



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Coronado Hotel, with the strong horizontal line of its curved facade, and curved staircase within, balanced against the block towers, is a fine example of Inter-War Functionalist architecture, demonstrating the strong influence of William Dudok on Australian architecture in the late 1930s. (Criterion 1.2)

The place is significant for its streetscape value in terms of the appropriate response in scale and proportion to the adjacent structures and the strong horizontal which wraps around the corner to express the two streets. *Coronado Hotel* has a landmark presence in Stirling highway. (Criteria 1.3 & 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

A licensed premises for over fifty years, *Coronado Hotel* was a highly popular focus for social activity and accommodation for both local and broader community. (Criterion 2.1)

Coronado Hotel has historic value as a fine example of the work of Marshall Clifton and Reginald Summerhayes, two prominent Western Australian architects in the inter war period. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Coronado Hotel, a fine example of the influence of Dudok on contemporary architecture in the late 1930s, is one of the very few remaining examples of the Modernist design ethos of its period. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Coronado Hotel is representative of the Modernist design ethos of the late 1930s, and equates with Civic Hotel, Inglewood and Swanbourne Hotel, both of which were designed by Marshall Clifton and Reginald Summerhayes in the same year. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Coronado Hotel is in moderate condition, having been unused for approximately 12 months. There is evidence of superficial deterioration: externally, the metal fascia at first floor level on the eastern elevation and the fascia at the eastern side of the bottle shop canopy have become dislodged. Internally, many of the fittings have been stripped out, and the general decor is in a neglected state.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Highway Hotel was subject to major alterations in 1992, at which time the name was changed to *Coronado Hotel*.

A prominent canopy was erected on the Stirling Highway facade to serve the drive-in bottle shop, exterior walls were painted a heavy brown, replacing the original light cream colour, and internal walls which separated ground floor bars, lounges and dining room were removed to open up the space. These changes, designed to enhance the commercial viability of the place, have partially compromised the original design. However, these changes, in particular the canopy and paint colours, are reversible and, therefore, the place retains a reasonable degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Generally, the original fabric of the place is still intact. The cantilevered canopy, added to the Stirling Highway elevation, could be removed and the enclosure of balconies reversed.

The removal of internal walls separating the ground floor reception areas, bars and dining room and the loss of original fixtures and fittings and the redecoration of first floor bathrooms has diminished the authenticity of the place. The authenticity of *Coronado Hotel* is moderate.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon, Architect, in June 1996, with additional information from the National Trust exposition, which was compiled by Vyonne Geneve and Laura Gray in June 1995.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Highway Hotel, Claremont, (more recently known as *Coronado Hotel*) was built in late 1940. The architects were the partnership of Marshall Clifton and Reginald Summerhayes.¹ There is some debate about the specific architect for the design of *Highway Hotel*. At the time, Reginald Summerhayes and Marshall Clifton also designed the Civic Hotel, Inglewood and the Swanbourne Hotel, however the design of the *Highway Hotel* facade has been

¹ Chapman B. & Richards D., *Marshall Clifton Architect and Artist*. Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1989 p 60.

attributed to Allan Gamble who was an ex-Public Works Department cadet (architect) and colleague of Marshall Clifton.²

The elevations feature a sweeping horizontal curve which is countered by blocked vertical towers, and demonstrates the strong influence of prominent Dutch architect, William Dudok in Australian architecture in the late 1930s.³

The staircase with its wrought iron balustrade is an elegant design by Marshall Clifton.⁴ The sculptor, Edward Kohler, modelled a bronze statuette of a nymph, which featured on a pedestal in the beer garden.⁵

When *Highway Hotel* was opened in November 1940, it was heralded as a palatial hotel, the entire appearance of which is "one of comfort and spacious modernity." The place had every facility for comfort and convenience, with the best service of any hotel in the state. It was claimed the hotel embodied the latest features in hotel construction; the design of the water system was entirely new (innovative) and the first of its kind in the State. The hotel was the largest construction project undertaken by Plunketts Builders, who had been residential builders for the previous forty years. Interior furnishings were designed and supplied by Boans.⁶

The hotel was a popular destination for country people to stay in the city. More recently, as the renovated *Coronado Hotel*, it was a popular venue for young people. However, the large crowds of young people attracted to the hotel drew complaints from nearby residents and the local council.

Extensive alterations were carried out in the conversion of *Highway Hotel* to *Coronado Hotel*. Broadly, the changes involved the painting of the street facades in a heavy brown colour, the replacement of the glass bricks with clear glass at the entrance, the construction of stone dwarf walls approaching the front entrance, the opening out of the reception, dining room and lounge into one area and the replacement and introduction of new bar fittings. The result was a very much changed character to that of the original building.

