



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
- 7.6.4 Dispensing justice

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation & subdivision
- 403 Law & order
- 311 Hospitality & tourism

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Of brick and iron construction, *The Residency, Bunbury* is a competently designed and built example of a substantial house in the 'Victorian' Regency style. (Criterion 1.1)

Situated within a large open landscaped area that contains two large plane trees, *The Residency, Bunbury* contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the part of Stirling Street in which it is located. (Criterion 1.3)

The Residency, Bunbury is a domestic scale building that shares many aesthetic characteristics with houses in the near vicinity. Collectively these houses contribute to the precinctual qualities of Stirling Street. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The Residency, Bunbury is associated with development of Bunbury and the Wellington district at the end of the nineteenth century, which came largely as a result of availability of funds and the increase in population associated with goldrushes in the 1880s and 1890s, and resulted in the consolidation of Bunbury as the principal port and the minor capital of the southwest region. (Criterion 2.1)

The Residency, Bunbury was the official residence of the Resident Magistrate from 1896 to the early 1960s, and has associations with the administration of justice in the district during this period. (Criterion 2.2)

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

The Residency, Bunbury was constructed in 1896 for W. H. Timperley, Resident Magistrate of the Wellington district from 1890 to 1905. The place has associations with the various Resident Magistrates who served the district from 1896 to the early 1960s, including Timperley's successor William Lambden Owen who held the position and thus occupied the residence from 1905 up to c. 1920. (Criterion 2.3)

The Residency, Bunbury has associations with architect Robert Balding and local contractor Joseph Hedley. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Residency, Bunbury has social significance for its use as the official residence of the district's Resident Magistrate from 1896 to the early 1960s, and its association with the administering of justice in the area during this period. (Criterion 4.1)

The Residency, Bunbury is valued by the local and wider community for its contribution to the built environment of Bunbury, and as a result contributes to this community's sense of place. This is evidenced by its inclusion of the City of Bunbury Municipal Heritage Inventory, its classification by the National Trust of Australia (WA), and its entry the Register of the National Estate. The preservation of the building c. 1979/1980 and its retention in public ownership is also an indication of the social value of the place. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

The preservation and restoration of *The Residency, Bunbury* in c. 1979/1980 and the later work carried out c. 1990, as well as its retention in public ownership, is also an indication of the value the place has to the community. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Residency, Bunbury building is characteristic of brick and iron buildings built in the 1890s for prominent citizens near the centre of large regional towns and also in the suburbs of Perth that line the railway between Midland and Fremantle. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally *The Residency, Bunbury* appears to be in fair condition. However, most of the external walls show signs of damp that is severe in some locations.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The Residency, Bunbury has a moderate degree of integrity. The current use of the building as a youth hostel has not caused the fabric of the building to be changed significantly.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The Residency, Bunbury has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The form of the building and the room layout of the building do not appear to have changed substantially. It appears that much of the fabric of the building is original.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Kristy Bizzaca, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Alan Kelsall, Kelsall Binet Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Residency, Bunbury, a single-storey brick and iron building in the Victorian Regency style, is situated at the south east corner of the intersection of Stirling and Moore Streets.

Despite having been proclaimed a townsite in 1841, as well as being the principal port of the southwest and the capital of the Wellington district, the population of the Bunbury area was still low in the 1870s. At this time, only 300 people lived in the town and approximately 2,000 in the district itself.¹ The Bunbury area had this modest growth primarily because of the low levels of agricultural and mineral production in the hinterland, inadequate transport and communication lines, and the lack of development of the port facilities.² With the availability of public monies and the increased population as a result of the goldrushes in the 1880s and 1890s, funds were provided for the construction of the Perth to Bunbury railway line, which opened in 1893, and works to the Bunbury harbour. The larger population and therefore market base also ensured the opening up of the district's agricultural areas.³ These factors contributed to the development of the town itself as the minor capital for the region and subsequently the provision of further public and commercial services.⁴

