



## 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)

- 7.5.9 Providing services and welfare
- 7.5.10 Enforcing discriminatory legislation
- 7.5.11 Administering Aboriginal Affairs

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 401 Government and politics
- 404 Community services and utilities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The place is of aesthetic significance to the people of Perth and Western Australia because it is one of the major places representing the administration of the State Government from 1912 to the 1990s. Its well-proportioned but somewhat imposing façade and fine detailing represent the role of government institutions in society and reinforce the respect to the public sector. (Criterion 1.1)

The place is a fine example of a government building dating from the early 1900s and of the work of Chief Architect Hillson Beasley. Both in terms of the planning of the building and the design of the Murray Street elevation, the building is of high architectural quality. The building is an example of Federation Free Classical architectural style although it also exhibits characteristics of the Federation Free style that incorporated elements of Arts and Crafts detailing and was favoured by Beasley. The façade of the building featuring Donnybrook stone and with large windows giving an emphasis to light is well proportioned and employs finely detailed iron balustrading, both at ground and first floor levels. Internal detailing is particularly fine including ornate moulded ceilings, clear leadlights, a fine timber staircase and an extant example of a finely detailed Arts and Crafts style fireplace surround. (Criterion 1.2)

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\* 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.

The place has landmark value within the Murray Street east precinct by virtue of its size, scale and proportions and particularly well executed façade featuring Donnybrook stone, iron balustrades and Marseilles profile terracotta tiled roof which contrast with the adjacent red brick or rendered facades. (Criterion 1.3)

The place is a major component of the Murray Street east precinct which extends from the intersection of Pier and Murray Streets to Victoria Square and includes various buildings including the former Government Printing Office, former Government Stores building, Department of Supply building, the Salvation Army Congress Hall, the Young Australia League buildings, the Fire Brigade No. 1 Station, the Chest Clinic building and buildings associated with Royal Perth Hospital including Kirkman House and grounds and the Administration Building. (Criterion 1.4)

## **11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE**

The place has historic significance for its associations with and occupation by a number of State Government departments dating from its construction in 1912 up until 1992. At different times, these departments have included: the Public Health and Medical Department; the Chief Secretary's Department; the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries; the Factories and Early Closing Office; State Hotels, the Inspection of Liquors and State Tourist Bureau; the Rottneest Control Board; the School of Hygiene; the Royal Sanitary Institute; the Nurses' and Midwives Registration Boards; the War Funds Council; the Minister of Police; the Prisons Department; and, the Occupational Health, Clean Air and Noise Abatement Division (later the Environment Protection Authority). (Criterion 2.1)

The place has historic significance for its association with the development of public health administration in Western Australia and specifically with the Health Act, 1911, which established the Public Health and Medical Department. It was for the purpose of housing the fledgling department that the building at 57 Murray Street was constructed in 1912. (Criterion 2.2)

The place has historic significance for its associations with the Public Health and Medical Department, which occupied the building at 57 Murray Street from 1912 up until 1974. During this time, the place was associated with a number of Commissioners of Public Health and Principal Medical Officers who made significant contributions to the development of public health services in Western Australia. This included first Commissioner of Public Health, Dr James Hope, from 1909 to 1915, and Dr R. C. Everitt Atkinson who held the position of Commissioner from 1915 up until his retirement in 1944. (Criterion 2.2 & 2.3)

The place has historic significance for its associations with the Chief Secretary's Department, which occupied the building at 57 Murray Street from 1912 up until 1970/1971. During this time, the place was associated with various individuals who held the position of Chief Secretary, including the Hon John Michael Drew MLC and Undersecretary Hubert Charles Trethowan. (Criterion 2.2 & 2.3)

The place has historic significance for its associations with the Department of Aborigines, which occupied the building at 57 Murray Street from 1922 up until 1944/1945, and for its association with Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O Neville, whose office was located at the building from 1926 to his retirement in 1940. The place was also associated with the development and implementation of State Government policies towards Aboriginal people,

such as the removal and assimilation of children of mixed descent and the resettlement of Aboriginal families at Government settlements such as Moore River. (Criterion 2.2 & 2.3)

