



## 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)

- 6.2 Establishing schools

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

- 402 Education and science

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Kent Street Senior High School* is a modest example of the Inter-War Free Classical style, exhibiting symmetry in form, and broad effects created by the contrasting brick and render facades. Art Deco ornamentation has been introduced into what would otherwise be very simple exterior detailing. (Criterion 1.1)

The *Kent Street Senior High School* site is characterized by a large number of mature pine trees throughout the grounds, as well as an avenue of peppermint trees off Kent Street, that combine with expanses of grassed playing fields, to create a distinctive and pleasing environment. The grounds and buildings combine to form a significant streetscape along both Rathay and Kent Streets. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Kent Street Senior High School* was constructed to relieve the pressure on the few existing secondary schools in central Perth and demonstrates the growth of secondary education in the expanding southern suburbs of Perth from the 1930s, being the first secondary school south of the river. (Criterion 2.2)

Through the establishment of formal pre-vocational training and an aeronautics course, *Kent Street Senior High School* provides evidence of State Government policy changes in the 1970s to address the increasing

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Richard Apperly, Robert Irving, and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1989.

retention in the upper school of non-tertiary oriented students, an increase due largely to reduced employment prospects for school leavers. (Criterion 2.2)

*Kent Street Senior High School's* former students include prominent figures in Australian society such as Michael Jeffrey (Governor of Western Australia 1993-2000 and Governor-General 2003 to the present in 2004), and former Test Cricketer, Rod Marsh. (Criterion 2.3)

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

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

*Kent Street Senior High School* is valued by the local community, and by the community of its former students, for providing education that has been innovative, and responsive to community expectations, and in particular a number of specialist programmes, including aviation, cricket and tennis studies and CISCO computer networking. (Criterion 4.1)

*Kent Street Senior High School* is important in contributing to the community's sense of place, having provided educational facilities on the site since 1940. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

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### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Kent Street Senior High School* is representative of the design of government high schools by the Public Works Department of Western Australia, headed by A. E. ('Paddy') Clare, Chief Architect from 1930 to 1960. Specifically, the extendable lineal plan, arranged in a 'U' shape to enclose a large courtyard, was common in school design of this period. (Criterion 6.1)

*Kent Street Senior High School* is representative of the Inter-War Free Classical style of architecture, with Art Deco detailing. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Kent Street Senior High School* is generally of fair condition. The internal finishes show considerable wear, particularly the wall finishes and floor coverings.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Kent Street Senior High School* has a high level of integrity, functioning as a secondary educational facility since 1940.

## 12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

*Kent Street Senior High School* has a moderate to high level of authenticity. The addition of new classrooms and facilities over the years is consistent with the original design intent of the 1939 Classroom Block, and reflects the changing requirements of the users, and changes in educational trends. Significant changes to the fabric include; the extension of the circulation corridor through the corner classrooms of the 1939 Classroom Block to link with the new 1963 Classroom & Administration Block; the 1940 Manual Training building was extended in 1943; the Domestic Science building (1940) was extended in 1963; the Boys' Shelter Shed (1940) was converted to change-rooms in 1953, and the Girl's Shelter Shed (1940) was converted into a gardener's store in 1979, and then change-rooms in 1982. Both shelter sheds are now used for storage. The 1954 Manual Training building was extended in 1955 and again in 1965. The former main entry, articulated by the avenue of peppermint trees off Kent Street, is still extant but has been replaced by a new entry off Rathay Street, providing direct access to the new Administration building (1996).

Despite the on-going changes to the place, the majority of early fabric is still intact, particularly internal details, such as the joinery, the half-glazed timber doors and brick fireplaces.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Wayne Moredoundt, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Palassis Architects.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Kent Street Senior High School* comprises a number of buildings set in the school grounds: Classroom Block (1939), Classroom Block (1943), Girls' Shelter Shed (1940, 1979, 1982), Boys' Shelter Shed (1940, 1953), Girls' Toilets (1940), Boys' Toilets (1940, 1965), Manual Training building (1940, 1943), Domestic Science building (1940, 1963), new Manual Training building (1954, 1955, 1965), Home Economics building (1955), Classroom and Administration Block, with Canteen (1963), Science Building (1966), Library (1969-70), Faculty Building (1973), Pre-Vocational Centre (1979), Gymnasium/Hall (1979), Drama/Media Centre (1982), Aircraft Studies Building (1989, 1993-94), and new Administration Building (1996).

The area in which *Kent Street Senior High School* is now located was, in the early part of the twentieth century, an undeveloped tract of land on the western boundary of Victoria Park. By 1897, Victoria Park had been declared a Municipality and by the following year, had a population of 1,197 people. By 1906, the year after a tram service from the city opened, the population had grown to 1,500. In 1917, when the population of Victoria Park was 5,000, ratepayers voted for the Municipality to amalgamate with the City of Perth.<sup>1</sup>

A map from 1911 shows the present school site as part of Reserve Lot 3694, itself adjacent to a 1,000 acre tract of land consisting of the South Perth Park Lands (Reserve Lot 5988) and the Victoria Park Park Lands (Reserve Lot 5987).<sup>2</sup> While the population of the area south of the Swan River had grown substantially by the late 1920s, post-primary school students still had to travel to Perth for their education. Although community representatives requested the State Government to provide a local secondary school, a lack of available funds prevented this from being considered at the time.<sup>3</sup>

During the economic difficulties of the 1930s, there was also a decline in the size of the school population, due to a lower birth rate and the cessation of immigration.<sup>4</sup> There was, however, a growing need to increase the facilities available for post-primary education in Western Australia. In 1925,

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<sup>1</sup> Geoff Gallop, *Know your suburb: Victoria Park and East Victoria Park*, Perth, 1992, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Battye Maps #29/7/4.

