



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)

- 4.2 Supplying urban services (power, transport, fire prevention, roads, water, light and sewerage)
- 3.16.1 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 401 Community services and utilities
- 111 Depression & Boom

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The 1934 wing of *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* demonstrates aesthetic significance as a well-designed and composed building with its distinctive Inter-War Stripped Classical detailing, including its prominent rendered entry bay which features a stepped parapet and moulded pilasters. The aesthetic significance of the place as a whole has been compromised by the 1969/71 addition. (Criterion 1.2)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) was built following the State's recovery from the Depression, as part of an intense building campaign undertaken by the Western Australian Fire Brigade Board between 1934 and 1938, which resulted in 18 new stations being constructed across the State. (Criterion 2.1)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

The expansion of *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* in 1969/71 is indicative of the addition of permanent staff to the brigade which occurred as a part of the restructuring of Western Australia's fire services following the Stevenson and Hepburn Report, 1956. (Criterion 2.1)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is representative of the development of fire station facilities in Western Australia during the twentieth century, through its initial establishment in a local government building in 1911, to the relocation of the brigade to a purpose-built station in 1934 and expansion of that station in 1969-71 to accommodate permanent staff for the first time. (Criterion 2.2)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is indicative of the development and growth of the Bassendean area through the twentieth century. This began with West Guildford becoming a separate municipality in 1901, a growing pride in the community that led to a name change in 1922 from West Guildford to Bassendean and the relocation of services in 1934 to a larger and more prominent site closer to the centre of Bassendean reflects the growth of the suburb. (Criterion 2.2)

The Bassendean Fire Brigade, which from 1934 operated from *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)*, was one of the most successful and dominant brigades in competitive firefighting championships both in the Western Australia State Championships, and nationally at the Australasian Championship. (Criterion 2.3)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) was designed by architect K.C. Duncan, who, in 1932, developed a standardised plan for fire station building in Western Australia, and was responsible for the design of the majority of fire stations built in the State between 1930 and 1960. Duncan was also a volunteer fire fighter; he served on the Executive Committee of the Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association from 1924 to 1942 and became a life member of Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association in 1937. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) has high social value to the community of Bassendean, for the firefighting services provided by the brigade for 102 years (79 of which was at this station building). (Criterion 4.1)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) has social value to the community of Bassendean as a venue for many social events, dances and fundraisers hosted by the Bassendean brigade over the years. (Criterion 4.1)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) has social value to the community of Bassendean through its numerous State and National Fire Brigade competition wins bringing pride to the district. (Criterion 4.1)

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) may have some social value to the wider Western Australian community, as evident in the opposition to the closure of the station both locally and in State Parliament. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is representative of a substantial fire station facility established in a period of growth (1930s) and redeveloped significantly in the 1960s to accommodate major replanning of the fire service.

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally the 1934 wing is in fair condition, with evidence of cracking to walls, some substantial; and water damage to ceilings. There are numerous marks to walls caused by previous use, and the removal of fixtures.

Generally the 1969/71 wing is in good condition, but there is evidence of water damage to the carpet to the kitchen, with a significant amount of mould growing over it. A burst pipe which has been repaired apparently caused the damage.¹ The building shows signs of wear and tear, but appears, on visual inspection, to be in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr), although currently vacant, has high integrity as the original function of the place can be clearly read. Although it is unlikely to function as a fire station again, this use could be easily restored.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) has low-medium authenticity overall. The 1934 wing has medium-high authenticity, with the original planning and much of the original fabric extant. The 1969/71 wing, whilst itself being highly authentic, replaces an earlier wing of the 1934 station, which was demolished to allow construction of the 1969/71 wing.

¹ Conversation between Janine Symons, Palassis Architects, and David Radford, DFES, 18 August, 2014

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Palassis Architects, in August 2014, with amendments and/or additions by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is a single storey brick and tile fire station (1934 with additions 1969/71) displaying characteristics of Inter-War Stripped Classical styling, with associated outbuildings and ladder training tower in the rear yard.

