



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)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.16 Struggling with remoteness and hardship
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 107 Settlements
- 111 Depression & boom
- 203 Road transport
- 303 Mining
- 308 Commercial & service industries
- 311 Hospitality Industry and tourism
- 604 Local heroes & battlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is a good example of a modest single storey hotel in the Federation Free Classical style, in a remote goldfields location. (Criterion 1.1)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is valued by the community of Laverton and the surrounding district, for the significant contribution the place makes to the historic townscape and character of Laverton, by complementing and enhancing the other remnants of the 1900s heritage and history of the town. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is associated with the development of the Laverton townsite, which resulted from the discovery of gold by Tom Potts, Harry Dennis and George McOmish northeast of Mount Margaret in 1896. (Criterion 2.1)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

The history of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* reflects the fluctuating economic fortunes of the Laverton area and the Goldfields more generally, with its recurrent cycles of boom and depression and the resultant changes in population, from the late 19th century through to the present day (2005). (Criterion 2.2)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is associated with Richard Lancaster who was responsible for the construction of the place in 1901; George McOmish, a member of the trio that discovered gold near Mount Margaret in 1896, which led to the eventual development of the Laverton townsite; and, long-time and prominent Laverton resident Don Leahy. (Criterion 2.3)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton was used as the initial base of operations by prospector Ken Shirley, who was responsible for the discovery of nickel at Mt Windarra in 1969 that sparked a worldwide sensation and buying spree for the shares of the mining company Poseidon. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton has social and historic value to the community for its significant contribution to the historic townscape and character of Laverton and as a reminder of the original development of the town in the early 1900s, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Shire of Laverton Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is the only known remaining example of a hotel designed to incorporate an enclosed carriage-way. (Criterion 5.1)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is rare as a single storey example of a hotel in the Federation Free Classical style, and as an example of a hotel designed in this style in the Goldfields. (Criterion 5.1)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is one of only a small group of buildings dating from the original development of the town of Laverton in the early 1900s to have survived to the present day (2005). (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is a good example of Federation Free Classical architecture in a remote northern goldfields hotel that has facilitated many functions since its construction and survived the 1970s major redevelopment associated with the mining resurgence in the town. (Criterion 6.1)

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton represents the fluctuating economic fortunes of the Goldfields and the Laverton area, with its recurrent cycles of depression and boom and the resultant changes in population, from the late nineteenth century through to the present day (2005). (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is overall in fair condition. The roof appears to be in fair to good condition, and the building seems to be structurally sound. The

damage from rising damp from lack of gutters, downpipes or ground level drainage is evident on the front and north walls. The timber detailing on the front façade is damaged and weathered and in very poor condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton has moderate integrity. Some changes to original fabric, have taken place over the years, to facilitate various uses of the place, most significantly in the 1970s, although it is unknown when the outbuildings, bedrooms and other elements of the original hotel were removed and/or demolished. The place is currently vacant, except for the flat at the end of the west wing.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The remaining original fabric of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is mostly intact. The original face brick has mostly been stucco rendered, and the tuckpointed front wall has been painted, some sections of interior walls have been removed, and the kitchen fitted out. Overall, *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* has moderate authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Kris Bizzaca, Historian, and Laura Gray, Architect, in May 2005, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is a single-storey stucco brick building with a corrugated iron roof in the Federation Free Classical style. Constructed in 1901 for owners Richard Lancaster and Frederick Cameron, the former hotel is now located on the west side of a broad grassed area that was Laver Street (now Laver Place), originally the main street of Laverton.

The first Europeans to visit what is now known as the Laverton area were part of John Forrest's expedition to the area in 1869. During this visit, Forrest named various topographical features such as Mount Margaret.¹ Forrest was followed by other explorers including a party led by David Lindsay in 1891, which travelled from South Australia to the East Murchison where deposits of gold were found.²

It was the discovery of gold in Coolgardie in 1892 that led to prospectors searching for alluvial gold in the Laverton area.³ In 1896, Tom Potts, Harry Dennis and George McOmish discovered gold north-east of Mount Margaret and registered their claim. It was during this process that the three men met Dr Charles Laver. After hearing their news, Laver rode his bicycle from Coolgardie, 400km away, to see the claim for himself.⁴ Laver later helped finance the mining of the three men's British Flag mine and also became a partner and helped secure other investors for other claims in the area including the Craiggimore mine.⁵

