



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES**

### **Assessment Documentation**

#### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

##### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 3.10.2 Encouraging women into employment
- 3.22 Lodging people
- 4.1.2 Making suburbs
- 4.1.5 Developing city centres
- 4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities.
- 5.4 Working in offices
- 7.2.1 Protesting
- 7.2.2 Struggling for inclusion in the political process
- 7.2.3 Working to promote civil liberties
- 7.2.4 Forming political associations
- 8.5.2 Helping other people
- 8.13 Living in cities and suburbs

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

- 111 Depression and boom
- 306 Domestic activities
- 408 Institutions

#### **11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history**

As the headquarters of the Women's Services Guilds from 1956 to 1982, *Harvest House, West Perth* demonstrates the rise in advocacy for women's and children's rights in twentieth century Western Australia.

*Harvest House, West Perth* is an example of a substantial residence erected at the height of the Western Australian gold boom, displaying design and craftsmanship characteristics that were prevalent at the time.

*Harvest House, West Perth* is indicative of the move of the wealthy citizens of Perth away from the commercial city centre and the beginning of the trend towards the development of substantial homes to the west of the city. It is evidence of the dynamic nature of the city at the time of its construction.

*Harvest House, West Perth* is associated with the Sherwood family, a prominent and respected Western Australian family who had made significant contributions to the development of the business and social life of the colony.

**11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage**

*Harvest House, West Perth* has rarity value as it is one of a decreasing number of substantial residences in West Perth that date from the gold boom era and reflects the status of West Perth as an area where the wealthy and high status families of Perth's society at that time resided. Many of the original houses in the area have been demolished to make way for commercial development.

**11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;**

*Harvest House, West Perth* has a degree of potential to reveal archaeological evidence relating to the occupation of the house and its history as a prestigious family home from the Gold Boom Era.

**11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

*Harvest House, West Perth* is a good example of a substantial residence erected at the height of the Western Australian gold boom, many examples of which formed the original housing stock in West Perth. The planning and design quality of *Harvest House* is demonstrative of a lifestyle enjoyed by the middle and upper classes of society in this state at that time.

**11(f)<sup>1</sup> Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;**

*Harvest House, West Perth* displays external characteristics of a Victorian Italianate residence that reflects a degree of formality that employs a number of renaissance styles, including stucco moulded string courses, eaves cornices, arched window heads and a geometrically ordered fenestration.

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<sup>1</sup>

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.

Harvest House, West Perth has some landmark status through its scale and visual prominence on Harvest Terrace that is located on the northern approach to Parliament House.

Despite alterations, the internal characteristics of Harvest House, West Perth still retains a sense of the grandeur and formality of a Victorian house through its layout, proportion and geometry.

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

Harvest House, West Perth operated as the headquarters of the Women's Services Guild of WA from 1956 to 1982. Founded in 1909, this was a prominent and active women's organisation concerned with education, health, social justice and equal employment opportunity issues.

Bessie Rischbieth, OBE, JP, a foundation member and first Federal President of the Australian Federation for Women Voters (Non Party), and elected member of the Board for International Alliance of Women, was a prominent feminist and advocate for women's and children's issues. Bessie was President of the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia from 1915-1923 and 1946-1950. At the time Bessie was made a life member of the Guilds in 1955, Harvest House, West Perth was the Guilds' headquarters.

The Sherwood family who resided in Harvest House, West Perth were prominent members of Perth society and their residence in West Perth would have had important implications for the development of that area's social character. The house was the focus of many social gatherings and celebrations.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

Harvest House, West Perth is generally in good condition with the main roof and wall structure of the original house in a good state of repair. Internal finishes are starting to show signs of general wear and tear, and the timber frame skillion extension to the rear, in particular the timber staircase, is in a poor and fragile condition due to rotten and deteriorating timber. The staircase has been deemed unsafe to use which has recently prohibited occupation of the first floor.

Although the façade brickwork is painted it does not appear to be causing any damage by sealing the fabric. Minor cracking is evident throughout the building where there is evidence of patch repairs.

The raised porch to the ground floor area of the former verandah is showing signs of extensive cracking and delamination.

**12.2 INTEGRITY**

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

The integrity of Harvest House varies throughout but as a whole the place retains a moderate level of integrity. The original layout, form and proportion of the house is still legible even with removal of the main internal staircase and addition of new

internal partitions. The main original architectural feature that no longer exists is the front verandah but this could be reconstructed based on the available documentary evidence. Some of the original joinery remains but new floor, wall and ceiling finishes have been applied throughout.

