



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Courthouse and Gaol, built of local clay bricks, exhibit an aesthetic style and colour that blends with other significant early buildings in Meadow Street including: *Mechanics' Institute*, *Guildford Post Office* and residences. (Criterion 1.1)

Courthouse and Gaol, makes an important contribution to the streetscape of Meadow Street, which is considered to be the most important historic street in Guildford. (Criterion 1.3)

Courthouse and Gaol, is located within a civic precinct which dates from the early colonial period and which contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Courthouse and Gaol demonstrates an evolution of design and usage that shows the development of policing in Guildford. (Criterion 2.1)

The building and additions, of 1866, form part of the architectural building stock of the late-convict period in Western Australia when building development took place at a rapid rate to take advantage of convict labour prior to the cessation of transportation in 1868. (Criterion 2.2)

Courthouse and Gaol have a close association with Richard Roach Jewell, Colonial Clerk of Works, who contributed greatly to the building stock of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Courthouse and Gaol, as reminders of the early settlement and development of Guildford and as integral components in the historical precinct, contribute to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The gaol is an uncommon structure and an intact example of a colonial gaol. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The buildings are fine examples of colonial architecture, constructed by both convict labour and private contractor. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The buildings have undergone repairs and maintenance.¹ They are considered to be in good condition with the exception of severe fretting to the lower sections of the brickwork to the northern and eastern walls of the courthouse, and the western wall of the gaol. Some structural cracks exist in two of the cells of the gaol.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The courthouse retains its original fabric but has lost its original function. Display cases were installed in the 1990s to some rooms. Their presence has not diminished the cultural heritage significance of the place and the building, therefore, retains a high degree of integrity.

Although the gaol has lost its original function, and its outbuildings have been demolished, it is being used as a museum by the local historical society and retains a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Alterations to the building fabric of the former courthouse and gaol have been minimal and therefore *Courthouse and Gaol* retains a high degree of authenticity.

¹ HCWA refers to the buildings as *Courthouse and Gaol (fmr)*; however, it should be noted that the National Trust of Australia (WA) refers to them as *Police Station and Lockup (fmr)*.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The former *Gaol* is a single-storey brick and iron building. The original section was constructed, in 1841, when it was realised that the facilities available in Guildford were no longer adequate. Additions to increase the size of the building were carried out in 1866. The adjacent former *Courthouse* was also constructed in 1866, for use as a Courthouse.²

In the 1840s, the Swan District was suffering from a lack of labour and lack of established overseas markets for its produce. The Town of Guildford, although gradually losing its population to the Avon Valley, remained a place of importance in the economic life of the colony. Its function as an inland port and its situation at the junction of the main roads leading to the inland agricultural districts, ensured the town's survival through the depression years in the 1840s.³

The 1840s saw the construction of a number of new buildings, including the town gaol, Guildford's first Government building. It had become apparent that there was no suitable building in Guildford to contain prisoners who were awaiting trial in the Swan District, the numbers of which were large due to the three public houses in Guildford which caused much drunken behaviour. In September 1840, the Government Resident of the Swan wrote to the Governor as follows:

... I have, therefore, to request with the concurrence of my brother Magistrates of the District, that His Excellency will be pleased to sanction the erection of a small building with two cells, the one for White the other for the Native prisoners, together with a pair of stocks in Guildford.⁴

By October 1840, the Colonial Superintendent of Works, Henry Trigg, had prepared a plan and specification for a gaol at Guildford, to consist of two cells and a constable's room with loft above. Guildford builder John Welbourne was authorised to commence the work as a cost of £80, and the building was completed in 1841. This building now forms the central part of the existing structure.

The remainder of the present building, an additional room and four cells, was constructed in 1866, and flanks both sides of the original 1841 building. The additions were designed by Richard Roach Jewell, Colonial Clerk of Works who was responsible for the architectural design of all Government buildings at the time. The Gaol was used until the 1960s when the adjacent Courthouse was closed.

² HCWA refers to the buildings as *Courthouse and Gaol (fmr)*; however, it should be noted that the National Trust of Australia (WA) refers to them as *Police Station and Lockup (fmr)*.