A small townsite developed in the vicinity of Craiggimore in order to service the various mines in the district. This site proved to be unsuitable and a new location to the north, near the British Flag mine, was chosen as a townsite in 1899. The new town was eventually given the name 'Laverton' in honour of Dr Laver, who had been so instrumental in the district's development. On 6 July 1900, the town of Laverton was gazetted.⁶

By 1901 Laverton was described as follows:

Although it is only two years since the building of the town began, Laverton possesses, in addition to several substantial and commodious business places and hotels, a branch of the Western Australian Bank, and a very creditable hospital, of which Dr. Hurst is the medical officer. There is also a Post and Telegraph Office, with Money-order Office and Post Office Savings Bank; there is a mining Registrar's office, and the warden visits the town monthly to adjudicate upon mining and other cases.⁷

1 Ball, J. & Aris, K., 'Shire of Laverton Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places', prepared for the Shire of Laverton, January 2000, p. 11.

2 Ibid.

3 Ball & Aris, op. cit., p. 12.

4 Ibid, p. 12; Strickland, B., *Golden Quest Discovery Trail Guide Book*, Golden Quest Trails Association Inc., WA, 2003, pp. 72 – 73.

5 Ball & Aris, op. cit., p. 12; Strickland, op. cit., p. 72.

6 Strickland, op. cit., p. 72; *Government Gazette*, 6/7/1900, cited in Ball & Aris, p. 12.

7 P. W. H. Theil & Co., *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*, 1901 (Facsimile Edition Hesperian Press, 2000), p. 656.

At this time there were four hotels in the town: the British Flag Hotel, the Laverton Hotel, the Grand Hotel and *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*.⁸ *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was built in 1901 and was the first permanent hotel of brick construction to be erected on Laver Street, the main street of the town.⁹

Lot 20 Laver Street (now Laver Place), the land on which *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is located, was purchased by accountant Frederick Cameron and hotelkeeper Richard Lancaster both of Laverton for the sum of £20 on 16 March 1901.¹⁰ The first Certificate of Title was issued for the property later that month on 19 March.¹¹ On 28 March, Lot 20 Laver Street was transferred into the sole ownership of Richard Lancaster.¹²

Richard Lancaster commissioned local Laverton architect W. E. Robertson to prepare plans for a new hotel on the site, and Robertson went on to supervise the building's construction. Local newspaper the *Laverton Mercury* proclaimed that the structure and the large amount of money expended was proof of Lancaster's 'faith in the future of the town and the district.'¹³ Indeed, a number of contractors were employed to undertake various tasks on the project including the woodwork by Messrs. Judge & Stamp of Malcolm and the brickwork by Mr. J. Edwards. The burnt bricks were supplied by Messrs. Baker and Co.¹⁴

The Hotel Australia was opened on Monday, 22 April 1901 and was said 'to be the best finished house of its kind outside of Kalgoorlie.'¹⁵ The following is a contemporary description of the hotel:

The front bar is roomy, being 18ft x 18ft. The fittings are up-to-date, being constructed of turned pillars with mirror backs. The salon bar is similar to the front bar as regards fittings, and is very conveniently situated, having slides connecting it with both the billiard-room and the smoking-room. The billiard room is 19ft x 24ft, is well ventilated and well lit, and contains a fireplace. In the parlors everything has been done to make them comfortable in summer as well as in winter. The dining-room is 19ft x 24 ft, and the ceilings, which are handsomely decorated, are lofty. This room has received particular attention as regards lighting and ventilation, as 9-inch ventilating pipes have been connected with the ceiling to carry away the heated atmosphere. There are windows on either side, so that in hot weather a draught can be caused and the room made much more comfortable than it would [sic] otherwise be. The pantry and storeroom are conveniently situated between the kitchen and dining-room. The kitchen is large, being 14ft x 19ft, and is fitted up with all the modern necessities. There are 8 bedrooms connected with the hotel, all being 12ft x 10ft, with the exception of the bridal chamber, which is 14ft x 12ft, and is furnished in a very elaborate style.¹⁶

8 Ibid, pp. 656 – 658; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1901 & 1902.

9 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1901 & 1902; *Laverton Mercury*, 24/8/1901; Theil, op. cit., pp. 656 – 658.
10 Grant, T17, 796.

11 Certificate of Title, Vol. 212, Fol. 136.

12 Ibid; Certificate of Title, Vol. 213, Fol. 79.

13 Information & quotation from *Laverton Mercury*, 27/4/1901.

14 Ibid.

15 *Laverton Mercury*, 27/4/1901.

16 *Laverton Mercury*, 27/4/1901.

