



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

**DRAFT – Register Entry**

1. **DATA BASE No.** 1973
2. **NAME** *Central Government Offices (1874-2015)*
3. **LOCATION** Barrack Street, Perth
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**  
Lot 557 on Deposited Plan 73153 being the whole of the land contained in Crown Land Record Volume 3163 Folio 54 and shown on Heritage Council Curtilage Map P1973-0.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Perth
6. **CURRENT OWNER**  
State of Western Australia
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
  - Register of Heritage Places: Interim Entry 16/04/1992  
Permanent Entry 08/01/1999
  - National Trust Classification: 11/06/1973
  - Town Planning Scheme: 20/12/1985
  - Municipal Inventory: -----
  - Register of the National Estate: 21/03/1978
  - Aboriginal Sites Register: -----
8. **ORDERS UNDER SECTION OF THE ACT**  
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9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**  
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10. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
Central Government Offices comprises three former government office buildings; the Treasury Building, a three-storey brick and stucco building with a replacement slate roof, originally constructed in the Victorian Georgian style, and remodelled in the Victorian Second Empire style (1874-1904), the Lands

Department, a three-storey brick and stucco building with a replacement corrugated copper roof, in the Victoria Second Empire style (1893), and the Titles Office, a four-storey brick, stucco and iron building in the Federation Free Classical style (1897), occupying over half a city block, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place has been associated with Government activities since the foundation of the Colony and demonstrates the developing role of government administration during the major period of Colonial expansion in the State, and is representative of the Colony's passage to full statehood within the Commonwealth of Australia;

the place has been a symbol of Government and a place where numerous significant public figures performed their work including; Surveyor General John Forrest (1883 to 1890), C. Y. O'Connor, 1891-1902 Engineer in Chief, Politicians and State Premiers;

the place is a key element of the Cathedral Precinct with its mix of commercial, civic and ecclesiastical buildings which is a Perth landmark, and makes a major contribution to the streetscape quality of St. Georges Terrace, Barrack and Hay Streets;

the place contains major works by two of the State's most notable government architects, Richard R. Jewell and George T. Poole;

the buildings designed or modified by Poole are fine examples of the use of mannered classicism using the Victorian Second Empire Style, which was a comparatively rare choice of style for public architecture at the time, and the Federation Free Classical Style;

the exterior and the vestibule and stairs of the Titles Office, and the interior of the main GPO Entry Lobby and of the Postal Hall are of exceptional design excellence;

the development of the place demonstrates the history of regional operations, changes in administration systems and changes in economic circumstances in Western Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century;

despite successive building campaigns and having many later additions, the place retains cohesion through its use of the Victorian Georgian, Victorian Second Empire and Federation Free Classical styles and through the use of a palette of materials that was set by the construction of Jewell's Perth Town Hall;

the remnant sprung corrugated iron lost formwork ceilings evident in the basements of the former Treasury Building and Titles Office exhibit a high degree of technical achievement; and,

the place, along with the group of places comprising the Perth Town Hall, McNess Royal Arcade, St. George's Cathedral, Burt Memorial Hall, the Deanery and St. Andrew's Church, Stirling Gardens, the Old Courthouse, Supreme Court and Supreme Court Gardens, Council House and Government House and the Weld Club which collectively connect West Australians with their past and contribute to their sense of place.

The David Malcolm Justice Centre (2015), Treasury Annexe building and associated landscaped forecourt and plaza, together with the 2015 roof top addition to the Treasury Building and the 2015 western façade additions to the Titles Office and Lands Department, are of little significance.



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### DRAFT – Assessment Documentation

#### 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

##### 11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history

*Central Government Offices* has been associated with Government activities since the foundation of the Colony and demonstrates the developing role of government administration during the major period of Colonial expansion in the State, and is representative of the Colony's passage to full statehood within the Commonwealth of Australia;

*Central Government Offices* demonstrates the continual expansion and adaptation of the public service to meet growing and changing needs of the State from the 1860s to 1996.

*Central Government Offices* was the first major Government office complex in Western Australia and was one in which it was intended to house all Government departments.

##### 11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage

*Central Government Offices* is an uncommon example of a collection of contiguous buildings in the Victorian Second Empire and Federation Free Classical styles, the design of which differed from the classically derived architectural forms applied to government buildings in other states.

*Central Government Offices* contains early sun-baked brickwork dating from the 1834 guardhouse, which is the earliest known brickwork in the City of Perth

**11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

*Central Government Offices* demonstrates the range and development of a large proportion of the State Government administration and services over a period from 1874 to 1996.

*Central Government Offices is a material and symbolic reminder of the traditional structure, geographical concentration and conduct of the public service in Western Australia.*

The principal components of the place were conceived at a time of increasing prosperity when Western Australia built some of its finest architecture, and later additions (1893) represent the confidence of the State following the economic impact of the gold boom.

**11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;**

Along with the Perth Town Hall, McNess Royal Arcade, St. George's Cathedral, Burt Memorial Hall, the Deanery and St. Andrew's Church, Stirling Gardens, the Old Courthouse, Supreme Court and Supreme Court Gardens, Council House and Government House and the Weld Club, the place is part of a group which connects Western Australians with their past and contribute to Western Australian's sense of place.

**11(f)<sup>1</sup> Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;**

*Central Government Offices* is a key element of the Cathedral Precinct, that includes the Perth Town Hall, St. George's Cathedral, Burt Memorial Hall, and the Deanery which is a Perth landmark and makes a major contribution to the streetscapes of St. Georges Terrace, Barrack and Hay Streets.

*Central Government Offices* is part of a significant cityscape that greatly contributes to the character of the City of Perth. It forms part of the largest collection of buildings among a small number of substantial late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that remain in the centre of Perth.

The individual components of *Central Government Offices* are important for their artistic achievement and the group as a whole is a demonstration of the particular design skills of their chief creators, in particular Richard R. Jewell and

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

George T. Poole, supported by John Grainger and Hillson Beasley from 1897 until 1904.