### **12.3 AUTHENTICITY**

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

The authenticity of *Harvest House* is considered to be moderate with alterations made for the change of use into offices being reasonably compatible with its original use as a house. The original design intent at ground floor level remains readily apparent but less so at first floor level where interventions of new partition walls have disturbed the original layout. The partition walls at this level however are non-structural so could readily be removed to reveal the original layout.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Dr Robyn Taylor, Historian, and Ian Boersma of Kevin Palassis Architects in December 1998, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

West Perth has long been recognised as a prestigious and favoured location owing to the high ground and commanding views that result from its positioning next to Mount Eliza in Kings Park.<sup>2</sup> Kaarta Cumba, the Noongar name for Mount Eliza, is an important place for Whadjuk Noongar people due to its use as an early hunting and camping ground prior to European settlement.<sup>3</sup> The area has significant ceremonial and spiritual associations, which continue to be recognised through relevant men's and women's places today.<sup>4</sup> These areas, which extend into West Perth, are registered Aboriginal Heritage Sites. The Whadjuk Noongar people's way of life was disturbed after 1829 with the arrival of British colonists, who established the settlements of Perth and Fremantle along the Swan River.

The development of West Perth into a designated suburb began in the early-1880s in response to the spread of population from central Perth, which at that time was full of activity.<sup>5</sup> Harvest Terrace, which is a prominent street within West Perth that runs perpendicular to Hay Street, was known as such from approximately 1878 and was named after Colonel Edward Douglas Harvest, a military commandant in Western Australia who trained the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Western Australia Volunteers from 1872 to 1878.<sup>6</sup> In keeping with the original form of terraces, such as St Georges Terrace and Adelaide Terrace in the city which overlook the Swan River, Harvest Terrace had houses erected only on the more elevated side of the street. Before the general area to the east was developed with the erection of Parliament House and mature plantings of trees, these homes commanded panoramic views of the city and the large military complex known as The Pensioner Barracks.

*Harvest House, West Perth*, located at No. 7 Harvest Terrace, originally sat on part of Perth Town Lot H24.<sup>7</sup> Lot H24 was owned by Edward Hughes, a Perth Military Pensioner, before being transferred to William Alfred Watson, a Perth printer, in 1884.<sup>8</sup> In 1886, the title was transferred to John James Watson, the Superintendent of the Reformatory on Rottnest, who subdivided the vacant land, as indicated in the Perth City rates books, and sold portions to Thomas Sherwood and Robert and Arthur Bunning of the Bunnings Limited sawmilling company in 1892.<sup>9</sup>

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- <sup>2</sup> D'Arcy, R., 1989, *West Perth Study Area: Inventory of Heritage Items*, prepared for the W.A. Heritage Committee
- <sup>3</sup> 720 ABC Radio Interview with Dr Richard Walley and Russell Woolf, 2013. <https://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/about-us/information/news/media/audio-transcripts/1746-abcradio-rwalley-ats> Accessed 24 January 2020.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid; 2020, *Aboriginal History*, Kings Park & Botanic Garden. <https://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park/visit/history/aboriginal-history> Accessed 24 January 2020.
- <sup>5</sup> D'Arcy, R., op. cit.
- <sup>6</sup> J. S. Battye, 'Perth Street Nomenclature', in *Early Days*, Vol. 1, Part 2, 1931, RWAHS, p.55.; Biographical Register, B/994, Vol. 1, p.310.
- <sup>7</sup> Lot H24 has boundaries to Harvest Terrace and what was then called Wilson Street, now Parliament Place. Lots H25 and H23 form the other two boundaries.
- <sup>8</sup> Certificate of Title, Vol. XII, Folio 386.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid; Perth City Council rate books, 1893, Battye Library

At this time, during the 1890s Gold Boom there was new stimulus to the economy and with this there came a greater presence of wealthy businessmen and merchants in Perth. West Perth, with its sweeping views and close proximity to Perth's centre became a desirable residential area. At this time, the Town Lots around Harvest Terrace were sub-divided into what were still substantial blocks to allow for equally substantial homes. Real estate developers would later extol the virtues of West Perth as 'the Toorak of Perth', and 'the most fashionable and healthiest part of the city'.<sup>10</sup>

[It] had the essential characteristics of a quality neighbourhood: close proximity to both the services of the city centre and the amenities of Perth Park (later to be known as King's Park); elevation, which provided for healthy site drainage as well as cooling breezes and wideviews over the city and hills; social status associated with the residents of nearby Mount and Malcolm Streets; and ready access to the city's piped water system.<sup>11</sup>

Major Thomas Sherwood, a Lands Department civil servant, and his wife Caroline (nee Mews) made the decision to build a new home for their family and leave their two-storey home, opposite Foy & Gibson's Department Store in Hay Street which was quickly developing into a busy commercial thoroughfare.<sup>12</sup> In 1892, they purchased part of Lot H24 on Harvest Terrace.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after, tenders had been accepted for the erection of a house and Sherwood applied for a loan from the AMP Society.<sup>14</sup> In that same year a substantial two-storey home, later known as *Harvest House* was constructed, as indicated in the Perth City rates books for 1892, which refers to 'buildings on site'.<sup>15</sup>

The Sherwoods had eleven children, and the need to maximise any investments they had would have been necessary to maintain a comfortable existence. Both Major Thomas Sherwood and his wife Caroline Mews, came from prominent early Western Australian families. Caroline's family were boat builders, and Thomas' father, Frederick, who arrived in the colony in 1843 on the *Lady Grey*, was successful architect and surveyor.<sup>16</sup> Major Thomas Sherwood was a prominent figure in the middle to upper-class society of the day. He was a member of the first Volunteer Corps that formed in Western Australia in 1861 and later became a Lieutenant in the Metropolitan Rifle Volunteers in 1875.<sup>17</sup> He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge and was heavily involved in the Diocesan affairs of the Perth Anglican Church.

