



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)

- 3.14 Developing an Australian engineering and construction industry
- 8.13 Living in cities and suburbs
- 6.3 Training people for the workplace

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 604 Innovators
- 402 Education and science

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Lexbourne House (fmr) is an excellent example of a grand two storey brick, stucco and tile roof construction villa in the Federation Free style, with a pavilion, external garden walls and a restrained informal landscape setting to the front and south side of the house. It features very fine brickwork, stucco detailing, and leadlight windows and employs elements of the language of classical architecture such as Corinthian columns, decorative entablatures, acroteria, console brackets, dentils, and balustrades with turned balusters. (Criterion 1.1)

Lexbourne House (fmr) is a very fine example of the work of the architectural work of Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry, prominent architects in practice in Perth. (Criterion 1.2)

At the time of its construction, *Lexbourne House (fmr)* was one of the most imposing houses in West Perth. Notwithstanding a number of recent and

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O., *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

substantial developments in the area, *Lexbourne House (fmr)*, set in its garden context remains a substantial architectural statement and retains contextual landmark value as one of the most substantial residences remaining in West Perth. (Criterion 1.3)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Lexbourne House (fmr) was built during a time of prosperity in Western Australia and is one of the more substantial houses built in West Perth, a prestigious residential suburb close to the city of Perth that became popular in the early twentieth century for its elevation and proximity to the city. (Criterion 2.1)

Lexbourne House (fmr) was converted for use as the Government School of Nursing for the Country Training School in 1955 and continued to serve this important function until 1975, when the new School of Nursing in Wellington Street, Perth, replaced it. (Criterion 2.2)

Lexbourne House (fmr) was built for Robert Law, a prominent West Australian builder and entrepreneur in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In partnership with William Atkins, Law was responsible for the construction of a number of prominent buildings and structures throughout Western Australia. Law established a number of brickworks, which were consolidated as Metropolitan Brick (Metro Brick) and was the founder of Monier, the first company in Western Australia to manufacture concrete pipes and concrete roof tiles. (Criterion 2.3)

Lexbourne House (fmr) was designed by the architectural firm of Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry and is one of the more elaborate residential designs of the firm's principle designer, Michael Cavanagh. The firm designed a number of residential, commercial and ecclesiastical buildings throughout Western Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

As a prominent former residence in West Perth, *Lexbourne House (fmr)* contributes to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

With the pressure of development generally in West Perth, which was the product of changes to the planning scheme in the early 1970s, many substantial West Perth residences have been removed to make way for redevelopment. *Lexbourne House (fmr)* is a rare example of a large residence dating from the early twentieth century that remains largely intact in the West Perth area and one of a small number of such substantial

suburban residences from the period to remain and to be in such an intact state externally. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

While being particularly ornate and grand in scale and design, *Lexbourne House (fmr)* is an excellent example of the residential design work of the architectural firm of Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry and is a good example of the skill of the firm's principle designer, Michael Cavanagh. (Criterion 6.1)

Lexbourne House (fmr) is representative of the development of West Perth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a prestigious residential suburb. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

As far as can be ascertained from the property boundaries, the front garden setting, *Lexbourne House (fmr)*, and its garden pavilion are in fair to good condition, while later buildings located to the rear of the house would appear to be in fair to poor condition.

It would appear that external maintenance to *Lexbourne House (fmr)* has been based on sound principles so that the heritage values of the house and to some degree the front garden have been maintained. The gradual development of the rear of the property has caused original garden features to be removed. The cumulative effects of maintenance on the interior have not been ascertained.

Developments to the rear of the site from the 1950s onwards are likely to have disturbed most original and early rear garden features.

It would appear that the house, front gardens and pavilion receive some care and maintenance, as the elements that could be viewed from the street appeared to be in fair to good condition.

