



**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)**

- 4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities
- 7.6.5 Incarcerating people
- 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare

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

- 104 Land allocation & surveying
- 102 Rural industry & market gardening
- 403 Law & order
- 404 Community services & utilities
- 408 Institutions

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr) Caversham* is an example of utilitarian architectural design by the Public Works Department of Western Australia in the 1960s, exhibiting some elements reminiscent of the Post War International Style. (Criterion 1.1)

The series of decorative wrought iron security door and window grilles that are located strategically throughout the complex exhibit aesthetic design qualities that are in contrast with the overall utilitarian nature of the site. (Criterion 1.2)

Located on the north-western banks of the Swan River, the setting of *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* including the olive orchard, paddocks and remnant indigenous vegetation located on the southern and eastern areas of the site outside the secure compound, provide a tranquil rural environment with cultural landscape elements that date from the earliest

\*

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

period of settlement of the Swan Valley in the early to mid 19th century. (Criterion 1.3)

## **11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE**

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* has associations with the development and implementation of child welfare practices by the Western Australian Government, particularly in the secure care and treatment of thirteen to eighteen year old male offenders from 1960 to 1997. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* formed part of Swan Locations N and O; one of the earliest 'ribbon' land grants to be issued in the Swan district (later the City of Swan). Under the ownership of the prominent Hamersley family, the property became known as 'Pyrton' and is representative of large agricultural landholdings that once made up this locality. (Criteria 2.2)

From c. 1837 up to the c. 1940s, *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* as the 'Pyrton' property, was owned by Edward Hamersley and his descendants. Members of the Hamersley family, including Edward Senior, were prominent businessmen and civic leaders in the Swan and Avon regions. (Criterion 2.3)

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* has associations with the male offenders and staff from the time of its operation as a secure facility for teenagers from 1960 to 1997 and for vulnerable adults from 1998 to c. 2001; one of these juvenile offenders was the future lead singer of AC/DC, Bon Scott (1946-80). (Criterion 2.3)

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

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* site has the potential to yield through archaeological investigation, important information concerning changes to domestic material culture over a long period of time from c. 1850s to 1958; information concerning farmstead activities and technology associated with early colonial settlement of the Swan River through to the 1950s. (Criterion 3.2)

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

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* has associations with those people who, as children, spent time at the institution, and for the staff who worked and lived there. It also has value to the wider community for its role in child welfare services in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

The cabin/ cell accommodation at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is a rare extant example of this form of accommodation used for juveniles in the late 20th century.

As they no longer meet the current standards required to accommodate prisoners, the cells at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham*

demonstrate a function no longer practised in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.2).

## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The buildings that comprise *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* are representative examples of the work of the Public Works Department of WA in the 1960s that exhibit some elements of the Post War International Style, commonly used for public buildings at the time. (Criterion 6.1)

The place retains evidence of prison design from the time of its construction, and as such is representative of the philosophy of incarceration from the time. In particular the varying design of the cells and their furniture to restrict the control the occupant has over their environment reflects how cells were used as a deterrent and/or punishment. The cells also retain evidence of design that was intended to reduce opportunities for ligature strangulation. (Criterion 6.1)

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is representative of the various institutions established as part of the development and implementation of child welfare practices in Western Australia, in particular with those associated with the Western Australian Government in the 20th century. (Criteria 6.1 & 6.2)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

The buildings that comprise *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* are in fair to good condition. There is minor damage resulting from use of the place for defence training. In 2010, the asbestos lined roofs to the Detention Centre were replaced with pre-painted corrugated galvanised steel as part of a general refurbishment program.

In 2015, the former administrative offices for the Community Work Management Unit are in fair to good condition having undergone general refurbishment in 2010. Olive trees in the former orchard were not inspected in 2015.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

In 2015, *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is vacant. However, the conversion of the place in 2010 for use as a Community Work Management Unit is an indication of the high integrity of the place. During this time the former residences were used as administrative headquarters.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* remains substantially as constructed in the periods 1960 and 1969/70 with subsequent accommodation upgrades, as such it has high authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Kris Bizzaca, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Rosemary Rosario, Architectural Heritage Consultant and Gaye Nayton, Archaeologist, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

##### **Pyrton (c. 1850s)**

The founding of the Swan River Colony in 1829<sup>1</sup> coincided with a wave of British emigration which had been stimulated by a number of factors including the ending of the Napoleonic wars and agricultural recession in England.<sup>2</sup> Those first European settlers to Western Australia have been described as 'highly respectable and independent persons'; that is, people with the money to bring out property, equipment and labourers, which, under the new Colony's land regulations, would allow them to obtain land to that value.<sup>3</sup>

The land grant system resulted in the subdivision of land along the banks of the Swan River, which was the most effective and practical means of transportation in the Colony in this period. The majority of grants were 'ribbon' shaped, long narrow subdivisions with frontages to the Swan River and Helena River thus providing the best of the alluvial soils and access to the communication route.<sup>4</sup> One of the conditions on receipt of a land grant was to ensure that this land was put into productive use. This meant that the early settlers were given only 'occupational rights to their grants' with ownership not being transferred until the land had been improved by clearing, fencing, cultivation, etc. Grantees were given a period of ten years to undertake this before the land would be resumed by the government.<sup>5</sup>

By late 1830, those caught up in the 'Swan River Mania' totalled 2,000 men, women and children.<sup>6</sup> However, soon after the significant influx of settlers from 1829 to the early 1830s it was realised that, despite high hopes, the Colony was floundering.<sup>7</sup> Preliminary reports on the great potential for agriculture in Western Australia had not looked at the problems associated with the wide coastal plain nor the limited alluvial soils on the riverbanks.<sup>8</sup>

Other issues that impacted on these early years were the difficulties associated with using British farming and cultivation techniques in Western

---

<sup>1</sup> Crowley, F. K. & de Garis, B. (eds.), *A Short History of Western Australia*, MacMillan of Australia, Melbourne, Second Edition, 1969, pp. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> Bolton, G. C., 'The Idea of a Colonial Gentry', in *Historical Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 51, October 1968, pp. 318-25.

<sup>3</sup> Crowley, F. K., *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970, pp. 5-6, 25; Statham, P., 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', in Stannage, C. T., *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1981, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Pitt Morison, M., 'Settlement & Development – The Historical Context', in Pitt Morison, M. & White, J. (eds), *Western Towns and Buildings*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979, pp. 6 & 16; Hasluck, P., 'Guildford and the Swan', in RWAHS, *Early Days*, Vol 1.2, 1928, pp. 2-3; Statham, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> Statham, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> Statham, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Statham, op. cit., pp. 181-89; Cameron, J. M. R., 'Patterns in the land, 1829-1850', in Gentilli, J., (ed), *Western Landscapes*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979, pp. 203-07.