The buildings designed and modified by Poole in *Central Government Offices* are fine examples of the use of mannered classicism using the Victorian Second Empire Style, which was a comparatively rare choice of style for public architecture at the time, and the Federation Free Classical Style.

The exterior and the vestibule and stairs of the Titles Office, and the interior of the main GPO Entry Lobby and of the Postal Hall are of exceptional design excellence.

Despite successive building campaigns, later additions, and recent adaptive reuse, *Central Government Offices* retains cohesion through its use of the Victorian Georgian, Victorian Second Empire and Federation Free Classical styles and through the use of a palette of materials that was set by the construction of Jewell's Perth Town Hall.

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

*Central Government Offices* has been a symbol of Government and a place where numerous significant public figures performed their work including; Surveyor General John Forrest (1883 to 1890), C. Y. O'Connor, 1891- 1902 Engineer in Chief, Politicians and State Premiers.

*Central Government Offices* is a major work by two of the State's most notable government architects, Richard R. Jewell and George T. Poole.

**11(h) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;**

*Central Government Offices* demonstrates a rich variety of building materials and construction techniques that are indicative of forty years or more of traditional construction that is associated with the more significant phases of development and early extensions of the site.

The remnant sprung corrugated iron lost formwork ceilings evident in the basements of the former Treasury Building and Titles Office exhibit a high degree of technical achievement.

The trusses used over the GPO Postal Hall were comparatively large span for their time and employed standard timber construction techniques using Oregon for its main timbers. The composite steel and timber trusses over the eastern courtyard is of some technical interest.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

Having undergone extensive conservation works and refurbishment between 2012 and 2015, *Central Government Offices* is in very good condition.

## 12.2 INTEGRITY

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

Overall, *Central Government Offices* has a moderate degree of integrity. The place has undergone many changes over the years, which have resulted in progressive modifications to original fabric, particularly in relation to the interiors. The principal street facades and the internal Postal Hall retain a high degree of integrity.

## 12.3 AUTHENTICITY

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

Overall, *Central Government Offices* has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. Although no longer used as government offices, the current uses are compatible with the original intent, respecting original corridor and cellular layout and significant spaces.

The forecourt and plaza accommodate a number of interpretative artworks that are associated with the place. These include 'Iconic' by Matthew Harding (2015), a large stainless-steel tree sculpture in the Barrack Street forecourt symbolising the felling of a tree on the site in 1829 to commemorate the Foundation of Perth; and 'Dirty Deeds' by Marcus Canning and Tom Müller (2015), an in-ground art work interpreting the former Police Court cells which were demolished as part of the State Buildings redevelopment. The place is also the site of 'Point Zero', the marker from which all road distances in Perth are measured. An interpretative feature in the paving at the south-east corner of the Treasury Building on the corner of Cathedral Avenue and St George's Terrace marks 'Point Zero'.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been taken from pages 194-209 of Considine and Griffiths Architects with Erickson and Taylor Historians: 'Central Government Offices Perth: Conservation Plan, August 1998' (prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of Government Property Office) with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

The physical evidence has been prepared by Lara Watson Architect in March 2021, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects with Erickson and Taylor Historians: 'Central Government Offices Perth: Conservation Plan, August 1998' (prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of Government Property Office).

Noongar people living around the Swan Valley in the pre- and early contact period can broadly be described as comprising small family groups moving through the landscape in response to seasonal change, utilising a toolkit of wooden and flaked stone tools and grinding stones. The artistic culture of the Noongar people was expressed in a wide variety of forms, relating to a complex spiritual worldview that incorporated a connection to the natural world, and the remembrance or ongoing influence of ancestral and spiritual figures.<sup>2</sup>

The Noongar groups living in and around the Perth area are collectively known as the Whadjuk, whose significant cultural sites include *Derbal Yerrigan* (Swan River) and *Karra kata* (King's Park).<sup>3</sup> The traditional way of life of the Whadjuk began to be disturbed after 1829 with the arrival of British colonists, who established the settlements of Perth and Fremantle along the Swan River.

The city block upon which the *Central Government Offices* is located was one of the earliest sites to acquire civic buildings in Perth, starting with the construction of a small barrack building and armoury in 1832. In 1836, Government offices were built on the southern side of St. Georges Terrace, (where the present-day Council House stands), and this building was used by the Executive Council until 1874.

The beginnings of the development of the site were slow, reflecting the struggle of the young Colony to establish itself on a sound basis in the first twenty years of its existence. Even the arrival of the convicts in 1850 did not have an immediate impact on the accommodations for the civil service.

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<sup>2</sup> Crawford, I M, 'Aboriginal cultures in Western Australia', & Hallam, S, 'The First West Australians', in *A New History of Western Australia*, C T Stannage (ed.), UWA Press, 1981, pp.16-20, 56-66; Meagher, S & Ride, W D L, 'Use of natural resources by the Aborigines of south-western Australia', & Berndt, R M 'Aborigines of the South-West', in *Aborigines of the West: Their Past and Present*, R M Berndt & C H Berndt, (eds.), UWA Press, 1908, p. 76-77, 81-86; Vinnicombe, P, 'Gooninipup: a site complex on the southern side of Mount Eliza: an historical perspective of land use and associations in the old Swan Brewery area, Western Australian Museum', 1989, pp.8-9; Strawbridge, L, *Aboriginal Sites in the Perth Metropolitan Area: A Management Scheme*, Department of Aboriginal Sites, Western Australian Museum, 1988, pp. 10-16.

<sup>3</sup> 'About the Whadjuk Region', *Kaartdijin Noongar – Noongar Knowledge*, accessed 18 March 2021 <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/whadjuk/>



In 1867, the barracks relocated to the new Pensioner Guard Barracks on St Georges Terrace, and the old Barracks were adapted for use as the General Post Office. From this point onwards there was a steady if slow progression of development of civic buildings. Work on the Town Hall commenced in the same year and was completed in 1870. In 1874, construction began on the north west wing of the Treasury buildings, conceived as part of an overall plan in a simple Victorian Georgian style by Richard Roche Jewell in the classical tradition.