The place could not be inspected internally for the preparation of this assessment, and the interior condition is therefore not known. Internal inspection may reveal additional information on the condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Lexbourne House (fmr) was built as a grand residence, but has not served this purpose for over half its existence. However, subsequent uses have not required a great deal of change according to the documentary evidence, apart from kitchen and ablution areas where the servant's stair was removed and changes made to accommodate new requirements. In terms of the presentation of the place, it still reads as a substantial residence externally and to this extent its integrity is moderate to high.

The place could not be inspected internally for the preparation of this assessment, and the interior integrity is therefore not known. Internal inspection may reveal additional information on the integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

From the exterior, much of the fabric appears to be original, while elements such as the side verandah and the pavilion have been infilled to form rooms. These adaptations have retained existing fabric and adapted it. The iron railings have been replaced and paving would appear to be replacement material. Overall the place retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

The place could not be inspected internally for the preparation of this assessment, and the interior authenticity is therefore not known. Internal inspection may reveal additional information on the authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Jacqui Sherriff, Historian.
The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Lexbourne House (fmr) was built for builder and entrepreneur Robert Law in 1911/12 by R Tindale to a design by the architectural firm of Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry. It remained the Law family home until 1954 when it was sold to the State Government and was converted for use as the Government School of Nursing where student nurses from the country received theoretical training and were provided with residential accommodation. Changes at this time included the conversion of the residence to student accommodation and the construction of a training block in the grounds. The majority of the garden features were retained. A three storey accommodation block, designed by the Public Works Department, was added in 1960. The place became known as Lawton Hostel in 1975 when it became a hostel for intellectually disabled persons operated by Mental Health Services. The property was sold into private ownership in 1990, when the 1950s lecture block was demolished and replaced with landscaped gardens. In 2003, the house appears not to be used, while the former teaching block and nurses quarters buildings appear to be in use by the Father Brian Crisis Care Centre.

By 1900, West Perth was one of the more prestigious residential addresses in Perth. Its close proximity to the city and its elevated position south of the railway line made it a much sought after location. In 1906, the 'high land of the city' between Hay Street west and Kings Park was described as 'a very fashionable resort'.¹ Along with Adelaide Terrace and Cottesloe, West Perth was a favoured residential address for many prominent Western Australians.²

Robert Oswald Law purchased a portion of Perth Town Lot H91 on the corner of Colin Street and Colin Grove, West Perth, in May 1910.³ By this time, much of Colin Street was extensively developed with large houses and medium sized houses, interspersed by a few vacant lots, including Law's.⁴

Robert Law came to Western Australia in 1881 to join his father, David Law, in the family building business. The Laws completed a number of building contracts, including bridges, jetties, and railway lines. David Law died in 1886, leaving 19 year old Robert to supervise the construction of a large wharf at Derby. The following year Robert Law constructed the Long Jetty at Fremantle and in partnership with William Atkins successfully tendered for

¹ Year Book of Western Australia, E S Wigg & Son, 1906, p. 202, as cited in C T Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*, Perth City Council, Perth, 1979, p. 245.

² C T Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*, Perth City Council, Perth, 1979, p. 243.

³ Certificate of Title, Volume 463, Folio 128, registered 24 May 1910.

⁴ City of Perth Rate Book, South Ward, 1907, Folio 103; 1911, Folio 119, State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA).

the Perth-Pinjarra Railway which was completed in 1893.⁵ Other prominent works completed by Law and Atkins included the Perth Mint, the Perth Boys' School, Boans Emporium, Perth's drainage and sewerage system⁶, Cue Public Buildings (1895), Fremantle Post Office (1907), One Mile Jetty and Tramway, Carnarvon (1896)⁷ and extensions to the Bunbury and Busselton jetties (1911)⁸.