<sup>8</sup> Burvill, G. H., *Agriculture in Western Australia 1829-1979*, UWA Press, 1979, p. 1.

Australian conditions and a general lack of resources including skilled labour and unsuitable agricultural equipment.<sup>9</sup>

The land upon which *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is located was originally part of Swan Locations N and O; one of the earliest land holdings to be issued in the Swan district (later the City of Swan). In 1829/1830, the approximately 2,500 acres in Guildford, which had frontage to the Swan River, were assigned to G. W. Mangles. It was transferred to C. D. Ridley in May 1830 and then to Edward Hamersley c. 1837. It was during Hamersley's ownership that the land was developed and named 'Pyrton'.<sup>10</sup>

Born on 25 March 1810, Edward Hamersley arrived in the Swan River Colony aboard the *Shepherd* with his family in 1837. The Hamersleys settled at the Swan district at Pyrton and 'Lockridge' (also spelt Lockeridge; Swan Location P) and also established agricultural properties at Toodyay, York and Williams. Their landholdings in the colony were large and later included leases at Irwin and Greenough and town lots in Perth and Fremantle.<sup>11</sup> In addition to his business interests, Hamersley was prominent in the community being MLC for the Eastern districts in Swan (1857-65) and an active, early member of the Swan Districts Agricultural Society, Guildford Board of Education and WA Turf Club.<sup>12</sup>

In 1843 Edward Hamersley travelled to France to live. He returned to his Guildford properties in 1850 after which he established a vineyard at Pyrton.<sup>13</sup> Newspaper reports of the maiden voyage of the *Pioneer* steamboat from Perth to Guildford in January 1857 indicate that there was a residence at Pyrton at this time. The voyage was a significant occasion in the colony and, following lunch at the Stirling Arms in Guildford, newspapers state that twenty passengers landed at Pyrton for refreshments at Mr Hamersley's house before returning to Perth.<sup>14</sup> Development of Pyrton following Hamersley's return in the 1850s is also suggested by his hiring of 26 ticket-of-leave men over the period from 1856 to 1873 at Guildford.<sup>15</sup>

The property remained in the ownership of the Hamersley family up to at least the early part of the 20th century. The years 1900 to 1920 saw the subdivision of the original grants such as Caversham, Sandalford, Henley Park, Oakover, Herne Hill and Pyrton into smaller farms; and viticulture dominated industry in the Swan Valley.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Cameron, op. cit., pp. 203-07.

<sup>10</sup> Bourke, M., *On the Swan: a history of the Swan District of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1987, Appendix B.

<sup>11</sup> Bourke, op. cit., Appendix B; Hamersley Family Papers, Battye Library, MN 150, Acc. 971A, 1286A & 6491A; Battye, J. S., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 2, 1913 (Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, 1985), p. 485; Erickson, R. (ed), *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians Pre 1829-1888*, UWA Press, Vol. 2, D – J, 1988, p. 1330.

<sup>12</sup> Bourke, op. cit., pp. 196-97, 206 & 222; Erickson, op. cit., p. 1330. His son Edward Jnr was also a prominent businessman and politician and his daughter Margaret married John Forrest. (Battye, Vol. 2, 1913, op. cit., pp. 309-485.)

<sup>13</sup> Bourke, op. cit., pp. 160 & 210; Battye, Vol. 2, 1913, op. cit., p. 485. While absent, Pyrton was leased by Richard Betts. It is not yet known how long this lease was for. (Lease dated 25/2/1843, in Hamersley Family Papers, Battye Library, Acc. 6491A/31.)

<sup>14</sup> *The Inquirer*, 21/1/1857 & *Perth Gazette*, 23/1/1857, cited in Bourke, op. cit., pp. 193-94.

<sup>15</sup> Erickson, op. cit., p. 1330.

<sup>16</sup> Bourke, op. cit., pp. 283-92.

By the 1940s, Swan Locations N and O had been subdivided. Although the Hamersley family did retain ownership of some of the property, the Pyrton house itself was sold off as part of a lot comprising 11 acres to market gardener Raffaele Masolini.<sup>17</sup> Masolini lived at the place harvesting and pressing the fruit from the mature olive trees remaining there. At some stage prior to 1956 Masolini converted the main residence and portion of an outbuilding into flats; renting out the rooms for additional income.<sup>18</sup>

The State Government of WA acquired Masolini's property for the purposes of a reformatory for boys in February 1957.<sup>19</sup> Records prior to the construction of *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* provide a description of the place as follows: a large, gable rectangular residence of brick construction with timber floors and a verandah running the length of the southern elevation; a brick and timber wash house and garage to the north-east of the main building; and, a brick and iron structure to the north-west divided into a flat and an olive press area. Other features on the site included remnant gardens such as olive and orange trees, an oak tree, fencing and a rubbish tip.<sup>20</sup>

The Pyrton buildings were demolished in 1958/59. Correspondence at the time mentions plans to reuse some of the brick and timber materials at Caversham and at the boys' farm at Stoneville (also known as *Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)*). The diamond-paned doors from the main house were set aside at the request of the Hamersley family as 'a keep-sake of the original home of the family in Western Australia'.<sup>21</sup> Initially it was proposed to also retain many of the olive trees as well as the large oak tree through the placement of the new buildings on the site; however, this was later changed and the trees removed.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham (1960)***

In 19th century Western Australia, concern for the welfare of children was left primarily to religious bodies with minimal government intervention.<sup>23</sup> The care of orphaned, disadvantaged and delinquent children was formally established

<sup>17</sup> Various correspondence in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA.

<sup>18</sup> Various correspondence in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA.

<sup>19</sup> Certificate of Title, Vol. 1115, Fol. 264 & other correspondence in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA.

<sup>20</sup> Variation dated 17/9/1956, in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA; Caversham, Boys Reformatory School Site, n.d. [c. 1957/58], located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>21</sup> Quotation & other information in the paragraph from Letter dated 7/3/1958, Homes & Institutions, Caversham – Riverbank, Child Welfare Reformatory – erection, Cons. 1562, Item 1955/1250, SROWA.

<sup>22</sup> Various correspondence between The Tree Society, Minister for Works and the Child Welfare Department in Homes & Institutions, Caversham – Riverbank, Child Welfare Reformatory – erection, Cons. 1562, Item 1955/1250, SROWA.