Due to Western Australia's hot, dry climate and lack of water, the issue of controlling the outbreak of fire has been a concern for its population since the beginning of European settlement.²

Until the establishment of the Fire Brigades Board (FBB) in 1898, firefighting services were informal, largely relying on volunteers in the vicinity to extinguish fires.³ Early brigades operated from municipal buildings or sites provided in return for their voluntary efforts.⁴

With the formation of the FBB, the State Government became involved with providing firefighting services for the first time. Purpose-built stations were constructed, beginning with Perth⁵ in 1901 and Fremantle in 1903.⁶ These stations reflect the evolution of the service from a predominantly voluntary force to organised, trained brigades.⁷

In 1909, the State extended its control through the introduction of the *District Fire Brigades Act*. This established the Western Australian Fire Brigades' Board (WAFBB) to replace the FBB, centralised all brigades through compulsory registration and introduced fire safety regulations for public buildings.⁸ From this time, until the 1930s, a significant building program was undertaken, which saw 54 new stations being constructed.⁹

As the State recovered from the Depression of the 1930s, the WAFBB entered another period of intense building activity, resulting in 18 new stations being constructed between 1934 and 1938.¹⁰

In 1932, the architect K.C. (Keith) Duncan developed a standardised plan for fire station buildings in Western Australia.¹¹ This was adopted by the WAFBB and implemented during the 1934-1938 phase of construction, meaning that

² Palassis Architects, *FESA House, Perth: Conservation Management Plan* (2012), p. 6.

³ Palassis Architects, *FESA House, Perth: Conservation Management Plan* (2012), p. 6. Palassis Architects, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review*, prepared for the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (2011), p. 4.

⁴ Palassis Architects, *Merredin Fire Station Complex Conservation Plan* (2011), p. 7.

⁵ P2051 No. 1 Fire Station (fmr)

⁶ P982 Fremantle Fire Station (fmr No 2)

⁷ Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), p. 17.

⁸ Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2. pp. 11, 23, 30.

⁹ Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p. 30.

¹⁰ Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p. 37.

¹¹ Palassis Architects, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review*, (2011), Volume 2, p. 37.

the majority of new stations from this period were based on a standard plan, including *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)*.¹²

Bassendean, located 10km north-east of Perth, was originally named West Guildford and fell under the municipality of the Town of Guildford until the West Guildford Roads Board was officially gazetted in 1901. Its first fire brigade came in the form of the West Guildford Volunteer Fire Brigade, which was established in January 1911.¹³

From May 1912, following the construction of the new West Guildford Roads Board offices and hall (on the site of the present Town of Bassendean offices), the brigade operated from the old West Guildford Roads Board building, located opposite the oval on Perth Road between Rosetta Street and West Road.¹⁴ The brigade consisted of 15 Firemen and 2 Call Boys, and its only equipment was a hose reel.¹⁵

By 1919 additional accommodation was required, and the former Bayswater fire station (originally built in 1910) was relocated to the West Guildford site.¹⁶

In 1922, the West Guildford Roads Board was officially renamed Bassendean, and so the fire brigade followed suit becoming known as Bassendean Volunteer Fire Brigade.¹⁷

By the late 1920s, the expanding district led to the need for a new, modern, and purpose-built fire station in Bassendean. Discussions were held between the Bassendean Roads Board and the WAFBB for many years, culminating in the construction of *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* in 1934.¹⁸

The new station was sited closer to the main centre of Bassendean on Parker Street, built on land donated by a local family specifically for the purpose of building Bassendean's new fire station there.¹⁹ The donated plot was, at that time, the highest point in Bassendean. The new building was built by W. T. Clark at a cost of £1,782.²⁰ It comprised two parts: the station and adjoining quarters situated on either side of a central appliance bay. The station wing included a meeting room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and storerooms, and the quarters wing included a living room, men's bedroom, second bedroom,

12 *Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory*, Dept of Contract and Management Services (1997), pp. 25, 37-38.

13 Carter, Jennie, *Bassendean: A Social History 1829-1979* (Town of Bassendean, Perth: 1986), p. 87. Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p. 19.

14 Thomas Alf T., *A History of Bassendean* (West Leederville: 1947). The Western Australian [Wise's] Post Office Directories, 1913.

15 'Bassendean Volunteer Fire Brigade: 50 Years Jubilee Anniversary, Dinner and Social Evening', pamphlet (21 April 1961).

16 'Bayswater Fire Station (former) 1910-1919', Palassis, *FESA Inventory Review* (2011), p. 25. 'History' part of Bassendean Memorial Library exhibition on Bassendean Fire Station.