By 1905, Law was having difficulty sourcing bricks for his building projects and opened his own brickworks on the Helena River.⁹ In 1911, he established Monier Patent Proprietary Company Limited, the first company in Western Australia to manufacture concrete pipes from imported cement. In 1918, his Monier tile plant commenced the manufacture of concrete roof tiles, again from imported cement. Monier was later sold to Hume Pipe Company, but when Portland Cement Co Ltd (later Swan Portland Cement Co) was founded in 1918, Law was appointed chairman of the local board of directors. The company commenced cement production in 1920. In May 1922, Law's various brick works were consolidated as the Metropolitan Brick Company (Metro Brick).¹⁰

Law was the founding president of the Master Builders' and Contractors' Association, which was formed following a series of industrial disputes in the 1890s. He was also a Mason, and member of the Western Australian and South-Western Clubs and the Liberal League. He was President of Amateur Sports Club and a member of Croquet Club for a number of years, though Battye does not make clear whether these were local or State organisations.¹¹

By early 1911, construction of a large residence had commenced on Law's West Perth property, designed by architects Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry.¹² Construction by Mr R Tindale progressed steadily and the *WA Mining, Building and Engineering Journal* noted that 'a special feature of the building is the brick columns and other reinforced work...'.¹³ The City of Perth Rate Book for 1912 records a house and garden valued at £140 on the property.¹⁴ No doubt Mr Tindale welcomed the work, for in mid-1911 the *WA Mining, Building and Engineering Journal* noted that there had been few tenders called for the construction of residences 'during the last six

⁵ Bryce Moore, *From the Ground Up: Bristle, Whittakers and Metro Brick in Western Australian History*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1987, pp. 6,10.

⁶ J S Battye (ed), *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, volume 1, Hussey & Gillingham, Adelaide, 1912, p. 655, (facsimile edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1985).

⁷ Heritage Council of Western Australia Places Database, www.heritage.wa.gov.au, accessed 22 August 2003.

⁸ *WA Mining, Building and Engineering Journal* (WABEJ), 13 August 1911, p. 18.

⁹ Prior to this, Law had established his own saw mills to supply his own timber for construction works.

¹⁰ Moore, op. cit., pp. 42-52.

¹¹ J S Battye (ed), *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, volume 1, Hussey & Gillingham, Adelaide, 1912, p. 655, (facsimile edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1985).

¹² WAMBEJ, 25 February 1911, p. 19.

¹³ WAMBEJ, 25 June 1911, p. 20.

¹⁴ City of Perth Rate Book, South Ward, 1912, folio 120.

months...when it is known that the population is increasing rapidly, and that there are no vacant houses to be obtained'.¹⁵

Michael Cavanagh trained as an architect with the South Australian Public Works Department and studied in London before arriving in Western Australia to set up a branch of his South Australian architectural practice. He went on to become one of the State's best known architects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1900, his younger brother James joined him in partnership in Perth. Herbert Parry joined the firm in 1908. The firm designed many buildings for the Catholic Church, as well as a range of commercial and residential properties.¹⁶

In 1913, Law purchased additional land at the rear of his property on Colin Grove.¹⁷ Another block to the rear along Colin Grove was purchased in 1920.¹⁸ The following year, this rear section was recorded as being vacant.¹⁹

By 1930, the value of the Law's house had increased to £240, indicating that improvements were made to the house at this time.²⁰ In 1940, part Lot H88 was included in the Rate Book as an annotation to the entry for 18 Colin Street, which then comprised 'house and gardens'.²¹

Robert Law died in 1947 and Mrs Law continued to live in the house until 1954 when the property was purchased by the State Government for conversion into a training center for country nurses.²² At this time, the ground floor of the residence comprised a lounge room, smoke room that opened onto a side verandah, living room and kitchen on either side of a wide entry hall, with a recreation room and laundry at the rear. Upstairs comprised bedrooms and bathrooms, with two sleepouts above the side verandah.²³

¹⁵ WAMBEJ, 10 May 1911, p. 19.