In 1889, the south wing was completed as a grand civic statement just before the granting of Responsible Government in 1890 for which the Colony had so long striven. The building symbolized that sense of arrival and even though the Parliament transferred to a new building in 1904, the public perception of the building remained as the place from which the business of State government was conducted. Together with the Lands Department and the Titles Office, it was the most important symbol of public service.

In 1890, The General Post Office (GPO) was introduced as a major central linking element in the Victorian Second Empire style to designs by Poole and the existing east and west wings were allowed to remain expressions of their time until 1898 when the GPO was given its second floor and the balance shifted giving emphasis to this building.

The rapid expansion of the Colony following the discovery of gold at this time resulted in a growth in the demand for the survey of land and the issuing of titles. This was one of the fastest growing arms of Government and accommodation was provided for these functions in successive building campaigns in 1893 and 1897 with the construction of the Lands Department and the Titles Office respectively.

The Lands Department (Lands and Surveys) also built to designs by Poole, continued the Victorian Second Empire style for the Cathedral Avenue extension of the Government Offices. The detailing of the building while still within the stylistic expression of the Treasury group, differed architecturally with its deep and imposing cantilevered balcony, pavilion ends and an eccentrically located entry.

The Titles Office built to designs by Poole and modified by Grainger in 1897, was the tallest and most exuberant of the group of buildings in terms of the modelling of the wall planes and the boldness of the treatments. It became a landmark building with its free melding of classical elements. These elements include a substantial low arched entrance and two-storey colonnaded, cantilevered balconies on enriched brackets similar to the Lands Department (Lands and Surveys) building beside it.

Following the completion of the Titles Office, the growth in the economy and the size of the public service was reflected in the additions to all the existing buildings, including the additional storeys to the whole of the Treasury group of buildings between 1902 and 1904. The roofscapes were unified and Jewell's elevation treatments were given the stucco dressings, quoins and casements that were characteristic of Poole's GPO, though Jewell's Victorian Georgian proportions were retained. The differences in the brick colours in relation to the various construction campaigns remain a testament to the earlier appearance of the east and west wings prior to their revision.

From the time of its construction, the place was the location of many government departments and is associated with a rich and long list of individuals who played a significant role in the development of the State and its administration. This list includes: Colonial Secretaries from Barlee 1855-1875 to Steere 1890; Colonial Treasurers from Lefroy 1856-77 to Elliot 1889; Surveyors General from Fraser 1870-1883, John Forrest 1883 to 1890 through to John Morgan 1968-84. Registrars General from James 1887 to Clifton 1898-1912; Superintendents of Public Works or Civil Engineers and Commissioners for Railways including Jewell (1854-84), Bird (1883-4), Poole (1885-97), Grainger (1897-2905), Beasley (1905-16), Hardwick (1917-27), Tait (1927-31), Clare (1931-60), and Mason (1882-1890). Directors of Public Works J. H. Thomas (1878-1884), John Arthur Wright, C. Y. O'Connor, (1891- 1902) Engineer in Chief, also Postmasters General from Sholl to Whysall, and Attorneys General, Inspectors General of Education, Politicians and State Premiers.

Following the removal of the GPO to Forrest Place in 1923, the use of the place intensified. There was a rapid series of expansion campaigns to accommodate growing civil service numbers. This involved the addition of new sections to existing buildings and new storeys onto both Jewell's and Poole's treasury group.

During the period of World War Two, Government departments, including the Department of Premier and Cabinet moved to Government House which was regarded as structurally safer. Following the end of the War there was a resurgence of public building activity. At this time, the Department of Public Works had a workforce of thirty five people and there were thirty two vacant positions. In 1946, the Department of Premier and Cabinet moved back into the *Central Government Offices*.

In 1958 a new lift was installed in the Lands and Titles Office in the main stairwell, as well as a new strong room and new lavatory block.

In 1963, the Barrack Street entrance and the southern section of the west wing of the Treasury Building was refurbished. A new steel and terrazzo stair and floors were installed replacing the original timber elements, and a new lavatory was installed in the Premier's Suite. W. L. Green was the Principal Architect.

In 1986, an option for the redevelopment of the *Central Government Offices* was put forward by Marshall Begent, Executive Director of the Building Management Authority following Lord Alistair McAlpine's proposal to the State Government to convert the Old Treasury into a luxury hotel. Plans were prepared by Oldham Boas Ednie Brown and Partners which included the retention and adaptation of the whole structure. However, the project did not proceed beyond the concept stage.

During the last half of the 20th century, various government departments left the building for new accommodation, with the last being the Department of Land Administration who moved to new premises in Midland in 1993. After this, the site was vacant for nearly two decades and a variety of proposals for its redevelopment never eventuated. However, in 2011, the place began a period of major redevelopment with the construction of a new 37-level luxury boutique hotel on the site directly behind the *Central Government Offices* buildings.

The new development resulted in the demolition of the 1958 west addition to the 1897 north wing (fmr Titles Office); West portion of 1893 north east wing (fmr Lands Department); North portion of 1901 central wing (fmr GPO/Treasury) and the North east portion of 1875 north west wing (original Police Court Cells).

During the works, an early brick well was uncovered in the northern part of the site during the construction of the office tower and it is understood to be concealed at depth beneath the Hay Street pedestrian link. The original police court cells which were located on the east side of the northwest wing, were also demolished in 2012. Demolition work revealed early brickwork comprising sun-baked bricks that formed part of the 1834 guardhouse. This is the earliest known brickwork in the City of Perth.<sup>4</sup>

Internal changes included: a luxury day spa in the basement of the north wing (fmr Titles Office); retail tenancies to Barrack Street at ground floor level in the south west wing and north west wing (fmr Public Offices); cafes and restaurants at ground floor level in the south wing (fmr GPO/Treasury) and south east wing (fmr Survey Department); offices in the south west wing and north west wing (fmr Public Offices at first floor level); a retail tenancy incorporated into a new contemporary rooftop space at the rear of the south wing (fmr GPO/Treasury) at fourth floor level and a luxury boutique hotel in the ground to fourth floor levels in the balance of the heritage buildings.