<sup>3</sup> Janet Pearce, ed., *Kent Street Senior High School 1940-1990: The first fifty years*, Perth, 1990, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Enrolments in government schools rose from 55,197 in 1930 to 57,520 in 1933, and then declined to 55,885 in 1934, and did not again equal the 1933 total during the decade. David Mossenson, 'A History of State Education in Western Australia With Special Reference to Administration and the Provision of Primary and Secondary Schools'. Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1961, p. 312.

3902 post-primary pupils attended Central and Primary schools; in 1930 this number had increased to 5406; and, in 1940, to 6114.<sup>5</sup>

In 1932, the Director of Education, Wallace Clubb, had ordered a survey, which showed that 410 post-primary students, residing in suburbs south of the river, had to travel to Perth for their education. On 22 June 1932, local residents met with the Minister for Education, T.A.L. Daly, to stress the need for a high school in Victoria Park. This meeting set in train planning for the acquisition of a 15-acre portion of Reserve Lot 3694. By 1938, when resumption of a school site was almost complete, opposition from Perth City Council resulted in the chosen site being reduced to 10 acres.<sup>6</sup>

The main reason why the provision of new facilities for post-primary students in the metropolitan area had been neglected, in spite of a demonstrated need, was because an inequitable State electoral system strongly favoured rural voters. While a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly investigated state education in 1938, its members were preoccupied with the grievances of the disproportionately large number of country Members.<sup>7</sup>

There had been five year high schools opened at Eastern Goldfields (1916), Northam (1921), Bunbury (1923) and Albany (1926), while in the whole of the metropolitan area there was only one such high school, Perth Modern, opened in 1911. The next city secondary school- which did not become a High School until 1946- to be completed was Perth Girls' School, at East Perth, in 1936. However, another non-metropolitan five year high school was opened at Geraldton in 1939.<sup>8</sup>

On 2 February 1939, the State Government approved the building of a central school for post-primary students in the southern suburbs of Perth at Kent Street, Victoria Park, at a cost of 15,000 pounds. In the same announcement, the Minister of Education, F.J.S. Wise, also announced expansion of the Perth and Fremantle Technical Colleges, to meet some of the lack of facilities for technical secondary students.<sup>9</sup>

The amount spent on the Kent Street High School compares unfavourably with the expenditure on country high schools, built to accommodate fewer students. Bunbury, which provided facilities for 240 pupils, was completed in 1923 for 24,500 pounds, while Albany, which also catered for a smaller number of students than Kent Street, was built in 1924-25 for 19,000 pounds.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> F.G. Bradshaw, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', B. Ed. Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1953, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Mossenson, 'A History of State Education in Western Australia', p. 138; Kaye Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia 1912-1972', *Education Research and Perspectives*, Vol. 29, No. 2, December 2002, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Bradshaw, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', p. 6; *Perth Girls' School: An Historical Retrospect, 1847-1947*, Perth, 1947, pp. 31-40.

<sup>9</sup> *West Australian*, 3 February, 1939, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> J.S.H. Le Page, *Building a State: The Story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829-1985*, Perth, 1986, p. 458.

Plans of Kent Street Central School at the time of construction showed a school consisting of a single storey brick building of eight classrooms, with administrative areas and latrines.<sup>11</sup> While the building work was in progress, approval was received in November 1939 for the additional construction of domestic science and manual training areas (at a cost of 3,550 pounds), caretaker's quarters (600 pounds), and installation of school equipment and furniture (746 pounds).<sup>12</sup>

Kent Street Central School commenced operation at the beginning of the 1940 school year, with 354 pupils. Kent Street School was then only the third secondary school in the State- after Perth Modern School (1911) and Perth Girls' School (1936)- to not be built as an extension of an existing primary school.<sup>13</sup> The school, in its foundation year, was for Year 7 students only.<sup>14</sup> Parents were unhappy with this limitation- brought about due to the Government budgeting for only eight rooms instead of the twelve required- as year eight students would still need to travel to the City for their education. Parents also objected to the School's situation only 300 metres from a Perth City Council sanitary depot, from which emanated unpleasant odours.<sup>15</sup>

As the feeder areas for the new school included the suburbs of Applecross, Canning Bridge and South Perth, and as there was no direct transport from these places to Kent Street Central School, the families of the children so affected had to be advised as to which existing bus services would need to be accessed each day in order to get to school. Residents in close proximity to the South Perth ferries also would have preferred their children to continue attending City schools. In this matter, however, they had to comply with Government directives.<sup>16</sup>

At the time that Kent Street Central School opened, there were only eight main classrooms completed. The domestic science and manual training centres were not finished until 20 March 1940, while the caretaker's quarters were finished a week later. At the opening of the new school, there were eleven permanent staff members; a Head Teacher, a First Male and a First Female Assistant, five Assistants, two Temporary Assistants, and a Monitor.<sup>17</sup>

