



**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)

- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 6.2 Establishing schools

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 107 Settlements
- 402 Education and Science

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Northam State School (fmr)* is a fine example of a functional 1870s school enlivened by the application of a prominent curvilinear gable to the centre of the main façade. The Victorian Tudor<sup>1</sup> detail, roof form and setting contribute to the picturesque composition of the place as a whole. (Criterion 1.2)

Together with the adjacent *Post Office (fmr)* the place forms a prominent pair of community buildings illustrating a somewhat eclectic approach to the design of public buildings in the 1870s to 1890s period. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Northam State School (fmr)* is indicative of the introduction of compulsory education in Western Australia for all children aged between six and fourteen under the *Elementary Education Act 1871*. (Criterion 2.2)

*Northam State School (fmr)* is reflective of the changing growth patterns of Northam, particularly its rise as a major regional centre in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Its erection in 1878 is indicative of the initial growth in the town, and the need to construct new facilities from 1898 demonstrates the rapid

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

<sup>1</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.

growth of the region following the extension of the Eastern Railway line to Northam in 1886. (Criterion 2.2)

*Northam State School (fmr)* was designed by the Colonial Superintendent of Public Works, Richard Roach Jewell, and local businessman, future Premier and Northam resident George Throssell, who was responsible for its construction. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

*Northam State School (fmr)* has the potential, through archaeological investigation, to reveal further information about the use of the place. Sub-surface deposits beneath the school building floor, and around the exterior of the building, may contain artefactual material relating to the use of the place. (Criterion 3.1)

### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Northam State School (fmr)* has social value to the teachers, students and individuals who have associations with the place for its role in the education of Northam's children from 1878, and later for its use as a community education centre. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Northam State School (fmr)*, constructed in 1878, is one of the earliest State schools to remain extant in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

*Northam State School (fmr)* is a rare example of Victorian Tudor style architecture in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Northam State School (fmr)* is indicative of the introduction of compulsory education in Western Australia for all children aged between six and fourteen under the *Elementary Education Act 1871*. (Criterion 6.2)

*Northam State School (fmr)* is reflective of the changing growth patterns of Northam, particularly its rise as a major regional centre in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Its erection in 1878 is indicative of the initial growth in the town, and the need to construct new facilities from 1898 demonstrates the rapid growth of the region following the extension of the Eastern Railway line to Northam in 1886.. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Northam State School (fmr)* was extensively renovated as part of its adaptation as a community arts centre and generally appears to be in a sound condition. There is, however, evidence that the effects of rising damp have been concealed behind the external rendered dado and internal repairs to the plastered walls.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Northam State School (fmr)* is no longer used for its original purpose as a school, but has continued to be used for community education purposes (art classes).

The original use of the place is capable of interpretation and the place has a moderate degree of integrity.

## 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

*Northam State School (fmr)* has a low-moderate degree of authenticity. While the plan form and building envelope generally remain consistent with the development of the place in the nineteenth century, door and window openings, and the associated joinery, have been extensively altered in various phases.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place was prepared by the State Heritage Office in January 2014.

Physical evidence was compiled by Greenward Consulting in October 2013.

Amendments and/or additions have been carried out by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Northam State School (fmr)* (1878), is a fine and picturesque red brick and corrugated iron roofed building with a prominent central Victorian Tudor curvilinear gable.

Shortly after the establishment of the Swan River Colony in 1829, settlers were quick to discover that the settlement was not as lush, fertile or productive as expected, and by 1830 explorations in to the colony's interior were underway in search of better land.

In late-1830, explorers were successful in their search and found productive agricultural land beyond the area of initial settlement in the region now known as the Avon Valley. In November 1830, the Lands and Surveys Department set aside land in this area for the townsites of Northam, York and Beverley.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its early foundation, the Northam district did not immediately develop owing to the majority of its land being owned by absentee land owners. However, after the townsite was surveyed in 1836, the settlement became more established with a small number of pastoralists settling in the region.<sup>3</sup>

Little development occurred until the 1860s, when Northam then started to grow due to improvements in agriculture and the establishment of a commercial steam flour mill. As the population of the area started to increase, so did the need for adequate educational facilities for its school ages children.

The district's first school was established at Morby Farm Cottage<sup>4</sup> in 1851, where Frederick Morrell employed a tutor for his children and allowed other local children to attend.<sup>5</sup> Morby Farm School adequately served the local population

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<sup>2</sup> Garden, Donald S., *Northam: An Avon Valley History* (1979), p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Garden, *Northam: An Avon Valley History* (1979), p. 6, 12., and O'Brien Planning Consultants, *Town and Shire of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory* (1998), p.2.