To the rear of the main building, there was a large covered outdoor area to serve as a venue for functions and concerts. The entire building was lit using acetylene gas which was supplied by a plant located on the premises.¹⁷

A photograph of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* appeared in the 1901 publication *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*. This shows a single storey building of brick construction with rendered detailing to arched window and door openings, to pilasters and to the parapet, pediment and decorative accents. To the north of the main hotel façade was the arched opening for an enclosed lane way or carriage-way that provided access for the horse drawn carriages to the rear of the building where the stables were situated. Gas light fittings are shown over the main hotel entry and the carriage archway.¹⁸ (The building did not have a verandah at this time.)

The incorporation of the carriage way into the overall design of the building illustrated an integral part of the early operations of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* as a stop for coaches and also most likely for the resting or changing of horses. The hotel is said to have been part of the Cobb & Co. coach and mail contract service route that travelled throughout the goldfields from the 1890s up to the 1910s/1920s.¹⁹ The stables were also part of the overall business of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*. In June 1901, the first advertisement for the place declared 'The best Horses and Traps in the district on hire. Charges reasonable.'²⁰

Over the next two decades *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* changed hands a number of times and in some instances was even transferred back to previous owners. On 21 April 1902, Laverton agent Clyde Ballantyne was registered as its proprietor and he owned the hotel for one year.²¹ *Wise's Post Office Directories* show that Ballantyne was also the publican of the place in 1902 and 1903.²²

Richard Lancaster and Frederick Cameron again became owners of the hotel in April 1903 in partnership with Christopher Lawrie, a bank clerk of Perth, and George Basham, manager of the Western Australian Bank in Laverton. This was the same bank where Cameron himself was employed.²³ In December 1903, ownership again changed when Cameron and Lawrie became joint tenants of the hotel with Charles Straus, a local mine manager.²⁴

17 *Laverton Mercury*, 27/4/1901.

18 Photograph in Theil, op. cit., p. 658; see also Photograph in *Western Argus*, 3/1/1905. **Note:** It is believed that the large archway formed part of a carriage way rather than a coach room as this was the most common form of this type of construction/design. Photographic evidence also shows that there were buildings hard up on either side of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* which meant the horse drawn carriages would not have been able to access the rear of the property by any other route. (See Photograph in *Western Argus*, 3/1/1905.) Information provided to Jim Carter from former owners Frank and Jean King suggests that there was a rear door to the carriage way that was large enough to allow only horses to pass through. (Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 16/6/2005.)

19 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 15/10/2001; Battye Library Research Note: 826; http://www.cobbandco.net.au/History_of_CobbCo.html, 15/5/2005. It should be noted that despite the name this was a privately owned Western Australian service and not part of the infamous Victorian Cobb & Co. coach company.

20 *Laverton Mercury*, 1/6/1901.

21 Certificate of Title, Vol. 213, Fol. 79.

22 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1903 & 1904.

23 Certificate of Title, Vol. 213, Fol. 79; Certificate of Title, Vol. 271, Fol. 76; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1902 – 1904.

24 Certificate of Title, Vol. 271, Fol. 76.

It is worthwhile noting that Richard Lancaster did not return to Laverton to act as the publican of the place but remained in Malcolm.²⁵ Ballantyne continued on as manager of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* up to c. 1904.²⁶ In 1905 and 1906 Joseph Lyons operated the hotel.²⁷ Joseph Daniel Lyons also had a cordial manufacturing (soft drink) business in Laverton from as early as 1900 and is believed to have continued to run this whilst at the hotel.²⁸

Robert Thompson took over from Lyons as manager of the hotel in 1907.²⁹ Thompson stayed on as publican of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* until c.1912.³⁰

From August 1913, the ownership of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was divided into shares. One-half share was registered to Cameron and one-quarter shares each to Straus and Lawrie.³¹ On 18 May 1914, George Alexander McOmish became the owner of Cameron's portion³² and it was then transferred to his wife Mary McOmish on the very same day.³³

McOmish had been one of the three prospectors who had discovered the British Flag claim in 1896 and had stayed on at the Laverton town. He became the owner of the British Flag Hotel in 1900/1901 and in the early 1910s also had a butcher shop.³⁴ Just prior to purchasing Cameron's share of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* in c. 1913, McOmish took over management of the hotel.³⁵ He was recorded as its publican up to the early 1920s.³⁶

The Certificates of Title show that Charles Lawrie was declared bankrupt in July 1913 and Morrie Moss was appointed his Trustee in September 1920.³⁷ William Lewis later became the owner of the one-quarter share of the hotel on 20 October 1920.³⁸ Lewis was then the manager of the Grand Hotel in Laverton.³⁹

On 8 November 1920, Charles Straus sold his one-quarter share of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* to Mary McOmish.⁴⁰ In May 1925, Mrs. McOmish, by then a widow who had taken over the operation of the hotel, also became the

25 Certificate of Title, Vol. 271, Fol. 76.

26 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1904.

