



**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)

- 3.16.1 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 4.2 Supplying urban services
- 8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 404 Community services & utilities
- 604 Local heroes & battlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Beverley Fire Station is a good example of the Inter-War Stripped Classical style, consistent with other fire stations constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. (Criterion 1.2)

Beverley Fire Station contributes to the interwar heritage character of the streetscape of the main street of Beverley, with the nearby Beverley Town Hall, Child Health Centre and Hotel Beverley in similar interwar styles. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Beverley Fire Station was built in 1948 during the post World War II period of reconstruction and modernisation of facilities. (Criterion 2.1)

The construction of *Beverley Fire Station* immediately post World War II reflected the importance of Beverley as the service centre for the surrounding agricultural area. (Criterion 2.2)

Beverley Fire Station was associated with the Beverley Volunteer Fire Brigade from construction in 1948 until the brigade moved into new premises in 2005. (Criterion 2.3)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Beverley Fire Station was designed by the architectural firm Duncan, Stephens and Mercer, and is particularly associated with Keith Duncan, who was responsible for the design of fire stations in Western Australia since 1926. (Criterion 2.3)

Beverley Fire Station, despite its post World War II construction date, continued the general styling of the interwar standard designs created by Keith Duncan, providing continuity while acceding to post-war constraints during a period of great demand for reconstruction and modernisation amid material and labour shortages and rising costs. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Beverley Fire Station is valued by present and past members of the Beverley Volunteer Fire Brigade for its social and service associations and by the community of Beverley and district. (Criterion 4.1)

Beverley Fire Station contributes to the sense of place for the Beverley community for its associations and its place in the heritage streetscape of Vincent Street. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Beverley Fire Station is a rare remaining example of a single-appliance brick fire station with quarters built immediately post World War II and in largely original condition.

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Beverley Fire Station is representative of a fire station facility established in the late 1940s that has functioned continuously until recent years.

12.3 CONDITION

Beverley Fire Station is in good condition. However, there is considerable evidence of cracking throughout the Appliance Room and Quarters, particularly on the northeast wall under the window near the fireplace, above the kitchen window, and also in the west kitchen corner. External timbers are weathered on both buildings, and the tiles along the rear gable are damaged on the Storage and Toilet Building. There is evidence of termite damage in the Storage and Toilet Building.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Beverley Fire Station evidences the original form and has retained a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Beverley Fire Station retains a high degree of the original fabric with intervention only evident in the concrete floor in the Appliance Room and Quarters, and a door intervention in the same area. Overall, *Beverley Fire Station* has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Irene Sauman, Historian and Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant, in September 2006 with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Beverley Fire Station comprises a simple single-storey brick, tile and render Appliance Room and Quarters in Inter-War Stripped Classical style, and a single-storey face brick and tile Storage and Toilet Building, both constructed in 1948 to a design by Duncan, Mercer and Stewart.

The town of Beverley began as a service centre for the surrounding pastoral and agricultural district and sprang to prominence when chosen in the mid 1880s as the junction of the Eastern and Great Southern railway lines.¹

Early fire brigades were volunteer operations working from municipal buildings or sites provided in return for their efforts.² A volunteer fire brigade was formed in Beverley around 1908, when the town was connected to the Goldfields Water Supply pipeline and came under the control of the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board (WAFBB) in 1910. The brigade occupied a corrugated iron building adjacent to the Council Chambers. When Beverley's Municipal Council and Roads Board amalgamated, the Council Chambers were surplus to requirements and purchased by the WAFBB as a home for the brigade. The building was reported as being suitable for a fire station after slight alterations.³

The Beverley Volunteer Fire Brigade occupied the Council Chambers for the next 32 years. As well as attending fires in the town, the brigade took part in the competitions and demonstrations held between brigades. Beverley brigade fielded a team of eight in the first annual fixture held at Albany in 1915, and in 1929, won the Discipline March event.⁴

In 1945, Lot 27 on Vincent Street, adjacent to the Town Hall site, was purchased as the site for a new fire station and the Council Chambers sold into private ownership.⁵ However, the new station was not built immediately and the 17-member brigade was without a home for several years. They considered disbanding, but instead turned to creating a grassed training track at the Beverley sports ground while they waited.⁶ The delay was caused by the shortage of building materials and labour following World War II, compounded by rapidly rising costs. Construction finally began on *Beverley Fire Station* in 1948, the work being undertaken by contractor G. A. Esselmont.⁷

¹ A more detailed history of the early development of Beverley can be found in Heritage Council assessment documentation for Beverley Town Hall (00154).

