



# REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

## 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

*Baker's Terrace* contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the streetscape. The classical decorative elements and screen of cast iron verandah details are characteristic of the Federation Filigree style, which, although common in Melbourne and Sydney during the 1880s, was less common in Perth during the gold boom of the 1890s. (Criterion 1.1)

*Baker's Terrace* is a landmark on Lake Street. Its height, length and detailing is in marked contrast with the predominantly single-storey detached and semi-detached villas in Perth. (Criterion 1.3)

Together with the neighbouring row houses on Moir and Brookman streets, *Baker's Terrace* forms a unique precinct of residential accommodation constructed in 1897 by a single property investment company, during the gold boom. (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Constructed by the Colonial Finance Company in 1897, *Baker's Terrace* is a demonstration of the housing boom and investment opportunities associated with the 1890s gold boom in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Baker's Terrace* is a demonstration of the standard of residential accommodation for the managerial class constructed for investment purposes during the gold boom. The subsequent changes in occupancy and spatial arrangements demonstrate the evolving composition of Perth's inner city population after the Second World War. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

*Baker's Terrace* is the longest row of two storey terrace housing in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Baker's Terrace* is representative of the Federation Filigree style of architecture, embodying all the principal elements of the style. (Criterion 6.1)

*Baker's Terrace* is representative of terrace housing, most popular in Melbourne and Sydney in the 1880s, but largely supplanted by the detached suburban villa in the 1890s. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

The houses in Baker's Terrace are subject to varying degrees of maintenance by individual owners. Overall, it is structurally sound and in good condition.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Baker's Terrace* continues to be used for residential purposes and although all fifteen houses have undergone some degree of alteration and additions, the original layout, comprising living, dining and service rooms on the lower level, and three bedrooms and small room on the upper level, is evident in all houses. Each house retains its forecourt, boundary fence and paths and, the character of the terrace facade and the form of the terrace are intact. *Baker's Terrace* retains a high degree of integrity.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Baker's Terrace* has been subject to some alteration to the verandahs, balconies, forecourts and interiors. All houses have been extended but original construction is evident. *Baker's Terrace* retains its authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian.  
The physical evidence has been compiled by Kelly Aris, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Baker's Terrace* is a row of 15 two-storey brick and iron terrace houses built in 1897, as part of the development of a new housing estate.<sup>1</sup>

*Baker's Terrace* is located on Pt Perth Suburban Town Lot 28, being lots 1 to 15. In 1834, Surveyor General Roe and Governor Stirling assigned Suburban Lot 28 to Thomas W. Mews.

At this time in Perth, building lots were 9/10 acres (.36 ha) with a frontage of 1.5 chains (30m). The owners of blocks in St George's Terrace were required to build within two years. Urban allotments were initially held on lease from the crown, subject to conditions of improvement for 21 years; but as with country lands after 1831, town lots had to be bought. The leasing and sale conditions initially prevented widespread speculation in town land. Only from the gold rush years did greater financial resources and less restrictive laws allow the amalgamation of properties. Nor did the early land legislation encourage the extensive terrace development so characteristic of Sydney and Melbourne from the 1840s onwards.<sup>2</sup>

By the 1890s, pastoral and farming wealth, merchandising, contracting, mining wealth and timber wealth were all well represented in Perth. The 1890s, buoyed by the prosperity associated with the gold boom, also heralded the arrival of large urban land companies seeking to take advantage of the housing shortage and resultant building boom.

In May 1895, Colonial Finance Corporation, a typical property investment company, became the sole proprietor of part of Suburban Lot 28 with the intention of building a housing estate.<sup>3</sup> The part of Suburban Lot 28 owned by the Corporation was bounded by Lake Street to the west, Cicely Street (later known as Robinson Avenue) to the north, Wellman Avenue to the east, and by Forbes Street to the south. Forbes Street and Wellman Avenue were created by the Corporation in the process of developing the residential estate, as were Moir and Brookman Streets, which were named after two of the company's principal investors.