<sup>4</sup> P1837 Morby Farm Cottage was constructed in 1838 for John Morrell, the first settler and acknowledged founder of Northam.

<sup>5</sup> Gray, Laura., and Sauman, Irene., *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* prepared for the Shire of Northam (2011), p. 13., and Garden, *Northam: An Avon Valley History* (1979), p.71.

until 1863 when the Government provided funds towards the construction of a dedicated school building. Funds were matched in part by the settlers, and a one-room timber-framed school was constructed on York Road in 1865.<sup>6</sup>

In 1872, Northam was granted a separate Board of Education, having formerly been under the jurisdiction of the Newcastle (Toodyay) Board. As school enrolments continued to grow during the 1870s, following the introduction of compulsory education for all children aged between six and fourteen under the *Elementary Education Act 1871*, the Northam Board of Education appealed to the Government for better and larger school facilities. Between 1870 and 1873 attendance rose from 41 to 73, which put a significant strain on the small 16ft by 15ft York Road school building.<sup>7</sup> Under the terms of the *Elementary Education Act*, the Government was obligated to provide suitable facilities to accommodate the now compulsory student body, therefore, in 1877, the Government called for tenders for the construction of a new school building.<sup>8</sup>

The new school, named Northam State School, was constructed by local businessman, future Premier and Northam resident George Throssell, to a plan drawn up by the colonial Superintendent of Public Works, Richard Roach Jewell. The school catered to both boys and girls, and comprised two large classrooms (separate classrooms for boys and girls) with a centrally located washroom to the rear with separate washrooms for boys and girls. Verandahs surrounded much of the building with a central curvilinear parapeted gabled projecting bay to the street front.<sup>9</sup> The distinction between the boys and girls portions of the school was likely identified by high level rendered plaques on the gable ends. The words 'GIRLS•SCHOOL' remains on the northern gable, however, the 'BOYS•SCHOOL' wording does not.

*Northam State School (fmr)* was completed and opened in 1878.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Northam underwent drastic development, outstripping both York and Toodyay in terms of size and importance. In 1886, the Fremantle to Guildford railway line was extended to Northam, and following the discovery of gold in Western Australia in the early 1890s, Northam became the terminus of the rail line to the Eastern Goldfields. Not only did this result in thousands travelling through Northam on their way to the goldfields, but Northam itself was transformed. Major reconstruction and expansion of the Government railway yards and workshops took place, a new

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<sup>6</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p. 13., and Garden, *Northam: An Avon Valley History* (1979), p.71.

<sup>7</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p. 13-14., and 'Appendix One: Victorian School Buildings c.1840 – c.1890, Historical Overview', in Kelsall Binet Architects and Bizzaca, Kris., *A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings 1890-1945* (2001).

<sup>8</sup> Gregory, Jenny., and Smith, Lisa., *Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia* (1995), p.7-8., and West Australian Government Gazette, 4 September 1877, p.182., cited in Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p. 14.

railway station was built, many new businesses were established and the population grew rapidly.<sup>10</sup>

The growth of Northam over this period meant an increase in the number of school aged children residing in the town, and therefore requiring education. In 1894, the boys and girls schools at *Northam State School (fmr)*, who had previously been treated as separate entities, became amalgamated into 'Northam Public School'. By 1897, *Northam State School (fmr)* had become too overcrowded, and in 1898 a new brick school building, located on the adjacent lot, was constructed. This building, known as Main School building, is no longer extant.<sup>11</sup>

After the construction of the Main School building, *Northam State School (fmr)* was used predominantly as a domestic economy centre (for cookery, laundry and housewifery classes), although also functioned as teachers quarters for a short time.<sup>12</sup> Some alterations occurred over the years to accommodate the building's different functions.

*Northam State School (fmr)* continued to be used for domestic science until the 1970s when it became a community arts centre. It is thought that the long term use of *Northam State School (fmr)* for domestic science, is the reasons why the former school is commonly known as 'Old Girls' School',<sup>13</sup> although the place never had this sole function.