As early as 1841, there were three resident magistrates appointed in the Wellington district.⁵ At this time and up to the 1890s, the resident magistrate or government resident was the representative of the Colonial Government, and was considered to be very powerful in the district, even more so than the elected members of local government.⁶ However, unlike other regional centres such as Albany, the Bunbury position did not come with an official residence until 1904. Up until this time, the resident magistrate resided in his own home.⁷

¹ Barker, A.J. & Laurie, M., *Excellent Connections: A History of Bunbury 1836 – 1990*, City of Bunbury, 1992, p. 104.

² Ibid, pp. 121, 132 - 133, 135.

³ Ibid, pp. 135, 140 – 144, Ch. 5.

⁴ Ibid, Ch. 4.

⁵ Ibid, p. 31.

⁶ Ian Molyneux, Architect, 'The Residency, Bunbury, Western Australia: A Brief Report', 23/4/1979, p. 2.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 2 – 3; The West Australian Arts Magazine, *Artlook*, Vol. 5, No. 8, August 1979, p. 44. The resident magistrate administered court proceedings over the large Wellington district among others. Serving under him were a number of prominent citizens who rotated as 'magistrates' in local courts in the area, a practice that appears to date from the late nineteenth century. The resident magistrate himself presided at the court house in Bunbury; the first of which was completed in March 1885 and the second (and current) constructed in

From 1890 to 1905, W. H. Timperley served as the Resident Magistrate of the Wellington district.⁸ Prior to this, he had spent four years as a police inspector in the Southwest and was later appointed Superintendent of the Rottneest Island prison.⁹

Timperley was granted title to the land on the corner of Stirling and Moore Streets on 6 March 1896.¹⁰ Soon after, he commissioned architect Robert Balding to design a residence to be constructed on the land.¹¹ *The Residency, Bunbury* was completed by local contractor Joseph Hedley by June 1896.¹² A description of the place appeared in *The Bunbury Herald* on 19 June 1896:

... one of the finest private residences in Bunbury was completed lately for W. H. Timperley, Esq., R.M. It is both substantial and an ornament to the street and since its erection has added to the value of the frontages in the vicinity... The building is built of brick, on a solid cement foundation, with a verandah on three sides, 7 ft. wide with ornamental post iron brackets and fence. The front of the house is tucked pointed with cement dressings around the window, the entrance is on the east side by a hall 20 x 6, with semi-circle moulded cap and base. This dining room is on the right hand 14 x 15, has projecting double windows under large arch. The drawing room 20 x 14 has windows similar to the dining room with Cornish and ornamental centre flowers, the whole of the woodwork being grained maple. On the right side are three bedrooms 14 x 11, on the left bedroom 14 x 15, smoking room 14 x 8 and servants rooms 14 x 8. Outside the back door is opened space 14 x 14. To the right is the kitchen, to the left the bathroom and store.¹³

The newspaper article also states that *The Residency, Bunbury* was one of two 'villa residences', which had been constructed on the 'White Road' (now Stirling Street). It went on to say: 'The White Road is certainly becoming a favourite for residential sites, and bids fair to compete with the Vasse Road, where quite a number of villas have been erected.'¹⁴

Although *The Residency, Bunbury* was at the time known as the official residence of the magistrate, it was not until circa 1904 that it was actually purchased by the Public Works Department.¹⁵ This coincided with the appointment of William Lambden Owen to the position of Resident Magistrate in Bunbury in 1904.¹⁶ (At this time Owen was the magistrate responsible for the Wellington, Nelson and Sussex magisterial districts.¹⁷)

The property was vested in the Crown on 5 April 1904.¹⁸ Owen took occupation of *The Residency, Bunbury* in January 1905.¹⁹ He resided at the property up to circa 1920 when he was succeeded as Bunbury's Resident Magistrate.²⁰

1907. (Barker & Laurie, op. cit., pp. 31, 111, 132, 138 & 164; Williams, L. & Kelsall, A., 'Heritage Assessment of *Bunbury Post Office and Bonded Store (fnr)*', HCWA Documentation, August 2001.)

