



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)

- 8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 407 Cultural activities
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Weld Club visually terminates the western end of the Stirling Gardens and, together with its own gardens, extends the aesthetic qualities of the park westward. (Criterion 1.1)

The Weld Club is a fine example of Federation Queen Anne architecture, notwithstanding the cumulative effect of changes. (Criterion 1.2)

The Weld Club distinctly defines the corner of Barrack Street and The Esplanade, and is a landmark in the central city. (Criterion 1.3)

Together with the *Central Government Offices*, the *Town Hall*, *St. George's Cathedral*, the *Supreme Court*, the *Old Court House*, *Stirling Gardens*, *Burt Memorial Hall*, the *Deanery* and *Government House*, *The Weld Club* contributes to the central precinct of nineteenth century and early twentieth century buildings, which form the colonial administrative and social core of Perth. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The Weld Club is closely associated with a period in Western Australia's history when political and social power was maintained in the hands of a very few members of colonial society. (Criterion 2.1)

The Weld Club continues to have close associations with many prominent male members of Western Australian society. (Criterion 2.3)

The Weld Club is a fine example of the work of the prominent architect, Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs, a leading Australian practitioner of the Federation Queen Anne style of architecture. (Criterion 2.3)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Weld Club, which has operated continuously since its foundation in 1871, is recognised by the community as one of the leading gentlemen's clubs in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.1)

The Weld Club contributes to the community's sense of place by providing a physical and social link with the past governance and cultural life of Perth. *The Weld Club* is highly regarded as a social forum for its members and their guests and interstate and overseas visiting members. The Club has reciprocal arrangements with comparable clubs worldwide. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The Weld Club is a rare example in Perth of a finely executed substantial Federation period building that has accommodated a prestigious gentlemen's club from the 1890s to the present. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Weld Club is an outstanding example of the Federation Queen Anne style of architecture, exhibiting all the characteristics of the style. (Criterion 6.1)

The Weld Club is representative of a period in Western Australian history when membership of private gentlemen's clubs was considered essential to social acceptance and advancement. (Criterion 6.2)

The Weld Club demonstrates a type of social and political interaction that was prevalent in Western Australia prior to the introduction of representative government, when political power was exercised by a small, socially elite group. (Criterion 6.2)

The Weld Club is representative of the recreational and social activities available to colonial gentry in Western Australia in the late nineteenth century. It is also the last example of a variety of private clubs available for the men of Perth in this period. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The Weld Club is in sound condition. Restoration and renovation of the place occurred in the early 1990s and a regular professional program of maintenance has been entered into under the direction of architectural specialists co-opted to the Club's committee.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The Weld Club continues to be used for the purpose for which it was built and retains a high degree of integrity.

The fabric of *The Weld Club* has a high degree of integrity. Recent restoration and removal of unsympathetic 1950s additions to the fabric has enhanced the Barrack Street and Esplanade elevations and returned the tower belvedere to prominence at the corner. Whilst not all of the rooms have been returned to their original proportions (the library and anteroom) it would not be impossible to reinstate walls to the original dimensions if necessary.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The Weld Club has, in over 100 years of occupation, undergone a number of changes to both its external and internal fabric. Restoration and renovation of *The Weld Club* in 1988/89 has resulted in the removal of earlier unsympathetic work, especially to the facades. The removal in the 1980s, for structural reasons, of the 1925 tiled roof cladding that replaced the original timber shingled roof cladding to the two street elevations of the building, and replacement with corrugated Zinalume sheeting with a red factory-applied finish, has altered the appearance of the place. With the exception of the dining room, which is a well-executed replica, and the new roofing material, which replaced material that had been in place for over half the life of the club, *The Weld Club* has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by staff of the Heritage Council of Western Australia, with additional information supplied by Ronald Bodycoat Architect. The physical evidence has been compiled by Ronald Bodycoat Architect and Members of The Weld Club.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Founded in 1871 as an exclusive gentlemen's club, The Weld Club was named in honour of His Excellency Mr (later Sir) Frederick Weld, the Governor of Western Australia from 1869 to 1875. Members met to discuss politics, play billiards, invest in an informal stock exchange and read the latest news in British and colonial newspapers.¹ With the patronage of the Governor and a select membership, The Weld Club was an influential forum for the discussion of politics and policy.

