



## 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

The group of buildings and intervening spaces comprising *Cottesloe Civic Centre* have great importance to the community for their aesthetic characteristics, as a well composed set of places in a walled garden setting and for their aesthetically pleasing characteristics. The group is important for its component parts and the collective effect of buildings and their spatial relationship revealing the function and organisation of the site. Each building has its own subtly distinctive aesthetic quality and, together, the group and its open spaces contribute to the community's sense of place. It is the illusion of the whole that is important to the community, both the community of Cottesloe and to the wider community of Western Australia. (Criterion 1.1)

*Cottesloe Civic Centre* is important not so much for innovative design, but for the overall aesthetic achievement and for the fact that the aesthetic achievement of the whole place is far more important than a mere sum of the parts. Although not a literal interpretation of the Inter-War Spanish Mission style in all respects, the place conveys a mood, very successfully, that remains little diminished by the steady erosion of detail and increasingly dense planting. (Criterion 1.2)

The landmark value of the place is somewhat diminished by the loss of the foreground of the vacant land between 'Overton Lodge' and Marine Parade that arose from the sale of Overton Estate and the loss of the vertical form of the 'Spanish Tower' on the highest point of the site. However, *Cottesloe Civic Centre* remains a Western Australian landmark, comprising the large pines, the perimeter walling and the general impression of the house within the grounds from the street. It is the key visual experience in Broome Street and is a comfortable component in the broad expanse of the street. (Criterion 1.3)

Because of the size of the site and its context as noted above, the place makes a significant contribution to the streetscape and contributes, in no small part, to the experience of the town. The limestone boundary walls and the Norfolk Island pines are a significant part of the Cottesloe townscape identity and contribute to its aesthetic unity. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Cottesloe Civic Centre* is an exuberant example of the Inter-War Spanish Mission style on a very large scale and the entire development is a substantial demonstration of the lifestyle of a senior politician and later of the mode of

domestic existence of one of the State's most flamboyant and charismatic businessmen in the first half of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.1)

In its first form, the place was a substantial demonstration of the way of life of one of the State's leading politicians. Under the ownership of de Bernales, the place became a demonstration of the way of life of a wealthy and flamboyant mining speculator and became a large scale symbol of his success and wealth. (Criterion 2.2)

The place has important associations with a number of eminent persons, including its first owner, the Hon. Mr Justice Pennefather, its second owner, Claude Albo de Bernales, Laurence Gadsdon, the Mayor of Cottesloe who oversaw the purchase of the place by the Town, architects Sir Bernard Evans, Samuel Rosenthal, Harold Boas and John Oldham, and several generations of Cottesloe councillors. (Criterion 2.3)

The transformation of the Federation Queen Anne style house, by then known as 'Overton Lodge', into an Inter-War Spanish Mission styled mansion, on a grand scale and to elegant effect, reflected a shift in popular domestic taste. (Criterion 2.4)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

As with many places in the public domain, the social value of the place is high. It is and has been accessible to the public for almost 50 years and plays a strong part in the life of the Town of Cottesloe and, through its popularity for use as a place for functions and wedding receptions in particular (up to 1,000 per annum), the place has a relatively high social value on a State level. (Criterion 4.1)

With its pleasing streetscape setting, buildings, landscape setting, large individual trees and limestone walls, the place is a familiar part of Cottesloe people's existence and contributes to the community's sense of place. While some prominence has diminished in a visual sense since the loss of the 'Spanish Tower' on the highest part of the site and the development of the Overton Estate, *Cottesloe Civic Centre* remains one of the town's cultural icons. The story of the place, the interest in its most famous owner and its passing into the hands of the town are part of the town's mythology. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

The place is a rare example of an Inter-War Spanish Mission style mansion in Western Australia. *Cottesloe Civic Centre*, is of a scale quite unlike any other house of this type and period in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

The place is representative of a particular person's distinctive way of life and is of a particularly grand order as a collective experience and is representative of a way of life not common in Western Australia in the present era. There are no other places in Western Australia, from this period, associated with such a glittering international lifestyle or financial scandal; none so grand or so complete. The place may be said to have a degree of rarity. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The place is representative of a particularly large-scale privately executed, culturally modified landscape of a type that is unusual in Western Australia, with its combination of natural and terraced gardens in a grand scale conception. (Criterion 6.1)

The place is a demonstration of successive owners' ways of life and, with the assistance of interpretation, can be used to teach about the way of life of the owners at various stages of occupation. It is also able to demonstrate, with the aid of interpretation, how buildings may be adapted, when their original purpose is no longer being served, to retain important and useful structures. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

Overall, *Cottesloe Civic Centre* is in good condition.

For detailed tables setting out the condition of the place room by room refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

Although the place is now used as a civic centre, the original intention as a residence on a grand scale remains clear. *Cottesloe Civic Centre* has a high degree of integrity.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

Overall, the place has moderate authenticity.

For a detailed discussion of the authenticity of the place refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a detailed discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a detailed discussion of the physical evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).

#### **13.3 REFERENCES**

Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd: 'Cottesloe Civic Centre Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Town of Cottesloe March 1996).