17 Carter, *Bassendean* (1986), p. 120. The Western Australian [Wise's] Post Office Directories, 1923.

18 'New Fire Station: Proposed For Bassendean', *The Daily News*, 10 March 1928, p. 6. 'Bassendean Objects: Alteration of Boundaries', *The Daily News*, 21 July 1928, p. 4. 'Bassendean Affairs: New Fire Station Refused', *The Daily News*, 27 August 1932, p. 6.

19 Steve Page, 'The Bassendean Volunteer Fire Brigade, History Lecture', held at The Bassendean Library 23 April 2014.

20 'Fire Station Opened: Bassendean Ceremony', *The Daily News*, 10 February 1934, p. 2.

kitchen, bathroom and other small rooms.²¹ The quarters wing has subsequently been demolished and replaced with a large extension including double appliance bay.

Also located on the site were a 50ft high steel tower, a 50ft long hose washing trough, and the 1910 Bayswater fire station, which was relocated for the second time, and used at the Parker Street site as a recreation room.²² The 1910 Bayswater fire station was demolished in 1998.²³

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) was formally opened on 10 February 1934, in a ceremony attended by the Honorary Minister in Charge of Fire Brigades Mr Kitson, the Chairman of the WAFBB, the Mayor of Fremantle representing the WAFBB's metropolitan local authorities, the MLC for the Metropolitan Suburban Provinces, the Chairman of the Bassendean Road Board, as well as about 300 local residents and visitors.²⁴ At the opening ceremony Hon. Minister Kitson complimented the Bassendean brigade on its fine record in inter-brigade contests, and mentioned that on one occasion the Bassendean brigade had won every single event on the programme.²⁵

The Bassendean Fire Brigade operated from *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* for the next seventy nine years, until its closure in December 2013.

During its lifetime the brigade earned a reputation as one of the leading brigades in the State. Bassendean dominated the annual Volunteer Fire Brigades' State Championships, being awarded the title of State Champion Team a massive 23 times. They also competed nationally, winning in Victorian Grand Aggregate Competitions four times.²⁶ On a number of occasions, the brigade concurrently held both State and National Australasian Championships, including an unbeaten three year stint between 1948 and 1950.²⁷

As well as bringing pride to the Bassendean area through its competition wins, the Bassendean Brigade was also involved in the local community through its fundraising (often raising money for competitions or new equipment) and social events such as dancing or dinners.²⁸ In 1935, the brigade made headlines through its fundraising for youth and motherhood, when it conducted a mock wedding, with the firemen dressing up as the bride,

21 'New Bassendean Fire Station', *The West Australian*, 26 August 1933, p. 6. 'Fire Station Opened: Bassendean Ceremony', *The Daily News*, 10 February 1934, p. 2.

22 'New Bassendean Fire Station', *The West Australian*, 26 August 1933, p. 6. 'Bassendean Fire Station', *The West Australian*, 5 February 1934, p. 16.

23 Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 3, p. 25.

24 'Fire Station Opened: Bassendean Ceremony', *The Daily News*, 10 February 1934, p. 2.

25 'Fire Station Opened: Bassendean Ceremony', *The Daily News*, 10 February 1934, p. 2.

26 'Major Demonstration and Records', part of Bassendean Memorial Library exhibition on Bassendean Fire Station.

27 'Bassendean Fire Brigade', *The West Australian*, 10 July 1948, p. 22. 'Bassendean Leading', *The West Australian*, 19 April 1949, p. 6. 'Bassendean Wins Aggregate', *Riverine Herald*, 11 March 1950, p. 1. Wood, Kenneth A. *Ready, Aye, Ready: A History of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Movement of Western Australia* (Western Australian Volunteer Fire Brigade Association and The League of Champion Firemen, Perth WA: 1989), p. 173.

28 'Interview with Mr Roy Weatherburn of Bassendean', conducted by Maxine Laurie, Town of Bassendean (30 November 2007),

bridesmaids and lady guests and women participants being dressed up at the groom and gentlemen guests.²⁹

During WWII, an air raid shelter was constructed under *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* beneath the present day front office. A special phone was connected to this room during the war so that calls could be received. Following this use, the room was used as a cellar.³⁰

In 1966, the Bassendean brigade became part staffed by permanent (career) firemen.³¹ This was the consequence of a WAFBB review following the Stephenson and Hepburn Report in 1956, where the WAFBB had determined that all but six of the metropolitan fire stations would become redundant.³² Bassendean was one of the very few metropolitan stations that remained operational.