The Weld Club was patronised by members of the colonial gentry and Government officials of high social standing.² Nearly all the colony's legislators belonged to The Weld Club and political and business interests could be discussed within its confines.³ It was only a short stroll from the then club premises, initially located in Lionel Samson's St George's Terrace house, to Government House, the Legislative Council in Hay Street or the fine houses on St. George's Terrace and Adelaide Terrace, where many members lived.⁴ In 1892, The Weld Club was described as

unique as a centre of sociability and once admitted to its somewhat exclusive portals you are admitted into pleasant contact with everybody who is anybody in the small capital of the largest colony.⁵

To be admitted to the Club was a mark of social respectability and status; the subscription was high and membership list exclusive. The Club maintained its

¹ Stannage, C.T. *The People of Perth. A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth, 1979) p. 2.

² Stannage, *People of Perth* p. 87. A typical profile of a member is that of Sir Luke Leake, merchant, banker and Member for Perth in the Legislative Council. He was a vice president of the Mechanics Institute in 1863-64 and president 1879-86 and he served on the Central Board of Education from 1878 to 1886. In the Weld Club he was a vice-president from 1878-82 and president from 1882-1886. He was Speaker of the Legislative Council from 1870 to 1886 and was knighted in 1876.

³ de Garis, B. K. "Self Government and Political Parties" in Stannage, C.T. (ed) *A New History of Western Australia* (Perth, 1981) p. 334.

⁴ Stannage, *People of Perth* p. 87.

⁵ Mennell, P. *The Coming Colony* (1892) quoted in Stannage, *People of Perth* p. 307

social exclusiveness and its cultural standards, which the colonial gentry expected to be accepted by the community, at large.⁶

In the 1890s, the Club decided to build its own premises. A block of land was sought nearby and a location decided upon. The land was on the corner of the Esplanade and Barrack Street, in close proximity to the legal and administrative centre of the Colony: *Government House* (1863), the *Supreme Court* (1836), the *Central Government Offices* (1874-1882), the *Town Hall* (1871), *St. George's Cathedral* (1879), adjacent to *Stirling Gardens* (1845) and next to the Swan River, which then lapped The Esplanade carriageway as the recreational Esplanade had not been reclaimed. The site was both prestigious and picturesque.

A design competition was held for a building suitable for this prestigious location. The winner was Mr (later Sir) J. J. Talbot Hobbs, a prominent Perth-based architect who migrated to Perth in 1887. By 1892, he had been responsible for a number of impressive buildings including the Prince's Building and the Perth Masonic Lodge, numerous domestic buildings and additions to St. Alban's Church in Highgate. His design for the Club premises was a two storey building in the Federation Queen Anne style with verandas on two sides. A prominent tower belvedere addressed the corner of Barrack Street and the Esplanade, and afforded good views over the Swan River. The roof of the building was shingled to the street facades.⁷ Bunning Brothers won the contract to build the Club premises for £5,427 and the plumbing, which was a separate contract, went to a Mr Lapsley for £269.⁸ Locally produced iron paling was used for the fence. The total cost of the building, including extras and minor modifications to the original plans, was £5,996 11s 4d, and the plumbing and ironwork was £359 1s 5d.⁹

The new club building was officially opened by Governor Robinson on 22 December, 1892. The *West Australian* reported that amongst those members who attended were

...the President of the Legislative Council (Mr Shenton), The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Sir James Lee Steere), the Premier (Sir John Forrest), The Commissioner of Railways (Mr Venn), the Commissioner of Lands (Mr Marmion), Judge Stone, several members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, and many others including a large number of ladies.¹⁰

The *West Australian* reported

...the members possess in the new building a habitation which would receive respect in any of the Colonies. If, in its ornamentation and size, the building does not compare with those of some of the clubs in larger centres, few possess a finer site and surrounding. The building stands on a block of land on the corner of the Esplanade and Barrack Street measuring 207 feet 6 inches by 190 feet. The building itself has a frontage of 17 feet to the Esplanade, with a depth of 104 feet. Looking at the outside one is struck with the way in which an imposing effect is obtained with simple materials. The outward building has no great pretension to ornamentation, yet the effect is decidedly pleasing. It is in the Queen Anne style with square windows, being plain red brick with cement facings. On the ground floor there is a piazza with brick columns facing the Esplanade and Barrack Street. Over it is a wooden balcony which adds a light and airy appearance to the building. At the Esplanade and Barrack Street corner there is a square tower

6 Stoddart, B. "Sport and Society" in Stannage, *A New History*.. pp. 656-657.

7 Committee Minutes 4 March 1925, regarding replacement of the original shingles.

8 Louch, T. S. *The History of the Weld Club* (Perth, The Weld Club, 1964) p. 43.

9 *ibid.* pp. 43-4.

