



# 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

The *Criterion Hotel* displays a cohesive, consistent and comprehensive range of original Art Deco details throughout its exterior and interior design, that few buildings in central Perth can match. (Criterion 1.1)

The *Criterion Hotel* has important streetscape value and provides a continuity of line with neighbouring buildings in Hay Street, between Barrack and Pier Streets. (Criterion 1.3)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

A licensed public house has operated on the site of the *Criterion Hotel* since 1848, at least, making it the oldest continuously licensed premise in Free Classical rebuilding of a hotel in central Perth in 1936, as the state recovered from the Great Depression, was an affirmation of the Swan Brewery's faith in the continued growth of city life. (Criterion 2.2)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

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## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

The *Criterion Hotel* is one of the few remaining "pubs" still operating as a hotel with accommodation in the Central Business District. It is the only remaining example of a central city hotel in the Art Deco style. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

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### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The *Criterion Hotel* is in sound condition.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

The *Criterion Hotel* retains a high degree of integrity.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

Except for some alterations to the ground floor spaces, in particular the introduction of inappropriate details and finishes in Bugatti's Bar (late 1980s), the degree of authenticity in the *Criterion Hotel* is high.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The early history of the buildings on this site is documented in an article by Trevor Tuckfield published in 1975 in *Early Days*:

It may be noted that Edward Barron later opened an inn in Howick Street [now Hay Street]- between Barrack and Pier streets. Then, in 1848, a sale notice - 'For sale allotment 014, recently a public house by Ed. Barron.' Today, the *Criterion* occupies the spot. However, Barron sold his and it became the *John Bull Inn* and the licensee was T. Roach and later (1850) M.A. Rodgers (transferring from T. Roach). Rodgers had it until 1854. Possibly he died because from 1854 to 1860, Mrs. Rodgers held the licence. From 1865 to 1867, H.A. Dore had the licence - then it transferred to Patrick Maloney who had it from 1868 to 1870. From 1871 to at least 1885 the licence for the *John Bull Inn* was held by John C. Chipper. In 1898 to 1899 W. Herrington held the licence. I have no record of when it was changed to the *Criterion* (but it was already changed in 1885).<sup>1</sup>

The original *Criterion* must have still been relatively new in 1885 as it is mentioned in an article in the *West Australian*, dated 1 June 1885:

There is room for improvement in the appearance and arrangement of the hotels, with one exception (the "Criterion", a fine new building) the hotels are not in keeping with the rest of the town, so far as appearance goes, there is not much to complain about in the accommodation they afford.<sup>2</sup>

The original *Criterion* is again mentioned, in an article in the *West Australian*, dated Monday, 2 May 1892:

The *Criterion Hotel*, Howick Street, which appears to be one of the first establishments in this city to adopt the electric light system, was lighted up by electricity for the first time on Saturday night. The light is undoubtedly a decided improvement to Mr. Chipper's house....<sup>3</sup>

The new *Criterion*, constructed in 1937, is described at length in a feature article published in the same year. In it, mention is made of the former buildings:

Mrs. J. Norrish, who as Gertrude Amelia Chipper, laid the foundation stone of the old *Criterion Hotel*, then known as the *John Bull Inn*, on March 6, 1878, recently unveiled a memorial tablet in the new and elaborate structure to mark the third epoch of the *Criterion*.<sup>4</sup>

The new *Criterion* was built for the Swan Brewery Company Ltd, on the recommendation of Mr. A.W. Jacoby, General Manager, that the company build an up-to-date building 'in keeping with the times'. The cost of the new building, without furnishings was £42,000, and furniture and furnishings involved an outlay of over £7,000. Mr. E.J. Church continued as licensee of the new hotel.<sup>5</sup>

The article heralds the building as a modern, well-equipped hotel:

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<sup>1</sup> Tuckfield, T. 'Early Colonial Taverns and Hotels' in *Early Days*, 1975, Vol 7, Part 7, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *West Australian*, 1 June 1885.

<sup>3</sup> *West Australian*, 2 May 1892.

