



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.

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Wayne Moredount, Historian, and Palassis Architects, in July 2003, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development settlements, towns and cities
- 8.1 Organising recreation
- 8.2 Going to the beach
- 8.3 Going on holiday
- 8.4 Eating and drinking

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 308 Commercial services and industries
- 311 Hospitality industry and tourism
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Pagoda, Como is an interesting and unique example of recreational architecture with Chinese inspired details and form. The place exhibits a distinctive three-tiered bellcast roof that turns up at the edges and is adorned with decorative ridge accents, gargoyles and a finial. The internal arrangement of radiating columns complements the octagonal plan and creates a large open floor space suited to a range of recreational activities. (Criterion 1.1)

* *Pagoda, Como* does not have an architectural style as identified in Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1989.

Pagoda, Como, with its distinctive form, is a landmark on the Melville Waters foreshore area, located in a prominent position near Como Beach and Jetty, and beside the Kwinana Freeway. (Criterion 1.3)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Pagoda, Como is a rare, extant example of the buildings constructed in the 1920s for leisure, recreational and entertainment purposes at Como Beach, at the height of its greatest popularity as a summer resort, which lasted to some degree until the Kwinana Freeway was built in 1959. (Criterion 2.2)

Pagoda, Como has been used continuously for recreational and social functions for over seventy years and, during World War Two, was used as accommodation for soldiers. (Criterion 2.2)

Pagoda, Como is associated with a number of Perth families involved with the provision of food, beverages, entertainment and accommodation, including the Gordon, Clyde, Style and Pell families. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Pagoda, Como contributes to a sense of place for residents and visitors to Perth as a well-known social venue and prominent landmark building located opposite Como Beach and Jetty. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Pagoda, Como is rare as the only remaining example of the commercial recreational facilities that existed in profusion along the Melville Waters foreshore area during the Inter-War period. (Criterion 5.1)

Pagoda, Como is a rare example of a Chinese-inspired style of architecture dating from the Inter-War period in the Perth region. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Pagoda, Como is representative of the type of recreational facility that was developed during the early twentieth century. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Pagoda, Como is in good condition and has been well maintained. Repairs and alterations have been carried with reasonable sensitivity to the original building style.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Pagoda, Como has a moderate-high level of integrity. It has continued to function as a place of various social and recreational activities since the 1920's. Its close relationship with Como Beach and Jetty has been maintained, despite the building of the Kwinana Freeway, because of the nearby footbridge which allows pedestrian links.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Pagoda, Como has a low level of authenticity. Although works in 1998 appear to have made a faithful attempt to wherever possible retain the original design intent of the place, very little original fabric remains.

Changes to the fabric include the reconstructed outer perimeter wall (including 130mm reinforced concrete walls, timber-framed windows and timber corner columns). Sections of the roof have also been replaced. The former entry on Comer Street is no longer extant.

Original building fabric includes the internal round columns with an arched connection between them, the original timber floors that have been re-used in the construction of the new bar and restaurant tables, and the original octagonal form of the building which has been retained.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Wayne Moredoundt, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Palassis Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Pagoda, Como (1926), a masonry and tile building in a pseudo-Chinese style,¹ is located on the corner of Comer Street and Melville Parade, Como, and is now subsumed within the Pagoda Broadwater Hotel complex (1998). It was originally built for well-known Perth hotelier and café proprietor, Harold C. Gordon.²

The history of the City of South Perth has been shaped by its situation on the Swan River and its relative early isolation from Perth city on the opposite shore. The earliest development in South Perth was Shenton's Flour Mill in 1833, but the population of the area remained small until the 1880s, when communication with Perth was improved with the introduction of ferry services and construction of bridges across the Swan and Canning Rivers. The discovery of gold in the State from 1885 led to an increase in population, with land facing Perth Waters progressively sub-divided between 1886 and 1904. It was during this period that much of the infrastructure of South Perth was developed.³