To cope with the larger brigade, the existing Fire Station was altered. The original quarters wing (to the south of the original appliance bay) was demolished, and replaced with a larger accommodation block and double appliance bay. The new accommodation block was completed in 1971, and comprised two dormitories (officers and men), bathrooms (officers and men), living room, workshop, watch room and office. These alterations were designed by Duncan, Stephen and Mercer. The 50ft steel tower was replaced as at unknown date with the current metal framed tower, used for ladder training, behind the 1969/71 wing

While there was some tension between the volunteer and permanent staff, the two generally got on as one brigade. Antagonism that did arise was usually centred around the issue of volunteer staff being a threat to the permanent jobs.³³ This was not, however, a Bassendean specific problem, as there had been conflict between volunteers and permanents across Western Australia ever since permanent staff were first introduced in the early twentieth century. It was well recognised that having permanent and volunteer staff at the same station was often not harmonious.³⁴

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) continued to operate as a part permanent part volunteer station until December 2013 when the building was decommissioned by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). Bassendean's permanent staff were moved to Kiara.³⁵

The closure of *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* was met by considerable opposition not only by the brigade itself, but the local community, and the local and state government. In August 2013 the Mayor of Bassendean penned an open letter to the Minister for Emergency Services noting the Town's grave

29 'A Mock Wedding', *The West Australian*, 16 August 1935, p. 25. 'Bassendean Volunteer Brigade Association Mock Wedding', photograph held by the Bassendean Memorial Library.

30 Conversation between Fiona Bush and Ross McDonald, 25 March 2015.

31 'Interview with Herbert Smith', conducted by Maxine Laure, Town of Bassendean (18 February 2013), p. 12.

32 Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p. 98,

33 Herbert Smith, phone conversation with Sian Ferraz, State Heritage Office, 6 March 2015.

34 Palassis, *FESA Heritage Inventory Review* (2011), Volume 2, p. 25.

35 'Volunteers oppose fire station closure', *The West Australian*, 11 September 2013, sourced from <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/18873405/volunteers-oppose-fire-station-closure/> Accessed on 9 March 2015.

disappointment in the proposal to disband the brigade citing it as an integral component of the Town.³⁶ In an address to State Parliament, the MLA for Bassendean acknowledged the special history of the Bassendean brigade, and highlighted that the closure of the station was strongly opposed by the local community and the brigade itself.³⁷

In 2015 *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* is vacant.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) comprises a single storey brick and tile fire station (1934 and 1969/71) displaying characteristics of Inter-War Stripped Classical styling, with associated outbuildings and ladder training tower in the rear yard.

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is located on the western side of Parker Street, in close proximity to Old Perth Road, the main commercial street in Bassendean. Development along Parker Street in the vicinity of the fire station is largely single-storey residences.

The fire station is built right to the front boundary, and occupies most of the width of the lot, with a substantial bituminised rear yard which contains outbuildings, a ladder training tower, fire hose washing trough and the remnants of playing courts marked out on the bituminised surface.

The fire station comprises buildings from at least two building campaigns – the original 1934 station, in the northern portion of the building, and the 1969/71 extension, in the southern portion. The building, which displays some characteristics of Inter-war Stripped Classical style in the earlier portion, largely in the appliance bay façade detailing, is domestic in scale and detailing, with brick walls, concrete render bands, and a complex, hipped tiled roof. The single appliance bay to the 1934 wing separates the two wings, whilst the appliance bay to the 1969/71 wing (a double bay) is located at the southern end of the building. Both wings have entrances leading directly to the footpath.

A metal framed ladder training tower is located directly behind the 1969/71 wing. It appears to be of relatively recent construction.

A single roomed metal framed and clad building is located directly behind the 1934 wing. The structure is of late twentieth century construction and signage suggests it was used as a recreation room.

Immediately behind the recreation room is a carport, comprising square metal posts and a metal sheet roof.

