



**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*

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is a good example of a two-storey brick fire station, displaying some influence of the Inter-War Stripped Classical style in its massing and the simple detailing to the main façade of the central bay. (Criterion 1.2)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) has a landmark quality in the streetscape of Duke Street and contributes to the heritage ambience of the townscape of Northam. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is representative of the development of fire fighting services across Western Australia during the early twentieth century, which were introduced, or upgraded, as growth and movement of population dictated. (Criterion 2.1)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is indicative of the growth and development of Northam and the wider agricultural and pastoral Wheatbelt area during the 1920s, which triggered the construction of new fire fighting facilities in 1929. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is representative of fire station design and construction in the early twentieth century, where each new station building was designed on a case-by-case basis to meet the needs of each site and brigade individually. (Criterion 2.2)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) was one of a number of fire stations designed by well-known architect Jack Learmonth Ochiltree, who was the architect for the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board from 1913 to c.1926. Ochiltree was also responsible for several iconic Western Australian buildings, including *First Church of Christ, Scientist* (1939), and *St John's Ambulance Building* (1940) in Perth. (Criterion 2.3)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is associated with the Northam's Volunteer Fire Brigade, one of Western Australia's earliest volunteer brigades. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is highly valued by the local community for its associations with fire fighting, over a period of 62 years, as evidenced by its entry in the local Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criterion 4.1)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) contributes to the sense of place of the local and wider community for its associations and landmark streetscape quality. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is rare for its distinctive single bay two-storey central appliance room, flanked on either side by single-storey wings, a design type which has not been applied elsewhere in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is one of the last architecturally designed fire stations to be constructed prior to the introduction of a standard fire station plan in the 1930s. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is representative of fire station design following the establishment of the Fire Brigade Board in 1909 and prior to the introduction of a standard fire station plan in the 1930s, when fire stations were designed on a case-by-case basis to meet the needs of each site and brigade individually. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is in fair to good condition. There is some evidence of damage from rising and falling damp, particularly in the residential wing (including extensive areas of fretting mortar to the external walls). Other areas of concern included patches of rust to the roof sheeting

(particularly to the south-west side of the central bay) and areas of deterioration to paintwork to the external joinery.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) retains a moderate degree of integrity. The place has not been used as a fire station since 1991, but the original intent is clear and the current uses are compatible.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity. It retains a degree of the original fabric with change evident predominantly in the appliance room, with the installation of a replacement door at front and infill at the rear opening. The exterior displays the infill of the front and rear verandahs of the residential wing and the enclosure of the area at the rear of the appliance room.

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 May 2007.

The physical evidence was updated in October 2013 by Greenward Consulting.

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

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is a two-storey brick and iron-roofed building flanked by single storied wings, built in 1929, which displays some elements of the Inter-War Stripped Classical style.

Despite its early establishment, in 1830, the district of Northam did not develop until the 1860s when improved agriculture and the establishment of a commercial steam flour mill led to increased settlement in the area.¹

While the township initially developed as a service centre for the surrounding pastoral and agricultural areas, during the last decades of the nineteenth century it underwent drastic development following the extension of the Fremantle to Guildford railway line to Northam in 1886 and the discovery of Western Australian gold in the early 1890s. Northam became the terminus of the rail line to the Eastern Goldfields and became a major centre for the Avon Valley district.²

As its population rapidly grew, like many other settlements in the State at this time, the need to provide fire protection in Northam became more pressing. In 1898, the State Government established the Fire Brigade Board (FBB), a centralised body for the management of fire fighting in Western Australia, under the *Fire Brigade Act 1898*. Prior to the *Fire Brigade Act 1898*, brigades were formed on a purely local as-needs basis, often in reaction to significant fires in the nearby area,³ as was the case with the establishment of Northam Volunteer Fire Brigade, in October 1898.

In early 1898, after a number of properties had been destroyed by a particularly devastating fire in Northam, the *Northam Advertiser* suggested 'that perhaps some of the public spirited young men will at once set about... the formation of a Fire Brigade'.⁴

¹ Garden, Donald S., *Northam: An Avon Valley History* (1979), pp.4, 6, 12., and O'Brien Planning Consultants, *Town and Shire of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory* (1998), p.2.

² 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.

³ Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review*, prepared for Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia (2011), Volume 3, p.4.