10 *West Australian* 22 December 1892

surmounted by a lookout giving the building quite a distinctive character. On the Esplanade frontage there is a large flight of wooden steps. One of the primary objects of the design of the building is to ensure as much of the sea breezes as possible for the members' rooms...and there is another wooden balcony on the Eastern side by which members can take full advantage of the delightful sea breezes which make even the hottest season of Perth pleasant and bearable.

If one were to stop at the outside of the building he would go away with a very incomplete idea of the architectural elegance. The architect seems to have expended his best energies on the interior...everything being designed to give the minimum of trouble to all the inhabitants, to the members communicating with the servants, and the latter in attending to the former's wants... On the right side of the vestibule is the strangers' room...which is so placed as to enable members to entertain their friends without invading the privacy of other parts of the building. The room is distinguished by its elegant simplicity... The main hall 31 feet by 21 feet is entered by two swinging doors of polished cedar, with leaded lights... All the principal rooms on the ground floor communicate directly with the hall, and its appearance is enhanced by cedar over doors and the polished jarrah staircase on the right hand side, with a handsome brass stand for the electric light.

Directly opposite the entrance is the members' room. This is a large chamber 43 feet by 53 feet...There are two marble fireplaces with tiled hearths and sliding dog grates. The cornices are enriched and there is an elaborate centrepiece on the ceiling. A large bay window in this room opens out on to the piazza on the Esplanade side. Also overlooking the Esplanade is a reading room, 18 feet by 25 feet, with a very handsome white marble mantelpiece, the woodwork being painted to represent grained marble... The windows of this room open out into the piazza, as do those of the next room at the corner of the building. This is the Smoking Room, 18 feet by 25 feet, which has a Sicilian marble mantelpiece and a bay window. On the opposite side to the member's room is the billiard room, 20 feet by 26 feet, which is large enough for two tables. So as to have a perfectly level surface for the tables, supports have been affixed in the foundations, with tiled surfaces. A hatchway in the wall communicates with the steward's room. The dining room, 23 feet by 30 feet, is on the Barrack Street side. It has a mantelpiece of rough marble and, like many of the other rooms, a tiled hearth and dog grate. The other rooms on the ground floor and the butler's pantry, secretary's room, lavatory, baggage lift, telephone room and a large kitchen. There is also a cellar with beer stand and wine racks, and Chinese servants' quarters...arranged so that they are at the back part of the building and are shut off from the members' room.

From the balcony a magnificent view is to be obtained of Perth and Melville Waters and, if there are cricket matches or sports on the recreation ground, the members can easily witness them from the Clubhouse. There is a still better view from the tower, and those who have the enterprise and agility to mount to the lookout are rewarded with a view of the north side of the city over the adjacent housetops. The grounds are only in a rough state at present, but a tennis court is in course of formation.¹¹

The building comprised a ground floor suite of public rooms and an upper storey containing residential accommodation. The front door, located off Barrack Street, opened into a vestibule from which a stranger's room opened on the right. Ahead there was a large hall in which there was located an elegant jarrah staircase which lead to the first floor accommodation. The dining room and kitchens, with servants' stairs, were located in the northern wing. To the south were the smoking room and the reading room. The tower abutted the smoking room. To the west was the members' room with

¹¹ *West Australian* 22 December 1892.

a large bay window facing south over the river and the billiard room. The billiard room and the members' room were joined by a verandah.¹²

The Weld Club was designed to accommodate the members' meeting, recreation and short-term residential requirements. Of the active members, 91 lived in Perth, twelve at Fremantle, seven at Albany, five on the Goldfields and 612 in the country districts and the Northwest of the state.¹³ Members could stay at *The Weld Club* whilst in town, partake of various recreational activities such as billiards, reading, croquet, bowls and tennis, and could sail on the Swan or, when visiting Britain, rent a luxurious house boat - *The Golden Grasshopper* - in which to sail down the Thames.¹⁴

The Weld Club was for gentlemen only and ladies could only attend special functions in the premises if accompanied by a member. In 1892, the Women's Christian Temperance Union was established next door in Barrack Street. In the mid and late 1890s, the Union strove hard to win votes for women, a movement much deplored by many of the members of the Club.¹⁵ While other private clubs were formed in Perth in the 1890s and early 1900s, (Tattersalls, Perth Club, West Australian Club, Mechanics Institute, Karrakatta Club (for women), The Weld Club was the most prestigious and exclusive. A roll call of members, shortly after the new premises opened, in 1892, shows that 13 out of the 15 members of the Legislative Council, and 21 out of the 30 members of the Legislative Assembly belonged to the Club, including the President of the Legislative Council, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and all the members of Sir John Forrest's Ministry.¹⁶

