



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)

- 3.11 Feeding people

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 308 Commercial services and industries
- 505 Markets
- 604 Innovators

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Albany Bell Hatchery (fmr) is a well proportioned and executed example of the Inter-War Functionalist style applied to an industrial building. (Criterion 1.1)

The large fig tree to the west of the building is a landmark and contributes to the streetscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place was the premises of one of the first dedicated chicken hatcheries in Perth. (Criterion 2.1)

Prior to subdivision, the place was part of the Peter Albany Bell's estate comprising the 'Castle' building, completed in 1914, and developed on garden principles. (Criterion 2.2)

Albany Bell Hatchery (fmr) was designed by architects Powell, Cameron and Chisholm and is an unusual example of an architect designed hatchery at a time when most buildings associated with agricultural industry were accommodated in vernacular structures. The firm (as Wright Powell and Cameron) also designed the nearby Albany Bell Castle factory building for Peter Albany Bell in the 1910s. (Criteria 2.3)

The place was established by the Bell family. Peter Albany Bell, father of Albany Matson Bell who established the chicken hatchery, was an important manufacturer and philanthropist in the early years of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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, NSW, 1989.

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The hatchery building at 90 Guildford Road has rarity value as the premise was one of the first dedicated chicken hatcheries in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.2)

The place is a rare example of an architect designed industrial building of considerable aesthetic quality being custom designed and built for a chicken hatchery, a use that would have been more commonly accommodated in a vernacular structure. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

While the building's Inter-war Functionalist style is representative of its period, its application to an industrial building is unusual. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The structure of the building and its permeability, are in good condition. Many of its secondary building elements such as glazing, wall surfaces and internal doors have been vandalized, damaged and defaced.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The overall building form remains legible but the place is vacant. As all of the equipment and fixtures associated with the hatchery business have been removed and since the building itself exhibits only a few particular characteristics associated with its original use (concrete floors, high ceilings, rear delivery bays) the building legibility as a hatchery is not high. No fit outs remain in the building, nor are there any notable building elements incorporated (apart from concrete floors throughout), to indicate the building's use as a hatchery.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The fabric of the structural elements of the place is authentic but for clear anodised sliding aluminium windows to the street façade to what would have been originally timber double hung windows and off white 'colourbond' custom orb flat ceilings to principal large rooms to what would have been originally plasterboard ceilings as evidenced in other rooms. Fluorescent tube lighting attached to ceilings replacing original incandescent lighting. All the internal fixtures associated with its occupation and use are missing. The removal of all equipment and fit out relating to the operations to the hatchery has reduced significantly the historic material of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Sasha Ivanovich, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The building is located at what is now referred to as 90 Guildford Road, Mt Lawley, part of the original Swan Location Y, which is in the Maylands-Mt Lawley area.¹

The first European settlers in Stirling established themselves on the Peninsula in present-day Maylands. They arrived on the *Tranby* in January 1830.² Early settlers on Swan Location Y were John and Mary Gregory who worked hard to make a viable living from dairying, market gardening and their *Pineapple Inn*.

The Perth Roads Board, which was the predecessor of the City of Stirling, came into being in early 1871.³ It was responsible for a large district, stretching from the Municipality of Perth along the Swan River to its mouth, then north to a point five kilometres beyond Quinns Rocks, and east from the coast to a line passing southwards through Lake Gnangara and joining the Swan near the end of the future common border of the cities of Stirling and Bayswater.

The rapid expansion associated with the gold boom of the 1890s resulted in the creation of a number of new municipalities and by the turn of the twentieth century the area of the Perth Road district had been reduced considerably. Between 1890 and 1905 the population of the Perth metropolitan increased fourfold and new subdivisions were required. Most of Maylands and Inglewood were developed by Gold Estates Australia as blue-collar suburbs, though there were also the larger 'white-collar' homes in the district.

Between 1900 and 1910 there was some diversification of industrial activity within the Perth Road district. The Mephan Ferguson Factory was built which produced pipes for the Goldfields Water Scheme between 1898 and 1903. Confectionery manufacturer Peter Albany Bell (1871-1957) built his 'factory in the garden' on the site of the old *Pineapple Estate* from 1914-19. The place at 90 Guildford Road is located immediately adjacent to what is now referred to as Albany Bell Castle and it has a close association with the Bell family and their business activities.