¹⁶ I P Kelly, 'Architectural Biography, 1890-1915', prepared as part of degree of Master of Architecture, University of Western Australia, 1991. See also Jane McKenzie 'Michael Cavanagh F.R.I.B.A. Western Australian Architect 1860-1941, His Life, His Philosophies and His Architecture', Architecture Minor Study 400, Curtin University, 1992.

¹⁷ Portion of Town Lot H88, Certificate of Title, Volume 566, Folio 154, registered 15 September 1913.

¹⁸ Portion of Town Lot H88, Certificate of Title, Volume 742, Folio 76, registered 18 May 1920.

¹⁹ City of Perth Rate Book, South Ward, 1921, folio 12. In May 1916, titles to the property (Portion Town Lot H91 and first portion of Town Lot H88) were transferred to his wife, Pauline Bertha Law. Certificates of Title, Volume 462, Folio 128 and Volume 566, Folio 154, registered 19 May 1916.

²⁰ City of Perth Rate Book, South Ward, 1930, folio 73. The value of adjacent properties changed very little during this time, supporting the theory that works were completed to the Law property.

²¹ City of Perth Rate Book, South Ward, 1940, folio 72.

²² Certificates of Title, Volume 463, Folio 128; Volume 566, Folio 154; Volume 742, Folio 76, registered 13 July 1954. Title to the remaining lot (Portion H88) had been transferred to Bertha in 1949. See Certificate of Title, Volume 742, Folio 76, registered 7 February 1949.

²³ Public Works Department Plan, Residence – West Perth, Department of Housing and Works, Drawings On-Line. The plan is damaged with the upper floor diagram incomplete. Details (including date) are also missing.

Survey and sewerage diagrams from the 1950s show the layout of the house and grounds, with the residence set well back from Colin Street with a brick path running from the northern end of the lot on Colin Street to the house and brick building ('Summer House') and gavanised iron aviary on the Colin Grove frontage. A bitumen path/roadway from Colin Grove leads to a brick garage at the rear of the residence. A brick stable and assortment of small brick buildings are located near the garage. The majority of the remainder of the property is fenced open ground, with a stone wall screening a pond, sunken gardens and glass house at the very rear of the property. The property has a high brick wall on both street and rear frontages, and a brick pier and picket fence between it and the adjoining property to the south.²⁴

The Law residence became the West Australian Government School of Nursing in December 1955:

In December the new Government School of Nursing was opened in Colin Street, West Perth, having transferred from Devonleigh Hospital. A large house had been purchased and adapted and new lecture and demonstration rooms etc. constructed at the rear of the premises. The whole unit is most attractive and efficient and it is expected that it will be able to cater for an increased intake of trainees for training in the country hospitals.²⁵

The report of the Principle Matron of the Nursing Branch provides further information on the new School:

The Government School of Nursing, 18 Colin Street, was opened on 5 December. Up-to-date school rooms have been built affording excellent facilities for teaching.

The original building has been extensively renovated and presents a most attractive appearance. The interior of the nurses' home is very comfortable and should do much to attract young girls to nursing as the Home stands in delightful grounds. The situation of the school is ideal in that it is within a few minutes' travel from the centre of the City but being in a quiet area away from traffic disturbances.

In order to accommodate the Nurses from the Country Training Schools attending the Block Sessions, Irwin Court was acquired, this building providing adequate accommodation.²⁶

In the conversion to nurses' quarters, very few internal changes were made to the building. The television lounge, office, pool and recreation room, dining room, kitchen, laundry and maids' dining room was located on the ground floor, while bedrooms (accommodating two to three beds each), office and toilet were located on the upper floor. The existing garage was converted to a maid's change room and store, while the existing pavilion

²⁴ City of Perth, Metropolitan Sewerage, MWSS&DD, Sheet 6, 1956, Cons 4156, SRO; Survey Diagram 22186, Department of Lands and Titles, 22 February 1957. Although these two documents are dated 1956 and 1957 respectively, other documentary sources indicate that they were drawn earlier than this.

