



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)

- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 3.24.1 Providing medical and dental services

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 306 Domestic activities
- 404 Community services and utilities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE•

The Palms is valued by the Kalgoorlie community as significant in exhibiting the principle characteristics of a regional representation of Federation Queen Anne style of architecture in a picturesque garden setting. (Criterion 1.1.)

The Palms, in its picturesque garden setting, forms a significant cultural environment which contributes to the streetscape of Maritana and Piccadilly streets in Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 1.3)

The height of the palm trees and the dense foliage around *The Palms* make it a landmark in the streets of Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *The Palms*, a substantial dwelling in Kalgoorlie in 1901, illustrates the rapid development of the town as an outcome of the prosperity resulting from the exploitation of the Eastern Goldfields in the 1890s. (Criterion 2.1)

The changing use of *The Palms* from residential to a health service facility, is indicative of the growth and development of the town of Kalgoorlie as the major administrative and commercial centre of the Eastern Goldfields. (Criterion 2.2)

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

The Palms was built for Sidney Edwin Hocking, proprietor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspaper, as his family home. The Hocking family occupied the place from 1901 to the mid-1960s. (Criterion 2.3)

The Palms has been closely associated with the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, nurse education and the administration of health services in the Eastern Goldfields since 1966. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The gardens associated with *The Palms*, established in 1901 at the time of the construction of the house and maintained substantially intact throughout its history, provide an important reference and teaching site. (Criterion 3.1)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Palms is valued by the local community for its connection with Kalgoorlie's gold boom past, for its social associations as a garden wedding venue, and for its aesthetic appeal. (Criterion 4.1)

The Palms is valued by the local nursing and medical community for its associations with the delivery of nursing education and administration of health services. (Criterion 4.1)

The Palms contributes to the local and wider community's sense of place as a symbol of the 1880s and 1890s goldrushes, a period of prosperity, population growth and development in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The Palms is a rare remaining example in Kalgoorlie of Federation Queen Anne style of architecture in its original gardensque setting and retains a high degree of authenticity. (Criterion 5.1)

The gardens associated with *The Palms* provide a rare example of an extensive garden developed at the time of construction of the house in 1901 and maintained substantially intact throughout its history. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Palms demonstrates the principle characteristics of a regional representation of Federation Queen Anne style of architecture. It is a fine example of its type, set in a picturesque garden setting that was characteristic of the period. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The Palms has been refurbished in recent years. Regular maintenance through a management program has ensured that the building and the garden setting have been maintained in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The Palms was originally designed as a dwelling. Extensions within a few years of the original construction responded to the residential function of the place. Since the late 1960s, the place has functioned as an administration and training facility. The place underwent minimal change to facilitate the change

in use, and similarly could revert to a residential function. It has retained a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The original building, c.1904 extension and garden setting, remain intact. There has been minimal impact on the original fabric during internal upgrades of the kitchen and bathroom in the 1930s, and more recent refurbishment of the ceilings in the boardroom and meeting room, and the upgrade of services throughout the building. The place has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Heritage Consultant.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Palms is a single-storey brick and iron residence constructed, in 1901, with elements of Federation Queen Anne style.¹ The place was built for newspaper proprietor Sidney Edwin Hocking, and was enlarged c. 1904. The garden won the inaugural, 1904, Best Garden competition in Kalgoorlie, held to encourage use of water from the Goldfields Pipeline. In 1966, *The Palms* was purchased by the Department of Health for use as a Nurse's Training Centre and, in 1994, was renovated for use as the administrative centre of the Northern Goldfields Health Service.

In June 1893, Paddy Hannan and his partners discovered alluvial gold thirty miles (48 kms) north-east of Coolgardie. A camp, known as Hannan's Find, quickly developed at the site, with bough huts and hessian and canvas structures erected along the edge of the track from Coolgardie. Many of these structures housed businesses to serve the prospectors who flocked to the area. Later that year, William Brookman and Sid Pearce located gold reefs three miles south of Hannan's Find, at what was to become Boulder. On 4 September 1894, Hannan's Find was declared the townsite of Kalgoorlie. The track from Coolgardie became the main street and was named Hannan Street.²

Housing for the miners and others who came to the district consisted of similar bough, hessian and canvas structures, and was erected wherever there was space. One area that developed as largely residential was west of the Coolgardie track. It was jokingly named Piccadilly, after 'the busiest part of London's West End' because it was a quiet bush area. As the number of camps in Piccadilly grew the residents gave them names in order to identify them. Boards were put up bearing names such as 'Buckingham Palace', 'Windsor Castle', 'Westminster Abbey' and the 'House of Lords'. 'Buckingham Palace' was the home of John Kirwan (later Sir John) in 1895.

