



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

Masonic Lodge (former) exhibits a characteristic element of Cue's architectural vocabulary in its cladding of corrugated iron. (Criterion 1.1)

Masonic Lodge (former) has outstanding aesthetic significance for its architecture - the use of sophisticated 'Victorian Second Empire' style in a remote location, using corrugated iron and timber as building materials. The juxtaposition of an elegantly detailed portico against a bland corrugated building demonstrates a subtle quality of architectural design in a remote place. (Criterion 1.2)

The imposing building is a landmark in Cue. Its size and relative isolation is in stark contrast to the primarily single-storey residences of Dowley Street. (Criterion 1.3)

The corrugated iron clad *Masonic Lodge (former)*, set in the vast outback landscape, presents a unique and unexpected aesthetic experience. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *Masonic Lodge (former)* is part of the building development that occurred in Cue around the turn-of-the-century, when the demand for services and facilities increased as the town developed to become the regional centre for the Murchison Goldfield. (Criterion 2.1)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Masonic Lodge (former) is an unusual example of a timber frame two-storey building using corrugated iron as a cladding. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Masonic Lodge (former) contributes to the community's sense of place as a distinctive building which is a readily recognised as being in Cue. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Masonic Lodge (former), in its size, shape and construction detailing, is a rare style of Masonic Lodge building within Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12. 3 CONDITION

The building has not been maintained since it was unoccupied in the mid-1980s. General repair and refixing of finishes is required. In addition to replacing window panes, some replacement of fabric may be required to return the building to good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Masonic Lodge (former) retains its original floor layout which reflect its original function as a meeting place. The building retains a moderate degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The building has a moderate degree of authenticity, due to the fact that some of the fabric has been removed (e.g., cooking facility, water tanks, external W.C.).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Conservation Plan for The Masonic Lodge (former) Cue (1899), prepared by John Taylor Architect, September 1996.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Masonic Lodge (former) is a two-storey corrugated iron building constructed in 1899, to provide a meeting place for Murchison Lodge 22 W.A.C., which had been established two years earlier.

Cue, located approx. 650km north-east of Perth, was proclaimed a municipality in 1894, and developed as the regional centre of the Murchison Goldfield. The town was the centre of mining activity over a large field and acquired the offices of a warden and resident magistrate. Among the numerous public buildings that were established were a hospital, public school, workers' hall, miners' institute and the masonic hall.¹

Murchison Lodge 22 W.A.C. was consecrated on 21 April 1897, the ceremony being carried out by the Hon. J.A. Wright, District Grand Master, who had travelled up especially from Albany.² The ceremony, which was held in the State School, was attended, "by a large gathering of brethren from every part of Australasia".³

Subsequently over fifty members of the craft sat down to a sumptuous banquet at the Crown Hotel, presided over by W.M. Gale. Numerous toasts were proposed, and especial gratification was expressed by the visitors at the heartiness of their reception. Mutual good wishes were expressed, and the proceedings throughout were of a nature tended to elevate the character and tone of Freemasonry on the Murchison and Australia generally.⁴

However, it was not until 1899, that the building of a Masonic Hall commenced. On 8 April 1899, the foundation stone was laid on the chosen site at the corner of Robinson and Dowley Streets. A newspaper report of the occasion notes that, 'In the cavity under the stone, the local papers, plans of the building, and coins of the realm, etc. will be deposited in the usual way.'⁵

The foundation stone records that Little and McInnes were the contractors; E. Owen Hughes the architect; and, that P. M. Bro. D. Taylor laid the stone.

Mr E. Owen Hughes is known to have practiced architecture in Melbourne from 1889 to 1894. In 1899 he is listed in Wise's Postal Directory in practice in Cue, the same year he designed the Masonic Lodge. Little else is known of his architectural work, although he continued to practice in Cue until 1912.⁶

¹ Battye, J.S., *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, (Hussey and Gillingham, Adelaide, 1912), pp. 1009-1010.

² *Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette*, 1 May 1897, p. 2.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette*, 8 April 1899, p. 2.

⁶ Kelly, I., 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)', (Masters Thesis, UWA, 1991).

A brief outline of the nature of Freemasonry was provided during the consecration ceremony:

According to His Lordship the art of building massive and beautiful buildings, destined to stand the attacks and ravages of ages, was held in such high esteem, that masons were free to travel in all countries - hence the term. They formed a guild and were firmly united in the bonds of friendship and fidelity. In times of sickness or distress they were bound to afford relief, and the grandest principles of humanity were laid down for the guidance of brethren generally.⁷

Monthly meetings were held in the Hall until August 1979, when they were cancelled due to insufficient numbers.⁸ The Lodge was in recess until 1983; however, the building was not sold by the Trustees of the Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons until 23 October 1985. *Masonic Lodge* was sold to a private individual and the building was left unoccupied. It was then sold in 1989, and again remained unoccupied.⁹

Currently, *Masonic Lodge (former)* is still unoccupied; however, work is being undertaken to conserve the building.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Masonic Lodge (former) is a two-storey building that addresses Dowley Street.

The cubed shaped building is of timber framed construction and clad with iron sheeting in a small corrugated profile to three facades and a ripple profile to the front facade and interior. The hipped roof is also clad in corrugated iron and adorned at its front apexes by two small decorative iron motifs.

The front facade is built on a stone base course and is symmetrically disposed about a central door with matched windows either side. The plain facade is relieved by an elegant timber portico which extends over the doorway. The portico features a truncated pyramidal roof, clad in corrugated iron and topped with an iron cresting. The portico rests on slender stop-chamfered, timber posts to the upper level and square, fluted timber posts to the lower level. The posts, decorated with Tuscan capitals, sit on a stone balustrade. Seven carved crosses decorate the entablature. The portico is delicately decorated with cast iron infill panels to the balcony, and cast iron brackets. The entrance is approached by stone steps with a solid stone balustrade. The front door is timber panelled topped with rectangular fanlights. The window openings are four paned sashes with decorative timber sills.

The building comprises two rooms of similar size, located one above the other at the street facade. The room at the rear on the lower level contains the stair and gives outside access. Two small rooms are located at the top of the stairs. The upper level room retains its timber stage and two raised dais's. At some time the building was used for residential purposes.

⁷ *Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette*, 1 May 1897, p. 2.

⁸ Information from Freemasons Grand Lodge of Western Australia, 11 October 1994.

⁹ C/T 1673/202; Information on file, provided by the National Trust, February 1992.

The interior features a carved jarrah staircase, oregon pine floorboards and small decorative ceiling roses.

A small addition to the rear of what is believed to have housed a kitchen - evidenced by its chimney, a bathroom and water tank, was built with karri framing and clad to match the existing. Photographic evidence dates the addition and tank to the 1920s. It was demolished early in 1994.

The building requires repair throughout. Iron sheeting masks the broken window panes.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition.

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.

Conservation Plan for The Masonic Lodge (former) Cue (1899), prepared by John Taylor Architect, September 1996.