



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.4.2 Fishing and whaling
- 3.12.4 Preserving food and beverages

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 305 Fishing and other maritime industry
- 310 Manufacturing and processing
- 501 World wars and other wars
- 605 Famous and infamous people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The rhythm of the wide brick piers, regular bays and large multi-paned timber windows of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* create a simple utilitarian building that is a good example of a single story factory building in the Post-War International style. (Criterion 1.1)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a landmark on Norseman Road, the main approach into Esperance, where the road meets the Esperance foreshore. (Criterion 1.3)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is an important component of a precinct of utilitarian port and maritime buildings that contribute to the precinct along the Esperance foreshore. (Criterion 1.4)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is representative of the State and Commonwealth governments policies of post-war reconstruction through the decentralisation of industries and distribution of populations away from Metropolitan centres. (Criterion 2.1)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is representative of the research and improved understanding of Western Australia's fishing grounds from the 1940s. (Criterion 2.2)

The operation of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* is indicative of the impact of modern technologies, such as aeroplanes, vehicles, motorboats, and improved processing techniques, on Western Australia's fishing industries. (Criterion 2.2)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is representative of the re-use of ex-army equipment, such as Tiger Moth planes, Blitz trucks, Bren Carriers and camouflage nets for peace-time production and industry. (Criterion 2.2)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) was established by Daniel Samuel Hunt, an ex-Water policeman and contractor, who established a number of fish canneries throughout Western Australia, but particularly in its south, in the late-1940s. Hunt has been recognised for having a significant and positive impact upon Western Australia's fish canning industry in the post-World War II period. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a reference site for the understanding of the development of the fish canning industry. (Criterion 3.1)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) contributes important information to the understanding of the development of fishing and fish processing in Esperance and the southern part of the State. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is valued by the community of Esperance as indicated by the community's support for its retention (in the 1970s) and its inclusion in the Shire's Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is rare as an extant example of a fish cannery in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is rare for being a fish cannery which has been highlighted by the local government as being of cultural heritage significance. While there may be other similar places (site of, or extant) in Western Australia, few have been recognised by the local governments, thereby indicating the importance of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* to the local community. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a representative example of the simple utilitarian type of building which was used for fish canning in the mid-twentieth century. (Criterion 6.1)

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a representative of the decentralisation of Western Australia's industries in the post-World War II period. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is in good condition and is well presented. The brick walls, large timber posts and roof structure of the original building appear sound. The building had a campaign of renovation and adaptation in the 1980s when the roof sheeting was replaced and the interior partitioned. The building is currently well used as an arts centre and appears to be reasonably well maintained.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) displays a moderate degree of integrity. The place is no longer used for its original and intended purpose of fish canning Factory, however, the original intent of the building is legible and if required, the building could easily be restored to its original form. The current use of arts centre and gallery is a compatible use that would lend itself to interpretative elements.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) displays a moderate degree of authenticity. The place retains its original structure and most of its external form. The original large open internal space has been partitioned but the gallery gives an idea of the large volume of the original space. Important elements that have been modified include the windows and large doors. The roof sheeting has been replaced and the original ridge vent is no longer extant.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by the State Heritage Office, in April 2014. The physical evidence was prepared by Lynne Farrow Architects in December 2013.

Amendments and/or additions have been carried out by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a single story brick and corrugated iron utilitarian building in the Post-War International style, constructed in 1948 for Daniel Samuel Hunt.

In the post-World War Two period, the Government of Western Australia focused on reconstructing its economy through promoting and supporting a more industrialised and self-sufficient State.¹ As early as 1942, the Commonwealth Government was preparing for the transition to a peace-time economy with the establishment of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. In Western Australia, the primary concerns were for the need to broaden and expand industries and to find or provide employment for those servicemen returning from war.²

As a way to promote Australia-wide economic development and growth, in September 1945, the Commonwealth Government came to a joint agreement with Australia's State and Territory governments to fund the establishment of industries away from metropolitan areas. This decentralisation policy, in essence, aimed to evenly distribute industries across the country, thereby providing the opportunity for regional areas to grow and prosper, as well as providing much needed employment in those regions.³

In Western Australia, decentralisation of industries was particularly appropriate as post-war immigration had caused the State's population to dramatically increase, and decentralisation facilitated the distribution of population across the State. The Government's policy was to establish industries in close proximity to the raw materials they needed, resulting in industries, and subsequently employment opportunities, being established across rural Western Australia. Although it is now difficult to identify specific places established because of the 1945 decentralisation policy, some known projects include the establishment of a charcoal iron plant and refinery at Wundowie, an alunite plant near Merredin, a pyrite mine at Norseman, and a phosphate rock mine on the Abrolhos Islands.⁴

By 1949, just four years after the decentralisation policy was introduced, the State Government was arguing that the policy should be maintained, as it not only

1 Ellery, Peter, '1945-1960' in Firkins, Peter (ed), *A History of Commerce and Industry in Western Australia* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands: 1979), pp. 118, 119., Gnosh, R. N., 'Economic Development and Population Growth in Western Australia since 1945', in Stannage, C. T. (ed), *A New History of Western Australia* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands: 1981), pp.270, 271.

