



**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)

- 3.10.1 Assisting Indigenous people into the cash economy
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 6.4 Building a system of higher education
- 9.2.3 Being teenagers

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 402 Education & science
- 405 Sport, recreation & entertainment
- 601 Aboriginal people (before and after 1829)
- 606 Famous & infamous people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Northam Senior High School is valued for its late Inter-war Arts and Crafts style design in that it contributes to the historic townscape and identity of the town of Northam. (Criterion 1.1)

Northam Senior High School typifies the scale, materials and design of Government buildings designed by the Government Architect, in the 1920s. (Criterion 1.1)

Northam Senior High School is valued by the community of Northam and district, for the significant contribution to the townscape and character of Northam. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Northam Senior High School was the first purpose built secondary education facility in the agricultural regions of Western Australia and demonstrates the development of the rural areas of the State following World War I. (Criterion 2.1)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

The employment of married female teachers at *Northam Senior High School* in the 1940s is indicative of the changes to the employment of women that were forged by the exigencies of World War II. (Criterion 2.1)

The development of *Northam Senior High School* documents changing needs and approaches in secondary education from the one-style classroom of the pre-war period to individual purpose built buildings that were constructed post-war, such as Library, Science Block and Social Studies Block. (Criterion 2.1)

The construction of *Northam Senior High School* in 1921 marked Northam as a major centre in the West Australian Wheatbelt, which has been confirmed by the ongoing development of the complex in the post-war years. (Criterion 2.2)

The use of the Caretaker's Quarters since 2001 as a specialist education facility for Indigenous students marks a recognition of their particular need within the State's education system and the will to address it. (Criterion 2.2)

Northam Senior High School was designed by the Public Works Department under Chief Architect W. B. Hardwick, who continued his predecessors' approach of the use of standardised simple architectural forms to create a variety of simple, well proportioned buildings for public use. (Criterion 2.3)

Northam Senior High School students include prominent figures in Australian society such as Olympian Shirley Strickland, cricketer John Rutherford, zoologist Barbara York Main, conservationist Harry Butler, Rhodes Scholar Jerry Ellis and medical researcher and educator Dr John Colebatch. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Northam Senior High School is valued by the local community, and by the community of its former students, for providing a sound education venue in their local environment and for the many high achieving West Australians who have attended the place. (Criterion 4.1)

Northam Senior High School is important in contributing to the community's sense of place, having provided, and continuing to provide, educational facilities on the site since 1921. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Northam Senior High School is an uncommon example of late Inter-War Arts and Crafts style in a substantial government building in a regional town.

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Northam Senior High School is a fine representative example of a regional High School in the 1920s designed by the Government Architect W.B. Hardwick, in the late Inter-War Arts and Crafts style.

12.3 CONDITION

Northam Senior High School is in good condition having been in use since construction. Regular maintenance has been undertaken.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Northam Senior High School has retained a high degree of integrity, demonstrating continuous use for the educational purposes as designed, and has

incrementally developed since 1921 for that same purpose. Some changes have taken place over the years, to facilitate those ongoing uses but those changes are minimal in the context of the place, and the original school use is clearly identifiable.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The remaining original fabric of *Northam Senior High School* is mostly intact. There is minimal evidence of intervention to original fabric, although development has taken place incrementally since 1921. *Northam Senior High School* has retained a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Documentary evidence compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. Physical evidence compiled by Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Northam Senior High School, comprising the Main School Building, a double-storey brick, roughcast and tile building (1921, 1930, 1945, c.1950, c.1965-75, 1976, 1996) that forms a square around the central open quadrangle in the late Inter-War Arts and Crafts style; the Hall (1921, 1960, 1976, 1996) a weatherboard, asbestos and zincalume building of more vernacular architectural style; the Caretaker's Quarters (1921, c.1950) a brick render and roughcast, and tile building that responds to the aesthetic of the Main School Building, at a domestic scale; the Home Economics Building (Domestic Science, 1945); Manual Arts Centre (Manual Training, 1951); Science Office (old Science Block, 1969); Library (1974); Social Science Block (Social Studies Block, 1974); Thomas Lee Hall/gymnasium (1985); new Science Block (1995); and, Industrial Workshop (Pre-Vocational Centre, 1995). The 1921 buildings were designed by the Public Works Department under Chief Architect W.B. Hardwick.