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- 11 'Elevations and Section', Sheet No. 3, # 1385/38, PWDWA 28827, 9 May 1939; 'Ground Floor Plan', Sheet No. 2, #1385/38, PWDWA 28827, 9 May 1939.
- 12 'Block Plan', # 1385/38, PWDWA 28827, 2 April 1940; Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 5.
- 13 The designation as a 'Central School' is misleading. This structure developed in 1908, when eight of the largest primary schools in the State had post-primary classes added on to their existing primary levels, allowing children to proceed to Junior Certificate level. Kent Street never had primary classes. Jenny Gregory and Lisa Smith, *A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia*, UWA, 1995, p. 20.
- 14 Although an Inspection Report for the school (31 October 1940) shows an enrolment of 123 boys and 191 girls, for a total enrolment of 314 pupils. Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 11.
- 15 *West Australian*, 3 February 1940.
- 16 *West Australian*, 5 February 1940. There is also a photograph of the new Kent Street school on page 12 of this issue of the newspaper.
- 17 Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 5.

An Inspection Report for the 1940 school year describes the early functioning of Kent Street Central School:

Kent Street is a new school commenced this year with eight excellent classrooms ... It has the thru course system, viz. Professional, commercial and technical. The two former courses have made definite and credible progress, and a very good tone and working spirit have developed in the school. The technical course is not satisfactory for two reasons:- (1) Metal work has not been available for the boys (2) a number of these children came from opportunity classes, especially in VII Junior Tech (Girls) and they have not responded very well to the 'lockstep' system. Project work, activity, and full recognition of individual differences are essential for this type of child. ... I wish to record appreciation of the skilful and enthusiastic efforts of the staff of this school to launch a new unit in our educational system. ... Splendid progress has been made with the school grounds, sport is well organized ... patriotic efforts are commendable ... with attention ... this should develop into a splendid school.<sup>18</sup>

In December 1941, the Government approved expenditure of 1,160 pounds for four more classrooms, two science rooms, a metal workshop, a forge room, a room for drawing, and additional lavatories. However, these extensions were deferred until mid-1943, because of restrictions on non-military activities due to the War. When these additions were completed, in September 1944, the total cost had increased to 13,500 pounds.<sup>19</sup>

During the period of the War, Italian prisoners-of-war were engaged in planting runners of couch grass on the south east and north east playing fields of the school. It was also during the period of the War that trenches were dug- to provide protection in the advent of an air raid- among the pine trees between the school and Berwick Street. Some time in 1944, Prime Minister John Curtin visited the Kent Street Central School and, in the course of his address, promised to have the nearby Sanitary Depot removed, as the intense odour from the facility was distractingly noticeable.<sup>20</sup>

It was also in 1944 that Murray Little- Director of Education, 1940-1950-announced that the Education Department's policy was 'to develop post-primary education units in the suburbs' and 'eliminate outmoded buildings now in the centre of the city.' In line with this, he recommended the construction of high schools at Midland Junction, Fremantle, Hollywood and Mt Hawthorn. To this list the Minister added Mt Lawley, South Perth and Como.<sup>21</sup>

In 1945, the Education Department prepared a plan for a new 'multilateral' high school policy. Under this plan, co-educational comprehensive high schools would be created which would meet the needs of all students within their surrounding communities. Into these new types of schools, the central schools and Perth Modern School would be subsumed. To begin this process, metropolitan central schools would be reclassified as junior high schools, with their facilities upgraded to high school standard. On 1 July 1946, then, ten metropolitan central schools became 'three year high

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<sup>18</sup> Report by T. Edmondson, Inspector, 31 October 1940, in Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>21</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', p. 67.

schools. Little, who was concerned about political reaction to the new metropolitan focus of the plan, added the establishment of five year schools at Merredin, Manjimup and Narrogin and three year schools in Busselton, Harvey, Bridgetown, Pemberton and Katanning. The reclassification increased immediately the number of metropolitan high schools from one to eleven and the number of metropolitan high school students from 634 to 5,361.<sup>22</sup>

While metropolitan high schools had been reclassified, there were no new secondary schools built in Perth between 1940 and 1950. There was an acute war-caused shortage of building materials, which was exacerbated by the need to house increasing numbers of primary students. Between 1945 and 1950, the Government spent 547,672 pounds on primary school buildings and only 27,059 pounds on high school buildings. Although the high school population grew by 2,353 students.<sup>23</sup>

The election of a Liberal-Country Party coalition government in 1947 was also a significant impediment to construction of new metropolitan high schools. Arthur Watts, the new Minister for Education, was also the Leader of the Country Party, and had as his professed aim the raising the material standards of all country primary and secondary schools to the very best available in the metropolitan area. So it was, that the 60% of the State's population who lived in the metropolitan area had access to one five year high school, entry to which required competing in two consecutive examinations.<sup>24</sup>

In 1946, Kent Street began accepting students for three years of secondary education. By 1947, there were 668 students at Kent Street, which placed a great strain on the existing facilities.<sup>25</sup> Students from the High School used several rooms at Victoria Park Primary School in 1942, 1948 and 1950. Overcrowding at the High School led to this arrangement being made use of as late as 1966.<sup>26</sup>

During the 1950s, the State's school population continued to rise- secondary enrolments grew from 9,180 in 1951 to 22,178 in 1958, while primary school enrolments increased from 60,844 to 88,448 in the same period. Although the movement of families with young children from inner-city area to new suburbs north and south of the river had left empty classrooms in Subiaco, Victoria Park and East Perth- which were available for use by nearby secondary schools- constantly increasing secondary enrolments meant that there was still a drastic shortage of secondary facilities in metropolitan areas, in the absence of new construction.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 68-70, 74-75.