<sup>23</sup> 'History of the Department for Community Welfare' in Community Welfare Department Annual Report, 1979, pp. 8-9, cited in Heritage & Conservation Professionals, 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', prepared for CAMS (now DHW) on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, June 2001, p. 9.

under the auspices of the *Industrial Schools Act of 1874*.<sup>24</sup> The 'Industrial Schools' themselves were essentially reformatories for delinquent children, and came under the jurisdiction of and were subsidised by the Public Charities Department.<sup>25</sup>

With the growth of Western Australia as a result of the discovery of gold, the government became more involved in the provision of welfare services. In 1894 the first fully funded and controlled 'Receiving Depot' was established in Claisebrook for the reception of all classes of children.<sup>26</sup> A purpose-built Receiving Depot/Industrial School was opened at Subiaco in 1897 (now *King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women*)<sup>27</sup> and from 1907 was administered by the State Children's Department.<sup>28</sup> New premises (*Walcott Centre*) were later opened in 1921 in Mount Lawley for the care and treatment of orphans and other wards of the State as well as delinquent or uncontrollable children.<sup>29</sup>

Children's welfare went largely unchanged for many years. *Walcott Centre* remained the only government-run facility up to the 1950s with the subsidised orphanages and industrial schools/farms operated by various religious bodies providing the bulk of the services.<sup>30</sup> In the 1950s, the Director of Child Welfare in New South Wales, Mr R. H. Hicks, was appointed to investigate child welfare in Western Australia. His recommendations saw the government approach the Anglican Homes Board to take over the care of delinquent children, who had been sentenced by the Children's Court.<sup>31</sup>

The Anglican Church's Padbury Boys' Farm in Stoneville<sup>32</sup> was reopened c. 1955 as the Anglican Boys' Farm. The farm was to serve as a reformatory for all delinquent boys until such time that accommodation for 'senior' boys could be established.<sup>33</sup> Political pressure due to delays in government-funded upgrades and infrastructure resulted in its decision to construct new buildings at Stoneville from 1964 and to erect a reformatory for older boys (thirteen to

- 
- <sup>24</sup> *Signposts: A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920*, prepared by the Department for Community Development, n.d. [c. 2004], pp. 24-26; Battye, Vol. 1, 1912, op. cit., p. 505.
- <sup>25</sup> 'History of the Department for Community Welfare', op. cit., pp. 8-9, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Public Charities Department Annual Report, 1907, in *Votes & Proceedings (V&P)*, 1908-09, Vol. 1, p. 13; State Children Department Annual Report, 1913, in *V&P*, 1913, Vol. 2, p. 8; 'History of the Department for Community Welfare', op. cit., p. 11, all cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 9. Reference to Claisebrook Receiving Depot from Chinnery, R. & Griffiths, P., 'King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women', HCWA assessment documentation, 2002, p. 4.
- <sup>27</sup> Chinnery & Griffiths, 'King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women', op. cit., pp. 4-8; HCWA Online Database No: 2438.
- <sup>28</sup> This Department was known variously as the Child Welfare Department (1927-72), Community Welfare Department (1972-85), Community Services (1985-93), Community Development (1993-95) and Family & Children's Services (2000).
- <sup>29</sup> All information in paragraph from various sources cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., pp. 9-11; see also HCWA Online Database No: 15731.
- <sup>30</sup> Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17.
- <sup>31</sup> Taylor, R. & Kevin Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', HCWA assessment documentation, 1999, pp. 9-10.
- <sup>32</sup> The Padbury Boys' Farm operated for orphans and disadvantaged boys from 1946 to c. 1955. (Taylor & Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', op. cit., p. 1.)
- <sup>33</sup> Taylor & Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', op. cit., p. 10.

eighteen year olds) at the former Pyrton property in 1960;<sup>34</sup> the Child Welfare Department had acquired this place earlier in 1957.<sup>35</sup>

In 1958 the Child Welfare Department reported that

... money was set aside to commence the building of a closed reformatory at Caversham, where 11 acres of ground have been purchased. This building will be the first in Australia deliberately planned from the outset as a maximum security reformatory for boys. The Public Works Department, Architectural Division, in consultation with the Child Welfare Department officers, have planned a building which, while giving maximum security, should provide a wide variety of occupational interests and the ancillary services necessary to undertake the care and reformation of the less tractable delinquent boys.

The purpose of this institution is not merely to protect the public by the secure incarceration of the inmates, but so to treat those inmates that their anti-social attitudes are changed and they learn to accept their proper law-abiding role in the community.

There are two dangers to be avoided in the administration of such an institution. The first is that public pressure may tend to make it a place of committal for the more spectacular offenders, e.g., for car thieves only. Secondly, public pressure may wish to reserve it for absconders from other institutions. Neither of these pressures should be allowed to obscure the essential point that the purpose of the building and its staff is to reform boys, not merely to imprison them.<sup>36</sup>

Records of the early planning of what became *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* reveal further details about the purpose behind the place:

To provide for short periods (approximately 6 months) a style of life for extremely difficult delinquent boys such that:

- (a) They will not wish to return to it.
- (b) They will be more amenable to the freer and more permissive re-education to be provided at Stoneville.
- (c) Escape is obviously impossible.<sup>37</sup>

Some of the ways in which this was to be achieved were as follows:

- (a) Boys are to be kept continuously occupied in working hours in set tasks [e.g. metal and wood work] or in supervised recreation.
- (b) Boys are to be always kept aware of the pressure of work, of the supervision of recreation, and the discipline of every activity. The 'pace' of work is to be that of a closed reformatory, rather than that of a school manual training room.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 10; see also Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Certificate of Title, Vol. 1115, Fol. 264 & other correspondence in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA. The decision to locate a reformatory for senior boys at Pyrton was made by the government because of its close proximity to *Swanleigh Precinct*. The Child Welfare Department initially made arrangements to acquire property closer to this institution in Midland Junction; however, this fell through and attention was focused on the river front property of Pyrton. (Various correspondence in Caversham, Riverbank Child Welfare Reformatory Site, Cons. 6706, Item 1995-20568-O1RO, SROWA.)

<sup>36</sup> Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1958, cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 437.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated 13/1/1958, in Riverbank Centre (Caversham), Training of Field Staff, Child Welfare Department, Cons. 1668, Item 1957/2048, SROWA.