2 Ellery, '1945-1960' in Firkins (ed), *A History of Commerce and Industry in Western Australia* (1979), p.119.

3 'Joint Action to Decentralise Industry', *Advocate*, 24 August 1945, p.5.

4 'State's Economy: Second Industry. Extension Plans Outlined', *The West Australian*, 13 August 1943, p.6.

provided considerable produce for export, but also reasonable employment for people located in isolated regions. During this discussion, the Minister for Industrial Development and Acting Premier, Hon A. F. Watts, noted that Western Australia's fish canning industry was a prime example of the successes of decentralisation. The Acting Premier highlighted the efforts of one man, Mr Dan Hunt, to be particularly significant to the successes of the fish canning industry in Western Australia.⁵

In 1948, Daniel Samuel Hunt was responsible for establishing *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, and between 1946 and 1949, he was also responsible for establishing canneries at Albany, Hopetoun, and Geraldton.⁶

Although research has been able to locate little biographical information regarding Hunt, local histories and contemporary newspapers suggest that prior to the period he was establishing fish canneries, Hunt was employed as a Water Policeman in Fremantle, and worked as a contractor for military infrastructure around Darwin (including Batchelor Demonstration Farm) and the North West.⁷

The reason behind Hunt's move into the fishing industry is not clear, however in the late 1940s, the potential of the native salmon (*Arripis truttaceus*) to the fishing industry in Western Australia became apparent, and it was likely this opportunity which attracted Hunt to the fish canning industry. While fish canning had become an almost extinct practice in Western Australia prior to the 1940s, most likely due to the previously unsuccessful attempts to exploit its marine stock, research undertaken by the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (later the CSIRO) and the State's Fisheries Department revealed the potential of the Western Australia's fishing grounds.⁸ Investigations found that the catching and canning of Australian fish had the potential to generate an estimated £1,500,000 a year, reduce the reliance upon imported fish from overseas, as well as provide employment for thousands of Australian men and women.⁹

Hunt's first cannery was located in Albany, and its construction, in late 1946, was supported by the Minister for Industries and Director of the Industrial Development Committee. Its establishment was noted to be a significant step towards the decentralisation of industry in the State,¹⁰ and the cannery was opened in March 1947 by the Premier, Hon F. J. S. Wise.¹¹ The Premier's presence, while also

5 Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, 11 August 1949. Sourced from [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19490811_Assembly.pdf/\\$File/19490811_Assembly.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19490811_Assembly.pdf/$File/19490811_Assembly.pdf). Accessed on 16 December 2013.

6 Place Record for 'Hopetoun Fish Cannery', in *Shire of Ravensthorpe: Municipal Heritage Inventory* (1998), p.490., 'Geraldton Cannery Sold', *Geraldton Guardian*, 5 August 1948, p.2.

7 'Fremantle Water Policeman: Charged with Unlawful Possession', *Western Argus*, 19 October 1926., 'Dynamite Under His Bed', *The Daily News*, 23 September 1941, p. 19., 'Men From Army Opposed', *Northern Standard*, 8 August 1941, p. 3., Drummond, Sarah, *Seasons of Abundance: A look at the salmon fishing industry of the Albany region* (self-published, Albany: 2005), p. 10.

8 'Fish Cannery. Opened By Premier', *Albany Advertiser*, 10 March 1947, p.8., 'Industrial Development', *The West Australian*, 3 June 1941, p.6.

9 'Industrial Development', *The West Australian*, 3 June 1941, p.6., 'Fish Canning Industry. Need or Development in Australia', *The Mercury*, 28 January 1941, p.3., Drummond, *Seasons of Abundance* (2005), p. 25.

10 'Fish Canning. Albany Establishment', *The West Australian*, 20 September 1946, p.14.