The place is a fine example of the work of Hillson Beasley, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department from 1905 to 1916, and of builder S. B. Alexander, who was also the proprietor of the Donnybrook Freestone quarries. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is a fine example of the Government architecture of the period designed in the Federation Free Classical style but exhibiting influences of the Federation Free style through the use of Arts and Crafts detailing which introduced more domestic proportions and detailing to the public buildings. The building is finely executed with attention to detail in both the exterior and interior fabric. (Criterion 2.4)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

The yard area behind 57 Murray Street may have the potential to yield, through archeological excavation, information on structures originally located on the site and no longer extant. (Criterion 3.2)

### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

The place is valued for its associations with a large number of State Government departments including: the Public Health and Medical Department; the Chief Secretary's Department; the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries; the Factories and Early Closing Office; State Hotels, the Inspection of Liquors and State Tourist Bureau; the Rottneest Control Board; the School of Hygiene; the Royal Sanitary Institute; the Nurses' and Midwives Registration Boards; the War Funds Council; the Minister of Police; the Prisons Department; and, the Occupation Health, Clean Air and Noise Abatement division (later the Environment Protection Authority). (Criterion 4.1)

The place is highly valued for its contribution to the historic character of Perth, and in particular the Murray Street east streetscape and, as a result, contributes to the local and wider community's sense of place. This is illustrated by its inclusion in the Register of Heritage Places and the Register of the National Estate, as well as its classification by the National Trust. The cultural heritage significance of the building was also illustrated during the 1980s when, after the redevelopment of the site was proposed, the National Trust negotiated the retention of the whole of 57 Murray Street and the facade of St George's Hall. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

The place has social significance to the Aboriginal people of Western Australia and also the wider community for its association with the Department of Aborigines and Chief Protector of Aborigines A. O. Neville. In living memory, the place is representative of State Government policies towards Aboriginal people, including the removal and assimilation of children of mixed descent and the resettlement of the lives of many Aboriginal people who in recent times have been prominent in the reconciliation process. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

*Chief Secretary/Public Health Department (fmr)* is a particularly fine example of the work of Hillson Beasley during his period as Government Architect from 1905 to 1916 and as such has rarity value in the context of the city of Perth and Western Australia today. (Criterion 5.1)

## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The place was a key administrative building housing numerous departments of the Western Australian State Government throughout the twentieth century. As such it represents the workings of government, the policies and the policy makers, that shaped the development of the State, in particular in the fields of health, state and Aboriginal affairs during that period. (Criterion 6.2)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

The place is in generally fair to good condition. There are some areas of deterioration in the timber to the back verandahs, and gutters are in generally poor condition. However, the exterior and interior fabric shows little evidence of problems such as damp, either through rising damp or the effects of inundation often associated with buildings of this era.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The place has high integrity. Although not currently used for government administrative purposes, the current use by the Living Stone Foundation continues the office functions of the building and continues to provide services to the community. The building is capable of sustaining this or similar uses in the long term.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The place has high authenticity. The building remains substantially as constructed in 1912 with additions to the west wing dating back from 1921. The internal room layout has only been modified by the introduction of partition walls that can be removed. The main alteration has been the construction of a mezzanine floor in the central room at first floor level.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Public Health and Medical Department (fmr) Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of The Ministry of Justice in June 2000.

Key section used: Executive Summary (p1-5), 2.0 Documentary Evidence (p17-46), 4.0 Analysis of Evidence (p95-98), 7.0 Graded Zones and Elements of Significance (p107-112).

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Public Health and Medical Department (fmr) Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of The Ministry of Justice in June 2000.

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Public Health and Medical Department (fmr) Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Ministry of Justice in June 2000.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a Comparative Analysis refer to Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Public Health and Medical Department (fmr) Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Ministry of Justice in June 2000.

### **13.4 REFERENCES**

Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Public Health and Medical Department (fmr) Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of the Ministry of Justice in June 2000.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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