The Cathedral Avenue entrance to the 1893 north east wing (fmr Lands Department) was restored to original details to become the hotel entry and lobby. The original public access was reinstated to the centrally located St Georges Terrace entrance, through the original Postal Hall, to the rear of the south wing (fmr GPO/Treasury).

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence prior to the redevelopment of the place from 2011 to 2015, refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects with Erickson and Taylor Historians: 'Central Government Offices Perth; Conservation Plan, August 1998' (prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of Government Property Office).

The following updated physical evidence has been prepared by Lara Watson Architect in March 2021, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

*Central Government Offices* comprises three mid-rise former government office buildings – the Treasury Building (1874-1904), Lands Department (1893) and Titles Office (1897) – the Treasury Annex building (2015), a five-storey mixed use commercial building at 585 Hay Street; the David Malcolm Justice Centre (2015), a 32-storey commercial office tower at 28 Barrack Street; landscaped forecourt and plaza and interpretative artworks; and Cathedral Avenue, a paved trafficable forecourt. The place was the subject of a major adaptive re-use and redevelopment campaign between 2012 and 2015, officially re-

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<sup>4</sup> Previously the oldest known brick work was that of the P1948 *The Old Courthouse, Perth* as noted in *The Old Courthouse, Perth Conservation Plan* undertaken for the Building Management Authority of Western Australia in 1992, by Ross Smith & Wendy Brady.

opening as a contemporary hospitality and retail destination known as the State Buildings in November 2015.

### **Siting**

*Central Government Offices* is situated in Cathedral Square, a vibrant civic and commercial area which occupies an entire city block in the heart of the Perth CBD. The precinct is bound by Barrack Street to the west, St Georges Terrace to the South, Pier Street to the east and Hay Street to the north. It contains a collection of culturally significant buildings which include the *Deanery* (1859), *Perth Town Hall* (1868-70), *St George's Cathedral* (1879) and *Burt Memorial Hall* (1918). Other buildings constructed more recently in the precinct include the refurbished Public Trustee's Building (c.1960 and 2014), the State Administrative Tribunal building (2014), the City of Perth Library (2015), Church House (2016) and the Cadogan Song School (2017).

Cathedral Square is bisected by Cathedral Avenue, a paved trafficable pedestrian street, which runs parallel to Barrack Street. *Central Government Offices* occupies the majority of the block west of Cathedral Avenue. The *Perth Town Hall* (RHP), on the corner of Barrack and Hay streets, is located on a separate lot in the northwest corner of the block. Although not part of the registered curtilage, the southern and eastern sides of the Town Hall have been opened up to visually and physically integrate into the *Central Government Offices* site, resulting in a high degree of connectivity between the two places.

The Treasury Building, Lands Department and Titles Office are built to the west, south and east boundaries of the historic lot, with the facades extending half the length of the lot along Barrack Street, the full width of the lot along St Georges Terrace, and the full length of the lot along Cathedral Avenue. The Titles Office, located in the northeast corner of the site, and the Lands Building, immediately adjacent to the south, address Cathedral Avenue, forming an attractive edge to the precinct. The Treasury Building occupies the southern part of the lot, overlooking Stirling Gardens to the south and the CBD retail area to the west.

On the northern boundary facing Hay Street and directly abutting the Titles Office, is the Treasury Annex building, which occupies part of the site of the demolished R&I Bank Building. The office tower, situated to the rear of the heritage buildings, is set back from Barrack Street in approximately the centre of the site, with its public entrance addressing Barrack Street. A paved forecourt to Barrack Street and associated podium plaza unite the office tower and heritage buildings at ground level. A steel framed glazed canopy, providing protection from the elements, connects the tower to the rear of the heritage buildings at approximately second floor level.

There is a strong public pedestrian network through the site, with major entry points into the heritage buildings from Barrack Street, St Georges Terrace and Cathedral Avenue and major entry points from the public plaza into the rear of the Lands Department and Treasury Building. The main forecourt off Barrack Street is graded to the fall of the street, providing a seamless transition into the site from the footpath. The forecourt and plaza are relatively flat on the western and northern side of the tower, before sloping more steeply down towards the large arched entrance at the rear of the Treasury Building. Heading east, the plaza steps up again to meet a recently constructed entrance at the rear of the

Lands Department. North of the plaza, the site steps up approximately one metre to meet the ground floor levels of the Treasury Annex and town hall undercroft. A wide paved pedestrian link to Hay Street is situated between the two buildings at this higher level. To deal with the level transition around the town hall, a stepped terrace has been introduced on the northern edge of the plaza along the town hall interface. There is also a set of steps and a universal access ramp in the plaza northeast corner.

A single level basement carpark exists under the podium slab. This is linked by a concrete tunnel connection under the Titles Office through to a vehicle access ramp in Cathedral Avenue.

### **Landscape Setting**

*Central Government Offices* has a modern urban landscape setting which dates from the 2015 redevelopment campaign. Landscaping is concentrated around the Barrack Street forecourt and podium plaza area, and within Cathedral Avenue.

Along the northern edge of the plaza, the terrace, steps and ramp are retained by three large raised planter boxes. There is a fourth raised planter box of similar design in the Barrack Street forecourt and a fifth low-rise planter of contrasting design adjacent to the tower entry.

The forecourt, plaza, terrace, steps, paths and raised planter boxes are hard landscaped with grey-green granite pavers. Raised planters contain semi-mature tree plantings, including a Jacaranda tree near Barrack Street, and some low-height shrubs. The low height planter has juvenile native grass trees and other low-height shrubs. Seating and directional pillar signs are built into several planters.