11 'Fish Cannery. Opened By Premier', *Albany Advertiser*, 10 March 1947, p.8.

indicating the importance of the cannery to the State, acknowledged the State's investment of £10,000 in the project.¹²

The canning and preserving of food products had been vitally important to Western Australians from an early date, as without fresh provisions, early settlers relied heavily on preserved goods to survive. The canning of produce prevented spoilage (through mould and bacteria), while also extending its storage time enormously. Canning was a preferred method, rather than preserving in glass jars for example, because it provided total protection against insects, light, and gases, as well as being tamperproof and convenient for storage.¹³ Canning fish in Western Australia allowed for it to be easily transported throughout the State and into remote regional areas.

By 1948, Dan Hunt's business was doing well. In August 1947 he made the newspapers with his purchase of a new Ford De Luxe Sedan,¹⁴ and in 1948 he opened three new canneries, at Hopetoun, Geraldton and Esperance.

In August 1948, construction was underway on Hunt's Esperance Cannery.¹⁵ The building is noted to have been constructed in just one week, to the design of architect Alan Adams.¹⁶ *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* began operating in December 1948. The fishing team combined aerial spotting (with the use of a Tiger Moth plane and former RAAF pilot, Bob Cooper) with air radio communication to identify and catch fish, thereby eliminating the 'hit-and-miss method' of the pre-war days. Hunt's team also used ex-army Blitz trucks and Bren Carriers as an innovative way of transporting fish from inaccessible beaches, and former army camouflage nets to haul fish.¹⁷

The use of ex-army equipment was not uncommon following the end of World War II as the Commonwealth Government disposed of a large quantity of surplus defence equipment and materials in the immediate post-war years. Surplus equipment was firstly offered to other Commonwealth and State departments, and then to the public, with primary producers¹⁸ (such as the fishing industry) given preference.¹⁹ A majority of disposals were allocated to rural areas (for example

12 'Fish Cannery. Opened By Premier', *Albany Advertiser*, 10 March 1947, p.8.

13 Peter, Fellows (ed), *Traditional Foods: Processing for Profit* (Intermediate Technology Publication, London: 1997), p.4.

14 '32 New Cars Bring Month's Total To 76', *The Daily News*, 22 August 1947, p. 7.

15 'Items of News: Esperance Cannery', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 25 August 1948, p.4.

16 Young, Victoria, 'Cannery Arts Centre: From Fish to Fine Arts', *Esperance Express*, 7 March 2000, p.11.

17 'Esperance Cannery: First Haul of Fish', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21 December 1948, p.2. 'Items of News: Fishing at Esperance', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 20 September 1948, p.4., 'Money from the Sea', *Western Mail*, 29 July 1948, p.12., Drummond, *Seasons of Abundance* (2005), p. 9., Phone conversation between Sian Ferraz, State Heritage Office, and John Drummond, ex-employee of Hunt's Albany Fish Cannery, on 19 March 2014.

18 Primary producers or industries are those industries which extract raw materials from the earth or produces basic foods, such as agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing. The packaging and processing of raw materials (such as fishing and fish canning) is also considered to be a primary industry. Secondary producers or industries are those industries which deal with the manufacture of goods, such as metal works, automobile production, engineering and construction. Rosenberg, Matt, 'Sectors of the Economy: Primary, Secondary, Quaternary, and Quinary', sourced from <http://geography.about.com/od/urbaneconomicgeography/a/sectorseconomy.htm>. Accessed on 28 April 2014.

19 Butlin, S. F. and Schedvin, C. B., *War Economy 1942-1945* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra: 1977), pp. 794, 795.

70% of vehicles between 1944 and 1949 were allocated to rural areas),²⁰ and it is very likely that Hunt, like many other rural producers, acquired the cannery's ex-army equipment through this disposal process.

The use of modern technologies, such as aeroplanes, vehicles and motor boats, as well as improved canning methods, impacted significantly on Western Australia's fishing industry. In terms of the catching and canning of fish, these technologies enabled Australian and Western Australian fish to become profitable and reach distant markets.²¹

Despite its convenient location opposite Esperance's main export jetty (P831 *Tanker Jetty*), the fishing boats for *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* did not berth at Esperance, but rather, after catching their fish to the east of Esperance at Cape Le Grand and Israelite Bay, transported their catch via road to the cannery.²² The success of the cannery's operation was well documented by the local press, which reported that a haul of about eight tons was caught on the first day. Within five hours, the fish were transported to *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* where they were processed and canned within twelve hours of arrival. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* regarded the operation 'as a strong argument in favour of decentralising the fishing industry'.²³

