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 September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Mardoc Building is a fine example of the Federation Anglo-Dutch style, enhanced by its period interior details. (Criterion 1.1)

*Mardoc Buil*ding, located on a major intersection in the town, is a landmark building that contributes to the coherent architectural character of the central area of the town. (Criterion 1.3)

Mardoc Building, together with *Hordern Hotel*, contributes to the streetscape of Federal street and the retail / commercial area of Narrogin. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Mardoc Building demonstrates the district's development during an era of rural prosperity, when investors were anticipating a flourishing town life based on agricultural wealth. (Criterion 2.2)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Mardoc Building is highly valued by the community for its associations with a period of development in Narrogin and contributes to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Mardoc Building is a demonstration of a distinctive way of life of commercial and recreational use that represents a time of rural prosperity and expansion in the district of Narrogin in the early years of this century. *Mardoc Building* demonstrates a way of life no longer practiced in the State. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Mardoc Building is representative of the style of architecture popular in the first decade of the 20th Century and is typical of the form associated with medium scale, commercial / residential street architecture. (Criteria 6.1, 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Despite some deterioration of finishes associated with lack of maintenance and non-use, *Mardoc Building* is in sound condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The loss of the verandah and balcony has not only diminished the appearance of the building but the residential function of the upper level and the street amenity. The alterations to the interior layout and additions to the rear do not respect the original building and although removable, they have compromised the integrity of the place. *Mardoc Building* therefore retains a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Alterations and additions have generally been carried out with materials that do not conform with the quality and character of the original building. However, the altered shopfronts and internal openings could be easily reinstated. *Mardoc Building* retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Mardoc Building is a three-storey building on the corner of Egerton and Federal streets, Narrogin. It was built, in 1911, for W. G. Cornwall of Carnegie Farm. Cornwall was also the owner of the first general store in Narrogin, an extension of his Williams business.[1]

The area around Williams was settled in the 1850s and 1860s and, in 1869, a survey (gazetted as Williams Location 177). In the 1880s, the Western Australian Government actively pursued the idea of a railway line between Perth and Albany. The W. A. Land Company successfully bid for the railway contract and the line was started in 1886. The Company needed a place to stop its engines and acquired Narrogin Pool. The Beverley to Albany Act of 1887, granted all unowned land within the Narrogin townsite to the W. A. Land Company as payment for the railway line. Accordingly, the surrounding land was surveyed into suitable blocks. Lot 5 Federal Street was acquired by William Cornwall.[2]

By 1905, the township had become well established and, by 1906, Narrogin was declared a municipality. Following the take over of the railway by the Government in 1897, land was made available for settlement for people who were leaving the Goldfields in large numbers.[3] However, the major source of wealth was not in the development of the town but in the development of the farming industry.[4]

Cornwall's new building was designed by architect B. H. Dods who had spent six years in South Africa and the design of the building clearly shows the influence of the Dutch Colonial architecture found in South Africa. T. H. Brown, who built many of Narrogin's buildings, was the contractor. Both plan and building were regarded as progressive for the day.[5] The building was designed for shops with living accommodation above.

The splendour of the building is captured in the *Narrogin Advertiser's* description of the opening of the building:

> The ground floor on Federal Street is devoted to five shops...The premises have residential accommodation arranged on the first and second floors. The first floor consists of a spacious dining room and kitchen, pantry, bathroom and staircase leading to three airy bedrooms on the second floor. The centre shop...has a large showroom on the first floor approached by a fine staircase executed in picked jarrah.[6]

Mrs Le Lievre's Coffee Palace, on the second floor, is described as having similar splendour. [7] This part of the building became a Temperance Guest House in the 1920s and it was used as a boarding house for fifty years. In the

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1 Pustkuchen, O. E. *The Way Through: The Story of Narrogin* (Town of Narrogin, 1981) p. 155; Opening described by *Narrogin Observer*, 23 December 1911 p. 23.

2 *ibid.*, p. 91.

3 City of Narrogin, *Narrogin the Garden City of the North West*, p. 10.

4 For Site Particulars Form see Heritage Council of Western Australia File No. P1811, p. 5.

5 Pustkuchen, p. 155.

6 *Narrogin Observer*, 23 December 1911 p. 23.

7 *ibid.*

1940's the new proprietors, Mark Purser and Eva Docking, renamed the building the Mardoc Guest House and today the building is generally referred to as the Mardoc Building.[8] The longest term tenants were A. G. McLoughlin and later his son, Bert. For over sixty years they ran the newsagency, bakers and sporting goods shop.[9]

According to Mr R. Bodycoat, in an architectural evaluation for the Western Australian Heritage Committee, written in 1989, the building has been used as an eating house, a *bordello,* and a nightclub, as well as its long history as a boarding house.[10] The use and condition reflect a decline from the hopeful prospects of the early years of this century: Shops 1 and 2 newsagent; Shops 3 and 4 vacant; Shop 5 pet shop; Shop 6 opportunity shop; Shop 7 antiques and Shop 8 boutique. The first and second floors are vacant. The upper floors and shop 4 were condemned in 1989.[11]

In 1994, the owner of the building undertook upgrading works to the southern area of the building. The shopfronts were refurbished however, with the exception of the rooms above the newsagency, the upper floors remain vacant.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Mardoc Building is a three-storey commercial building built in the Federation Anglo-Dutch style,[12] on the south-west corner of Federal and Egerton Streets, a prominent corner in the Town. The place has been identified in Donaldson Smith's Narrogin Townscape Study (1988) as being significant in its own right and contributing to the townscape of the central area. The intersection of Federal and Egerton Streets is one of four major road junctions in the town and is the integrating link between the eastern and western sides of the town.[13]

The building is truncated at the corner and has street frontages that stretch thirty metres. Vehicular access is provided to the rear courtyard by a right-of-way from Rowley Street.