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- 10 Kelly, I., 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)', unpublished M.Arch. thesis, UWA, 1992, p.170.  
 11 *ibid.*  
 12 Certificate of Title, Vol.XLVI, Folio 302.  
 13 Love, Margaret, *The Sherwood Papers - A Swan River Story*, published by Margaret Love, 1996, p.186.  
 14 Discussion with Margaret Love who referred to a letter from Major Thomas Sherwood to the Manager of the W. A. Bank dated 6 October 1892. Sherwood was lodging the Certificate of Title with the bank and referred to the impending construction of his new home. Discussion dated 29 November, 1998.  
 15 Perth City Council rate books on microfiche located in the Battye Library. The entries in these microfiche records are not always entirely legible because of corrections and over-writing on some of the original entries.  
 16 'Sherwood-Lane', 8 June 1936, *The West Australian*, p. 18; During the 1860s, Frederick Sherwood had a fine two-storey house built for his family in St Georges Terrace which was to become known as Lombard Chambers after it was leased as business premises in 1895. (See Love, *op. cit.*, p. 137) During the 1930s, with the construction of the CML Building and Lawson Flats, Lombard Chambers and Sherwood Lane would make way for the new linking road between St Georges Terrace and the Esplanade, Sherwood Court.  
 17 *ibid.*, p.148.

Descendants of the Sherwood family claim the home was designed by renowned Architect, J. J. Talbot Hobbs and built by Mr. Barry, who built *Parliament House* (RHP) (1901) which is located across the road.<sup>18</sup> An entry in the City of Perth Records of Building Permits issued in March 1897 matches another entry found in Talbot Hobbs' ledger recording that a villa was erected at the neighbouring site of 9 Harvest Terrace, which was also owned by Major Sherwood.<sup>19</sup> While the villa at No. 9 was not constructed until 1912, ground plans indicate the single-storey bungalow held a degree of symmetry with No. 7, with both houses having a single front bay window on the sides adjacent to the carriageway that separated the two houses.<sup>20</sup> It therefore is possible No. 7 was also designed by Talbot but there is no archival evidence to substantiate this claim.

The new two-storey home at No. 7 was named 'Kalmeta' and was substantial enough to comfortably fit Mr and Mrs Sherwood and their 11 children.<sup>21</sup> At the time of construction the house would have appeared grand in style and location, particularly with its sweeping views. Its prominent location was further enhanced after 1902 when the foundation stone for the first stage of *Parliament House* (RHP) was laid across the road<sup>22</sup> and officially opened in 1906. Harvest Terrace was re-levelled to make way for the development and the steep gradient was decreased.<sup>23</sup>

Thomas Sherwood died in 1914 and his wife, Caroline and two sons, Aubrey and Frederick Sherwood inherited the property.<sup>24</sup> The valuer's description of the house, given for probate purposes, provides the following details: 'a two-storied brick house containing eight rooms, kitchen, bathroom, pantry, wash-house, hall and passage downstairs, hall upstairs, staircase, front verandah and balcony, back verandah and balcony, brick and iron carriage room, weatherboard and iron storeroom, detached weatherboard stable, fencing etc.'<sup>25</sup>

In 1927 Caroline Sherwood died and the property was transferred to her sons, Frederick, Raymond and Arthur Sherwood who let the house to various tenants throughout the 1930s and 1940s<sup>26</sup> The three, unmarried Sherwood daughters moved into the villa next door at No. 9 Harvest Terrace.<sup>27</sup> In 1933, in preparation to lease the property, the house was converted into three flats and the internal staircase was removed and replaced with a new one at the back of the house.<sup>28</sup> The ground floor flat had a drawing room and a bedroom at the front of the house (a stud wall separated the two rooms); a kitchen in a small room behind where the staircase had been; a large dining room and another bedroom. The bathroom was

18 Love, op. cit., p.211.

19 Talbot Hobbs Ledgers, MS1460, Acc. 2595A, Leger No. 2780A/3, Public Records Office, State Archives; City of Perth Building Permits, March 1897; City of Perth Building Permits, March 1897.

20 PWD Map 10857, dated 26 May, 1904; and Sewerage plans MWS 1522, held by the Public Record Office

21 The meaning of the name 'Kalmeta' is not known by the family. Various Aboriginal terms have been suggested such as 'Kallamatta' (fire stick); and 'Kalleep' (fire, earth, home). Love, op. cit., p.211.