¹ Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1989, pp. 132-135.

² Webb, M. & A. *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of WA*, (2 vols), Hocking & Co and St George Books, Perth, 1995, p. 91; King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields: 100 years of the 'Kalgoorlie Miner'*, p. 15; Kalgoorlie-Boulder Tourist Centre, *Hannan Street, Kalgoorlie 'Our Golden Heritage': a heritage walk along Hannan Street*, June 1995, pp. 2-4.

John Kirwan worked as editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, which was owned by Sidney Edwin Hocking and his brother Percy.³

The Hocking brothers purchased residential land in the Piccadilly area when it was first released for sale in 1898. Sidney Hocking purchased Lot R13, on the corner of Piccadilly and Maritana streets, for £20.⁴ Percy Hocking acquired Lot R12, on the northern boundary of R13. Lot R11, was subdivided and sold to separate owners.⁵ When Percy Hocking died in March 1900, at the age of 38, Sidney Hocking acquired Lot R12 from his brother's estate.⁶ In August that year he also purchased the half of Lot R11 that adjoined the northern boundary of Lot R12.⁷

Sidney Hocking married Effie Fenn on 15 August 1900, and began construction of *The Palms* on Lot R12. They occupied the place in 1901.⁸ According to Sir John Kirwan, *The Palms* occupies the site of his earlier shanty residence, 'Buckingham Palace'.⁹

Sidney Hocking was born at Nairne in South Australia in 1859. After completing his education at Prince Edward College, Adelaide, he worked as a mining reporter in Adelaide and Broken Hill. In 1894, he and his brother, Percy, and James McCallum Smith, established the daily *Golden Age* and weekly *Goldfields Courier* newspapers in Coolgardie. They also ran a stationer's and newsagent's business.¹⁰

In 1895, the Hocking brothers purchased the weekly newspaper the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* from the Mott brothers.¹¹ James McCallum Smith did not join them in this new venture as he did not believe there was any future in Kalgoorlie. The Hocking brothers modernised the printing plant at their Kalgoorlie office and, on 14 September 1895, launched the daily *Kalgoorlie Miner*. Together with another brother, Ernest, John Kirwan and printer W. W. Wilcox, they established Hocking & Co Ltd.¹²

Sidney Hocking was active in public affairs, being a member of the Municipal Council in 1895, and from 1907, and mayor for two terms in 1910 and 1911. He also served as chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and the Kalgoorlie Racing Club.¹³ He was a founding and lifelong member of the Hannan's Club, and was also president of the Kalgoorlie club.¹⁴

Prior to the construction of the Goldfields Pipeline, which provided an ample supply of water for the town, gardens were not common in Kalgoorlie. Sidney Hocking began to establish his garden as soon as *The Palms* was built,

³ Notes by Sir John Kirwan in HCWA File 3427.

⁴ Land Grant 127 & Certificate of Title, Vol. 120 Fol. 136, 15 August 1898.

⁵ Certificates of Title Vol 122 Fol. 141, 15 September 1898 & Vol. 184 Fol. 104, 11 December 1899.

⁶ Certificate of Title, Vol. 216 Fol. 133, 10 May 1901.

⁷ Certificate of Title, Vol. 184 Fol. 104, 4 August 1900.

⁸ King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields*, op cit, pp. 75 & 78. No information is available on architect, builder or cost of construction. The Hocking family do not have any information on construction of the building either, hence the 'Circa 1900' date on the plaque attached by the front door of the place.

⁹ Notes by Sir John Kirwan in HCWA File 3427.

¹⁰ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 9, 1891-1939.

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² *ibid*.

¹³ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 May 1961, p. 8.

