



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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from “North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan” prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 8.13 Living in cities and suburbs

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 101 Immigration, emigration & refugees
- 402 Education and science

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Primary School Building at *North Perth Primary School* is a well designed and competently constructed building that is a definitive example of a Federation Central Hall type school building and displays the characteristics of the Federation Free Style. (Criterion 1.1)

The School for Instrumental Music (former Infants School) is a rare and good example of an Early Inter-War Period Infant School, and is a well designed, appropriately scaled and competently built school building exhibiting elements of the earlier Federation Arts and Craft style. (Criterion 1.1)

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

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Both main buildings at *North Perth Primary School* are fine examples of their particular type executed with a degree of creative excellence, demonstrating the adaptability of Public Works Department standard designs to suit specific uses and sites. (Criterion 1.2)

North Perth Primary School is a component of a significant precinct of early twentieth century municipal buildings, including the Police Station, Post Office, Fire Station and Town Halls, the Wesley, Congregational and Anglican churches and the commercial development along Fitzgerald and Angove streets. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The siting of *North Perth Primary School* was a result of the spread of settlement north of Perth as population expanded following the gold boom, and its incremental additions provide evidence of a consistently increasing school population in the first half of the twentieth century, growing in response to the rapid development of the North Perth area in this period. (Criterion 2.1)

The *North Perth Primary School* was the first civic development within the locality and its construction was a focus for further settlement in the suburb. The early history of the school is closely interwoven with the establishment of adjacent civic, social and commercial amenities. (Criterion 2.1)

Since World War Two, *North Perth Primary School* been characterized by a culturally diverse school population, illustrating the changing demographics of the area, and of Western Australia, in the post war period. (Criterion 2.2)

The construction of the Infant School in 1921, to a design influenced by the Montessori teaching method, and the changes made progressively to the fabric of *North Perth Primary School* buildings, reflect changes in philosophies of education throughout the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

The 1924 central hall addition to *North Perth Primary School* was the last of its type constructed in a Government school in Western Australia, and the design differs from the other central halls constructed prior to World War One in that it has clerestory windows rather than a lantern light. (Criterion 2.2)

The three pavilion classrooms that have been combined to form the Arts and Crafts Centre provide evidence of the Education Department's response, between 1914 and 1920, to overcrowding in schools throughout the State, by providing temporary weatherboard and canvas classrooms. (From 1920 pavillion classrooms were considered unsatisfactory and were replaced or modified for permanent use). (Criterion 2.2)

North Perth Primary School is associated with numerous notable students, including two Rhodes Scholars, Edmund Ernest Jarvis and John Robert Hall, who are commemorated in the Rhodes Scholar gates. (Criterion 2.3)

North Perth Primary School buildings are significant examples of school buildings designed by the Public Works Department around the turn of the century, and in particular of the work of Hillson Beasley, who was Assistant Government Architect when the school was established and Chief Architect during the period of development to 1916, and his successor W.B. Hardwick,

who was responsible for the central hall addition and the Infant School building. (Criterion 2.3 & 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

North Perth Primary School has social significance for past and present students, staff and the community through its continual use as an educational facility from 1899 to 2004. The community continues to maintain an active participation in the operation of the school through its Parents and Citizens Association. (Criterion 4.1)

North Perth Primary School contributes to the community's sense of place through its distinctive appearance, and as a substantial and longstanding educational facility in the local area. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

North Perth Primary School is rare as a school containing, largely intact, definitive examples of two uncommon types of substantial school buildings. The Primary School building is a Federation Central Hall School building and The School for Instrumental Music is an Early Inter-War Period Infant School. (Criterion 5.1)

The Primary School building is rare as a late example of a Central Hall type school building, completed in the Interwar period after the central hall design was abandoned in favour of the lineal classroom plan. (Criterion 5.1)

The Primary School building is rare as a Central Hall type school building incorporating a Federation Hall and Gallery school building. (Criterion 5.1)

The School for Instrumental Music is a rare example of an Early Inter-War Period Infants School. (Criterion 5.1)

North Perth Primary School is unusual in that from 1922 to 1990 the infant school and the primary school operated side by side as separate institutions, where generally this was arrangement in the early years of the twentieth century was reorganised by the 1970s as a single administration overseeing both junior and senior primary schooling. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

North Perth Primary School displays the principal characteristics of a school that was established at the end of the nineteenth century and was largely complete by the late 1930s. (Criterion 6.1)

The Primary School building demonstrates the characteristics of the Federation Central Hall type classroom building with a standard plan formed

by a series of identical lineal wings with gable roofs surrounding a central higher volume hall. (Criterion 6.1)

The School for Instrumental Music displays the characteristic form of infants schools built in the late Federation period and during the Inter-War period, including the characteristic 20-foot wide verandah for open-air teaching. (Criterion 6.1)

The Arts and Crafts Centre is a representative example of three pavilion classrooms, which have been amalgamated to form one building. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

The *North Perth Primary School* as a whole is generally in fair condition with some areas and elements in poor condition.

On the two major buildings, the areas of poor timber work appear to be concentrated on the west side and can be remedied by regular maintenance and painting. In the Primary School building there are signs of damp at high level and it is thought that these are attributable to defects in the box gutters that ring the upper part of the central hall. The brickwork at the south-east corner of the Primary School building is badly fretted.

12.4 INTEGRITY

North Perth Primary School is typical of schools established in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, in that all schools of this age have undergone numerous changes. Mostly these changes have been made to the buildings to enable them to continue to fulfill their original intended purpose which broadly speaking is to serve as a place for educating children.