22 Pitt Morison and White, J., (eds), *Western Towns and Buildings*, UWA Press, 1979, p. 62.

23 PWD Plan 9135, map dated 10 April, 1902. Cons. 1647.

24 Certificate of Title 46-302. Retrieved from Landgate.

25 Conversation with Margaret Love.

26 Ibid; Certificate of Title 46-302. Retrieved from Landgate.

27 Post Office Directories.

28 Ochiltree, J. L., 1933, *Proposed Alterations to Residence No.7 Harvest Terrace for the Messrs Sherwood*, FRIA; Conversation with Margaret Love and sketches of floor plans for flats drawn by Rosemary Van Toll who lived in one of the flats from 1952 to 1953/4, 25 September, 1998.

on the back verandah. The upstairs flat, on the south side, had a large living room at the front, a kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, with a central hallway from the back entrance through to the living room.<sup>29</sup>

From the late 1920s, Government planning in Western Australia had aimed to create a 'central government office complex on a landscaped site which would enhance the amenity and beauty of the City of Perth'.<sup>30</sup> However, this did not come to fruition and World War II then became the focus of the nation. It was not until 1955, after the Stephenson-Hepburn metropolitan planning report was published, that the State Government revisited the issue again.<sup>31</sup> In the Report it was recommended that a portion of land be set aside for a Government office area on Mount Eliza adjacent to Parliament House. The area was bounded by Kings Park Road, Havelock Street, Hay Street and Harvest Terrace. It was set aside under and interim order in September 1956.<sup>32</sup>

In 1952, No. 7 Harvest Terrace was transferred to Raymond, Arthur and Thomas Sherwood and their brother-in-law Thomas John Neville Wood.<sup>33</sup> It was then transferred again in 1955, to Clarence Hufton Snowden, a Company Manager in Hay Street, Perth, and then shortly after in the same year, to the Women's Guild of Western Australia Inc.<sup>34</sup> As indicated by historical imagery the original verandah and balustrades were removed by this time.<sup>35</sup> While No. 7 Harvest Terrace was originally included within the boundary of the planned Government Office area, in April 1960 the area was reduced to Parliament Place to the North, rather than Hay Street. This cut out the small portion of Harvest Terrace, where No.7 is located, from the site. This decision benefitted the Women's Guild who had only been at the property for five years as they were able to remain at the property until 1976.

Founded on 25 March 1909, the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia:

formed a core feminist connection for the exchange of feminist strategies and ideas with international feminism for much of the twentieth century. While typified as conservative, the Guilds anticipated many radical trends and were at the forefront of activism which challenged the political and social boundaries that excluded women from participating fully in society.<sup>36</sup>

The Guilds worked to raise the status of women and improve the welfare of children, and were particularly concerned with the establishment of a maternity hospital (in response to the high infant mortality rates of the time), equal marriage and divorce laws, admittance of women to the bar, education, heritage

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- 29 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1152, Folio 151; Sketch map of both floors provided by Rosemary Van Toll who lived in the upstairs flat, and conversation with Margaret Love.
- 30 Le Page, J.S.H., 1986, *Building a State: the Story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829-1985*, Water Authority of WA, Leederville, p. 528. As cited in Rad Architecture, Riley Hair Architecture and Urban Design & L Williams, 2009, *Dumas House West Perth Conservation Plan*, for Department of Treasury & Finance Building Management and Works, p. 8.
- 31 Rad Architecture, Riley Hair Architecture and Urban Design & L Williams, 2009, *Dumas House West Perth Conservation Plan*, for Department of Treasury & Finance Building Management and Works, p. 8.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Certificate of Title 46-302. Retrieved from Landgate.
- 34 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1152, Folio 151.; Rischbieth, B. op. cit. p.30.
- 35 1955, 'Harvest House at 7 Harvest Terrace, Perth, headquarters of Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia', State Library of Western Australia, BA1272/1. [http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa\\_b2016582\\_1](http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b2016582_1) Accessed 16 April 2020.
- 36 Tallis, D., 2004, 'Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia (1909-1997)', *The Australian Women's Register*. <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0803b.htm> Accessed 28 January 2020.



conservation with a focus on Kings Park and the Swan River, and the equal treatment of men and women in the public service and prisons. From its inception in 1909 the organisation was referred to as the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia. In the period from 1915 to 1919, the Guild experienced a period of growth and prosperity and a number of Guild branches formed in Albany, Fremantle, Claremont and Cottesloe. Country circles were also active in Kalgoorlie, Kellerberrin, Donnybrook and Doodlakine. It was decided that, to appropriately manage this expansion, there would be the creation of a State Executive which oversaw each branch. To reflect this, the organisation's name was changed to The Women's Services Guilds of Western Australia.<sup>37</sup> Foundation members included Lady Gwenyfred James (1869-1938), who was awarded Order of the British Empire for her services to the Red Cross and was State Commissioner of the Girl Guides; Edith Cowan (1861-1932), who was the first Australian woman to serve as a member of parliament; Jessie Gover (1857-1938), who was secretary of the Children's Protection Society of Western Australia, Dr Roberta Jull (1872-1961), who was the first female doctor to set up practice in Perth and was the first President of the Association of University Women; as well as Bessie Rischbieth.<sup>38</sup>

