Above the recessed entrance is a timber panelled section. Doors are not original.

The shop immediately north of these (#274) is an intact example of a c1940 shopfront. The building was constructed c.1897 and there is no evidence of the original shopfront. In contrast to the adjacent shops, it has metal framed glazing. The door dates from this alteration and is recessed also. The northern shop to this building has been completely remodelled in a style sympathetic to the adjacent shop, with a recessed entry.

Finally, the three shops to the 1913 building (#278 - 282) have been retained as individual shops. Each of the shopfronts is different from the other. The southern shop appears to have the earliest detailing, with painted recently stripped from the copper framed glazing. This shop has a recessed aluminium framed door. In the 1995 conservation plan, the central shop was described as the most original of the three shops. However, since then, this has been replaced with new powdercoat aluminium door and window frames with clear glazing. The door is recessed. The corner shop has timber framed, glazed double entrance doors in the truncated corner. It has also had the frames stripped to reveal the copper and has clear glass windows with textured glass leadlight windows. Further along Aberdeen Street are shops which are not directly attached to the 1913 building. They are rendered with very simple openings.

#### External - rear elevation

The right of way is less clearly defined than that of Y34. It has been recently bituminised and along most of its length is approximately a metre to a metre and a half above the ground level of the William Street buildings. This level is reduced at either end. This level difference is accommodated by a brick retaining wall which is four to five courses in height above the right of way. Above this is olive green custom orb fencing to approximately 1800 mm in height. This defines the eastern boundaries of the Y55 lots, with the exception of the Francis Street corner building (#246) and the adjacent house (#252 - 254). The right of way is primarily used as a parking area.

The right of way fence obscures most of the rear areas of the Y55 buildings although the upper floors of the three two storey buildings are visible. The Baldwin building (#260 - 264) and c.1897 building (#274 - 276) are the only buildings with face brick walls behind the street elevation. The 1906 building (#266 - 268) has a brick wall to north and south elevations, however the eastern elevation has been painted. The Baldwin building has had its two eastern windows bricked in and a central opening covered in sheeting to match the fence. The c.1897 building has original eastern openings at first floor and the 1906 building has had some modification to its openings. These buildings have an assortment of wiring, piping, ductwork and air conditioning units fixed to their walls. They also have transportable toilet blocks located in the rear yard, between the building and the fence.

The 1913 building on the Aberdeen Street corner (#278 - 282) is partially visible from the right of way. The parapet walls between the shops have been retained in this building which is generally not the case where such buildings have been re-roofed. There are two extensions at the rear of these buildings which are separate structures and do not follow the roof form of the 1913 building. There is a rear court between these two, which has a wall along its eastern edge and was not accessible for inspection. The northern additions, housing separate shops, appear to be mid century additions or later and the southern extension appears to be of an earlier date.

Unlike the 1913 building, the two single storey shops (#270 - 272) have no dividing parapet wall. The roof is a single pitch which extends almost to the rear fence. The sheeting has been recently replaced. Similarly, the two houses have recently replaced roof sheeting. At the rear of each of these buildings is an extension of painted brick with a skillion roof extending almost to the right of way. South of these, the former bank building has not had extensions into the eastern yard and the original house with its simple hipped roof is clearly visible. Its walls have been rendered and painted and the openings do not appear to be original.

#### Internal

Internally, most of these buildings have been extensively modified. The most intact space is probably the central shop in the 1913 building (#280). This is a single room which has a rear exit door, presently not used. The ceiling is pressed metal. [Note: until recently, the shopfront was also the most intact] Similarly, the shops in the Baldwin building (#260 - 262) have ornate pressed metal ceilings and have largely retained the original spacial layout. The northern shop has a central skylight and the southern shop evidence of the location of a similar skylight. Other finishes are later additions, however.

The upper floors of the c.1897 building (#274 - 276) have also retained most of their original layout. The southern portion has original timber stair detailing, timber joinery including a roof lantern in the central room, timber floorboards and painted timber mantelpieces to fireplaces in two rooms. This appears to be little used office space. The northern shop has retained this detailing to a lesser extent and has had some modifications to convert upper rooms into restaurant toilets. The western portion is used as a residence but was not open for inspection.

The upper floors of the 1906 (#266 - 268) and Baldwin (#260 - 264) buildings are used by a single business. The 1906 building has had the upper floor completely altered. It is now a single open space with service rooms at the eastern end. The only original detailing is the window architraves and sashes. The original stairwell has been covered and is no longer visible. Entrance is through the reception area of the Baldwin building. There is a large opening between the two and a level change indicating the division. At ground floor, the building is also a single space with no original detailing. The stairwell is divided from the space by a brick wall and is accessible by a flush panel door, however the lower half of the original stair has been removed.

The Baldwin building has retained the lightwell to the south but has concealed the northern lightwell. The original spacial layout appears to have been modified and there is little early detailing in the eastern rooms. There are two large rooms facing William Street from which the balcony is accessible. These have retained some detailing which may be original; the only notable detailing is the door and window frames and architraves to the balcony.