<sup>23</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 75-76.

<sup>24</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 76-77.

<sup>25</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> HCWA Register Entry for *Victoria Park Primary School*, Data Base # 3459.

<sup>27</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', p. 82.



In 1952, Kent Street was reclassified as a five-year High School, from which students could proceed to university courses.<sup>28</sup> This move was a condescension to metropolitan opinion by the Minister of Education, who still intended to construct new five year high schools at Collie and Narrogin. Although initially the reclassification of Kent Street High School was not accompanied by a subsequent increase in capital works funding, a public outcry caused the Minister to act.<sup>29</sup> To accommodate additional students, five prefabricated Bristol units (of two classrooms each) were purchased (for 19,700 pounds) and put on site at the school.<sup>30</sup>

Following the redrawing of State electoral boundaries in 1948, to take account of population growth and movement, the number of metropolitan electorates was increased by three, giving the metropolitan area 40% of Legislative Assembly seats. In 1952, the Minister for Education announced that the Government would use limited funding to build more country high schools and junior high schools, rather than addressing the accommodation shortage in the metropolitan area. This policy played a significant part in the government's defeat in the subsequent February 1953 election.<sup>31</sup>

The new Labor Government was informed that the introduction of shifts for students at Kent Street, and other metropolitan high schools, in 1954- if the accommodation crisis was not addressed- would lead to considerable community disquiet. The Government moved quickly to make funds available for new secondary school construction. As part of this programme, in 1954 and 1955, new Home Economics and Manual Training buildings, in brick and tile, were erected at Kent Street High School.<sup>32</sup> In 1954, the Box Report into Secondary education recommended that all new metropolitan high schools be situated in the outer suburbs.<sup>33</sup> By 1958, new three year high schools had been built at Applecross, Belmont, Hollywood, Tuart Hill and Mt Lawley, and five year high schools at Fremantle and Midland Junction. There were now four five year high schools and ten three year high schools in the city and suburbs, compared with nine five year high schools, two three year high schools and thirty-one junior high schools in country centres.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gregory and Smith, *A Thematic History*, p. 42. Unfortunately, a lack of detail in this monograph means that it is impossible to be certain as to the number of 5-year High Schools existing at this date (1952). As early as 1924, however, there were five five-year high schools in the State. In addition, there were four technical schools, and seven centres at which technical classes were held, from which students could proceed to university courses. Gregory and Smith, *A Thematic History*, Appendix 6.

<sup>29</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 82-83.

<sup>30</sup> 'Site Plan', File No. 2091/50, PWDWA 32565, 19 October 1950; Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 83-85.

<sup>32</sup> 'Additions', File No. 1088/40, PWDWA 34524, 1955.

<sup>33</sup> Information from the 1963 *Report on Secondary Education*, pp. 11-13, and the 1969 Dettman Report- *Secondary Education in Western Australia*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>34</sup> Tully, 'State Secondary Education in Western Australia', pp. 85-87.

In 1957, there were 1,733 students enrolled at Kent Street High School. In 1959, the school became *Kent Street Senior High School*.<sup>35</sup> During the 1960s, *Kent Street Senior High School* underwent a series of additions to its building stock. In 1963, a U-shaped block of classrooms, a canteen, a typing room, and administration facilities was built on to the south west of the original 1939 Administration Building. The design was by architect, Kenneth Broadhurst, on behalf of the Public Works Department.<sup>36</sup> In 1965, the Manual Training Building was extended. In 1966, a new Science Building was built to the south west of the 1963 additions.<sup>37</sup> In 1969-1970, a new Library was built to the east of the 1963 additions.<sup>38</sup>

In the decade from 1970, the expansion of the facilities at *Kent Street Senior High School* continued. During this time, a swimming pool was built for the School's sports programme. In 1973, a two-storey Faculty Building- designed by Peter Overman and Associates for the PWDWA- was constructed to the south of the existing school complex.<sup>39</sup> In order to construct the Faculty Building, some of the existing prefabricated Bristol buildings on the site, used for classrooms, were removed. However, to the south of the Faculty Building, a row of these Bristol units remained until sometime after 1979.<sup>40</sup>

In 1979, a new Hall-Gymnasium was built to the south east of the Faculty Building, with a seating capacity of 1,000. The new building was named in honour of E.E. McGrath, Principal of the school from 1943 to 1956. The Hall was dedicated by the Minister for Education, G.S. MacKinnon, on 18 August 1979.<sup>41</sup> Another development in this year was the construction of a Pre-Vocational Centre to the north of the 1940 Manual Training Building. Also in 1979, *Kent Street Senior High School* introduced an aeronautics course, with 27 students in the first intake.<sup>42</sup>

The establishment of formal pre-vocational training and an aeronautics course were products of a change in orientation for senior high schools in Western Australia from the mid-1970s. This change came about in response to the increasing retention in the upper school of non-tertiary oriented students, an increase due largely to reduced employment prospects for school leavers.<sup>43</sup>

The 1980s began with the phasing out of Bentley Senior High School. Students living in the former Bentley S.H.S. catchment area were redirected either to Cannington, Como or *Kent Street Senior High School*. Transportable classrooms were again brought on site to deal with

<sup>35</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> 'Alterations and Additions', PWDWA # 41395, 1963; 'Block Plan', PWDWA # 28827, 1963.