By 1901, membership had increased markedly, and country members were requesting that more accommodation be provided. A meeting authorised the raising of a loan and the building of additions to the Clubhouse, but it was not until 1903 that E. Dean Smith, an architectural associate of Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs, and member of the committee, was appointed to design the additions. He presented his plans to the committee in January 1904, and the committee authorised him to proceed with a total budget of £6,000.¹⁷ The proposed alterations practically doubled the size of the club premises and provided new residential accommodation, a new dining room, bar, kitchen, scullery, servery, servants' dining room, lavatories and extended the cellars and lengthened the billiard room. The successful tender was by Mizen Brothers for £5,825 but the total cost, including extras and architect's fees, was in the vicinity of £7,500.¹⁸ The building was started in April 1904 and finished at the end of the year. The additional accommodation was immediately occupied.¹⁹

The functions of many existing rooms were altered; the strangers' room became a hall porter's room, the original dining room became a reading room and the kitchen became the secretary's office. The smoking room became the strangers' room and the reading room was converted to a

12 Ground plan of the original club in Louch, .p. 55.

13 Louch, p. 51.

14 Stannage, *People of Perth* p. 307.

15 *ibid.* p. 308.

16 Louch, p. 51.

17 *ibid.* p. 70. Smith later formed a partnership (Hobbs, Smith and Forbes) with Talbot Hobbs, the architect of the original portion of the Club, and the new building was completed as part of this partnership.

18 *ibid.* p. 71.

19 *ibid.*

writing room. A box room, servants' dining room, butler's store and six w.c.'s were added in the northern wing. The only structural alteration to the original public rooms designed by Hobbs, was the removal of the northern wall of billiard room, which was extended northwards, doubling its size.²⁰ Lath and plaster ceilings were installed in the billiard and old dining rooms, in lieu of pressed metal. New corridors, leading to the impressive new dining room, were added. The new dining room was serviced by a new servery, kitchen, extended cellars and scullery as well as a lavatory. On the upper floor nine new bedrooms, four bathrooms, extra w.c.s and urinals were provided.

The alterations required the demolition of the original servants quarters and the Chinese servants were henceforth accommodated in the bedrooms previously occupied by members in the Barrack Street wing. Indentured Chinese servants were employed by the Club as cooks, bed makers, yardmen, waiters, butlers and billiard-markers, until changes to immigration legislation in 1901. After that time they began to be replaced by white servants, although there were Chinese on the staff until 1927. Females were first employed as staff in 1927.²¹

In 1925, the Committee of the Club decided to reroof with Marseilles tiles the shingled roof areas facing onto Barrack Street and The Esplanade.²²

In 1934, the beautification of the Members' smoking room of the Club was mooted by the family of the late Mr. F. F. B. Wittenoom, who donated the funds required. The room was upgraded with jarrah panelling, electric light and new floor coverings to the design of Mr. H. J. Eales. The members were most impressed and, in gratitude to the donor, subscribed a fund of 100 guineas to commission the painting of Mr Wittenoom's portrait by Ernest Buckmaster. This portrait was hung in the room, which has since been known as the Wittenoom Room.²³ Refurbishment of the Wittenoom Room highlighted electrical problems and the whole building was rewired in the same year.²⁴

In 1964, more modifications were made to the fabric of the building. Some of the walls to the members' and visitors' (formerly strangers') rooms on the south were demolished and rebuilt in line with the edge of the veranda with French doors opening out onto the terrace. This incorporated part of the tower belvedere on the southern side and changed the way in which the building addressed the corner. Several openings for doorways were cut into the walls of rooms: the library (formerly reading room) now accommodated a dining component as well and the former clerks and secretary's offices were combined into one ante room with doors leading into the library and the corridor opposite, effectively making the room into a gallery. A porch to the northern part of the Barrack Street elevation was added and a doorway changed in the servants' dining room. The effect of the modifications was to change the relationship of the building to the corner and the Esplanade frontage and to alter the proportions of the original rooms.²⁵

The Weld Club was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) on 6 February 1978. The place was entered into the Register of the National Estate

²⁰ Plans dated 22 May 1904; also Louch, pp. 70-71.

²¹ Stannage, *People of Perth* p. 307.

