



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)

- 4.1.2 Making suburbs

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 506 Tourism

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The place has aesthetic significance as a row of modest, attached residences built in the Federation Queen Anne Style, featuring prominent half timbered gables and tall corbelled chimneys. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place reflects the expansion and development of residential buildings on the city fringes during the rapid population increase of the 1890s gold boom and the early years of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.1)

The place is important as a reflection of the social changes that occurred in Northbridge over the course of a century. This is reflected in the changing function of the houses from domestic dwellings to a drug rehabilitation centre, and now a backpackers' hostel. (Criterion 2.1)

The place has some importance for its association with Dr William Trethowan, a Perth surgeon, who owned and developed that part of Palmerston Street between Aberdeen and Newcastle Streets. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is significant for its role in providing accommodation and shelter to various fringe groups within the community. (Criterion 4.1)

* 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.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The place is rare as an example of a modest terrace in the Federation Queen Anne style comprising three attached residences.

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place is representative as an example of a modest Federation Queen Anne style building comprising two or more attached residences.

12.3 CONDITION

The place is in good condition and appears to have been well maintained.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The three attached residences have been adapted for use as one building. The domestic scale and character of the place has, however, been retained. The place has a moderate degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a moderate degree of authenticity. Generally, the place remains largely as constructed although there have been modifications over time to accommodate the changing uses of the place. These changes include internal modifications to the plan and finishes. Externally the place remains largely as constructed, although a brick addition has been added to the rear.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robyn Taylor, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Palassis Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

These three single-storey terrace houses were constructed on former Lot Y164 (now Lot 35) in 1907 by Dr William Trethowan. Originally there was another set of three terrace houses on the south side, Nos. 11-15 Palmerston Street, which were demolished for the construction of the Graham Farmer Freeway and Northbridge Tunnel.¹ The neighbouring corner commercial building (No.309 Newcastle Street) and residence (No.23 Palmerston Street) were part of the same development along the Palmerston Street frontage of Lot Y164.² Following the resumption of land in Northbridge during the 1960s by the Metropolitan Roads Board, these houses and many other properties were leased out by the Board to various community groups and businesses. Nos.17-21 Palmerston Street has been used by a variety of groups, the current occupants being City Backpackers which operates in conjunction with the nearby Lone Star Backpackers at 156 Aberdeen Street.

According to the City of Perth rate books, Perth Town Lot Y164 belonged to the well known merchant George Shenton until 1887 when James MacKay acquired the property in 1888. MacKay, whose occupation is listed as an 'Agent', then 'Mining Manager' during 1899 to 1902, had acquired other

¹ Officially opened by the State Premier the Hon. Richard Court, MLA, on 20 April 2000.

² City of Perth rate book for 1907. Also, Metropolitan Water and Sewerage map, revised August 1950. Cons.4156, Sheet No.71, State Records Office.

properties in the area such as Lot Y156 on the corner of Newcastle and Fitzgerald Streets. These boom years in the State's economy, triggered by the gold rushes of the 1890s, resulted in considerable land and property speculation in the area north of the city.

In 1902, Lot Y164 was transferred to Dr William Trethowan, a surgeon. Dr Trethowan also acquired nearby Lot 163 in 1905 and took up residence in the grand c.1892 house at No.162 (then listed as No.170) Aberdeen Street.³ This house was a neighbour to the Post Master General Richard Sholl's large residence at No.156 Aberdeen Street, which at that time occupied the whole of the corner Lot 165 facing Aberdeen and Palmerston Streets. At one stage in his career Dr Trethowan was President of the Western Australian Branch of the St John's Ambulance Association, which had been set up in 1891.⁴ This Association had its headquarters, or postal address, in a nearby residence, No.120 Aberdeen Street, which still stands today.⁵ Trethowan had lived next door at No.122 before moving into No.162 Aberdeen Street while his other property, Lot Y164, was being developed.⁶

In 1907, Trethowan had two sets of three single storey terrace houses erected along the Palmerston Street frontage and an elaborate two-storey commercial building on the corner of Newcastle Street with an attached two-storey residence at No.23 Palmerston Street. The remainder or part of Lot Y164, along Newcastle Street, was apparently being used as a yard by Australian Wood and Coal.⁷ For many years this area would continue to be used as a timber yard.

Among the first tenants to live at Nos.17-21 Palmerston Street were Harrie West, a music teacher; Dr Lionel Robertson; and Mr Dugald Stalker, a salesman. Apart from the Wests (Mrs West was apparently also a music teacher) the names of the other residents were to change the following year.⁸ A random survey of the post office directories suggests few residents remained for any significant length of time in these terrace houses. For a long period of time the only other residences in this section of Palmerston Street were a group of houses on the opposite side of the street owned by the architect J. J. Talbot Hobbs.