Bessie Rischbieth (1874-1967) was a prominent feminist and advocate for women's and children's issues. Bessie was President of the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia from 1915-1923 and 1946-1950, was the first President of the Australian Federations of Women Voters and an elected member of the Board for International Alliance of Women. She was responsible for connecting the Guilds to their international counterparts and is considered the 'guide and mentor' of the Women's Service Guild.<sup>39</sup>

During their time at *Harvest House, West Perth*, Bessie and her colleagues had a number of achievements, including advancements on mental health matters, assistance for civilian widows, the defeat of the King's Park Aquatic Centre Bill and the Guild's major goal, general acceptance of the principle of equal pay for women. This goal came about after decades of lobbying and the creation of the West Australian Equal Pay Committee, which Bessie Rischbieth, and fellow Guild member, Irene Greenwood, were patrons of.<sup>40</sup>

The Women's Service Guilds were the first to refer to the place as *Harvest House*, as identified in Bessie Rischbieth's 1964 publication, *March of Australian Women*.

In 1955-56 a great event in our history was the purchase of Harvest House as our permanent headquarters. This property was situated at No. 7 Harvest Terrace, Perth, in close vicinity to Parliament House - a strategic position. The property is proving an excellent investment. The purchase was made possible by the sale of certain property in hand, but the main support was a debenture scheme subscribed to by members over a lengthy period.<sup>41</sup>

The Women's Service Guilds used the ground floor as their headquarters and leased the upper floor to generate funds for their activities. The location, as noted above, was regarded as a strategic position being opposite Parliament House and

<sup>37</sup> Davidson, D., 1997, *Women on the Warpath: Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawly, p. 88

<sup>38</sup> Rischbieth, B, 1964, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson Brokensha Pty Ltd. Perth, frontispiece, p. 30.

<sup>39</sup> Davidson, D., 1997, op. cit. p.271.

<sup>40</sup> Rischbieth, B, 1964 op. cit. p. 253.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p.13-18.

the Guilds' presence there contributed to West Perth's wider corporate and business composition. During its time at *Harvest House*, the Guilds diversified their work to be involved in a wide range of welfare and environmental issues.<sup>42</sup>

For the next twenty years or so the Guilds continued to use the ground floor of *Harvest House, West Perth* as its headquarters, while renting the upper floor in order to help generate funds for its activities.<sup>43</sup> However, due to space constraints the Guilds eventually moved into new headquarters in the Wesley Centre in 1976.<sup>44</sup> The Guilds retained *Harvest House, West Perth* which they now owned outright after paying off the mortgage with funds bequeathed to the Guilds by Rischbieth. The building was then leased out by the Guilds until it was sold to the State government in 1982.<sup>45</sup>

During this time, West Perth continued to change from being a residential area to one largely made up of government offices, medical specialists, consultants and other commercial properties.

On 20 July 1982, the State of Western Australia became the registered owner of *Harvest House, West Perth* and it began operating as an electorate office.<sup>46</sup> In the late 1990s, the building was re-roofed and repainted.<sup>47</sup>

The place continues to be used as office space for politicians.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Harvest House, West Perth* is a two-storey residence built c.1892-1893 constructed of brick masonry with a corrugated iron roof. Although altered since its original construction, the architectural style is best described as Victorian Italianate. The building fronts onto Harvest Terrace, opposite Parliament House in West Perth. It originally had a two-storey verandah on the front, but this has been removed and replaced with a raised concrete porch at ground level. There is an extension to the rear of the house that accommodates an external stair and service areas that was built when the first floor of the building was divided into two separate flats in the 1930s. There is also a triple carport to the rear. The building was originally used as a residence and is now used as office space for politicians at ground floor level and is currently vacant at first floor level.

### Siting

The building is located at No.7 Harvest Terrace which is elevated from the street and faces east. It is positioned on the section of road that rises up from Hay Street, and is a prominent feature on the northern approach to *Parliament House* (RHP). To the north of the site is No.11 Harvest Terrace which is a large four-storey modern building that is currently used for Cardno WA's Head Office. The property to the south is No.5 Harvest Terrace which is occupied by a single-storey brick vernacular residence dating from the inter-war period. Directly opposite *Harvest*

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42 Davidson, D., op.cit. p.228.

43 Ibid. p.22

44 Ibid. p.228.

45 Ibid. p.273; Certificate of Title, Vol. 1151, Folio 151.

46 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1152, Folio 151, and conversation with Rod Spencer, Ministry of Premier and Cabinet, 23 September, 1998.

47 Conversations with Kath Wyatt (25/09/98) and Adrienne Bartrop (2/09/98), both Electoral Officers, office of the Hon. Murray Dixon.

*House, West Perth* are gardens associated with *Parliament House* (RHP) with both sides of Harvest Terrace lined with a grass verge and mature trees.