- (c) Staff must be prepared to organise every activity (occupational tasks, recreation and routine movements) and to carry out that organisation into action so that the purposes of the institution are achieved.<sup>38</sup>

The reformatory was planned as a 'hollow square' with limited external access so that the building could be fully secured. Accommodation was to be provided for 30 boys in single cabins/cells, which could be individually locked at night.<sup>39</sup> A staff of 21 people was also to be employed at the place including a superintendent and matron as well as up to eight tradesmen/teachers that were to come under the supervision of the Education Department.<sup>40</sup>

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* was officially opened by the Hon L. A. Logan MLC, Minister for Child Welfare, on 12 May 1960.<sup>41</sup> Costing approximately £195,000,<sup>42</sup> the buildings took the form of a large quadrangle with a central court yard and enclosed space/grounds to the east of the main building, and quarters for the superintendent and for other staff to the west.<sup>43</sup> The primary entrance to the place was at the north-western corner where staff offices and the interview rooms were also located. The sick room, individual boys' cabins and open ablution and changing block comprised the northern wing; the recreation hall, a classroom and the chapel the western; rooms for boot repair and leather work, metal work and wood work the southern; and, the kitchen, dining, storage and service areas were in the eastern section.<sup>44</sup> Over the next few years the grounds outside of the main building were landscaped, and a new store room, an arts and crafts building (also referred to as a gymnasium; now demolished) and swimming pool were added to the external courtyard.<sup>45</sup>

By the end of 1960 four boys had been admitted to *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* and in 1961, 61 were committed with 43 of these eventually being discharged.<sup>46</sup> As indicated above, the boys' life at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* was strictly regimented and supervised from the time they woke up at 6am to lights out at about 9-10pm. They woke, cleaned their rooms, washed, had breakfast, worked, trained and had classes; stopping only for lunch and dinner, before showering again, and then preparing for bed. The regime varied on the weekends with Sundays

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Information in square brackets inserted by the consultant.

<sup>39</sup> Letter 12/11/1957, in *Riverbank Centre (Caversham), Training of Field Staff*, Child Welfare Department, Cons. 1668, Item 1957/2048, SROWA.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid & other correspondence in *Riverbank Centre (Caversham), Training of Field Staff*, Child Welfare Department, Cons. 1668, Item 1957/2048, SROWA.

<sup>41</sup> Information from *Homes & Institutions, Caversham – Riverbank, Child Welfare Reformatory – erection*, Cons. 1562, Item 1955/1250, SROWA.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> *Caversham Boys' Reformatory, Block Plan & Road Sections*, Drwg No. 1, 30/6/1958, located at DHW E-Plans. Note: Details for all aspects of the original 1957-1959 planning of *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr)* in terms floor plans, elevations, layout, security, services, etc are located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>44</sup> *Caversham Boys' Reformatory, Ground Plan*, Drwg No. 3, 18/6/1958, located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>45</sup> *Caversham Boys' Reformatory, News Gardeners Store, Office, Toilet, Garbage Room & Platform*, Drwg No. 41, 3/2/1960; *Caversham Reformatory, Landscape Scheme Plan*, Drwg No. L1, January 1961; *Riverbank, New Swimming Pool*, September 1961, all plans located at DHW E-Plans. It is not known when the arts and crafts building/gymnasium was built; however, it appears on plans as existing by 1969. (See *Riverbank Boys' Reformatory, Proposed New Additions – Sewerage & Drainage Layout*, Sheet No. P1, January 1969, located at DHW E-Plans.)

<sup>46</sup> Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 438.

designated for chapel and visitors.<sup>47</sup> Annual reports indicate that there was a conscious attempt to provide social and recreational opportunities for the boys given their isolation and in part for them to learn socially acceptable behaviour and suitable work habits as was the case for other young people in the community.<sup>48</sup>

Not much is known about the male offenders and staff associated with *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* from the time of its operation as a secure facility for teenagers from 1960 up to its closure in 1997. One well-known exception to this is the famous lead singer of AC/DC, Bon Scott (1946-80), who in 1963, prior to becoming a singer, served nine months at the place for various charges including giving a false name and address to police and stealing 12 gallons of petrol.<sup>49</sup> The cold and hard experience there, is said to have had a major impact on the singer; not only giving him the determination to not act criminally once released, but to 'take seriously the idea of getting into a band'.<sup>50</sup>

During the 1960s, the average number of boys at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* was 32-33 per year with anywhere between 40 to 80 children in after-care supervision.<sup>51</sup> Increasing numbers meant a need for further accommodation. In 1969/1970 plans went ahead for the construction of ten new cabins and a meeting room for boys at the eastern end of the northern wing, a second classroom to the rear of the chapel, and additions to the store room in the external court yard for use as hobby rooms'.<sup>52</sup>

In this same period, developments in the treatment of juvenile offenders continued with the establishment of Longmore Remand and Assessment Centre in Bentley in 1965<sup>53</sup> and 'Fourteen' in Francis Street, Perth in 1968, which was described as being a half-way house for boys leaving *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr)*.<sup>54</sup> Like the additional accommodation provided at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* these projects were largely in response to increased demand on the secure accommodation and the subsequent need to lower the amount of time spent at the place and develop community-based training programs.<sup>55</sup>

By the early 1970s, over 200 boys were being sentenced to the reformatory each year with trends showing growing numbers of younger boys (the

- 
- 47 Letters 12/11/1957 & 18/2/1958, in Riverbank Centre (Caversham), Training of Field Staff, Child Welfare Department, Cons. 1668, Item 1957/2048, SROWA
- 48 Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 438-39.
- 49 *The West Australian*, 13/1/1963; Walker, C., *Highway to Hell: The Life & Death of AC/DC Legend Bon Scott*, Picador Edition 2002 (First Published 1994), pp. 26-29.
- 50 Quotation & other Information from Walker, op. cit., p. 29.
- 51 Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 438-39.
- 52 Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 438; see also Riverbank Boys' Reformatory, Additions – New Cabins, Drwg No. 2, 17/2/1969; Riverbank Boys' Reformatory, Additions – New Classroom, Drwg No. 3, 17/2/1969; Riverbank Boys' Reformatory, Additions – New Hobby Rooms & Stores, Sheet No. 5, 10/4/1969, all plans located at DHW E-Plans.
- 53 Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17; *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 291-92. Longmore is still in operation.
- 54 *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 212-14. 'Fourteen' closed in 1979 and in 1980 was replaced by the detention centre's Victoria Park annexe, which provided for a community-based training program for boys. It is not known when this ceased operation. (*Signposts*, op. cit., p. 212-14; 530.)
- 55 Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 439-41.

average age was 15 ½ years) and Aboriginal boys being admitted. In 1974, two Indigenous staff members were appointed to *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham*. The need for this expertise is evident by the percentage of Aboriginal children in the population, which increased from 14.75% in 1975 to 50% in 1976, with a high rate of re-admissions.<sup>56</sup>

Alterations were carried out to *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* in 1978/1979. These included the creation of a new deputy superintendent's office in the administration section, additions to the night office incorporating an observation post to the court yard in the northern wing, the conversion of the pan room into a laundry for the boys, a new kitchen, air-conditioning, and upgrades to the cabins/cells.<sup>57</sup> Toilets, basins and a writing table were provided to each cabin and the existing timber floor was replaced with concrete with a vinyl covering.<sup>58</sup>

A 1978 block plan of the place shows that a prisoner's entrance (sally port) had been constructed to the north of the 1969/70 additions, adjoining the secured external courtyard.<sup>59</sup> It is thought that this may have been constructed during the 1978/79 works.