⁴ *Northam Advertiser*, cited in Wood, Kenneth, *Ready, Aye, Ready: a history of the volunteer fire brigade movement of Western Australia*, The WA Fire Brigades' Association (Inc) and The League of Champion Firemen, East Perth, (1989), pp. 58, 83 & 148. An overview of the development of the

Northam's Volunteer Fire Brigade was inaugurated on 19 October 1898, making it one of the very first volunteer brigades to be established in Western Australia.⁵

The Brigade initially operated from a shed in Fitzgerald Street, and fought fires by dropping fire hoses into nearby wells and pumping the water manually.⁶ Later, the Brigade acquired its first equipment, worth about 300 pounds, consisting of a Maryweather fire engine and a horse borrowed from the council's rubbish cart when it was free. Due to the limited availability of the horse, the volunteer firemen often ended up pulling the engine themselves.⁷

Although the *Fire Brigade Act 1898* had established the FBB in 1898, it was optional for brigades to be registered with the board until 1909 following the introduction of compulsory registration and creation of the Western Australian Fire Brigade Board (WAFBB) under the *District Fire Brigade Act, 1909*.⁸ Most existing brigades chose not to be registered with the FBB prior to 1909.⁹ Northam, however, was one of the very few voluntary brigades to request to come under the jurisdiction of the WAFBB prior to it becoming compulsory 1909.¹⁰

In March 1899, a Special Meeting of the Fire Brigade Board was held to consider the Northam Fire Brigade's request to be registered with the FBB. Their request was accepted, and Northam became part of the FBB in 1901.¹¹

Despite being under the control of the FBB, it appears that the Northam Brigade enjoyed a considerable level of autonomy, being able to appoint its own Superintendent on a number of occasions during the 1900s.¹²

In 1903, a purpose-built brick Fire Station with corrugated iron stables was erected in the town of Northam on the corner of Gordon and Duke Streets. This building is no longer extant.¹³

Prior to the construction of Northam's first Fire Station in 1903, the fire bell was kept in the Town Hall.¹⁴ When a fire occurred the alarm was sounded by a series of coded blasts on the electric light station whistle, indicating the area

fire service in WA can be found in HCWA assessment documentation P01567 Merredin Fire Station.

⁵ 'Appendix III: Volunteer Fire Brigades – Formation Date', in Wood, *Ready, Aye, Ready*, p.58. N.B, Prior to 1900, the only other Volunteer Fire Brigades to have been inaugurated were at Coolgardie (1895), Esperance (1897), Geraldton (1886), and North Kalgoorlie (1897).

⁶ *Northam Advertiser*, Centennial Edition, 25 November 1993, p. 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Wood, *Ready, Aye, Ready* (1989), p. 83.

⁸ Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p.12, 23.

⁹ Wood, *Ready, Aye, Ready* (1989), p. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹¹ 'Appendix III: Volunteer Fire Brigades – Formation Date', in *Ibid.*, p.58.

¹² 'Northam: Notes on 1st Fire Brigade', by Stanley Gibbons, Assistant Chief Officer, Country Fire Department (23 March 1978), courtesy of Fire Brigade Museum, Perth, pp.2-3.

¹³ Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p.437.

¹⁴ *Northam Advertiser*, Centennial Edition, 25 November 1993, p. 22.

of the fire. The volunteer firemen would rush from their work to the area indicated, where they would meet up with the fire engine.¹⁵

The introduction of compulsory registration of all Western Australia's Fire Brigades in 1909 led to significant reorganisation of the management of fire fighting services in the State. One change was the introduction of permanent station officers to volunteer brigades and in 1910, the Northam Brigade acquired its first permanent Station Officer Jim Caddy. Caddy, a former volunteer fireman, had been trained in Perth and brought back a new fire engine and a white horse named Jack.¹⁶ The rest of the brigade remained volunteers, who were only paid when they attended a fire.¹⁷

The Northam Fire Station Occurrence book 1927-28 indicated that the firemen worked 10-hour shifts, carrying out tasks such as equipment checks, water pressure checks, station whistle checks and synchronisation of the clock. By this time there were three permanent officers and four volunteers.¹⁸

Throughout the early twentieth century, the decision when to construct new, or repair existing fire stations was dependant on the growth and movement of population in the State. The Wheatbelt, in particular, experienced rapid growth during this time, and towards the end of the 1920s, the WAFBB recognised that a new station was required at Northam.¹⁹

In 1927, plans were made for construction of Northam's second Fire Station, which was to be located on Duke Street.²⁰ In addition to an appliance room, which would house the fire engine, Fire Station No. 2 was also to include an attached residence for the Station's permanent Fire Officer as well as overnight accommodation for volunteer firemen. The new building was designed by Architect Jack Learmonth Ochiltree.