Harvest House is set back approximately 7m from the front boundary with a low painted brick wall, divided into three sections that are articulated by small brick piers that extend across the sloping frontage. This wall encloses an area of paving and small garden bed before rising up to a concrete patio. A driveway crosses over the footpath at the northern end of the front wall that runs along this side of the house to provide the main point of entry and also car parking to the rear. There is another driveway to the south side of the house that services the neighbouring building at No.5 Harvest Terrace. The raised concrete patio area projects 2.4m out in front of the house that is more or less in the position of the removed verandah and surrounded by low height wrought iron railings. Apart from the single-storey carport, there are no other built features to the rear of the site which is paved with bitumen and currently used as a car park.

### **External**

The house best displays characteristics of the Victorian Italianate architectural style with use of classical proportions such as the asymmetrically placed faceted bay window to the ground floor front facade, the use of stucco mouldings and the window opening fenestration, where windows are grouped rather than spaced evenly across the facade. Although painted, the walls display the texture of the brickwork with Flemish bond used for the front wall and stretcher bond for all other external walls.

The roof is of a hipped configuration which is visible from the front, but through being pitched back without gables or other distinguishing features, is not a dominant element. In plan the roof forms a U-shape ridge which enables a twin roof that connects at the front and has a box gutter down the centre. The extension to the rear has a skillion roof.

#### **East Elevation (Front Façade)**

The east elevation of the building faces Harvest Terrace and presents itself as the front façade with painted brickwork in a Flemish bond pattern with painted stucco mouldings. It accommodates the faceted bay window and three pairs of windows that are all timber frame double hung sash extending down to floor level. There are two pairs of windows at first floor level which have steel bar juliet balconies with the third pair at ground level adjacent to the bay window. Placed in the central facet of the bay window is one double hung sash window that goes down to floor level with two narrower conventional height double hung sash windows flanked on either side with stone cills. There is a flat roof to the bay window with a cornice and moulding to its perimeter with no gutters or downpipes.

There is a painted rendered plinth at the base of the façade that extends from floor level down to external ground level; much of this is concealed by the raised porch. There are two stucco string course mouldings that run across the façade that intersect both the ground and first floor windows midway on the upper sash, returning into the reveals. A hood stucco moulding frames the portion of windows above the string course moulding, and accentuates the gentle curve of the shallow arch used for the window heads.

Another painted stucco moulding sits below the eaves line, forming a cornice below the fascia. A series of air vents puncture this cornice directly above each first floor

window opening. The overhanging eaves is made up of timber bird battens which is concealed by the cornice. The fascia is painted timber that has a painted scotia below the ogee profile painted steel gutter. There is a cylindrical steel downpipe to the corner junction where the façade turns the corner to the north elevation.

#### North Elevation (Side with Main Entry)

The north elevation has similar architectural detailing as the front facade, with regular placement and consistent sizing of windows, application of stucco mouldings, roof eaves and the materiality of the façade being painted brickwork, but in this case using stretcher bond. All windows are conventional double hung sash types with stone cills. Forming part of this elevation is the double storey skillion extension to the rear of the building that is of timber frame construction clad with timber boarding and cement sheeting.

Rather than being placed in the front facade, the main entrance to the building is positioned approximately midway along this northern façade. It consists of a wide arched opening with concrete steps leading from external ground level up into a shallow porch. The floor to the porch is covered with red tiles. The door into the house is of timber frame construction with sidelights and glazed fanlights above. The sidelights are divided into two with a lower painted timber panel and an upper fixed glazed panel. The entry door is single leaf of solid timber with two lower panels and two glazed lancet style arches above. There is an aluminum frame flyscreen fixed to the door.

Unlike the front façade, there are a number of service conduits and boxes fixed to the façade that are all in white that goes some way to blend them into the brickwork. There is a rendered plinth with ashlar marking to the length of the façade.

#### West Elevation (Rear)

The two-storey skillion extension makes up the majority of this façade which is readily apparent as a non-original structure that contains a staircase to the first floor and service areas. The rooms are clad externally with cement sheeting and the balustrading to the stair is clad with v-jointed timber boards. Two back rooms at the southern end of the ground floor are constructed of brick. What is visibly prominent from this elevation is the double hipped roof of the main house behind. The carport also forms part of this elevation which consists of a skillion profile rendered wall with masonry piers.

#### South Elevation (Side)

The materiality and detailing of this elevation is the same as the north and east elevations but with the window opening fenestrations being more random having different proportions from one another. The elevation of the skillion extension at the rear is brick and partly rendered at ground floor with the first floor being of stud wall construction clad with asbestos cement sheeting. The length of the car port to this elevation is a blank rendered wall capped with a metal roof flashing. Towards the rear there is a sewer stack and other plumbing relating to the disposal of rainwater. Four air conditioning units are mounted on brackets along the wall at approximately the height of the first floor. A dominant feature of note to this elevation is the only remaining chimney stack which has rendered masonry to the base and brickwork above. All other chimneys to the house have been removed.