The town of Northam developed as a service centre for the pastoral district in the Avon Valley and as an important railway junction on the Eastern Goldfields line.¹

In the 1890s, the only high schools in Western Australia were private schools in the metropolitan area offering, on the whole, a classical education for boys and ladylike accomplishments for girls. In 1907, Inspector General of Education, Cecil Andrews, initiated a system of central schools where upper level classes were added to selected government primary schools for students to proceed to Junior Certificate level. By 1909, there were six such schools in Perth and two in the Eastern Goldfields.²

In 1911, the first public high school, Perth Modern, was established and named for the fact that it offered a modern secondary education rather than a classical one. The opening of the University of Western Australia in the same year established a three level education system and set academic standards with a system of public examinations.³ The provision of secondary education spread rapidly into country areas, but most rural centres could not justify a high school building. An exception to this was in the Eastern Goldfields district, where the towns of Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Boulder had sufficient population to warrant the construction of the Eastern Goldfields High School in 1914. District high schools, similar to the Perth central schools, were established at the primary schools in Northam, Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury in 1917-18.⁴

Land for a site for *Northam Senior High School* was being sought early in 1918. In July that year the Northam Town Council was asked if it would relinquish Leake Park for a high school site. The Council promptly agreed, stating that they

1 For the early development of Northam see Heritage Council documentation: P1871 Commonwealth Bank; P1880 The Residency and P1898 Railway Institute Northam.

2 Gregory, Jenny & Smith, Lisa, *A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia*, Centre for Western Australian History, UWA, 1995, pp. 19-21.

3 Gregory, Jenny & Smith, Lisa, op cit, pp. 19-21.

4 Gregory, Jenny & Smith, Lisa, op cit, p. 22.

'are fully seized with the importance of Secondary Education and are prepared to do all in their power to assist in providing facilities therefor (sic)'.⁵

By 1919, it was apparent that the Northam high school classes had outgrown their accommodation at the primary school, where they were occupying pavilion classrooms.

The pupils now number over 150, and next year will be between 180 and 200. Next year for the first time the full course for the Leaving Certificate will be taken...

This High School is too large to be run satisfactorily as part of a school which begins with the infants. It will contain students belonging to five distinct years and it will not be possible to provide for them all without extra class room and laboratory accommodation....

If the children of the larger country towns are to receive anything like the same advantages as those of Perth, we must provide High School accommodation. Scholarship winners from Northam are not given boarding allowance to go to Perth, but this is unfair unless we can provide them with fairly equivalent opportunities at Northam.⁶

Plans for *Northam Senior High School* were drawn up by the Public Works Department (PWD), under Chief Architect W.B. Hardwick.⁷ Hardwick was Chief Architect from 1916-26. Hardwick had joined the PWD as a draftsman in 1894 and had first hand experience of the style and details of his predecessors, George Temple-Poole, J. H. Grainger and Hillson Beasley, all of whom tended toward the use of standardised simple architectural forms to create a variety of simple, well proportioned buildings for public use. A contract for the construction was awarded to Joseph Lake and the foundation stone was laid on 24 September 1920 by Minister for Education Hal Colebatch (later Sir). Colebatch had been owner of the *Northam Advertiser* since 1904 and Mayor of Northam in 1909-12.⁸

The inscription on the foundation stone reads:

NORTHAM		HIGH		SCHOOL
Established		January		1917
This	building	was	erected	on
a	site	presented	by	the
Northam		Municipal	Council	1920
Foundation		Stone	laid	by
Hon	Hal	Patershall	Colebatch	MLA
Minister		for		Education
24th September 1920				

There was a large attendance at the ceremony. Colebatch stressed the importance of secondary schools in the country to give country students the same opportunities as those in the city and called on Northam residents to continue to 'open their homes and their hearts to young students from outside centres' until such time as a hostel for their accommodation could be provided. Out of the 120 enrolled in 1920, 53 were from outside the town.⁹

Northam Senior High School opened on 5 September 1921 under headmaster Thomas N. Lee with an enrolment of 120 and a teaching staff of seven, made up

5 Correspondence 16 & 17 July 1918, 'Northam Senior High School', SROWA WAS 24 CONS 5957 Item 1918/F1391.

6 Report of the district inspector, 1919, 'Northam Senior High School', Item 1918/F1391, op cit, fol. 33.

7 Public Works Department (PWD) plans 21222, February-March 1920, SROWA WAS 399 CONS 6147 Item 21222 & courtesy Dept of Housing & Works (DHW).

8 Black, David, *Biographical register of the members of parliament of Western Australia*, Perth, WA Parliamentary History Project, 2001, Vol. 1, p. 49.

9 *Northam Advertiser*, 26 September, 1920. p. 3.

of three male and four female teachers. The official opening was performed by Hal Colebatch on 28 October 1921.¹⁰

The main building is two-storey, built in brick with rough cast outer walls on the top storey. The roofing is of local tiles. On the ground floor are the administration centre, three classrooms fitted with single desks and one classroom fitted up as an art room and two cloakrooms. The upper storey has two classrooms, a lecture theatre, two laboratories (one for chemistry and agriculture, the other for physics and biology), and two fire-proof storerooms. The hall/gymnasium is a handsome structure of 1800 square feet.¹¹