Ochiltree completed his articles in 1891 under one of Melbourne's leading architects, Alfred Dunn. In 1894, during the height of the Western Australian gold boom, Ochiltree moved from Melbourne to Western Australia and joined the architectural branch of the Government Railways. In 1897, he moved to the Goldfields and opened practices in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. After serving in the Boer War from early 1901 to mid-1902, and obtaining the rank of Captain, Ochiltree established an architectural practice in Perth. As well as being responsible for the design of a variety of buildings in Western Australia, including *Newmarracarra* (1910), *No.2 Substation, Perth* (1914), *First Church of Christ, Scientist* (1939), and *St John's Ambulance Building* (1940). Ochiltree was appointed architect for the WAFBB in 1913, and was responsible for the designed for a number of fire stations.²¹

15 Ibid., and Memo of telephone conversations with retired Northam fireman Lance Bullen by researcher Carolyn Denham-Shade, August-September 1995, HCWA place file.

16 *Northam Advertiser*, Centennial Edition, 25 November 1993, p. 22.

17 Ibid.

18 Northam Occurrence Book, 1927 - 1928, Fire Brigade Museum.

19 Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p.24,

20 Reserves Index, Reserve 270 & 4951., and Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p.439,

21 Taylor, John K., 'Jack Learmonth Ochiltree (1870-1954)', Western Australian Architect Biographies, sources from <http://10.2.1.72:9091/servlet/com.trend.wss.user.servlet.sendfile?downloadfile=IRES->

Plans for the new Northam Fire Station were drawn up by Ochiltree in June 1928, and the contract for construction was awarded to local Northam builders Edmondson Bros.²²

By May 1929, it was reported that construction on Northam Fire Station No 2 had finished, and the brigade was to enter the new building as soon as the alarm panel from the old station was transferred to the new building and the cable for the telephone alarm system was connected.²³

The station was opened on 6 August 1929.²⁴

Along with the new building, a new fire engine was required, and the horse drawn fire engine was replaced by a motorised new Ford fire engine.²⁵

Northam Fire Station No. 2 underwent a number of alterations and additions through the mid-twentieth century, including the enclosure of the verandah surrounding the residences in 1955.²⁶

During the latter half the twentieth century, in reaction to massive post-war growth and increased building density, the duties of the fire brigade changed throughout the State to be one of fire and rescue. The duties of the Northam Brigade were broadened to include attendance at chemical spills and serious motor vehicle accidents, and in 1964 the Northam fire district was extended.²⁷

By the 1990s, Northam Fire Station No. 2 was no longer adequate to meet the needs of the Northam Fire Brigade. Following the formalisation of the fire brigade's role to attend to and rescue people from any emergency situation in 1987, existing fire station often did not provide enough space to house the new equipment required.²⁸

In 1991 *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)* was vacated, and the brigade moved into a new two-bay fire station building with detached residence.²⁹

From 1992, *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)* was used by Northam's Avon Descent Association Inc as its headquarters.

In 1998, *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)* was entered on the Town of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory.³⁰

In 2013, *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)* is used as a local toy library and the Northam Men's Shed Inc.

[764363818-13B7F710-15163-15102-15](#). Accessed on 23 October 2013., and Battye, J.S., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Adelaide, Hussey & Gillingham, 1912-13, pp. 542-43.

22 Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p.439,

23 *Northam Advertiser*, 25 May 1929, p. 2.

24 Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p.439,

25 Northam Municipal Council Meeting, *Northam Advertiser*, 3 August 1929, p. 5.

26 Fire Brigades Board, *Annual Report*, 1934, p. 3; physical evidence; *Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory*, Perth, CAMS, 1997, Northam Fire Station (Former No. 2); Reserves Index, Reserve 4951.

27 *Northam Advertiser*, Centennial Edition, 25 November 1993, p. 22.

28 Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p.59,

29 *The Avon Valley Advocate*, 24 April, 1991 p. 1.

30 O'Brien Planning, *Town & Shire of Northam, Municipal Heritage Inventory* (1997).

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is a two-storey brick and iron-roofed building flanked by single storied wings, built in 1929, which displays some elements of the Inter-War Stripped Classical style.

Site Features

The site of *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)* is rectangular, and slopes up from the road frontage to the rear. It is located on the south-east side of Duke Street, between a former church and a residence, and overlooks a mesh fenced school playground on the north-west side of the road.