³ Bourke, M. J., *On the Swan: A History of the Swan District Western Australia*, (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1987), p. 146.

⁴ Cited in Bourke, p. 152.

The building currently houses a museum under the direction of the Guildford Historical Society. The building was first leased for £2/year, until the Guildford Historical Society took charge of the adjacent Courthouse, in 1988.⁵

Former Courthouse

In 1866, work commenced nearby on the construction of a new Courthouse, to replace the existing one, built in 1841, which was too small for its purposes. Its construction was part of a building boom in Guildford that was connected in part to the campaign of public works instituted by Governor Hampton. Knowing that the transportation of convicts to Western Australia was to cease in 1868, Hampton instituted a vigorous program of construction to take advantage of the time remaining to complete the necessary public buildings and roadworks. Work on the building progressed well, it was reported in the newspaper in January 1866, that the foundation of the Courthouse had been laid.⁶

Richard Roach Jewell was the architect and the work was carried out partly by convict labour and partly by private contractor. The opening of the new Courthouse in February 1867, was celebrated by a large Ball given by the Resident Magistrate and the Chairman of the Town Trust.⁷

The central role in the town that these buildings played is shown in 1870, when the Courthouse was involved in the acquisition of a town clock for Guildford. Following the installation of a public clock at the new Perth Town Hall, the Guildford Town Trust requested the Governor to allow the old turret clock on the Perth public offices to be moved to Guildford. The request was agreed to and the clock was installed at the summit of the roof of the Courthouse. However, following the hurricane of 1872, the clock was moved to a less exposed position above the entrance to the Courthouse. It is not known when it was removed from this position.

The building was occupied by the police until 1960 as a Police Station; however, they had a presence in the building even when it was used primarily as a Courthouse. The Returned Services League (RSL) used the courtroom as a hall during the 1930s before the Guildford Historical Society occupied the building in 1988.⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The former *Courthouse and Gaol* are sited on Meadow Street, an historically significant street in the centre of Guildford. The street is located opposite Stirling Square, the historic centre of Guildford.

Former Gaol

The building is built on the footings of the original exercise yard wall. It is surrounded by lawn and is sited adjacent to the former Courthouse. The rear of the building was originally used by prisoners as an exercise yard and housed toilet facilities which no longer exist.

⁵ Interview conducted by Kelly Aris with Mrs Hamersley and Noel Tanner, curators, Guildford Historical Society, 27 July 1994.

⁶ *Inquirer*, 17 January 1866, p. 2.

⁷ *Inquirer*, 6 February 1867, p. 3.

⁸ Interview, 27 July 1994.

The building is twenty metres long and four metres wide, constructed in brick with a steep roof of lapped boarding covered with shingles of she-oak, which was later replaced with corrugated iron. The building consists of four cells with a loft over, a longitudinal passage and three associated rooms. The floors are timber throughout, with brick vaulted ceilings in the cells. (Vaulted spaces are typical of nineteenth-century gaols.⁹) The corridor retains its two brick arches and the ceiling has recently been lined with corrugated iron. The interior of the identical cells is featureless with the exception of a strip window opening with vertical bars, located on the west wall, just below door head height. The doors to the cells are timber with iron latches and are fixed to wide timber frames. With the exception of a fireplace located in the duty sergeant's room (warden's room) and the sergeant's house, the interior is austere.

The external brickwork of the building clearly shows three stages of construction. All the bricks in the building are hand made. The bricks used in 1841, differ in size to those used in the addition of 1866. All walls have been painted with the exception of the west elevation.¹⁰

The original building consists of two cells and a duty sergeant's room. Additions, at right angles to the west face, of six cells and police quarters were carried out in 1855, including stables, located to the south, and a walled exercise yard. They were demolished in 1866. The wall opening to the original building was sealed with timber boarding. The location of these buildings is clearly marked by bricks set into the ground and is currently used as a drive-way and parking area.

In 1866, ticket-of-leave men and convicts on probation built two further cells, adjacent to the original cells including, a loft over for Aboriginal trackers and a sergeant's quarters of two rooms, adjacent to the duty sergeant's room.¹¹

Other outbuildings, including stable, magistrate's house, and a cesspit no longer exist.