<sup>37</sup> 'New Science Block', PWDWA 42530, File No. 1403/65, February 1966.

<sup>38</sup> 'New Library', PWDWA # 5189-03, November 1969; 'Plan and Elevations', PWDWA # 5190-14, 1970.

<sup>39</sup> 'Faculty Building', PWDWA File No. PW 431/73, Job No. 6/131/7, July 1973.

<sup>40</sup> 'Site Plan', PWDWA File No. 1786/69, Job No. 6/131/M1, 1979.

<sup>41</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> *West Australian*, 6 June 1979; *Daily News*, 16 October 1979.

<sup>43</sup> Education Department of Western Australia, *Alternative Courses in the Upper Secondary School*, Perth, 1980, pp. 1-3.

immediate accommodation requirements.<sup>44</sup> In 1982, a two level Commerce-Drama/Media Centre was constructed to the west of the Faculty Building. At the same time, alterations to the two Home Economics Buildings, and the Medical Centre in the 1939 Administration Block, were carried out. This work was undertaken by Overman and Zuideveld, Architects, on behalf of the Public Works Department.<sup>45</sup>

Also during the 1980s, a number of improvements were made to the Aeronautics programme at *Kent Street Senior High School*. In 1982, Kent Street purchased a used Cessna 152 aircraft for \$14,500. In 1988, an Aviation Studies course in Flight was introduced into the lower school. In 1989, an Aviation Studies Building was built to the south of the Science Building. Also in this year, a second aircraft was purchased for the use of the school. By this time, *Kent Street Senior High School* had attained an impressive reputation in the area of Aviation Studies in Australia, achieving a number of distinctions, nationally. The school was the first to teach aviation as an accredited part of the curriculum, the first Government school to own an aeroplane, the first school to own two aircraft, the first school to have flight instructors, both male and female, and the first school to build and fly its own aircraft.<sup>46</sup>

When student numbers at *Kent Street Senior High School* declined during the 1980s, greater autonomy in decision-making at the local school level, supported by the Education Department at this time, allowed the School to develop innovative programmes to attract potential students. In 1988, Kent Street began a special programme in cricket studies. Areas of teaching included skills development, umpiring, history, etiquette, captaincy and fitness. By 1990, there were 66 students studying cricket at Kent Street.<sup>47</sup> Another development at *Kent Street Senior High School* (in 1988) was the introduction of technology studies into the existing Unit Curriculum. This was made possible by the awarding of a grant of \$85,000 from the Western Australian Ministry of Education. An aim of the programme was to establish closer links between the school and the business community, and to raise the technological awareness of students.<sup>48</sup>

From 1997, a specialized Tennis Course was offered at Kent Street Senior High School. This course allowed students from all over the State to combine four hours of specialized tennis instruction and two hours of general physical education each week with their high school studies.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 63.

<sup>45</sup> 'Site Plan', PWDWA File No. PW 1023/82, Job No. 6/131/12, November 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, pp. 65-68.

<sup>47</sup> Other schools have since followed Kent Street's lead and set up programmes in volleyball, soccer, netball and hockey, prompting the Ministry of Education to standardize the accreditation of these units in study. Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>48</sup> Pearce, *Kent Street Senior High School*, p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> (Current) Kent Street Senior High School Information Pack, n.d.

Developments in physical infrastructure at the school during the 1990s included additions to the Aircraft Studies Centre in 1993-94<sup>50</sup> and the building of a new Administration Block in 1996.<sup>51</sup>

In 2003, *Kent Street Senior High School*, continued to draw the majority of its students from the immediate surrounding area. Students outside the immediate area included those from other areas south of the river and a small number of country students.<sup>52</sup> As of 2004, *Kent Street Senior High School* offered a number of specialist vocational programmes of study along with standard academic subjects. For country applicants to the special programmes, accommodation was available at the nearby Rotary Residential College. Specialist programmes include: Aviation (the only high school to offer this course), Aeronautics (also offered at Greenwood, Morley, Melville and Yanchep High Schools), Cricket Studies (also offered by John Forrest and Rockingham High Schools), Tennis Studies (also offered by Applecross, John Forrest, and Lynwood High Schools), Sports Industry Studies, Fashion and Design (the only high school to offer this course), Nautical Studies (also offered by John Curtin High School), Hospitality and Tourism, CISCO Computer Networking, and Business Technology and Administration.<sup>53</sup>

Former students of *Kent Street Senior High School* have become prominent in Western Australia, and in the wider Australia society. Amongst their number are the former Western Australian Governor, and present Governor-General, Michael Jeffrey; former Australian Test Cricketer, Rod Marsh; former Miss Universe, Kerry Ann Wells; Olympians, Margaret Burvill (Athletics), Brian Glencross and Don Smart (Hockey); and the Vlahov family (Basketball).

In 2004, *Kent Street Senior High School* continues to operate as a comprehensive co-educational public secondary school.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Kent Street Senior High School* is a complex of Inter-War Free Classical style brick and tile buildings comprising 1939 Classroom Block, 1940 Manual Training building, Domestic Science building (1940), Boys' Shelter Shed (1940), Girls' Shelter Shed (1940), Boys' Toilets (1940), Girls' Toilets (1940), 1943 Classroom Block, and post-war additions, including the 1954 Manual Training building, Home Economics building (1955), the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block, Science Building (1966), Library (1969/70), Faculty Building (1973), Pre-vocational Centre (1979), Gymnasium (1979), Drama/Media Centre (1982), Aircraft Studies Building

<sup>50</sup> 'Additions 1993/94', BMAWA5194-09, September 1993.