Annual reports of the Community Welfare (originally Child Welfare) Department continued to report on the pressure on *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* and the major impact this had on its rehabilitative programs, in particular its community-based activities:

The trend in boys receiving recommendations by the Courts for specified periods in maximum security has continued and intensified... [with] five boys being held on indefinite sentences and a further 25... the subject of court recommendations. In effect this meant Riverbank was operating with only 13 constraint free beds to provide for progressive, rehabilitative programmes. This situation and a constant capacity population... has continued to curtail outward bound activities and interaction between the boys and staff outside the confines of a maximum security setting.<sup>60</sup>

The rising number of sentences and extension of length of stays were the main reasons for the problems at the centre. Occupancy levels were assisted by changes to government policy in 1984/1985 that saw the 'remission of sentence for good behaviour and restriction of detention to the Court'.<sup>61</sup>

At the same time however, a significant percentage of the boys at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* were held without remission or other

<sup>56</sup> Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 441-42.

<sup>57</sup> Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, New Deputy Superintendent's Office & additions to Existing Night Office, Drwg No. 1, July 1977; Department of Community Welfare – Riverbank, Conversion of Existing Pan Room to New Laundry, Drwg No. A1, November 1977; Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, Proposed Kitchen Upgrade, September 1977; Department for Community Welfare, Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, 1977 Upgrading of Cabins 1 – 33, October 1977; Department for Community Welfare, Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, Dining Area – Evaporative Cooling, 19/5/1977; Department for Community Welfare, Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, Cabin Block – Air-conditioning, 28/9/1979, all plans located at DHW E-Plans; Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 442.

<sup>58</sup> Department for Community Welfare, Riverbank Boys Treatment Center [sic] – Caversham, 1977 Upgrading of Cabins 1 – 33, October 1977, located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Community Welfare Department Annual Report, 1980, cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 443.

<sup>61</sup> Community Welfare Department Annual Report, 1985, cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 444.

opportunities. This caused disturbances within the population and led to the appointment of more staff and a review of its programs.<sup>62</sup> In the late 1980s and early 1990s, electricity was renewed, equipment at the workshops improved and power provided to each cabin/cell to allow access to privileges for good behaviour.<sup>63</sup>

Security at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* was improved at various times over the years including in the early 1990s. This incorporated the erection of an enclosed yard for visits adjoining the outside of the recreational hall.<sup>64</sup>

In 1993 the Department of Justice was made responsible for corrective services including the care and treatment of juvenile offenders.<sup>65</sup>

Investigations and complaints about the standard of accommodation and subsequent difficulties in the provision of services at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* started soon after its opening in 1960.<sup>66</sup> The ongoing issue was finally resolved with the allocation of funds in the 1990s for a secure facility that reflected up-to-date policy and programs for male and female offenders aged ten to eighteen years. Banksia Hill Detention Centre opened in Canning Vale in late 1997 and replaced the one at Riverbank.<sup>67</sup>

Due to overcrowding, from 1998 to c. 2001 *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* was used as a prison for vulnerable male adults.<sup>68</sup> As part of this process, a program of works was undertaken including alterations and additions to the administration and medical section, upgrade of security and posts, modernisation of cells (such as new fixings, privacy screens and some bunk beds), upgrade of the ablutions block, and the arts and crafts building was demolished.<sup>69</sup>

In 2010 the place reopened as a Community Work Management Unit, following a program of refurbishment carried out by adult offenders on work orders. Refurbishment works included upgrades to the former administration and cell block areas, and the construction of mechanical workshops. The facility provided adult and young offenders rehabilitation programs to develop new skills and gain vocational accreditations. Programs included carpentry

---

<sup>62</sup> Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 444-45.

<sup>63</sup> Information from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports cited in *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 445-46; Department of Community Services, Riverbank Training Centre, Upgrading Workshops – Metal Workshop, 1/5/1990; Department of Community Services, Riverbank Training Centre, Upgrading Workshops – Woodwork Shop, 1/5/1990; Department of Community Services, Riverbank Training Centre, Upgrading Workshops – Auto Repair Shop & Site Plan, 1/5/1990, all plans located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>64</sup> Riverbank Training Centre, Security Upgrade Plan and Details, 1993, located at DHW E-Plans.

<sup>65</sup> Site Visit with Sean Pearse, Ministry for Justice, 19/7/2007.

<sup>66</sup> Site Visit with Sean Pearse, Ministry for Justice, 19/7/2007.

<sup>67</sup> Site Visit with Sean Pearse, Ministry for Justice, 19/7/2007; [www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/B/banksiahill.aspx?uid=2023-0909-2872-2097](http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/B/banksiahill.aspx?uid=2023-0909-2872-2097), 2/12/2007; [www.lfl.asn.au/history.html](http://www.lfl.asn.au/history.html), 12/12/2007. It appears that funding was the main reason behind delays in the replacement of *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr)* as well as the relatively newness of the facility.

<sup>68</sup> Site Visit with Sean Pearse, Ministry for Justice, 19/7/2007.

<sup>69</sup> Riverbank Detention Centre, Administration/Medical Floor Plans, June 1998; Riverbank Detention Centre, Room Layouts & Details, June 1998; Riverbank Detention Centre, Cell Layouts, June 1998; Riverbank Detention Centre, Accommodation/Staff/Ablution Floor Plans, June 1998; Riverbank Detention Centre, Visitors Centre, June 1998, all plans located at DHW E-Plans.

and auto repair workshops, traineeships in commercial laundry; catering and kitchenhand programs, and arts and crafts workshops. During this time, the former residences at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* were used as the administrative headquarters.<sup>70</sup>

In 2015, the future use of the place is currently the subject of discussion by government, and includes possible tourism and recreational opportunities. The cost of demolishing the buildings is considered prohibitive.<sup>71</sup>

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is a former youth detention facility comprising a secure walled compound with a single storey masonry, concrete building, exhibiting some elements of the Post War International Style, designed as a quadrangle around an inner courtyard; an open recreation area with a vehicle workshop and a swimming pool, located to the rear of the quadrangle and within the perimeter walls of the compound; and three former residences comprising one detached house and one duplex, in the vernacular style typical of the 1960s and 70s, located on the western side of the site outside the secure compound. The southern portion of the site contains remnants of an orchard of mature olive trees, and an area of open paddocks. The place is located on the north-western bank of the Swan River at the entry to the Swan Valley, on the site of the Hamersley family's original early 19th century landholding known as 'Pyrton'. No buildings or structures associated with the former use of the place remain extant.