The two-storey Main School Building fronted Kennedy Street. It had a single storey wing on each side housing the cloakrooms, and the separate timber-framed Hall, measuring 30 feet by 60 feet, was accessed from the centre of the rear verandah by a covered way. Behind the Hall was a drill area with a shelter shed on each side. The only other building included in the original construction of the place was the Caretaker's Quarters, located within a fenced quarter-acre site in the northwest corner of the grounds fronting Inkpen Street.¹² Final cost of construction was £20,615 1s 2d.¹³

Northam Senior High School had an agricultural bias, and an orchard, vegetable garden and experimental farm plot were soon established. Tennis courts were established on the drill area north of the Hall and were opened by the Mayor of Northam in October 1922.¹⁴

The Education Department Annual Report of 1922 noted that:

The buildings are designed to accommodate 200, and it seems probable that by 1923 they will be fully occupied. The original site was nine acres in extent, and additional land has been secured for playing purposes and for agricultural work.¹⁵

Much of the surrounding area had already been subdivided into residential lots but the PWD quickly acquired another 10 acres adjoining the north side of the school ground and 10 acres of a former dairy site on the opposite side of Inkpen Street.¹⁶

No changes were made to the Main School Building until September 1930, when two classrooms were added to the east wing.¹⁷ The only other construction work was the addition of woodwork and metalwork rooms on the west boundary, which were added sometime between 1930 and 1938 (not extant).¹⁸ In 1938, a hostel for female country students, Adamson House, was provided by the Country Women's Association and a boy's hostel, St Christopher's, was opened by the Church of England in 1941.¹⁹ Overcrowding was reported at the beginning of the

10 *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, 75th Anniversary Reunion Committee, 1996, p. 1; *Northam Advertiser*, 29 October 1921, p. 3.

11 *Northam Advertiser*, 29 October 1921, p.

12 PWD plans 21222, sheets 1-5 & 7, op cit.

13 PWD, *Annual Report*, 1921-22 in V & P 1922-23, Vol. 2, Paper 26, p. 29.

14 *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, p. 1.

15 Education Dept, *Annual Report*, 1921-22 in *Votes & Proceedings* 1922-23, Vol. 2, Paper 1, p. 6.

16 'Northam Senior High School', Item 1918/F1391, op cit; photograph in *The Avon*, Northam High School student magazine, December 1938, p. 18.

17 PWD plan 26474, 'Northam High School additional classrooms', 28 February 1930, courtesy DHW; *Northam Advertiser*, 17 February, 1940, p.2.

18 DHW plan 781489, 'Northam High School' site plan, c. 1940; *The Avon*, op cit, photographs December 1930, pp. 5 & December 1938, p. 1 and August 1946, p. 2.

19 Adamson House was located on the Old York Road.

school year in 1940, when there were 321 enrolments. The concrete floored cloakrooms had to be utilised as classrooms to cater to the numbers.²⁰

The outbreak of War forced a change in policy toward female teachers, who had previously had to resign when they married and were not re-employed by the Education Department. With many male teachers being called up for active service, married female teachers were employed to fill the void. In February 1942, there were six men and eleven women on the staff of *Northam Senior High School*, three of whom were married. Thomas Lee retired in 1944, after twenty-one years as Principal. The school enrolment had grown from 120 to 448 during that time.²¹ Another long-serving member of staff was Caretaker R.H. Spice, who held that position and occupied the Caretaker's Quarters from 1921 to c.1940.²²

Following World War Two, Northam became the third-largest centre in Australia for housing new migrants, with two large camps established. Northam Immigration Accommodation Centre operated from 1949 to 1951, and in that time housed 15,000 European migrants.²³ Holden Immigration Accommodation Centre, which operated from 1949 to 1957 and again briefly in 1962-63, was particularly set up to house the families of immigrant workers assigned to remote areas.²⁴ While the camps provided primary schooling for migrant children, teenagers were bussed to the local high school. Despite often having limited English language proficiency, no special programs were provided and the migrants joined in the normal curriculum along with local children.²⁵

The post-World War Two period saw an upgrading of facilities as enrolments increased due to migration, a prosperous agricultural sector and a greater demand for secondary education. In 1945, three classrooms were added on the upper floor of the east wing of the Main School Building, and in the 1950s, the east wing was completed and part of the north wing adjoining was constructed.²⁶ A Domestic Science (Home Economics) Building was added to the site in 1945. Previously, students had walked to East Northam Primary School to take domestic science classes. A Manual Training (Manual Arts) Centre was added in 1951, replacing the earlier woodwork and metalwork rooms. Renovations to the Caretaker's Quarters around the early 1950s included the addition of a sleepout on the front verandah and a louvre window enclosure on the rear verandah.²⁷

Considerable work was undertaken at *Northam Senior High School* in the 1960s and 1970s, but before further work on the north wing of the Main School Building could be carried out the Hall had to be moved from its position in the centre of the developing quadrangle. In 1960, it was relocated northwest to the site currently occupied by the library:

It was cut off the stumps, jacked up and roped through pulleys to two big trees. Sand was laid on an incline and two layers of boards placed over the sand. On rollers the hall was pulled on long ropes at intervals up the incline. Like Ancient Egyptian slaves,

20 *Northam Advertiser*, 17 February, 1940, p. 2.