² A brief history of the development of the fire brigade service can be found in the Heritage Council assessment document for Merredin Fire Station (01567).

³ *Fire and Rescue Service of WA Heritage Inventory*, Perth, CAMS, 1997, entry for Beverley Fire Station (fmr); Thomas Alf T., *The History of Beverley*, West Leederville, A.T. Thomas [1946], p. 27.

⁴ Wood, K., *Ready, Aye, Ready: A history of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Movement of WA*, WA Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association, (Inc) and the League of Champion Firemen, Perth, 1989, p. 174.

⁵ Certificate of Title, Vol. 1077 Fol. 192 & Vol. 1089 Fol. 290, 11 Sept 1945; Thomas Alf T., op cit, p. 27.

⁶ Thomas Alf T., op cit, p. 27; *The Beverley Times*, 12 Nov 1948, p. 1.

⁷ *The Beverley Times*, 12 November 1948, p. 1.

The place was designed by the architectural firm of Duncan, Stephen and Mercer. Keith Duncan had been commissioned by the WAFBB in 1926 to design most of their fire station buildings.⁸ Duncan was also a volunteer fireman and held various positions in the Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association, serving on the Executive Committee (1924-42), and as Secretary of the Association (1937-41). He was made a life member in 1937.⁹ The design of *Beverley Fire Station* was an adaptation to post-war restrictions, with the proposed married quarters reduced to single quarters as a cost measure.¹⁰ Initial estimates for construction had been in the order of £2,000, while the final construction cost, even in the reduced form of the place, was £4,251 8s 9d.¹¹

A description of the place appeared in the *Beverley Times* a week before the official opening:

The new premises embrace a commodious engine room which has also been constructed with the end in view that it can be used for social and other Brigade functions by the simple expedient of removing the engine. A fireplace is provided and the lighting is excellent. To the rear of the main room is a kitchen and stove with a sink installed and to the rear of this is a bedroom for the single man who will be domiciled at the premises. Baths and shower rooms are adjoining. A handsome entrance is provided and provision has been made for the planting of suitable shrubs in receptacles flanking the entrance. The building is set back from the road on the Town Hall alignment and a cemented driveway provided.

To the rear of the main building a brick room has been provided where the Brigade's reel and other competition gear will be housed. Flanking this are ladies and gentlemen's conveniences which have been sewerage.

The ground immediately surrounding the new premises has been bituminised but a strip has been left on the western side on which the members intend to establish a small grass running track for practice of the 'dry' demonstration events. Here also a ladder stand for practice has been provided.¹²

The brigade occupied *Beverley Fire Station* on 14 November 1948 prior to the official opening on the 19th, which was reported in the local newspaper.

Local volunteer firemen had their big day on Friday last when in the presence of parliamentary representatives members of the Fire Brigade board and Beverley Road board and a large assemblage of the public the new fire station which had been erected at a cost of approximately £3,700 was officially opened. Those in attendance included the Minister controlling Fire Brigades, the Hon H. Parker, MLC, Chief Officer Gerhard (of the WA Fire Brigade) Mr. J. L. Mann (member from the district), Messrs. H. Irvine (president of the Fire Brigades Board), A. J. Revell, Prunster, A. Hines, H. Highman, Secretary J. P. Price (of the Fire Brigades Board), L. Carey (Volunteers' Representative on the Board) T. Carlisle (president of the Volunteers' Association), W. Dobson (secretary Volunteers Association), A. Rose (Executive) Inspecting Officer Gardener, Captain Lee (Narrogin), Captain Price (Brookton), Messrs. Duncan and Stewart (architects), G. A. Esselmont (contractor) and G. Curlew (late of the Fire Brigades Board).¹³

Chairman of the Beverley Roads Board, Len Doncon, presented seven-year service awards to brigade members Walter Swan, Colin Grover and Bert Wilhelm, after which Mrs J. I. Mann, wife of the local Member of Parliament, officially opened *Beverley Fire Station* by turning the key in the lock of the main

⁸ *Fire and Rescue Service Inventory*, op cit., pp. 25, 37-38.