Mr Peter Albany Bell arrived in Western Australia in 1887 and worked at a variety of jobs before opening a small shop in Hay Street, Perth, in 1894 making and selling confectionery and lemon squash.⁴ The one shop expanded and developed into an established tea room business. With the developing tea room business, Mr Bell purchased, in 1906, part of the former

¹ The place is located close to the boundary of Mt Lawley and Maylands.

² Information concerning the history of the area is taken from Considine & Griffiths Architects with Dorothy Erickson, 'City of Stirling Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places, adopted 17 June 1997.

³ After the recent realignment of local government boundaries, the place falls within the City of Bayswater.

⁴ Information concerning the history of Albany Bell Castle is taken from assessment documentation for entry in the State Register of Heritage Places for Albany Bell Castle (P2429) and Bodycoat, Ronald (Duncan, Stephen & Mercer architects), 'Albany Bell Castle Property Conservation Plan', prepared for Civil Aviation Authority, November 1992.

Pineapple Inn/Estate located on the Swan River.⁵ He bought the property, which extended from Thirlmere Road to the northern side of 'The Gables' flat site down to the river, with the purpose of building a 'factory in the garden concept'. A portion of the land was transferred to Edith Agnes Bell shortly afterwards.⁶ A new title was later issued in 1930 in the name of Edith Agnes Bell, the area being approximately four acres.

Bell first built a large brick and tile house for his large family. The factory itself was set in gardens and built in two stages. The first stage of the two winged building was built in 1914. The second stage was completed in 1919, it being the central block that was built across the front of the other two. The building was designed by Alexander Donald Cameron, a partner in the Wright, Powell and Cameron and follows the practice of earlier English factory buildings using decorative stylistic elements in the external expression of red brick and bands of cream coloured render. Bell was well known for his philanthropy and the generous working conditions that he provided.

In 1928, Bell sold out of the tea room business. During the depression of the 1930s, the buildings were leased out – the central block for macaroni making, the ground floor of the south wing to a confectioner, the first floor of the south wing to a raincoat manufacturer and the north wing to another operator for use as a bakehouse.

In 1937, the land was subdivided into Lot 1 and Lot 2 and a new Certificate of Title was issued to Edith Agnes Bell showing Lot 2 being an area of approximately two acres.⁷

In 1938, as a result of losing family assets to the Depression, Mr Albany Maston Bell, Peter Bell's son, started a new operation by hatching chickens in a shed at the back of the factory.⁸ In an interview in 1976, Bell comments:

I had never been in the poultry industry and knew little about it, although my father dabbled in everything because he was a man with plenty of initiative, but he at the time was visiting America and he wrote to me telling me about hatcheries there and just then another incubator manufacturer from Sydney called to see me. The room I was in was where we had the special double cavity wall for keeping the place cool for the dipping of chocolates, he said, "Mr Bell, this would be a great place for a hatchery" which began to shape up the idea of a hatchery.⁹

Eventually Bell bought a 17,000 egg incubator and although it was thought he would not succeed the hatchery grew to be the largest of its day in Western Australia.¹⁰ Subsequently, the north wing was used as a hatchery for a year or so before Maston Bell built a new hatchery in 1943, the subject of this assessment. The hatchery was designed by Powell, Cameron & Chisholm Architects.¹¹

⁵ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 378, Folio 102, 20 September 1906.

⁶ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 378, Folio 102, 29 June 1907.

⁷ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 1051, Folio 902, 12 February 1937.

⁸ Oral History transcript of an interview with Albany Maston Bell conducted on 13 April 1976 by Chris Jeffery (OH1568), p. 14.

⁹ Oral History transcript of an interview with Albany Maston Bell conducted on 13 April 1976 by Chris Jeffery (OH1568), p. 14.

¹⁰ Oral History transcript of an interview with Albany Maston Bell conducted on 13 April 1976 by Chris Jeffery (OH1568), p. 15.