²² Committee Minutes 4 March 1925.

²³ Louch, pp. 142-3.

²⁴ Louch, p. 142.

²⁵ Floor Plans of the 1964 alterations *ibid.* pp. 94, 95.

by the Australian Heritage Commission on 21 October 1980. The place was entered into the City of Perth's Town Planning Scheme Schedule 46, Part V in 1985 and is afforded protection under the scheme.

In 1985, a proposal was put to the Club members that the building be restored with the restoration funded by a long building lease of some of the Club's land through the sale of the Club's development rights.²⁶ The development rights were incorporated in the high rise office development, housing the Australian Stock Exchange, on the adjacent site between the existing Club house and Sherwood Court. It was proposed to reverse many of the 1964 alterations, including reducing the size of the members' and visitors' rooms to that of the 1904 proportions, remodelling the original veranda to the Esplanade (thus giving the tower belvedere back its prominence) and removing the doorways and porch that had been inserted in 1964. The library and the anteroom were merged and the through doorway infilled. A major intervention in the fabric was the demolition and rebuilding of the dining room with an east-west alignment in lieu of the original north-south orientation. The new dining room retained similar proportions to that of the original, however bay windows, which overlook the landscaped area and the bowling green, were added. The interior details of the 1904 dining room were reproduced. The original building and extension has a replaced verandah again supported by timber columns. The existing kitchen, servery and other facilities were retained. The billiard room and other rooms remained intact. A loading area was built in the space created to the north. The construction of a floor of bedrooms above the new dining room increased and upgraded residential accommodation and construction of underground car parking resulted in a refurbishment of the western lawn. Cleaning and repair of the brickwork and mortar, repainting, and general refurbishment of the interior was also undertaken.

In 1992, flagpoles were removed from over the front entrance archway, the entire surviving original external face brickwork was repointed and stucco decoration repaired and repainted. The Marseilles tiles (1925) were removed and those areas re-roofed in Colorbond Custom Orb sheeting with new upper level ceiling installation. Gutters, hoppers and downpipes were rationalised and upgraded. The ceramic tiled porch floors and outer landing were repaired or retiled. External timber details were repaired, reinstated and repainted. Subsequently, mechanical exhaust systems have been installed in chimneys to allow continued use of log fires in ground floor fireplaces.²⁷

In 2001, *The Weld Club* continues to operate as the premises of an exclusive private club in the city centre.²⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Weld Club comprises a single two-storied building constructed as a private gentlemen's club in 1892, extended and altered in 1904 and 1925, and more recently altered in 1934, 1964 and the late 1980s.

The Weld Club, including its landscaped grounds and the boundary walls to the south and east sides of the lot facing onto The Esplanade and Barrack Street and to the west side onto a pedestrian thoroughfare owned by the

²⁶ *An important proposal to all Members of the Weld Club* (information circular to members, 18 November 1985) Battye Library.

²⁷ Report supplied by Ron Bodycoat Architect in February 2001.

²⁸ With reference to *Equal Opportunity Act*, Section 22, Sub-section 3, the registration of the Weld Club by the Heritage Council of WA is unlikely to conflict with WA Equal Opportunity legislation.

Club, is an element of the nineteenth century institutional precinct which comprises Government House, the Supreme Court, the Old Court House, Central Government Offices, the Town Hall and St George's Cathedral. Location on a corner site opposite the Stirling Gardens to the east and The Esplanade to the south has meant that The Weld Club premises would retain its character as a prominent and historic landmark building in the central business district of the City. The precinct has been determined to be of major cultural heritage value. More recent buildings of quality in the immediate vicinity - Lawson Apartments, Council House and the Bell Tower at the foot of Barrack Street - reinforce the visual and cultural relevance of this precinct of diverse architectural elements; *The Weld Club* is one of the elements of value.

The Club building is located on the corner of The Esplanade and Barrack Street in the City of Perth, set back from The Esplanade boundary but close to the Barrack Street boundary. A service roadway, which forms part of the site, runs along the northern boundary of the lot off Barrack Street to service the Kitchen and Bars of the Club building. The roadway also services a high-rise office tower on the adjacent site fronting onto Sherwood Court. The area of the site immediately south of the building is terraced, paved and landscaped as an outdoor function area accessible from the ground floor rooms of the Club building. The area of the site immediately west of the building is also terraced over car parking below, but grassed and landscaped as an outdoor area for use by members. On the south boundary, a lift and stairs from car parking below the western lawn is housed in a small pavilion constructed in the late 1980s.