## Internal

The original layout of the house is of simple design with four rooms to each floor divided by a central staircase that has now been removed. Alterations over the years consist of new partitions, creation of new openings and infill of original openings. Particularly at first floor level with creation of two tenancies, this has clearly changed the building's layout but the legibility of the original house is still readily apparent. The general detailing is a combination of period features of plastered masonry and painted joinery mixed in with new detailing where alterations have occurred. What remains of this detailing is helpful in gaining an understanding of the hierarchy of rooms and changes that have occurred to the place since it was constructed.

### Ground Floor

The main entry to the building is off the porch to the north elevation, where there is an internal lobby that provides access to the two front rooms, a small passage to the two rooms at the rear and a small kitchenette and store in the location of the former staircase. The two front rooms are of equal size and currently used as offices for politicians. The front room to the north features a bay window that is separated from the main room by means of a shallow archway to the external wall. This room is divided from the room to the south with a lightweight stud wall with a connecting doorway and masonry nibs at either end. There originally would have been a solid wall to divide the two rooms with a chimney breast either side but this is no longer extant. It is a sound assumption that at some stage one large room to the front of the house was created with removal of this central wall. In addition to this, it is understood that historically this wall originally had large folding wooden doors which could be pulled back to allow family entertainment and gatherings<sup>48</sup>. On some masonry walls of the ground floor rooms there is a raised band indicating the presence of painted dado beneath the painted surface, and an outline of the staircase may be seen in relief on the west wall of the entrance lobby.

To the south of the entry lobby in the location of the former staircase is a kitchenette and storage room of stud wall construction. The passage leading to the rear of the house has an archway from the entry lobby with a relief plaster moulding to the corner wall nibs. The passage provides access to rooms on either side, with the room to the south being the former kitchen which has had its window and door infilled to allow development of the later 1930s extension behind. At the end of the passage, there is a single door that leads outside and to the extension comprising of a timber staircase to the north leading up to first floor level and amenity facilities to the south that have been morphed into the car port. The amenity facilities include toilets, kitchen and a store.

Ceilings throughout the ground floor have been altered from their original with new suspended metal linear acoustic panels integrated with modern light fittings. Internal door joinery is of four panel doors with plinth blocks and architraves. Windows are painted timber. Some original skirting boards remain extant and it is clear where new skirtings have been introduced when later wall partitions have been built. The floor is of timber construction with carpet finish. The amenity facilities to the rear are of solid floor construction with vinyl covering.

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<sup>48</sup> Love, op. cit., p.213.

## First Floor

Access to the first floor is via the external timber stair at the rear of the building that leads to a single door in the original wall. From here there is a small lobby with access to the two separate tenancies that in plan are more or less mirrored images of one another. Typically each tenancy consists of a narrow passage which extends through to the front rooms with a large and small room located off to the side. The two front rooms of each tenancy have since had the chimney breasts removed. The service areas of a kitchen and bathroom to each tenancy are located to the rear in the 1930s extension made of timber frame construction and cement sheet panels.

Ceilings are a combination of suspended plasterboard panels with feature battening and plain plasterboard with coved cornices. Walls are a combination of plastered masonry and stud partition walls where the tenancies have been created. A few of the upstairs stud walls are clad with lathe and plaster and their position would tend to indicate that these are part of the early or original fabric of the building. The floor structure throughout is of timber construction with a combination of carpet and timber laminate finish. Joinery throughout the first floor is more understated than the ground floor due to it being part of alterations undertaken in the 1930s.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

#### ***Places Associated with Social Activism in Western Australia***

*Harvest House, West Perth*, being the headquarters of the Women's Service Guilds for over 25 years, is a place associated with social activism in Western Australia. Although it is difficult to search for such places in the Historic Heritage database given they have often not been identified as having this association, known places associated with social activism that are most comparable to *Harvest House, West Perth* include:

- P1531 *Bundi Club* (RHP): Constructed in 1911 in Meekatharra, the place originally functioned as a courthouse and mining registrar's office before it was handed over to Mrs Avey Curley in 1963 to be used as meeting place for Aboriginal women and children. The place was used for sewing and cooking classes for women and children and was often a social venue for the community. Mrs Curley was awarded the Order of Australia for her services to the Aboriginal community in the Murchison and Warburton area. The place is in a state of disrepair with its walls in particularly bad condition.
- P1920 *Alice Williams Memorial Building, Nungarin* (RHP): Constructed originally as the Nungarin Roads Boards office and then occupied by the Nungarin Branch of the CWA (the oldest in WA) since 1968. The place illustrates the significant contribution made by women to life in country districts as well as their involvement in the wider community. The place is dedicated to Alice Williams, a prominent member of the Nungarin CWA who held the highest offices in the State organisation and was instrumental in lobbying for a number of country women's and children's issues.
- P1325 *Trades Hall, Kalgoorlie* (RHP): Being the first Trades Hall built in Western Australia, the place is closely associated with the Trades & Labor Council and the labour movement in the goldfields and the State. The

Trades & Labor Council continues today, as UnionsWA, to advance the interests and rights of working people.

