



# 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.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

By virtue of its Victorian Georgian style, pleasing proportions, generous verandahs and prominent corner gabled roof, *Murchison Club Hotel* displays high aesthetic quality. (Criterion 1.1)

The two-storeyed *Murchison Club Hotel*, situated on a slight bend in Austin Street, and at the junction with Darlot Street, is one of the largest buildings in Cue and forms a visual focus for the town as acknowledged by the inclusion of *Murchison Club Hotel* in the Classified Precinct of Cue by the National Trust of Australia (WA). (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Murchison Club Hotel* is the main meeting place in Cue this century and hosts a range of functions from reception for the Governor to informal lunches and drinks after work. (Criterion 2.1)

*Murchison Club Hotel* is significant to the community of Cue because it is associated with the two periods of growth associated with gold mining in the region - 1892-c. 1920 and the 1930s. (Criterion 2.2)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Because of its continuity of function *Murchison Club Hotel* is significant to the community of Cue and surrounding districts for its social and cultural services throughout the century. (Criterion 4.1)

*Murchison Club Hotel* contributes to the community's sense of place because of its longevity of function and the strong physical presence of the place. (Criterion 4.2)

As the main hotel in Cue, *Murchison Club Hotel* contributed and continues to contribute to the social fabric of the town.

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

The five metre-high ceiling in the restaurant is unusual and is of significance. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Murchison Club Hotel* is representative of its type, a two-storey Victorian Georgian style hotel. It is a typical corner hotel in a country town. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

While undergoing extensive alterations and additions of various quality, *Murchison Club Hotel* is generally in a fair to good condition. The soft porphyry walls are in much better condition than, for example, the walls of *Old Gaol* and *Fmr. Bank of New South Wales*, by virtue of their being protected from wind driven rain by the deep verandahs and also by the application of paint to the stone plinth.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Murchison Club Hotel* has high integrity. The place is continuing to be used for its original purpose.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

When compared to the original structure, *Murchison Club Hotel* has low authenticity. Compared to the altered and enlarged building of the 1930s, authenticity is moderate. Some of the internal finishes of the public bar, pool room and lounge have been installed in recent times as has the concrete paved ground floor verandah.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Prue Griffin, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Murchison Club Hotel* is a two-storey hotel of stone and brick with a corrugated iron roof. It is prominently located on the main intersection at Cue.

Cue was established as a result of a gold find reported by Tom Cue in 1892. The location known colloquially as 'The Patch' rapidly filled with prospectors. In 1892, up to one thousand men were fossicking in an area approximately 3 kilometres by 2 kilometres. Conditions were tough, water was scarce and enteric fever swept the camps. A hospital committee was formed to care for the sick but real relief came on 13 May 1892 when water was finally struck in a well dug at the site of the present rotunda. A Progress Committee was formed in 1893 and the townsite of Cue was gazetted on 17 August 1893.<sup>1</sup> From 1893, the townsite rapidly expanded with substantial public and private buildings erected.<sup>2</sup> Government had proved its faith in the town by undertaking the construction of its public buildings at the end of 1894.

The land on which *Murchison Club Hotel* stands was bought from the government in April 1894 for £22 at public auction.<sup>3</sup> The property changed hands and was subdivided several times before March 1896 when the London and Western Australian Investment Company Limited purchased the property and financed the construction of the new hotel.<sup>4</sup> Some basic buildings are believed to have existed on the site and the new single-storey stone buildings were wrapped around them.<sup>5</sup> This new hotel was designed by Alfred Edward Cox and constructed by James Dawson.<sup>6</sup> The hotel was leased to Michael Daly, a man of many talents whose previous jobs included Works Manager of the Fremantle Harbour Works and construction of tram and railway lines in Midland, Bunbury, Adelaide and Victoria.<sup>7</sup>

The opening of the new hotel in August 1896, named Daly's Murchison Club Hotel, was a great occasion because the quality of the hotel was claimed to be above the previously existing hotels in the district.

(Mr. Daly) can now proudly, and without fear of contradiction, claim to be the landlord of the best hotel on the Murchison, and one of the best on the West Australian goldfields.<sup>8</sup>

Daly's Club Hotel is the largest and best appointed hotel to be found on this end of the goldfield and is as comfortable, the *cuisine* as good and the

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<sup>1</sup> Conversation with June Gronow of the Geographic Names Section of the Department of Land Administration, 17 March 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Heydon, P. R. *Just a Century Ago A History of the Shire of Cue* Hesperian Press, 1987, p. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Original Grant 25 T10, Department of Land Administration.

<sup>4</sup> Certificate of Title, Volume 362 Folio 63, Department of Land Administration.