<sup>51</sup> 'New Administration Block', Tsigulls and Zuvella, Architects, for the Department of Contract Administration, ED 66-30, December 1996.

<sup>52</sup> 1983-2003 Census Data and 2003 student population mapping provided by Alistair Hutchinson, Information Officer, Department of Education and Training, 27 February 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Many of these specialized courses are also offered by various TAFE Colleges. (Current) Kent Street Senior High School Information Pack, n.d.; Additional information from Alistair Hutchinson, Information Officer, Department of Education and Training, 27 February 2004.

(1989), and new Administration Building (1996). The site also comprises two grassed playing fields located southeast of the buildings, either side of the entry driveway off Kent Street. Basketball courts and practice pitches are located parallel to the playing fields, southeast of the Gymnasium. Two grassed sports' ovals are located along the southwestern boundary of the site, behind the Aircraft Studies Building and the Gymnasium.

*Kent Street Senior High School* is located on the northwest side of Kent Street, bound by Rathay Street to the northwest, and Berwick Street to the northeast. Harold Rossiter Park, South Kensington School, and Kensington Bushland are located southwest of the school. Residential lots surround the school, on Kent Street, Berwick Street and Rathay Street. The site slopes steeply towards the west, with retaining walls and earth berms used throughout the grounds to accommodate the change in levels. Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria heterophylla [excelsa]*) define the boundaries of the site along Kent Street and Rathay Street and contribute to both street elevations.

The former main entry to *Kent Street Senior High School* is off Kent Street, and comprises a long bituminized driveway lined by mature peppermint trees (*Agonis flexuosa*), terminating in an informal parking area southeast of the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block. The Girl's Shelter Shed and the Boys' Shelter Shed are located either side of the driveway, at its northwest end, and overlook the surrounding playing fields. The Girls' Toilets, the Boys' Toilet, and the Library are located in the strip of land between the end of the driveway and the main school buildings. Two U-shaped blocks form the main body of the school, the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block to the southwest, and the 1939 and 1943 Classroom Blocks to the northeast. These classroom blocks form two quadrangles; both quadrangles comprise a combination of grassed and bituminized surfaces with mature trees. The northeast quadrangle also features six prominent date palm trees (*Phoenix canariensis*). The 1940 Manual Training and the Domestic Science buildings are located directly northeast of the 1943 Classroom Block. Further northeast are the 1954 Manual Training building, the Pre-vocational Centre, and the Home Economics building. The Gymnasium, the Faculty Building, and the Drama/Media Centre are located southwest of the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block and are physically separated by a dramatic change in ground level, characterizing this corner of the school site. The Science Building is located west of the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block, opposite the Aircraft Studies Building, both of which have a street elevation on Rathay Street. The entrance and car park off Rathay Street form the current primary entry to the school and Administration Building (1996). A covered walkway connects the Administration Building to the 1939 Classroom Block.

### **1939 Classroom Block (1939)**

The 1939 Classroom Block is a U-shaped plan brick building with a medium pitched, hipped tile roof. The facades are divided horizontally into bands, with a face brick base to sill height and smooth render above. The evenly spaced brick chimneys are also smooth rendered. The building has symmetrical façades, featuring a centrally placed entry porch, articulated on

both the southwest and northeast elevations. The porch on the southwest (front) elevation is smooth rendered with a lotus-pattern low-relief ornament over the door and window heads, and '*KENT STREET CENTRAL SCHOOL*' in Art Deco style lettering inscribed on the parapet. A concrete dais provides access to the porch on the southwest side. The doorway is heavily framed with layering planes of parallel lines creating a deep threshold. This framing is continued on the porch on the northeast elevation, although this is simpler, framed instead with planes of face brick. The uppermost parapet wall of the northeast porch is smooth rendered and features three decorative pressed cement panels with geometric patterning. Simple geometric patterning is also featured in the face brickwork porch base and steps. An open verandah passes through the northeast porch and acts as the primary circulation space along the inner walls of the 1939 Classroom Block and quadrangle. The verandah has brick columns and base, with a timber floor raised above the ground level of the bituminized quadrangle.

The 1939 Classroom block is symmetrically planned; the prominent entry porch contains a high-ceilinged entrance hall, flanked on either side by former offices and storerooms. Four classrooms and a lavatory form L-shaped wings either side of the porch. Vestibules are located at the return of each wing, providing access to the grounds southeast and northwest of the building. Corridors have been opened through the end classrooms, providing connection between the 1939 Classroom Block and 1963 Classroom & Administration Block. The classrooms are typically 7.8m x 9.2 m (22ft x 26ft), with timber floors (carpeted over), rendered walls, and plastered ceilings featuring decorative mouldings and ceiling vents. The fenestrations include multi-paned timber framed double hung sash windows with lower hopper windows and half-glazed timber doors with unique mechanical locks and closers. A brick fireplace with timber mantle is located in a corner of each classroom, and also in the offices. The fireplaces are no longer used and electrical heaters have been installed in front of them.

### **1943 Classroom Block**

The 1943 Classroom Block extends in the form of two parallel wings from the northeast ends of the 1939 Classroom Block, and forms the northwest and southeast edges of the quadrangle. The façades have been designed to match the horizontal banding of the 1939 Classroom Block, with matching fenestrations, roof and verandahs, making the extension virtually seamless. The 1943 Classroom Block is symmetrically planned and comprises six classrooms and a library, with access off the main circulation verandah.

