



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 6.16.1 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 4.2 Supplying urban services

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 404 Community services and utilities
- 503 Natural disasters

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is a fine example of the Federation Romanesque style. It exhibits symmetry and a robust form in its rock-faced limestone walls and contrasting ornate rendered moulding. The large semi-circular openings to the ground floor and arcade that extends across the first floor, flanked on either end by parapeted gable bays adorned with turrets, are particular features of note. (Criterion 1.1)

The separation of functional areas is a significant design achievement, with the work areas, staff quarters, Superintendent's quarters and public reception area being well planned within the form of the building. (Criterion 1.2)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is a well-known landmark located in a prominent position. By virtue of its scale and distinctive appearance, it makes a significant contribution to the Murray Street and Irwin Street streetscapes. (Criterion 1.3)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is an important component of the historic Murray Street East Precinct, which comprises a number of former Government, administration and ecclesiastical buildings dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Criterion 1.4)

* 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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) was the first purpose-built fire station for the accommodation of fire fighters and their equipment. The Perth Brigade was also the first in Western Australia to employ fire fighters on a permanent basis. (Criterion 2.1)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) was the headquarters for fire fighting and emergency rescue in Western Australia from 1901 until 1979, when its operations were relocated to the newly constructed Central Fire Station. (Criterion 2.2)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is closely associated with James McFarlane Lapsely, Superintendent of the Perth Fire Brigade from 1897 to 1910, and the first Chief Officer of the WA Fire Brigades from 1910 to 1922. He was also involved in a considerable number of community groups. (Criterion 2.3)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) was designed by the prominent Western Australian architectural firm of Cavanagh and Cavanagh and built by Gus Liebe. James Ochiltree, who had a strong relationship with the WA Fire Brigade Board, was responsible for the design of the 1906 and 1910 additions. (Criterion 2.3)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) incorporates numerous examples of technical excellence and innovation developed during almost 80 years of operation. Up until 1920 applicants were required to have a trade to join the Fire Brigade as a permanent fireman. The Perth Brigade's trained and skilled trade personnel manufactured most of the requirements of the service on the premises. After 1920, trades were a desirable, though not essential, requirement for personnel. (Criterion 2.4)

Superintendent Lapsely invented various electro-mechanical devices, including an automatic alarm, a horse-harnessing system and a quick fire suppression system. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

As the WA Fire Service Headquarters, the building contains remnants of operational fixtures and structures, as well as evidence of fire suppression research. This demonstrates the station's consistent association with research as well as the utilisation of new technologies, such as the introduction of chemical fire extinguishers, breathing apparatus (from 1913), automated alarm systems (from 1901) and the electronic operations location map (1970). (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is a well-known landmark in central Perth, and as such it contributes to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is a rare example of a large and comprehensively equipped fire station. It was the largest in the State until the construction of the new Central Fire Station in 1979. (Criterion 5.1)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) contains remnants of past operational procedures and technologies not found in any other fire station in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is a rare example of a secular building designed by prominent Perth architectural firm Cavanagh and Cavanagh. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is representative of architectural firm Cavanagh and Cavanagh's work, which included No. 2 Fire Station, Fremantle (1908). It is a good example of the firm's use of the Federation Romanesque style of architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) represents the evolution of fire and emergency services management in Western Australia, from horse-drawn vehicles to motorised engines. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) is generally in good condition. The place has been well maintained.

12.4 INTEGRITY

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) has a moderate degree of integrity. Although no longer used as a fire station, the place retains clear evidence of its former use, and retains a related purpose through its use by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

No. 1 Fire Station (fmr) has a high degree of authenticity. The place retains the majority of its original fabric.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document has been based on 'No. 1 Fire Station, 25 Murray Street, Perth: Conservation Plan' prepared by Palassis Architects (for Spotless Facilities Management on behalf of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, July 2006) with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

The curtilage comprises a portion of Lot 23 as identified in the Conservation Plan prepared by Palassis Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

See Palassis Architects, 'No. 1 Fire Station, 25 Murray Street, Perth: Conservation Plan'

Since the Conservation Plan was completed, there has been some work at the *No. 1 Fire Station (fmr)* in preparation for re-opening as the FESA Education and Heritage Centre in 2008. Work has comprised the creation of new spaces within the framework of the first floor and some internal adaptation (wall penetrations) to assist with people movement. The 1985 lift and rear balcony have been removed and a new service core is being built behind the station. It will include a lift, external stairs and amenities. The new centre will include full interpretation of the building and site, as well as exhibits on all types of hazards and emergencies.¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

See Palassis Architects, 'No. 1 Fire Station, 25 Murray Street, Perth: Conservation Plan'

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

¹ Conversation with Su Ferreira, Curator, FEAS Education and Heritage Centre, 5 May 2008.

See Palassis Architects, 'No. 1 Fire Station, 25 Murray Street, Perth: Conservation Plan'

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Palassis Architects, 'No. 1 Fire Station, 25 Murray Street, Perth: Conservation Plan' (for Spotless Facilities Management on behalf of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, July 2006)

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