21 *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, p. 2.

22 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1921, 126, 1930, 1939, 1942.

23 Peters, Nonja. *Milk and Honey – but no Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia 1945-1964*. UWA Press, Nedlands, 2001, pp.119 & 310.

24 Peters, Nonja, op. cit. pp.220-21.

25 Peters, Nonja, op. cit. pp.161-62.

26 *The Avon*, op cit, August 1946, p. 2; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1945, pp. 31, 156 & 707; *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, p. 3.

27 *The Avon*, op cit, August 1946, p. 2; PWD plan, Northam High School Caretakers Quarters repairs and renovations, [c.1950], courtesy DHW.

the boys who were called out of classes for a short time, pulled the hall to its new site.²⁸

The west and north wings of the Main School Building were built incrementally over the 1960s and the place was largely completed by 1969, with the possible exception of some upper floor classrooms on the northwest corner, which were completed in 1974-75. The Home Economics Building and Manual Arts Centre were both enlarged in the late 1960s, and the old Science Block (Science Office) was built in 1969.²⁹

The buildings at Northam Senior High School had been designed by the PWD architectural division, but from the 1970s private architects were engaged for this work. In 1974, the firm of Kenneth Broadhurst, Ryan & Evans designed the Library and Social Studies (Social Science) Block, which had previously occupied classrooms in the Main School Building. A Pre-Vocational Centre was built in 1977, on the site of the current Industrial Workshop.³⁰

The Hall had to be moved again to make way for the new Library building. This move relocated it straight back toward Inkpen Street. It remained in that location for another twenty or so years, until 1996, when the site was required for the new science block. The Hall was then moved to its current location on the west side of the Library. The various relocations of the building have become part of the folklore of the school.³¹

Some eminent people have been educated at *Northam Senior High School*. Dr Hal John Hester Colebatch, grandson of Sir Hal Colebatch, was world famous in the science of respiratory medicine, particularly as it related to victims of polio, he himself having contracted the disease in 1953 while working at Royal Perth Hospital. In 1964, he was appointed senior lecturer in medicine at the University of NSW, becoming associate professor in 1970 and chairman of the Department of Respiratory Medicine in 1985. He died in 2004.³²

Barbara York Main graduated from the University of Western Australia (UWA) with a PhD in zoology in 1957. Her studies on arachnids made her world famous and she has become known as WA's own spider woman. She is Professor of Zoology at UWA. On International Museum Day, 18 May 2002, fellow former *Northam Senior High School* student, Harry Butler, presented her with the WA Museum's Butler Medal for her lifelong contribution to biological research in Western Australia.³³

William Henry (Harry) Butler trained as a teacher, but in 1963 he began working for corporate and government bodies as an environmental consultant and undertook a major study of Western Australian animals. He collected more than 2000 examples of mammals, 14 of which were new to science. He is best known as the author and presenter of the TV series *In the Wild*, which was produced in the 1970s and 1980s. He was Australian of the Year in 1979 and Citizen of the

28 *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, p. 3.

29 PWD plan for job 6/608/4 'New science block', September 1969 site plan.

30 Plan, Kenneth Broadhurst, Ryan & Evans, 'Northam High School New Library & Classroom Additions', 1974, courtesy DHW.

31 PWD site plan, 'New science block at Northam Senior High School', November 1969; *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, pp. 3-4.

32 *Sydney Morning Herald*, obituary, 18 October 2004.

33 University museums and collections in WA, www.lib.mq.edu.au/mcm/aumis/wa.html & www.museum.wa.gov.au/aboutus/annualreports/WAM_report_2001-02.

Year for Western Australia in 1980. His belief that conservation and development can go hand in hand often brought him into conflict with environmental groups.³⁴

Jerry Ellis was a Rhodes Scholar in 1959 and attended Oxford University. In 1967 he joined Broken Hill Proprietary Co Ltd (BHP) and rose to hold a number of executive positions in the company including Chairman from 1997-99. He is chairman of the boards of directors of a number of companies, holds directorships in various fields and is Chancellor of Monash University.³⁵

John Rutherford trained and worked as a teacher and was selected to play cricket for Australia in 1951, while a member of the UWA 1st X1 team. He was a strong batsman and in 1956 he became the first West Australian to play Test cricket.