²⁵ Annual Report of Commissioner of Public Health for 1955, p. 15, in *Votes and Proceedings of the Western Australian Parliament* (V&P), 1956. Training for country nurses had commenced in Kalgoorlie before moving to Narrogin and then to Devonleigh Maternity Hospital in Anstey Street, Cottesloe. See *The West Australian*, 2 February 1954, p. 1.

²⁶ Report of Principle Matron, Nursing Branch, in Annual Report of Commissioner of Public Health for 1955, p. 81, V&P, 1956.

was converted to offices for the matron and typist. Works included new brickwork, windows and doors.²⁷

The new training school block was a single storey brick and tile building comprising lecture rooms, demonstration rooms, a ward, kitchen and sisters' rooms.²⁸ Landscaping involved the removal of trees and shrubs 'to allow the work to proceed' and the demolition of the glass house. Flower beds and lawns were to be retained where possible.²⁹

While at the Government School of Nursing, student nurses were given theoretical training 'free of the duties and distractions of the Hospital Wards'. Although the system changed over the years, student nurses initially spent four weeks of each year's training at the School.³⁰ Former students of the Government Central School of Nursing were invited to an open day at the new Colin Street school in January 1956. At the time, there were 17 junior trainees and 14 nurses preparing for final examinations at Colin Street.³¹

When the lease on Irwin Court expired in 1960, additional living accommodation was built at 18 Colin Street.³² *The West Australian* described the new building as 'striking quarters' of 'contemporary design [that] will dominate the Government School of Nursing':

The new block will adjoin the existing single storey school building...The new building will be behind an existing lawn and set among trees and shrubs on the site. A sunken garden and fish pond will be retained. The façade will be framed in a rendered surround. A big section of the front will be cement rendered and the rest will be in contrasting panels of glass and brickwork. Two panels of brickwork will carry patterned tiles and the upper panel will also carry the school coat of arms.³³

Designed by the Architectural Department of the Public Works Department, the building comprised a lounge for tutor sisters and library on the ground floor and 26 bedrooms and a sitting room on each of the upper two floors.³⁴

In addition to the pavilion building, features on the site dating from when the place was the Law residence included the aviary, sunken garden, garage and shed (old stables).³⁵

²⁷ Public Works Department, West Perth Nurses Training Centre, Block Plan, Plan of Alterations and Additions to Quarters, Conversion of Existing Garage and Pavilion, PWDWA 34347, September 1954, Department of Housing and Works, Drawings On-Line.

²⁸ Public Works Department, W Perth Nurses Training School, New Training School Block, PWDWA 34347, September 1954, Department of Housing and Works, Drawings On-Line.

²⁹ Public Works Department, West Perth Nurses Training Centre, Block Plan, Plan of Alterations and Additions to Quarters, Conversion of Existing Garage and Pavilion, PWDWA 34347, September 1954, Department of Housing and Works, Drawings On-Line.

³⁰ 'Government School of Nursing Prospectus, n.d., Battye Library. See also undated pamphlet on the Government School of Nursing describing the course and accommodation in Colin Street. Battye Library PR5736/1.

³¹ *The West Australian*, 5 January 1956, p. 12.

³² Annual Report for Nursing Section in Report of the Commissioner of Public Health for 1959, p. 66, V&P, 1960; Annual Report of the Public Works Department, 1960/61, p. 38, V&P, 1962.

³³ *The West Australian*, 21 May 1960, p. 18.

³⁴ *The West Australian*, 21 May 1960, p. 18.

³⁵ Public Works Department, West Perth Nurses Training School, Additions 1960 Block Plan, PWDWA 38170, June 1960, Department of Housing and Works, Drawings On-Line.