The main feature of the site is the fire station/residence, which has a prominent two storey central bay built up to the street frontage (housing the appliance room). Attached to this central bay, but set slightly back from the main frontage, there is an office wing (south-west side) and a residential wing (north-east side).

The Duke Street boundary is enclosed by a metal pipe and wire mesh fence in front of the side wings, with an open walkway on the north-east side of the residence and a wire mesh gate in front of the office. At the south-west end of the main frontage there is a wide opening to the fence providing access to an expansive bitumen driveway, after which the wire mesh fence returns along the south-west boundary. The bitumen driveway and an adjacent hardstand provide access to a steel clad double garage set at right angles to the street, approximately 40m back from the front boundary. Behind this a second, larger, steel clad shed extends across much of the rear boundary.

On the north-east side of the driveway there is a low brick retaining wall which defines the edge of a pathway along the south-west side of the building. Both this pathway and the driveway open up onto a sealed courtyard at the southern corner of the *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr)*. This area originally provided vehicular access to the rear of the central appliance room and to a later covered enclosed area. The courtyard is now partly covered by a modern patio attached to the south-west side of the residential kitchen.

On the south-east side of the site, immediately behind the residential wing, there is a one metre high brick retaining wall set approximately one metre from the rear wall. At this point the site steps up to a fenced residential yard containing a brick and fibrous cement laundry and a large vegetable garden. All of the fences to this part of the site are corrugated fibrous cement to approximately 1.8m high.

Exterior

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) displays some influence of the Inter-War Stripped Classical style in its massing and the simple detailing to the main façade of the two storey central bay.

The roof over the central bay is hipped with louvered gablets. The roofs over the single storey wings are also hipped, with a projecting cross gable over the side entrance to the residence and skillion roofs over the rear rooms. The front verandahs have dropped raked roofs with hipped corners. The roof profile is dominated by a number of tall face-brick chimneys, with plain rendered corner panels to the upper sections, projecting flat caps, and terracotta chimneypots. The original ogee gutters and round downpipes with

decorative rainheads have been replaced with ogee gutters and rectangular downpipes in pre-painted steel (post-2008). Spaced battened eaves linings remain in-situ.

The main facade is broadly symmetrical with the two storey, white, rendered and painted central bay flanked by the single storey face-brick office wing and the single storey residential wing. The facades of the side wings are not, however, of a symmetrical design, with the office having a simple front verandah over the entrance door, while the residence was designed with two windows to the front façade and a return verandah providing access to an entrance along the north-east side.

At the ground floor level of the rendered central bay there is a sectional garage door to the appliance room, above which the words 'FIRE STATION' are set out in raised capital letters (painted red). To the first floor there is a pair of double hung windows with textured glass set in 9 panes to the upper sashes and a single pane to the lower sashes. These elements are flanked by full-height rendered pilasters, unadorned except for a free interpretation of classical capitals set over paired 'brackets'. On the outer edge of each pilaster there is a narrow band of face brickwork, broken by two rendered panels.

The other original external walls are generally red face-brick with an unpainted rendered string course at window sill level to the areas visible from the street. The rear (south-east) wall of the first floor has now been fully rendered and the north-east elevation of the residence has been partly rendered to approximately 1.5 metres high.

The windows throughout are typically the original timber framed double hung sashes with nine-panes to the upper sash, and a single pane to the lower sash. The sills throughout are sloping concrete. In the residence, aluminium framed sliding glass windows have been inserted into the north-east wall of the front room and the north-east wall of the bathroom. Aluminium framed windows have also been used for the front and rear verandah enclosures.

Additions include a:

- Matching, skillion roofed bathroom extension at the rear of the office wing (1934);
- Front verandah infill to the residential wing (c.1955). This is stud framed with an asbestos cement dado and aluminium framed windows shaded by a wide steel framed awning;
- Rear verandah enclosure to the residence (c.1955). This has a skillion roof, stud framed walls, aluminium framed windows, fibrous cement cladding, an external timber dado, and a wide steel framed awning;
- Covered extension to the appliance room. This has a salmon face-brick external wall, a low-pitched metal clad roof, open eaves secured by square weld mesh and a garage roller door.

Layout

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is irregular in form, with the appliance room separating the office wing and residential wing. Entry to the office wing is through the door from the front verandah into the office. From

the office there is an internal door into the appliance room, while a second door has been cut through to the kitchen behind. This, in turn, has doors to the appliance room and a rear vestibule.