8 Barker & Laurie, op. cit., p. 148.

9 Ibid, pp. 131 & 148.

10 Molyneux, op. cit., p. 3.

11 *The Bunbury Herald*, 19/6/1896.

12 Ibid.

13 *The Bunbury Herald*, 19/6/1896.

14 *The Bunbury Herald*, 19/6/1896.

15 *Artlook*, op. cit., p. 44.

16 Molyneux, op. cit., p. 3.

17 Ibid, p. 3.

18 *Artlook*, op. cit., p. 44.

19 Molyneux, op. cit., p. 3.

20 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1905 – 1920.

In 1913, the Public Works department commissioned local contractor C. F. Coles to carry out renovations to *The Residency, Bunbury* at a cost of £59/1/8.²¹

The Residency, Bunbury continued to be occupied by successive Resident Magistrates and their families up to the early 1960s, at which time a new residence was constructed on a different site.²²

From the early 1960s to the mid 1970s, *The Residency, Bunbury* was used as offices by several state government departments.²³ During this period various works were carried out to the property including the conversion of one of the small rear rooms as an additional kitchen, the construction of adjoining male and female toilets at the rear of the building, the installation of suspended ceilings in some of the rooms, the erection of detached sheds (now demolished), and the bitumenising of an area close to the residence for parking.²⁴

In circa 1979, the property was placed in title in preparation of the public sale of the place. This sale was deferred in response to community interest in the preservation of *The Residency, Bunbury*.²⁵ (At this time, the building had been unoccupied for a number of years and had been subject to vandalism and deterioration.²⁶)

In 1978/1979, a grant from the Western Australian Heritage Committee to the sum of \$5,500 was made available for emergency repairs to *The Residency, Bunbury*. The works were carried out under the supervision of the National Trust of Australia (WA), and the funds administered by the Bunbury Town Council under the direction of the Bunbury Historical Society.²⁷ As part of a grant application to the Australian Heritage Commission for further restorations works, a report was prepared by architect Ian Molyneux which outlined the extent of the work needed to *The Residency, Bunbury*.²⁸ The restoration of the residence was completed in the early 1980s.²⁹

By August 1979, the Bunbury Arts Council had taken over the lease of *The Residency, Bunbury* at the request and in conjunction with the Bunbury Historical Society.³⁰ Other organisations, such as the Community Youth Support Scheme, also appear to have used the building's facilities from the early 1980s up to c. 1990.³¹

The Bunbury Arts Council leased *The Residency, Bunbury* to the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) for use as backpacker accommodation in early 1990.³² The lease was entered into on the condition that the residence be restored. This work was completed under the supervision of the National Trust of Australia

21 PWD Contract Book, 1911-1913, p. 346, Public Works Department, AN 7/14, Acc 1124, SRO.

22 Information from HCWA File P0355. The names of individuals who held the position of Resident Magistrate in Bunbury and who lived at *The Residency, Bunbury* from c. 1920 up to the early 1960s is an area of further research.

23 *Artlook*, op. cit., p. 44.

24 *Ibid*; Molyneux, op. cit.

25 *Artlook*, op. cit., p. 44.

26 Molyneux, op. cit., pp. 2 – 5.

27 *Ibid*, p. 9.

28 *Ibid*.

29 *Ibid*; see also HCWA File P0355 & PD0355.

30 *Artlook*, op. cit., p. 44.

31 *Ibid*; Molyneux, op. cit.; *Travelwest*, No. 45, May 1990, p. 15.

32 *Travelwest*, op. cit., p. 15.