After a new School of Nursing was constructed on Wellington Street near Royal Perth Hospital in 1973-75³⁶, the property at 18 Colin Street was passed to Mental Health Services. Known as Lawton Hostel, the place operated as a hostel for intellectually disabled persons.³⁷

As part of the State government's rationalisation of assets, the property was sold to Tipperary Investments in 1990.³⁸ The closure of the place also represented a policy shift away from institutional care for mental health patients. A newspaper reported that \$4.3 million was paid for the property and that the owner intended to retain the original residence, summer house and three-level hostel. The 1950s lecture buildings were to be demolished and replaced with 'ornate gardens and landscaping'. At the time, the residence was described as retaining many of its original fittings, 'as well as polished wood floors, staircases, ornate ceiling and leadlight windows and fireplaces'.³⁹ The uses to which the buildings have been put since that time have yet to be confirmed with the landowner, though it would appear that *Lexbourne House (fmr)* is not currently in use.

Lexbourne House (fmr) was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in 1987 as one of the 'few remaining grand residences of West Perth' retaining the original lot size, gardens and surrounding brick wall, and for its associations with Robert Oswald Law and Michael Cavanagh.⁴⁰ The place was also included in the City of Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory in 2001 for its aesthetic and historic values, with a recommendation that it be considered for entry in the Register of Heritage Places.⁴¹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Lexbourne House (fmr) is a two storey brick, stucco and tile roof construction villa built for Robert Law in 1911 in the Federation Free style⁴², pavilion, garden walls and open landscape setting to the west and south. To the east of these elements lies the single storey former nurses training block, three storey quarters, and large expanses of bitumen paving.

³⁶ Annual Report of the Medical Department, 1973/74, p. 12, V&P, 1975; 1975/76, V&P, 1977. The Government School of Nursing merged with the Royal Perth Hospital School of Nursing to become the Western Australian School of Nursing on 1 July 1975.

³⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Mental Health Services, 1976/77, .60, V&P, 1978. There is no description of the hostel or its operation in any of the annual reports from this time. The 1976/77 reference is for expenses for Lawton Hostel, one of the many hostels operated by Mental Health Services.

³⁸ Certificates of Title, Volume 1820, Folio 660; Volume 1820, Folio 661; Volume 1820, Folio 1662, registered 5 June 1990. In 1998, titles to the properties were registered to the Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons.

³⁹ *The West Australian*, 7 February 1990. The article also reported that the City of Perth placed a bid on the property, with the intention of turning the site into a car park.

⁴⁰ National Trust of Australia (WA), Assessment Exposition for Lawton Hostel, n.d.

⁴¹ City of Perth, Municipal Heritage Inventory, entry for Lawton House, 2001.

⁴² Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989. pp. 136-139.

Landscape elements to the rear of the site were not visible from the property boundary.

At the time of the preparation of the physical evidence, access to the site was not permitted. The evidence in this section has been compiled from plans on the public record, photographs taken from the street, and notes taken while visiting the place and viewing it without accessing the buildings.

Lexbourne House (fmr) is located on the corner of Colin Street and Colin Grove, West Perth, a short distance from Kings Park Road. In the immediate context, there are several late nineteenth and early twentieth century single storey dwellings, a three storey inter war period block of flats, and a number of buildings from single to five and six storey developed from the 1960s to the present. Colin Street is a local thoroughfare and Colin Grove a lightly used street. The road reserve comprises two way bitumen road with kerbside parking, concrete barrier kerbs, narrow grass verges, Queensland Box Trees as street trees, and concrete paving slab footpaths.