The vestibule opens onto the rear bathroom and, on the north-east side, to the covered enclosed area that was originally an outside area at the rear of the appliance room.

The central appliance room, as well as directly accessing the office and fire station kitchen, has a door on the north-east wall, opening into the residential wing. There is a sectional garage door to the street, while the rear vehicle door has been replaced by a vertical profile pre-painted steel panel. A timber staircase along the north-east wall accesses the single first floor room.

The main entrance to the residential wing is on the north-east side of the return front verandah. This opens into an entry hall, which has a door to a former bedroom on the right (front: north-west), and the door to the appliance room at the south-west end. The hall turns at right angles into a corridor along the south-west wall. This has a former bedroom on the left and then opens into the original living room. On the south-east side of the living room the plan form widens out as two rooms – the kitchen and a former dining room. Both of these rooms open onto an enclosed rear verandah, which houses an original bathroom and later toilet. The rear door is on the south-west side of this space.

Interior Detailing and Finishes

The office and residential wings, and the upper floor of the central bay, all have the original jarrah tongue and groove floors throughout, except the bathrooms (concrete floors) and the residential kitchen (tiles). The floor of the appliance room is concrete. In the residence there are simple bevelled skirtings with a quarter round trim to the main rooms. Elsewhere there are plain quarter rounds or no skirtings.

Walls are typically hard plaster throughout, although the appliance room also has an original glazed ceramic tiled dado to a height of approximately 1.5 metres. These white tiles are laid in a stretcher bond and capped by a moulded plaster border. Picture rails have been fixed to the walls in the main residential rooms and along the north-east and south-west sides of the first floor room.

Ceilings are typically plasterboard with battens in simple geometric patterning and a plain coved cornice.

Doors vary in style according to the function of the spaces. The most decorative is the solid 6-panel front door to the office. The front door to the residence has a glazed upper panel over two solid vertical panels, flanked by a highlight and single sidelight. The other original doors are all high waisted with four panels. The sectional panel door to the front of the appliance room (not original) allows some natural light to penetrate into this otherwise windowless room.

The staircase to the first floor is accessed near the front of the appliance room and has a long straight flight along the north-east wall. This meets a high level landing after which there is a short return flight against the rear wall. It is a boxed timber staircase with a simple, robust timber balustrade.

Kitchen hearths with built-in wood-fired stoves and bracketed timber mantles remain to both the residential and fire station kitchens. In the office and residential living room the original fireplaces have been replaced with mid-twentieth century style, cream face-brick fireplaces with attached timber mantle shelves. In the former front bedroom the fireplace has been adapted as a storage shelf, while in the former dining room the fireplace has been blocked up.

The bathroom extension in the office wing has a tiled shower recess, basin and toilet, while the residential bathroom has a c.1950s style boxed bath with shower over.

13.3

COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Architect Designed Fire Stations in Western Australia

Prior to the introduction of a standardised plan for fire station buildings in 1932, fire stations were designed either by the WAFBB or by a professional architect.³¹

While Western Australia's earliest fire stations were housed in makeshift or rented buildings, following the establishment of a centralised fire brigade board in 1898 and compulsory registration in 1909, the construction of new fire station infrastructure became more regulated.³²

Between 1909 and 1932 fifty three new stations were opened by the WAFBB, of these, at least 28 stations have little to no records remaining and are therefore thought to have been modest and/or temporary structures. Of those fire stations with records, just ten are known to have been designed by an architect, with the others likely to have been designed by the WAFBB.³³

Architects who designed fire stations during this period include: Jack Learmonth Ochiltree, K.C. Duncan (who was also a WAFBB Board member) and G.Lavater.³⁴

Of the ten architecturally designed fire stations, excluding *Northam Fire Station No. 2 and Quarters*, three are entered in the State Register. These are:

- P1379 *Kellerberrin Fire Station* (1914) - A single-storey station in the Federation Free style designed by Ochiltree.
- P2664 *Claremont Fire Station* (1914) – A large red brick two storey station designed by Ochiltree.
- P8749 *North Perth Fire Station* (1926) – A two-storey red brick Inter-War Free Classical Style building designed by Duncan.

The other six architecturally designed fire stations are:

- P14451 *Bunbury Fire Station* (1915) - A two-storey building in the Federation Free Classical style designed by Ochiltree. This building was demolished in c.1980.³⁵

31 Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, pp. 25, 37.
 32 Ibid., p.30.
 33 Ibid., p.30.
 34 Ibid., pp.19-21, 33-35..