27 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1905, & 1906.

28 *Laverton Mercury*, 9/12/1900 & 16/12/1904; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1902 – 1905; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005. Jim Carter has provided information indicating that Lyon's cordials were supplied in a particular type of bottle commonly known as a 'Codd' bottle, which was sealed with a marble. Evidence of bottles by Lyon's also show embossed label designs and trade marks. (Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.)

29 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1905, 1906 & 1907.

30 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1912 & 1913.

31 Certificate of Title, Vol. 293, Fol. 141; Certificate of Title, Vol. 563, Fol. 20. By this time none of the owners resided in the Laverton district.

32 Certificate of Title, Vol. 563, Fol. 20.

33 Certificate of Title Vol. 589, Fol. 117.

34 Ball & Aris, op. cit., p. 12; Theil, op. cit., p. 657; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1900 – 1912.

35 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1913.

36 *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1913 – 1925.

37 Certificate of Title, Vol. 563, Fol. 20.

38 Ibid.

39 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1920.

40 Certificate of Title, Vol. 563, Fol. 20.

owner of Lewis' share.⁴¹ On 18 May 1925, a new Certificate of Title was issued in her name as the sole proprietor of Lot 20 Laver Street.⁴²

It was while in the ownership of Mrs. McOmish in 1922 that *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was delicensed.⁴³ As *Wise's Post Office Directories* lists Mary McOmish at *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* up to c. 1926, it is likely that the business of the dining room and accommodation continued to function after the licence was cancelled.⁴⁴

The hotel property was transferred from Mrs. McOmish to William Joseph Olson on 18 December 1926.⁴⁵ In 1927, *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* began to be used as a lodging house run by Mrs. Mary Olson (also spelt Olsen).⁴⁶ The boarding house is only recorded up to 1937/1938,⁴⁷ although William Olsen remained the proprietor of the former hotel until 1947.⁴⁸ Bill Olsen was a licensed sandalwood contractor, which was a major local industry in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, during his ownership of the hotel and may have utilised the property for these purposes.⁴⁹

From c. 1937 up to the early 1940s, *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is believed to have been used by Everett Baylis as the headquarters for the printing of his newspaper *The Inland Watch*. Local resident Wilfred Leahy recalled visiting *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* to watch printer Jim Inkpen at work and also did odd jobs for the paper. The newspaper offices were relocated to Leonora in c. 1943.⁵⁰

Information provided by former owner and long-time Laverton resident Don Leahy and current owner Jim Carter suggests that from the 1940s to the 1960s the former hotel building was used again as a boarding house but was primarily a private residence.⁵¹ *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* had several owners during this period including Bessie Harvey of Kalgoorlie (1947 – 1948), Francis King of Merlynston, Victoria (1948 – 1953), and Abbondio Folini (1953 – 1966).⁵² (Frank King worked at old Lancefield gold mine retreating the tailings for new owner United Gold Recoveries.⁵³)

41 Certificate of Title, Vol. 757, Fol. 165.

42 Certificate of Title, Vol. 888, Fol. 79.

43 *West Australian, News of the North*, 18/8/1976.

44 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1926. It is interesting to note that the MaryMac Gold Mine located to the south of the Laverton townsite was named after Mrs. McOmish. (Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.)

45 Certificate of Title, Vol. 888, Fol. 79.

46 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1927.

47 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1937/1938.

48 Certificate of Title, Vol. 888, Fol. 79.

49 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005. This is an area of further research.

50 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; Information about *The Inland Watch* from LISWA Online Catalogue, 15/5/2005; Wilfred Leahy to Jim Carter, Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.

51 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.