It is likely that *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* functioned much like Hunt's other canneries around the State, whereby once caught, the fish were canned in their own juices with salt. The can was then vacuum crimped to take out the air, sealed and cooked with steam.²⁴ From *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* the canned fish was then transported to Perth via rail,²⁵ which was conveniently located about a kilometre to the south of the cannery. Hunt's canneries were reported as utilising the most modern methods of catching, treating and canning of fish.²⁶

While it is almost certain that *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* would have employed local residences, including professional fishermen, it is also likely that Hunt would have employed returned servicemen (like the former RAAF pilot employed to fly the Tiger Moth plane), and particularly considering the use of ex-army vehicles. From 1947, the Commonwealth provided training for ex-servicemen from all States to enable them to become commercial fishermen, fisheries administrators

20 Butlin, and Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945* (1977), pp. 799, 797.

21 Harrison, Anthony J, 'The Development of Australian Fisheries Management: A Historical Perspective 1800-1990', sourced from <http://www.users.on.net/~ahvem/page1/page103/page99/page99.html>. Accessed on 17 December 2013., Harrison, Anthony J, 'The Factors and pressures Affecting Sustainability', sourced from <http://www.users.on.net/~ahvem/page1/page103/page102/page102.html>. Accessed on 17 December 2013.

22 'Good Haul of Salmon', *The West Australian*, 11 January 1949, p.10., 'Salmon for Cannery: Bad Tracks to Israelite Bay', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 July 1949, p.1.

23 'Esperance Cannery: First Haul of Fish', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21 December 1948, p.2.

24 Place Record for 'Hopetoun Fish Cannery', in *Shire of Ravensthorpe: Municipal Heritage Inventory* (1998), p.490. Images of this process are available to be viewed at: [http://henrietta.slwa.wa.gov.au/search~S2?/X\(hopetoun+fish\)&searchscope=2&SORT=D/X\(hopetoun+fish\)&searchscope=2&SORT=D&SUBKEY=\(hopetoun+fish\)/1%2C2%2C2%2CB/frameset&FF=X\(hopetoun+fish\)&searchscope=2&SORT=D&2%2C2%2C#.UrDqTqSQ-N4](http://henrietta.slwa.wa.gov.au/search~S2?/X(hopetoun+fish)&searchscope=2&SORT=D/X(hopetoun+fish)&searchscope=2&SORT=D&SUBKEY=(hopetoun+fish)/1%2C2%2C2%2CB/frameset&FF=X(hopetoun+fish)&searchscope=2&SORT=D&2%2C2%2C#.UrDqTqSQ-N4).

25 Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, 11 August 1949. Sourced from [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19490811_Assembly.pdf/\\$File/19490811_Assembly.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19490811_Assembly.pdf/$File/19490811_Assembly.pdf). Accessed on 18 December 2013.

26 'Money from the Sea', *Western Mail*, 29 July 1948, p.12.

and inspectors. It was noted that this scheme represented the Commonwealth's recognition of the value of the fishing industry in Australia's post-war economy. While Hunt's employees may not have been trained at a Commonwealth Fisheries Training School, ex-servicemen were noted to be eager to enter the professional fishing industry, and it is possible that Hunt employed some of these returned servicemen at Esperance.²⁷

Hunt's fishing team at *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* continued to catch large hauls, primarily of salmon but also herring (*Arripis georgianus*), during early 1949. In January, 24 tons of salmon were caught in one day, and on another day in July, 23 tons were caught.²⁸

By July 1949, however, Hunt was making complaints to the Esperance Roads Board about the poor state of the roads. The transportation of fish from Israelite Bay to *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* had become disastrous, with fish having to be dumped along the journey to ensure that the carts didn't get bogged on the swampy bush road.²⁹

In July 1949, despite the abundance of salmon present at that time, *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* temporarily closed due to the poor condition of the roads and the high costs of transport.³⁰ In August 1949 the matter was brought to the attention of the Minister for Works, who advised that the Esperance Roads Board had allocated £1,000 for the improvement of this road, but lacked the means to actually do the work themselves. The Minister noted that the Main Roads Department would assist, however there would be unavoidable delays.³¹

Although *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* was open again by November 1949, its operation didn't last, and it appears that the facility closed permanently before the end of 1950.³² It is assumed that the Esperance facility closed because the Albany cannery was much more successful. By 1951, the Albany facility was canning 50,000 cans a day and employed 120 staff, and it made sense to centralise the business in one location.³³

While the Albany Fish Cannery continued to operate well into the 1970s, when regulations protecting Hunt's monopoly of the south coast were lifted, *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* sat vacant until 1969 when Hunt's lease of the building was cancelled.³⁴ After that time, the building was leased for a variety of purposes, such as a welding and metal work business, and as a dry cleaners.³⁵

27 'Studying Secrets of the Fishing Industry', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1947, p.2.