<sup>5</sup> *Shire of Cue Municipal Inventory* Place No. 2, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> *The Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette* 5 August 1896, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

attention shown to visitors as great as anything in Perth, or the whole colony indeed.<sup>9</sup>

Lengthy descriptions of the building follow in both articles in which the dimensions of the rooms are detailed and the merit of the layout examined. Of particular note to both commentaries was the 'loftiness of the rooms' which would make the place cool in the summer months.<sup>10</sup> The hotel included a public bar, public lounge, office and parlour, smoking room, fifteen bedrooms, dining room, servery, kitchen, pantry, and a fine billiard room. In addition there were two bathrooms, a six stall stable, a coach house and a yard. Verandahs enclosed both sides of the building which faced the streets.<sup>11</sup>

In the following few years, the hotel underwent several changes of licensees and owners. In 1903, acetylene gas was installed in the hotel by proprietor James Moloney and, in 1904, a sample room and private writing room were added to the hotel.<sup>12</sup>

The fortunes of Cue declined in the 1910s and 1920s but a further gold boom in the 1930s had significant repercussions for *Murchison Club Hotel*. The owner at the time, Joseph Bowes, installed a modern ice plant and a new septic system in 1934.<sup>13</sup> Further capital was invested in the business with the decision to erect a second storey on the building. The architects for these additions were Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown and the successful contractor was J. R. Parker.<sup>14</sup> At a cost of £5,503<sup>15</sup>, the new additions were probably finished in mid-1935 as they were being advertised as completed in September of that year.<sup>16</sup>

The second-storey additions of brick are not greatly similar in style to the first floor. Internally the building has undergone many changes since that date and it is difficult to piece together the original internal construction of the building. The continuity of its function is the most consistent feature of the building. Externally one of the most significant changes has been the painting of the external walls.

Because the hotel is the only one in the town of Cue it serves as the main meeting place of its community members. All range of functions are held there from receptions for the Governor to informal lunches and drinks after work.<sup>17</sup>

*Murchison Club Hotel* was purchased by the current owners in 1991 and remains the only functioning hotel in Cue.<sup>18</sup>

## 13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

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- <sup>9</sup> George Hope, 'Murchison Goldfields', supplement to the *Geraldton Express* 1897, Part 1, p. 52.  
<sup>10</sup> *The Murchison Times...*, 5 August 1896, p. 5.  
<sup>11</sup> Battye Photograph, 5001B/19.  
<sup>12</sup> *The Murchison Times...*, 1903 and 1904.  
<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* 25 August 1934, p. 2e.  
<sup>14</sup> Alfred Cox, designer of the Hotel, went on to form the partnership of Oldham and Cox in 1905 with Charles Oldham. This partnership was succeeded by Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown.  
<sup>15</sup> *Building and Construction Journal* 26 October 1934, p. 10 and 16 November 1934, p. 12.  
<sup>16</sup> *The Murchison Times...*, 4 September 1935.  
<sup>17</sup> Heydon, P. R. op. cit. p. 134.  
<sup>18</sup> Certificate of Title, Volume 1408 Folio 677, Department of Land Administration.

*Murchison Club Hotel* is situated on level land on the eastern corner of the junction of Austin and Darlot Streets. Across Austin Street are some vacant single-storey shops, south-west of which are, respectively, Flix Video, Breakaway Video, the Breakaway Coffee Shop and the Breakaway Shop. Adjacent to the Breakaway shop and diagonally opposite *Murchison Club Hotel* is the two-storey Dorsett's Guest House. Across Darlot Street is the *Fmr. Bank of New South Wales*. The Hotel beer garden is situated to the north-east of the hotel, facing Austin Street, and is directly opposite the two-storey *Cue Shire Offices*. The beer garden also addresses Post Office Street. Opposite Post Office Street is the one and two-storeyed Post Office and Police Station Building. To the south-west of the hotel and facing onto Darlot Street are respectively, a single-storey turn of the century residence which serves as the hotel staff accommodation, and, further along Darlot Street, modern single-storey motel accommodation units. Between the beer garden and the motel units, behind the hotel, is a laundry and several sheds.

*Murchison Club Hotel* is built in a Victorian Georgian Style and consists of a major two-storey section, situated on the corner, with a two-storey verandah to Austin and Darlot Streets, and a minor single-storey element consisting mainly of the kitchen, facing the rear, and the restaurant which addresses Darlot Street.

The corrugated iron roof of the major two-storeyed section has gambrels to the end. The broken backed roof of the verandah is hipped at the ends, and has a raised gable addressing the corner, emphasising the corner entrance below at ground level. The walls are of porphyry stone on the ground floor and brick on the first floor. The brickwork to the Austin and Darlot Street elevations is rendered and painted. To the sides and rear of *Murchison Club Hotel* the walls are face brickwork with only the sliding sash windows and sills rendered and painted. The restaurant has a hipped roof, at a greater pitch than the main roof, no eaves and no verandah. There is no evidence of a verandah being attached to the restaurant. The original hotel before the first floor was added was probably similar to this section. It was probable, however, that it had a verandah.