Large rectangular metal planters, are also positioned in various locations around the site. Powder coated in a dark palette of neutral tones and generally containing easy-care dark green exotic plantings, these provide an attractive counterpoint to the hard landscaping.

The forecourt and plaza accommodate a number of interpretative artworks that are associated with the place. These include 'Iconic' by Matthew Harding (2015), a large stainless-steel tree sculpture in the Barrack Street forecourt symbolising the felling of a tree on the site in 1829 to commemorate the Foundation of Perth; and 'Dirty Deeds' by Marcus Canning and Tom Müller (2015), an in-ground art work interpreting the former Police Court cells which were demolished as part of the State Buildings redevelopment. The place is also the site of 'Point Zero', the marker from which all road distances in Perth are measured. An interpretative feature in the paving at the south-east corner of the Treasury Building on the corner of Cathedral Avenue and St Georges Terrace marks 'Point Zero'.

An early brick well, uncovered in the northern part of the site during the construction of the office tower, is understood to be concealed at depth beneath the Hay Street pedestrian link.

West of the heritage buildings, Cathedral Avenue is a hard landscaped pedestrian street designed as an integral urban component of the larger Cathedral Square precinct. It contains a vehicle access ramp, a series of raised masonry garden beds, some large metal planter boxes, and some urban style

steel bicycle racks. The street has predominantly at-grade interfaces with the adjoining landscaped areas to St George's Cathedral, Perth City Library and the square. Surfaces are granite paved or clad to match the surrounding footpaths and precinct area.

### **Treasury Building (1874 to 1904, refurbished 2015)**

#### **Exterior form and detail**

The Treasury Building is a three-storey plus part-basement brick and stucco building with a replacement slate roof, constructed over several stages between 1874 and 1904. The building comprises the original northwest (1874), southwest (1878) and southeast (1883) wings, designed by Richard Roach Jewell, and the original south wing, containing the Postal Hall (1888 and 1898-99), designed by George Temple-Poole.

Originally constructed in the Victorian Georgian style, the early Jewell wings were remodelled by Temple-Poole to their current Victorian Second Empire appearance when their third storeys were added in 1902 and 1904. A fifth wing, the four-storey central wing (1901) which contained postal sorting rooms, was demolished in 2012 to make way for the office tower. The original police court cells which were located on the east side of the northwest wing, were also demolished in 2012. Demolition work revealed early brickwork comprising sun-baked bricks that formed part of the 1834 guardhouse.

The Treasury Building underwent extensive refurbishment in 2015, resulting in a contemporary steel and glass addition being inserted into the rooftop area over the rear of the building at this time. This addition is mostly concealed behind the main ridge line, although an associated glass enclosed deck on the south side of the addition is visible from St Georges Terrace.

The building has principal façades to Barrack Street and St Georges Terrace, which have full bay returns to the northern and eastern elevations. Façade returns bear similar architectural treatments to the corresponding main façades, however subtle differences are evident in the façade composition, materials and detailing, which is reflective of the historical construction sequencing. At the back of the building, the rear elevations of each wing, which are visible from within the landscaped plaza, are simply treated with minimal embellishment. Wall finishes here are a combination of face brick, painted rendered brick and painted bagged brick. The location of the demolished police court cells is evident in the remnant fabric retained at the rear of the northwest wing and in ground plane interpretation of the perimeter walls within the forecourt paving.

The principal street facades are symmetrically configured with a projecting central entry and end bays and recessed infill bays. On the St Georges Terrace elevation, inset bays are set back behind basement lightwells, which retain original Classical masonry balustrades. Lightwells have been modified to provide contemporary stair and platform lift access down to the basement tenancies.

Facades are raised on a plain stucco plinth and feature original polychromatic Flemish bonded brickwork with elaborately detailed original stucco enrichment of the wall surfaces. Stucco work has been recently restored to its original unpainted appearance. There is a subtle colour and texture distinction between

brickwork used in the earlier Jewell building campaigns and later Temple-Poole building campaigns. Façade embellishments include plain and rusticated pilasters, Ionic and Corinthian order capitals, decorative rosettes, rusticated quoining, hit-and-miss voussoirs, heavily moulded string courses and entablatures, dentilled cornices and segmented arch window pediments.

Façade fenestration is vertically and horizontally aligned, with most openings embellished with stucco surrounds. Many windows are not original, having been replaced for acoustic reasons as part of the 2015 redevelopment. Windows are traditional style one and two-pane double-hung sliding sashes, which are typically set into the reveal. Taller openings on the southern elevation have fixed toplights. The two arched openings flanking the St Georges Terrace entrance retain their original finely detailed arched tripartite windows. All window frames and sashes are painted a dark charcoal black and ground floor level windows on the Barrack Street façade have modern black canvas shade awnings fitted externally.

The two main entrances are centrally positioned about the middle bays on their respective street elevations. Both feature a generous open archway which leads to a small recessed entry porch. The St Georges Terrace entrance, from which the original Postal Hall is accessed, is the grander of the two, with the porch retaining original rusticated wall treatments and a finely detailed ceiling with elaborate cornice and ceiling rose. Both entry porches are raised on granite clad steps. A third raised entrance, which has a dog-leg stair access stair off St Georges Terrace, retains original granolithic treads and painted cast iron handrail. Other handrails are contemporary black steel and antiqued brass. Most exterior doors have been replaced with modern black steel and glass assemblies, however two tenancy entrances on the southern and western elevation retain original moulded timber panel doors.

The building has a series of steeply-pitched gable and mansard roofs which are covered in dark grey Welsh slates and have black metal decorative crestings to ridges and mansard edges. All roof coverings and crestings date from 2015, with selections based on evidence of the original. Original stucco chimneys are extant. Mansards incorporate large stucco-fronted masonry dormers which are original. Gable roofs have fibreglass replica round dormers which date from 2015. The west-facing roof of the southeast wing, together with the tops of the mansards, have been recently re-roofed in raised seam copper sheeting, although these roofs are not visible from the street. Rainwater goods are traditional copper, with ogee profiled edge gutters and rectangular downpipes.

