



HERITAGE  
COUNCIL  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

## Permanent Entry

1. **Data Base No.** 0945
2. **Name** Water Police Station and Quarters (former), Fremantle (1903)
3. **Description of elements included in this entry**  
The former Water Police Quarters building and the land on which it stands, being all of the land comprised in Strata Plan 24012.
4. **Local Government Area** City of Fremantle
5. **Location** 10-20 Marine Terrace, Fremantle
6. **Owner**  
Lot 1 - A. H. & M. Karp  
Lot 2 - P. Sanders Holdings P/L & Cado Holdings Pty Ltd  
Lot 3 - Earth Matters P/L  
Lot 4 - P. Sanders Holdings P/L & Cado Holdings Pty Ltd  
Lot 5 - J. A. Kempthorne  
Lot 6 - I. P. Johnston
7. **Statement of Significance of Place (Assessment in Detail)**

### DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The former Water Police Station and Quarters is a two storey stuccoed brick terrace building, built in 1903 to house the administrative and accommodation requirements of the Fremantle Water Police. It was built on the site of a previous Water Police building, which had housed the force since their inception in 1851.

In May 1851, an ordinance, passed by the Parliamentary Council of Western Australia, gave the Governor of the Western Australia the power to appoint officers of a Water Police Force, whose duties were to ensure the safety of shipping at the port and to prevent the escape of convicts by ship.<sup>1</sup> Shipped goods had to be unloaded at a comparatively short jetty in South Bay, passed through the Customs area associated with the Commissariat Store property, opposite the Water Police Station and Quarters, and then transported by road to the river jetty at the northern end of Cliff Street, and then sent up river to Perth.

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<sup>1</sup> They were not able to prevent the escape of the Fenians in 1869

In 1851, the building on the corner of Marine Terrace and Cliff Street was amongst the few buildings then existing in Cliff Street. Together with the Post Office, Court House and Fire Station nearby, the Water Police Station and Quarters formed part of the civic heart of the West End prior to the gold boom and the construction of the inner harbour.<sup>2</sup>

In 1885, the administration of the Water Police was transferred from the control of the Imperial to the Colonial Government. With the opening of the Inner Harbour in 1897, the role and importance of Cliff Street as an administrative area began to decline, despite the time generally being an important expansionary phase for the West End as the construction of the inner harbour at Fremantle, the linking of rail and road transport, and the burgeoning growth and prosperity of Western Australia heralded an increase in commercial and other activities in the area. Although shipping and customs functions gradually moved to the northern side of the Fremantle peninsula, the responsibility of the Water Police, now amalgamated with the land force, increased and resulted in the need for a new building.<sup>3</sup>

The Water Police were held in high regard and the "... organisation mainly attracted young seamen, and applicants for positions were selected with great care".<sup>4</sup> "The Water Police of those days were a fine body of men, selected with great care from an always overloaded list of applicants. Being mostly young seamen of an ambitious turn of mind, many of them took advantage of the opportunities which their occupation afforded them to study the art of navigation. The sea carrying trade of the State was at that time carried entirely by sailing vessels, and I recall the names of the following who graduated from water police constable to master mariners. The Superintendent of the water police was M J.F. Stone, and the coxswain was Mr William Brown. The latter built and conducted the Pier Hotel after his retirement from the force."<sup>5</sup>

In 1903, the Water Police Station and Quarters was demolished and rebuilt to the design of John Grainger, Principal Government Architect (PWD), who was responsible for a number of substantial public buildings in Western Australia built at the turn of the century. The new building, in the Federation Free Classical style<sup>6</sup> maintained the civic importance of the location at a time when the focus of the West End was shifting northwards towards the Inner Harbour.

The contract for the Water Police Station and Quarters was let in May to H. Abbott, for the sum of £3,590/12/1.<sup>7</sup> The building is of brick construction, and comprised "offices, living rooms and kitchen on the ground floor, and bedrooms on the first floor."<sup>8</sup> The contractor, H. Abbott, completed the building in October 1903. The construction had taken longer than expected and a penalty was imposed on the contractor at the rate

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<sup>2</sup> Hocking Planning and Architecture *10-20 Marine Terrace, Fremantle* (Heritage Council of W.A., 1991) p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Ewers, J. *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle* (F. Daniels, Perth, 1971) p.51. cited in Hocking Planning and Architecture *op.cit.* p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Ewers, J. *op.cit.* p 51.

