HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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.

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Robin Chinnery, Historian, and Philip Griffiths, Architect, in May 2004, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 4.1.5 Developing city centres
- 4.3 Developing institutions
- 8.6.1 Worshipping
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 406 Religion
- 408 Institutions

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is a very fine example of the Inter-War Art Deco style applied to a church building. It employs a wide range of the characteristic elements of the style internally and externally and is a strong and simple rendering of Art Deco applied to a church. As well as a very fine and imposing exterior, the church features a very finely proportioned and detailed foyer and auditorium, with consistently detailed and restrained Art Deco decorative motifs throughout. (Criterion 1.1)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA,* unpublished report, 1997.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is a landmark in the procession of buildings leading into the City and from the terrace of Parliament House. (Criterion 1.3)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is one of most notable modern public buildings designed and built in Western Australia in the Inter-War period and exemplifies the aspirations and achievements of the small church congregation. (Criterion 2.1)

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth was built in the late 1930s, a period of considerable building activity on Western Australia following recovery from the Great Depression and prior to World War Two. (Criterion 2.2)

Architect J. L. Ochiltree designed the Sunday School (1933; removed) for the church and subsequently, in 1939, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was designed for the Church by the well known architectural firm of Ochiltree and Hargrave. It was built by acclaimed builders A. T. Brine & Sons Ltd., with high quality features supplied by leading Western Australian companies in their respective fields including Perth Modelling Works Ltd., Barnett Bros. (1934) Ltd., Millers Timber & Trading Co. Ltd. and Bunning Bros. Ltd. (Criterion 2.3)

On completion, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was acclaimed as 'a beautiful example of the modern trend in architecture'[1], noted for its creative design and innovative features, and for the excellence of their achievement. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is valued by the community of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth for its religious, social, cultural, and educational associations, and its interior layout and minimal religious decoration reflects the denomination's simple worship style and focus on educational activities. (Criterion 4.1)

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is highly valued by the wider community for aesthetic reasons, as demonstrated by its Classification by the National Trust of Australia (WA) and inclusion in the Municipal Heritage Inventory of the City of Perth with the recommendation that the place be entered in the Register of Heritage Places. (Criterion 4.1)

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth has contributed to the community's sense of place as a prominent landmark in the City of Perth since 1939. (Criterion 4.2)

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1 *Building and Construction* 30 June 1939, p. 3.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is an important part of the State's collection of Inter-War Art Deco style buildings, a style of building that was popular for a brief period, and whose numbers were not extensive in Western Australia. The application of this style to church design was uncommon, especially where it applied to both internal and external detailing. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is very fine example the Inter War Art Deco style applied to church architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is little altered by the effects of cumulative maintenance and changes such as the addition of shutters to windows are reversible. Some poor maintenance decisions have been made in the past, but these are very few and include such strategies as painting over the render at the rear of the building, obscuring its aesthetic qualities. Generally the place is very well maintained and maintenance has been sympathetic. Overall the place is in very good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth continues to function for its intended purpose, with small changes in the manner of its use and improvement to the level of amenity. The place retains a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The site of *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* has been altered by resumption for the construction of the Mitchell Freeway, early buildings have been removed, and a new Sunday school constructed.

The church itself has had numerous minor alterations, including the addition of shutters, some additional grilles, toilets added to the cloakrooms, modifications to the rostrum and organ area, sealing over the organ pit to provide more rostrum space, and division of the two reader's rooms at the rear of the rostrum. The underlying fabric, exterior, foyer and auditorium are substantially intact. Overall the place retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect and Jannine Cullen.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is an ashlar ruled stucco finish masonry church building with a Colourbond corrugated iron roof, designed in the Inter-War Art Deco style by architects Ochiltree and Hargrave in 1938. It was built in 1938-39, by A. T. Brine and Sons Ltd.

Following the foundation of Perth on 12 August 1829, the townsite of Perth was laid out between Mount Eliza and Heirisson Island, facing the Swan River on the south, and with a chain of swamps and lagoons to the north. Arrowsmith's 1833 plan shows St George's Terrace.[2] In 1838, Arrowsmith's plan of Perth shows St George's Terrace, the eastern continuation of which had been named Adelaide Terrace after the consort of King William IV.[3] From the 1840s, the area of land to the north of the original townsite began to be taken up for farmlets and market gardens when drainage of the wetlands made the fertile swamp land available for agriculture. By the 1870s, the city centre of Perth was consolidated on the grid laid out of Roe's survey, and there were about 800 houses accommodating about 4,600 people.[4] By this period, St. George's Terrace was well developed as the city's principal thoroughfare, in which were located Government House, the Supreme Court, various government buildings, banking and insurance businesses, churches and the residences of some of Perth's leading citizens. The Barracks, built in the late 1860s to accommodate the Enrolled Pensioners, stood at its western termination, a dominating landmark.[5] The Infirmary for the Barracks was located nearby, on part of the future site of *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*. It would later accommodate Hale School, and later again would be converted to accommodate administrative offices for the Church.[6]

In the 1880s, there was expansion northwards, and further development took place after the construction of Perth Railway Station in 1880. The Western Australian Gold Boom resulted in a building boom in Perth from the mid-1890s. There was considerable expansion of residential and commercial building in the areas to the north, east, and west of the city, and many of the large Perth Town Lots were sub-divided during the period.