⁹ Wood, Kenneth A., op cit, pp. 109-12.

¹⁰ *The Beverley Times*, 12 November 1948, p. 1.

¹¹ *Fire and Rescue Service Inventory*, op cit, entry for Beverley Fire Station.

¹² *The Beverley Times*, 12 November 1948, p. 1.

¹³ *The Beverley Times*, 19 November 1948, p. 3.

entrance. Those attending then inspected the buildings before partaking of afternoon tea in the Lesser Town Hall, where several speeches were made. The fire brigade hosted a dance in the Town Hall in the evening.¹⁴

A plaque commemorating the opening was attached on the interior of the Appliance Room and Quarters, recording the names of those associated with the construction and opening of the place and listing the members of the WAFBB.

Beverly Volunteer Fire Brigade was only required to attend fires in the township, but for many years it had been the practice to assist at bush fires as well. On those occasions the Fire Brigades Act precluded the brigade from taking the fire engine and other equipment outside the town boundaries. Following the opening of *Beverley Fire Station*, the Roads Board and the brigade joined forces to call for donations for the purchase of a two-ton truck with a 400-gallon tank and pump for the brigade to use at country fires. The initial response was slow despite there being several grass fires on private properties during the week the request was made.¹⁵ Eventually, however, this movement saw the establishment of the Beverley Bush Fire Brigade.

One of the duties of the volunteer firemen was guard duty, carried out in accordance with the Health Act, at such places of public entertainment as picture theatres and live stage performances. The attending fireman was paid a scheduled fee and this was looked upon as supplementing brigade funds. A uniformed fireman would have attended at balls and other events at the Town Hall, and picture shows in the lesser Town Hall and the Beverley picture gardens. This practice continued until 1959.¹⁶

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Beverley brigade had a number of successes in their divisional competitions and achieved several records including: the C Class records for Disabled Six's 1970 and 1972; 'Y' Eights, 1969; Blue Ribbon Eights 1969 and 1970; Ladder Fives, 1969; and, Hose practice Six Men, 1987.¹⁷

Beverley Fire Station was upgraded in 1988, and it is likely at this time that the cement floor was installed in the appliance room. In 1989 a pre-painted corrugated galvanized steel garage was erected to house appliances for the brigades rescue role. This would have included cutting and lifting equipment for road accident rescue.¹⁸

In the 1994 survey of Significant Buildings of the 1930s in Western Australia, *Beverley Fire Station* was identified as a significant regional fire station of the Art Deco period. The place was recorded in the 1997 Fire and Rescue Service of WA heritage inventory as having some local significance.¹⁹

In 1997, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services was created, which established the Fire and Emergency Service Authority of Western Australia (FESA) on 1 January 1999. FESA took over management and co-ordination of

14 *The Beverley Times*, 19 November 1948, p. 3.

15 *The Beverley Times*, 19 November 1948, p. 1 & 26 November 1948, p. 3.

16 Wood, Kenneth A., op cit, p. 180.

17 Wood, Kenneth A., op cit, p. 54.

18 *Fire and Rescue Service Inventory*, op cit, entry for Beverley Fire Station; History of FESA's services on the FESA website www.fesa.wa.gov.au.

19 Geneve, Vyonne, *Significant Buildings of the 1930s in Western Australia*, National Trust, Perth, 1994; *Fire and Rescue Service Inventory*, op cit, entry for Beverley Fire Station.

all emergency services in the State, including the Western Australian Fire Brigades, which then became the Fire and Rescue Service.²⁰

In 2005, a new fire station was opened at Beverley in an outer part of the town. The new facility was necessary because without major alterations to the structure, necessitating changes to the façade, *Beverley Fire Station* could not house the newly acquired fire engine. The new station allowed the brigade's entire equipment to be kept under the one roof and provided for both the Beverley Volunteer and Bush Brigades to be housed in the one modern facility.²¹

Beverley Fire Station is likely to be handed to the control of the Beverley Shire in the near future as FESA have no further use for the place.²² In 2006, *Beverley Fire Station* is unoccupied.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Beverley Fire Station comprises a simple single-storey brick, tile and render Appliance Room and Quarters constructed in 1948 and showing some influence of Inter-War Stripped Classical style, and a single storey face brick and tile Storage and Toilet Building at the rear of the site, constructed at the same time.