Signage and lighting evident on the building exterior, including the black metal pillar lights on the St Georges Terrace lightwell balustrades and the large spherical pendants in the entry lobbies, all date from 2015.

For a description of the Treasury Building internal layout and details, refer 'Heritage buildings – internal layout and details' section below.

### **Lands Department (1893, refurbished 2015)**

The Lands Department is a three-storey brick and stucco building, with a replacement corrugated copper roof, constructed in 1893 in the Victoria Second Empire style. The western portion of the building was demolished in 2012 and

a new framed and clad link with a contemporary façade installed on the western side in 2015.

The building has its principal façade to Cathedral Avenue and abuts the Treasury Building to the south and the Titles Office to the north. Parts of the recently constructed western façade are visible from within the landscaped plaza.

The Cathedral Avenue façade is symmetrically configured into a wide recessed central bay and two narrower projecting end bays. Fenestration is vertically aligned, with a single window opening on each level in the end bays, and five openings to each level in the central bay. The main entry is centrally positioned about the southern bay.

Walls are raised on a plain stuccoed plinth and feature Flemish-bonded red face brick with classically influenced stucco embellishments. Stucco work has been recently returned to its original unpainted appearance. Wide string courses with projecting cornices mark the first and second floor levels, with first floor level mouldings aligning to those in the adjoining Treasury Building. The two major end bays are articulated at the corners with rusticated quoins.

The central bay features a distinctive cantilevered balcony, with decorative coffered ceiling at the first-floor level, which is supported on over-scaled stuccoed consoles.

The balcony has an original curved classical masonry balustrade and a stucco segmented arch colonnade wall, with Ionic order columns and pilasters, which carries the third-floor level wall above. Five individual contemporary black steel balconettes, with compliant balustrades, have been inserted into the original balcony area behind the original balustrade as a solution to safety compliance issues. Balconettes date from 2015 and have modern mesh panel inserts, antique bronzed handrails and integral planter boxes.

The main entry has non-original black steel and glass door assemblies which date from 2015 and a modern canvas awning bearing the name of the hotel. Balcony openings have painted replacement glazed timber French doors, which are similar in appearance to the original French doors.

Windows are two-light double hung sliding sashes set into stuccoed reveals and architraves. The first-floor window in each end bay is accentuated with a classically influenced segmented arch pediment, projecting sill shelf and decorative console brackets. Smaller windows are used on the second-floor level.

The building has a pitched roof with steeply rising mansards over the end bays. Roofs, which were replaced in 2015, are sheeted in corrugated copper based on original evidence. Original stuccoed chimneys are present on the inside edge of each mansard and original oval lucarne windows remain extant on the east face of each mansard. Mansards carry back metal repousse mouldings and highly ornate metal edge crestings and finials. The main roof has a less ornate black metal ridge cresting. All decorative roof elements date from 2015, with designs based on original evidence.

The contemporary western façade, which presents to the tower plaza, has granite cladding below the line of the glazed canopy and composite metal panel cladding above. This façade contains no visible evidence of original fabric.



For a description of the Lands Department internal layout and details, refer 'Heritage buildings – internal layout and details' section below.

### **Titles Office (1896, refurbished 2015)**

The Titles Office is a four-storey brick, stucco and iron building with a semi-raised basement, constructed in the Federation Free Classical style. The western portion of the building was demolished in 2012 and a new framed and clad link with a contemporary façade, matching that on the rear of the Lands Department, installed on the western side in 2015.

The building has principal façades to Cathedral Avenue and Hay Street which share similar architectural treatments. A narrow section of the wall is inset in plan at the southern end of the eastern façade to provide a subservient connection to the adjoining Lands Department. The southern elevation, exposed to view above the eaves line of the Lands Department, is simply treated face brick with minimal embellishment. Part of the recently constructed western façade, which is clad to match the west elevation of the Lands Department to which it directly links, is visible from within the landscaped plaza.

Although the architectural style of the Titles Building is a departure from the Victorian Second Empire style evident on the other heritage buildings, the overall design and materials palette is complementary. Walls are tuck-pointed red brick, raised to approximately ground floor level on a rusticated stucco plinth. The brick colour does not match that of the adjoining Lands Department, being distinctly more reddish in appearance. Walls are punctuated by regularly spaced fenestration and, at the top floor level, a round arch arcaded wall. Above the arcaded wall is a deep dentilled cornice, which opens out into wide coffered shelf eaves supported on scrolled consoles. Eaves have shallow coffers and are painted grey to match the stucco work. The building has a modern replacement corrugated galvanised metal roof which dates from 2015. There are four extant original face brick and stucco chimneys, however a fifth chimney was demolished in 2012. Unlike the other two heritage buildings, all stucco work to the Titles Building is painted.

Windows are simply set into brick reveals with no surrounding architraves. The majority have single light double hung sliding sashes, painted dark charcoal. Openings to verandahs on the first and second floor levels have painted timber glazed French doors, opening outwards, with glazed toplights over. There are three unusual oval picture windows set into the second-floor level brickwork at the north and south ends of the Cathedral Avenue elevation and at the east end of the Hay Street elevation. These openings have painted stucco surrounds and oddly undersized triangulated pediments over, which project forwards from the façade. The plinth features segmented arched openings which retain original woven iron window grates set into the reveals, with inset windows behind.

The Titles Building has several particularly noteworthy architectural façade features, which include the grand two-storey cantilevered verandahs on the north and east elevations and the over-scaled arched main entry to Cathedral Avenue. Verandahs are reinforced concrete construction, with the first floor carried on scrolled decorative consoles and the second floor and roof carried on slender Corinthian columns. Columns terminate to deep moulded entablatures. Intricately detailed masonry balustrades are fixed in between the

columns. Verandahs have contemporary black steel and mesh balustrades fitted behind the original masonry balustrades which are barely discernible externally, and modern tiled floor finishes, all dating from 2015.