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2 Plan of the townsite of Perth, J. Arrowsmith, London, 1833, reproduced in Seddon, George and Ravine, David *A City and Its Setting Images of Perth, Western Australia* Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986, p. 100.

3 ibid, pp. 98-99; and Plan of the town of Perth as drawn by Assistant Surveyor A. Hillman, published by J. Arrowsmith, London, 1838, reproduced in ibid.

4 Campbell, Robin McK. in Pitt Morrison, Margaret, and White, John (Eds.) *Western Towns and Buildings* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1979, p. 104.

5 Crowley, F. K. *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia from First settlements to modern times* Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1960 p. 79.

6 Jill Rees-Robson, fax to Philip Griffiths, 6 June 2004.

Subsequently, the area of West Perth to the south of the railway line, between Hay Street and Kings Park Road, was largely developed as residences for the upper and upper middle class, professionals and civil servants, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[7]

In 1912, the Perth Christian Science Society was formed by a group of students, which became the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth, in May that year.[8] The Church of Christ, Scientist, was based on the teachings of Mary Morse Baker Eddy (b. New Hampshire, 1821, d. 1910). After a serious fall in 1866, whilst reading an episode of Jesus' healing, she experienced a miraculous recovery. Subsequently, in c. 1867, she began teaching and practicing 'what she called a new system of healing', disseminating the teachings of her erstwhile physician, Dr. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (d. 1866).[9] Gradually, her own beliefs and teachings evolved, and she developed the theology and metaphysics that were expressed in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which she published in 1875, primarily as a textbook for religious practice.[10] Some of her students formed the Christian Scientists Association in 1876, which obtained a charter as the Church of Christ, Scientist in 1879. From 1883, the *Journal of Christian Science* carried her teachings beyond New England, and the National Christian Science Association was formed in 1886.[11] In 1892, with Mrs. Eddy as Pastor Emeritus, The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was formally organised in Boston, where The Mother Church was built in 1893-94, and dedicated on 6 January 1895.[12] Branch churches could only be known as the First, or Second, etc, Church of Christ, Scientist.[13]

In 1895, in the *Manual of The Mother Church*, Mrs. Eddy established the structure of the Church of Christ, Scientist, which she would continue to develop until her death in 1910. A five-member Board of Directors was to preside over the central administrative functions of The Mother Church, whilst the congregations that constituted the Church of Christ, Scientist were to be 'self-governing within the framework provided by the Manual.'[14] There are no ordained clergy, the sacraments are not ritually observed, 'and all but

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7 *Sunday Times* 4 August 1929, p. 24; and Erickson, Rica (Ed.) *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre-1829-1888* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1988, p. 3039.

8 *Building and Construction* 30 June 1939, p. 4.

9 Johnson, Allen and Malone, Dumas (Ed.) *Dictionary of American Biography* Vol. VI, Humphrey Milford - Oxford University Press, New York, 1931, pp. 7-9.

10 *Christian Science: A Source Book of Contemporary Materials* Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A., p. 6. Note: This book aims to provide an objective, informed account of the beliefs and practices of Christian Science. For a comprehensive examination of Mary Baker Eddy's life and the development of Christian Science during her lifetime, refer to the trilogy by Peel, Robert *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery*, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial*, and *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority* Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A., 1966, 1971 and 1977 respectively.

11 Johnson, Allen and Malone, Dumas (Ed.) *Dictionary of American Biography* Vol. VI op. cit., pp. 9-13.

12 Peel, Robert *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority* Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A., 1977, p. 371.