In 1914, ownership of the land along Palmerston Street and the corner of Newcastle Street was transferred to William and Elizabeth Pead, while Trethowan continued to be the owner of the land along Newcastle Street where Adam Martin operated a wood yard.⁹ In 1919, Martin acquired this

³ City of Perth rate books for 1902 and 1905. Prior to this Dr Trethowan was living at No.122 Aberdeen Street. Post office directory for 1900 and 1904.

⁴ Cohen, B. C., *A History of Medicine in Western Australia*, Paterson Brokensha Pty.Ltd., Perth, WA, no date (1965 written in pencil on front page), p.120. Although the Association had been established in Western Australia in 1891, its formal recognition by Great Britain took place in 1892. Discussion with Kris Bizzaca 6 April, 2001.

⁵ Entry in the 1910 post office directory. Subsequent entries for the St John's Ambulance Association appear for this residence during the years up to 1930, and probably predate the 1910 listing. It was the home of members of the Campbell family, with R. Campbell being listed as Secretary in the 1924 post office directory. In 1921, the Association established its headquarters in Murray Street. Discussion with Kris Bizzaca 6 April, 2001.

⁶ City of Perth rate books, and post office directories for 1900-1904.

⁷ Post office directory for 1905. The address is given as No.259 Newcastle Street, however the street numbers were to change dramatically over time.

⁸ Post office directory for 1908, 1909-10.

⁹ City of Perth rate book for 1914.

site and continued to operate his business as a fuel merchant.¹⁰ This yard would have extended behind the terrace houses. In 1946, ownership of the land, which still included the two sets of residences and the corner building and residence, was transferred to Waddy Waddy Co. Limited.¹¹

A few of the names listed in the post office directories during the 1930s and 1940s indicate something of the demographic changes that were taking place in Northbridge resulting from post-war immigration. Names such as George Isavaris (1929), and Con Kalaf, V. Rossi (a builder), and R. Tula, who are listed during the 1940s. During these decades there were significant numbers of Greek and Italian immigrants living in the area.¹² The construction of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Constantine and St. Helen in 1924, and later the Hellenic Community Centre in nearby Parker Street, bears witness to the strength of the Greek community in this part of Northbridge. The trend is also evident with the subsequent owners of portion of Lot Y164. Maria Giuseppa Sparta, Mrs Benedecia Robustellini, Francesco Paola Genovese, Salvatore Genovese, and Allesandro Genovese were tenants in common of the property.¹³

During the 1960s and 1970s, following the release of plans to develop a north-of-the-city by-pass, large tracts of land and properties between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets were resumed by the government.¹⁴ However, Lot 34 (Lot Y164) was not acquired until 1987.¹⁵ The properties were then leased out by the government at a low rental. Apparently because the future of these properties was uncertain, little to no maintenance was undertaken.¹⁶ The residential properties along Palmerston Street were leased to the Anglican Church, which operated a Nyoongah shelter from Nos.11-15, and possibly Nos.17-21 as well,¹⁷ then in October 1989, the WA Council on Addiction took over the lease for Nos.17-21.¹⁸ The houses were apparently in a bad state due to squatters having been in the premises.¹⁹ Alterations were made to the place, referred to as 21 Palmerston Street, by the coordinator or manager Rick Hamersley to accommodate the programmes on offer. These changes included removing sections of some party walls and creating new doorways to enable the three residences to function as one place. Spaces were created for holding group sessions in the central section, while residential rooms were established on each side, one side for males and the other side for females. Shower facilities and a large communal room was built across the back section of the three houses. A garden with lawns and pavers was established

10 City of Perth rate book for 1919 and post office directories.

11 City of Perth rate book for 1946 and post office directories.

12 Post office directories and various articles and histories written about Northbridge.

13 Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Dated 18 December, 1986. The men have their trades listed as a Tool Maker and two were electricians.

14 *The West Australian*, Advertising feature celebrating the opening of the Northbridge Tunnel, 20 April, 2000. '40 years in the planning', article by George Hackett, former Director, Strategic Planning for Main Road, p.5.

15 Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Transferred to the State Planning Commission on 23 March, 1987.

16 Discussion with Mr. Graham Mason, tradesman and wall paper specialist who frequented No.309 over a period of thirty years. Date 19 March, 2001.

17 Discussion with the Aboriginal Housing section of the Aboriginal Affairs Department, 19 March, 2001. The Anglican Church records were unavailable at the time of writing.