- P8783 *Delaney Gallery*, Perth (RHP): Constructed in 1912, the building was the first permanent headquarters of the Metropolitan District Council of the Australian Labour Federation and served as the base for both the industrial and political activities of the Australian labour movement until 1985.
- P5072 *Gnowangerup Noongar Centre (fmr)* (RHP): The place was established in 1972 as a Noongar Centre to provide social services and community support to the local Aboriginal population, who had not previously been permitted a meeting place within the town boundaries. Aboriginal staff were employed at the place with a view to ultimately handing the project entirely to be managed by the local Aboriginal community.
- P14468 Anzac House, Perth (Assessment Deferred): The place has a long association with the RSL, having been the site of the original Anzac House constructed in 1934 and later a purpose-built headquarters for the Western Australian RSL in 1979. The RSL's advocacy role was instrumental in the establishment of a Repatriation Department amongst other initiatives to assist returned service personnel and their families. The place has since been demolished and a new headquarters is currently in preparation for this site.
- P2118 The Karrakatta Club: The club located in Perth is of the first women's clubs in Australia (now the oldest continuing), significant in lobbying for women's suffrage, and more generally encouraging women into public affairs.

### ***Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia***

A search of the Historic Heritage database for other places associated with the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia returns four entries, two of which are on the State Register of Heritage Places, but only one that is specifically associated with the Guilds. This is:

- P2438 *King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women* (RHP): Constructed from 1897, the place is a large complex of hospital and hospital related buildings built over an extensive period. Fundraising by the Women's Service Guild and similar bodies, played a crucial role in funding the development and expansion of the hospital into the first public maternity hospital in the State in 1916.

Other places associated with the Guilds include:

- P15940 Shops, Stirling Hwy, Peppermint Grove: A single storey former residence from the Inter War Period constructed in 1905. The place was occupied by the Cottesloe branch of the Women's Service Guilds from c.1935 to c.1950. Bessie Rischbeith's sister, Olive Evans was President of this branch. The place is now a dry cleaners shop.
- P6849 House, 5 View St, Peppermint Grove: A two storey brick and tile residence that was designed by Charles Oldham in 1904 for Bessie and Henry Rischbieth who lived in the residence until 1967. Bessie was a

prominent member and former President of the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia.

- P3564 Mount Henry Hospital (Assessed Below Threshold): The first purpose-built home for aged women in Western Australia in 1951. The Women's Service Guilds lobbied for the place prior to and throughout its construction.<sup>49</sup> The place was demolished in 1997.

### **Victorian Italianate Residence**

A search of the Historic Heritage database for places of Victorian Italianate architectural style returns 43 entries, twelve of which are on the State Register of Heritage Places. Of those places, the following are most comparable to *Harvest House, West Perth*:

- P0003 *The Albany Club* (RHP): Constructed from 1886 to 1887, the place is a two-storey building constructed of stuccoed brick and with a corrugated iron roof, designed in the Victorian Style with Italianate elements. Since 1894, the place has been the premises of 'The Albany Club', the second oldest established Gentleman's club in Western Australia, and an important social institution in the town and in the region.
- P3494 *House (fmr), 257 & 259 Adelaide Terrace* (RHP): The place, located in Perth, consists of two adjacent residential buildings exhibiting influences of the Victorian Italianate architectural style constructed in 1888. The building styles demonstrate the type of city residence that members of upper classes of society aspired to at that time.
- P4317 *Tower House, Northbridge* (RHP): Constructed in 1898, the place is a two-storey brick and iron residence constructed in the Victorian Italianate style. The place was purpose built as a boarding house.
- P1035 *Hillcrest* (RHP): Constructed in 1901 in North Fremantle, the place is a two storey building with a three-storey balustrade turret and faceted bays in the Victorian Italianate architectural style. The place was constructed for Francis Pearce, a prominent family of North Fremantle, and subsequently used as a maternity hospital for unmarried mothers from 1922 to the 1970s run by the Salvation Army.
- P3694 *Penhurst* (RHP): Constructed in 1897 in East Fremantle, the place is a two-storey residence of the Victorian Italianate architectural style which exhibits the exuberance of the Gold Boom era. *Penhurst* has historic value for its relationship with shipping in Fremantle, particularly its connection with the firm of Symon, Hammond and Hubble.

### **Conclusion**

*Harvest House, West Perth* is associated with the social activism in Western Australia, and in particular the Women's Service Guilds. The above would suggest that places associated with social activism are underrepresented on the State Register of Heritage Places. As such *Harvest House, West Perth* may be a rare known example which addresses this theme.

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'What are Women's Organisations Doing? News from East and West: Women's Service Guilds', *The Dawn*, 18 October 1944, p. 3.; 'Liquor Laws 'Not Enforced'', *The Daily News*, 17 July 1945, p. 8.



*Harvest House, West Perth* is a comparatively modest presentation of the Victorian Italianate architectural style.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

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#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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