



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

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)

- 4.1.2 Making suburbs
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 8.13 Living in cities and suburbs

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 605 Famous and infamous people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is a visible reminder to the local community of the substantial and decorative residences built during the Federation era in the Swanbourne locality. (Criterion 1.1)

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is a fine and rare example of a two-storey weatherboard residence designed in the Queen Anne style. (Criterion 1.2)

The gardens, redesigned in the 1960s by John Oldham, form aesthetically pleasing spaces that still contain some of his original plantings and hard landscape elements. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne was the residence for nearly fifty years, of prominent landscape architect John Oldham, and journalist and author Ray Oldham, and is now the home of Jan Oldham, cookery editor, writer and illustrator. John and Ray were well known Communist proponents, political activists and heritage advocates and, among many other achievements, Ray

* 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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Oldham is remembered for being a foundation member of the National Trust of Australia (WA), the Conservation Council of Western Australia and the WA Tree Society. (Criterion 2.3)

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is associated with the early development of the Swanbourne locality, and is a visible reminder of the substantial and decorative residences built during the Federation era. (Criterion 2.4)

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne contains gardens designed by John Oldham that demonstrate his philosophy of garden design. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is likely to contain archaeological material relating to the occupation of the place during the early twentieth century. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne has been the meeting place of various cultural and lobby groups associated with both built and landscape heritage for more than fifty years. (Criterion 4.1)

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne contributes to the community's sense of place as a visual reminder of the substantial and decorative residences built during the Federation era in the Swanbourne locality. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is a fine and rare example of a two-storey weatherboard residence designed in the Federation Queen Anne style. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Oldham Residence, Swanbourne is representative of two-storey weatherboard residences designed in the Federation Queen Anne style, constructed at the turn of the century. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

The Main House is generally in fair to good condition. The exterior posts, remaining lattice and balustrades are in fair to good condition, although many of the weatherboards require painting. Interior walls are in fair to good condition, although some lathe and plaster walls are in need of repair particularly in the north eastern corner of the kitchen, part of the stairwell and south wall of the study. In the dining area, plaster on the lathe ceiling has partially collapsed. The Laundry Building is in poor condition, and the Garage is in very poor condition. The Studio Block is generally in good condition. The Gardens are in fair to good condition.

On 25 November 2009, the *Oldham Residence, Swanbourne* was damaged by fire. The damage was mainly limited to one section of the western elevation of the Main House, with the most damage occurring to the upstairs bathroom, which has little original fabric remaining. Other areas affected by

fire damage to a lesser extent include the external jarrah weatherboards and window frames of the western elevation and the lathe and plaster walls and ceilings in the downstairs lounge room and the upstairs bedroom.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The Main House maintains a high degree of integrity. Some changes have taken place over the years, such as minor additions, and renovations. However, the original intention of the house is clear, as the place has been in continuous use as a residence since construction. The Garden has moderate integrity due to the modification of some areas and the introduction of new plantings and garden beds. However, the owner is currently (2008) redesigning the garden using the design principles espoused by her late father John Oldham.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The Main House has a high degree of authenticity, as the fabric is mostly intact. Externally, the house retains original verandah and balcony timber detailing, and doors including fanlights and stained glass. The guttering and downpipes, and the balustrading and balcony floors have been replaced, and the corrugated iron roof has been covered with pressed metal tile sheeting. Internally, the house retains some original lath and plaster walls and ceilings, some with cornices and roses, original joinery, including the dividing doors in the reception rooms, and original timber flooring. Ceilings were replaced in the kitchen, passage and entry area. A new bathroom was installed in a former bedroom on the upper floor, and the old bathroom on the south-west balcony of the main house removed. The Gardens have a moderate degree of authenticity, as some sections have been remodelled, and new plantings and garden beds introduced. However, some of John Oldham's original plantings and hard landscape elements remain extant.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document has been based on '11 Saladin Street, Swanbourne, The Oldham House: Conservation Plan', prepared by Erickson & Taylor for Jan Oldham in 2008, with amendments and/or additions by Office of Heritage staff and the Register Committee.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence refer to '11 Saladin Street, Swanbourne, The Oldham House: Conservation Plan', pp. 22-102.

Additional Documentary Evidence

On 25 November 2009, the *Oldham Residence, Swanbourne* was damaged by fire. The damage was mainly limited to one section of the western elevation of the main house, with the most damage occurring to the upstairs bathroom, which has little original fabric remaining. Other areas affected by fire damage to a lesser extent include the external jarrah weatherboards and window frames of the western elevation and the lathe and plaster walls and ceilings in the downstairs lounge room and the upstairs bedroom.