¹⁴ King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields*, op cit, pp. 75 & 78; King Norma, *The Hannans Club: The First 100 Years*, Hannans Club, Kalgoorlie, 1996.

planting palms (from which the place got its name) and cuttings from grape vines he had planted at his first home in Brookman Street. Sidney's son, Ernest Nicholas (Ning), described how his father watered his garden before the pipeline was opened in 1903:

My father was the Chairman of the Kalgoorlie Brewing Company Ltd in Porter Street and when he started to make his garden they buried a big galvanised tank in the corner of the yard in Maritana and Piccadilly streets. The condensed water that was used to wash the bottles et cetera, was pumped into a long, skinny tank on the back of a cart and a horse would pull that from the brewery and the water would be pumped into the tank in Piccadilly Street. Mum and Dad would bale this out into watering cans and water the gardens.¹⁵

When the pipeline was opened, the price of water was still high and Goldfields residents were accustomed to rationing their water supply. As an incentive for residents to use more water, the Public Works water supply section inaugurated a Best Gardens competition in the spring of 1904. Sidney Hocking won the competition in the Class A section (for those who employed a gardener) and was presented with a sterling silver working model of a pipe-laying machine - the type used to lay the water pipes from Mundaring Weir to Kalgoorlie. He continued to enter the competition each year, winning prizes in the individual sections for flowers, shrubs and vegetables.¹⁶ His gardener was Tom Cunningham. The competitions led to the establishment of horticultural clubs in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.¹⁷

In 1904, Sidney Hocking had *The Palms* enlarged to accommodate his growing family. He and his wife already had three of their eventual eight children. The extensions are claimed to have included a large bedroom with a nursery next door, and a new bathroom, toilet and septic tank.¹⁸ However, while the two large rooms at the rear, on the Maritana Street frontage, are constructed in stretcher bond brickwork, the bathroom is in English bond which matches the rest of the house.¹⁹ This suggests that the bathroom may have been an existing room which was then fitted out to take advantage of the continuous water supply provided by the Goldfields Pipeline.

In 1907, the remaining half of Lot R11 was added to the land holding and became part of the garden.²⁰

Sidney Hocking died on 29 January 1935. His wife Effie inherited *The Palms*, and their sons continued to run the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, with three of them, Sidney Jack Fenn (Jack), Percy, and Ernest Nicholas, becoming directors of Hocking & Co.²¹ These three men were also members of the Hannans Club, with Jack president for two terms (1973-74, 1979-81). Their father's interest in horticulture was passed on, with Jack and Ernest assisting the Club with gardening matters such as pruning the roses, and Percy taking unofficial responsibility for the management of the couch grass bowling green.²²

¹⁵ King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields*, op cit, pp. 75-76.

¹⁶ Photographs of S. E. Hocking's prize-winning garden in 1908, *Western Argus*, 1 December 1908, pp. 23 & 24.

¹⁷ King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields*, op cit, pp. 75 & 78.

¹⁸ King, Norma, *The Voice of the Goldfields*, op cit, pp. 75; Sketch plan, 1966, Health Department File, AN 120/27, ACC 2506, KL5.5. See supporting material.

¹⁹ Information provided by physical inspection.

²⁰ Certificate of Title Vol. 178 Fol. 62, 25 July 1907.

²¹ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, op cit.

²² King Norma, *The Hannans Club*, op cit, pp. 179-180.

Effie Hocking lived at *The Palms* until her death on 13 July 1962. Title was then transferred to Ernest Nicholas Hocking.²³ In 1966, the Health Department purchased *The Palms* for use as a Nurses' Training Centre.²⁴

Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital is situated on Piccadilly Street, directly opposite *The Palms*. In 1966, the Nurses' Training Centre occupied a galvanised iron building on the hospital site, and plans were being drawn up to provide a new building on the same location. The Kalgoorlie Hospital site was already crowded however, so the opportunity to purchase a suitable building nearby for the Training Centre was quickly taken up. The Training Centre was able to occupy *The Palms* without any alterations of note to the place, and the Public Works Department took over maintenance of the building.²⁵