The main entry has a heavily proportioned rusticated arch which features a large keystone bearing the date '1897' and an original sculptured coat of arms of the British monarchy. The entry has three door openings separated by paired pilasters, which are square in plan, with Corinthian capitals. Pilasters support a wide entablature with an elaborately detailed arcaded toplight over. Openings retain original glazed timber doors.

For a description of the Titles Office internal layout and details, refer 'Heritage buildings – internal layout and details' section below.

### **Heritage buildings – internal layout and details**

The Treasury Building, Lands Department and Titles Office have been collectively adapted for boutique retail, food and beverage and hospitality uses. A premium luxury hotel is the anchor tenant. The building interiors now present as a cohesive whole, with a unified approach to interior layout and details. New insertions are generally clearly expressed in complementary materials.

The interior layout generally maintains the corridors and cellular room structure of the original buildings, with the nineteenth century Postal Hall conserved as the central organising element of the whole development.

A major east-west circulation spine connects the Postal Hall with the significant Barrack Street (Treasury Building) lobby and adjacent Lands Department building corridor, which in turn leads to the Cathedral Avenue Entry Lobby. Two recently installed lift, stair and amenities cores are situated north of the Postal Hall and circulation spine, adjacent to the plaza interface. A black steel stair, which provides access into basement level tenancies from this area, is a recent insertion.

The refurbishment has conserved the 1960's terrazzo stair in the Lands Department lobby although a similar stair in the Barrack Street lobby has been removed, with evidence of this visible in the retained floor finishes. A lift in the original Titles Office stairwell has also been removed, however a modern meshed steel insertion in the former lift shaft interprets the appearance of the original nineteenth century caged lift enclosure. The significant granolithic stairs in the Titles Office entry vestibule have been retained to provide vertical circulation through the hotel for guests. No original timber stairs remain in the building.

The significant Postal Hall has been restored as a grand public gathering hall, with the majority of its original features conserved, including its coved lathe and plaster ceiling and impressive curved roof lantern. The floor level has been slightly raised and the travertine floor tiles are not original. A section of nineteenth century tessellated tiling uncovered during the refurbishment works, have been preserved in the floor at the southern end of the hall. Black glazed steel doors are modern insertions however the dark-painted toplight joinery is original.

Boutique retail uses are generally concentrated within the Treasury Building basement areas, together with a restaurant which opens out into an original inner western courtyard. Bagged render finishes to the courtyard walls have

been restored, and evidence of recently removed accretions and a partly demolished strong room have been preserved. The black steel stair insertion is a modern intervention. Basement retail tenancies have a 'deconstructed' interior aesthetic - floors are exposed concrete, plaster wall finishes have been removed to expose brick substrates and there are no ceilings. Services and conduits, which are neatly reticulated, are exposed to view. Original fireplaces and steel window shutters are still evident. The majority of the Titles Office basement level is given over to hotel-related wellness uses and a small bar tenancy occupies the northern end of the Titles Office basement.

At ground floor level, the eastern half of the Treasury Building accommodates quality food and beverage tenancies, private function rooms and, immediately adjacent to the Postal Hall, some boutique retail. A similar deconstructed aesthetic has been employed here as for the basement retail and restaurant tenancies. Original timber floors, cast iron columns, remnant lime plaster wall finishes and remnant rendered skirtings are evident within some of the Barrack Street tenancy areas.

A private members club is situated on the first-floor level of the Barrack Street wings.

Hotel related uses account for the remaining half of the ground floor area, and the majority of the first, second and third floor areas. A contemporary fitted-out fine dining restaurant occupies the fourth-storey rooftop addition. East of the Postal Hall, the Treasury Building ground floor rooms have been adapted as the hotel lounge, bar and restaurant. The restaurant, which occupies the early post office franking rooms in the eastern inner courtyard, retains an original trussed roof lantern and herringbone timber floor. The original Lands Department lobby and public hall has been adapted as the hotel lobby and reception, with the original butt-jointed timber floor conserved. Early decorative wall finishes and an old shoe, uncovered during the 2015 refurbishment, are on display in the lobby in a purpose-designed wall case near the reception entrance.

The 48 hotel guest suites are situated on the first and second floor levels of the Lands Department, the first, second, third and fourth floor levels of the Titles Building, and the first and second floor levels of the Treasury Building. Significant spaces, such as the original Premier's office and cabinet rooms, located on the first-floor level of the Treasury Building, have generally been retained and conserved as part of the hotel adaptive re-use. Guest rooms are generously proportioned, occupying two window bays in Titles Office and opening out onto the Lands Department balcony and Titles Office verandahs at the mid-floor levels. Finishes are modern, restrained and timeless, generally comprising painted plaster walls, suspended plasterboard ceilings with no cornices, and carpeted or travertine tiled floors. Where timber floors are extant, these may be assumed to be original. Corridors retain original plastered arches with stop chamfered or stopped ovolo mouldings, however the height of some arches has been modified to suit adjusted floor levels.

With the exception of some key public spaces, such as the Postal Hall, and in and around some of the entry vestibules, there is little evidence of original joinery in the building. Hotel rooms have modern painted timber panel doors and elsewhere original doors have been replaced with contemporary black glazed steel assemblies. Most windows through the hotel areas have been

replaced with modern sash windows. Moulded skirtings are modern painted fibreboard.

A number of significant original strong room steel doors and vaulted corrugated off-form ceilings have been preserved however throughout the basement and ground-floor level circulation areas.

### **Treasury Annex Building, 585 Hay Street (2015)**

The Treasury Annexe building is a five-storey contemporary concrete and glass mixed use commercial building constructed in 2015 on the site of part of the demolished R&I Bank building. The building directly abuts the Titles Office to the east, with its principal elevation and entrance facing north to Hay Street.

