



# 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

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a pleasing aesthetic harmony caused by the domestic scale of both *Residency Museum*, in the Victorian Georgian style, and *Old York Hospital* in the Federation Arts and Craft style. The variations of colours in the local clay bricks used in the construction of each place, variations in roof massing and fine detailing on the component buildings, contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. (Criterion 1.1)

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a landmark quality in York. In particular, *Old York Hospital* is an imposing landmark that terminates the vista of Clifford Street. (Criterion 1.3)

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* comprising *Residency Museum*, and the adjoining *Old York Hospital* with its associated outbuildings, forms a group of York's earliest institutional buildings and creates an historical precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* is a precinct of buildings which have been used for government and hospital services since the establishment of Government services in York. *Residency Museum* and *Old York Hospital*, although built at different times, for different purposes, have a common link, in that they are government buildings constructed to provide services for the district. In addition, *Residency Museum* was used by the hospital for maternity and other hospital functions prior to the establishment of new hospital facilities elsewhere in York and its conversion to a Museum. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a range of buildings, displaying the historical development of Government and medical services in York. (Criterion 2.2)

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a close association with the convict establishment and R. G. Meares in the 1850s, and with the P. W. D. architect George Temple Poole in the late 1890s. (Criterion 2.3)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has scientific value for its ability to demonstrate different techniques of construction and standards of public infrastructure in the nineteenth century in Western Australia. (Criterion 3.2)

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

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* contributes to the community's sense of place as a reminder of the European settlement and development of York. (Criterion 4.2)

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* is highly valued by the local community and is a tourist destination. Within the place, *Residency Museum* is a museum depicting the past history of York and, until recently, *Old York Hospital* has been used to provide low cost accommodation for schools and special interest groups, a service seen as an integral part of the promotion of York as a place to visit. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

-----

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* is representative of the growth and development of York from the mid to late nineteenth century and the provision of Government services to the people of York in that period. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Residency Museum* and *Old York Hospital* are, generally, in good condition.

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* is in good condition.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a high degree of integrity with its component parts: *Residency Museum* and *Old York Hospital*, having individually high integrity.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* has a high degree of authenticity. Both *Residency Museum* and *Old York Hospital* are substantially original.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*York Hospital Heritage Precinct* contains within it *Residency Museum* (c. 1850s) and *Old York Hospital* (1896).

Good land was discovered in the Avon Valley, in 1830, by a party led by Ensign Dale of the 63rd Regiment, and the district in the vicinity of Mount Bakewell was named Yorkshire for its resemblance to that county in England. As the district was opened up for settlement, a townsite of 3840 acres was reserved at the foot of Mount Bakewell and gazetted in November, 1830. Settlers moved into the district, in 1831, and the first town allotments were sold in 1835. York was one of the earliest rural settlements and the first inland town of the Swan River Colony.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Residency Museum**

*Residency Museum* is a single-storey building constructed as part of the convict establishment circa 1850s as an office and residence for the second Government Resident Captain R. G. Meares and his family. Meares resigned as Government Resident in 1859, when the magisterial duties were transferred to Northam. However, the Residency continued to be occupied until about 1901. Shortly after, the place was adapted for use as a Maternity Hospital as *Old York Hospital*, located on the adjacent site, did not have the space to provide the required facilities.<sup>2</sup> *Residency Museum* remained in use as a maternity hospital until the early 1940s and was used by the Hospital for a variety of purposes until the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

In 1972, *Residency Museum* was opened as the first regional museum established under the *Museum Act 1969-73*, to be recognised by the Western Australian Museum.<sup>4</sup> It continues to be used as a museum and is a well known tourist attraction.

*Residency Museum* was entered into the Register of Heritage Places on an interim basis on 30 June 1995. For a full discussion of the documentary evidence of the building see 'Documentation of Places for Entry into the Register of Heritage Places' on Heritage Council file number 2870.