The seventy-five houses built on the estate were well constructed and their annual rateable value was high.<sup>4</sup> *Baker's Terrace* formed part of this residential development.<sup>5</sup>

The estate was set out so that *Baker's Terrace*, as the more gracious accommodation, provided more exposure for its more affluent occupants while the semi-detached workers' cottages were located in the streets

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<sup>1</sup> Date of construction and name of building is embossed on the pediment of the central terrace.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, P., 'An Architectural and Historical Record of Moir and Brookman Streets, Perth', (excerpts, unpublished student report, Curtin University, c1990).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Stannage, C.T., *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth City Council, Perth, 1979), p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> City of Perth Council rate books, north ward (Battye Library, microfiche).

behind. Colonial Finance Corporation's ownership of *Baker's Terrace* ceased in 1921, when the 15 terrace houses were sold to Hyan Hester.<sup>6</sup>

The original managerial occupants of *Baker's Terrace* had moved out of the terraces in favour of more spacious detached suburban housing. The popularity of inner-city housing amongst the more affluent was in decline.

*Baker's Terrace* remained in single ownership until the early 1960s, by which time the houses were sold to individual owners.<sup>7</sup> This period saw the arrival of many post-Second World War immigrants to Western Australia for whom unfashionable inexpensive inner-city living was an attractive option. In the late 1970s the pattern of ownership began to reverse with some inner-city areas gradually being upgraded and restored as young affluent professionals sought to benefit from inner-city living.

The remaining extant components of the Colonial Finance Corporation estate include: *Baker's Terrace*, 156-184 Lake Street; 3-27 and 2-18 Moir Street; 1-31 and 2-32 Brookman Street; and, 40 Forbes Road.

In 1995, *Baker's Terrace* is fully occupied, with a number of the terraces having undergone restoration.

### 13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The following evidence is based on an assessment of *Baker's Terrace* as a street elevation, on a recent (1995) inspection of the interior of house No.172, as a typical example, and the inspection report of No.170, prepared by an architecture student from Curtin University of Technology while the house was being restored in 1993.

*Baker's Terrace* is a row of fifteen, two-storey brick and iron terraced houses in the Federation Filigree style.<sup>8</sup>

The design is representative of a style of building, that was beginning to lose favour in Melbourne and Sydney, in which the Victorian fashion of cast-iron balustrades and brackets were the norm.<sup>9</sup>

*Baker's Terrace* is formed by an identical house that, in plan, is progressively mirrored fourteen times. The terrace is constructed to the building line of the east side of Lake Street. Each house has access to a rear right-of-way that connects to Forbes Road, at the southern end, and Robinson Street at the northern end.

*Baker's Terrace* is the longest terrace of two-storey housing in Western Australia, and is in marked contrast with the surrounding landscape of predominantly single-storey detached villas, on the west side of Lake Street, and the single-storey row houses on the east side of Lake Street. The neighbouring area comprises detached and semi-detached houses that

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<sup>6</sup> City of Perth Council rate books, north ward, 5/5, p.127. (Battye Library, microfiche).

<sup>7</sup> Refer to individual title details held on HCWA place file P1000.

<sup>8</sup> Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture, Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989) pp. 60-63.

<sup>9</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, eds, *The Heritage of Western Australia, The Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (The Macmillian Company of Australia, Melbourne, 1989) p. 17.

are located on less prominent streets in Northbridge, such as the single-storey semi-detached houses at 3-27 and 2-28 Moir Street, and 1-31 and 2-32 Brookman Street.

*Baker's Terrace* is built of red, tuck-pointed brickwork, on the street elevation, with medium pitched gabled roofs that are clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The fifteen terraces are separated by firewalls that are embellished with classical detailing on their ends, and blind archways to each side of the firewalls on the upper level.

House Nos.156, 162, 168, 172, 178 and 184 (every third house) have ornamental parapet walls employing Italianate motifs, including cast balls on stepped pedestals. House No.170, at the centre of the terrace, has a pedimented parapet that bears the inscription, 'Baker's Terrace, 1897', the year of construction. Prominent tall, fair-faced brick and rendered corbelled chimneys feature toward the front of the street elevation. Tall and more slender brick chimneys are prominent at the rear of each house. Some houses feature roof vents and skylights, that have been recently installed to some houses.