52 Certificate of Title, Vol. 888, Fol. 79.

53 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 16/6/2005 & 20/6/2005

On 11 February 1966, Laverton postmaster Don Leahy was registered as the proprietor of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*.⁵⁴ By this time, the building had been vacant for many years and had fallen into disrepair. This reflected the downturn of Laverton and the eastern goldfields region as a whole as the price of gold fell after the brief gold boom of the 1930s. In the early 1960s, Laverton comprised 'six houses and two stores, including the post office' and had a population of only 100 people.⁵⁵

In 1968/1969, nickel claims were pegged in the vicinity of Mount Windarra by mining company Poseidon N. L. The company employed prospector Ken Shirley to explore the claims and he did so from his initial base of operations at *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*.⁵⁶ Shirley discovered rich nickel deposits in 1969 and this led to a massive leap in the share prices of Poseidon, which caused a sensation and made headlines all over the world.⁵⁷ Although Poseidon began the Mount Windarra mine in 1974, it was Western Mining Corporation that played a significant role in its development in the mid 1970s and by 1984 was the sole proprietor of the mine.⁵⁸

The resurgence of the mining industry in the Laverton district resulted in renewed interest in the town. Initially the large workforce at the Windarra Nickel Project was accommodated close to the mine site but Western Mining later decided to centralise services at the nearby town of Laverton and invested heavily to this end.⁵⁹

Subsequent to this, the state government and the Shire of Laverton formed a partnership that eventuated in the redesign of the townsite around public open space in what was previously Laver Street, and is now Laver Place and the retention of only a few of the original buildings, including *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*. The new Laverton, as it was called, was officially opened by state Premier, Sir Charles Court, in early March 1976. By this time the population of the town had increased from 100 in the early 1960s to 1,500 people.⁶⁰

It was during this period of redevelopment in 1970 that works were commenced on *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* by café proprietors Frank and Lil Pearce and funded by owner Don Leahy.⁶¹ This included the repair and renovation of the original building, the construction of a verandah over the front side-walk, and the conversion of the former carriage way into a pool room and amusement arcade.⁶² *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was renamed 'The Coach House' and included a cafe, a cool room, and a new addition with kitchen facilities and an ablutions area. The latter works resulted in the demolition of the original

54 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1308, Fol. 206.

55 Quotation from Unsourced article about Don Leahy in Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; see also Strickland, op. cit., p. 74; Ball & Aris, op. cit., p. 19.

56 Strickland, op. cit., p. 74; Ball & Aris, p. 21; *West Australian, News of the North*, 18/8/1976.

57 Strickland, op. cit., p. 74; Ball & Aris, p. 21.

58 Ibid (both).

59 Ibid (both); *West Australian, News of the North*, 3/3/1976.

60 Ball & Aris, op. cit., p. 21; *West Australian, News of the North*, 3/3/1976.

61 *West Australian, News of the North*, 3/3/1976.

62 *West Australian, News of the North*, 18/8/1976; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543.

accommodation wing and the removal of part of the original internal walls for access into the retail area.⁶³

An undated plan also shows that new concrete floors were put in at the main entry and former carriage way, the inside of the carriage archway was infilled, the rear L-shaped verandah was erected and new aluminium windows and doors installed to the west wing.⁶⁴ To the rear of the building an outdoor cinema and an alfresco function area were created, and a basketball court and roller-rink built.⁶⁵

In 1970/1971, Les Tucker, who at the time worked at one of the local Laverton gold mines, painted five murals on the walls of the amusement parlour (former carriage way) depicting the main stages of the development of Laverton. In 2005, only the mural showing the discovery of nickel at Mount Windarra is still extant.⁶⁶

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton later became known as 'The Coach House Inne' operated by John Laker and Katrina Arpas and provided à la carte dining while also continuing to serve takeaways and school lunches.⁶⁷ On 19 June 1981 the place was transferred to John Laker and Katrina Arpas.⁶⁸

A 1982 photograph of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* shows the removal of the 1970s verandah and the still exiting timber gates to the carriage archway. Grates had been installed over the front windows and glassed door panelling, the front façade painted and the rear exterior stucco rendered.⁶⁹

Nationwide Food Service was registered as the proprietor of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* in February 1986 and in July the next year Spotless Services Limited, the parent company of the Nationwide Food Service, was listed as the owner.⁷⁰

It was at the time of the 1987 change in ownership that the former hotel building was again subject to works, which resulted in the conversion of the place from a café to a newsagency.⁷¹ A plan indicates the installation of shop displays, counters and fittings.⁷² A hand written note on the plan states that a flat at the end of the west wing was then rented out at \$50.00 per week.⁷³

63 *West Australian, News of the North*, 18/8/1976; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; Information from Jim Carter, email dated 19/5/2005; Aerial photograph of Laverton townsite, late 1960s, showing the original accommodation wing, provided by Jim Cater, email dated 16/6/2005.

64 Undated plan, in Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543. **Note:** This plan appears to be a compilation of the works that occurred in c. 1970 and in c. 1987.