#### **Old York Hospital**

*Old York Hospital* is a two-storey building constructed, in 1896, to provide improved hospital facilities for the township of York and the surrounding district. The site also comprises a number of other buildings including: former Morgue, former Laundry (1942), former Nurses' Quarters (1925), and

---

<sup>1</sup> Pitt Morison, M., *Western Towns and Buildings*, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979) p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Community Recreation Council, 'The Old Hospital - York' (March 1978), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*; 'The Old Hospital', pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with Mr Greg Wallace, of Museum of Western Australia, 15 March 1995.

former Maternity Block (1941).<sup>5</sup> Individually, these other buildings have little significance, but as a group, they demonstrate the history of the place.

In 1851, convicts were brought to York and their labour was used to construct a number of buildings in the town. The first official hospital in York appears to have been accommodated in a building built sometime after the convict depot was established in 1852. It was located slightly to the south of *Old York Hospital*.<sup>6</sup>

Gold was discovered in the Yilgarn, in 1887, and in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, in 1892/3. York, as the most easterly town to the goldfields, developed rapidly as a commercial centre with many men passing through York on their way to the goldfields.

Until hospitals were built at Southern Cross, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the sick men were often transported to the nearest township for medical treatment, and in all the towns of the Avon Valley, new hospitals were urgently needed.<sup>7</sup>

In September 1893, a deputation from York met with the Director of Public Works to discuss several local requirements:

... the first matter he wished to bring under notice ... was that of hospital accommodation. This was the second time he had come to the city on that important question. The people thought the subject of great importance, as the building used for some time past, having not in the first instance been built for a hospital, had not sufficient accommodation, and was every year becoming more unsuitable.<sup>8</sup>

By 1894, the matter of a new hospital for York had not been addressed and, in April, a meeting of York ratepayers resolved:

... [the Government should] take immediate action in carrying out the erection of the long promised hospital, and of appointing a trained nurse to take charge of patients. The Government was strongly commented on for not taking steps towards erecting the hospital, as the accommodation in the existing miserable structure is unfit for human beings.<sup>9</sup>

Action was soon taken, and several plans were drawn up for a new hospital.<sup>10</sup> *Old York Hospital* was designed by George Temple-Poole, Chief Architect in the Public Works Department.

Temple-Poole was an English born and trained architect and engineer who had arrived in Western Australia, in 1885, to take up the position of Superintendent of Public Works. Under various official titles, including Colonial Architect, and Assistant Engineer-in-Chief, he headed the architectural section of the Public Works Department from its infancy to its gold boom heydays in the 1890s. While he did not personally design and detail every building produced by the P. W. D. in this period, the architectural

---

<sup>5</sup> Date of construction of the former Morgue is unknown but probably built in the same year as the hospital, as was the case for hospitals at Beverley and Busselton.

<sup>6</sup> P. W. D. Plan 2104. It also shows the location of the police quarters, medical officers' quarters, cook house and the Residency.

<sup>7</sup> Oldham, R. & J., *George Temple-Poole: Architect of the Golden Years 1885-1897* (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1980), p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> *West Australia* 7 September 1893, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *West Australian* 18 April 1894, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> P. W. D. Plan 1989.

character and building technology that was developed under his supervision owes much to his experience and vision. According to van Bremen, the quality design and construction established under Temple-Poole's direction set the standard for P. W. D. works up to the First World War.<sup>11</sup> Temple-Poole was also responsible for the *Court House* (1896), *Post Office* (1893), *Police Station and Gaol* (1895), located in Avon Terrace, York

The contract for *Old York Hospital* was let on 22 August 1894, to Christie, Tompkinson and Watkins for £2,267/19/6, and was to have been completed by 22 August 1895.<sup>12</sup> There was a delay when the contractors failed to carry out the work required. As a result, the contract had to be taken out of their hands during construction and the contract was completed by C. Mouritzen, the Public Works Department district supervisor.<sup>13</sup>

During construction, the layout of *Old York Hospital* was described as follows:

This is a two-storey building of brick and comprises, on the ground floor, a ward 35 ft x 20 ft, with verandah back and front, and service of nurses/rooms, dispensary and medical officers' room, also kitchen etc. On the upper floor is a ward 47 ft x 20 ft, and service rooms and nurses' sleeping apartments, with balcony back and front, bathroom and necessary latrine accommodation are also attached to each ward.<sup>14</sup>

Following the completion of *Old York Hospital* in early 1896, the Resident Magistrate, Mr Hare, in an address at the opening of the *Court House*, mentioned, '... The hospital, without exception, was the best in the state.'<sup>15</sup> *Old York Hospital* was also illustrated in the 1896-97, *P. W. D. Annual Report* with the caption, 'A Country Town Hospital (at York) to accommodate 20 patients.'

The building functioned as a hospital until the early 1960s, by which time it had become apparent that *Old York Hospital* was inadequate in many ways. In 1961, tenders were called for the construction of a new building. In April 1963, the new hospital was opened at a site on the other side of York; although, until the completion of nurses' quarters at the new hospital, in 1965, nurses continued to use the quarters at the *Old York Hospital*.

In 1963, the Medical Department made *Old York Hospital* available to the Methodist Church, who renamed it 'Mirambeena'. In 1969, the building was sold to the Methodist Camps Trust. *Old York Hospital* continued to be used as a youth centre, until it was sold to the National Trust of Australia (W. A.) in 1976.

On 17 March 1978, *Old York Hospital* was officially opened by the Hon. P. V. Jones MLA, for use by the Youth Community Recreation and National Fitness Council of Western Australia. The Council leased the property from the National Trust to use as one of their field centres.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> van Bremen, I. 'York Court House, Police Station & Lockup. Conservation Plan', (for the National Trust of Australia (WA), September, 1993), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Votes & Proceedings, 1895. *P. W. D. Annual Report* (for the year ending 30 June 1895).

<sup>13</sup> van Bremen, I., 'The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia Government Buildings Under the Direction of G. T. Poole, 1885-1897' (Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Architecture, University of WA, Nedlands, 1990), p. 316.

<sup>14</sup> Votes & Proceedings, 1896, *P. W. D. Annual Report* 1895-96, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> *West Australian* 21 December 1896, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Trust News* No. 93, 19 April 1978, p. 8.

The building has also been leased by the Youth Hostels Association, for a period of time, providing low cost accommodation for tourists visiting York.

Since January 1995, when the Youth Hostels Association vacated the building, *Old York Hospital* has been unoccupied.<sup>17</sup>

### 13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Residency Museum* is a single-storey structure, built as part of a convict depot,<sup>18</sup> in the Victorian Georgian style.<sup>19</sup> It is on the south side of Brook Street, west of Suburban Road. It is set back from the building line and surrounded by a sandy clearing. A paved path leads to car parking on the eastern side of the building.

The building was built as a three roomed residence, with a fireplace in each room, and a central passage. Over the years, additions to the place were made. In 1870, the original building was extended and adapted to a residence.<sup>20</sup>

The building is simple in form, 'L' shaped in plan and constructed of local clay bricks. It features a timber framed, medium-pitched hipped roof, that was originally shingled. Slender timber posts support a spreading verandah that is a low pitched extension of the main roof. The building features simple chimneys, flat arched windows, stone lintels, casement sashes with small panes and a timber-panelled entrance door.

As a maternity hospital, the building accommodated a maternity and labour ward, nurses' bed/sitting room, duty room and in the adjoining structure, a store, kitchen and maid's room. In 1926, a bathroom, toilet and new verandah were added to the northern wall of the central court.<sup>21</sup> In 1952, as matron's quarters, the building underwent renovation.<sup>22</sup>

Since the building's conversion to a museum, the interior fabric of the building has been largely untouched. A glass display case blocks the original entrance and timber louvred shutters have been installed to increase security.