Hotel operations ceased in 1994, and the hotel has remained vacant since then.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Coronado Hotel stands at the north end of the site that has a 61 metre frontage to Stirling Highway on the north boundary and a 108 metre frontage to Bay

² Allan Gamble was a significant architect and artist in his own right and was the first full time lecturer to be appointed to the School of Architecture at the University of Sydney. In the catalogue *Marshall Clifton, Watercolours and Drawings* Fremantle Arts Centre 1986. Gamble writes a tribute to Clifton.

³ William Dudok undertook a number of commissions in the period from the early 1920s through to the late 1930s, in his capacity as town architect for the Hilversum Town Council. Influenced by the Dutch expressionists and the *de Stijl* group, Dudok's work reduced the structure to the essence of the structural essentials in an assemblage of asymmetrical modern designs. Dudok was concerned with the functional capabilities of the place and designed for maximum sunlight into the interior spaces, and considered the outdoor spaces. Many Australian architects specifically visited Hilversum to inspect Dudok's work, and his designs were widely illustrated in Australian architectural journals.

⁴ A drawing of the staircase is included in *Marshall Clifton. The Art of Building* exhibition catalogue, 1989.

⁵ *Building Construction* journal November 1940

⁶ *ibid*

Road along the east boundary, away from the intersection of the street and highway.

The area surrounding the building is almost completely bitumen paved, with a 10 metre wide curtilage facing the two street frontages and large areas of car parking to the south and west of the building. There are a small number of well established trees growing close to the eastern side of the building.

The building plan consists of two wings, one facing the highway and one, Bay Road. Each wing is parallel to its street alignment. The junction of the two wings at less than a right angle results in irregularly shaped spaces. This design problem is resolved by the introduction of a sweeping curve at first floor level to disguise the external angle and the truncation of the internal angle. The curve at the external angle is expressed as a cantilevered concrete balcony with its balustrade forming a solid band which dominates the whole composition. Behind and above the balustrade, the curve is repeated in the parapet wall of the first floor lobby. One third of the way down from its coping, the curve of the parapet is emphasised by a cantilevered concrete awning sitting above a procession of small, square, equally spaced windows.

At ground floor level the plan form is broken into a pair of small circular elements each side of the central entry which is recessed under, the dominant curve of the first floor balcony balustrade. The southern circular element contains a staircase that rises in a continuous spiral through 180 degrees to the first floor level. On the northern side, an identical circular element contained a small lounge opening off the entry hall. Both circular elements were originally light by glass bricks contained glass bricks, which were replaced in 1992 with fixed panels of narrow clear glass strips, silicon jointed to accommodate the curve.

The curved first floor balcony balustrade which marks the main entrance runs into two banks of squat rendered brick towers before progressing south and west in front of the bedroom wings. Each wing is terminated by a single-storey, hip roofed annexe.

The window joinery is steel framed. The building is roofed with Marseilles terra-cotta tiles, subservient behind the parapet of the two-storey building, but more prominent in the case of the single-storey annexes. The rendered facades fronting the highway and Bay Road, originally painted a pastel colour, is now painted in a heavy brown colour.

The rear elevations consist of fair face red brick with rectangular window openings. The centre part of the elevation, at the internal angle subtended by the intersection of the two wings, is truncated with the fencing of the beer garden at ground floor level and the aluminium framed glazing of an extension to the first floor lobby, added in 1992.

The front door is a double leafed temporary hoarding. The entry hall between, and wrapping around the two circular elements is bare of furniture and of drab appearance as are the other interior spaces. The Entry Hall leads to the Main Lounge, the central feature of which is the fireplace. The fireplace is as built, with wooden box mantle, but has been painted in bright colours. It stands in isolation, the walls on each side, which once separated the Lounge from the Dining Room and Reception, having been removed. Newly built, but now dilapidated, bar counters intrude in the lounge and the bank of

doors, which once lead into the beer garden, have been replaced with aluminium framed doors. The Saloon Bar, which once had an island counter, has been remodelled with a side bar, again now dilapidated.

In 1992 a large cantilevered canopy awning was erected in front of the bottle shop to the west end of the wing facing Stirling Highway. The bottle shop has been stripped of most of its fittings, and the kitchen at the south end of the Bay Road wing is partially dismantled.

There are few changes at the first floor level, except those brought about by age and lack of maintenance. The carpets to the first floor lobby at the head of the staircase are worn and the paintwork is generally in a poor state. To the south-west of the lobby is a reception room formed by the truncation of the internal angle at the meeting of the two wings of the building. In 1992 the south-west wall of this area was extended outwards to enlarge the room and aluminium framed glazing was installed. From the first floor Lobby, passages along each wing lead between a succession of relatively small bedrooms, each fitted with an original cast iron, porcelain enamel basin. The bedrooms facing the streets open onto the balconies by means of steel framed, obscure glazed, French doors. The bathrooms have been redecorated and are not of exceptional interest.

13.3 REFERENCES

Building and Construction, 4 November 1940, pp 6,7.

D Richards, *Marshall Clifton. The Art Of Building*, exhibition catalogue, 1989.

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 1 June 1995.