### **1940 Manual Training building**

The Manual Training building is located northeast of the 1939 and 1943 Classroom Blocks and comprises an orthogonal plan brick building with medium pitched, hipped tile roof. The building was built in two stages, with a southeast extension added in 1943, evident in the variation in window types on the southwest and northeast elevations. The windows to the original (1940) classrooms comprise multi-pane timber framed double-hung sashes, while the windows in the section added in 1943 also contain

lower hopper windows. The form of the classroom block of the original building was mirrored to form the extension, thus the Manual Training building is symmetrical. The building was designed to match the 1939 Classroom Block and therefore features the same face brick and rendered walls, and Art Deco themes. An entry porch is centrally located on the southwest elevation and projects slightly from the main form. The doorway of the porch is framed with face brick, reflecting the design of the 1939 Classroom Block entry porch opposite, but with less ornamentation. The porch opens into an entrance hall and toilet, with large teaching areas on either side. Another two porches are located on both the northwest and southeast elevations, and two double doors are located at the far ends of the southwest and southeast elevations. These openings provide access to the stores and teaching areas.

#### **Domestic Science building (1940)**

The Domestic Science building is adjacent to the Manual Training building and comprises an orthogonal plan brick and tile building with a simple projecting entry porch on its southwest elevation. The Domestic Science building was designed to match the 1939 Classroom Block, and to be extendable in the future. The extension was added in 1963, as evidenced by the subtle variations in the colour of the face brick base and roof material. The Domestic Science building is very similar in scale and detail to the Manual Training building, featuring the horizontal banding formed by face brick and smooth render walls and an Art Deco inspired detailing on the porch. The Domestic Science building comprises two classrooms either side of an entry hall and office. A storeroom projects on the southwest elevation.

#### **Girls' Shelter Shed (1940)**

The Girls' Shelter Shed is located on the outer edge of the playing fields and comprises a rectangular plan brick building with medium pitched, hipped tile roof. The building was designed to match the palette of materials used in the main school buildings, namely red face brick and smooth render, although in this example, the smooth render is limited to a narrow continuous band under the eaves line. The southeast elevation features a steel grate door and a large opening with a roller shutter door. There is also evidence of another large opening that has been bricked in. Two small timber framed windows are located on the northeast elevation. The Girls' Shelter Shed comprises two rooms, both used for storage.

#### **Boys' Shelter Shed (1940)**

The Boys' Shelter Shed is located southeast of the 1943 Classroom Block, on the outer edge of the playing fields, and comprises a rectangular plan brick building with hipped iron roof. Timber framed windows appear on the northeast, northwest, and southwest elevations. As for the Girls' Shelter Shed, one of the former large openings on the southeast elevations has been bricked in, while the other has a roller shutter door. The Boys' Shelter Shed comprises two rooms, both used for storage.

### **Girls' Toilets (1940)**

The Girls' Toilets is located directly southeast of the 1939 Classroom Block, and comprises a rectangular plan brick building with hipped tile roof containing eleven toilet stalls. The building features a continuous high-level horizontal ventilation gap, with a rendered sill weathered outwards, clad with corrugated polycarbonate. Two brick walls screen the two entry doors on the northwest elevation.

### **Boys' Toilets (1940)**

The Boys' Toilets is located southeast of the Manual Training building and comprises a rectangular plan building with hipped tile roof containing eight toilet stalls, urinals, and two store rooms. As with the Girls' Toilets, the building features a continuous high-level horizontal ventilation gap, with a rendered sill weathered outwards. Corrugated polycarbonate cladding has only been applied to the toilet area, not the storeroom area (southwest end). Three doors on the northwest elevation give access to the toilets and the one of the stores; another storeroom door is located on the southeast elevation.

### **1954 Manual Training building**

The 1954 Manual Training building is located northeast of the 1940 Manual Training building and is very similar in terms of appearance, exhibiting the same face brick and smooth render walls and projecting entry porches. The 1954 Manual Training building comprises large teaching areas, storerooms, and offices, with two entry porches at either end of the southwest elevation. The building has timber-framed double hung sash windows and timber doors. As with all the other early school buildings, the 1954 Classroom Block was extended; a metalwork room was added to the northeast in 1955, and the main rectangular form was extended southeast in 1965. This 1965 extension is particularly evident in the colour variation of roof materials.

### **Home Economics building (1955)**

The Home Economics building is located northwest of the Manual Training building and comprises a L shaped brick building with medium pitched, hipped tile roof. The building exhibits the same face brick base with smooth render walls seen in the other early buildings, but features considerably larger timber-framed windows on the northwest and southeast elevations. The main entry porch is located on the southwest elevation, and like the 1954 Classroom Block, is a recessed entry framed by face brick. Two other porches are located on the southeast and northeast elevations, providing access to the classrooms. The building comprises an entry hall, coming off the main porch entry, with two large classrooms forming the two wings. A number of secondary rooms form stores and offices.