28 'Good Haul of Salmon', *The West Australian*, 11 January 1949, p.10., 'Salmon for Cannery: Bad Tracks to Israelite Bay', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 July 1949, p.1.

29 'Salmon for Cannery: Bad Tracks to Israelite Bay', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 July 1949, p.1., 'Closing of Cannery: Cost of Transport Too High', *The West Australian*, 25 July 1949, p.4.

30 'Closing of Cannery: Cost of Transport Too High', *The West Australian*, 25 July 1949, p.4.

31 'Esperance Cannery: Minister Questioned Regarding Road', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 August 1949, p.1.

32 'Salmon at Esperance', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21 November 1949, p.4. Plunkett, Christine, *The Renovations and Restoration History of the Old Cannery Arts Centre* (student project: undated).

33 Drummond, *Seasons of Abundance* (2005), p. 11., Phone conversation between Sian Ferraz, State Heritage Office, and John Drummond, ex-employee of Hunt's Albany Fish Cannery, on 19 March 2014.

34 Western Australian Land Information Authority, 'Esperance Lot 291: Lease No. 2362, Hunt Daniel Samuel, Duration of Lease 1 July 1954 to 30 June 1969'.

35 Drummond, *Seasons of Abundance* (2005), p. 11., Plunkett, *The Renovations and Restoration History of the Old Cannery Arts Centre* (undated), 'Fishy Beginnings For Centre', *Esperance Express* (undated).

Following the end of the lease, and prior to the Shire of Esperance taking over the management of the property in 1976, Main Roads Western Australia proposed demolishing the building to make way for a road. This proposal was opposed by the local community, who raised \$1,200 to renovate the building. The road proposal was abandoned and the building was from that time used as a youth centre.³⁶

In the 1980s, with funding assistance from the Instant Lottery Development Arts and Culture Fund and the Youth, Sports and Recreation Department, *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* was converted into an arts centre. The arts centre was opened in 1984.³⁷

In 1996, *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* was recognised for its heritage significance through its inclusion in the Shire of Esperance's Municipal Heritage Inventory.

In 2014, *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* continues to be used as a community arts centre.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a single story brick and corrugated iron utilitarian building in the Post-War International style, constructed in 1948 for Daniel Samuel Hunt.³⁸

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is located on Crown Reserve 34219 at Lot 1018 Norseman Road, on the southern corner of Jetty Road, about 2 km to the north-east of the town centre of Esperance, and just to the north of P831 *Tanker Jetty, Esperance*. For a short length in front of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, Norseman Road runs along the foreshore of Esperance Bay. The front façade of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* is located close to the road boundary and faces east to overlook the Bay.

The front façade of *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* is composed of 4 equal bays, defined by three wide brick pilasters which support internal trusses. The three southern bays each contain a large 12 pane timber window, with the head of the window at the level of the roof plate. The windows were originally 8 pane, and the lower row of panes was added in the 1980s. The northernmost bay also has a timber window, which is smaller than those adjacent and has a lower head. It replaced an original large door seen in the early photograph of the place. The brickwork of this façade is painted brown, while the other façades are painted white. There is no evidence of the original ridge ventilator evident in historic photographs.

The north (side) façade is constructed of painted brick to plate height and the gable is clad with horizontal fibre cement boards, replacement fabric for the original vertical cladding, which was probably asbestos cement as was the roof

³⁶ 'Fishy Beginnings For Centre', *Esperance Express* (undated).

³⁷ 'Fishy Beginnings For Centre', *Esperance Express* (undated)., Plunkett, *The Renovations and Restoration History of the Old Cannery Arts Centre* (undated).

³⁸ Style terms are taken from Apperly, Richard, Irving, Robert, Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

sheeting. There is a central pilaster underneath the ridge line. On the eastern half is a large section of new brickwork which delineates the position of the former sliding doors shown on the early photograph. There is a pair of flush panel doors at the west side of this panel and a double hung timber sash window about a metre to the east of the doors.

The rear façade was originally very similar to the front façade, composed of four equal bays separated by wide brick piers. The original 8 pane windows are located in each of the northern and two southern bays, and a double flush panel door is located in the second bay from the north. A verandah has been added along the whole of the west façade within which a glass porch has been constructed in front of the double door. A small living room has been constructed at the south end of the verandah, with external access from the north and the verandah roof is hipped as it returns around the south-west corner.

The main plane of the south (side) façade mirrors the north façade, with a brick wall surmounted by a boarded gable. On the west side of the ridge, within the gable, is a large 8 paned window with a sloping head that follows the line of the bargeboard.