Olympic gold medal winning athlete and conservationist Shirley Strickland (later Shirley De la Hunty) made her mark early at *Northam Senior High School*. The report of the school's 1938 Sports Day athletics recorded no less than six potential champions, but:

Of these, one already had distinguished herself above all others. We refer, of course, to that great little runner from the girls' side of the [Red] Faction, Shirley Strickland by name. Such outstanding success is unique from one who is yet to finish her first year...³⁶

At the London Olympic Games in 1948, Shirley Strickland became the first Australian female to win an Olympic medal in a track and field event. She competed at the 1952 and 1956 Olympics, winning in all three gold, one silver and three bronze medals as a sprinter and hurdler. She also had an honours degree in nuclear physics and worked as a science teacher at Perth high schools. She was awarded an MBE in 1957 for her services to athletics and an Order of Australia in 2001 for service to the community.³⁷

Nonja Peters, born in Holland in 1949, came to Western Australia with her family as part of the post-World War Two migration programs. She grew up in Northam, where the family settled. In the 1990s she undertook mature-age studies at the University of Western Australia including an acclaimed PhD on immigration to Western Australia. She has become a prominent spokesperson for migrant history in Western Australia and, in 2002, became inaugural Director of Curtin University of Technology's 'Migration, Ethnicity, Refugees and Citizenship (MERC) Research Unit' in Perth.³⁸

Upgrading of the facilities at *Northam Senior High School* has been ongoing. The Thomas Lee Hall, named for the first principal, was added in 1985 and as well as taking over many of the functions of the 1921 Hall, also functions as a gymnasium. The Thomas Lee Hall was designed by the PWD.³⁹ The 1921 Hall has remained in continuous use in its various locations, being the venue for assemblies, dinners, concerts and dancing classes, and more recently as a music and drama centre and an art and craft centre.⁴⁰ The tennis court was

34 Australian of the Year Awards 2006, www.australianoftheyear.gov.au/recipient.asp?pid=20.

35 Monash University www.monash.edu.au/rngndellis.php.

36 *The Avon*, op cit, December 1938, pp. 20-21.

37 Australian Women's Archives Project, Biographical entry, Shirley Barbara de la Hunty (1925-2004), www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0186b.htm.

38 Australian Women's Archives Project, Biographical entry, Nonja Peters, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE1959b.htm>

39 PWD file 1440/83, 'Northam Senior High School. New gym-hall', 1985.

40 *Northam Senior High School 75th Anniversary Reunion: 1921-1996*, op cit, pp. 3-4.

moved to the Inkpen Street boundary as the school site was developed, and extra courts were added, requiring excavation. Further developments in 1995 saw the construction of a modern Science Block and an upgraded pre-vocational centre (Industrial Workshop), which replaced the 1977 pre-vocational centre building. These two new buildings were designed by Edgar Idle Wade Architects of Subiaco.⁴¹

The buildings at Northam Senior High School continue to be upgraded and remodelled as needs arise. In 1996 a landscape development plan was prepared for the grounds, but not implemented, and in 1997, the timber stairways in the Main School Building were replaced with concrete.

In 1998, *Northam Senior High School* was entered on the Town and Shire of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory with recommended management category C.⁴²

Since 2001, the Caretaker's Quarters (referred to as the House) has been the home of the Northam Alternative Vocational Education & Training (VET) Program for Indigenous students.

The... Program is designed to meet the needs of Indigenous students enrolled in Years 10, 11 & 12 that are at risk of not completing their education or are at risk of leaving school without a pathway. The Alternative VET Program is one of skills acquisition where students are prepared to either go into the workplace or to undertake further education and training...

Students in the Alternative VET Program at *Northam Senior High School* have ownership of a section of the school which has been painted by the students. At the 'House' students participate in English, Workplace Studies, and Indigenous Language and after school it is the Homework Centre.⁴³

In 2004, *Northam Senior High School* had four students nominated for the State VET in-school awards.⁴⁴

In 2006, *Northam Senior High School* continues as a fully functioning secondary education facility in the Midlands Education District. The Main School Building acts as the major teaching and administration centre of the complex; the Caretaker's Quarters is occupied by the Alternative VET Program; the Hall continues to be used for school purposes, and the other later constructed buildings continue in their various educational and support functions.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Northam Senior High School, comprising the Main School Building, a double-storey brick, roughcast and tile building (1921, 1930, 1945, c.1950, c.1965-75, 1976, 1996) that forms a square around the central open quadrangle in the late Inter-War Arts and Crafts style; the Hall (1921, 1960, 1976, 1996) a weatherboard, asbestos and zincalume building of more vernacular architectural style; the Caretaker's Quarters (1921, c.1950) a brick render and roughcast, and tile building that responds to the aesthetic of the Main School Building, at a domestic scale; the Home Economics Building (1945); Manual Arts Centre (1951); Science Office (1969); Library (1974); Social Science Block (1974); Thomas Lee Hall (1985); Science Block (1995); and, Industrial Workshop (1995).

41 Edgar Idle Wade Architects, plan 'Science Building, Northam Senior High School', 1995.

42 O'Brien Planning Consultants, *Town and Shire of Northam Municipal Heritage Inventory*, 1998, entry T33.

43 Vocational Education Community Online, Northam Alternative Vet Program, www.veco.ash.org.au/gallery.

44 *Avon Valley Advocate*, 4 November 2004.