In 2013, *Northam State School (fmr)* continues to be used as a community arts centre.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Northam State School (fmr)* is a single storey brick building constructed in 1878. It comprises two large former classrooms under the main roofline, a small projecting central bay (now an entry porch and store) on the Wellington Street (western) side, and a projecting rear wing with two rooms (one now subdivided as a vestibule, kitchen, toilet and storeroom) on the eastern side. Verandahs extend along all sides, between the projecting front bay and the rear wing. The southern half of the building (and larger site) was originally used as the Northam Boys' School, while the northern half was used as the Northam Girls' School.

The rear wing uses matching external brickwork to the main classrooms, but the walls of the former are approximately 230mm thick (9" Flemish bond brickwork),

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<sup>10</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p. 7., Heritage Council of Western Australia, State Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation, P3976 *Northam Cemetery* (2006), p.6., and Heritage Council of Western Australia, State Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation, P1859 *Northam Railway Station (fmr)* (1996), p. 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p.14-16.

<sup>12</sup> Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p.16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

compared to 355mm thick (14" Flemish bond), suggesting that the rear wing may have been an early (pre 1895) addition.<sup>14</sup>

### Siting

*Northam State School (fmr)* is located on the eastern side of Wellington Street, near two other early community buildings, the former Northam Post Office (1873)(immediately south) and St Johns Anglican Church (1889)(11 Wellington Street). The site around the building is an open grassed area with informal mixed plantings, including eucalypts, schinus (pepper tree) and casuarina – none of which appear to be of a significant age.

The front boundary to Wellington Street is unfenced and is defined along the central and southern portion by a low, random-stone retaining wall. This is broken at the southern end of the building by an unformed driveway. There is a low pipe-frame and wire mesh fence to the northern boundary and a high pipe-frame and wire mesh fence to the eastern boundary. The southern end of the site originally faced Hawes Street, but this street has now been truncated and the area between the former school and the former Northam Post Office is now an unfenced, landscaped pedestrian area.

No archaeological features have been identified, but the site is relatively undisturbed and it is possible that there may be archaeological evidence of site works and outbuildings relating to the former playgrounds.

### Exterior

*Northam State School (fmr)* is a simple functional building with only one applied architectural feature, a curvilinear parapeted gable at the centre of the main facade. This was a popular Victorian Tudor detail, but the place does not otherwise exhibit the picturesque characteristics of this style.

The main roof is gabled with short-sheet corrugated iron cladding, ogee profile gutters and round downpipes. The rear wing is roofed with a dropped 'M' shaped double gable, while the front bay has a small gable roof concealed behind the parapet. At the centre of the main roof there is a large rendered chimney, while to the rear wing there are two face brick chimneys, one over the back to back raked fireplaces on the western side and one over the externally projecting hearth on the eastern side.

The return verandahs have steeply pitched roofs springing from immediately below the gutter line of the main roof. To the north, west and south sides the verandahs have timber floors over a face brick plinth. The timber floor continues at ground level behind the former girls' classroom, while the area behind the former boys' classroom has concrete slab paving. The verandah roof is supported on plain timber posts and the elevated areas have a simple square section timber balustrade. The current configuration of the verandahs is consistent with the 1895 plan, minus the former lightweight, rear washroom enclosures. Faint marks to the north and south facades suggest, however, that the place may have previously had steeply pitched gabled porches over the original entries to the boys' and girls' schools.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on the current physical evidence and comparison with 'Plan 8, 1894 School Floor Plan' reproduced in Gray and Sauman, *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* (2011), p.26.

The face brick walls were laid in Flemish bond and, on the main façade, the selection of darker headers and lighter stretchers created a bi-chromatic, chequerboard pattern. This is contrasted by the rendered finish to the parapeted gable, which features a simple projecting band around the edge of the parapet and a central arched bay flanked by two small windows. The arched bay is a recessed panel only and the stepped internal face of this wall, together the clear separation between the former boys' and girls' schools, suggests that this may be the original design (i.e. it was never intended as a front entry).

The physical and documentary evidence indicates that there were originally two windows to the western façade of the girls' classroom and a matching pair to the boys' classroom. In the post 1895 era these were bricked up and replaced by three windows to each of the former classrooms. To the former girls' school these are double hung, with one pane to each sash, over a small bottom hopper – all with plain brick surrounds and flat sills. To the former boys' school the windows have two panels, each divided into 6 panes. The lower panel is fixed, while the top panel is a hopper window. Each of these windows has a raked sill and rendered lintels and 'quoins'. To the façade of the former boys' school there is also a wall-mounted marble plaque (1978) which commemorates the centenary of the opening of the Northam School in December 1878 and the acquisition of the building by the Northam Town Council for preservation.