The facade of each house has asymmetrical fenestration. The upper level fenestration is protected by a balcony that has a separate lean-to roof, which is also clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The lower level receives the most decoration. A rendered sill course and string course run the length of each house. The windows on the lower level are recessed, and are in the form of four-light casements with fanlights and decorative rendered sills. The entry door is panelled with timber and glass, and has a sidelight and fanlights. Each house has two french doors on the upper level. The rear of each house has double-hung sash windows and, is devoid of any decoration.

The balconies were originally supported on slender, round posts with ornamental cast-iron capital mouldings. The balcony posts divide each house facade into two bays. The balconies are screened with decorative cast-iron balustrade, friezes and brackets. The cast-iron features give the terrace a light filigree character.

A low brick wall with iron palisade and brick piers, that frame the entrance gate and the boundary of each house, is constructed along the building line and defines the boundary of the forecourt to each house. The detailing of the palisade is inconsistent across the terrace as many have been replaced. The boundary wall returns to meet the firewall of each house to separate the forecourts. The return brick wall is at window sill height. Most forecourts are partially paved and landscaped.

The interior of each house on the ground floor comprises a dining room, living room with a corner fireplace, a kitchen, and outhouses for use as a laundry/bathroom and toilet. A hallway is behind the front door with a staircase leading to the upper level. The upper level comprises one large bedroom, with a fireplace, which opens onto the balcony through french doors, two smaller bedrooms, and a small room (perhaps designed as a study) that is at the top of the stairs that also opens onto the balcony. In most of the houses, the small room has been converted into a bathroom. The remaining two bedrooms overlook the rear right-of-way and beyond

to Perth's city centre. House number 162 is believed to have a cellar.<sup>10</sup> Most houses have sheds that back directly onto the right-of-way. Most houses have garages at the rear of the property. Vehicular access to the end houses are from the side streets of Forbes Road and Robinson Street.

The interiors of many of the houses retain decorative ceiling roses, cornices, picture rails, a carved timber stair and timber floors.<sup>11</sup>

The street facade of house number 156 and 172 retain their tuck-pointed brickwork; however, the street facades of house number 174, 180, 182 and 184 have been overpainted, and all other houses have been rendered over. All houses have concrete verandah floors with the exception of house number 178 which is covered with tessellated tiles. Over the years, balcony balustrade, balcony support posts, and boundary fences have undergone change. Some balcony posts have been replaced by square timber posts - number 172 was replaced by concrete pillars and now has turned timber posts, others have been replaced without capitals. At one stage, house number 170 and 172 had rendered brick balustrade. Many balcony roofs have been re-clad in corrugated iron. The balcony of house number 172 retains old timber floor joists and roof joists. The balconies on most other houses have been reconstructed and soffits have been lined.

Most houses have been extended at the rear and, upgraded internally. Original door and window frames are extant on many of the houses (house number 166 and 168 have new joinery, and house number 172 has a timber balustrade). Some clear glass sidelights and fanlights have been replaced with etched glass. House number 166 and 184 have a third level that were created by converting the roof space, balconies have also been added at that level. House number 168 has been extended at the rear on two levels.

Outbuildings for use as a bathroom/laundry have been extended. Some owners have opened-up the kitchen through to the rear bathroom/laundry and have relocated the bathroom to the small room on the upper level.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1950s, house number 172 was extended and the original kitchen was converted to a bathroom.<sup>13</sup> In 1993, the street facade of house number 172 was reconstructed and the interior refurbished including the installation of new ceiling and wall linings, and new services.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *West Australian*, 13 November 1993.

<sup>11</sup> Gray, L., 'Bakers Terrace' - Measured Drawings (unpublished student report, Curtin University of Technology, 1993) n.p.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with owner/occupier of house number 172.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

### **13.3 REFERENCES**

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 1977.

Gray, L., 'Bakers Terrace' - Measured Drawings (unpublished student report, Curtin University of Technology, 1993). no pagination.