### **1963 Classroom & Administration Block**

The 1963 Classroom & Administration Block is a U shaped plan brick building, located southwest of the 1939 Classroom Block. The building was built with the same materials as those used in the earlier buildings, namely



red face brick and smooth render walls, designed in a contemporary post-war style. Regularly spaced structural bays characterize each of the elevations; these are defined by a distinct pre-cast concrete column & beam construction, which form a skillion roof. The roof is clad with corrugated compressed fibre sheeting. The bays have brick infill with upper clerestory windows on the quadrangle side, and brick infill with large aluminium-framed windows on the southeast, southwest and northwest elevations. A steel-framed flat-roof verandah with concrete floor forms the primary circulation space, and connects the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block with the 1939 and 1943 Classroom Blocks. The 1963 Classroom & Administration Block comprises staff offices, former administration area, seven classrooms, and the canteen.

### **Other School Buildings**

A number of other buildings comprise *Kent Street Senior High School* most of which continue the theme of face brick and smooth render facades, although they have been designed in a variety of building styles. The Library (1969/70) is located southeast of the 1963 Classroom & Administration Block and comprises a single storey face brick building with corrugated compressed fibre gable roof. The Prevocational Centre (1979) is located southeast of the 1954 Classroom Block and comprises a single storey face brick building with hipped tile roof. The swimming pool (1970s) is located southwest of the Gymnasium. The Gymnasium (1979), Faculty Building (1973), Drama/Media Centre (1982), and Aircraft Studies building (1989), are located at the far southwest end of the school site and are typically face brick with corrugated iron roofs. The Faculty Building and Drama/Media Centre are two storey and feature concrete access walkways to deal with the dramatic change in ground levels at this end of the site, forming both visual and physical connections with the early school buildings. The Science Building (1966) is located northwest of the 1963 Classroom Block and comprises a three-storey concrete framed building with face brick infill to the northeast and southwest elevations, and smooth rendered concrete on the northwest and southeast elevations. The concrete render has been painted to match the red brick and cream colour scheme. The new Administration Building (1996) is a single storey brick and tile building located adjacent to the Science Building, designed to match the style and appearance of the early school buildings but without the Art Deco themes.

In general terms *Kent Street Senior High School* is in fair condition, with considerable signs of wear showing in the interiors of the building. The distinctive red face-brick and smooth render aesthetic of the early school buildings has been well-maintained and new buildings designed sympathetically. The place maintains a high level of integrity and a moderate-high level of authenticity.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

*Kent Street Senior High School* is one of a number of state government secondary schools constructed in Western Australia prior to 1945, however there is no definitive list of the schools constructed during this period. J. Gregory & L. Smith, in *A Thematic History of Public Education in Western*

*Australia* (1995) contend that there were sixteen secondary schools operating in Western Australia prior to 1945, including the 1909 Perth Boys', Perth Girls', Fremantle Boys', Fremantle Girls', Claremont, Midland, Kalgoorlie and Boulder Central Schools, Perth Modern School (1911), Eastern Goldfields (1914:1916), Northam (1917:1921), Geraldton (1917:1939), Bunbury (1918:1922), Albany (1918:1925), and Collie (1924) high schools. *Kent Street Senior High School* is not listed in this document as existing prior to 1952. There were also other educational facilities, such as Technical Schools, Higher Elementary Schools and primary schools offering secondary education. The HCWA database lists some of the above secondary schools and a further nine secondary schools constructed prior to 1945, namely Pingelly District High School (1895), Southern Cross District High School (1895), Gnowangerup District High School (1908), Wongan Hills District High School (1913) Corrigin District High School (1915), Boddington District School (1920), Narembeen District High School (1925), Perth Girls' School (1936) and Mullewa District High School (1937). Kelsall Binet Architects, in *A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings (1890-1945)*, identify a further two Inter-War (undated) secondary schools, Donnybrook District High School and Pinjarra District High School. Neither the Department of Housing and Works (formerly CAMS), nor the Department of Education of Western Australia, list the construction dates of state schools in their databases. It would appear from the above that *Kent Street Senior High School* is not a rare example of a secondary school constructed in the Inter-War period.

*Kent Street Senior High School* is a typical example of a late Inter-War government school designed by the Public Works Department in Western Australia, and as such, may be compared to other high schools produced during this period by the same office, namely Perth Girls' School (1936) and Geraldton District High School (Main Building), 1937.

Perth Girls' School (fmr) comprises a double-storey Inter-War Stripped Classical style building constructed with a face brick base and reinforced concrete walls, exhibiting symmetry and monumentality in both its form and detail. The building was designed in 1936 by the PWD (with A. E. Clare as Principal Architect), also in an Inter-War classical style featuring Art Deco themes. As with *Kent Street Senior High School*, the building features a compact plan with lineal containing classrooms, toilets, cloak rooms and staff offices. Perth Girls' School stands apart from *Kent Street Senior High School* however due to its larger scale and aesthetic complexity. The Perth Girls' School is listed on the State Register and is comparable in terms of condition, integrity and authenticity.

Geraldton Senior High School (Main Building) is a double-storey Inter-War Free Classical style building featuring facades divided horizontally into bands with a face brick base and smooth render above. The building features Art Deco themes expressed by distinctive vertical elements and articulated entry porches. As with *Kent Street Senior High School*, the school has a symmetrical plan and is modestly detailed. Geraldton Senior High School is not listed on the State Register but can be compared in terms of style, time period and architect.

Kent Street Senior High School is representative of a government high school designed in the late inter-war period by the Public Works Department (WA).

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

Janet Pearce, ed., *Kent Street Senior High School 1940-1990: The first fifty years*, Perth, 1990.

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

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