



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

1. **DATA BASE No.** 1947
2. **NAME** *Supreme Court Buildings and Gardens,
Old Court House, Stirling Gardens (1836+)*
COMPRISING The Supreme Court Building and Gardens (1903; 1923-53)
The Old Court House (1836/7)
Stirling Gardens (1845)
3. **LOCATION** Barrack Street, Perth
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**
 1. Perth Lot 572 on Deposited Plan 215419, being Crown Reserve 18392 and being the whole of the land comprised in Crown Land Title Volume 3098 Folio 871.

Lot 571 on Deposited Plan 215419, being Crown Reserve 18391 and being the whole of the land comprised in Crown Land Title Volume 3117 Folio 118.
 2. Perth Lot 761 on Crown Plan 5838, being part of Crown Reserve 1150 and being part of the land comprised in Crown Land Record Volume 3096 Folio 714.

Lot 462 on Deposited Plan 206176, being Crown Reserve 10887 and being the whole of the land comprised in Crown Land Title Volume 3062 Folio 344.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Perth
6. **OWNER**
 1. State of Western Australia
 2. State of Western Australia
(vested in the City of Perth)
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**

• Register of Heritage Places:	Interim Entry	06/03/1992
	Permanent Entry	14/02/2003
• National Trust Classification:	Classified	06/02/1978
• Town Planning Scheme:		-----
• Municipal Inventory:		-----
• Register of the National Estate:	Permanent	21/10/1980
8. **CONSERVATION ORDER**

9. HERITAGE AGREEMENT

10. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Supreme Court Building and Gardens, Old Courthouse, Stirling Gardens, comprising the Supreme Court building, a rectangular two-storey building constructed of load bearing brick and designed in the Federation Academic Classical style with a roof consisting of sections of corrugated galvanised iron and sections of custom orb zincalume sheeting, the Old Court House, a single-storey stone building in classical Greek revival style with a shingle roof and shutters, the Supreme Court and Stirling Gardens, mature gardens with a diverse collection of trees, shrubs and large areas of lawn bordered by banks of shrubs and flower beds, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place forms an integral component of the area known as the Government Precinct, and together they are a physical and symbolic representation of the importance of law and order in the State, with the Supreme Court building being the major legal institution of the State of Western Australia and the Old Courthouse being reputed to be the oldest building in the city;

the Supreme Court building represents the almost continuous association of the Supreme Court with the site since 1863 and has accommodated a number of the state's judicial courts, including the principal law court, the Supreme Court of Western Australia;

the place is associated with significant events in Western Australia's legal history, such as the imposition of the last death penalty in Western Australia in 1963, and provides the community generally with a public face to the history of the legal system in Western Australia;

the place has been associated with a large number of eminent members of the legal profession and the justice system, including the twelve chief justices who have presided over the court since 1903, Governors, senior administrators and private citizens;

the Supreme Court building is an excellent example of Federation Academic Classical architectural style used for major public buildings in the early 1900s. Its formal proportions and grand scale and design represent the role of the legal system in society and reinforce the respect due to the main law enforcing institution in the city;

the construction of the Supreme Court building was a major technical design achievement on a difficult site on the edge of the river in the early 1900s;

the Supreme Court building features a dignified setting, largely concealed by dense gardens, which shield it from its public surroundings;

the Old Courthouse has been built in classical Greek revival style which was a notable achievement for the infant colony of Western Australia, it is reputedly the oldest building in the city of Perth, and is a valuable component in the Supreme Court Precinct;

the Old Courthouse was the first permanent court house in Perth which was also used for other events, such as the delivery of judicial and

industrial arbitration decisions, and as such it is associated with a wider range of cultural groups in the community;

the archaeological potential of the place yields information about structures originally located on the site and no longer extant, including the first major police complex in Perth and the Commissariat Store, as well as the physical layout of the first Port of Perth and the stone jetty. The topography of the Stirling Gardens provides significant evidence of the landscape which existed at the date of European settlement and the interaction of Aboriginal people and European settlers, as well as of horticultural, social, cultural, and meteorological history;

Stirling Gardens and the Supreme Court Gardens are associated with the original townsite plan for Perth and with the reclamation of the Swan River in the late 1800s and early 1900s respectively for the purposes of providing public open space for the city;

the Supreme Court Gardens were designed by the State Gardens Board between 1923 and 1953;

the tall perimeter planting of the Supreme Court Gardens and the rich tree canopy of Stirling Gardens contribute to and are integral with the streetscape of Riverside Drive, and form an integral part of the avenue of Moreton Bay Figs which line and enclose Barrack Street between the Esplanade and Riverside Drive;

the Supreme Court Gardens, particularly the curving row of tall palms which follows the corner of Barrack Street and Riverside Drive, and Stirling Gardens, since their inception as the Public Garden in Stirling Square in 1845, are a landmark recognisable from extensive areas of the Perth foreshore, Perth Water and the South Perth foreshore

the place is important to the community as an attractive place to visit and as a setting for organised public events;

the Supreme Court Gardens and Stirling Gardens contain a range of plants which are rare in Perth and have the potential to yield scientific information and propagative material;

Stirling Gardens have been in continuous use as a garden since its proclamation as the Public Garden in Stirling Square in June 1845, the first public garden in Western Australia, and served as the first public botanic garden in the State from 1884-5;

the wrought iron gates and fence railings, the stone piers and fences, and the cast iron lamps at the main entrance to Stirling Gardens are associated with the history of the Government Offices in St Georges Terrace (Council House site) during the periods in which the Legislative Council was accommodated there. Since their relocation to Stirling Gardens in 1936, they have become an important landmark in the City of Perth;

Stirling Gardens is significant for the social and economic experimentation evident in the hiring of Aboriginal labour for the clearing of the site in the first 'experiment' in the use of Aboriginal labour in public works in Perth;

Stirling Gardens is significant as one of the few surviving nineteenth century gardens in Perth which continues to exhibit some of the picturesque and gardenesque landscape design concepts popular in England and the Australian colonies during that century;

Stirling Gardens is important as the location of the parade ground for the first barracks in St Georges Terrace in the early colonial period;

Stirling Gardens is associated with the collection of meteorological information in Western Australia for a period of nearly fifty years, from the establishment of the Meteorological Branch in 1875; and,

the place is important for its cultural and social value to the community of Perth, and to the people of Western Australia, as a complex of individual components makes a vital contribution to the community's sense of place, and to its sense of identity.

The Library and Courts building (1987), the toilet block in Supreme Court Gardens, the internal fabric of the 1959 extensions of the Supreme Court building are of little significance. The terracotta plant pots adjacent to the northern portico of the Supreme Court building, some elements of air-conditioning plant, fittings and other services, the statutory signage, fire hydrants etc. on the exterior of the Supreme Court building are intrusive. The open grassed areas of Stirling Gardens with sparse planting near the St. Georges Terrace and Barrack Street boundaries, the 1960s landscaping to St. Georges Terrace including the Toodyay stone planters and terracing, the ornamental pond and the Ore Obelisk, and the kangaroo sculptures. Although the social significance of the Holocaust memorial is acknowledged, its fabric and the surrounding planting are of little significance. The garden bed and shrubs to Barrack Street boundary of Stirling Gardens, the bus stops, signage, lightpoles and the Queensland Box street trees to St Georges Terrace are intrusive.