Access to *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is from Hamersley Road that runs east from the West Swan Road immediately north of Barkers Bridge on the outskirts of Guildford. *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is located approximately 1.5 kms north-west of the Midland town centre, 1.5 kms north-east of Guildford and approximately 19kms north-east of Perth.

The *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* site is a rectangular area of land comprising approximately 4.75 hectares, with a frontage of 150m and a side boundary of 309.24m. The western site boundary fronts Hamersley Road and the eastern boundary is defined by the shores of the Swan River. The northern half of the site contains the compound of buildings that comprise *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham*. The developed area of land is approximately level and is about 5m above the river floodplain. There is a steep bank to the lower portion of the site on the southern and eastern sides of the walled compound. To the east the site comprises indigenous shrubs and trees extending down the banks to the river. To the south the site comprises open paddocks and, the south-western portion comprises the remnants of an orchard of mature olives originally planted in the 19th century.

There are no extant structures on the southern or eastern sides of the walled compound. There are brick remnants of a former boiler house associated with the post 1960s development, in an area to the south outside the perimeter.

---

<sup>70</sup> The Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australian Division. Media Release, 11 May 2010, *Riverbank celebrates 50 years with refurbishment and re-focus*, accessed online <http://www.wa.liberal.org.au/article/riverbank-celebrates-50-years-refurbishment-and-re-focus>.

<sup>71</sup> Meeting onsite with Department of Corrective Services & Landcorp, 12/11/2015.

There is a grassed pathway around the southern and eastern perimeter of the brick walls of the secure compound. A cyclone mesh fence has been erected along the southern side, to about half-way along the exterior wall of the compound. There is a cyclone mesh gate at the end that leads to the river. The fence framing comprises tubular steel posts, approximately 2.4m high with several rows of barbed wire at the top.

The secure compound comprises approximately two thirds of the developed area of the site and is located approximately 100m back from the Hamersley Road boundary. The western boundary has a 1.8m high cyclone mesh fence on tubular steel posts with a pair of cyclone mesh gates to the driveway located near the northern boundary. The western portion of the site is quite densely wooded, concealing the detention centre compound from view. A bitumen sealed, tree lined driveway runs from the gates to the compound, past the former residential accommodation located to the south, and facing the driveway. This comprises a single house and a duplex. The single house is closest to the gate and is a modest brick and tile single storey dwelling. The house has a domestic garden that is overgrown, but features a row of mature olive trees on the western side. The house is vacant in 2015 and is in fair condition.

The duplex is located to the east of the house and is set back from the entrance drive behind a row of parking spaces. The duplex is of brick and tile construction with a hipped roof extending over the entry porch. The duplex is in a former domestic garden that is in a similar state to the garden surrounding the house. Both the house and the duplex are contemporary with the detention centre. The duplex was vacant in 2015.

The secure compound comprises the remainder of the developed northern portion of the site.

A cyclone mesh fence supported on tubular steel posts extends across the front of the secure compound with a pair of cyclone mesh entry gates at the northern end, across the main driveway. Inside the secure compound there are a series of fenced areas, in front of the main detention centre building, that lead around to the southern side of the building to the path to the back of the compound. The main fenced area in front of the detention centre is the former visitors' area and contains several steel framed acrylic table and chair modules with pitched roofs over the top, constructed c1990s. The fenced areas are grassed with remnant indigenous trees providing shade.

The main building is constructed as a quadrangle with an open grassed courtyard in the centre. On the eastern side of the quadrangle a brick boundary wall approximately 8m high, enclosing a grass recreation area with a vehicle workshop and recreation facilities. The main driveway continues down the northern side of the building and into the sally port (developed in the 1970s) located at the eastern end. Offenders that arrived at the sally port by vehicle were transferred from there into the holding area located centrally in the residential part of the complex. The sally port comprises brick arched openings on the eastern and western sides with space for parking a vehicle in between. The opening on the eastern side leads into the walled recreation area behind the main building.

The walled enclosure behind the main building comprises a grassed recreation area on the northern side and an auto repair workshop on the southern side. The rear wall is aligned at an angle reflecting the line of the river bank, however the river nearby is completely obscured from view. There is a disused concrete lined swimming pool on the eastern side of the vehicle workshop and a cricket pitch with nets for practice near the eastern wall of the detention centre building. The vehicle workshop is a face brick structure with a low pitched fibrous cement clad roof. It comprises a series of garages with roller shutter doors and metal grilles that face north onto the open area. There is an arched opening with a metal grille gate from the recreation area to the inner grassed courtyard of the detention centre quadrangle.

The main building at the *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* is a single storey structure with face brick and rendered brick external walls, concrete floor slab and a concrete ceiling slab with fibrous cement roof cladding over the top. The building plan is designed with an inner courtyard featuring a concrete framed verandah with high brick parapet walls around the four sides of the courtyard, concealing the roof and preventing escape. All the rooms or areas of the building open onto the wide verandas around the central quadrangle.

The entrance to the centre is on the north-western corner of the main building and leads to the administrative area. The northern wing comprises residential accommodation made up of cabins or cells opening off a central corridor, ablution facilities and a former medical area at the western end of the cabin or cell block. The southern wing comprises workshops. The eastern wing comprises the laundry, kitchen and dining room; and the western, or front, wing contains classrooms, the former chapel and the gymnasium, located next to the administration area.

The front (western) wall, near the entry, is rendered brick with an abstract metal wall sculpture featuring a bird, fixed to the wall. The other external walls are a combination of face brick to the lower section of the wall and rendered brick above. The gymnasium is prominent structure on the western end of the complex, due to its scale, and is of face brick with a low pitched gabled roof. The side elevations of the building feature windows with steel security grilles in the upper portion of the walls. The roof pitches towards the outsides of the quadrangle, and the north and south side walls have metal gutters and downpipes. Along the south elevation there are a series of narrow windows with metal grilles that open from the chapel.