To the northern gable there is a high level rendered plaque with the words 'GIRLS•SCHOOL' in raised lettering, flanked by two vertical ventilation slits. Physical evidence of careful repairs to the brickwork of the plain southern façade, and reference to an 1895 plan, indicate that this was formerly located over an entry door flanked by two windows - the original entry to the girls' school.

To the southern end, the matching door and window openings are extant, but the plaque for the boys' school has been removed and the ventilation slits bricked up, leaving clear physical evidence of their location. The windows are single casements with raked sills, and both these and the door opening are framed by rendered lintels and 'quoins'.

The eastern façades of the former girls' and boys' classrooms have also been altered, with evidence that an original window opening to each room has been replaced (post 1895) with a new window opening and door. To the former girls' classroom the window is a double-hung/hopper window combination (matching the windows to the western facade) while to the boys' classroom the window is double hung. All of the openings have plain reveals with the exception of the door to the former boy's classroom, which has a rendered lintel and 'quoins'.

The rear wing retains doors in the original locations to the north and south, and three original, vertically proportioned, window openings to the northern half of the east elevation. Post 1895 an additional narrow window was added to the northern facade and a standard double hung window to the southern façade. A new projecting fireplace hearth and chimney was also added to the southern half of the east elevation – possibly as part of the adaptation of the place as a domestic economy centre (for kitchen work).

The current main entry is off the front verandah, through a door to the southern side of the central bay. A water tank shown adjacent to this on the 1895 plan confirms that this opening is also a later alteration.

The other major alteration is the rendered dado to all of the external walls, typically to window sill height, but rising to door head height on parts of the rear wing. Associated patches of repairs to the brick mortar and internal render suggest that this conceals areas of rising damp.

#### Interior

The current entry porch occupies half of the gabled bay at the centre of the western façade. This has an external door to the southern verandah and an internal door to the former boys' classroom. The western window is set in a recess formed by the intrusion of a stepped wall behind the external arch. Along the northern wall there is a built-in timber bench. The northern half of the gabled bay is occupied by a storeroom with a door to the former girls' classroom. Both of these spaces have butt-jointed timber floors and timber boarded ceilings. The entry porch has hard plaster walls, while the store has lime-washed and painted brick walls. It is not clear if these were originally two small rooms or a single teacher's room providing the only original internal access between the two classrooms.

The main two rooms each measure approximately 10.15 x 5.5m (33' 4" x 18') and are laid out symmetrically around a central wall with large back-to-back fireplaces (approximately 1.67 wide and projecting 0.6m either side of the central wall). The fireplace on the northern side has been blocked up, while on the southern side it has been built-in as a cupboard. Both rooms have timber floors with 130mm wide boards, hard plaster walls, and plasterboard ceilings with coved cornices. Like all of the ceilings in the building, these are raked along the sides to follow the pitch of the gabled roof. The high level ventilation slits to the external gable walls are repeated to the central wall, originally providing some cross ventilation at ceiling level.

Evidence of the former use as a classroom is now limited to a blackboard on the northern wall of the former girls' classroom, and the honour board above the fire place in the former boys' classroom. There is also, however, a 1.83 x 1.28m concrete slab in front of the fireplace to the former boys' classroom which may be related to the adaptation of the place as a domestic economy centre.

The main two rooms are connected by an internal door to the west of the fireplaces, but it is not clear if this was an original opening. On the eastern side, each classroom also has an original door opening into the rear wing, which was divided into two spaces on the same alignment as the dividing wall between the main classrooms. The room off the former girls' classroom has now been subdivided into four spaces, comprising a vestibule, toilet, kitchen and small storeroom. The vestibule has timber floors, rendered walls and a flush ceiling (raked at the sides to align with the gable roof). It also retains a raked fireplace to the south-western corner, with a semi-circular opening and a robust timber mantle. The kitchen has built-in benches and retains evidence of a moulded dado line to the plaster above the sink on the southern wall. The toilet has a concrete floor and is serviced by a wall-mounted basin in the vestibule.

The room off the former boys' classroom has been adapted as a wet area with concrete floors and sinks along the northern wall. The original raked fireplace to the south western corner has been blocked up, as has been the later fireplace to the western wall. Walls are finished with hard plaster and the flush ceiling is raked along the sides.