In 1986, a commemoration ceremony was held at *The Palms* and the place was officially named. A plaque bearing the words 'The Palms Circa 1900' was attached beside the front door. Present at the ceremony were the Minister for Health, Ian Taylor, and Sidney Hocking's, great-grandson Lindsay.²⁶ In 1994, the nursing education and staff development programs conducted at *The Palms* were moved to new accommodation within the hospital grounds and the Health Department converted *The Palms* for occupancy as the administration centre of the Northern Goldfields Health Services. There were fears at the time that the interior of the place would be much altered to suit the new purpose, but the building has not undergone any major changes. A sketch plan, drawn in 1966 at time of purchase by the Health Department, clearly indicates this.²⁷

In 1999, the place continues as the administrative centre of the Northern Goldfields Health Services, while the gardens of *The Palms* are a popular venue for wedding ceremonies.²⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Palms is located opposite Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital on the corner of Maritana and Piccadilly streets in Kalgoorlie. The place is central within three lots, which comprise a picturesque landscape setting.

A steel framed mesh fence and hedge along the Piccadilly Street frontage, and a steel fence along the Maritana Street frontage, obscure views of the place from the streets. The site is level and is accessed by a pedestrian and vehicular entry on the left side of the Piccadilly Street frontage. The driveway has a blue metal surface, and the remainder of the entry area is grassed with a cement pathway leading to the front entry and around to the kitchen entrance on the rear right side.

The informally laid out manicured gardens are dominated by extensive plantings of palms and neatly trimmed plumbago hedges. Two prominent Parade Palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) are located on either side of the front entrance and a third is located further east in the front garden. Throughout

²³ Certificates of Title Vol. 216 Fol 133; Vol. 178 Fol. 62; Vol. 184 Fol. 104; Vol. 120 Fol. 136, 12 July 1966.

²⁴ Certificates of Title Vol. 216 Fol 133; Vol. 1272 Fols. 890-892.

²⁵ Health Department File, AN 120/27, ACC 2506, KL5.5.

²⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 17 December 1986, p. 2.

²⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 11 April 1994, p. 3.

²⁸ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 7 July 1997, p. 9. Note: The Health Department also owns 56 Piccadilly Street on Lot R10, on the northern boundary of *The Palms* (Health Department File 05-03-43).

the garden are approximately fourteen Canary Island Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*). There is a steel framed wire archway towards the rear of the driveway. The height of the palms and the dense foliage around the house make *The Palms* a landmark in Kalgoorlie.

The Palms displays the characteristics of Federation Queen Anne style and is a very fine example of the style. *The Palms* is sited in picturesque gardens, is domestic in style and asymmetrical in form. The roof has a dominant gable facing the street, and there are verandahs on three sides. Typical of the Queen Anne style, the place has bay windows, red face brick work with contrasting render and cavity brick walls with traditional timber floor, roof and verandah construction. Regional variations of this style include corrugated iron roofs and pressed metal ceilings.²⁹

The Palms is a single-storey brick and iron building with verandahs along four sides. There is a separate external toilet. The hipped roof is clad with corrugated iron. The immediate frontage is symmetrical in plan with a feature gable on the left front side and the kitchen wing recessed on the right. The recessed kitchen wing demonstrates the asymmetry typical of the style which is further evidenced by the 1904 extension at the rear on the left side (Maritana Street frontage). Bay windows feature in the symmetrical frontage and in the Maritana Street frontage of the 1904 extension. The left front bay features a rendered parapet below the gable front.

The bullnose verandah is supported by decorative square timber posts with cast iron decorative brackets and has a replacement timber floor laid with 75 mm boards. The verandah extends across the front and both sides of the original dwelling, terminating at the 1904 extension on the left and the former dining room on the right. A separate skillion verandah runs along the right side of the kitchen and returns along the rear of the kitchen, with the store rooms (former maids room and laundry) adjoining at the rear, and the bathroom similarly located off the verandah behind the former dining room.

The face brick of the original building is laid in English bond, and finished in tuck pointing across the front facades under the verandah, as well as along the front of the kitchen. The 1904 extensions at the rear, on the Maritana Street frontage, are laid in a stretcher bond.

The main entry is central in the symmetrical frontage to Piccadilly Street. The original stained glass in the sidelights and fanlights has been replaced with amber obscure glazing, and there is a four panelled front door. The central hallway accesses rooms each side, and leads to the 1904 extension at the rear.