The courtyard inside the quadrangle is grassed with several trees and shrubs. There is a stone wishing well that appears to have been constructed by the residents.

The interior of the building is utilitarian in its design and finish, the most decorative items comprising a series of wrought iron security grilles that are located strategically throughout the complex. The office area comprises a series of rooms opening from a central corridor. There is a decorative metal grille between the foyer and the office and a second similar screen between the office and the outside courtyard. The finishes comprise carpet to concrete floors, painted plaster to walls and concrete slab to ceilings.

The gymnasium is located adjacent to the offices and has a timber parquet floor, face brick walls, metal ceiling with a large exposed air-conditioning duct along the centre.

The chapel is located nearby and has a proscenium at the western end, raked timber panelled ceiling, painted face brick walls and narrow windows with deep reveals, timber surrounds and metal grilles on the inside. Any elements associated with the former use of the space as a chapel have been removed and it is set up as a general recreation room.

The southern side of the complex comprises the metal workshop and the timber workshop. These comprise large open workshop areas with offices and stores at either end. The metal workshop has a concrete floor, painted brick walls, concrete slab ceiling and windows with metal security bars along each side wall. The timber workshop has a timber floor, but is in other respects similar to the metal workshop. Work benches have been removed. There are timber double doors from each workshop to the verandah.

The former laundry and kitchen facilities and the dining room are located at the eastern end of the quadrangle. These rooms have similar finishes to elsewhere, concrete floor with vinyl finish to the laundry and terracotta tiles in to the kitchen, rendered and painted, or painted face brick, walls and concrete ceilings. The kitchen and laundry retain some stainless steel fittings but generally fittings and fixtures have been removed. The dining room is similar but has a mural of three paintings on the inside wall, one depicting the river, one depicting the road to the valley and third the bridge over the river. The origin of these paintings is not known, however they appear to depict the context of *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* which is not visible from anywhere within the secure compound.

The northern side of the complex contains the residential cabins or cells. The original section of the building contains 33 individual cabins opening from a central corridor. The addition at the eastern end constructed in 1969/70 contains a further 10 cabins and a lounge area. The later cabins are larger and contain bunk beds. The finishes here are similar to elsewhere; concrete floor slab with vinyl sheet flooring, painted rendered walls, concrete ceilings and windows with metal bars. The cabins or cells each contain a bed, recent cabinet and table and a stainless steel basin and toilet. Several of the earlier cabins/cells have original concrete toilets in the corner of the cell. Each cabin has a high window with steel bars and a timber panelled door with security lock and a small viewing panel with a cover on the outside.

The cells are designed with increased restrictions which were used as deterrents or punishments, with the most restricted at the far west of the corridor. On the most restricted cells basic amenities (such as toilet seat or mattress) are not provided. Less restricted rooms may have such features but are missing the food slot, or have the light switch on the outside, to reduce the control the occupant has over their environment. The cells also retain evidence of prison design intended to minimize the opportunity for ligature strangulation (that is strangulation occurring using rope, cord or wire, and when the strangulating force is something other than the person's bodyweight).



There is a communal ablution area at the end of the original cabin/ cell block. The original open stalls to toilets have been replaced by partitions and the facilities upgraded, however the original configuration of the space remains evident. There is also a duty office and staff room at the end of the cabin/ cell block.

*Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* remains substantially as constructed in the periods 1960 and 1969/1970 with subsequent accommodation upgrades, and as such, it has high authenticity.

The buildings are in fair to good condition, the main issues being minor damage resulting from use of the place for defence training.

Following the reoccupation of site in May 2010 as administrative offices for the Community Work Management Unit, both the former residences show evidence of general maintenance, such as painting and new carpeting. In 2015, the gardens are unkempt. The former orchard was not inspected.

### **Archaeology**

The study area contains archaeological sites from both *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* and previous uses of the site including the early colonial homestead and 1940s market garden.

The archaeological evidence associated with *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* consists of short lived outbuildings, remnants of the drainage system, a demolished boiler room and a scatter of material around the edges of the detention centre internal courtyard.

The evidence associated with the former Pyrton Homestead Group (c.1850s to c.1940s), built by the Hamersley family, consists of both landscape and archaeological features. The landscape features including olive and pine trees and remnant garden plantings are evidence of the former occupation and use of the place.

The archaeological evidence consists of the sites of three former buildings (two homestead buildings and an outbuilding) and a buried remnant landscape which includes activity areas around the former buildings and the household rubbish pit preserved under a layer of fill. The preserved evidence, being domestic sites, rubbish pit and activity areas around domestic buildings, represents a rich archaeological resource. The area is likely to contain the majority of physical evidence relating to the long period of occupation from the early colonial period to the 1950s. The site has the potential to shed knowledge on the material culture and life style associated with a historically important settlement process and is therefore assessed as having considerable archaeological significance.

### **13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

This comparative information section is aimed at providing a context to the establishment of institutions for juvenile offenders in Western Australia as opposed to an investigation into the philosophy underlying this discourse. Such analysis is beyond the scope of this project.

In 19th century Western Australia, concern for the welfare of children was left primarily to religious bodies with minimal government intervention. From 1847, juvenile offenders received treatment through the development of the

Children's Panels. Penalties were limited to three months imprisonment, with whipping as an alternative for boys. In the second half of the 19th century, growth in population together with other social issues led to an increase in the numbers of children needing care, and a number of private institutions were subsequently set up.<sup>72</sup>

These included the Catholic Church's St. Joseph's Girls' Orphanage<sup>73</sup> in Subiaco and the Anglican's Orphanage for Protestant Girls (now *Perth Girls Orphanage (fmr)*; RHP 1996<sup>74</sup>) in Adelaide Terrace, both in 1868. This was followed in 1871 by the Swan Protestant Boys Orphanage (now *Swanleigh Precinct*; RHP 2004<sup>75</sup>) in Midland, and by a Catholic orphanage for boys in Victoria Park<sup>76</sup> in 1872.<sup>77</sup>

The care of orphaned and disadvantaged children was formally established under the auspices of the *Industrial Schools Act of 1874*.<sup>78</sup> The Act also provided for the 'detention, maintenance, and training of children found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment'.<sup>79</sup> These 'Industrial Schools', which were essentially reformatories for delinquent children, came under the jurisdiction of and were subsidised by the Public Charities Department.<sup>80</sup> Young male offenders older than 12 years of age were sent to a reformatory located on Rottnest Island that operated from 1881/1882 to 1901.<sup>81</sup>

With the growth of Western Australia as a result of the discovery of gold, the government became more involved in the provision of welfare services. In 1894 the first fully funded and controlled 'Receiving Depot' was established by the government in rented premises in Claisebrook for the reception of all classes of children, but principally those under detention for a short period or waiting to be transferred to one of the subsidised institutions.<sup>82</sup> A purpose-built Receiving Depot/Industrial School was opened at Subiaco in 1897, but was later converted for use as part of Western Australia's first maternity and

<sup>72</sup> 'History of the Department for Community Welfare', op. cit., pp. 8-9, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> This place forms part of the Catherine McAuley Group. (HCWA Online Database No: 2231.)