The joinery (including skirtings, architraves, doors and windows) varies in style throughout the building and has been altered in various stages. Some elements, such as most of the skirtings, the ceilings to the main classrooms and some of the doors and windows, clearly date from renovations undertaken in the modern era, while others are consistent with school detailing from the early to mid twentieth century. Elements that may date from the nineteenth century include the boarded ceilings to the front bay, low-waisted doors, sections of skirting in the vestibule and the remaining fireplace mantle.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

#### Early State Schools in Western Australia

Education in Western Australia can be divided into two distinct streams: education provided by the State and education provided by religious institutions, both of which were established within the first decades of the Swan River Colony. *Northam State School (fmr)* was established by the State in 1878, and therefore will be compared to other State schools.

While the first government school was opened in 1830,<sup>15</sup> the colonial government did not develop a formal system of education until the establishment of the General Committee of Education in 1847. By 1855, the General Committee had established thirteen government schools,<sup>16</sup> both in the metropolitan and regional area. Few of these very early State schools remain, probably because prior to the construction of purpose-built school buildings, classes were held in small temporary buildings that were later demolished.<sup>17</sup>

Two of the earliest surviving purpose-built government schools are *Old Perth Boys School* (P2117) on St Georges Terrace, and Fremantle Boys' School (entered in to the State Register as P842 *Film and Television Institute*), both constructed in 1854.<sup>18</sup>

A search of the State Heritage Office database does not identify any other government schools as having been constructed between the period 1850s to 1870s. Partly this is because not many government schools were built during this time, as education was not yet compulsory and there were numerous privately established (mostly religious) schools. However it is also possible that government schools from this period have been adapted over time and their historic use is no longer well known and recorded in local heritage inventories and heritage lists. Further research may reveal other examples of government schools from this period.

In 1871, the State Government introduced compulsory education through the *Elementary Education Act 1871*, which meant that the Government was thereafter obligated to provide suitable facilities to accommodate the now compulsory student body. This led to the construction of new state schools

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15 Mossenson, D, *State Education in Western Australia 1829-1960* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands: 1972), p.2. cited in Siew, Adelyn, *Mapping Schools: Exploring Spatial Histories of Government Primary Schools in Western Australia*. Ph.D thesis, University of Western Australia (2004), p.67.

16 'Appendix One: Victorian School Buildings c.1840 – c.1890, Historical Overview', in Kelsall Binet Architects and Bizzaca, Kris., *A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings 1890-1945* (2001).

17 Ibid.

18 Gregory, Jenny, and Smith, Lisa., *Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia* (1995), p.3.

where existing facilities did not adequately serve the growing number of students. Between 1870 and 1890, twenty new schools were built and 1,706 extra children are recorded as attending State schools.<sup>19</sup>

In the immediate years following 1871, while student numbers steadily increased, the number of State schools actually dropped from 63 in 1871 to 60 in 1872 and 58 in 1875.<sup>20</sup> Constructed in 1878, *Northam State School (fmr)* is, therefore, one of the first schools to be built as a consequence of the *Elementary Education Act 1871*.

Other State schools constructed during this time were:

- Former Infants and Girls School, Fremantle (registered as P1008 *Fremantle Technical College Annexe (Single Storey)* and as part of P1007 *Fremantle Technical College Annexe*) – A single-storey, semi-dressed stone building constructed in 1877-78 to a design by Richard Roach Jewell.
- P13390 *Geraldton Primary School* – A single-storey stone Victorian Georgian style classroom constructed in 1878 to a design by Richard Roach Jewell.
- P2559 Newcastle State School (fmr) – A single-storey red brick building constructed in 1887 to the design of George Temple Poole. This place was reviewed by the Register Committee in 2003, and determined not to warrant assessment for the Register.
- P330 *Paisley Centre, Bunbury* (formerly Bunbury State School) – A single-storey Victorian Rustic Gothic style school building constructed in 1886 to the design of George Temple Poole.
- P2877 *York Primary School* – A single-storey Victorian Rustic Gothic style building constructed in 1886 to the design of George Temple Poole.

Constructed in 1878, *Northam State School (fmr)* is one of the earliest State schools to be constructed in Western Australia following the introduction of compulsory education in 1871.

In addition, as few State schools from this early period of State education have been identified as extant, *Northam State School (fmr)* is rare as one of the earliest State schools to remain in Western Australia.

### **Design & Style**

*Northam State School (fmr)* has been identified as a functional building constructed with elements of the Victorian Tudor style. However, apart from the curvilinear gable to the centre of the main façade, the building is functional in its overall layout and design.