The building has full-height curtain wall glazing above first floor level, which is vertically articulated with protruding metal fins. On the Hay Street elevation, there is a stone clad connecting element between the main façade and the Titles Office. This element steps down respectfully at the upper level to meet the western wall of the Titles Building just below the underside of the decorative shelf eaves. This connecting element is also slightly set back in plan from the Titles Office so as to reveal the original brick and stucco return from the north façade.

A similar glazed and articulated façade treatment continues through to the west and south elevations, which visually interface with the Hay Street pedestrian link, podium plaza and nearby town hall. Connection to the rear of the Titles Office on the south elevation is managed in a similar manner as on the stone-clad connection on the north elevation.

Internally, the building has a modern fit-out retail food tenancy on the ground floor level, modern fit-out offices on the mid-levels and a naturally ventilated swimming pool and gymnasium for hotel guests on the upper level, which connects internally through to the Titles Office.

### **David Malcolm Justice Centre, 28 Barrack Street (2015)**

The David Malcolm Justice Centre is a 32-storey plus single level basement contemporary concrete and glass commercial office tower, constructed in 2015. The office tower is built over the site of the demolished R&I Bank building and demolished Treasury Building central wing. The main public entry into the tower is located in the northwest corner, with a staff only entrance situated on the northern side of the tower.

The building is raised on granite clad structural piers and has curtain wall glazing on all four elevations. Glazing is vertically articulated, in a manner similar to the Treasury Annexe building facades, with full height metal fins. The multi-storey podium lobby has an unusual rounded trapezoid plan, which is inset from the rectangular grid of the structural piers. This facilitates a high degree of pedestrian permeability around the base of the tower.

The building provides state-of-the-art judicial facilities on levels 2 to 16, together with office accommodation for the Department of Justice and the Department of Treasury on levels 19 to 31.

## **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Principal Australian Historic Theme(s)**

Register of Heritage Places

Central Government Offices

20

Place Assessed January 1999

Documentation amended: March 2021

- 2.5 Promoting settlement
- 3.2 Constructing capital city economies
- 3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages
- 3.21 Entertaining for profit
- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 4.1.4 Creating capital cities
- 4.2 Supplying urban services (power, transport, fire prevention, roads, water, light & sewerage)
- 4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places
- 5.4 Working in offices
- 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy
- 7.3 Making City-States
- 8.1 Organising recreation
- 8.4 Eating and drinking
- 8.10.4 Designing and building fine buildings

#### **Heritage Council of Western Australia Theme(s)**

- 107 Settlements
- 106 Workers (including Aboriginal, convict)
- 108 Government Policy
- 111 Depression and boom
- 308 Commercial services and industries
- 311 Hospitality industry and tourism
- 401 Government and politics
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 504 Depression and boom
- 605 Famous and infamous people

#### **Comparative Analysis**

All State capital cities in Australia have similar Government building complexes that housed a variety of Government departments in one location:

- Treasury Reserve Precinct, Melbourne (1850s-1960) – includes a large complex of government buildings including the former Treasury Building and State Government Office both in the Victorian Academic Classical style; Government Printer's Office, Old and New Treasury Building and Department of Agriculture Building, together with three buildings constructed in the late 1960s that illustrate the workings of government over an extensive period.
- Treasury Building, Brisbane (1885-9) - in the Victorian Academic Classical style; also includes the former Lands department building (1901), and a larger Administration Building (1914-22) in the Classical revival style.
- Treasury Building, Adelaide (1858-76) – in the Victorian Free Classical style, and the Government Office Building (1881) in the Victorian Classical Revival style and a two storey GPO building.

- Lands Department Building, Sydney – a substantial building complex in the Victorian Classical Revival style which includes the General Post Office, also in the same style (1866-74).

### Victorian Second Empire Architectural Style

The Victorian Second Empire architectural style is an uncommon style for places included on the Historic Heritage database. There are only 4 places in this style including *Central Government Offices*, all of which are on the Register:

- P0637 *Masonic Lodge (fmr)*, Cue (1899) - RHP
- P1307 *York Hotel*, Kalgoorlie (1901) - RHP
- P2148 *Royal Hotel*, Perth (1882-1906 - RHP

### Architects

#### Richard Roach Jewell

There are 24 places on the State Register associated with the work of Jewell who was responsible for the design of a large number of public buildings including:

- P1953 *Perth Town Hall* RHP (1868-70) – in the Victorian Free Gothic style;
- P2003 *Wesley Church*, William Street, Perth RHP (1870) – in the Victorian Academic Gothic style.
- P2100 *The Deanery* RHP (1859) – in the Victorian Tudor style
- P2119 *The Cloisters* RHP (1858) - in the Victorian Tudor style
- P2120 *Barracks Arch* RHP (1863-7)
- P4289 *Colonial Hospital* RHP (1853) – part of Royal Perth Hospital Heritage Precinct

#### George Temple-Poole

During Poole's employment with the Public Works Department (WA) from 1885 to 1897, he was responsible for the design of more than 200 buildings throughout the State. Notable examples of his work on the Register include:

- P0030 *Old Albany Post Office* (1868-96) – in the Victorian Free Gothic style
- P1933 *Cottesloe Primary School and Cottesloe School for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired* – RHP (1897);
- P2339 *Roebourne Hospital Group* RHP (1887)
- P02434 *Subiaco Primary School* - RHP (1897)
- P0483 *Claremont Post Office* RHP (1896)
- P2166 *The Perth Mint* RHP (1899) – Poole's last design in his role as Chief Architect of the Public Works Department

## Conclusion

Central Government Offices comprises a substantial complex of former government buildings that are distinctive for their fine design in the Victorian Second Empire Style, which was a comparatively rare choice of style for public architecture at the time, and were designed by two of the State's most notable government architects, Richard R. Jewell and George T. Poole.

### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

Considine and Griffiths Architects with Erickson and Taylor Historians: 'Central Government Offices Perth; Conservation Plan, August 1998' (prepared for Department of Contract and Management Services on behalf of Government Property Office).

### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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