The integrity of *North Perth Primary School* is high because the school, including the School for Instrumental Music (former Infants School), continues to be used as a place of education. The level of integrity of the individual buildings varies due mainly to the extent that the original intention for each building remains intact.

The Primary School Building has high integrity because the rooms continue to be used as primary school classrooms.

The School for Instrumental Music (former Infants School) is of moderate integrity. The building is currently used as the administrative headquarters for around one hundred and fifty senior high school music teachers. This current use is quite different from the original intended purpose of the school, which was that it should operate as an infants' school, but is compatible with the original intended purpose. The School for Instrumental Music could readily be restored to function as an infants' school.

The Arts and Crafts Centre has high integrity because the rooms continue to be used as classrooms in which children are educated.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of the *North Perth Primary School* is high to moderate. The school and its landscaping continue to demonstrate the original characteristics typical of schools established in the late nineteenth century and largely developed by the late 1930s.

The authenticity of the Primary School Building is high to moderate. By 1924, the interior of the primary school building was largely complete. Following minor additions, the building remained essentially unchanged between 1935 and 1977. Works in 1977 included the addition of a reception area to the south-west corner of the building, the conversion of the 1912 hat room into two offices, the relocation of the main entrance to the school and the blocking up of the old entrance to the 1912 porch. The steel framed mezzanine level library inserted into the central hall at this time is largely free standing and although it intrudes upon the ambience and natural lighting to the central hall, it has caused little disruption to the existing fabric of the room itself.

The authenticity of the Arts and Crafts Centre is moderate to low. The Arts and Crafts Centre was constructed by joining three pavilion type classrooms, with these classrooms left in their original locations and new rooms added in the spaces separating them. The joints between the buildings remain legible. It seems that the exterior of the building may have undergone at least three lots of modification. The only internal work evident in the existing Pavilion classrooms are the bench and the cupboard units installed in 1966. The ceiling lining and the blackboards appear to be original.

The authenticity of the School for Instrumental Music (former Infants School) is high to moderate. The last phase of the work that affected the exterior of the former Infants School was carried out in 1948 and the exterior of the building appears to have undergone little change since then. The interior of the building remained essentially unchanged from its completion in 1948 until 1985. In 1985 a number of minor changes were made to the south wing of the building. The 1985 arrangement of the south wing remains largely intact. The interior of the east wing appears to have remained largely unchanged until recently when large openings were made between rooms 1 and 2 and between rooms 3 and 4. The classroom in the west wing appears to be largely unchanged.

The landscaping to the playground side of the building has been changed with garden beds being introduced into the area between the edge of the playground and the verandah. The ground levels around the perimeter seem to have risen quite substantially in some locations.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Supporting evidence has been taken from “North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan” prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003.

Key sections used: Documentary Evidence pp.7-61; Physical Evidence pp.63-106; Analysis of the Documentary and Physical Evidence pp. 146-153.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to “North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan” prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003.

From 1922 to 1990, the infant school and the primary school at *North Perth Primary School* operated side by side as separate institutions, each with its own administration, including two separate heads of the schools. The divide between the infant school (grades one to three) and the primary school (grades four to seven) was strictly maintained, with former students recalling that although both schools used the adjacent sports oval, children were not permitted to otherwise share play areas.¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence, refer to “North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan” prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information, refer to “North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan” prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003.

While a comprehensive study has not been undertaken for this assessment, it is believed to be unusual for the infant school and primary school to have coexisted as separate institutions for such a long period (1922 to 1990). Of the thirty primary schools entered into the Register, no others are noted as retaining separate infant and primary schools into the 1980s. Schools entered in the Register that formerly included a separate infants school include:

P1933 *Cottesloe Primary School and Cottesloe School for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired* (RHP) includes a separate infants school, constructed 1901, that was amalgamated into the main school in 1959.

¹ Ron Davies, former student and local resident, phone conversation with Clare Schulz, 31 August 2005.

P2174 *East Perth Primary School (fmr)*. Infant school constructed c.1901. School closed and converted to children's court, 1975.

P2241 *Newcastle Street School*. Infant school constructed 1890s. Closed, along with the adjacent primary school, in 1928.

P3135 *North Fremantle Primary School (fmr)*. Infant school constructed 1900 across the road from the primary school. Amalgamated 1926.

P3463 *1915 Block, Albany Primary School*. The registered place only includes the 1915 infant school, which was amalgamated with the primary school in 1974.

P7596 *Claremont Primary School Precinct*. Infant school constructed 1903; closed along with the primary school in 1964.

P13390 *Geraldton Primary School*. 1915 infant school; unclear when it amalgamated with adjacent primary school, but joined as one institution by late 1970s.

A further six registered primary schools are noted as having had a separate infant school in the early years of the twentieth century, but information is not readily available as to when the schools were amalgamated. These are: P2180 *Highgate Primary School*, P2434 *Subiaco Primary School*, P2505 *Old Midland Junction School*, P3459 *Victoria Park Primary School*, P3608 *East Fremantle Primary School* and P9394 *Maylands Primary School*.

It appears that most infant schools had been absorbed into primary schools by the 1960s and 1970s, when 'infant schools' were renamed 'junior schools'. *North Perth Primary School* is unusual in that from 1922 to 1990 the infant school and the primary school operated side by side as separate institutions.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to "North Perth Primary School Conservation Plan" prepared by Kelsall Binet Architects for The Department of Housing and Works on behalf of The Department of Education and Training in September 2003.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