Northam Senior High School is located between the Kennedy Street frontage that bounds the site on the south-east and Inkpen Street on the north-west. The unformed Moseley Ave marks the south-west boundary, and the north-east boundary is indeterminate as the school site extends into playing fields. The main building dominates the site, facing Kennedy Street, and is flanked by the single storey Home Economics Building on the southwest, and the Manual Arts Centre on the northeast, both on the same setback alignment as the Main School Building. There is minimal other development along the west side of the Main School Building, except a steel framed and clad shed, prefabricated classroom (adjacent to the Hall), and the outbuildings associated with the Caretaker's Quarters. On the north-east side of the Hall, at the west corner of the Main School Building, is the Library. Immediately adjacent to the Library is the Science Office (old science block). A 1995 Science Block has been constructed on the northwest side of the Library and Science Office, nearer to the Inkpen Street boundary. In the same alignment as the Library and Science Office, at the rear of the Main School Building and further to the north, is the Social Science Building (Year 8 area) with the tennis courts behind (north-west) aligned with the Inkpen Street boundary. Along the northeast side of the Main School Building is the covered area and Canteen, adjacent to the rear of the Manual Arts Centre. Behind the Canteen (to the north-east) is the Industrial Workshop (pre-vocational training centre), and further north-east, bordering the school playing fields, is the Change rooms, with the Thomas Lee Hall to the northwest of the Change rooms.

The Kennedy Street frontage has a single bitumen driveway entrance that circles across the front of the building, where there is some car parking, and exits on the south corner of the Kennedy Street frontage. The front boundary is delineated by a pipe framed chain link fence, and the pedestrian entry is centrally aligned with the central entry of the Main School Building. The entry is double width with brick pillars each side of the bitumen pathway. The pillars support a wrought iron arch with the words 'Northam Senior High School'. The street setback is mostly grassed with some flowerbeds and plantings. The plantings are immature and of no significance, including the 1970 rubber tree (*Ficus elastica*) on the east side. The Hall is not visible from Kennedy Street, although it can be identified on the Inkpen Street frontage, from the vicinity of the Caretaker's Quarters. The Caretaker's Quarters, located on the west corner of the Inkpen Street frontage, faces northeast, with the side elevation and access off the street. The boundaries are fenced with Supersix corrugated fencing, obscuring views in that vicinity which is essentially a services area. The site slopes down to the Main School Building from the Inkpen Street frontage and from the southwest, with retaining walls along the southwest and part of the northwest sides of the Main School Building, some distance away. The remainder of the site is flat, through to the Kennedy Street frontage. The pathways are predominately bitumen throughout the site, although there are brick paved paths and gravel surfaces dominate in the entire southwest, and much of the space between the buildings along the northwest area of the site, as well as southeast in front of and at the side of the Manual Arts Centre. Northeast of the Thomas Lee Hall and Change rooms, between Inkpen and Kennedy streets are the levelled flat grassed playing fields.

The main building of *Northam Senior High School* is a substantial presence in the streetscape, although the setback and scale of the building does not dominate the surrounding residential area, and the flanking single storey buildings further balances the scale. *Northam Senior High School* is aesthetically pleasing with red brick ground floor contrasted with cream coloured roughcast that is similarly contrasted by the clay tiles on the hipped roof. The roof is detailed with

symmetrically located tall roughcast chimneys with soldier face brick edges, and a central louvred roof vent with a hipped roof.

The central entry to the Main School Building is delineated by a hipped roof timber framed porch that protrudes from the otherwise flush frontage. The entry verandah posts are supported on substantial face brick pillars that are detailed as for the external walls of the front facade. The pairs of columns form sets of three about the corners, and a decorative valance bears the name of the institution. The soffit is lined with painted tongue and groove boards. The front and quadrangle entries are sets of double doors, side panels and fanlights in multi-paned glazing with arched frame detail to the doors. Flanking the centre front entry are three sets of windows, on vertical alignments for ground and first floors. The window sets comprise groups of three timber framed multi-paned double-hung sash windows, each with soldier course quoining around the perimeter. The windows form sets of two and one about the entry detail. A marble plaque on the northeast side of the entry informs of the foundation stone being laid in 1920. The face brick exterior walls are detailed in stretcher bond for four courses, and every fifth course is a row of recessed headers. The foundation is delineated from the main wall by a soldier course. A dado line approximately 2.5 metres from ground floor level shows the contrast to the roughcast wall that has a single string course of face brick at almost head height of the first floor windows. Set back from the main facade on each side, are the double storey ablutions and stairwells that are a reduced scale with a hipped roof that sits under the main roof. Both sides and the rear (northeast) of the Main School Building are similarly detailed on the exterior facades, with face brick ground floor and roughcast render first floor. The northeast wall has a protruding section from the west corner to the double arched entry opening central along that wall.