In 1892, the South Perth Roads Board was established and, in 1902, the suburb became a municipality. By the turn of the century, there were four jetties at South Perth, the Zoological Gardens had opened in 1898, and a government school and postal facilities were established. Due to its relative isolation from Perth, the South Perth area was regarded as a retreat from the city, a place of popular recreation, social and leisure facilities. A bucolic atmosphere was also accentuated by the continuing presence of dairies and market gardens.⁴

By the beginning of the twentieth century, land south of the Zoological Gardens began to attract the attention of land developers and home buyers. The South Perth Heights Estate on South Terrace was one of the first to be sub-divided. The area in which *Pagoda, Como* is situated was originally part of the 533 acres comprising Swan Location 40, the Como⁵ Estate, owned by Mark Gardner, a Perth produce merchant. Between 1904 and

¹ The South Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory (2000) claims that *Pagoda, Como* was built in a style 'called Edwardian Oriental by Harold Gordon in 1922'. There is no reference given for this claim, and it is unlikely to be correct. Firstly, *Pagoda, Como* was built in 1926, not 1922, and secondly, the style is 'Victorian' rather than 'Edwardian'. A similar style building was constructed in Kings Park in 1898 for use as tea rooms. See photograph and text in, Geoffrey London, *A Short History of Perth Architecture*, Pesaro, Sydney, 2002, p. 49.

² Despite comprehensively searching known documentary sources for this information, *Pagoda, Como's* designer and/or builder could not be identified.

³ Cecil Florey, *Peninsula City: A Social History of South Perth, Western Australia*, City of South Perth, 1995, pp. 40-72.

⁴ F.K. Crowley, *The History of South Perth*, Rigby, Perth, 1962, pp. 42-54.

⁵ 'Como Beach' is mentioned in the earliest surviving rate book, for 1899. Crowley, *South Perth*, footnote 10, p. 65.

1914, this land, plus Locations 41 and 42 immediately south of Location 40, was subdivided by the owners and offered for sale by Perth auctioneer, James Gardiner. However, because of the remoteness and difficulty of access to the lots, few were actually developed by the end of this period.⁶

In December 1905, Location 40, bounded by South Terrace and Thelma Street was pegged from the river back to the Fremantle Road by the surveyor, P.E. Renou. The first half-acre building blocks here were sold for between 10 and 15 pounds, with a two year term of payment usual. In 1906, the developer of the Como Estate arranged the building of the Como Jetty, with all the timber hauled from the Canning Road. Prior to this jetty, there had existed a narrow plank structure just south of Thelma Street, used mainly by yachtsmen. In addition, in return for the surfacing of Comer Street with shells, the proprietor of the Como Estate gave a section of land near the river to the Municipal Council and this became the Como Reserve.⁷

From 1907, the South Perth Municipal Council passed resolutions aimed at improving the Como area. In that year, tenders were called for wheeled bathing machines (to preserve the modesty of bathers) on the Melville Waters Foreshore, and the Council also considered a scheme for the erection of baths (that is, an enclosed bathing area) in the same area. In 1909, the Council investigated ways of popularizing the beach at Como. Subsequently, the first 'Gala at Como' event was held in 9 December 1909, construction of toilets and fencing commenced in September 1910, and in the summer of 1910-11 the Council supported the 'Children's Treat' at Como. A sports day for all local school children, to mark the official opening of Como Beach, was held on 30 January 1911.⁸ In February of this year, Swan Location 41 (owned by Robert Lockhart Alston, an absentee investor), bounded by Thelma and Saunders Street, was pegged from the river to the Fremantle Road by the surveyor E. Manning. This sub-division was known as the Como Beach Estate.⁹

In the 1912-13 season, camping facilities were improved at Como, with seats and firewood supplied for campers. The following summer, a special 'Como Day Picnic' was planned, with new dressing rooms and toilets provided, a sports programme organized, and 250 bags of refreshments provided for the children in attendance.¹⁰ In July 1913, Swan Location 42 (owned by Henry John Saunders, an engineer, company promoter, and former Mayor of Perth), bounded by Saunders and Henley Streets, was pegged out from the river to the Fremantle Road by E. Manning, and this was known as the Como Vale Parklands Estate.¹¹

During the war years of 1914-18 the development of Como slowed considerably. However, there was a sufficient number of children in the area for a small school to open in 1916, initially in the Anglican Mission Hall.