<sup>74</sup> HCWA Online Database No: 2159.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid; HCWA Online Database No: 14470.

<sup>76</sup> This orphanage later became Clontarf and developed on the Manning Road site in Waterford from 1901. (HCWA Online Database No: 2401).

<sup>77</sup> General information in paragraph from Battye, J. S., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 1, 1912, Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, 1985, pp. 505-07.

<sup>78</sup> *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 24-26; Battye, Vol. 1, 1912, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Battye, Vol. 1, 1912, op. cit., p. 505.

<sup>80</sup> 'History of the Department for Community Welfare', op. cit., pp. 8-9, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> *Signposts*, op. cit., pp. 24-26; [www.rottnestisland.com/en/History+and+Culture/Boys+Reformatory.htm](http://www.rottnestisland.com/en/History+and+Culture/Boys+Reformatory.htm), 9/12/2007). Buildings associated with the reformatory now form part of the holiday accommodation at the Rottnest Island Lodge. ([www.rottnestisland.com/en/History+and+Culture/Boys+Reformatory.htm](http://www.rottnestisland.com/en/History+and+Culture/Boys+Reformatory.htm), 9/12/2007)

<sup>82</sup> Public Charities Department Annual Report, 1907, in *Votes & Proceedings (V&P)*, 1908-9, Vol. 1, p. 13; State Children Department Annual Report, 1913, in *V&P*, 1913, Vol. 2, p. 8; 'History of the Department for Community Welfare', op. cit., p. 11, all cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 9. Reference to Claisebrook Receiving Depot from Chinnery & Griffiths, 'King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women', op. cit., p. 4.

women's hospital in 1916 (now WA Medical Museum in *King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women*; RHP 2002).<sup>83</sup>

The Government Receiving Depot was subsequently relocated to West Perth by the State Children's Department,<sup>84</sup> which had been created under the *State Children Act of 1907*. This accommodation was deemed entirely unsuitable and new premises were constructed in Mount Lawley for the care and treatment of orphans and other wards of the State as well as delinquent or uncontrollable children housed in detention wards. *Walcott Centre* (RHP 2001) was opened in 1921.<sup>85</sup>

Children's welfare in Western Australia went largely unchanged for many years. *Walcott Centre* was the only government-run facility up to the 1950s with the subsidised orphanages and industrial schools/farms operated by various religious bodies providing the bulk of the services.<sup>86</sup>

In the 1950s, at the invitation of Premier A. R. G. Hawke, the Director of Child Welfare in New South Wales, Mr R. H. Hicks, was appointed to investigate child welfare in Western Australia. With the exception of the Anglican Church's Swan Homes, Hicks' criticised all other institutions. His recommendations saw the government approach the Anglican Homes Board to take over the care of delinquent children.<sup>87</sup>

The Anglican Church's recently closed Padbury Boys' Farm in Stoneville<sup>88</sup> was reopened in c. 1955 as the Anglican Boys' Farm. The farm was to serve as a reformatory for all delinquent boys until such time that accommodation for 'senior' boys could be established.<sup>89</sup> Political pressure due to delays in government-funded upgrades and infrastructure resulted in its decision to construct new buildings at the Stoneville property from 1964 and to erect a reformatory for older boys at Riverbank in 1960.<sup>90</sup> These projects were followed by the opening of the Longmore Remand and Assessment Centre in Bentley in 1965.<sup>91</sup> This place was later renamed Longmore Detention Centre and was replaced by the Banskia Hill Detention Centre in 1997.<sup>92</sup>

*Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)* (Padbury Boys' Farm; later Anglican Boys' Farm) was entered into the State Register of Heritage Places in 1999.<sup>93</sup> The 1964

---

<sup>83</sup> Chinnery & Griffiths, 'King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women', op. cit., pp. 4-8; HCWA Online Database No: 2438.

<sup>84</sup> This Department was known variously as the Child Welfare Department (1927-72), Community Welfare Department (1972-85), Community Services (1985-93), Community Development (1993-95) and Family & Children's Services (2000).

<sup>85</sup> All information in paragraph from various sources cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., pp. 9-11; see also HCWA Online Database No: 15731.

<sup>86</sup> Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> Taylor & Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>88</sup> The Padbury Boys' Farm operated for orphans and disadvantaged boys from 1946 to c. 1955. (Taylor & Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', op. cit., p. 1.)

<sup>89</sup> Taylor & Palassis Architects, 'Hillston Boys' Farm (fmr)', op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 10; see also Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> Child Welfare Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 20, cited in 'Conservation Plan of Walcott Centre, Mount Lawley', op. cit., p. 17; *Signposts*, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>92</sup> Accessed online <http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/wa/WE00131> (December 2015)

<sup>93</sup> HCWA Online Database No: 4038.

dormitory block that comprised of separate cabins (cells) similar to the secure facility at Riverbank is said to have been demolished in 1999.<sup>94</sup> Research to date indicates that the buildings at *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* may be some of the earliest, still extant types of this form in Western Australia.

The buildings that comprise *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* were designed by the Public Works Department of Western Australia in the 1960s, at a time when the majority of buildings required by the state government were designed in the department's architectural office. While the buildings are appropriate to their required function and exhibit design elements representative of the Post War International Style commonly employed for institutional buildings at that time; there is no evidence to suggest that they exhibit aesthetic qualities that would contribute to their cultural heritage significance by way of their being particularly fine examples of the work of the department.

Conclusion: *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* represents a stage in the history of the incarceration of male juvenile offenders in Western Australia's justice system in the mid to late 20th century.

The buildings that comprise *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham* are representative examples of the work of the Public Works Department of WA in the 1960s that exhibit some elements of the Post War International Style, commonly used for public buildings at the time.

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

No key references.

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

Details about the construction and history of the Pyrton residence and outbuildings that were demolished in the 1950s are not known. This is an area of further research and requires more in-depth primary source research.

Little information is yet known about the male offenders and staff associated with *Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Caversham*. This type of research is beyond the scope of this heritage assessment.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.