The reconstructed Dining Room at ground floor level, servicing the Club and replacing the original Dining Room, together with a floor over of Bedroom suites for use by Club members, both form part of the Office Tower redevelopment and do not constitute part of this heritage assessment. Similarly, the car park under the western lawn and the small lift pavilion are not part of this assessment. The lawn, as an open space associated with the original and continuing use of the Club does form part of the assessment.

The Weld Club was initially designed by Mr (later Sir) J. J. Talbot Hobbs in the Federation Queen Anne style, an architectural expression in vogue in the 1890s. The building comprises two stories in red load bearing brickwork, of overall rectangular plan form, with a high-pitched roof framed in timber and sheeted with corrugated custom orb sheeting finished in colorbond; three prominent half-timbered gables are incorporated over projecting bays to the south and east elevations, with a two-storied verandah wrapped around the corner of the building between two of the bays. A prominent tower belvedere is located on the corner of the verandah. A single-storied verandah runs along the western elevation, overlooking the lawned area and providing covered access into the building from the pavilion on the southern boundary housing stairs and lift down to the car park under the western lawn, and into the new Dining Room which forms part of the high rise development. Alterations and additions over the life of the building since 1892 have resulted in a complex, hipped roof system and a central light well and upper verandah along sections of the western wall of the wing extending north along Barrack Street. A glazed roof light over the central Hall admits natural light into the interior of the building.

The characteristic architectural treatment of the exterior of the building includes half timbering and pebblecoat infill to the gables above the three projecting bays, with further minor projections onto those bays, capped at

the eastern bays with hipped metal roofs, whilst in the southern bay the projection continues up to the underside of the half timbering section of the gable which extends outwards beyond the minor projection to be supported at both corners with decorative timber bracketing. The red face brickwork to the street façade incorporates horizontal stucco bands and projecting stucco mouldings; the stucco bands are continued around all the external window openings. The stuccowork is now painted. Window joinery throughout consists of balance-hung sashes in painted timber frames, with small-paned top sashes to windows to the two street elevations. Original decorative timber hoods survive over windows to the street façade, formerly housing external timber louvered blinds. Window sashes to all windows to the Members Room (The Wittenoom Room) at the southwest corner of the building at ground floor level are glazed in small panes. The first floor level windows to the western elevation, and throughout the service rooms in the northern section of the building have single-pane balance-hung sashes. The verandahs at ground floor level to the south and east elevations retain the original construction of brick piers and moulded stucco arches between the piers; the first floor level verandahs above are constructed with turned wooden posts in pairs, decorative timber arched heads and brackets and decorative moulded capitals. The balustrade comprises turned timber balusters closely spaced with timber top and bottom rails. The original details survive intact with the exception of the moulded timber capitals to all posts; the ground floor verandah to the south elevation is now enclosed with small-paned glazed timber joinery including French doors to each bay opening out onto the new terrace. A wrought iron screen and gates have been introduced adjacent to the Main Entrance bay of the verandah at ground floor level to the Barrack Street elevation, as a security measure. The ground floor level verandahs retain the original ceramic tiled floor finishes and ripple iron ceilings; the first floor verandahs are now surfaced with felting as a waterproof membrane and expose the underside of the metal roof sheeting without any ceiling lining. The enclosure to the ground floor verandah to the south elevation has replaced all internal finishes to conform to the internal finishes of the rooms for which the enclosure provides an extension of floor area. Chimneys throughout are prominent in red face brickwork with stucco mouldings. The Main Entrance to the building survives within the eastern elevation as a two-storied brick projecting bay with a brick gable and arched openings, decorated with projecting stucco mouldings, a timber balustrade at first floor level and a cartouche in the gable displaying the opening date, AD 1892. The Main Entrance doors are solid panelled timber in two leaves. All gables are complete with projecting eaves, timber fascias and barge cappings and turned timber finials. Louvered metal dormer vents survive to the street planes of the main roof.

The single-storied verandah along the western elevation and overlooking the western lawn is a reconstruction matching the details of the original verandahs including a ceramic tiled floor. Gutters throughout are moulded sheet metal and downpipes replicate the original in rectangular and round section sheet metal.

Boundary fencing to the street elevations consists of the original cast-iron railings above a redbrick base wall capped in painted stucco; to a section of the wall, the brickwork extends down to the street pavement level to provide a retaining wall to accommodate the recent terracing to the south side of the grounds. The recent terrace at the southern side of the building has been paved in ceramic tiles and landscaped, as an external area associated with the enclosed verandah, which the terrace abuts.