The building is constructed of load-bearing brick walls and, at the shopfronts, the walls on the upper levels are supported on steel stanchions. The floors are generally timber throughout with the exception of several areas where they have been replaced by concrete, and in the bathrooms and toilets, where the original timber has been covered by concrete. The roof is constructed of timber and covered with Marseilles tiles to the street facades, while the

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8 Town and Shire of Narrogin, *Narrogin Sketches,* 1990, p. 44.

9 Pustkuchen, p. 155.

10 For Site Particulars Form see HCWA File No. P1811, p. 5.

11 Duncan Stephen and Mercer Architects *Architectural Evaluation for the Western Australian Heritage Committee* no. 46/89, p. 3.

12 Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture, Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989) pp. 112-115.

13 Donaldson Smith, 'Narrogin Townscape Study 1988' (A Townscape Improvement Grant project).

remaining roof is clad with corrugated galvanised iron, including the cantilevered awning.[14]

The building is modest in scale and, although designed in the Federation Anglo-Dutch style, the place combines interior elements which are Victorian in style and originally combined elements which were more simple in style; namely, the verandah and balcony which are no longer extant.

The plain, rendered facades feature a picturesque roof silhouette through the use of parapeted gables. The gables are a combination of triangular and curved-headed. The parapets are intricately modelled with light touches of Art Nouveau motifs, including a cartouche, freely adapted from French Renaissance detailing. The curved-headed parapets crown the building's truncation and the entrance hall on Egerton Street. Wide pilasters frame these parapets.

The gables project from a high-pitched, tiled roof that also features dormers, as the roof space accommodates the second floor. This decorative roof hides another roof beyond. From the street level, chimneys with potted tops can just be seen beyond the gables and the dormers.

The building exterior features square-headed openings with small panes in the upper sash.

The original verandah and balcony, no longer extant, were plain in style, with the balcony supported on paired timber posts with simple timber infill. The balcony was replaced by a cantilevered awning. A balconette remains at the first floor window at the building truncation.

Mardoc Building comprises four shops to Federal Street with two levels of living accommodation above, that are connected by interior stairs. The Egerton Street facade comprises three shops and a corner shop with an entrance at the building truncation. A coffee palace, later a boarding house, is accessed from Egerton Street via an entrance hall, and occupies the two upper floors at Egerton Street. A dining room, kitchen, pantry and bathroom are located on the first floor.

The interior features pressed metal ceilings throughout, with the exception of the eastern section of the second floor where the pressed metal has been replaced by fibrous plaster. Original timber boarding survives to the ceiling in the first floor dining room, and to the raked ceilings in the rooms on the second floor. The timber joinery details and carved timber stairs, between floors and in the entrance hall, are Victorian in character.[15]

An addition to the rear was built to accommodate a laundry and store on the lower level, and kitchen on the first floor.[16]

Due to changes in the shop tenancies, the shopfronts, the shop layouts and stairs to the upper floors have been altered. Brass over timber core shopfronts have been replaced by extruded aluminium, and additional stud walls have

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14 The cantilevered awning replaced the original balcony, the date of the alteration is unknown.

15 Bodycoat, R., 'Architectural Evaluation for No. 46/89 Mardoc Building, Narrogin' (for the Western Australian Heritage Committee) September, 1989, p. 4.

16 Date of the addition is unknown.

been added to the shop interiors. On all floors, openings have been created to link adjoining floor areas and, elsewhere in the building, stairs have been altered, one removed, and others sealed to stop access. Bodycoat, in his architectural evaluation of the place in 1989, states that these changes are reversible.[17]

In his inspection of the building, in 1989, Bodycoat reported that the toilet and bathroom facilities were substandard and many were inoperable. He also reported that the timber escape stair had collapsed, and that rising damp and ineffective stormwater disposal was causing deterioration to the courtyard. He reported that the roof plumbing and some roof timbers require replacement and that the place was in need of repair and replacement of deteriorated joinery, plaster and paintwork.[18] The building appeared, at this time, to be structurally sound and lack of maintenance the cause of much of the deterioration.

In 1994, the owner undertook conservation works on the place. The street facades were rendered and painted, and the upper level windows were reinstated. The shopfronts were also refurbished including, Shop No. 1, newsagency and the residential accommodation above, at the southern end of the building.[19] The building was re-roofed and the roof plumbing replaced. The interior of the upper levels were cleaned but no building work was undertaken.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet, 5 July, 1990.

Bodycoat, R., 'Architectural Evaluation for No. 46/89 Mardoc Building, Narrogin' (for the Western Australian Heritage Committee) September, 1989.

17 Bodycoat, p. 5.

18 *ibid.*

19 For details, see Heritage Council file No. 1811, Drawing No. 94.56.