<sup>5</sup> Fremantle Times, 25th April 1919.

<sup>6</sup> Apperley, 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) pp. 104-107.

<sup>7</sup> PWD Contract Register 1. Contract 2058 cited in Hocking Planning and Architecture *op.cit.* p.6.

<sup>8</sup> PWD Annual Reports, 1903, Architectural Division p. 57.

of £1 per day. The accrued penalty was £42/14/0. The final account paid, including extra for fitting, was £3565/8/4.

In 1919, a newspaper report, recalling earlier days, cites: "The only other buildings in the Cliff Street of that day were the Water Police Station and quarters on the corner of Marine Terrace; these were practically rebuilt in later times, but were used for their original purposes until the recent disbandment of the water police, or rather their amalgamation with the land forces."<sup>9</sup>

Property files on the building, from its completion until 1937, have been lost, however the building is known to have been used variously as a haven for sailors and by the Navy during World War Two.

By 1937, the office accommodation was being used by the PWD as an architectural workshop and office. Some renovations were carried out in 1955, however it is not clear from surviving documentation what the renovations involved.

From 1958, the property was used as sleeping accommodation for the unemployed and was often referred to as the "Homeless Destitutes Haven". In 1966, there was a proposal to use the property for Commonwealth Offices. Later the property was used for residential purposes by the Fremantle District Unemployed Relief Committee, prior to its alteration for use as low cost inner city housing.

The place was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in April 1974. The place was entered into the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission in March 1978.

## PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The former Water Police Station and Quarters is situated at 10-20 Marine Terrace on the north-east corner of the intersection with the southern end of Cliff Street. The property is part of the land, south of Croke Street, reclaimed from South Bay, making it part of the history of land reclamation since 1842 which has transformed the character of the original narrow Fremantle peninsula.<sup>10</sup> Cliff Street links the historic precinct of Arthur's Head to that of Marine Parade and the Esplanade Reserve.

The building is in the Federation Free Classical style.<sup>11</sup> The symmetrical facade is notable for its three porticoes, detailed with string coursing and capped by balustraded balconies, which provide access to each pair of terraces. The rendered facade is a free interpretation of Palladian motifs - defined base, or plinth; string coursing at floor, sill, window head and ceiling; feature door and window surrounds; a roof parapet, which is partly balustraded, hiding the hipped asbestos roof. The skyline is marked by two central chimneys and the east and west facades feature simply modelled chimneys. The restrained use of the style has achieved a civic building with a unity and a dignified presence notable in such a modest structure. The formal civic style of the Water Police Station and Quarters is in marked contrast to the domestic brick style more usually applied to police stations, post offices and the like.

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<sup>9</sup> *Fremantle Times* 25th April, 1919 quoted in Hocking Planning and Architecture *op.cit.* p.6.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* p.5.

<sup>11</sup> Apperley, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P.A *op.cit.* p104-107

The architectural style is one of the more sophisticated in that section of Marine Terrace, and continues the predominant style in Cliff Street. The corner of Cliff Street and Marine Terrace reinforces the scale and textual pattern on both streetscapes which are important components of the Fremantle's West End. It maintains the particular streetscape characteristic of Marine Terrace; that of a row of notable buildings which stand separately from each other. This is in contrast to the abutting facades which characterise the north-south streets. The building forms a cornerstone for the intersection of these two streetscape patterns within the West End.

The Water Police Station and Quarters were originally located in the central units of the building and were entered from a doorway formed within the central portico. The interior of this portico has subsequently been altered to provide access to two residences. Internally, there are jarrah floorboards, four panel timber doors, double hung timber windows, wide architraves with reeded detailing and deep skirtings. Much of the original door furniture is intact. Plasterwork is generally quite plain with only one area (unit 14) containing decorative plaster details with an arched cornice and central raised boss at the entry to the storage area.

The northern facade has been enclosed with sheeting, in an *ad hoc* manner, to afford weather protection to the rear stairs. The timber framed weatherboard laundries and external brick toilets were an necessary component of the residential use of the building. A remnant of stone shed walling, in the northern eastern corner of the site, is evidence of a wall that appears on early plans.

An interesting contrast is the Police Quarters in Henderson Street, Fremantle, built at the same time and for a comparative price, but constructed in stone with parapets between the residential units and displaying different architectural influences.