65 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543.

66 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.

67 Ibid; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.

68 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1308, Fol. 206.

69 Photographs dated 26/11/1982, in PD File: 1543.

70 Certificate of Title, Vol. 1308, Fol. 206; Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005.

71 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543.

72 Undated plan, in Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543. **Note:** This plan appears to be a compilation of the works that occurred in c. 1970 and in c. 1987.

73 Ibid.

Current owner Jim Carter arrived at Laverton and worked at *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* while the place was operated by the Nationwide Food Service. Jim went on to manage the newsagency business which at its height acted as agents for Lotterywest, Westpac, United Credit Union, Goldfields Air Service, Greyhound Bus, Amcal Pharmacy and Interflora, and employed 3 people.⁷⁴ Jim eventually purchased the place in May 1995.⁷⁵

By 2000/2001, Jim worked the newsagency at *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* as a one-man-operation.⁷⁶ The decline of the business reflected another economic downturn in the history of the town of Laverton, which was adversely affected by the closure of the Windarra Nickel Project in 1994.⁷⁷ Another factor that had a dramatic influence on the town has been the general rationalisation of mining operations, which resulted in the closure of businesses and other services. This has meant that although new gold mines have been established in recent years (such as Placer Dome Asia Pacific's Granny Smith mine and the Murrin Murrin Nickel Project) the implementation of fly-in fly-out shifts for workers has led to a rapid reduction in the population of Laverton.⁷⁸

On 21 December 2002, the business at *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was closed.⁷⁹ Since that time, the main part of the building has been vacant, only being used for storage purposes.⁸⁰

In 2003, Jim Carter received the Sheila Laver community award in recognition of his contribution to the Laverton area through his fundraising efforts and donations to local volunteer groups and for running a free counselling service.⁸¹

In May 2005, only the residential flat in the west wing is in use.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is a single-storey brick and stucco building with a triple hipped roof clad with corrugated iron. It is located on the west side of a broad grassed area that was Laver Street (now Laver Place), formerly the main street of Laverton. *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* backs onto McPherson Place, with a public pedestrian right of way along the south side, and another pedestrian corridor along the north side.

The grassed area that was originally Laver Street is lined on both sides by buildings predominantly from the 1970s, as is the street south from the intersection of Augusta Street. The Shire of Laverton swimming pool is located opposite *Hotel Australia (fmr)*. There are a number of immature Eucalyptus plantings within the grassed area, and red brick paved paths intersect the grassed areas at various locations.

74 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to the Heritage Council of WA, November 2004, in PD File: 1543; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 25/10/2002; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19/12/2002.

75 Information provided by owner Jim Carter to Kris Bizzaca, 20/6/2005; Certificate of Title, Vol. 1308, Fol. 206.

76 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19/12/2002.

77 Ibid; Strickland, op. cit., pp. 74 – 75.

78 *West Australian*, 28/5/1998; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 25/10/2002; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19/12/2002; Strickland, op. cit., pp. 74 – 75.

79 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19/12/2002.

80 Physical evidence.

81 Shire of Laverton, *Sturt Pea*, October 2003.

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton has an expansive street frontage that occupies the entire width of the site (lot 20). A 1970s rendered brick wall extends across the frontage to the north of the main building aligned with the façade, and continues along the north boundary, turning south after about 30 metres. This wall has a mural depicting the Windarra Nickel Project on the west side and openings for movie projection. There is a vacant site on the McPherson Place frontage in the north-west corner.

The area between the site and the adjoining vacant block is fenced with steel sheeting, with more murals along the McPherson Place elevation, where there are also double gates that provide vehicular access to the rear. The south boundary is predominantly the south wall of the building. Although the site extends beyond Lot 20, to the transportable buildings located on the north side of the site at the side and the rear, these buildings are intrusive and are not included within the proposed curtilage.

The front façade has no setback and there are no verandahs or physical evidence of there having been verandahs across the front. Although historic photographs indicate that the verandah was not original, documentary evidence shows a verandah in place across the entire frontage in the 1970s. Views of the front façade are somewhat obscured by plantings which restrict streetscape views.

The front facade of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* displays characteristics of the Federation Free Classical style of architecture, as described in *Identifying Australian Architecture*.⁸² The use of classical themes and the symmetrical frontage is typical of the style, as demonstrated by the frontage below the symmetrical parapet featuring a central pediment and decorative accents on the skyline. The carriage archway on the north frontage is not symmetrical to the main frontage, although it is an integral part and is balanced and in scale.