The Main School Building encompasses a central open quadrangle that is accessed through the main entry, into a foyer and directly onto the ground floor verandah that encircles the quadrangle on all four sides, at both ground and first floor levels. The quadrangle is an open grassed area with a small concrete and stone dais immediately adjacent to the main entry, and a paved shade cover area at the northwest end. There are a number of mature pencil pines (*Athrotaxis cupressoides*) around the perimeter of the quadrangle.

There is minimal evidence to inform of the various periods of construction of the Main School Building. In each corner of the outside square of the building there is staircase access between the ground and first floors. The staircases at the east and south corners evidence the 1921 construction with rounded red brick wall, although the timber stairs were replaced in 1997 with concrete stairs and pipe handrail. The north and west corners have more expansive concrete staircases with broad return platforms. The ground floor verandah is concrete. The verandah posts are pairs of substantial square jarrah posts with a single dado height timber rail infill. Similarly upstairs verandah posts are in pairs, with timber-framed balustrading between. The balustrading is detailed in roughcast on the exterior, tongue and groove lined on the verandah side, and features wrought iron panel infills bolted to the timber frame. The wrought iron infills feature a square pattern with diagonal, as for the detail on the entry valance. The upstairs verandahs still evidence the original timber floors with a recessed drain along the external edge of the verandah. The exterior walls of the classrooms that face onto the quadrangle are face brick, although metal lockers are in place along most of the ground and first floor walls. The 1921 wing evidences double-hung sash windows that are set very high on the walls, as with the other wings, but mainly these are towards the southeast end. Most windows are highlight windows featuring

horizontal strips of vertical louvres. Both the ground floor and first floor verandahs have painted tongue and groove soffit lining on the rake. The soffit space of the ground floor verandahs shows considerable intervention from air-conditioning ducting and other services.

The 1921 classrooms evidence the original fabric, with hard plaster walls, battened plasterboard ceilings, timber floors, and smooth rendered fireplaces with soldier course face brick surrounds, which have been boarded over. The north-east wing typifies the remainder of the classrooms, with similar finish, except for flush plasterboard ceilings, and truncated fireplaces. The classroom doors are ledge and brace lined with tongue and groove boarding, multi-pane glazing above, and fanlights. In the southwest and northwest wings, there are suspended ceilings and the doors are flush with glazed panels.

The Hall, located approximately 20 metres from the west (rear) corner of the Main School Building, is aligned with the front facing Kennedy Street. It is accessed by a steel framed timber floored ramp that is parallel with the rear wall of the Main School Building, and the Library on the north-west side, and turns at right angles to the front foyer entry of the hall. The hall is a double height building, with windows at regular intervals along each side and at the rear, set high above the dado wall, approximately 3.0 metres from floor level. The windows form sets of three casements with fanlights above. The roof is gabled, has decorative vents on the ridge, and is clad with long sheets of Zinalume. There is a single storey skillion verandah across the front. The Hall is a timber frame construction with weatherboard dado and battened asbestos sheeting above. The verandah enclosure is clad with weatherboards. The central foyer of the verandah is flanked by an enclosed space each side. The central double entry doors lead directly into the hall space that has been partitioned past half way, forming a single hall space and two rooms behind. The Hall still has original timber floors. Dado walls are lined with vertical tongue and groove boards and the walls above are lined with battened plasterboard sheeting in a vertical formation. The ceiling is similarly lined with painted tongue and groove timbers with contrasting battens along the length of the side walls. The rafters are substantial timber elements with curved brackets of timber that are integral to the rafter and simply detailed with vertical timbers. The partition wall appears to be a timber framed plyboard lined element. The double entry doors and exit doors on the sides of the building are tongue and groove lined ledge and brace doors. Intrusive air-conditioning is evident along the northeast side of the Hall.

The Caretaker's Quarters was inaccessible. It is a simple domestic scale dwelling of brick construction finished in rendered brick dado with roughcast above. The verandah has a flat roof below the line of the original hipped roof. The hipped roof is clay tiled. The symmetrical frontage faces north-east, with a central verandah that has been extended beyond the original frontage, and enclosed, leaving the entry on the south side open. The windows are single formation double hung sashes that are multi-paned as for the main 1921 Main School Building. Adjacent is the associated laundry that is a weatherboard construction with a skillion tiled roof. From an external inspection there seems to be little intrusion to the fabric of the Caretaker's Quarters.

Situated on the southwest and northeast of the Main School Building on the Kennedy Street frontage, are two single storey brick structures, both with hipped tile roofs. The southwest building is the 1945 Home Economics Building, and the northeast is the 1951 Manual Arts Centre (both enlarged c.1969). The Home Economics Building has a straight frontage with a recessed entry and protruding

porch. The walls of the building are face brick dado with render above, and the roof is clad with long sheets of Colourbond. There is evidence of an extension to the northwest, detailed in similar form and materials. The northeast section of the long frontage of the Manual Arts Centre is similarly dado brick and render above, with an entry with face brick surround, although the remainder of the frontage has been rendered over the original dado face brick. The hipped roof is clad with clay tiles. Although both buildings have asymmetrical frontages, the form, rhythm of openings, materials and aesthetic of the buildings complement the 1921 Main School Building that they flank.