18 Blackburn Real Estate, telephone conversation, 12 March, 2001.

19 Discussion with Peter Duncan, Cirenian House, who worked at 21 Palmerston Street. 20 March, 2001.

with a pergola extending from the back section. A large pre-fabricated unit was also erected in the back garden for yoga sessions.²⁰ Apparently during the construction of the Northbridge Tunnel cracks began to appear through the ceiling and walls.²¹

In September 1999, the place became a backpackers' hostel which is run in conjunction with the Lone Star Backpackers at 156 Aberdeen Street,²² the former residence of the Post Master General Richard Sholl. The rooms were returned to bedrooms while the rear back part of the building was retained as a communal living space with a large kitchen equipped with a stove, sinks, storage cupboards and pantry. The large pre-fabricated unit in the garden is now used as a television lounge and contains a billiard table.

In June 2000, title to the place was transferred to the East Perth Redevelopment Authority.²³

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The place comprises *Three Attached houses, 17-21 Palmerston Street*, a single storey row of three attached brick and iron residences constructed in 1907.

The place is situated on the western side of Palmerston Street, between Newcastle and Aberdeen Streets. The land to the south of the place, on both sides of the street, was cleared during the construction of the Northbridge Tunnel and is presently vacant. Immediately to the north of the place is a two-storey brick residence with a double height verandah and elaborate rendered parapet to the front. This building is attached to an ornate two-storey commercial building, which occupies the southwest corner of Palmerston and Newcastle Street. On the eastern side of Palmerston Street, opposite the place, are two single storey freestanding residences dating from the late nineteenth century. The residences have hipped corrugated iron roofs and verandahs to the front. This section of Palmerston Street has concrete paver footpaths and grassed verges to both sides of the street. There are two medium sized native Bottlebrush trees planted on the verge to the front of the place.

Along the front boundary of the place is a face brick fence surmounted by timber pickets. There is a single steel gate located towards the southern end of the fence. A concrete path leads from the gate directly to the front of No. 17. The front yard is mostly covered by lawn grass and is planted with a variety of trees and bushes.

The building is set one metre from the southern boundary, which is enclosed by a fibro cement fence. The front half of the building adjacent to the north of the place is built to the boundary line. There is a corrugated fibro cement fence to the remainder of the northern boundary.

The rear yard comprises a small central grassed area surrounded by brick paving. Much of the brick paved area is utilised for carparking. A laneway provides vehicular access to Newcastle Street. A prefabricated metal structure with a skillion roof and aluminium windows is located to the centre of the yard. A timber pergola with a clear polycarbonate roof cladding abuts the rear of the building. Beneath the pergola the ground is paved in concrete. Amongst the various plantings to found in the rear yard are a Palm tree and a

²⁰ Discussion with Peter Duncan.

²¹ Peter Duncan mentioned it was often difficult to be heard above the noise of the construction.

²² Blackburn Real Estate, telephone conversation, 12 March, 2001.

²³ Certificate of Title, Vol.1743, Folio 985. Transfer dated 30 June, 2000.

mature Cape Lilac tree. A substantial commercial building with parapet walls and a corrugated iron gambrel roof directly abuts the western boundary line.

Three Attached houses, 17-21 Palmerston Street comprises a single storey row of three attached brick and iron residences in the Federation Queen Anne style. The building has hipped corrugated iron roofs with battened eaves. To the front of each residence there are roughcast finished half-timbered gables. The gable to No. 21 features a sunburst motif. On the ridgeline, to the front of the residences, there are tall brick chimneys with rendered cornices. There is a verandah under a separate skillion roof across the full width of each front façade. The front facades are separated by brick party walls. The verandahs to Nos. 17 and 21 are supported by stop chamfered timber posts, whereas the verandah to No. 19 is supported by turned timber posts. The verandahs have concrete slab floors.

The front elevation comprises tuck-pointed stretcher bond brickwork with bands of render. The brickwork to the entire front elevation has been painted cream. To the front of Nos. 17 and 21 there is a shallow projecting bay with two timber framed double hung windows. No. 19 differs in that it has a faceted projecting bay with a large timber framed double hung window to the front and smaller timber framed windows to each side. Windows have rendered sills and arched brick lintels comprised of header courses. The front doorways are timber framed with a fanlight and narrow sidelight. The doors are timber and comprise two bottom panels and a single glazed upper panel. External joinery to the façade is painted green.