In 1982, the building was restored. Much of the render applied earlier to the lower sections of the external walls, to arrest the problem of moisture penetration into the building, was removed. Other repairs included: internal plastering; repainting; replacement of floor boards to the lobby and sergeant's room; installation of new gutters, downpipes and barge boards; grading of ground surrounding the building to enable rainwater to flow away from the building; and, the installation of a drainage system.

The end cell is now used as a store room and the other cells contain a laundry, dairy and cell exhibit.¹² The duty sergeant's room houses a kitchen exhibit and equipment is stored in the larger room of the sergeant's quarters. Shelves of artefacts line the western wall of the corridor. Information signs and lighting have been installed by the museum.

⁹ Tanner, H. (ed) *Architects of Australia*, (The MacMillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd, 1981), p. 41.

¹⁰ Date of painting not known.

¹¹ *West Australian*, 11 June 1981.

¹² As of 1994.

Former Courthouse

The adjacent former Courthouse was built by convict labour concurrently with the additions to the gaol, in 1866, to a design by Richard Roach Jewell.

Much of Perth's colonial character is attributed to Richard Roach Jewell, Clerk of Works at the Public Works Department. Jewell designed the *Perth Courthouse and Gaol* (1853-56) in limestone with simple blank arcades and recessed windows. His other works include: *The Cloisters* (1858), *The Deanery* (1859), *Government House* (1859-63) and other police buildings including, *Toodyay Gaol*, *Roebourne Police Station* and *Greenough Police Station*.¹³

The former Guildford Courthouse is sited forward of the gaol on the corner of Meadow and Swan Streets. The building's entrance fronts Stirling Square.

The building is single storey, built of soft coloured, hand made bricks laid in Flemish bond with dark header bricks and lighter coloured stretchers - a characteristic of much of Jewell's work. The roof is covered with corrugated iron.

The building is symmetrical with recessed verandas, to the east and west elevation, supported on fine timber posts. The main windows are vertical sashes of twelve panes with slim glazing bars. The frames are set into brick reveals. Square cut brick lintels decorate the windows. A low boundary wall with brick piers and pyramidal caps, surrounds the building on the north and west sides.

The plan consists of a central courtroom with a police, store and prisoners' room located at the southern end of the building. At the northern end of the building, is a reception, lobby and magistrate's room. The magistrate's room was later used as a sergeant's room when the Court was later used as a Police Station.

The courthouse has timber floors, and lath and plaster ceilings. The interior is austere with the exception of a carved timber witness box and a timber partition of vertical boarding located behind the magistrate's desk.

Since the Guildford Historical Society took occupation of the building, it has been used as exhibition space and the Society's offices. The police room houses a bedroom display.

Male and female toilets, housed separately and located between the two buildings, were built in the late 1960s.¹⁴

The building underwent repairs between 1983 and 1985, including, new ground drainage, painting, removal of rotted timber sills; reinstatement of doors to courtroom and prisoners' room; and removal of basin and fittings in the reception room. The southern and eastern walls were rendered to attempt to arrest the visual deterioration of the brickwork. The veranda bitumen paving was removed and paved with new bricks of similar colour and size to those of the building. The paving was extended to the entrance gate without steps.

In 1991, a glass enclosure was installed in the store room to house a costume exhibit. The courtroom and prisoners' room, originally converted to a kitchen

¹³ Tanner, pp. 38-42.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

during the RSL's occupation, now contains display cases. In 1991, timber floors were reinstated to the southern section of the building (essentially, to improve air circulation through the building and alleviate moisture penetration) to replace the concrete floors installed by the RSL; all window panes were lined to help prevent ultraviolet light penetrating through to the displays; and a security system was installed. The rooms at the northern end of the building, later used by the police, now house the Society's offices.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet

RAIA Architects Advisory Service, "Architectural Evaluation: Guildford Courthouse", (for the WA Heritage Committee, n. d.)

RAIA Architects Advisory Service, "Architectural Evaluation: Old Gaol, Guildford", (for the WA Heritage Committee, March 1982)