Typical for this style, the front facade was originally tuckpointed face brick, but this has subsequently been painted. Moulded detailing and pilasters delineate the arched openings arranged symmetrically across the front facade. The moulded cornice extends across the entire frontage; above which are simple brick parapets that feature rectangular moulded panels flanking a circular element. The central pediment above the entry has the words 'Hotel Australia' within a moulded panel.

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton shows evidence of two distinct periods of development, the 1901 brick hotel construction on the street frontage and the early 1970s additions. These additions comprise the west wing and ablution facilities along the south side boundary, the kitchen refurbishment, the external render (to all external walls except the front), paint to front wall, rear verandah additions, interior wall openings and partition walls, coach room openings enclosed, and installation of a cool room. The original section of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is approximately square in form, the adjoining extensions are a rectangular form. The west wing extension replaced the original accommodation block and was not accessed at the time of the assessment. The original hotel building comprises four rooms with a central corridor through to the back door, a former corridor to the north (cool room), and the former carriage way on the north side, which is accessed through the front room from the north.

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is a single-storey brick and stucco building with corrugated iron roofs. The roof over the original front building is a series of three

⁸² Apperly, Irving & Reynolds, op. cit., pp. 104 - 107.

hips hidden by the parapet. The west wing adjoins the south hipped roof. There is some guttering and roof drainage evident at the join of the main building and the west wing.

The original tuckpointed face brickwork and stucco mouldings on the entire street frontage have been painted over. The window and door openings are detailed with moulded arches and wire mesh security screens have been fitted within the openings to doors, windows and side panels. The remains of the original external four panel doors remain insitu. The original carriage archway opening has been infilled with sheets of corrugated iron. The south side wall, rear (west) wall and rear (west) extensions all have stucco rendered walls (1970s). The stucco is patterned in a regular circular shape, forming a continuum between the original and extensions on the exterior. The north wall of the original section is face brick in English bond. It has been painted and there is evidence of rising damp damage. Two extensions under the rear verandah are clad with flat fibrocement sheeting.

The double doors at the front of the building open into a wide central corridor with shop spaces on both sides. Wide openings have been made in both walls to access these shops. A central pilastered moulded arch detail divides the corridor, beyond which there is an office and cool room on the right (north) and a kitchen to the south.

In Shops 1 & 2, the floors are the original Oregon boards, walls are hard plaster and the ceilings are the original decorative pressed metal. There are various shop fittings. The truncated arched fireplace remains in situ in Shop 2. There is a brick lined cellar below Shop 1 with a hatch opening in the floor and ladder access.

The shop display area (former carriage way) is accessed through an opening in the wall of Shop 1. Its northern wall is face brick that has subsequently been painted. To the east, there is fibrocement lining on the arched infill, and a similarly clad partition wall sections a store area to the west/rear. The floor is concrete and the ceiling has a suspended fibrocement lining. The north wall of the actual hotel building (the south wall of the shop display) is also painted face brick. There is evidence of former openings in the arched detailing in the vicinity of the existing door opening, and also at the rear of the wall, behind the cool room.

The Office has timber floors, hard plaster walls, a pressed metal ceiling, a fireplace that has been boarded up, and the original double hung window that opens onto the shop display area (north side).

At the end of the corridor there is another archway, which is partially dissected by partition walls that intrude into the corridor space. To the north, there is another archway at right angles. The corridor here has been in-filled to form a cool room. A small section of wall in this area, approximately 0.3 metres wide, shows evidence of original wallpaper with a decorative floral pattern above the dado line.

Opposite the cool room, on the left side, the partitioned storage area leads into the kitchen. The kitchen has been extensively refurbished as a commercial operation with walls tiled to 1.8 metres, stainless steel bench fit-outs, stoves, and expansive stainless steel exhaust canopy. The floor is concrete with tiles. The original pressed metal ceiling remains in situ. The rear wall of the kitchen has been removed to double the space and adjoins a store room that is also part of the west wing. This has concrete floors, hard plaster walls and plasterboard ceilings. The rear verandahs have concrete floors.

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is in fair condition. The roof appears to be in fair to good condition, and the building seems to be structurally sound.