¹¹ Building and Construction 24 July 1942, p. 7. Tenders closed
Powell, Cameron & Chisholm architects

July 14 – erection of chick hatchery, Maylands for A. M. Bell Esq.

The Perth Road Board Rate Book for 1942-43 shows an entry for 90 Guildford Road, Lot 2 (portion of Loc Y) and is described as House and Hatchery. The word 'Hatchery' has been added underneath the word 'House' indicating that this is the year it was built.¹² The entry for the previous year is described as just 'House'.¹³ It should be noted that it has not been ascertained when the 'House' was constructed.

The Rate Book for 1942-43 also shows an entry for the adjoining Lot 1 shown as being 'Vacant Land' crossed out and 'House' inserted indicating that a house was built during that year.¹⁴

It would appear that there was some change to the street numbering at this time as the entry for the 'House' on Lot 1 in 1942-43 was changed from number 86 to number 88. In 1955-56 the number for the 'House' on Lot 1 changes to number 90.¹⁵ The entry for 'House and Hatchery' remains the same at number 90. The year 1955-56 is the last year in this sequence of Rate Books.

This 1942-43 date of construction is further verified by the issuing of a Building Licence on 21 July 1942 to A M & E A Bell. The description of the building is listed as, 'Brick Chicken Hatchery' and the location is described as Loc Y, Pt Lot 2, Plan 10385. The builder is listed as Davenport & Robinson. The dimension of the building is listed as 35 squares and the value of the work as £2,097/16/0.¹⁶

A further Building Licence was issued on 8 January 1944 to A M Bell for 'Additions to brick egg hatchery'. The dimension of the building is listed as 12 squares. The builder is listed as Davenport & Robinson and the value of the work was £800.¹⁷

A search of *Wises Post Office directories* did not show a listing at 90 Guildford Road for a Hatchery until 1945; however, this time lag is usual as it took some time for entries to be updated.

An undated Sewerage Plan shows the outline of the building and it is described as 'Hatchery'.¹⁸ A search of the relevant Surveyors Field Books was undertaken to ascertain the date of the plan.¹⁹ A 1936 date was

¹² State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA), AN 63, Acc 1717, Perth Road Board Rate Book (Maylands Ward). Item 292, 1942-43, p. 40.

¹³ SROWA, AN 63, Acc 1717, Perth Road Board Rate Book (Maylands Ward). Item 291, 1941-42, p. 40.

¹⁴ SROWA, AN 63, Acc 1717, Perth Road Board Rate Book (Maylands Ward). Item 292, 1942-43, p. 40.

¹⁵ SROWA, AN 63, Acc 1717, Perth Road Board Rate Book (Maylands Ward). Item 305, 1955-56, p. 54.

Building and Construction 14 August 1942, p. 8. Building Permits, Perth Road Board Maylands – August. Brick chicken hatchery £2,097 A.N. & E.A. Bell Pt 2 Guildford Rd, A.N. & E.A. Bell, contractors.

SROWA, Acc 2784/3-5, Perth Road Board Permit Register (record of building licences), on microfilm. Licence number 895.

¹⁷ SROWA, Acc 2784/3-5, Perth Road Board Permit Register (record of building licences), on microfilm. Licence number 4/92. Due to time constraints further searching of the register was not undertaken. It is therefore possible that there are further entries relating to this building. At a later date.

¹⁸ SROWA, Cons 4156, Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department, Sewerage Plan number 230 (on microfilm).

¹⁹ SROWA, WAS 84, MWSSD, Cons 3464, Item 36, Field Book 3720. The drawings for plan 230 are dated 30 June and 4 July 1936.

established; however no detailed drawing of the hatchery could be found, indicating that the outline of the building was drawn onto the plan at a later date. This was often the case when revisions were needed as it saved having to redraw or resurvey the whole plan.

It has not been possible to establish with any degree of certainty the role of the place in raising hens as part of the War effort, except to say that it has been established that eggs were in short supply during the War²⁰

Albany Maston Bell established the Hatchery (a new venture) as a result of losing family assets during the Depression and the suitable nature of part of the Albany Bell Factory. In the Oral History Interview he does not make any mention of the role of the place in relation to the War effort, except to mention that it was 'pretty tough going in the beginning'.²¹ However, it is likely that the demand for eggs during the War had some positive effect as he sought to supply poultry farmers with chicks.