Beverley Fire Station is located on the north west side of Vincent Street, the main street in Beverley, next to the similarly design influenced Beverley Town Hall. There is a road and parking access separating the fire station and town hall, which affords side access to the site, at the rear.

The frontage of the Appliance Room and Quarters is symmetrical, with a central recessed vehicle access door and parapet above. The rear of *Beverley Fire Station* adjoins a neighbouring residential property (no right of way is shown on the Certificate of Title). The west side of the front of the site is open and a concrete slab is evident, with evidence of the fixings where a shed was previously located. A steel framed mesh ramp structure remains in situ on the west side, from the front boundary back into the site. At the rear of the fire station, separated by an expanse of bitumen, is the Storage and Toilet Building, a single-storey face brick building. The site is level and except for the concrete slab on the west side, bitumen at the rear, a concrete path along the east side, and the concrete driveway entry, the remainder is grassed. The southwest side and the rear (northwest) boundary are delineated by 1.8 metre high fibrous cement fencing, and there is a low fibrous cement fence along parts of the northeast boundary. There is a row of immature eucalyptus trees along the southwest boundary.

Although constructed in 1948, in the post World War II period, the front facade of Appliance Room and Quarters displays most characteristics of Inter-War Stripped Classical style. The use of symmetrical massing, somewhat Spartan appearance, art deco elements, and plain wall surfaces light in colour are demonstrated in the street frontage

The 1948 Appliance Room and Quarters is a single-storey brick rendered construction with a hipped Marseille clay tile roof. The roof features a single square rendered chimney, and the tiles are almost entirely covered in lichen. The street frontage features a square element that is the rendered front wall that includes the parapet. Within that square element, symmetrically balanced, is the central original timber access door to the appliance room. The door is flanked by

²⁰ History of FESA's services, op cit.

²¹ History of FESA's services, op cit; information provided by Mike Hessell, FESA property manager.

²² Information provided by Mike Hessell, FESA property manager.

simple stepped rendered pilasters that protrude from the façade and continue as an 'eyebrow' extension across the top of the door opening. Each side of the flanking pilasters forms a curved flower box. The rendered walls are detailed in large-scale ashlar incisions, and central on the parapet is a small rectangular art deco motif. The return walls of the parapet have rainheads. There is a commemorative opening plaque located on the inside of the west pilaster.

The hipped tiled roof, ogee gutters, round painted galvanised downpipes and battened lined eaves remain as original except the northeast gutter, which has been replaced with square profile. The exterior wall detail of the remainder of the building is rendered with a low profile texture finish. There are engaged piers on both sides, forming equally spaced bays for the extent of the appliance room. There are regularly spaced windows along the entire southwest side, except for a door that has been inserted into the wall that evidences the remains of the original window in that position, with the upper sashes forming a fanlight. On the northeast side, there are mirrored regular windows along most of the wall. The windows are, without exception, sets of two double hung sashes. Each sash comprises two-panes in a horizontal configuration, and the windows are glazed with bubble pattern obscure glass. The exterior of the frames are painted. The external doors, including the appliance door on the front, but excluding the southwest door, are the original vertical tongue and groove lined timber doors that are painted on the exterior. The front 'appliance' access door is comprised of panels with the verticals infilled.

Appliance Room and Quarters is regular in form, with the appliance room at the front, two rooms (kitchen and bedroom) behind, and a bathroom and a verandah at the rear. Pedestrian entry is through a rear door off the verandah, or one of the doors located opposite each other central on the sides of the appliance room.