Other than the minimal guttering and roof drainage at the join of the main building and west wing, there are no gutters, downpipes or ground level drainage. The consequent damage from rising damp is evident on the front and north walls. The timber detailing on the front façade is damaged and weathered and in very poor condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION⁸³

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton was erected in 1901 and is one of the oldest extant buildings in the Laverton townsite, having survived the massive redevelopment of the town as a result of the 1970s nickel boom. Other buildings that have survived from the early period of development include the former Warden's Court (1900), the former Police Station and Sergeant's Quarters (1901), the Station Master's Quarters (1903) and the old Laverton School (1906). These buildings are simply designed and constructed, reflecting the character of a remote goldfields town.

Only one place located in the Shire of Laverton has been entered into the Register of Heritage Places; *Mt Margaret Mission Hospital (ruin)* (1897).

Documentary evidence shows that *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was the first permanent hotel of brick construction to be erected in the Laverton townsite. At the time there were four hotels in the town; the British Flag Hotel, the Laverton Hotel, the Grand Hotel and *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*.⁸⁴ Of these, only *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is extant. The Palace Hotel (fmr) (now Desert Inn) was built after to *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*, but still in the early 1900s and continues to operate as a hotel in 2005. The Palace Hotel (fmr) has not been included in the Shire's Municipal Heritage Inventory. As it still operates as a hotel, it has a high level of integrity.

Federation Free Classical Style

There are seven purpose-built hotels in the Goldfields region entered into the State Register: *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* (1896); *Railway Hotel, Kalgoorlie* (1897); *Cornwall Hotel, Boulder* (1898); *British Arms Hotel (fmr), Kalgoorlie* (1899); *Metropolitan Hotel (fmr), Hopetoun* (1901); *York Hotel, Kalgoorlie* (1901); and, *State Hotel (fmr), Gwalia* (1903). The majority of these buildings are two-storey brick structures with some of the elaborate stylistic detailing befitting more prosperous, larger goldfields centres. Only one of the above hotels was designed at least in part in the Federation Free Classical style: *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie*, however the dominant architectural style of this place is Federation Filigree. There are another 15 purpose built hotels in the Federation Free Classical style on the Register, but they are all located in the metropolitan area.

There are another ten notable hotels in the Federation Free Classical style listed in the HCWA database, two of which are located in the Goldfields: Marvel Bar Hotel, Coolgardie (an ornate two-storey example) and the Grand Hotel, Boulder (a simple two-storey building that originally included design elements of the Federation Filigree style eg cast iron panels on the wrap around verandahs).

⁸³ Unless otherwise stated the information in this section has been compiled from the Heritage Council of WA's Online Database, 18/5/2005.

⁸⁴ Theil, op. cit., pp. 656 – 658; *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1901 & 1902; *Laverton Mercury*, 24/8/1901.

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is rare as a single storey example of a purpose built hotel in the Federation Free Classical style, and as an example of a hotel designed in this style in the Goldfields.

Carriage Way

Incorporated into the overall design of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* was the enclosed lane way or carriage way identified through the arched opening in the front façade. The purpose of this carriage way was to provide access for horse drawn carriages to the rear of the building where the stables would have been situated.

Research to date has been unable to locate any other hotels with this type of form.⁸⁵ *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* is therefore the only known remaining example of a hotel designed to incorporate an enclosed carriage way.

This plan form is not, however, unique to *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton*, and was commonly found in commercial warehouses and bulk stores. A number of these types of buildings with the enclosed carriage/lane way incorporated in their design still exist in Fremantle. These include: the former Tolley & Co. building at 5 Pakenham Street (c. 1880; 1893; c. 1901; c. 1984); *W. D. Moore & Co. Building* (1868/1869 to c. 1899); the *Fremantle Furniture Factory* (formerly D. & J. Fowler Ltd) (1900); and, the former Falk & Co. Building at 2 Henry Street (1888/1889; 1896; 1903).⁸⁶

Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton is therefore rare as a hotel that incorporated an enclosed carriage way into its original design.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

It is believed that the large archway in the front elevation of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* formed part of a carriage way rather than a coach room as this was the most common form of this type of construction/design. Photographic evidence also shows that there were buildings hard up on either side of *Hotel Australia (fmr), Laverton* which meant the horse drawn carriages would not have been able to access the rear of the property and the stables. Unfortunately, physical evidence is unable to confirm either an opening at the rear of the carriage way or an intact room space due to the existing stucco on the building. This is an area of further research.

Research to date has been unable to locate any other hotels with an enclosed lane way or carriage way.

Further investigations may reveal the site of the stables and whether any archaeological material remains.

⁸⁵ This has been primarily due to the difficulty of undertaking a search of this nature using the Heritage Council of WA's database.

⁸⁶ Information from City of Fremantle Municipal Heritage Inventory Database.