A long skillion section that projects forward in the centre of the façade contains the toilets and store, and abuts the introduced enclosure of the south-west corner which projects slightly forward from it. Both projections are clad with horizontal fibre cement boards. At the east end is a narrow enclosed metal porch in front of a set of double doors. A break in between these two elements allows for the external access to the male toilet.

The interior of the building was originally a large open space of about 18 metres by 18 metres, with sloping concrete floors to enable the floor to be easily cleaned. The wall finish of all interior brickwork is rough plaster with a smooth plastered wainscoting to about 1.2 metres high. This is likely to be original. The original ceiling was unlined and the four bay roof structure exposed. The central ridge runs in a north-south direction and is supported by three large (175 x 175) equally spaced jarrah posts, which also support three perpendicular trusses.

This large space has been divided at the ridge line with a fibre cement lined timber framed wall to create a gallery across the rear (western) half of the building. The southern half of the building has two additional partitions at the first and third truss, to form an office on the north-east corner and a meeting room on the south-east corner. The remaining two bay space between these rooms is a large workshop. All the internal partitions are timber framed with battened fibre cement linings. The ceilings to the office, workshop and meeting room are 3.3 metres high and are lined in the same material (as the fabric is documented to have been installed in the late 80s it is highly unlikely to contain asbestos). The floors across all the rooms of the eastern half of the building are the original concrete, now covered in carpet. The extent of the slope of the floor is particularly noticeable in the skirting of the east wall of the meeting room.

The office is a long room about 4.5 metres by 9 metres. There is a double timber entrance door near the west end of the north wall, with a small double hung timber sash window adjacent. These and the brickwork surrounding them were installed in the place of an original large sliding metal door seen in the early photograph of the place. There is a three fixed pane window on the east wall, in

the place of an original large door. A double door in the centre of the west wall has a step up to the raised timber floor of the gallery and there is a single door at the west end of the south wall into the workshop.

The workshop is a large space, about 9 metres square. There are two large 12 pane timber windows on the south wall. There is a single flush panel timber door on each of the internal walls.

The meeting room is about the same size as the office, 9 metres long by 4.6 metres wide. There is a 12 pane timber window on the east wall and a double flush panel timber door towards the east end of the south wall. There is a single flush panel door at the north end of the west wall, with a step at the threshold onto the raised gallery floor, and a similar door in the centre of the north wall. Kitchen cupboards and a single bowl stainless steel sink dating from about the 1950s/60s, and recycled in the 1980s, have been introduced to the west end of the meeting room to form a kitchen, and there is a serving hatch with a vinyl concertina door adjacent to the door in the west wall.

The gallery is a large space, 9 metres wide by about 18 metres long. The raised 75 mm jarrah floor was introduced in the 1980s and is about 195 mm above the original concrete floor. There is a high level window in three of the bays on the west wall - the first (southern), second and fourth bays. The four upper panels of the windows are visible, - the four lower panels have been boarded over, but are visible on the external face of the wall. A double flush panel door in the third bay (second from the north) appears original.

The east wall is lined with fibreboard and has two doors – the double door into the office and a single door into the kitchen/meeting room. A third door into the workshop has been boarded over but is visible in the workshop.

At the south end of the room a timber framed plasterboard partition has been constructed in front of the entrance to the female toilet and store. There is a high level window with a raked head in the east side of the south wall.

The ceiling rakes off the west wall at about 18-20 degrees and is lined with spaced metal battening. Three large trusses span the ceiling, each with two struts and two vertical rods. The bottom chord is 230 mm deep. An additional brace (composed of a pair of 145 x 50 timber members) between the struts springs from each post about a metre below the bottom chord. Cross bracing between the posts is visible between the trusses on the east wall.

A gallery lighting system has been installed in this room.

The female toilets and store are accessed off the south wall of the gallery but are constructed within the skillion of the south façade. The floor level is at the level of the original floor and therefore there is a step of about 195 mm at the threshold of the gallery. The female toilet has two cubicles. Mosaic tiles have been laid on top of the original concrete floor. The brick wall on the north wall of both rooms is painted concrete and the other walls and the ceilings are lined with battened fibre cement sheeting.

The building is in good condition and well presented. A programme of maintenance is organised by the administrators of the Art Centre.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr) is a single story brick and corrugated iron utilitarian building in the Post-War International style, constructed in 1948 for Daniel Samuel Hunt.