<sup>4</sup> *Building and Construction*, 13 August 1937, p. 7. The tablet was placed in position in the hotel foyer on 2 July 1937.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

Replacing the old, historic *Criterion Hotel* in Hay-street a new building built on modern lines with an imposing and attractive exterior has been erected. Comprising four storeys, and a basement, the new *Criterion* was built at a cost of £40,000. It provides all the latest and best in hotel equipment including three finely-equipped bars, a dining room with accommodation for over 120, up-to-date kitchen and spacious lounge. There are 74 single and double bedrooms (the latter with bathrooms attached) and ample facilities for all patrons provided.<sup>6</sup>

The architects for the building were Hobbs, Forbes and Partners and the building contractor was Mr. H.A. Doust, who also received mention in the feature article:

Mr H.A. Doust, of Claremont, was selected by Messrs. Hobbs, Forbes and Partners, as builders for the new *Criterion Hotel*. Already well known for the quality of the work and service he gives his clients, Mr. Harold Doust has made a speciality of concrete construction and is a past master of the art. In the new *Criterion* he has cause to be proud of his handicraft. Other big works which are to his credit are the reconstruction of the Savoy Hotel, Merredin Hospital, Ron Doig Memorial Ward, Fremantle, and the big hall at Applecross. A remarkably fine job has been made of the new hotel which is the largest hotel contract carried out in Perth for some time.<sup>7</sup>

The feature article also provides a detailed description of the building and the layout of its features (a copy of which is held on file).

In an earlier article by Trevor Tuckfield, also published in *Early Days*, he points out that the *Criterion* (previously under several different names) is the oldest public house in the city, as the United Services Tavern, which had previously held this position, ceased trading in 1970.<sup>8</sup>

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

### Exterior Description

The *Criterion Hotel* is a four-storey building, with a basement.<sup>9</sup> The building is of a symmetrical design, a central block between twin stepped towers topped by flag poles. The style of design is referred to as the "Skyscraper Style", characterised by the stepped forms and vertical emphasis of the twin towers. Other examples of this style in nearby buildings are the Plaza Arcade and Cinema, and the Gledden Building (1936-37).

The stepped forms of the towers are repeated in the motifs on the projecting canopy at street level, and bear the initials of the *Criterion Hotel*.

Art Deco was a popular architectural style throughout Australia after the Depression, when building activity increased significantly from about 1936. In Perth, the Adelphi and Bohemia Hotels (the former demolished in early 1970s, the latter in the 1980s) in the central city and the Raffles, Highway and Scarborough Hotels in the suburbs all featured the Art Deco style.

The style of the *Criterion Hotel* can also be seen as a more Moderne development of previous buildings by the architectural firm, when it was

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Tuckfield, T. 'Early Colonial Taverns and Hotels' in *Early Days*, 1971, Vol 7, Part 3, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> The information found in the physical evidence section is taken from information provided by the Art Deco Society and which is held on file. A site visit by a Heritage Council conservation officer verified this information.

known as Hobbs, Smith and Forbes, eg. the Mounts Bay Road facade of the West Australian Newspapers (1929-30) and Goldsbrough House (1929) for the Goldsbrough Mort Company. The stylistic details can be seen to have changed from more classically derived forms to the contemporary Art Deco.

#### Internal Description

The building has a basement, ground and three upper levels. The basement contains mainly service facilities. The ground floor retains its original style in many areas. The front bar has been refurbished, however its ceiling remains largely unaltered with Art Deco themes on the plaster modelling of the beams and cornices. The entry lobby has extensive patterned terrazzo work in the floor and on the walls up to door head height. The main doors are glazed with an Art Deco motif on the glass and in the shape of the panes. The ceiling is barrel vaulted and divided into panels which reflect the wall piers.

The main lobby possesses original ceiling panelling, joinery and fittings (telephone booths, lifts, dado strip etc.). There is a clerestory within one of the ceiling panels.

In the former dining room there is extensive plaster work using Art Deco themes. The ceiling remains in its original form, as does the fireplace and the lead light windows. There are highlight windows over the alcoves, which also contain the design themes in lead light. There is also extensive timber dado panelling in the northern end of the dining room.

The stairway retains its solid brass streamline design balustrade with a polished jarrah handrail and polished stone stringer. At the landing there are lead light windows containing an Art Deco design motif.

On the two residential floors there are rooms on either side of a long corridor which has a high dado, with most of the original panelling intact. Rooms are plain with simple, but recognisable deco motifs in the ventilators, joinery and doors. On the first floor, overlooking Hay Street there is a suite of guest lounge/writing rooms which remain in original condition, with doors, ceilings and walls all displaying the Art Deco style.

### **13.3 REFERENCES**

*Conservation plans or books directly related to the place. This is not a general bibliography.*

National Trust Assessment Exposition.