While State schools of the early colonial era (1850-1890) generally adhered to one of three building types,<sup>21</sup> there was no apparent convention for style, or any

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<sup>19</sup> 'Appendix One: Summary of Statistics', in Mossenson, David, *State Education in Western Australia, 1829-1960* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands: 1972), p.160.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> The three building types have been identified as: 'Victorian School Room' – a single school room with porch; 'Hall and Gallery' – a large hall and adjoining classrooms; 'School with Attached Quarters' – a

consistency in the appointed architect,<sup>22</sup> and therefore the architectural style of school buildings varied greatly.

- *Perth Boys' School* (1854), an amalgamation of the designs of William Sanford and Richard Roach Jewell, has been defined as Early Gothic Revival in architectural style.
- *Fremantle Boys' School* (1854), an amalgamation of the designs of William Sanford and James Austin has been defined as Victorian Tudor in style.<sup>23</sup>
- The design of the original 1870 portion of P4088 *Guildford Primary School*, of which very little remains visible, was designed in a Victorian Georgian style by Richard Roach Jewell.

Although there was no overall stylistic consistency, a number of early colonial schools, incorporated Victorian Tudor detailing, including:

- *Fremantle Boys' School* (1854) – incorporates Victorian Tudor elements such as: curvilinear parapeted gables, two-centred pointed arches, Tudor arches, and medieval-looking chimneys.
- Original 1861 drawings for Guildford Primary School (not constructed) - incorporated Victorian Tudor elements such as: central projecting bay topped with pointed arch, and medieval-looking chimneys.
- Perth Girls and Infants School (1877, now demolished) - incorporated Victorian Tudor elements such as: Tudor arches, central projecting bay with pointed roof, depressed pointed arches, and medieval-looking chimneys

There are just 22 places entered in the State Heritage Office database which have been identified as being constructed in the Victorian Tudor style. While the style originated from English country houses of the Tudor era, in Australia, the style can be divided into two schools – places which made reference to the Scottish Baronial style, and places which incorporated medieval motifs, irregularity and picturesque elements.<sup>24</sup> While *Northam State School (fmr)* falls into the second 'picturesque' group, the majority of Victorian Tudor places in the database echo the Scottish Baronial manner of the style, with battlemented parapets and towers. Examples include:

- P2119 *The Cloisters*, Perth (1858)

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school building with teachers quarters incorporated into its design. 'Appendix One: Victorian School Buildings c.1840 – c.1890, Historical Overview', in Kelsall Binet Architects and Bizzaca, Kris., *A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings 1890-1945* (2001).

<sup>22</sup> Between 1850 and 1890, the Colonial Architects, Clerk of Works and Chief Architects were: William Sanford, Colonial Secretary (1852-1855), James Austin, Superintendent of Works (1853), James Manning, Clerk of Works (1850-1872), Richard Roach Jewell, Superintendent of Works (1874-1884), George Temple Poole, Chief Architect (1885-1896). 'Appendix One: Victorian School Buildings c.1840 – c.1890, Historical Overview', in Kelsall Binet Architects and Bizzaca, Kris., *A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings 1890-1945* (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Both Perth and Fremantle schools are accredited to William Sanford, Colonial Secretary 1852-55, despite plans for the Perth school being signed by Richard Roach Jewell, Superintendent of Works 1874-1884, and plans for the Fremantle school being signed by James Austin, Superintendent of Works 1853. Sanford made alterations to the original designs. Siew, *Mapping Schools* (2004), p.89 fn.14, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Apperly, Irving, Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, pp.86-89.

- P2120 *Barracks Arch*, Perth (1863)
- P2095 *Government House and Grounds*, Perth (1863)
- P482 *Claremont Teachers College (fmr)* (1902)

Places which are most comparable to *Northam State School (fmr)* in terms of the application of the Victorian Tudor style are:

- *Fremantle Boys' School* (1854)
- P875 *Museum and Arts Centre, Fremantle [Lunatic Asylum & Old Women's Home]* (1861)

The above analysis suggests *Northam State School (fmr)* to be a rare example of Victorian Tudor style architecture in Western Australia, particularly for its picturesque application.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

Gray, Laura., and Sauman, Irene., *Post Office and Quarters (fmr) and Girls' and Boys' School (fmr) Northam: Conservation Management Plan* prepared for the Shire of Northam (2011).

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may reveal additional extant State schools constructed between 1850 and 1870.