Canneries

There are five places, including *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, in the State Heritage Office database with a recorded use of 'Cannery'. These are:

- P5000 Dehydration and Canning Factory, Donnybrook (1943) – The original jarrah framed factory with concrete floors with fibro-asbestos walls has been incorporated into a larger hardware store. The factory is noted as an important war time secondary industry, and housed the first cool store in Donnybrook.
- P11732 Canning Factory Site, Shark Bay (1912) – Little remains of the factory except a small area of concrete close to two trees.
- P14052 Jardacuttup Fish Cannery, Hopetoun (1945) – Little remains of the original corrugated iron building, just the cement floor. Dan Hunt was also associated with this place, having purchased in before relocating the business to Hopetoun (see below) in 1948.
- P14053 Hopetoun Fish Cannery, Hopetoun (1948) – A large corrugated iron factory building, built by Dan Hunt on the site of the old railway station on Hopetoun Esplanade. The Cannery took mainly salmon, garfish and herring. The Cannery closed in 1951; it is unknown whether any of the building remains, as the Municipal Inventory notes that the building materials were sold.

None of these places have been reviewed by the Register Committee.

A search of the Western Australian Postal Directories online lists two potentially relevant trades under the headings of 'Fish Preservers' and 'Canners', which makes it difficult to identify those fish preservers who canned fish, and those cannery who were canning fish rather than other produce.³⁹

From 1895 to 1900, the trade 'Fish Preserver' is listed as its own trade in the Post Office Directories, however from 1901, it is included under the heading 'Preservers – Fish & Fruit' and later 'Preservers', which makes it less clear which businesses preserved fish, and which preserved other goods. In 1895, the directory records three fish preserving works, all located in Mandurah. This increased to six listings in 1896, including an additional one in Mandurah, plus a preserver in Perth (possibly offices) and another in Pinjarra.

Mandurah continued to be the centre of the fish preserving industry through late 1890s to about the mid-1910s, when the total number of fish preservers/preservers dropped to three in 1920, two in 1930 and three in the

³⁹ Information compiled from 'The Western Australian Post Office Directories' (1893-1949), sourced from State Library of Western Australia, http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/wa_resources/post_office_directories. Accessed on 17.09.2013

1940s. Across this period, other preservers, outside of Mandurah, occasionally appear in the directories, such as WA Turtle and Fish Preserving Co. in Fremantle (1901) and Turtle Curing Co. in Broome (1903). It is unknown if any of these facilities are still extant. Further research may reveal such information.⁴⁰

The first entries for 'Canners' in the Postal Directory occurred in 1933, with two Canners at Cossack, and one at Geraldton. By 1940, neither the Cossack nor Geraldton Canners appear in the directories, however, a canning and packing works is recorded as operating at James St, Perth, and another canner in Rivervale. The period from 1940 to 1949, Canners recorded in the Post Office Directories slowly grow in number. In 1942 just one canner is recorded (at Rivervale), and by 1949 there are five (Geraldton, North Perth, Rivervale, Kalgoorlie (possibly offices) and Beaconsfield).⁴¹

Analysis of the Western Australia Postal Directories has not been able to firmly establish the size or successfulness of the Western Australian fish canning industry. It should be noted that none of the fish canneries identified in the State Heritage Office database appeared in the postal directories, which suggests that the postal directories reflect an incomplete list of fish canneries.

The lack of other fish canneries in the State Heritage Office database reflects the lack of fish canneries recognised as being of cultural heritage significance in local municipal inventories. Although this may be because there are few extant fish canneries left, it may also be because they are not considered to be important by the local community. Interestingly, Hunt's fish cannery in Albany was much more successful than *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, however it has not been included in the City of Albany's Municipal Inventory (site of, or otherwise), thereby suggesting that the cannery and its operation was not subsequently considered to be very important to the local community. While *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* only operated for two years, it has been consistently viewed as important by the local people.

Daniel Samuel Hunt & Hunt's Canneries

Excluding *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, only two places associated with Daniel Samuel Hunt are entered in to the State Heritage Office database. These are:

- P14052 Jardacuttup Fish Cannery, Hopetoun (1945).
- P14053 Hopetoun Fish Cannery, Hopetoun (1948).

Hunt was also known to be associated with a fish cannery in Albany, as well as one in Geraldton,⁴² however it is not known if either of these places is extant, as neither are included in their respective local Municipal Inventories.

This analysis suggests *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)* to be rare as an extant fish cannery in Western Australia and additionally rare for its association with Daniel Samuel Hunt, a man who has been recognised as having a significant and

⁴⁰ Information compiled from 'The Western Australian Post Office Directories' (1893-1949), sourced from State Library of Western Australia, http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/wa_resources/post_office_directories. Accessed on 17.09.2013

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² 'Local and General', *Albany Advertiser*, 12 August 1948, p. 6.

positive impact upon Western Australia's the fish canning industry in the post-World War II period.