The two front rooms each side of the entry have a decorative arched opening into the window bay. They each have a fireplace which backs onto the fireplace in the next room down the hallway. The original mantelpieces vary in each room. All four rooms and the hallway have pressed metal ceilings and decorative ceiling roses. The walls are plastered and have 0.300 moulded skirtings. The original air vents feature an intricate floral and bird relief design. The four panel original doors still have the brass hardware and scratch plates in place, in addition to more recent hardware. Each room has French doors opening onto the verandah. Airconditioning, suspended fluorescent tube lighting and up-to-date services have been installed throughout.

The second room on the left accesses two smaller rooms. Each of those rooms has ripple iron ceilings. The walls of the room on the right (former

²⁹ Apperly, R., op cit, pp. 132-135.

pantry) are tiled with white glazed tiles in a stretcher bond to door height around the room. An original double hung sash window is in place indicating that the rear wall of the room was the external wall of the original building.

The second room on the right of the hallway is the former dining room. It leads through to the kitchen. The kitchen has the original ripple iron ceilings, hard plaster walls with small plain skirtings, no scratch plates on the doors and a c.1935 fitout with additional c.1960s cupboard fittings. The stove has been removed but the c.1935 tiled chimney recess remains. The verandah around the kitchen is accessed from the kitchen and also from a door in the central hallway, on the right, behind the dining room door. The rear entry door at that position is detailed similar to the main front door, except the back door is a bifold four panel door, and the skillion verandah cuts across the fanlight window.

At the end of the central hallway is a decorative moulded archway which signals the entry into the 1904 extension. A short hallway on the left leads to the boardroom at the end, and another meeting room on the right (originally the master bedroom and nursery).

The boardroom has a bay window with plain arched opening. French doors, featuring 9 vertical panes of glass in each door, open onto the original verandah on the Maritana Street frontage. The room has been refurbished in recent years with new ceiling lining and the installation of air conditioning and services, although the original ceiling roses have been retained. The original mantelpiece has been retained around a more recent gas heater installation. A large opening with timber veneer folding doors has been inserted between the boardroom and adjacent meeting room.

The meeting room has a raised floor along the right side wall, and above the c.1960s cupboard fitout along that wall there is a timber framed sliding blackboard. The fireplace has been boarded over. Steel vertical sunshades have been installed on the exterior of the three windows along the rear (west) wall of this room.

Immediately on the left, through the rear entry door in the central hallway, is the bathroom. It has high walls, with several pivot windows with obscure glass high up the walls. The floors are tiled with original black and white ceramic tiles, and the walls have white ceramic tiles in stretcher bond. Circa 1935, and more recent, toilet and bathroom fittings are in place.

Adjoining the rear verandah, behind the kitchen, are two original rooms. The interior of the room on the right has been refurbished (originally the laundry). The room on the left has the original ripple iron ceilings and plastered walls and there is no evidence of the cellar entry. Behind the rooms is a c.1920s toilet constructed in brick with a render finish, concrete floor, and a curved corrugated iron roof.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Although no longer used for its original purpose as a residence, *The Palms* is in largely original and good condition, including the extensive gardens which are used as a wedding venue.

A similar residence, at 37 Lewis Street, Kalgoorlie, was also originally sited on the centre of three lots. It has had continuous use as a residence and has been occupied by an executive of Western Mining Corporation for many years. However, the land on which the original residence is situated has been

subdivided, and a new home built on either side, greatly diminishing the streetscape impact of the place and its authenticity.³⁰

A residence at 121 Brookman Street, Kalgoorlie, listed on the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places as Dr Sawell's House (fmr), is another brick and iron home in the Federation Queen Anne style. The place was originally used as a residence and doctor's surgery, but the surgery and waiting room were converted into a small flat pre-1944. In 1998, it was owner-occupied as a residence.

Other residences of note in Kalgoorlie-Boulder include three timber and iron buildings at 42 Moran Street, Boulder (date unknown), an Australian bungalow style house currently occupied by Kalgoorlie Skillshare; the Methodist Manse (fmr) (1898) set in landscaped gardens; and, 53 Lewis Street (c. 1898-1920), constructed in the Federation Bungalow style. These three buildings are described as being in sound condition.

13.4 REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research into the authenticity and importance of the gardens as a reference site is warranted.

³⁰ A photo sheet has been provided from HCWA file 3427, on this place.