*Residency Museum* was entered into the Register of Heritage Places on an interim basis on 30 June 1995. For a full discussion of the physical evidence of the building see 'Documentation of Places for Entry into the Register of Heritage Places' on Heritage Council file number 2870.

### Old York Hospital

---

<sup>17</sup> The closure and possible sale of the place by the National Trust of Australia (WA) has caused concern in the community as is evidenced by letters that have been written to the Government and heritage agencies. (See HCWA P2869 for copies.)

<sup>18</sup> Wroth & Wilson, *Avon Valley Sketchbook*, (Rigby, Australia, 1977) p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> 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) pp. 42-45.

<sup>20</sup> Conversation with Shirley Lutze, York Society, 9 March 1995.

<sup>21</sup> PWDWA Drawing No. 19200. The additions have since been removed. The date of demolition is unknown.

<sup>22</sup> PWDWA Drawing No. 31554.

*Old York Hospital* is sited on the eastern rise across the Avon River from York town centre on the south side of Brook Street. The building forms an imposing vista at the end of the residential street of Clifford Street. The site is adjacent to the *Residency Museum* which, for a short time, accommodated the hospital's maternity wing and nurses' quarters, and was physically linked to *Old York Hospital* and its outbuildings by a covered way.

*Old York Hospital* is a two-storey structure built in the Federation Arts and Crafts style.<sup>23</sup> The building appears to be more in the style of a grand residence than a Government institution as it exhibits domestic qualities in its scale and use of traditional English vernacular motifs. Wide verandahs and balconies that extend across the front and rear facades set the building in an Australian context.

The steep-pitched roof, covered in sheoak shingles (originally hand-split sheoak),<sup>24</sup> is a dominant and picturesque element of the building. The roof features prominent eaves and exposed rafters; hips and gables and tall chimneys, some of which are backed with dormers. The roof also features dormers and louvred vents.

The roof massing expresses the different functional areas of the building: two large wards, one above the other, offices, and service rooms at one end of the building and bathroom facilities in a service tower at the other. According to van Bremen, 'cottage hospital' design was often English in origin.<sup>25</sup> They were often double-storeyed, the wards and service wings radiated out from a central supervision and administration core. They were the preferred hospital designs for the southern climates.<sup>26</sup> *Old York Hospital* was one of the most notable of 'cottage hospitals'. The first 'cottage hospital' was built at Albany (1887), designed by Temple-Poole in domestic scale and character. It was probably the first entirely new hospital designed by Temple-Poole. A small standard plan was then developed for Busselton (1896) and Beverley (1897). Van Bremen says that the drawings show chimney ventilator flues with vents in the chimney breasts just below ceiling height linked to their own flues in the large chimney stack. According to van Bremen, the design achieved a high standard of ventilation, sanitation and architectural character.<sup>27</sup> They are used in *Old York Hospital*.

The verandah and balcony of *Old York Hospital* wrap around the north-west corner of the building and finish at the service tower. The verandah roof reduces the large scale of the building to domestic. Both verandah and balcony feature slender timber columns that divide the facade into bays. The columns have a decorative infill of slim timber balusters. A frieze of curved timber boarding emphasises the bays of the facade. All windows not protected by the verandah or balcony are shaded with shingled hoods supported on decorative timber brackets. Gable ends feature half timbered and roughcast stucco infill.

---

<sup>23</sup> Apperly, Irving, Reynolds, pp. 140-143.

<sup>24</sup> Oldham, p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> van Bremen, I., 'The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia Government Buildings Under the Direction of G. T. Poole, 1885-1897' p. 317.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid* p. 315.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid* p. 316.



The walls are built of red/orange chequered, coloured clay bricks in flemish bond.<sup>28</sup> Tuck pointed brick voussoirs of the arched opening at the entrance; cut brick window lintels; and the recessed arch on the front facade, all add interest to the walls. The exterior features of the building - roof form; mortar delineated brickwork; arched opening; and decorative stucco window sills, are characteristic of Temple-Poole's work.

