



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

Canning Town Hall has aesthetic value in the fact that it is a good example of simple country building at the turn of the century. (Criteria 1.1 and 1.2)

It is an example of a public building from H. Jefferis who was not influenced significantly by the common aesthetics demonstrated in Public Works Department public buildings that were being erected around the state at that time. (Criterion 1.2)

It is a landmark building for the area. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Canning Town Hall reflects a period of growth and development in the town's history. (Criterion 2.1)

Canning Town Hall has been closely associated with key figures involved in Municipal activities in the town. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Canning Town Hall is highly valued by the local community in its role as the principle public building associated with cultural and administrative activities in the town. (Criterion 4.1)

Canning Town Hall has landmark qualities that contribute towards the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Canning Town Hall demonstrates the civic and community need for a meeting place for the community. It is representative of the social climate in which it was designed, and the leisure and entertainment pursuits for which it was subsequently adapted. The appearance of the building demonstrates the importance of the meeting place when compared with domestic style buildings. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Canning Town Hall is in reasonable condition, but there is work being carried out on the north side to the rear entrance where demolition has taken place.

Internally the building has had some alterations over the years and maintenance has been minimal but satisfactory to hold the building in reasonable condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Canning Town Hall has a basic integrity of the original building with its use as a community hall and its conversion to a community cinema.

Later additions of ventilating systems, acoustic treatment and upstairs servery and bar additions detract from the original integrity.

Externally the addition of the Senior Citizens Centre and connecting walkways to the rear south west side are so different and out of keeping with the original that they can be considered only as a useful addition of space to the original hall and of little heritage significance.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Canning Town Hall has moderate authenticity. The main construction of the hall and stage through the rear internally retains the form and detailing of the original with a special regard to the metal moulded ceiling to the stage area.

In the main hall the form of the original hall is retained, but the alteration of the acoustics by the way of panelling and addition of ventilation system intrudes on the authenticity of the space.

The floor and windows are the originals.

The stage is a good example of the local community involvement and activities of the period.

Generally the building is a good example of providing a large space with economical building for a community.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Lise Summers, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by J C Keen, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Canning Town Hall comprises a hall and offices, built as a town hall and administrative centre for the Queens Park Municipality, later the City of Canning.

In 1908, the Queens Park Municipal Council was approached by a local resident, James Walsh, who was offering land for sale to the Council for the purpose of building a Town Hall.¹ Several other residents also offered land, and it can be supposed from this that Queens Park, in line with other municipalities, had not had sufficient land set aside in crown reserves for municipal use when it had been formed.²

The Council voted, on 23 June 1908, to accept James Walsh's offer, only to rescind the decision two weeks later in favour of the rival offer of Tate's Hall. This decision set in train a number of rival offers which were eventually resolved on 16 February, 1909, by the acceptance of an offer by J.H. Woods.³ A special meeting of ratepayers was called to protest the decision but the Council remained adamant, and tenders for the proposed Town Hall and offices were called on 14 May 1909.⁴

A tender of £597-10-3 was accepted from builder J McCracken, and the architect, H Jefferis, was appointed to oversee the project.⁵ The Mayor had also previously submitted plans and specifications to the Council and it is not known how closely the final building reflected these initial thoughts.⁶ A dispute over the siting of the hall on the block was overcome and work commenced. The new Hall was to be lit by gas, as electricity had not yet come to the district.

That a Town Hall was needed is evinced by the hiring of the hall to G. Shaw, who submitted his request even before the keys to the hall had been handed to the Mayor.⁷ Other requests soon followed, including one for a Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition. On another front, significant in the later history of the Hall, a letter was received from the Secretary for Health regarding the regulations for picture shows.⁸

H. Jefferis submitted his final certificate for the work to the Council on 25 November 1909.⁹ In the course of finally preparing the building for

1 Queens Park Municipal Council -QPMC - *Minutebooks* (MIN 1907/08)

2 The neighbouring South Perth Roads Board, for example, had identified this problem when seeking a site for its Board Offices in 1903-4. The problem was resolved in South Perth by reallocating part of a recreation reserve for the purpose.

3 QPMC - *MIN 1908/09*, p. 145

4 *ibid*, pp. 247- 8

5 QPMC - *ibid*, p. 276 and *MIN 1909/10*, p. 28

6 QPMC - *MIN 1908/9*, p. 176

7 QPMC - *MIN 1909/10*, p. 81

8 QPMC - *MIN 1909/10*, p. 10

9 QPMC - *MIN 1909/10*, p. 127

occupation some changes had been approved by the Council. The floors of the hall had been waxed, rather than oiled, and the lower sashes of the windows were to be frosted.¹⁰