The former bank building on the Francis Street corner (#246) has internal layout and detailing dating from the 1950s and '60s conversion for banking use. Elements include partitioning to the bank manager's office, timber joinery and the bank safe. There is some evidence of the original division of the space retained in the ceiling. Similarly, the house on lot 4 (#258) has internal detailing dating from the building's conversion into a bank in the 1960s. The adjacent house (#252 - 254) was not fully inspected as the rear rooms were in use as a doctor's surgery, however the front room, occupied by a chemist, has been extensively modified and has no sense of the original in either its layout or finishes.

The two single storey shops (#270 - 272) and southern shop to the 1913 building (#278) were not accessible for inspection either. The central shop (#280) is used as a second hand clothing shop. It is a single space with pressed metal ceilings which appears to have had little substantial modification. The corner shop (#282) has new fittings and furniture with no extant original detailing.

### **13.2.7 Changes to building fabric 1995-1997**

There have not been any substantial changes to the buildings along the east side of William Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets in the last two years. However, it is clear that since the recommendations of the conservation plan, some confidence has returned regarding the long term retention of the building. This is displayed in a general improvement of finishes - particularly to the street elevations.

The following changes are worth noting:

#### **Y15**

- The former kitchen in the S Chester building (#178-180) has had fittings removed and the wall opened between it and the former restaurant area.
- The south shop of the 1934 building (#186-192) now has a suspended ceiling which either replaces or covers the original battened plasterboard ceiling.
- A roller door has been added to the eastern elevation of the shed at the rear of #168-180 and a timber framed toilet structure built within the shed. [Note: the toilets were approved by the Heritage Branch of the Building Management Authority at the time on the condition that they be removable].

#### **Y34**

- Noarlinga Chambers (#208-212) has had its shopfronts restored. Intrusive signage has been removed, the copper frames stripped and paint removed from the marble facing at the base of the shopfronts. The underside of the awning has been painted as has the timber doors and frames and the first floor plasterwork.
- The Rosen building (#218-222) has had its central and southern shop refurbished in contemporary detailing (it was not intact prior to this); this has included new powdercoated aluminium window frames and new glazed tiling to the base of the shopfronts. On the first floor, a covered link has been made between the north and south sections. The northern section has been repaired and repainted. This work was approved by the Heritage Branch of the Building Management Authority at the time and is not

intrusive. The first floor facade has been painted to contrast brick and plaster work.

- *Rechabite Hall* (#224) has had its street elevation painted in subtle cream colours. Timberwork to doors and windows is in a tan/ brown colour. The base has been stripped of paint to reveal granite cladding. The north shopfront has been removed. This was very nicely detailed with c. 1960s stainless steel frames and highlight louvre windows which have been replaced with a powdercoated aluminium frame. Mosaic tiling has also been removed from the pilasters.
- The nightclub building adjacent to *Rechabite Hall* (#230) has had an awning added which continues the awning line on adjacent buildings.
- The Taylor's building and c.1905 building (#232-242) have had their first floor street elevation painted in contrasting dark red with cream detailing (except the section at 232 which is cream only).

Y55

- Intrusive signage has been removed from some of the buildings at street and first floor level - most notably from the buildings at the northern end.
- The c.1897 building (#274-276) and 1913 building (#278-282) have had their first floor street elevations painted.
- The c.1896 northern shopfront has had intrusive signage removed and new glazing.
- The c.1897 building (#274-276) has had signage removed from the south shop and first floor elevation. The northern shop to this building has been completely remodelled in a style sympathetic to the adjacent shop, with a recessed entry.
- The 1913 building (#278-282) has had the copper window frames to the north and south shops stripped. The central shop was identified in the 1995 conservation plan as being the most intact. However this has since been removed and replaced with an unobtrusive black powdercoat aluminium framed shopfront with a recessed door.

### 13.3 REFERENCES

Building Management Authority, '*Rechabite Hall* Conservation Plan', December 1994.

Building Management Authority, 'William Street Conservation Plan: a heritage assessment and conservation policy for the buildings on the eastern strip of William Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets', Perth, November 1995.

Heritage Council of Western Australia, notes by Chris Johnson on the Perth Job Club [National Bank (fmr)], May 1993.

Perth City Council Planning Department, Department of Planning and Urban Development and Donaldson and Warn Consultant Architects, 'Northbridge, WA: Northbridge Study', November 1992.

Young, L., '*Resurrecting Rechabite Hall: A Conservation Study*', Curtin University Architectural Dissertation, November 1990.

#### **13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

-----

#### **13.5 MANAGEMENT POLICY**

For a discussion of Management Policies refer to Building Management Authority, 'William Street Conservation Plan: a heritage assessment and conservation policy for the buildings on the eastern strip of William Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets', Perth, November 1995.