⁶ Florey, *Peninsula City*, p. 128.

⁷ Crowley, *South Perth*, p. 65.

⁸ Florey, *Peninsula City*, pp. 129-130.

⁹ Crowley, *South Perth*, p. 65.

¹⁰ Florey, *Peninsula City*, p. 130.

¹¹ Crowley, *South Perth*, pp. 65-66.

The Como Primary School was finally established on a permanent site in 1921. From 1918, the Council re-started its programme to improve facilities at Como Beach, with tree planting to beautify the area and provide shade, and construction of a better jetty, baths, camping areas, barbeques, change-rooms, and toilets.¹²

It was during the 1920s that a string of tea rooms, dance pavilions and lodging houses were constructed along the foreshore shell track of Melville Terrace (now Melville Parade), all the way to the Canning Bridge.¹³ According to one account, at least seventeen tea rooms operated along and around Como Beach in this period.¹⁴ Circa 1922, Harold C. Gordon began operating a boardinghouse and a 'SPOT Lager Saloon' on the corner of Comer Street and Melville Terrace in Como. In the following year, the Post Office Directory also listed a tea room operating from this site, but no 'saloon'.¹⁵ According to contemporary promotional material, the manager of the establishment at this time was Mr C. Tregilas.¹⁶ Gordon had run a wine saloon on the corner of Murray and William Streets, Perth, from 1905 to 1922. By 1907, until it was replaced by the Wentworth Hotel in 1928, this operated as Gordon's Hotel and Café. From 1922, the hotel was managed by the new owner, Mrs M.B. ('Ma') Thomas (later, Raine).¹⁷

In 1923, other refreshment rooms in the Como area included, the Billabong Tea Rooms across the Como Reserve from Gordon's establishment; Mrs Keesings' and Sid Outram's tea rooms, between Eric and Preston Streets; Chas Cassey's dancing pavilion and tea rooms on the next block south; and Emil Kohnberg's tea rooms and dancing pavilion, between Ednah Street and Thelma Street.¹⁸ Many of the Como tea rooms also offered accommodation. Cassey's and another tea room, the 'Kia-Ora', offered 'excellent furnished rooms' in the summer months, with optional board, and camping areas with caravans at the rear of their properties. They also ran 'dance hall entertainment' in the evenings. Gordon's establishment provided accommodation for about twenty people in a large house, from where the tea rooms also operated. Gordon's rooms were further divided over summer in order to fit in as many paying customers as possible.¹⁹

According to Rate Book entries, *Pagoda, Como* was built in 1926, immediately to the west of the existing boardinghouse.²⁰ Its octagonal structure, in a pseudo-Chinese style, would have made it a well-known

¹² Florey, *Peninsula City*, pp. 155-156.

¹³ Tea rooms were numerous in Perth during the first half of the 20th century, particularly at scenic, holiday or recreational locations. *Post Office Directories*, 1900-1949.

¹⁴ Lisa Alexandra Welch, *Como: Childhood Reminiscences During the 1920s*, Perth, 1992, p. 47.

¹⁵ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1922, 1923.

¹⁶ *See Como First!*, Como Progress Association, 1922.

¹⁷ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1900-1930.

¹⁸ *Post Office Directory*, 1923.

¹⁹ Young, *Como Beach*, p. 5.