Minor alterations took place over the next few years. The front doors were painted in 1911 and a small notice board installed nearby. An honour roll was installed inside the Hall in 1915 and approval for the erection of a flagpole was granted in 1917.¹¹ In 1919 the Electric Light Committee recommended that the Hall be electrified, and after calling for tenders and receiving four, the offer of L.H. Deague was accepted.¹² A new gutter was fitted to the rear of the building in the same year and new doors were proposed for the rear of the Hall by Mr Knowles, who offered to replace them for the sum of £2-0-0 and the old doors.¹³

A change in the use of the Hall, which presaged a much longer history, was proposed in 1920 when the managers of the Lyceum Theatre, Mount Lawley, wrote to the Council, with an offer to rent the Hall as a picture theatre.¹⁴ On 25 July 1921 the Council voted to allow the Hall to be let one night a week as a cinema, for a period of six months with an option to renew. The proposed new purpose also involved the Council, as the Canning District Road Board, in constructing an operating box at the rear of the Hall. Tenders for the operating box were let on the 8 August 1921, and for exclusive rights to show pictures for three months in April 1922.¹⁵ During this period a masonry arch and garden were constructed in the grounds of the hall as a war memorial to commemorate the dead of the Great War.

Two years later, in 1924, the right to show pictures was granted to F. Hodges, who continued to do so until at least 1932, and possibly later.¹⁶ Hodges installed a Bio, or operating, Box over the front door of the Hall, replacing the earlier one at the rear. In 1927, a fire in the box resulted in damage to five windows in the Hall. In the previous year, alterations to the building had included the construction of a public gallery, a new boardroom and more office space.¹⁷

Additional renovations took place in 1936 and 1937, and in 1939, Star Entertainments were given leave to renovate the Hall at their own expense.¹⁸ In 1964 Council considered plans to remodel the Hall, and in 1965 accepted a tender to turn the Hall into offices for the Council, before it took up space in its new Administrative centre, just down the road.¹⁹ In 1972, the Council decided to convert the Hall into a community hall and Senior Citizens Centre, and renovations took place the following year..²⁰

10 QPMC - *MIN 1909/10*, pp. 81 and 127

11 QPMC - Minutes dated 4 December, 1911, 18 October, 1915 and 10 December 1917, respectively.

12 QPMC - *MIN 1918/19_3* March, 1919, p. 143

13 *ibid.*, pp. 149 and 163

14 QPMC - *MIN 1919/21_p.* 166

15 Canning District Road Board - CDRB - *MIN 1921/22*, pp. 58 and 130

16 CDRB - *MIN 1922/24_p.* 139

17 Heritage and Conservation Professionals - *Municipal Inventory, City of Canning_*

18 *ibid.*, and CDRB - *MIN 1939/40*, p. 226

19 City of Canning Local History Collection - Reference no's. NPC 1/209/h and NPC 1/257/C

20 Heritage and Conservation Professionals - *op cit*

The Hall continues to be used as a community venue, and in the 1970s was the site of competition in the Southern Suburbs Eistedfodds.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

This brick and iron building faces onto Albany Highway. It has a semi classical facade with simple plastered brick walls and central clear storey windows at high level.

The plan of the building is basically a main hall with a stage to the rear and an upper gallery at the front. Offices are on either side of the central entry. To the left hand side below the upper balcony there is a small kitchen with service to the main hall.

The entrance foyer has simple double doors with a staircase leading up to the balcony directly in front of the entrance doors.

The whole of the building is painted a light off white colour. The rear of the stage area, originally timber frame and weather boarded, has now been faced with brick and repainted.

The balcony is on two levels with steps to the left. The gallery access is 1.3m in width. Three wide steps lead to the main gallery level on the left hand side of the building. The right hand side of the building is enclosed. There is a small servery within the upper gallery which was a 1970s addition. The ceiling to the gallery level is spray on vermiculite finish onto the original plaster board ceiling.

The main hall is two storeys high with a cathedral ceiling, lined with pressed metal mouldings. A later addition to the clear storey and sloping part of the cathedral ceiling has been relined with acoustic metal panelling. The floor is strip timber flooring running the length of the room. The stage at the far end is up five steps. The timber framed preceding arch door on either side is also lined with pressed metal moulding.

The three lights in the centre of the room and tie rods across the building are dwarfed by the later addition of the evaporative cooling system in the room.

The gallery access is three metres above the main hall floor.

In the entrance foyer at the left hand side is a small pay kiosk for the cinema patrons. Access to the projection box is on the right hand side of the staircase at ground level. There are seven holes in the wall from the projection box to the main hall. The side wings to the stage are 2 m wide, with a doorway to the rear of the stage on both sides and also emergency exits to the rear. There are gas heaters to the main hall.

In addition to the right hand side of the main hall, the emergency exit has been removed in 1996. A 13 m x 8 m extension to the side has been built at a later date as a Senior Citizens Centre.

The external elevation is simple red brick with concrete plinth and ply panelling four brick courses up the lintel above the ground floor windows. A simple lintel is at three courses height above the clear storey windows.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references. Refer to Municipal Inventory.