The scale of *Murchison Club Hotel* compliments that of several other nearby two-storeyed structures; Dorsett's Guest House, *Cue Shire Offices* and also the Police Station and Post Office building. Approaching the town from the north, as the Great Northern Highway curves to the south-west and becomes Austin Street, one's eye is led to the corner verandah gable of *Murchison Club Hotel*. Approaching Austin Street from Darlot Street, there is an increase in height from the domestic scale of the staff quarters, the single-storey but high ceilinged restaurant, and the main two-storey part of the hotel, punctuated by the corner gable.

Although *Murchison Club Hotel* is constructed of stone on the ground floor, similar to the *Former Bank of NSW* opposite Darlot Street and the *Cue Shire Offices* diagonally opposite Austin Street, the use of paint on the plinth and quoins under the deep and shaded verandahs diminishes the visual quality of the stone, and therefore there is little affinity with these two buildings in this respect. All three, however are built in a Victorian Georgian style.

*Murchison Club Hotel* bears little resemblance to the description of the place given in the *Murchison Times* on August 5, 1896. The only rooms which are recognisable and still being used as originally intended are the dining room, the public bar and part of the kitchen. The dining room measures about six metres by twelve metres and not, as reported in the article, six metres by fourteen and a half metres (48 feet by 18 feet) but there is no evidence of alterations.

Internally, the current layout of *Murchison Club Hotel* is as follows:

Upon crossing the concrete paved verandah and proceeding through the original timber entry doors, the visitor enters the public bar. This has modern pine floor boards, but also what appear to be original slate tiles. The main staff bar is relatively modern and has a face brickwork dwarf wall facing the public bar. The walls are original plaster, and the ceilings are non-original plaster, with some areas of original pressed metal. Behind the main bar is a face brickwork column, matching the face brickwork of the bar. This column was built when opening up the original parlour and office to extend the staff bar area.

To the north-east of the public bar the original internal wall has been opened up, forming a pool room and there is a change in floor finish from slate to ceramic tiles. The ceilings are pressed metal. The fireplace and mantle piece are original and it is possible that the pool room, the lounge to the south-west and the staff bar in between formed the billiards room referred to by the *Murchison Times*.

The lounge area is carpeted, has an original 1930s style fireplace and mantelpiece, and a timber dado rail about 800 mm high. The ceilings are plaster, and decorated with 1930s style motifs. A large roof light has been inserted in recent times.

Beyond the lounge, through the 1930s style double timber doors, one comes to a slate-floored lobby with a 1930s style plaster ceiling, off which is the carpeted timber staircase that gives access to the first floor.

By proceeding south one comes to the dining room. The dining room has a pressed metal ceiling about five metres high. Judging by the lowered pressed metal ceiling to the Darlot Street side of the dining room, and the description given in the *Murchison Times*, it is apparent that the dining room has been enlarged by incorporating the no longer extant hotel rooms that faced Darlot Street. This was probably done as part of the 1930s extensions and alterations, judging by the 1930s style timber detailing to the timber post and beams, and the transition between the high volumed original dining room and the lower volumed area near Darlot Street.

To the north is the kitchen, which has a linoleum floor, tiles on the walls typically up to about 1.6 metres above floor level and plaster over. In places the original lime render walls are evident.

A corridor leading from the kitchen, with a concrete floor, plastered walls and a pressed metal ceiling, parallel to the long axis of the restaurant and at right angles to Austin Street, gives access to a number of stores and it is likely that these were originally hotel rooms. The corridor has an entrance from Austin Street.

Adjacent to this entrance is a store which would appear to have been the Stock Exchange building referred to by the *Murchison Times*. The exterior detailing is different to that of the remainder of the hotel, having a timber dado, fibrous cement infill panels that were probably originally glass, and timber dentils over.

The first floor consists of seventeen hotel rooms, ten of which have french doors that lead onto the verandah. A common room is located on the corner. Adjacent to this, to the north, is a female toilet. At the north-east corner of the building are male and female toilets and change rooms.

The present first floor layout appears to have been altered little from the original, with the exception of the ladies' toilet adjacent to the common room. This was probably a hotel room originally, as it has the same dimensions and original french doors as the adjacent hotel rooms. Also, a verandah to the south west above the ground floor lounge has been enclosed and is now a store room. The hotel rooms have carpeted timber floors, a dado rail about 800 mm high, fibrous asbestos internal walls and ceilings with 50 mm by 10 mm timber joint battens. The 3.3 metre high ceilings have a simple cornice with no decorative motifs or roses. The common room on the corner is similar, except that there is no dado, but a picture rail three metres high. A decorative ceiling motif is in the centre of the ceiling.

The toilets to the north-east differ slightly to the remainder of the first floor in that they, and the corridor adjacent to it, have pressed metal ceilings. The transition between the pressed metal ceiling and the fibrous asbestos passage ceiling occurs at an opening in the plastered masonry wall which would indicate that the toilets were built at a later date. The external detailing, however, is very similar to the remainder of the first floor.

### **13. 3 REFERENCES**

National Trust Assessment Exposition 2 March 1982.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet No. 010828.

### **13. 4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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