The north and south elevations of the building comprise unpainted stretcher bond brickwork. There are timber framed double hung sash windows to both elevations with rendered sills and arched brick lintels comprised of header courses. There is an aluminium-framed window towards the western end of each elevation. The rear elevation to No. 21 comprises stretcher bond brickwork with a small aluminium framed window. The rear elevation to Nos. 17-19 features two sets of aluminium framed sliding doors. The rear section of all three residences is set under a single corrugated iron skillion roof.

The floor plan to each residence comprises a linear strip of four rooms located to one side of a passageway. There is a light-well to the south side of No. 19. Towards the front of each passageway is an archway with elaborate plasterwork moulding and console brackets. To the front of this archway there is a plaster cornice and ceiling rose. Beyond the archway the ceiling is flush plaster. The passageway to No. 17 has polished timber floorboards and a 60mm splayed timber skirting board. The passageway to No. 21 has a carpeted floor and a 260mm moulded timber skirting board. The front four rooms to each residence are presently used as dormitory rooms.

The passageway to No. 17 opens on to a kitchen with laminate bench tops and built in cupboards. The kitchen has a ceramic tile splash back. Two timber framed double hung sash windows are located on the south wall. To the west of the kitchen is a small storeroom and laundry. The rear yard is accessed via a glazed aluminium framed sliding door. To the north of the kitchen is a large recreation room. A glazed aluminium-framed sliding door on the west wall of this room opens on to the rear yard. The northeast corner of the room is truncated and incorporates a niche. On the east wall is a glazed timber framed door with a fanlight, which opens on to the light-well to No. 19. The kitchen and recreation room has a concrete floor with a vinyl covering and plaster walls and ceilings.

At its western end, the passageway to No. 21 turns 45 degrees to the north. The women's toilets are located off this section of the passageway. The passageway then turns 90 degrees to the south and opens on to the recreation room. The men's toilets are located at the western end of the passageway.

Interior finishes typically consist of plastered walls and ceilings. Rooms used as dormitories have carpeted floors covering timber floorboards. Doors are panelled timber with moulded timber architraves.

The three attached residences have been modified for use as one building. The domestic scale and character of the place has, however, been retained.

Generally, the place remains largely as constructed although there have been modifications over time to accommodate the changing uses of the place. The adaptation of the place for use as one building has resulted in internal modifications, mainly to the rear of the place and to the central residence. Openings have been made in the party walls to either side of the central residence and sections of the passageway to the central residence have been removed. A new front fence has been constructed with only one gate. Externally the place remains largely as constructed, however the tuckpointed façade has been painted and a brick addition with aluminium windows has been constructed to the rear.

The place is in good condition and appears to have been well maintained. The only major defect identified is the substantial cracks at cornice level to the passageways.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Three Attached houses, 17-21 Palmerston Street can be compared to other residences of a similar form, age, and detailing. Pairs of attached single storey Federation Queen Anne style residences are numerous within the Perth region. Terraces in the Federation Queen Anne style comprising three or more attached residences are, however, rare. By the 1890s the terrace form had been largely supplanted by the detached or semi-detached suburban villa.

99-101 Parry Street, Perth, comprises a pair of attached single storey brick residences built in the Federation Queen Anne Style. Each residence has a hipped corrugated iron roof with a small gable to the front. Gables are half timbered with roughcast infill. A verandah with a corrugated iron bull-nose profile roof runs across the full length of both facades. The verandahs are supported on turned timber posts and have timber valances and brackets. A projecting fin wall separates the residences. The façade comprises tuck-pointed brickwork with bands of stucco at sill level and three-quarter height. Front doors are panelled timber with a sidelight and fanlight. The building has tall face brick chimneys with rendered cornices and terracotta pots. The façade appears to have remained largely unaltered. The building is in good condition and retains its original use as two attached residences.

147-149 Parry Street comprises two single storey attached residences built in the Federation Queen Anne Style. The building has a hipped corrugated iron roof with two half-timbered gables to the front. A verandah under a separate skillion roof runs across the full length of the façade. The verandah is supported on turned timber posts with timber brackets. Walls are brick with tuck-pointed to the front. Chimneys are face brick with rendered cornices. Both residences have a panelled timber front door with sidelights and fanlights. To either side of each front door is a pair of timber framed double

hung sash windows. The rear of the building has a skillion roof. Despite some modifications to the façade, the building remains substantially intact. The building is in good condition and continues to be used as two residences.

Examples of attached houses are also found in the inner suburban areas of Highgate, West Perth, Subiaco and Leederville, as well as in Fremantle.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

There are no key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is required to find out the names of the architect and builder. A search is also needed of the City of Perth's archives for existing records of building licences