The Library, at the west corner of the Main School Building, next to the Hall, is a predominantly single storey face brick construction with horizontal bands of steel framed windows above a rendered dado. It has a clay tiled gable roof with expansive clerestory windows. The flat roof steel framed and clad entry structure is located between the Library and Science Office. The Science Office is the same construction as the Library but without the clerestory windows.

Further to the rear of the site (Inkpen Street), beyond the entry area of the Library and Science Office is the 1995 Science Block. The Science Block is also masonry constructed detailed in face brick dado with recessed horizontal bands, and rendered above the dado. The windows throughout are steel framed. The low pitch steel clad roof is a series of skillion forms.

The Social Science Building (Year 8 area) is similarly a single storey construction. It is finished in face brick and has a clay tiled roof. The roof is a relatively high pitched skillion with a flat roof connection between the skillion wings.

Between Thomas Lee Hall and the Social Science Building is a two room transportable school building, beyond which are the bitumen tennis courts to the north-west.

Thomas Lee Hall is a double volume building with a single storey height brick wall and the remainder clad with Colourbond. The roof is a low pitched gable also clad with Colourbond.

Aligned with the Thomas Lee Hall on the north-west/south-east axis of the playing fields boundary, are the Change rooms. Connected via a concrete path with a steel-framed, timber post and gable roofed covered way, the Change rooms are face brick with a simple tiled gable roof and a verandah along the playing fields frontage (north-east).

At the north corner of the Main School Building, where a low brick roundabout leads to the Social Science Building in the north, a covered way leads to the canteen in the east, with an expansive covered area between the northeast side of the Main School Building and the 'front' of the Canteen. The Canteen is a brick structure, rectangular in form, with a gable tiled roof. Behind the Canteen, between it and the Change rooms, is the Industrial Workshop. It is detailed in the same form and materials as the 1995 Science Block, with recessed horizontal bands in the face brick dado and rendered above. The windows throughout are steel framed. The low pitch steel clad roof is a skillion.

Except for the pencil pines within the central quadrangle, there are no plantings of significance. The landscaped plantings between the buildings and pathways are predominantly scattered shrub plantings of *Melaleuca*, *Grevillea* and *Eucalyptus* varieties. There is no evidence of the former orchard, and given the

extensive development on the site there is little likelihood of any archaeological evidence

Northam Senior High School is in good condition and is clearly maintained on a regular basis. It has a high degree of integrity and authenticity with continuous educational use since 1921, and utilisation and incremental development of the original 1921 Main School Building.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Three high schools were built in the early inter-war period, namely *Northam Senior High School*, P05613 Bunbury Senior High School (1922) and P00012 Albany Senior High School (1925). The high schools stood apart from other school buildings of their era due to their size and aesthetic and functional complexity. The basic plan was similar for all – two-storey lineal block with classrooms, toilets, cloakrooms, teachers' rooms, a small administration area and a freestanding hall/gymnasium. All three were constructed in face brick and roughcast render. Rooms open off a rear verandah (Northam) or front colonnade (Albany and Bunbury) and wings in the same style were added to the main school building as the schools grew.⁴⁵

The Education Department Heritage Survey has described these schools as exhibiting characteristics of Federation Arts and Crafts style with some Inter-War Spanish Mission and Federation Free Style displayed, particularly at the Bunbury and Albany schools. Each of the three high schools had a timber-framed hall/gymnasium, similar to that built at Perth Modern School in 1911. The Hall at Bunbury was built at a 45-degree angle behind the main school block.⁴⁶

Caretaker's quarters were similar in layout to teacher's quarters of the period, with four main rooms, although the materials and style varied. Teacher's quarters were not built in the metropolitan area after about 1910, but caretaker's quarters were constructed at some of the larger metropolitan schools as well as country high schools. Most are now used for school or community functions or as a general residence.⁴⁷

The next generation of high schools were built in the 1930s: P02173 *Perth Girls' School (fmr)* was built in 1936 in Inter-War Stripped Classical style and since 1963 has been occupied by the Police Department; P13226 Geraldton Senior High School Main Building, and P03372 *Kent Street Senior High School* were built in 1939, and are both in Inter-War Free Classical style. Kent Street was entered on the State Register in 2005.⁴⁸

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

⁴⁵ Kelsall Binet Architects & Bizzaca, Kris, *Education Department Heritage Inventory: A pictorial guide to standard terminology for Government school buildings 1890-1945*, September 2001, Inter-War Type 7.

⁴⁶ Kelsall Binet Architects & Bizzaca, Kris, op cit, Inter-War Type 17.

⁴⁷ Kelsall Binet Architects & Bizzaca, Kris, op cit, Inter-War Type 18.

⁴⁸ Heritage Council database and assessment documentation.