Lexbourne House (fmr) has a brick and stucco fence to its front boundary, with wrought steel grilles. The piers are capped with stucco spheres, though some of the caps are missing. The side fence along Colin Grove is a brick garden wall with stucco strings, with a side access gate. The house faces Colin Street and is separated from the street by an expanse of lawn, brick paths, and perimeter garden beds. The principal tree used in the front garden is the Jacaranda, with other trees used including Gums (*Eucalyptus spp.*), Lemon Tree (*Citrus limon*), and Poplar (*Populus alba*). There is a dense line of Hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp.*) along the front fence, with other shrubs and plants including Plumbago (*Plumbago carpensis*), Agapanthus (*Agapanthus africanus*), Dwarf Agapanthus, Roses (*Rosea spp.*), Azalea (*Rhododendron luteum spp.*), Strelizia (*Strelitzia reginae*) and Frangipani (*Plumeria*). Along the side of the house there is Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), Bottlebrush (*Callistemon spp.*), Tecoma (*Tecoma radicans*), and Lavender (*Lavendula spp.*). The landscape style could be described as informal suburban garden with a paradise style approach to plantings.⁴³

From west to east the elements that are visible from the property perimeter include *Lexbourne House (fmr)* to the west, the former pavilion to the south between the property boundary and the house, a large expanse of bitumen in the centre of the site, the three storey former nurses quarters to the north side of the lot, and the single storey training school building. The site of the sunken gardens indicated in the documentary evidence was not visible from the public domain. There was no evidence of the aviary on the southern boundary, and sheds that are indicated in the documentary evidence along the northern boundary could not be seen. As the sunken garden could not be viewed, it is not known whether there is any evidence of the glass house to the east of the property. Its demolition is indicated on plans drawn in 1954 .

⁴³ Richards, O., *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997. pp100-101.

Lexbourne House (fmr) is an asymmetrically planned two-storey residence that employs a range of classical and classically derived designed motifs. The visual focus of the front of the house is the entrance porch and first floor verandah, located at the centre of the front elevation. The plan has a curved front and partly fluted Ionic columns rise from a concrete floor to carry a frieze, which is simply treated with mouldings, and a protruding cornice visually supported with dentils. The fluting terminates on a torus moulding. The classical order change for the first floor, with columns changing from Ionic to Corinthian, with the bottom half of the column fluted. Between the columns there is a masonry balustrade comprising a moulded handrail and turned balusters. The frieze employs run moldings and applied decorative devices such as palmettes and garlands. There is a dentilled cornice set above the frieze with decorative consoles carrying the top of the cornice. In an unusual use of the device, the cornice is terminated with closely spaced arcoteria. A pair of doors set in a deep recess lead off the porch into the entrance hall and these doors are flanked by a set of windows to the south which light the entrance hall. At either end of the porch, four paneled doors with hopper lights over them lead into rooms flanking the hall. To the north of the porch, the elevation is dominated by the chimney breast of fireplaces in the window wall and the chimneys that emerge above eaves level, to join near their tops. Either side of the chimneybreast there are timber framed casement windows at both levels, with stucco sills and architraves. To the south of the porch, the west wall contains a high proportion of windows with sets of five windows en chain, with stucco sills, architraves and pressed cement mullions and transoms. While the verandah has a flat roof, the remaining roof over the house is Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles, with ogee gutters fitted to fascias, with scotias under the gutters. A prominent feature of the roof is the tall brick and stucco chimneys. A two-storey verandah on the south side of the building can also be seen from the front of the building. This is supported on turned timber posts, with the column shafts passing through bands and terminating with Ionic capitals. The upper level has a boarded balustrade, a strip of windows, a curved valance board, fascia beam, dentils, fascia, and fascia gutter.

The two-storey section of the southern elevation is masked by the two-storey verandah as noted above, a single storey flat roofed section extends east of the two-storey section. It has a series of windows set in stucco dressings and architraves and a brick construction wall topped with a castellated parapet.

The rear elevation is simply expressed, with the same detailing that is applied to south elevation. At the centre of the elevation, the place is deeply recessed, and there is a two-storey timber construction verandah and stair set between the two wings.

There was no access available to the interior, but records indicate a central hall and staircase, with rooms arranged around the north and south sides of the building and in the case of the first floor across the front or west side of the building.