It has not been possible to ascertain how the place operated as a hatchery²². It has neither been ascertained exactly how long the building was used as a hatchery. The last available Rate Book entry was dated 1955-56 and the last available *Wises Post Office Directory* is dated 1949. The Oral History Interview with Albany Maston Bell does not provide an exact date. However he does mention that his successor was Bill McGrath and that he (McGrath) eventually sold to Hampton's Hatcheries. He also mentions that in 1976 there were only three hatcheries in Western Australia.²³

Lot 2 remained in the Bell family until the 1970s.²⁴ In 1971, it was transferred to R. A. B Holdings Pty Ltd.²⁵ In 1978, the area of land was transferred to Noarlunga Pty Ltd.²⁶ A new Certificate of Title was issued to Noarlunga Pty

²⁰ Bosworth, M 'Eating for the Nation: Food and Nutrition on the Homefront' in Gregory, J (ed) *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II* UWA Press, Nedlands, 1996, p. 228. Bosworth notes that by 1942 Perth residents were being urged to plant extra vegetables etc. Eggs were also produced in backyards though the American fondness for fried chicken sent poultry prices souring and reduced the supply of fresh eggs in shops. However, egg marketing was firmly controlled in order that registered growers might receive the gazetted price.

²¹ Oral History transcript of an interview with Albany Maston Bell conducted on 13 April 1976 by Chris Jeffery (OH1568 Battye Library), p. 21.

²² At present no architectural drawings have been located which would show the design of the interior and therefore provide some idea as to how the place operated as a hatchery. The *Building and Construction* journal for 1942 was consulted in the hope that a description of the completed building was published. No description has been found and, in general, the journal provided very little in terms of building descriptions (compared with the 1930s). A scan of the *West Australian* was undertaken for the latter period of 1942, but again, no description was located. A scan of the recently published history of the City of Stirling, W. S. Cooper & McDonald *Diversity's Challenge: A History of the City of Stirling* City of Stirling, 1999 made no mention of the Hatchery building, though there were references to the adjacent Albany Bell Castle. The Maylands Historical Society are currently trying to locate information, though thought it unlikely that anything would be uncovered as most research has focused on Albany Bell Castle.

²³ Oral History transcript of an interview with Albany Maston Bell conducted on 13 April 1976 by Chris Jeffery (OH1568), p. 17.

²⁴ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073, Folio 181, 22 April 1971.

²⁵ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073, Folio 181, 22 April 1971.

²⁶ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 1073, Folio 181, 13 February 1978.

Ltd in 1997.²⁷ The current Certificate of Title shows Swan Location 2 and part of Lot 2 as owned by Rational Enterprises Pty Ltd.²⁸

A search of the WA Trades and Professions section of *Wises Post Office Directory* was undertaken to ascertain the number of hatcheries in Western Australia at the time of construction this place. Again, it is important to remember that there may be a time lag of one to three years. The first entry under 'Hatcheries' was in 1940/41 and was listed as Davey & Son Geo, Armadale.²⁹ This was the only entry until 1944, when two additional hatcheries are listed, being Albany Bell Hatchery, 88 Guildford Road, Maylands and the Kellerberrin Hatchery, Kellerberrin. In 1946, the entry for Albany Bell Hatchery is at numbers 88 and 90 Guildford Road. Albany Bell Hatcheries is not mentioned in the remaining three years (1947-49) of the *Wises Post Office Directories* indicating perhaps that this was when Albany Maston Bell sold out to McGrath.

Perth's egg drying plant was officially opened on 12 November 1942, though it had been operating for a period before that date.³⁰ It was erected on land adjoining the Metropolitan Markets at West Perth. The output of egg powder at this time was measured at about half a ton per day, packed in 4lb tins. It was noted that the normal exportable surplus of the State was about 40,000 cases.