A shallow concrete hose washing trough (a trough for washing fire hoses) extends the length of the place in the rear yard and there are narrow garden

³⁶ 'Letter send regarding disbanding of Bassendean Volunteer Fire & Rescue Brigade', by Major of Bassendean Cr John Gangell to The Hon Joe Francis MLA Minister for Emergency Services, 1 August 2013. Sourced from http://www.bassendean.wa.gov.au/2_news_events/mayoral-letters.html Accessed on 9 March 2015.

³⁷ Western Australian Parliamentary Discussions, 15 May 2013. Sourced from [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard.nsf/0/8caed1563079805848257b7100171a0f/\\$FILE/A39+S1+20130515+p580d-586a.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard.nsf/0/8caed1563079805848257b7100171a0f/$FILE/A39+S1+20130515+p580d-586a.pdf) Accessed on 9 March 2015.

beds in front of and to the south of the 1969/71 wing. Apart from this the entire lot is bituminised.

Fabric

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is irregular in plan, with the 1934 appliance bay separating the two wings.

The appliance bay façade is a projecting rendered bay with stepped parapet with central gable pediment, and pilasters at either side. The façade has a large door for the fire trucks, currently enclosed with a metal roller door. The 1934 wing has a face brick façade to window head height, and a band of rendered masonry above. A timber framed half-glazed door is set slightly off-centre, flanked by timber framed eight paned windows, and a single paned fanlight above. A slender concrete sunshade with moulded edges supported on concrete brackets shades the door and window. A single concrete step leads to this entry.

The 1969/71 wing has a red face brick façade, and is dominated by the double appliance bay wing. The hipped tiled roof projects over the appliance bay forming an entrance area, with a rendered band with 'FIRE STATION' extending across it. The original red lettering has been removed, leaving residue to form the words. The appliance bays have metal roller doors. There are two metal framed windows in the front façade of the office, and the timber framed and lined entrance door is set in the return formed by the junction of the office and appliance bays.

Openings to the 1934 wing are generally timber framed, with timber-framed doors and windows, except for one metal framed window to the rear of the northern elevation. Side and front windows are generally double hung, with concrete cills. External doors are generally timber framed, with rendered and painted concrete lintels and timber thresholds.

Window openings to the 1969/71 wing are generally metal-framed, with sliding windows. Door openings are timber-framed, with doors generally flush panel or timber lined.

The 1934 wing comprises an office to the front, with a smaller office behind, and the appliance bay accessed from both offices. Behind the smaller office is a kitchen, with bathroom and W.C. directly behind. A store room, only accessed from outside, is adjacent to the bathroom. A cellar is located under the front portion of the main office, accessed by a hatch door and steel ladder in the office. It has bare concrete walls, and the timber floor structure from the room above is exposed.

Generally, finishes comprise battened plaster ceilings, hard plastered painted walls and timber floors with either carpet or vinyl coverings. The appliance bay, which is at a slightly lower level, has a pressed tin ceiling, plastered walls with tiled dado (possibly original), concrete floor and contemporary metal roller doors. The bathroom/W.C. has a raked ceiling and tiled floor and walls. The fitout was executed as part of the 1966/71 works, but in the original building footprint. Openings to the 1934 wing are generally timber-framed, except for an aluminium framed window in the bathroom. Side and rear windows are generally double hung. Doors are timber-framed, generally timber panelled, or ledged, lined and braced.

The 1969/71 wings comprises an office to the front, flanked by a kitchen/living room, both fronting the street. Beyond the office is a hallway extending to a rear room, still furnished as a bedroom. Three bedrooms, a bathroom and W.C. are located to the north of the hallway, and one bedroom with ensuite bathroom and a store room, only accessible from the appliance bays to the south of the corridor. Finishes are generally plasterboard ceilings with corner vents and coved cornices; hard plastered walls and carpet over a concrete floor. Wet areas have tiled floors. Architraves are metal, and internal doors are generally flush timber panel. The store room, only accessible from the appliance bays, has face brick walls, and a large storage cupboard in the eastern wall. Hooks for firefighters' private kit are still attached to the walls.

A room at the rear of the building, furnished as a bedroom, has painted face brick walls. Plans dated 1969 indicate that this space was formerly a workshop. The two bedrooms towards the front of the building have been created by dividing a former larger dormitory.