In November 2009, there are plans to restore the place as close to its original form as possible using qualified builders under the supervision of a heritage architect

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence refer to '11 Saladin Street, Swanbourne, The Oldham House: Conservation Plan', pp. 103-64.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information refer to '11 Saladin Street, Swanbourne, The Oldham House: Conservation Plan', pp. 166-76.

Residences in the Federation Queen Anne style

Of the 234 places on the Office of Heritage database designed in the Federation Queen Anne style, 62 are described as two-storey residences, including seventeen entered in the State Register of Heritage Places. Of these seventeen places, the following eleven were constructed between 1897 and 1911, none are constructed of weatherboard, and all but one are located in the Metropolitan Region.

P00128 *Earlsferry*, Bassendean (1902): of brick and iron construction, the place is one of the few remaining grand turn-of-the-century properties situated along the Swan River. The two-storey mansion has tuck-pointed Flemish bond brickwork, decorative timber verandahs, art nouveau stained glass, and ornately carved exposed ceiling members.

P00140 *Nulsen Haven*, Redcliffe (1904): constructed of tuck-pointed brick with stucco detailing, and a tiled roof. The place contains fine crafted staircases, plaster ceilings which imitate pressed metal, ornate fireplaces and mantles, wood panelled doors, arched lintels and window seat alcoves.

P00931 *Dalkeith House*, Fremantle (1897): a two-storey building of tuck-pointed brick walls on the southern, western and northern faces and rubble limestone on the eastern face. The roof and bullnose verandahs are clad with pre-painted corrugated iron.

P01878 *Byfield House*, Northam (1904): two-storey, brick and tile residence. There is a high level of opulence exhibited in the applied ornamentation and imposing tower.

P02080 *Colwyn, Claremont* (1911): large double-storey brick house in the built by Bunnings Brothers for Arthur and Evelyn Bunning. A terracotta pitched shingle roof extends over the verandahs. The house is set in large gardens extending to Freshwater Bay.

P02081 *1 Museum Street*, Northbridge (1897): of brick, stone and iron construction, the place is an attractive example of a pair of two-storey semi-detached houses, with a richly detailed roofscape, cast iron balustrades and fine brick and stonework on the front and return façades.

P02168 *Dilhorn*, East Perth (1897): of brick and tile construction, *Dilhorn* is located on a major intersection and is a landmark in the area. The place displays many innovative and distinctive aesthetic elements that are a hallmark of J. J. Talbot Hobbs's domestic buildings between 1890-1910.

P02236 *Meerilinga*, West Perth (1897): of brick construction, the place has elaborately decorated two-storey verandahs, circular spired turret, finely proportioned fenestration and unusual crown of slate roof tiles.

P02489 *Guppy's House*, Guildford (1897): a two-storey brick house with a bullnose verandah giving way to doubly curved roofing around the bay windows. The whole is surmounted by a relatively steeply pitched corrugated iron roof with elaborately and exuberantly detailed gables.

P15783 *Tom Burke House*, Northbridge (1898): with an iron roof, the two-storey limestone and brick terrace with a full width verandah to both floors is a significant landmark in Northbridge.

P16819 *Lesmurdie Group* (1898): includes a two-storey stone and brick residence, constructed on the site of and as extensions to an 1898 two-room cottage.

There are two double-storey residences in the Federation Queen Anne style on the Office of Heritage database of a similar construction date to *Oldham Residence*, *Swanbourne* that are partially constructed of weatherboard:

P00127 *Daylesford*, Bassendean (1900): a two storey residential building in the Federation Queen Anne style with brick to the ground floor and timber weatherboard to the first floor.

P00390 *Little Holland House*, Busselton (1909): a partial two-storey homestead mainly constructed of brick with the upper level constructed of weatherboard.

Oldham Residence, *Swanbourne* is rare as a Federation Queen Anne two-storey residence constructed wholly in weatherboard. There are only two comparable places, 37 Leake Street, Peppermint Grove, and 36 Devon Road, *Swanbourne*, which are discussed in the Conservation Plan.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

'11 Saladin Street, *Swanbourne*, The *Oldham House*: Conservation Plan', prepared by Erickson & Taylor for Jan Oldham in 2008.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