It has not been possible to determine any direct link between the Albany Bell Hatchery and the egg drying plant other than to say they were operating at the same time. Although the Albany Bell Hatchery focused on the incubation of chicks it is probable that these chicks were sold to businesses who produced eggs that were then sent to the egg drying plant.

At this time, May 2000, the building is unoccupied. It has not been ascertained for how long this has been the case.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The property is situated on the south east side of Guildford Road, south of the intersection to Third Avenue. It is flanked by a ten storey block of flats (circa 1960s) to the north and a commercial building built in the early 1900s (the Bell factory) to the South. The building itself is flanked to the west by a mature fig tree of considerable age. Across the street are residential single storey cottages of the same period. The cottages have retained most of their original form whilst some changes and renovations to the building fabric are evidenced.

The premises at Pt 1 Lot 1001 Guildford Road forms no cohesive whole with its neighbours, as the building and flats to the north and the factory to the south have each a distinctive style of a different period character and form and scale. Nevertheless these buildings and the cottages across the road, represent together a slice of history of the period 1900s to 1960s, notwithstanding the width and scale of Guildford Road that visually separates the two sides.

The site is occupied by the building under examination with sheds and storage buildings at the rear (which do not form part of this assessment).

²⁷ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 2118, Folio 303, 22 October 1997.

²⁸ DOLA, Certificate of Title, Vol. 2118, Folio 303, 12 December 1998.

²⁹ *Wises Post Office Directories*, 1935-1949.

³⁰ *Farmer and Dairyman* 1 December 1942, p. 13.

The building is flanked by a bitumen driveway to the south, and a large fig tree. The tree is very old, about 40 metres high and appears to be in good condition.

Metal post and pipe with mesh wire form a one metre high boundary fence to the street and south boundary.

The site in general and the building in particular have not been maintained in recent times. The building appears to have been left unoccupied and derelict for some time.

The building has been built in face and rendered brickwork. Under floor exposed external walls are in 'rustic' limestone block.

Some of the main façade facing the street contains strong elements of the Inter-war Functionalist style. The entry porch is covered by a curved counter levered two tiered concrete canopy and flanked by a brick squat corner tower element with rendered brick banded parapets to each side, giving the otherwise domestic character of the building a monumental effect.

Other aspects of the building, sides and rear exhibit typical domestic construction forms, with pitched tiled roofs and overhanging eaves. Brick piers are expressed in the front façade and side elevations giving structural support to the building walls which are generally 3.7 meters high.

Although original painted timber double hung windows are located at the side and rear of the building, what would have been timber windows at the street façade, have been replaced with anodised aluminium sliding windows.

The building plan reveals an entry foyer with what would have been smaller offices to the south side and a larger open working space to the north of the entrance. This forms the whole of the original building, judging by several high lights to the west wall of this room which are now facing other adjoining rooms to the rear. This indicates the back of the building has been added on at a later date. The back of the building is constituted of another large room with a concrete floor and ancillary garage type storerooms with latter additions toilets

Office area has a plasterboard ceiling and scotias. The ceiling in the large room on the other side is a corrugated iron ceiling, implying that this is a later installation, probably replacing the original plasterboard ceiling. Timber partitions separate the office area and the north working area from the entry space. The large room at the front has a concrete floor. The latter addition rear rooms have concrete floors and seem to have been added to reflect the operational requirements of the chicken hatchery business with timber delivery gates fitted at the rear.

As previously noted the original fabric has not been modified with the exception of timber windows to the front façade which have been replaced with aluminium windows and the ceiling replaced in the original working room. The additions to the rear of the original fabric judged by the construction and detailing used would have been done relatively soon after the original part was constructed in 1943.

As previously noted the current fabric has not been maintained. The building has been left open and shows signs of habitation by itinerant homeless people. Much of the rendered brick internal walls have been sprayed with slogans.

Apart from surface painting and timber windows joinery the surviving fabric is generally in good condition:

No signs of wall cracks due to footing failure or movement have been noted. Much of the pointing to brickwork (which has only been originally installed to front façade and entry) has deteriorated. Attempts have been made to repair some areas, although the resulting work does not match the original. Externally and internally there has been little maintenance.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13. 4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