²⁰ In Rate Book entries, the building is described only as the 'Pagoda', but it is likely that it was used by Gordon for tea rooms. Although Gordon operated *Pagoda, Como* for a short time only, a photograph (dated 1940), shows the panel above the door with his name. Photograph in Florey, *Peninsular City*, p. 156.

landmark in the local area. By 1927, *Pagoda, Como* and Gordon's original boardinghouse was sold to Alexander McAllister Clydesdale, and re-opened as a roller skating rink in 1928, but this venture also failed shortly after this time.²¹ In the summer of 1929, *Pagoda, Como* operated as tea rooms and a 'dance pavilion' again, for a short period, under the management of K.A. Boskas, but small attendances made this operation unprofitable.²²

In 1928, James Stiles, who would later form a partnership with Clydesdale in *Pagoda, Como*, applied for a license to operate a 'modern brick residential hotel' in Comer Street close to *Pagoda, Como*. This was opposed, however, on the grounds that intoxicated people would lie about on the beach, and because young girls, passing the hotel on their way to the beach, would be subject to 'rude remarks' by drunken male hotel patrons.²³

The economic viability of the *Pagoda* in the 1920s, and the other similar businesses in the Como Beach area, was adversely affected both by the seasonal nature of their operations as well as by the lack of frequency of public transport to the area. Trams ran infrequently at night between Como Beach and the Mends Street Jetty, from where a ferry service ran to the Barrack Street Jetty. Otherwise a tram service ran from Preston Street to the Causeway, from where connections could be made to other parts of the city.²⁴

With the depression of the first half of the 1930s, tea rooms and other businesses at Como Beach struggled to remain economically viable. During the decade from 1930, *Pagoda, Como*, now owned in partnership by Alexander Clydesdale and Frank Stiles, continued to operate as a roller skating rink, although it seems also to have been used on occasion for social functions.²⁵ Between 1942 and 1945, the ownership of *Pagoda, Como* was transferred to Mr and Mrs J.P. and E.V. Pell.²⁶ In 1945, *Pagoda, Como* was requisitioned for war-time use as a billet for soldiers. After the War, *Pagoda, Como* reverted to operation as a dance hall and reception center.²⁷ Minor structural changes to *Pagoda, Como* were carried out in 1947 and 1950.²⁸

It was from the immediate post-War period that *Pagoda, Como* was widely used by the local South Perth community for a variety of social functions. In 1947, for example, the South Perth 'Younger Set' held a Ball at *Pagoda, Como* during March, while the local RSL held a similar event in May. In June

²¹ This is according to Young, *Como Beach*, p. 5. However, the Post Office Directory for this year lists the building as 'vacant'. Roller skating rinks had existed in Perth from at least the mid-1890s. See, *West Australian*, 29 January 1895.

²² *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1929.

²³ Young, *Como Beach*, p. 6.

²⁴ Young, *Como Beach*, p. 5.

²⁵ *Post Office Directories*, 1930-1940. The *Record* of 1935 and 1936 describes the use of *Pagoda, Como* for balls and fundraising events by the Catholic community of South Perth.

²⁶ City of South Perth Rate Book, 1942-1945. There is no indication in the Rate Books or Post Office Directories of what *Pagoda, Como* was used for at this time.

²⁷ Young, *Como Beach*, p. 7.

²⁸ City of South Perth Building Licenses, 14 July 1947, 18 June 1950. The Building Licenses do not reveal exactly what alterations were made to *Pagoda, Como*.

of the same year, a Debutante Ball was held, with the South Perth Tennis Club holding their Annual Ball around the same time.²⁹ In addition, *Pagoda, Como* held regular Friday and Saturday night '50-50' dances with music provided by Jack Pateman and his 'famous Pagoda Dance Band'. *Pagoda, Como* advertised 'cabaret style lounges and tables in delightful surroundings' as well as 'the fastest (dance) floor in WA, completely sprung in rubber.'³⁰