For further documentary evidence and a full citation of research sources see Hocking Planning and Architecture *10-20 Marine Terrace, Fremantle* (Heritage Council of W.A., 1991).

## **ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

### **1. AESTHETIC VALUE**

The former Water Police Station and Quarters building has harmonious proportions, with a pleasing ratio of solid to void, a visual rhythm generated by the three entry porticos, and an urbanity of scale which is appropriate in the context of the West End. The formal style is in contrast to the red brick domestic style usually applied to this type of government building.

The building is a very important set piece in the rich collection of Fremantle architecture, associated with the gold boom period. The use of the style, and its associations with the past authority of classical architecture served to symbolise the authority and status of the Water Police.

The building occupies a strategic location at the intersection of two different streetscape patterns within the West End. The Water Police Quarters provides coherence to the streetscape of this part of the West End.

**2. HISTORIC VALUE**

The Water Police Station and Quarters is located on some of the first reclaimed land in Fremantle; reclamation which transformed the character of the original narrow Fremantle peninsula.

Together with the old Post Office, Court House and Fire Station, the Water Police Station and Quarters formed part of the civic heart of the West End, prior to the gold boom and the construction of the inner harbour. Their presence in this part of the West End demonstrates the evolutionary changes in land use associated with port activities in Fremantle.

The construction of the Water Police Station and Quarters in 1903 is closely associated with an important phase in the development of Fremantle: the expansion of the inner harbour and port facilities and the increase in prosperity from the Goldrushes.

The building is one of a number designed by John Grainger, Principal Government Architect in the PWD, who was responsible for many of Perth and Fremantle's public buildings.

**3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

It is likely that the place and its environs have a high level of scientific significance in relation to construction upon reclaimed land, the construction of an early seawall, and the existence of earlier buildings on site.

**4. SOCIAL VALUE**

The Water Police had an important role in enforcing law and order and safety in Fremantle Port. The building is a reminder of that role and contributes to the community's sense of place.

The community holds the place in high regard and it is listed as a place of heritage value in Fremantle City's town planning scheme.

**5. RARITY**

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## **6. REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The place is representative of maritime activity of this locality prior to the creation of the inner harbour. The building demonstrates the civic aspirations for public buildings commensurate with Gold boom atmosphere prevailing at the time of construction.

The building is representative of the ebullient architecture constructed in Fremantle during the gold boom. It demonstrates the increasing prosperity and sophistication of Fremantle, and Western Australia, at the turn of the century.

## **CONDITION**

The present condition of the fabric reflects the variety of historic uses from previous occupation of the building. Few of the changes have been particularly deleterious to the building's fabric. The building's external fabric is illustrative of the historic development of the immediate environs of the building.

The original fabric of the building is substantially intact and in sound structural condition and requires only normal maintenance to ensure its future.

For further evidence see Hocking Planning and Architecture *10-20 Marine Terrace, Fremantle* (Heritage Council of W.A., 1991).

## **INTEGRITY**

Through the various changes of use the building has retained its integrity.

## **AUTHENTICITY**

With only minor alterations being made to the original fabric, the building retains a high degree of authenticity.

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Water Police Station and Quarters has cultural significance for the following reasons:

it is a notable example of the Federation Free Classical style which, although modest in scale, has a sophisticated collation of classical elements, fine proportions and an urbanity of scale;

the building is representative of the use of architectural form to assist in establishing authority, status and order;

the building is a critical element in the streetscape of Fremantle's West End, as it occupies a key corner and successfully mediates the transition of the different streetscape pattern of Cliff Street and Marine Terrace;

together with the old Post Office, Court House and Fire Station, the Water Police Station and Quarters formed part of the civic heart of the West End, prior to the gold boom and the construction of the inner harbour. Their presence in this part of the West End demonstrates the evolutionary changes in land use associated with port activities in Fremantle; and,

the building is well regarded by the community, and its condition, integrity and authenticity have been substantially retained.

## **8. Register of Heritage Places**

Interim Entry	17/07/1992
Permanent Entry	10/06/1994

## **9. Conservation Order**

## **10. Heritage Agreement**

## **11. References**

National Trust Assessment Exposition  
Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet  
Hocking Planning and Architecture *10-20 Marine Terrace, Fremantle* (Heritage Council of W.A., 1991)