



**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)

- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 3.9 Farming for commercial profit
- 3.12.2 Developing sources of fresh local produce
- 3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages
- 3.18.4 Cooperating to raise capital
- 3.19 Marketing and retailing
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 5.2 Organising workers and workplaces
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 302 Rural industry and market gardening
- 306 Domestic activities
- 308 Commercial services and industries
- 505 Markets

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters is a good example of a Victorian era building demonstrating both the simple massing, symmetry and high pitched roof of the Victorian Georgian style in the 1872 and c.1880 sections, and the confident decorative styling of the Victorian Free Classical style in the c.1888 façade, including arched openings, parapet wall concealing the roof and moulded floral details. (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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters, as one of seven significant historic two-storey corner buildings in central York, is a landmark in its own right at the northern end of Avon Terrace's commercial hub and contributes to the landmark character of the York Town Centre Precinct. (Criterion 1.3)

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters contributes to the significant historic townscape of central York, primarily comprising buildings dating from 1845 to 1911, which is aesthetically important as a fine collection of buildings demonstrating the architectural development of the town through this period. The place resonates with the similar arched features of the adjacent *York Post Office* and *York Police Station, Court House & Gaol*. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters has operated as a general store since 1872, providing essential commercial services to the local population, supporting the development of both York and the wider Avon Valley area. (Criterion 2.1)

Prior to the construction of the Eastern Goldfields railway line through Northam in 1894, York was a significant terminus for prospectors travelling to the goldfields, and *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* acted as a supplier for prospecting parties. (Criterion 2.2)

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters was constructed in 1872 for William Edwards Jnr, and was owned and operated by members of the Edwards family until 1936. The Edwards family were notable storekeepers in the colony: William's mother, Eleanor, began storekeeping at Guildford from 1831, then at Edwards Crossing near Beverley from 1846 to the late 1850s; Williams Jnr and his sons began trading in York in 1868, and *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* was the first of what became a chain of 'Edward's Stores' operating in the Avon Valley; William's son George operated as a merchant and importer's in Fremantle, while his sisters ran a drapers and haberdashery store from his Fremantle premises; and *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* was managed after William Jnr's death in 1889 by sons Charles and Kenneth and then grandson Hewitt Morris Edwards. The Edwards were also notably involved in the local community, serving on the Roads Board and Town Council (including both Charles and Kenneth serving as mayor), Agricultural Society, Race Club, York Jockey Club and WA Turf Club. (Criterion 2.3)

In 1936, *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* was purchased by Frederick Ashbolt, a member of an early York family, and was operated by him as a general store until the early 1950s. (Criterion 2.3)

From 1956 to the present (2008), *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* has been owned and operated by York and Districts Farmers Co-operative, which was founded in 1917 to supply agricultural needs to members and handle the sale of wheat, stock and other produce, and which has been a significant local employer and supporter of community projects. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.3)

Among its members, in particular its managing committee, York and Districts Farmers Co-operative has included many significant local residents, some of whom served long terms in managerial roles. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The local community values *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* for its role as a general store since 1872, and as a key part of the historic townscape of central York, thus contributing to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters is an unusual example of a place that has operated continuously as a general store since its construction in 1872. (Criterion 5.1)

The c.1888 façade is a rare example of Victorian Free Classical style in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

The 1872 and c.1880 sections of *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* provide a rare remaining example in York of the practice of siting commercial buildings so that their front verandahs do not intrude onto the footpath, which was largely abandoned in the town after 1886. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters is a good representative example of a general store featuring elements of both the Victorian Georgian and Victorian Free Classical styles that includes residential quarters. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Overall, *York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters* is in fair condition. The place has been maintained to facilitate ongoing use. However, the roof and roof drainage, first floor verandahs (dangerous and unusable) and balustrades, asbestos-clad enclosures, timber detailing and arched enclosures are in poor condition. The vacant interior areas at the first floor require attention due to deteriorated ceilings, walls and floors. The basement is in fair condition although there is some fretted mortar and damage to infill walls and grilled vents. The ground floor is predominantly in use as a supermarket and is highly maintained and in fair to good condition. Syd's Corner and the ground floor Macartney Street verandahs and enclosures are badly weathered and deteriorated, and in poor condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters has operated continuously as a store since 1872, when it was constructed, and has a high degree of integrity.

The residential quarters are no longer in use and changes to the internal layout means they are no longer intact as quarters. There is no evidence in the store sections of the layout of a Victorian-era general store.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

York & Districts Co-Op & Quarters has a moderate to high degree of integrity.

The current external form of the building is largely as constructed in the three campaigns of 1872, c.1880 and c.1888. This early fabric is for the most part intact, except for the removal of a few interior walls at ground level. Most notably, in 1968 the ground floor front verandah was replaced with a canopy and the shopfronts were removed and replaced with aluminium-framed glazing and mosaic tiled dado and plasters. The 1968 shopfront was replaced with timber

detailing in 2007. The supermarket has developed in several stages to the rear of the building, including creating an entrance to Macartney Street. However, despite the number of times the building has been changed, the pre-1890 fabric remains remarkably intact.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document has been based on York & Districts Co-operative Ltd Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Laura Gray and Irene Sauman in April 2007 for the York & Districts Co-operative Ltd, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For documentary evidence see York & Districts Co-operative Ltd Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Laura Gray and Irene Sauman in April 2007 for the York & Districts Co-operative Ltd.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For physical evidence see York & Districts Co-operative Ltd Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Laura Gray and Irene Sauman in April 2007 for the York & Districts Co-operative Ltd.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For comparative information see York & Districts Co-operative Ltd Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Laura Gray and Irene Sauman in April 2007 for the York & Districts Co-operative Ltd.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

York & Districts Co-operative Ltd Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Laura Gray and Irene Sauman in April 2007 for the York & Districts Co-operative Ltd.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