Sometime between 1955 and 1959, what became the main ball room of *Pagoda, Como* was constructed abutting the existing ball room on its northern side. It was a large two storey brick and iron barn-like structure, substantially larger in scale and dramatically different in style to the original *Pagoda, Como* tea rooms and dance hall.³¹ The expanded *Pagoda, Como* now operated as an enlarged dance hall and as a reception center, with the original *Pagoda, Como* used as an entrance area for the entertainment complex. In 1955, proposals were advanced to convert the space on the south side of *Pagoda, Como* from a 'ticket hall' to a licensed restaurant. It appears, though, that this scheme was not pursued.³² By 1970, the original tea rooms and dance hall building had all its ground floor glazing replaced by timber boards.³³ Some time between 1969 and 1978, the original (pre-1926) Gordon's Tea Rooms and boarding house, immediately to the west of *Pagoda, Como*, was demolished.³⁴

From the late 1950s until the early 1990s, *Pagoda, Como* continued to be used as a dance hall and as a reception center.³⁵ Many people living in Perth during this period, especially in the area surrounding *Pagoda, Como*, have memories of attending various functions and activities there.³⁶

In 1995, the Kareelya Property Group, now the owners of the *Pagoda, Como* site, engaged architects Overman and Zuideveld to look at the development potential of the property. Although the owners had only recently developed the Broadwater Apartments, a few hundred metres away along Melville Parade, it was felt that another hotel development, that would attract a different clientele to the family-orientated Broadwater Apartments, could be an economically viable proposition. The City of South Perth subsequently approved a 101 room holiday resort, with the original 1926 *Pagoda, Como* Tea Rooms building to be incorporated into the development as a bar area,

²⁹ *Community News*, May, June 1947; June, July, August 1948; April 1950.

³⁰ *Community News*, June 1947.

³¹ Aerial photographs of the South Perth area taken in 1959 show the 'barn' present, while a site plan of 1955 shows the area vacant. MWSSD Sewerage Plan, Consignment 4156 #686, SRO. Aerial photograph held at the City of South Perth History House.

³² Health Department Files, 1008, 728/45, 14/1/55, SRO.

³³ HCWA Place File 2043; photographs dated 15/11/1970.

³⁴ Aerial photographs of 1969 and 1978, held at the City of South Perth History House.

³⁵ Entertainment section of the *Daily News* and *West Australian*, various dates.

³⁶ Without undertaking comprehensive oral history research, it is difficult to establish the social importance of *Pagoda, Como* with any precision. Nonetheless, informal discussion with a wide range of people indicates that many regard it as having social significance for them and for others.

while the later ball room addition of the 1950s was to be demolished, as it was considered to be of little historical or aesthetic significance.³⁷

The architects soon discovered that *Pagoda, Como* was in a fairly deteriorated state. Apparently, the curved roof shape, that established the 'pagoda' form of the building, had always leaked badly and so required remediation. The rafters were also undersized, so that with the long span required to support the roof there was a considerable sag. There were also other structural problems. The original corner columns were timber and had been set directly into concrete. These provided an access route for white ants and encouraged the entrapment of water and the rotting of the timber. A dado-high wall encircling the octagonal building, on which the windows sat, had been formed as a 130mm thick concrete wall, and its steel reinforcing was rusting badly. As a result of these defects, the windows in this section had begun to distort and rotting had occurred under the main sill of the window frames.³⁸

After the City of South Perth had given approval for the construction of a hotel complex on the *Pagoda, Como* site in 1995, restoration and rebuilding of the original *Pagoda, Como* commenced. In order to deal with the problems identified in the 1926 structure, it was decided to take off the whole outer perimeter of the building and to reconstruct it, as part of the process of building a hotel complex on the site. The inner section, a series of round columns with an arched connection between them in reinforced concrete, was still, however, in reasonable condition and could mostly be retained. The decision was then made to take off the whole outer ring of the structure, carry out repairs to the inner one, replace the roofs and virtually all the framing around the upper part of the building, and rectify all the window frames and the walls. Timber supporting columns were replaced by steel ones, but with the steel hidden within timber covers.³⁹