(WA) and funded by the YHA.³³ Accommodation for 35 beds was provided and a freestanding bathroom and laundry block was also constructed.³⁴ The internal walls of what was a rear toilet/bathroom addition were removed and the area renovated for use as a living room.³⁵

In August 2001, *The Residency, Bunbury* continues to be used as a youth hostel. However, the lease of the building is soon due for renewal and the YHA does not intend renew its lease.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Residency, Bunbury is a single-storey brick and iron building. It has a rectangular plan and verandahs on three sides.

The Residency, Bunbury is situated at the south east corner of the intersection of Stirling and Moore Streets, Bunbury. The site appears to be a double block and the building stands on the half of the site that is furthest away from the intersection. The part of the site that edges the corner is mainly grassed and contains two large London Plane trees.

The section of Stirling Street in the vicinity of *The Residency, Bunbury* is largely residential in character. The majority of the houses in this area are single storey buildings with walls of brick or timber and iron roofs. Most of the buildings date from the early part of the twentieth century.

The Residency, Bunbury is the only substantial building on the site. A freestanding brick and iron bathroom and laundry block is located slightly to the rear of *The Residency, Bunbury*.

The Residency, Bunbury is a simply planned building designed with a restrained use of classical decorative detailing. It displays some of the characteristics of the Victorian Regency c.1840 –1890 style.³⁶

The building has a hipped roof that runs across the front face of the building and returns to the rear as a pair of hipped roofs. The inner edges of these abut to form a central valley gutter that discharges to the rear of the house. The rear part of the building has a lean-to roof. The verandahs have separately-pitched bullnosed corrugated iron roofs. All roofs are covered by sheets of Colorbond finished corrugated iron. The guttering is of ogee pattern, pressed galvanised iron.

The front façade of the building faces north onto Stirling Street. This façade is composed almost symmetrically with a rendered bay set on either side of a panel of the wall. This panel of wall is off centre by about 450 mm. The wall of this façade is completely rendered. The outer edges of the bays are finished with a bead and stop chamfered detail whereas the corners of the wall are not resolved in this manner, evidence that the rendering is not original. It is likely that the walls were rendered in a misguided attempt to overcome the problems resulting from rising damp. Supporting this assumption is the fact that the brickwork between the high point of the verandah and the soffit of the main roof is of tuck-pointed brickwork instead of render. Pairs of timber corbel brackets appear to support the fascia of the main roof.

Each of the bays contains a pair of almost full height timber framed double hung sash windows.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid; physical evidence.

35 Physical evidence.

36 Apperly, et. al., op. cit.

The outer edge of the verandah floor is supported on a low brick wall. The spaced floorboards of the verandah are 85 mm wide and are not original.

A short pathway leads from the footpath that runs along Stirling Street and meets the building near the east end of the front verandah. A set of two steps rises up to the verandah.

The main entrance to the building is off the east verandah. The east face of the building consists of two parts; the main part is under the hipped roof edged by the verandah. The other part is the rear area, which has a lean-to roof and no verandah. The windows and doors along the verandah are evenly spaced within openings that have flat heads and rendered surrounds. The main entrance door is four panelled, the upper panels are glazed and the two lower panels are solid with bolection mouldings. The door is flanked by half glazed sidelights with a fanlight above it. The other door on this side of the building also has a fanlight above it and is half glazed with a multi-paned upper half and a two-panel lower section. The two windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The walls to the main part of the building are of cut and struck Flemish bond brickwork with a rendered plinth.

The rear part of the east face of the building appears to have been built in two stages. The part adjoining the main part of the building has Flemish bond brickwork which matches the front, whereas the brickwork of the rear section is stretcher bond instead of Flemish and the windows are timber framed with 3 paned casement sashes instead of double hung sashes.

The west face of the building is composed in the same manner as the east face. The main part of the building is under the hipped roof and is edged by the verandah. The other part is the rear area, which has a lean-to roof and no verandah. The door and the two windows on this face of the building are evenly spaced and are of the same construction as those on the east side.