The entrance to the building was originally planned for the building's south-east corner but was built on the north-east corner.<sup>29</sup> Entry is via an arched entrance across a coloured clay-tiled floor. The entrance door with sidelight is crowned with a circular accent. The entrance leads directly into an entrance hall that features an interior arch and a staircase with decoratively carved timber balusters and newels. A long strip window with an arched top and stained glass panels, lights the landing and the main hall. The interior retains servery windows and decorative air vents. A boundary fence of brick piers, with pyramidal tops and cast-iron infill, no longer exists.

The site originally contained outbuildings, some of which no longer exist, including the dead house, drying shed and coke shed. In 1924, a mortuary was built on site, probably to replace the dead house.<sup>30</sup> In 1925, a nurses' quarters in a single-storey structure, was built east of *Old York Hospital*.<sup>31</sup> The quarters were later extended in 1927.

In 1935, the roof of *Old York Hospital* was re-shingled.<sup>32</sup> In 1937, a new sterilising room was added to the south-east corner of the building.<sup>33</sup> At some time, a single-storeyed structure with a low-pitched roof was also added to the rear of the building.<sup>34</sup> Drawing PWDWA No. 19200 shows a further extension at the time the building was being converted to nurses' quarters. A bricked-up doorway is the only remaining evidence of this further extension.

The maternity block that was built immediately east of *Old York Hospital* in 1941, was extended in 1952.<sup>35</sup> In 1942, a single-storey brick laundry, was built to the rear of the site.<sup>36</sup>

*Old York Hospital* underwent alterations and additions in the 1950s. In 1952, a timber fire escape stair was added to the rear of the building.<sup>37</sup> In 1953, minor alterations were carried out including the installation of a slow combustion cooker and new pantry. In 1958, a new dining room with steps to the rear yard (not extant) were added to the earlier rear addition. In 1959, further minor additions to the building were carried out.<sup>38</sup>

---

28 van Bremen, p. 316 cites that it was the only time chequered flemish bond was used for an entirely new building during the gold boom years, 1885-1896.

29 Oldham, p. 46.

30 PWDWA Drawing No. 23153.

31 PWDWA Drawing No. 24098.

32 PWDWA Drawing No. 27788.

33 For drawings see PWDWA File No. 678/36.

34 Date of the addition is unknown.

35 PWDWA Drawing No. 29404.

36 PWDWA Drawing No. 31554.

37 PWDWA Drawing No. 33463.

38 For details see PWDWA Drawing No. 19200.

In the late 1950s, two rooms of the office tower were converted into a treatment and x-ray room. In 1960, the conversion from hospital to nurses' quarters did not significantly alter the fabric of the building. Stud walls and partitions (no longer evident) divided the wards into bedrooms. The bathroom and toilets were upgraded and new windows to the service tower were created where previously bricked-up. The office tower was converted to matron's quarters; dining and living areas. Minor alterations to the building fabric were also carried out in the conversion.<sup>39</sup>

In 1975, the National Trust of Australia (WA) upgraded the kitchen. In 1977, *Old York Hospital* was inspected by Architect, John Pidgeon, for the National Trust of Australia (WA) and repairs were subsequently carried out. A cool room was constructed adjacent to the kitchen.<sup>40</sup> Works included: repair to balustrades; repair to timber escape stair; replacement of shingles on the rear roof slope; removal of verandah enclosure on the west side of the building; removal of the boiler house; repainting the exterior; making bathrooms more suitable for dormitory accommodation. Repair was also carried out on the old maternity wing prior to the Youth Hostels Association taking occupation.<sup>41</sup> Abutting the former mortuary is a three-sided shed, which was constructed at the same time.

At the time of writing this assessment, in 1995, the interior is substantially intact, apart from alterations to the surrounds of the fireplaces.

### 13.3 REFERENCES

-----

---

39 *ibid*

40 Conversation with John Pidgeon, 17 March, 1995.

41 *ibid*