The tower belvedere at the south eastern corner of the building continues the original construction method and materials of the two stories of open verandahs, with a third level in decorative timber construction capped by a flared and tapering four-sided roof sheeted in corrugated custom orb terminating in a four-sided cast-iron railing and a central flagpole. A cast-iron circular stair provides access between the middle and upper levels, and a timber ladder to the roof and flagpole.

The roof construction is traditional timber carpentry. However, the roof areas facing onto The Esplanade and Barrack Street were originally clad in timber shingles - a characteristic Talbot Hobbs detail. Subsequently in 1925 the shingles were replaced with Marseilles pattern orange terracotta tiles (to these roof areas only) and again in 1992, the tiles were removed and replaced with corrugated Colorbond Custom Orb in single-length sheets. As a consequence of these changes, the original lapped jarrah boarding survives on top of the rafters, together with the batten system installed for tiles. New jarrah battens were installed as grounds for fixing the Zinalume sheeting.

Internal Layout and Details

Internally, the building has been subjected to considerable change since 1892. Access to the place for physical inspection was restricted.

Ground Floor level:

The main entrance off the Porch at Barrack Street, proceeds through a Vestibule to a Central Hall; the Vestibule has the original ceramic tile floor and decorative plaster ceiling and cornices; the Hall retains a replaced wood block floor (originally tiled), polished timber doors and architraves, moulded timber skirtings, roof lantern admitting natural light, representative jarrah staircase to the first floor and brass light standard.

Off the Hall on the south side are located:

- the original, large Members Room now identified as the Wittenoom Room with timber wall panelling, decorative plaster ceilings and cornices and two operable marble fireplaces;

- the original Writing Room, now identified as the Friday Room; the original marble fireplace survives and the south wall has been removed and the former arcade incorporated into the room, with French doors opening out onto the Terrace;

- the Strangers Room on the south east corner with a bay under the Tower, (later called the Visitors Room and now the Garden Room) retains the original marble fireplace; the south wall has been removed and the former arcade incorporated into the room with French doors opening out onto the Terrace;

- The former Billiard Room, later doubled in size and now identified as the Old Billiard Room, retains the two window bays onto the western verandah, two fireplaces and the decorative plaster ceiling and cornices;

- The Main Dining Room, formerly in the north west corner of the building, has been demolished and rebuilt as the ground floor section of the adjoining high rise development;

- The original Dining Room, later the Reading Room and currently identified as the Barrack Lounge, is located along the Barrack Street frontage and leads northwards into the Barrack Dining Room, occupying space originally built as offices and later extended outwards towards the street;

Toilets and service rooms in the north eastern corner of the building;

An upgraded bar in the centre of the north wing, with the original Cellar below still in use as the Wine Cellar with access corridors on both sides leading to the Toilets and to the Kitchens and Service yard at the north wall and service roadway. Considerable alteration has applied to this section of the original building.

First Floor Level:

The original Hall of double volume and staircase give access to a range of what were originally small Bedrooms. Modifications have been extensive. The current use is identified as follows:

Library to the projecting pavilion in the south west corner, with Bedroom suites behind and extending along the western wall up to the new high rise development which now also provides Bedroom suites at this level above the reconstructed Dining Room;

Card Room in the south east corner at the Tower, with two former Bedrooms converted into one room now designated Committee Room on the south wall;

Offices and lift east off the Hall and leading to the large Secretary's office in the central east pavilion, formerly housing five small Bedrooms;

Store rooms, Service rooms and Staff rooms in the former Residential Staff Quarters in the north east corner of the building.

Ground and first floor level finishes throughout, apart from special features noted above, retain the representative details and finishes of a large Federation House of the turn of the century - special tiled or wood block finishes to floors in the Vestibule and Hall, carpet on timber elsewhere, painted hardwall plaster to walls apart from timber panelling to the Wittenoom Room and wainscoting to the stairs and Hall; high moulded timber skirtings and wide moulded timber architraves; moulded timber doors; marble fireplaces to the ground floor and simpler timber mantelpieces to First floor rooms where fireplaces survive; decorative moulded plaster ceilings and cornices with ceiling roses - simpler ceilings and cornices to the upper level and lesser rooms on the ground floor; electric lighting with chandeliers and brass lanterns to the main areas; new air-conditioning sensitively introduced into plaster cornices or floor grilles in the major rooms on the ground floor. Paint colour schemes tend to be a heightened interpretation of Edwardian colours; a substantial amount of polished timber survives in the major areas. Rooms altered for the use by members and their guests - the Barrack Lounge and Dining Room, are lighter and contemporary with present day decorative presentation. Kitchens, Bathrooms, Toilets and Service Rooms have been generally refurbished; some original tiling and fittings survive.