The appliance room is an open rectangular area with windows both sides and the appliance door at the front. A truncated fireplace is located in the northeast corner next to a servery hatch, and a door is central on the north wall accessing the rooms behind. The rooms behind are a kitchen and bedroom. Most of the floor of the appliance room has been replaced with concrete, although an area towards the rear, and the rooms behind still have the original 0.075 metre tongue and groove jarrah floorboards. The walls throughout are hard plaster with an incised dado line. The varnished timber boards of the coat and hat racks on the walls each side of the appliance entry access door remain in place although the hooks have been removed. The ceilings are battened plasterboard. The ceiling in the appliance room has a series of square air vents along each side. The original simple splayed skirtings and quarter round and architraves remain in situ in their original varnished finish, as are the interior flush panel doors, although the doors on the kitchen side have been painted. The external doors, including the appliance door, are also varnished on the interior side. The appliance doors evidence the original hardware. The hatch between the appliance room and the kitchen, is varnished on the appliance room side, and painted on the kitchen side where it reveals the slide element above the opening. The fireplace is detailed with face brick surrounds featuring horizontal patterned bricks, and a simple bracketed jarrah mantle. The kitchen fitout is a basic sink cupboard that is likely original. There is a simple bracketed mantle above the tiled stove recess, and a similar shelf and brackets below the hatch opening. Exiting the rear kitchen door, onto the rear verandah, on the west side of the verandah is a bathroom under the main roof. The verandah and bathroom have concrete floors and the edges are rolled up the wall in the shower section of the bathroom. The bathroom is a relatively large room with a simple sink installation and a shower compartment

along the back wall, separated by a brick rendered wall with an opening detailed in a stepped 'arch'. A cold (one tap) shower is in situ at the west side and double tap shower (more recent shower head) on the west side. As well as recent electrical fitout, the original Bakelite switches remain in evidence.

The Storage and Toilet Building is roughly square in form with a central room flanked by ladies and gents toilets. The central room was inaccessible at the time of the inspection. The building is entirely a face brick structure, with a gable-tiled roof that breaks pitch over the flanking toilets. The central room, with a vehicular entry across the front, protrudes from the flanking setback side toilets. The toilets were accessible. They have rendered brick walls, concrete floors and are unceiled. They have wire glass louvred windows in vertical configurations and ledge and brace doors. At the rear of the central room, two double hung sash windows with horizontal double pane sashes and bubble opaque glass are evident.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The Heritage Council database indicates that there are nine Fire Stations on the State Register, including: Metropolitan (5), Wheatbelt (3), and Goldfields (1). Of these, none were built within the same period (1943-53).

Stations built during this period were Cannington (1942, privately owned and occupied as commercial premise since 1992), North Fremantle (1944, demolished), *Beverley Fire Station* (1948) and Harvey (1953). The Harvey Fire Station, also built to the same plan as Beverley, had a games and trophy room addition made on one side of the appliance room in 1976. Window spaces in the common wall were converted to display cabinets. The wall between the kitchen and bedroom has been removed and the original timber entrance doors replaced with a metal roller door. The place was assessed as below threshold in May 2004. It was still in use for its original purpose at that time.²³

Despite its post World War II construction date, *Beverley Fire Station* continued the general styling of the interwar standard designs created by Keith Duncan. The 1940s fire stations, and three rural stations built in the 1950s, namely Bridgetown (1954), Manjimup (1954) and Margaret River (1956), were built to a modified design, which featured a projecting flat hood and side fins around the appliance door. The facades of the buildings were either fully rendered, as in *Beverley Fire Station* and Harvey, or rendered to the hood and parapet with a face brick return, as in the three 1950s stations. These three had a timber-framed building with iron roof behind the brick facade, while *Beverley Fire Station* and Harvey were all brick construction with a tiled roof. Two metropolitan stations built in the 1950s at Melville and Osborne Park were a transition between the rural post-war stations and the 1960s station buildings, where the fins were replaced by a simple projection of the side walls and there was no rendered detailing.²⁴

Beverley Fire Station is a rare remaining and representative example of a single-appliance brick fire station built immediately post-war and in largely original condition.

²³ HCWA assessment documentation for Harvey Fire Station (14517).

²⁴ *Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory*, op cit, entry for Beverley Fire Station, p. 3.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