The octagonal shape of the original *Pagoda, Como* building did not readily lend itself to many of the redevelopment options initially considered by the architects and the developers. Its use as a function room was considered impractical, as it was difficult to sub-divide into smaller areas, and the space was interrupted by columns. Its possible use as a grand entrance lobby to the hotel complex was rejected on the grounds that it would have been disproportionately large for the site. Finally, it was decided to use the space for a bar and restaurant area. In addition, the original wooden floor boards from *Pagoda, Como* were used to build the new bar and the restaurant tables.⁴⁰

The 'pagoda' form of the original building was to shape the design of the rest of the hotel complex. The position of the building hard against the corner of Comer Street and Melville Parade lent itself to developing two wings to the new hotel, with a central lift core directly behind the *Pagoda*,

³⁷ Frank Zuideveld, 'The Spirit of the Old Pagoda', in *South Perth- The Vanishing Village*, ed., Phillip Pendal and Kerry Davey, City of South Perth Historical Society, 2002, p. 82.

³⁸ Zuideveld, 'The Spirit of the Old Pagoda', p. 83.

³⁹ Zuideveld, 'The Spirit of the Old Pagoda', p. 85.

⁴⁰ Zuideveld, 'The Spirit of the Old Pagoda', p. 85.

Como building itself. The design of the hotel wings was also influenced by the materials and shapes of the original *Pagoda, Como*. A series of towers, on a substantial base were constructed, capped by tile roofs, akin to some traditional Chinese building design. The original building was also memorialized in the naming of the new complex as the Broadwater Pagoda Hotel. The re-developed building was declared officially open at a ceremony on the site by the then Premier of Western Australia, Richard Court, on 6 March 1998.⁴¹

In November 2000, *Pagoda, Como* was listed on the City of South Perth Municipal Inventory. As of August 2003, the renovated *Pagoda, Como* continues to be used as a bar and restaurant, part of the Broadwater Pagoda Hotel.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Pagoda, Como comprises a single storey building with an octagonal plan and distinctive three-tiered terracotta tiled roof, originally built in 1926, and then largely reconstructed in 1998.

Pagoda, Como is situated in a prominent location on the northeast corner of Melville Parade and Comer Street, in a prominent corner location with a relatively recent linked multi-storey hotel development behind. The place has an immediate relationship with the footpath on both street frontages, and has direct pedestrian and vehicular access from the northwest. Narrow garden beds featuring trimmed bamboo, diates, and a range of annuals are found along the southwest and west building edges. A bin store is located to the north east of *Pagoda, Como*, marking the junction with the multi-storey hotel behind. To the west of *Pagoda, Como* an entrance is defined by a large porte-cochere. This also provides access to the hotel reception.

The Broadwater Pagoda Hotel and Apartments are located on both Melville Parade and Comer Street and occupy the lots adjacent to *Pagoda, Como*. The roofs of the Hotel and apartments have been designed with oriental accents, similar to those of *Pagoda, Como*. Residential lots are found further north along Melville Parade, and further east along Comer Street. The Kwinana freeway and the Swan River are located west of Melville Parade and are clearly visible from *Pagoda, Como*. Comer Reserve and a pedestrian overpass are located on the southern side of Comer Street, also opposite *Pagoda, Como*.