Readily visible changes include the infilling of the south verandah, the modification to the rear verandah, including the addition of an external stair.

The Pavilion

The pavilion is a brick and render construction building with a tiled roof. The original construction includes the brick and stucco piers and roof structure. The panels between the piers are rendered brick and this material was introduced in 1954. Windows and doors were let into some panel.

Teaching Block

This is a single storey brick, render and tiled roof building designed in a utilitarian manner, with simple opening treatments in timber framing. It appears to be in fair condition.

Nurses Quarters

The nurses' quarters is a three storey brick and render building with a flat metal deck roof, with timber windows. It is designed in the Late Twentieth Century International style. It is in fair to poor condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Residences designed by Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry include:

- 26 Clive Street, Mount Lawley (1904)
- 35 Queens Crescent, Mount Lawley (c. 1911)
- McLeod Residence, Katanning (1912)
- A number of villas and residences in West Perth, Subiaco, Highgate, Mount Lawley, Broomehill, Muresk, Northam and Gnowangerup between 1904 and 1912.

Michael Cavanagh was the principle designer in the firm and according to Jane McKenzie, *Lexbourne House (fmr)* is the grandest of his residences that is still standing. It departs from his standard house design and is derived from his religious buildings (including St Brigid's Convent, Mercedes House and Redemptorist Monastery in North Perth). The curving lines of the portico are not seen in any other Cavanagh work.⁴⁴

Other buildings designed by the firm include:

- Mercedes School House, Victoria Square, Perth (1896; recommended for RHP)
- Great Western Hotel (Brass Monkey), William Street, Perth (1896; RHP)
- P&O Building, High Street, Fremantle (1896; recommended for RHP)
- St Brigid's Convent, John Street, Northbridge (1897; RHP)
- St Kevin's Industrial School for Boys, Glendalough (1897)
- 20 houses for the Catholic Church, Highgate (1897)
- St Patrick's Church, Fremantle (1898; RHP)
- Central Fire Station, Murray Street, Perth (1900; RHP)
- St Brigid's Church, Fitzgerald Street, Northbridge (1904; recommended for RHP)
- Catholic Church, Bindoon (1909; recommended RHP)

⁴⁴ Jane McKenzie 'Michael Cavanagh F.R.I.B.A. Western Australian Architect 1860-1941, His Life, His Philosophies and His Architecture', Architecture Minor Study 400, Curtin University, 1992.

- The transepts and sanctuary of St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Perth

There are sixty residences on the Register of Heritage Places constructed between 1900 and 1920, most of which are single storey residences. Most large architect-designed houses constructed in the period in Western Australia were variants of the Federation Bungalow, Queen Anne, Arts and Crafts and Filigree styles. Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry were producing buildings in most of the styles of the day, including Federation Gothic at the period. Houses designed by Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Parry at this period employed many of these stylistic characteristics, especially apparent in the other examples of their work that have been identified in Mount Lawley heritage areas. The choice of the free use of classical motifs at *Lexbourne House (fmr)* was unusual for its time.

Once a prestigious residential suburb characterized by large houses primarily constructed during the Federation period, West Perth has undergone substantial redevelopment in the last few decades. Many residences have been demolished to make way for 'modern' office accommodation and the majority of those that remain have been substantially altered to accommodate commercial tenancies. Many have been subdivided or are crowded by newer buildings on the same lot. *Lexbourne House (fmr)* is unusual in that it retains many of its original features (both within the main residence and grounds) and continues to occupy the original lot, despite the addition of a three-storey accommodation block in 1960.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The place could not be inspected internally for the preparation of this assessment, and the interior condition is therefore not known. Inspection may reveal additional information about the significance of the place.

Internal access to all of the buildings would provide a better understanding of condition, authenticity and the manner in which the various buildings operated. Though not the reason for its primary significance, further research might reveal the role of the place in the broad context of mental health care in the State and the way in which a mental health hostel operated.