Physical inspection of the place in August 2014 revealed the following differences to the 1969 plans provided to the consultants:

1. workshop in rear of 1969 wing now a bedroom;
2. male dormitory in 1969 wing now divided into two bedrooms;
3. door to store (south of corridor) filled in;
4. partition wall in office removed; and
5. change of layout to men's bathroom.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is a single storey brick and tile fire station (1934 with additions 1969/71) displaying characteristics of Inter-War Stripped Classical styling, with associated outbuildings and ladder training tower in the rear yard.

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) was built to a standard plan, which had been designed by the architect K.C. (Keith) Duncan, and implemented by the WAFBB during 1934-1938.³⁸

K.C. Duncan

K.C Duncan worked for the WAFBB over a period of fifty years from 1926 during which he carried out over 100 projects, including 65 fire stations across the State. In addition to his architectural work, Duncan was a volunteer fire fighter and held various positions in the Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association, serving on the Executive Committee (1924-42), and as Secretary of the Association (1937-41). He was made a life member in 1937.³⁹

Five fire stations Duncan designed are on the State Register of Heritage Places:

- P1567 *Merredin Fire Station Complex* (1920 & 1935)

³⁸ *Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory*, Dept of Contract and Management Services (1997), pp. 25, 37-38.

³⁹ Wood, Kenneth A. *Ready, Aye, Ready*, op cit., pp. 109-112.

- P2568 *Toodyay Fire Station* (1938)
- P8806 *Coolgardie Fire Station* (1938)
- P7508 *Guildford Fire Station and Quarters* (1934)
- P7508 *North Kalgoorlie Fire Station* (1935).

Of the above examples, *Merredin Fire Station Complex* is the most comparable, being constructed to exactly the same design as *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)*. However, unlike Bassendean, which was altered in 1969/71, the station at Merredin remains largely as originally constructed.⁴⁰ Additionally, the complex at Merredin retains its original 1920 station, whereas Bassendean's first station was located elsewhere in the town, and its oldest element – the 1910 relocated Bayswater station building – was demolished in 1998.

Each of Duncan's other four RHP fire stations are not comparable in terms of architectural style or design. They are all freestanding single bay stations, without office or quarters incorporated into the original building. The station at Guildford does include a residence, built simultaneously to the station; however this is detached and set back from the appliance bay.

Contemporary fire stations with attached accommodation

As suggested in the above discussion, *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* was different to many contemporary fire stations because the majority were designed with the accommodation/office as a detached element to the rear of the appliance bay.

The only other station identified as comparable to Bassendean is P2377 South Perth Fire Station (fmr #2) (1935), however this station has been extensively altered to convert it into a private residence and therefore has significantly lower integrity and authenticity than *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)*.

Contemporary fire stations with prominent single appliance bays

One of the most distinctive elements of *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* is its prominent rendered entry bay which features a stepped parapet and moulded pilasters.

A number of other single appliance fire stations built in the same period have appliance bays as a prominent feature of the place. These include:

- P2549 Tammin Fire Station (1935) – still used by DFES today and forms part of Tammin's Fire Station complex.⁴¹ It is included in the HCWA Assessment Program.
- P2805 Southern Cross Fire Station (1936) – demolished in 2000.

⁴⁰ Heritage Council of Western Australia, *State Register of Heritage Places – Assessment Documentation*, P1567 *Merredin Fire Station Complex* (2010), p. 2.

⁴¹ GoogleMaps (Image date: November 2009), sourced from <https://maps.google.com.au/maps?ll=-31.9688837,115.9313376&z=9&output=classic&dg=opt> Accessed on 10 March 2015.

- P403 Busselton Fire Station (1936) – in late 2014 the building was converted into a wine bar.⁴² It is included in the HCWA Assessment Program.

None of the above examples have attached accommodation, and are all comparable in design and aesthetics to the State Registered stations at Guildford and North Kalgoorlie.

Social Value

Social value of fire stations is usually attributed to the local community, particularly as fire brigades are so closely linked to the community in which they're sited. It is rare that a fire station would have social value at a State level, as it is rare that the wider Western Australian community would consider a singular fire station significant for its social value.

A fire station with high social value to the State is:

- P2051 *No 1 Fire Station (fmr)*, Perth (1901) – which (although not explicit in the Statement of Significance) has social value as the State's most prominent fire and emergency services museum and heritage education centre.

