



**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)**

- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 8.8 Remembering the fallen
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 107 Settlements
- 406 Religion
- 501 World wars and other wars
- 602 Early settlers

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is significant as a pair of well-composed stone ecclesiastical buildings in a landscaped setting constructed in the Victorian Academic Gothic style built over several periods of development. (Criterion 1.1)

*St John's Church* is a fine example of an Anglican Church constructed in a major regional centre in the late 19th century to a design by significant Perth architect, Francis Bird. The belltower, stained glass windows and tessellated tiles to the floor of the porch are details of particular aesthetic value. (Criterion 1.2)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is sited on elevated land on the northern outskirts of the town of Northam. The buildings are spaced apart with mature trees, landscaped gardens and a recent stone boundary fence,

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

giving the group a significant presence in Wellington Street's streetscape. (Criterion 1.3)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is located in close proximity to other significant heritage buildings (former Northam School and former Post Office to the south and former presbytery to the north) in the town of Northam, which together form a significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

## **11.2 HISTORIC VALUE**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* demonstrates the growth of the Northam Anglican community in the 1890s, as a larger church was needed to replace the original smaller St James Anglican Church (1851). The location of the new church demonstrates the pattern of occupation of Northam as the town centre had shifted since St James' construction. (Criterion 2.1)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is associated with the development of the Avon Valley region and particularly the town of Northam and its surrounding areas in the later part of the 19th century when rapid growth was experienced through the discovery of gold. (Criterion 2.1)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* was built to provide a venue for the social activities for the Anglican community, particularly Sunday School for which it has been continuously used until the present (2008). The parish hall is also associated with social activities for the wider Northam community. (Criterion 2.2)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is valued for its association with prominent members of the Northam community including: Frederick Morrell who contributed to the early development of the Anglican Church in Northam and George Throssell (second Premier of Western Australia) who was a significant member of the committee which organised the construction of the church and hall. The place is also valued for its association with the many rectors who served Northam parish. (Criterion 2.3)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* was designed by architects Francis Bird (St John's Church 1890), Howard Evans (Parish Hall, 1897), F. G. B. Hawkins (WWII Memorial Screen 1948), Marshall Clifton (vestry 1971) and stained glass artists E. G. Bowers (1955) and A. S. Brown (1982). (Criterion 2.3)

## **11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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## **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is valued by the Northam Anglican community as the site of religious activity and worship since the construction of the Church in 1890 until the present day (January 2008). The place contributes to the community's sense of place as a site of spirituality and culture for the Parish of Northam. (Criteria 4.1 and 4.2)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is valued by the local and wider community as evidenced by its inclusion on the Town of Northam Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places, the Register of the National Estate and its classification by the National Trust of Australia (WA). (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

## **12.1 RARITY**

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## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is a good representative example of a church and hall built of stone in the Victorian Academic Gothic style in the late 19th and early 20th century. The construction of the place to serve the spiritual and social needs of the growing community of Northam represents the growth of communities following the discovery of gold in Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* represents the period of time when the parish church and parish hall were the major venues for social gatherings in the community. (Criterion 6.2)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is in good condition. There is evidence of minor deterioration to stonework, which is particularly severe on the northern side of the hall. There is some deterioration to roof flashings, and gutters and downpipes are in very poor state generally. There are some broken panes and deterioration to lead lights and stained glass windows. There is some minor movement in the floor of the church.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* has a high degree of integrity, as it remains the focus of spiritual life for the Anglican community of Northam. The original use of both Church and Hall continues.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* has a high degree of authenticity. The majority of the fabric of both the 1890 church and the 1897 hall remains intact. The hall was extended in 1957 and remains largely as completed at that time. A vestry was added to the church in 1971 and the altar was adapted to conform to liturgical changes. The roof of the church was replaced with shingles in 1928, repaired with sheoak shingles after a fire in 1944, and replaced with asbestos shingles in 1977. No other major changes have been made to the church and it remains largely as it was constructed in 1890.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

This document is based on the 'St John's Church and Parish Hall Conservation Plan' prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, with Kristy Bizzaca, Historian, for the Anglican parish of Northam with funding from Lotterywest, December 2006.

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For discussion of documentary evidence, see 'St John's Church and Parish Hall Conservation Plan', pp. 19-41.

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For discussion of physical evidence, see 'St John's Church and Parish Hall Conservation Plan', pp. 43-84.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For discussion of comparative evidence, see 'St John's Church and Parish Hall Conservation Plan', p. 42.

In addition, the following churches are comparable to *St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam*:

*St Andrews's Church and Hall, Katanning*, comprises a Catholic Church (1898) and Hall (1911), constructed of red brick with concrete render and corrugated iron roofs. The Church is in a modest gothic design, utilising the rich red brick of the district with restrained stucco detailing. The Hall exhibits art nouveau and arts and crafts influences with an asymmetrical front facade, steep gable, unusually shaped gable window and castellation.

*St Brigid's Group, Perth*, comprises a brick and tile Convent (1896), Church (1904), Presbytery (1904) and Hall (c. 1900). The Church is a fine and substantial parish church in the Federation Gothic style and a good, restrained example of the work of Cavanagh and Cavanagh. The Parish Hall is a fine example of a parish hall, with some well-executed Flemish bond brickwork, and a good example of an institutional building designed by J. J. Talbot Hobbs.

*Scot's Uniting Church, Albany*, is a stone and corrugated iron church (1892), with a Hall of much later construction (1969). The finely crafted local granite stonework is composed into a balanced composition with a strong gabled form and restrained detailing of the west front.

*Wesley Church, Fremantle* (1889), is built of limestone with an asbestos roof. The Federation Gothic detailing is evident in the lancet windows with intricate tracery, the articulation of the elevations provided by the buttresses and the harmony of the unpainted cement dressings against the soft texture of the limestone walls.

*Scots Presbyterian Church* (1890), a limestone and tile church is significant for the colour and textures of the contrasting ashlar limestone walls and red brick quoins, and the soaring verticality of its form.

*Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont*, comprises a limestone and tile Church (1898) and Rectory (1936). The original building design was in the Federation Gothic style and contained the basic elements of Gothic architecture – pointed arch, ribbed vault and buttressing with wall membranes reduced to a minimum. Subsequent additions have, for the most part, embraced the same theme.

Places designed by architect Francis Bird include 1889 renovations to *Strawberry Hill Farm and Gardens*; *Woodloes Homestead* (1871), a Victorian Georgian home with shingled roof; Methodist Ladies College Group, Claremont (1880); *St John the Baptist Anglican*, Dongara (1884), a Victorian Gothic style church; and, the 1884 church at Kenwick Pioneer Cemetery.

Places designed by architect Howard Evans include: a stone and iron church at St Mary's Anglican Church, Rectory and Eucalyptus Citriodora Tree, Beverley (1890); Woodburn House, a limestone and tile, well-resolved building in the Federation Filigree style at *Corringle, Greenough* (1898); Wandering Shire Hall (1896), a brick and iron building; and, St James Anglican Church, Northam (1911).

*St John's Anglican Church and Parish Hall, Northam* is a good representative example of a stone church and hall in the Victorian Academic Gothic style.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

'St John's Church and Parish Hall Conservation Plan' prepared for the Anglican parish of Northam with funding from Lotterywest, December 2006 by Heritage and Conservation Professionals.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

The Conservation Plan does not identify whether the Pipe Organ is of any significance. Further research may determine the significance, if any, of this individual element.