The main door of *The Residency, Bunbury* opens off the verandah on the east side of the building and leads into a hallway that joins the north end of the corridor. This corridor continues through to the rear of the building. There is an arched opening at the junction of the hallway and corridor.

Two large rooms that now serve as dormitories occupy the full width of the front of the building. The remainder of the main part of the building contains six rooms, three on each side of the corridor.

The south end of the corridor opens on to the rear section of the building. There is a single step change of level at this point. The rear section has two bedrooms on the east side and a kitchen on the west side. Between these rooms is the dining area, which continues through to adjoin the living area that occupies the south-east corner of the building.

The two rooms at the front of the building have bay windows projecting beyond the main wall of the building. A segmental arch spans the opening of the alcove containing the bay windows. Both rooms have fireplaces with timber surrounds. The walls and ceilings are lath and plaster. The ceiling of the room in the northwest corner is battened but the other one is plain. The timber floors are carpeted and have about 350mm high skirtings with an elaborately moulded top. The timber doors have 4 panels.

The six rooms that open off the central corridor are generally finished in the same manner, with plastered walls, 200 mm high skirtings and carpeted timber floors. The plaster ceilings have no cornices. The timber doors have 4 panels. Four of the rooms have fireplaces with simple timber surrounds.

The central corridor has the same finishes as the six rooms apart from the ceiling, which has a cast grid vent and a coved cornice. Both details suggest that the ceiling is a replacement. The doorway at the end of the corridor connecting the main part of the house to the rear contains a door with sidelights and a fanlight. The door is a half glazed with a two panel lower section.

The dining area is within the rear part of the building and the plaster ceiling follows the rake of the skillion roof. The flooring is vinyl sheeting on timber. The walls are plastered masonry. Doors and architraves are as in the front part of the building.

The kitchen has a large fireplace on the west wall. The fireplace contains a cast iron Metters No. 4 stove. The fireplace has a tiled surround that continues around the room, forming a splash back to the timber benching that skirts the room. The timber benching is recent and appears to have been designed to suit the requirement of a hostel. It also has a gas cooker. The kitchen generally has the same finishes as the dining area.

The living-room part of the rear of the building was originally divided into a number of smaller rooms as can be seen by scars on walls and ceilings. The small casement windows in most of the walls suggest that, at one stage, this was a utilitarian area housing rooms such a laundry, a toilet or a bathroom. In addition, this part of the building has a concrete floor. The external walls of this area are mostly of plastered masonry, except for the small area of fibrous cement lined studwork in the south west corner of the room which houses the rear door.

The freestanding bathroom and laundry block has a rectangular plan. The walls of the building are built of red coloured face brickwork in a stretcher bond. The roof of the building is hipped and covered by sheets of Colorbond finished corrugated iron. A detached bullnosed verandah runs along the east face of the building. The building houses shower rooms, toilets and a laundry area that all appear to be part of a recent fit-out.

Since the early 1960s, *The Residency, Bunbury* has undergone various changes of use. Each change has resulted in works to the building. Of particular note are the erection of the freestanding bathroom and laundry block and the removal of internal walls in the living room section of the building c. 1990s.

Generally *The Residency, Bunbury* appears to be in a fair condition. However most of the external walls show signs of damp that is severe in some locations, particularly towards the front of the building.

The long-term future of *The Residency, Bunbury* is uncertain. The lease of the building is due for renewal in the near future and the Youth Hostels Association does not intend renew its lease.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The exact nature of all changes to the place is not known and is an area of further research.

The names of individuals who held the position of Resident Magistrate in Bunbury and who lived at *The Residency, Bunbury* from c. 1920 up to the early 1960s is an area of further research.

The departmental use of the building from the early 1960s to c. 1979, and the use of the building by the Bunbury Historical Society and the Bunbury Arts Council from c. 1979 up to c. 1990 is an area of further research.