Pagoda, Como comprises a single-storey masonry and tile building with Chinese inspired details and form. The distinctive three-tiered bellcast roof turns up at the edges, and is adorned with decorative ridge accents, gargoyles, and a finial. The place has an octagonal plan, presenting five of its eight wall faces to the street. The three rear faces of *Pagoda, Como* are physically connected to the hotel reception and service areas and are not clearly visible. Four of the exposed faces comprise rendered masonry walls with regular bays of multi-pane timber-framed windows affording views to the river and nearby reserve. The other exposed face comprises a rendered

⁴¹ Zuideveld, 'The Spirit of the Old Pagoda', p. 86.
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masonry wall only. Pairs of round-section gutters are positioned evenly across each face, freeing the corners where the roof is upturned. Painted timber shingles clad the revealed upper surface of the wall at each corner. The second and third tier roofs also have upturned edges, the second is raised upon a walled drum clad in fibrous sheeting and featuring a series of louvred vents to the rear. The uppermost drum features small porthole windows on each face.

The internal layout of *Pagoda, Como* comprises an octagonal plan featuring a large central column and eight radiating columns creating a large open floor space. A curved beam, resembling a wide arch, spans the openings between each of the columns, and is adorned with a keystone and beveled underside. The columns sit flush on the floor (without any base moulding) and have ornate capitals featuring grotesque sculptures. The sculptures incorporate the claws of a lion, the head of a dragon, and the wings of an eagle. The main ceiling is also ornamented, with plaster ceiling roses and decorative mouldings, and a wide plaster cornice adorned with festoons. A raked ceiling, housing mechanical and lighting services, is found between the external wall and the colonnade, and terminates above the head of the windows. The interior surfaces are a combination of varnished timber (such as the bar, the platform floor, and the window frames), floral carpet, and paint applied in graduated colours.

The interior of the space is dominated by a long timber bar and raised floor platform (approximately 300mm high) located around the central column. A low, gently curved wall with square piers encircles the platform, and divides the bar area from the general dining area. The cool-room, kitchen, store and toilets are located behind the bar, forming a restaurant service wing which attaches to the hotel service areas to the east.

The building form is largely as constructed, although the main point of entry has been moved from the south side of the building to the northwest side. The original 'pagoda' style form has also been retained. Original building fabric includes the internal round columns with an arched connection between them and the original timber floors, although these have been re-used in the construction of the new bar and restaurant tables. Changes to the fabric include the reconstructed outer perimeter wall (including 130mm reinforced concrete walls, timber-framed windows and timber corner columns).

Pagoda, Como is in good condition and has been well maintained. The interior shows wear and tear consistent with the ongoing use of the place.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Pagoda, Como has had various functions associated with recreational activities, including use as a ballroom and dance pavilion, tearooms, and as a skating rink. The HCWA database reveals only one other extant ballroom in Western Australia, Government House Ballroom, which is interim listed on the State Register, is a three level building constructed of stone and banded brick with clay tile roof, and was built in 1899 in the Victorian Tudor style. Government House Ballroom is not however of a comparable time

period, nor architectural style, to *Pagoda, Como*. There are no other former tearooms in the Perth metropolitan area on the HCWA database, however, historical evidence suggests that *Pagoda, Como* was one of a number of tea rooms built in the Como area during the 1920's, none of which remain. There are also no other extant former skating rinks noted on the HCWA database.

Pagoda, Como does not have an identified architectural style, which makes comparisons difficult, due to the uniqueness of the building type and the architectural style. Kings Park Pavilion (1898), on Fraser Avenue, Kings Park, is also a Chinese inspired pavilion, featuring upturned roof edges and decorative timberwork and painting. The Pavilion was originally designed as a tearoom but also functioned as a bandstand. Kings Park Pavilion is not listed on the HCWA database and is not of a comparable time period, but may be compared to *Pagoda, Como* in terms of architectural expression and building function.

Pagoda, Como is a rare extant example of a type of recreational facility, dating from the Inter-War period, and is representative of this kind of building. It is also a rare example of a building with Chinese-inspired architectural expression, of which there appears to be few known examples in Western Australia, as evidenced by the lack of comparable works.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

It has not been possible to identify the name of the architect or builder, despite thorough searches of the City of South Perth Rate Books, construction and building journals, local newspapers, and other primary and secondary sources as referenced in the Documentary Evidence.