Appearance and Condition:

The entire fabric of *The Weld Club* is in sound condition and of a high level of presentation. Refurbishment in the 1990s and ongoing maintenance have ensured that the building fabric and the grounds are retained in very good condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The Weld Club, like the Eastern States' private 'Gentlemen's Clubs', continued the English tradition of an exclusive retreat for prominent gentlemen to

mingle with their ilk. These private clubs were indicative of the class-conscious nineteenth century and each major Australian city still retains its purpose-built facility. The Adelaide Club (1863) is a three storeyed Georgian building located opposite Government House in North Terrace.²⁹ The Melbourne Club (1858) is a three-storeyed brick and stucco structure with basement at 36 Collins Street.³⁰ The Australian Club (1878), at 110 William Street, Melbourne boasts of 'the grandest and most intact Victorian clubrooms in Australia.'³¹ The Geelong Club (1874) is 'an unusual example of transitional Queen Anne style.'³² *The Weld Club* followed its Eastern States predecessors, and at the time of its opening, compared favourably with the Australia Club in Sydney.³³ Today no other club in Australia has comparable premises on upwards of an acre of ground in the centre of a capital city overlooking public gardens and the river.³⁴

In Perth, the Western Australian Club shared a similar outlook and membership list to The Weld Club. Formed in 1893 as The Exchange Club Limited, the Western Australian Club leased the Perth home of Fremantle merchant, Lionel Samson, on the northwest corner of Barrack Street and St Georges Terrace; the same premises that had been previously rented by the Weld Club from 1875 to 1892.³⁵ The name changed to The West Australian Club in 1897 and, like The Weld Club, it also continues to boast illustrious representatives of the local business fraternity and the public service as members. Those that were members of both The Weld Club and The WA Club included John and Alexander Forrest, George Shenton and Walter James.³⁶

A club for women equivalent to The Weld Club is The Karrakatta Club. Formed in October 1894, it was the first Women's Club in Australia.³⁷ Founding members represented the leading women in the colony, such as the Premier's wife, Lady Forrest, Lady Onslow, the wife of the Attorney General, Mrs Edith Cowan, Mrs Walter James, and Mrs Lefroy.³⁸ Dr Roberta Jull, Western Australia's first medical practitioner, joined in 1897.³⁹

Initially formed as a literary society, based on the Education Clubs for women in the United States, the Karrakatta Club was proactive in improving community services. Like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Karrakatta Club mounted a 'genteel campaign' for women's suffrage, by lobbying Members of Parliament, pressuring unions, distributing literature and arranging debates.⁴⁰

The architectural styles of the premises of these clubs differ. Originally a bank chamber, the WA Club's current residence in 101-103 St Georges Terrace is

29 Heritage South Australia.

30 Heritage Victoria.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Stannage, CT., *The People of Perth*. Perth City Council: Perth. 1979: p. 307.

34 Louch, TS., p. 48.

35 De Mori, C. *A Club for all Seasons. A history of the Western Australian Club (Inc)*. Perth: The WA Club Inc. 1990: p. 9.

36 Ibid. pp 13-14.

37 Anon., *Karrakatta Club: History 1894-1954*. Imperial Printing: Perth. 1955: 5

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. p. 7.

40 Biskup, P., "The Westralian Feminist Movement" in *University Studies in Western Australian History*, 222, 3 (Oct 1959). p. 80.

designed in the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style, consisting of four storeys with a basement and vault.⁴¹ The Karrakatta Club has moved from its Inter-War Mediterranean style building at 186 St Georges Terrace to its present location in Lawson Flats, 4 Sherwood Court, Perth.

The Weld Club was designed by Mr (later Sir) J. J Talbot Hobbs, to reflect a 'gentleman's residence' and comparative examples of his work in this style can still be readily found in the up-market suburb of Peppermint Grove. 'Minnawarra' in Leake Street, is a fine example. Other examples of this style can be seen in *Meerilinga*, Hay St, West Perth; 69 Mount St, Perth and 'Gibney House' in Vincent St, Highgate.

13. 4 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition
Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet
Louch, T. S. *The History of the Weld Club* (Perth, The Weld Club, 1964)

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

A full interior inspection should be carried out whenever an opportunity presents itself.