- P14529 Katanning Fire Station (1920) – Design and style unknown, G. Lavater designed the 1928 addition. This building was demolished in 1968.
- P14615 Narrogin Fire Station (1925) – Design and style unknown, building designed by G. Lavater. This building was demolished in 1971.
- P8878 Leederville Fire Station - A large red brick two storey station designed by Ochiltree. This place was reviewed by the Register Committee in 2003, and determined not to warrant assessment for the State Register.
- P14483 Collie Fire Station (1929) – A single storey Inter War Style Station designed by Ochiltree.
- P14651 Victoria Park Fire Station (1929) - Design and style, building designed by Duncan. This building has been demolished.

In 1932, the WAFBB adopted a standardised plan for fire station building in Western Australia.³⁶ The fire stations from before this period, therefore, demonstrate the less restrictive, case-by-case approach to the design of fire stations, which was the norm prior to the introduction of a standardised plan. This approach allowed the architects to design the buildings in accordance with the needs of the local community and brigade who used them,

The three stations entered in to the State Register from the 1909-1929 period demonstrate the variety in fire station design that was employed prior to the implementation of the standardised fire station design.

An additional consequence of the development of a standardised plan was that individually designed fire stations became a rarity after the 1920s.³⁷

While each of these four State Registered fire stations differ in their own way, *Northam Fire Station No. 2 and Quarters* is distinctive for its single bay two-storey central appliance room, which is flanked on either side by single-storey wings. A design type which has not been applied anywhere else in Western Australia.

Jack Learmonth Ochiltree

Jack Learmonth Ochiltree, the architect responsible for the design of *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters*, has been identified as the architect of five other fire stations from this period. It is likely that Ochiltree was responsible for the design of a much larger number of fire stations during this period, as he was the architect for the WAFBB from 1913 to c. 1926, however these have not been recorded.³⁸

³⁵ Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, pp. 81-83.

³⁶ Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review*, (2011), Volume 2, p. 37.

³⁷ 'North Perth Fire Station (Former *Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) 2*)' in Department of Contracts and Management, *Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory*, Volume 3 N-Z (1997).

³⁸ Taylor, John K., 'Jack Learmonth Ochiltree (1870-1954)', Western Australian Architect Biographies, sources from <http://10.2.1.72:9091/servlet/com.trend.iwss.user.servlet.sendfile?downloadfile=IRES->

In addition to Ochiltree's fire stations, there are nine buildings designed by, or with additions by, Jack Learmonth Ochiltree entered in the State Register of Heritage Places, including:

- P11595 *First Church of Christ, Scientist* (1939), a landmark Inter-War Art Deco style masonry church.
- P2161 *Carlton Hotel* (1928), East Perth a two-storey Inter-War Art Deco style hotel displaying architectural details of Anglo-Dutch, Spanish Mission and Mediterranean styles.
- P3485 *Shops, 452-460 William Street* (1914), a two-storey commercial terrace building comprising shops and dwellings constructed in the Federation Free Classical style.
- P2072 *No.2 Substation, Perth* (1914), a two-storey Federation Free Classical style building.
- P3443 *Newmarracarra*, Greater Geraldton (1910), a large single-storey Federation Queen Anne style residence.
- P13930 *Koogereena*, Greater Geraldton (1911), a single-storey Federation Queen Anne style residence.

Conclusion

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is an unusually designed two-storey fire station flanked by single-storey wings. Its unusual design is representative of fire station design and construction following the establishment of the WAFBB in 1909 and prior to the introduction of a standard fire station plan in the 1930s, when fire stations were architecturally designed on a case-by-case basis.

Jack Learmonth Ochiltree was the FBB/WAFBB's architect during this time, and was responsible for the design of a number of fire stations throughout the State. His designs do not seem to adhere to any one particular style or design type, but rather adapted to each site and brigade individually. The design of *Northam Fire Station No.2 & Quarters (fmr)* is representative of the needs of the Northam Fire Brigade.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may reveal the benefits of joining the Fire Brigade Board (FBB) prior to the introduction of compulsory registration in 1909. It is currently unknown why the Northam Volunteer Brigade chose to register with the FBB, and may other brigades chose not to.

[764363818-13B7F710-15163-15102-15](#). Accessed on 23 October 2013., and Palassis Architects, *Fire and Emergency Services and Authority Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p.91.