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) has been highlighted as a place considered to be highly significant to the community of Bassendean. This is evident through the prominent role that the brigade played in the local community in terms of fighting fires as well as hosting social events, dances, fundraising events, and bringing pride to the local area through its competition wins. Additionally, the opposition to the closure of the station, both locally and in State Parliament suggests that the place may have some social value to the wider community.

Of the fourteen fire stations entered in the State Register, most note within the Statement of Significance that the place has social value in relation to the local community and brigade.

One registered fire station with similar social value to Bassendean is:

- P1379 *Kellerberrin Fire Station* (1914) – the Statement of Significance states that it has social value to the local community as a focal point in the past for many social gatherings, including dances, balls, fund raising events and parades.⁴³

Another measure of social value is the community's reaction to the closure of its fire station, however the majority of fire stations entered in to the State Register were operating as fire stations at the time of assessment, and therefore reaction to their closure has not been recorded.

One station which does have a similar history to Bassendean for strong community support for retention is:

⁴² 'The fire station speciality beer and wine bar', *Facebook*, sourced from https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-firestation-specialty-beer-and-wine-bar/436265406487976?sk=timeline&ref=page_internal Accessed on 10 March 2015.

⁴³ Heritage Council of Western Australia, State Register of Heritage Places – Register Entry, P1379 *Kellerberrin Fire Station* (1998), p. 2.

- P982 *Fremantle Fire Station (fmr No. 2)* – When the station closed in 1977, the WAFBB proposed to demolish the 1908 building and construct a new station on site. This was met by significant opposition from the local community and local government, which resulted in the building being vested to the City of Fremantle in 1977.⁴⁴

Another example is P14631 FESA House, which had some public opposition to its demolition in 2014. However, in this case, the opposition was in relation to the building being an excellent example of its architectural style, rather than a place with exceptional social significance to the community.

Conclusion

As one of 18 fire stations constructed during the WAFBB's 1934-38 building campaign, *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* shares a similar history with a number of other fire station buildings across the State, including several already entered in to the State Register. Furthermore, as a station built to a standard plan, *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* shares design features with many stations across the State including *Merredin Fire Station Complex* which is on the State Register.

One significant difference between the station at Bassendean and Merredin is that *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)* was altered in 1969/71 to allow for permanent staff to be incorporated into the brigade. This alteration is representative of a restructuring of the Metropolitan fire stations following the Stephenson and Hepburn Report in 1956, where the WAFBB had determined that all but six stations would become redundant.⁴⁵

Evidence suggests that the proposal to decommission the majority of existing Metropolitan stations did not get executed as initially planned. A number of existing stations, including P14475 Cannington Fire Station (fmr) (1942), P2664 *Claremont Fire Station* (1914) and P7508 *Guildford Fire Station and Quarters* (1934), remained operational beyond the anticipated redundancy period, well into the 1980s and 1990s, and Guildford continues to be operational in 2015. Although the WAFBB's Metropolitan plan was not executed as initially proposed, *Bassendean Fire Station (fmr)*, and particularly its 1969/71 alterations, continue to be representative of this major restructuring.

Bassendean Fire Station (fmr) is therefore important for being associated with two important periods in the history of the WAFBB: the intense post-Depression building program of 1934-38, and the restructuring of Metropolitan fire services following the Stephenson and Hepburn Report.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Fire and Emergency Service Authority Heritage Inventory Review, Palassis Architects, 2011

⁴⁴ Heritage Council of Western Australia, *State Register of Heritage Places – Assessment Documentation*, P982 *Fremantle Fire Station (fmr No. 2)* (1993), pp. 2, 3.

⁴⁵ The other five stations being – P982 *Fremantle Fire Station (fmr No. 2)*, P14620 North Fremantle Fire Station (No.2), P14604 Midland Junction Fire Station No.2, P14600 Melville Fire Station & Special Services (fmr) and P14627 Osborne Park Fire Station & House.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

To date, no original drawings have been discovered.

Date of alterations to 1969/71 wing (division of dormitory, alterations to bathroom/W.C. layout, filling in of door to store, removal of partition wall in office and conversion of workshop to bedroom) is unknown.