Western Australian Fishing Industry

Excluding the fish canneries noted above, the State Heritage Office database includes 99 places associated with the fishing industry, 26 of which are on the State Register. The results includes Whaling Stations, Tryworks (the boiling of whale blubber), Whalers' or Sealers' Ovens, places associated with the pearling industry, jetties, factories, residences of people involved with the fishing industry, and are located predominantly in Albany and Broome, but also Exmouth, Fremantle, Irwin, Mandurah, Ravensthorpe, Roebourne and Shark Bay.

Some of those places entered in to the State Register include:

- P1796 *Whaling Station (fmr), Cheyne Beach, Albany* (1846)
- P15513 *Mouchmore's Cottage and Net Shed, Albany* (1850)
- P299 *Pa Norman's House, Broome* (1910)
- P5250 *Sailmakers' Shed (fmr), Broome* (1907)
- P4231 *Norwegian Bay Whaling Station, Exmouth* (1915)
- P3402 *Bunbury Timber Jetty* (1864, 1865, 1888, 1895-96, 1911, 1921, 1957, 1986, 1998)

The above reflects that Western Australia's fishing industry, in general, is well represented on the State Register of Heritage Places.

Post-World War Two Decentralisation of Western Australian Industries

In the post-World War Two period, the Commonwealth Government worked together with State and Territory governments to promote the establishment of industries away from centres of population, which would help the recovery and reconstruction of Australia's economy. While the Governments had no power to compel industries to establish themselves in rural locations, advice and assistance was offered where possible.⁴³

The Western Australian Government found it difficult to implement a policy of decentralisation. While efforts were made to provide advice and assistant to rural industries through the establishment of Industrial Development Committees at various regional centres, bigger industries continued to remain concentrated in the Metropolitan region, which led to the migration of people away from the regional areas which the Government was trying to populate. In 1961, 58.98% of the State's factories were located in the Metropolitan area, employing 70.8% of the State's male labour and 85.51% of the State's female labour.⁴⁴

Some decentralised industries were established in centres such as Geraldton, where the export of iron ore from Tallering Peak was been particularly beneficial

⁴³ 'Future of Industry: Decentralisation Policy', *The West Australian*, 6 October 1949, p.7.

⁴⁴ Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, 1 November 1961. Sourced from [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19611101_Assembly.pdf/\\$File/19611101_Assembly.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19611101_Assembly.pdf/$File/19611101_Assembly.pdf). Accessed on 3 January 2014.

for the district.⁴⁵ Bunbury also benefitted from the decentralisation of shipping in the port, and the spreading of industry, commerce, public utilities and population was seen as responsible for the growth of the Bunbury district.⁴⁶

It is difficult to identify specific places established as part of the Commonwealth/State policy of decentralisation. Searches of Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, Trove and the State Heritage Office database did not name specific places directly linked to this policy.

Despite the lack of specific data for places established as a direct consequence of the 1945 decentralisation policy, some known projects include the establishment of a charcoal iron plant and refinery at Wundowie, an alunite plant near Merredin, a pyrite mine at Norseman, and a phosphate rock mine at Abrolhos Islands.⁴⁷

Of the above, only P25098 Town of Wundowie is included in the State Heritage Office database. This place is included in the Heritage Council's Assessment Program.

The above analysis suggests that the decentralisation of industries in the post-World War Two period is not well-represented on the State Register of Heritage Places.

Conclusion

The above comparative information suggests that *Esperance Fish Cannery (fmr)*, in Esperance is a rare extant example of a fish cannery in Western Australia, an element of the fishing industry which is unrepresented on the State Register of Heritage Places.

Furthermore, it is a significance representation of the efforts to the State and Commonwealth Government to recover and reconstruct the economy through the decentralisation of industries and distribution of population in the post-World War Two period.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

There is no evidence of any of the machinery or equipment used by the cannery and further research could establish the whereabouts of any artefacts used at the place.

Additionally, further research may reveal whether there are any other canneries still extant in Western Australia.

45 Ibid.

46 Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, 9 October 1962. Sourced from [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19621009_Assembly.pdf/\\$File/19621009_Assembly.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19621009_Assembly.pdf/$File/19621009_Assembly.pdf). Accessed on 3 January 2014.

47 'State's Economy: Second Industry. Extension Plans Outlined', *The West Australian*, 13 August 1943, p. 6.