13 Johnson, Allen and Malone, Dumas (Ed.) *Dictionary of American Biography* op. cit., p. 13.

14 *Christian Science: A Source Book of Contemporary Materials* op. cit., p. 11.

the most spare symbols point to the almost Quaker-like simplicity of the Christian Science concept of worship'.[15]

In the late nineteenth century, the Church of Christ, Scientist, spread to Europe, where the First Christian Science Church was organised at Hanover, in Germany, in 1898. The Church of Christ, Scientist, has an educational purpose which informs all its activities, including publication of religious periodicals. In 1908, Mrs. Eddy founded the international newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor*.[16] By 1910, Christian Science, which emphasises 'Christian healing as proof of the supremacy of spiritual over physical power'[17], had become an international religious movement with almost 100,000 members.[18] Eventually, there would be some 3,000 congregations in 50 countries, including Australia.[19]

In its early period in Perth, the members of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, so-named in accord with the structure outlined above, utilised Shenton House in St Georges Terrace, moving to the Assembly Hall, in Pier Street, in 1924, when larger premises were required. When the congregation outgrew this premises, land was acquired in St George's Place, at the north of St George's Terrace.[20] Distinguished British architect Herbert Baker (b. Cobham, Kent, England, 1862, d. 1946) drew plans for a hall at this site.[21]

Herbert Baker had served his articles with his uncle, church architect A. H. Baker, before entering the service of George and Peto in 1886, where he met Edwin Luytens. In 1887, Baker entered the Royal Academy School in London. In 1889, he was awarded the Royal Institute of British Architects Ashpitel Prize. In 1890, Baker commenced in his own practice, before following his brother to Cape Town, South Africa in 1891, where he met Cecil Rhodes, who commissioned him to restore his home *Groote Schuur*. After it was destroyed by fire in 1900, Baker was responsible for re-building the residence which served as the Prime Minister's residence through into the late twentieth century. Rhodes appointed Baker with several others as architect 'to realise his dreams of a great and permanent culture for South Africa' and Baker's work at the Cape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 'brought the building crafts of South Africa to a high standard.'[22] Baker, individually and in partnership with Francis E. Masey designed various notable public buildings and fine residences, in addition to the numerous churches he designed as Diocesan Architect for Cape Town. In 1902-13, whilst in partnership with various architects, Baker also designed numerous private residences and public housing, schools and

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15 ibid, pp. 11-12.

16 Peel, Robert op. cit., pp. 372-374.

17 *Christian Science: A Source Book of Contemporary Materials* op. cit., p. 5.

18 Johnson, Allen and Malone, Dumas (Ed.) *Dictionary of American Biography* op. cit., p. 14.

19 *Christian Science: A Source Book of Contemporary Materials* op. cit.

20 *Building and Construction* 30 June 1939, p. 4.

21 Dolan, David and Lewis, Christine 'The Fairbridge Chapel: Sir Herbert Baker's Labour of Love' (publication pending, 2004).

22 Gray, A. Stuart *Edwardian Architecture: A Biographical Dictionary* Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., London, 1985, p. 97.

government buildings, including the Railway Station (1908-09) and Union Buildings (1910) in Pretoria, his 'crowning achievement in South Africa.'[23] Baker has been credited with introducing to South Africa 'a new formal vocabulary that influenced the architecture of neighbouring countries'.[24]

Whilst Baker was in the Transvaal, Lutyens visited him and designed the War Memorial and Art Gallery in Johannesburg. He recommended that Baker join him in the project to build the new government buildings at New Delhi. Consequently, in 1913, Baker returned to England to establish a practice in London and New Delhi, where he was associated with Edwin Lutyens in the design of various government buildings, and where Baker and F. L. Hodgson Fleming designed the circular Legislature Building and the Secretariat. From 1918 to 1928, Baker was principal architect to the War Graves Commission. In the post-war period, his notable designs included numerous war memorials, cemeteries and churches, including the Ninth Church of Christ, Scientist, (1934), Marsham Street, London SW1, whose restoration he would oversee after it was damaged by bombing in World War Two. In 1927, Baker was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture, and honorary doctorates. In 1930, he was knighted and later named Royal Academician in 1937.[25]

The only building Baker designed in Western Australia was Fairbridge Chapel, but it has not been ascertained whether this led to the commission to design the hall for the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Perth.[26] Although the latter pre-dates his design for the Ninth Church of Christ, Scientist, in London, Baker may have had some prior association with Christian Science.

Baker's plan for the site in St. George's Place was for a rectangular shaped building, 'with his signature elaborate timber roof structure', measuring 80 ft. x 50 ft. to the interior of the hall, with a porch, 'ornamented with tudor-style flat arched windows', and an undercroft.[27] The proposed hall is said to be 'reminiscent of the hall he built in Parkstown (Johannesburg)', which was later enlarged to become St George's Church.[28] This plan and his designs for its furniture, which are all held in the archives of the Royal Institute of British Architects, were not implemented.[29]

In November 1932, architect J. L. Ochiltree drew plans for a substantial Sunday School hall, to seat 600 people, to be built on the aforementioned site in St. George's Place. The interior of the main hall measured 80 ft. x 40 ft., i.e. 10 ft. narrower than that designed by Baker. Ochiltree's plan shows a raised platform for the rostrum, behind which the two readers' rooms are

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23 ibid.

24 Placzek, Adolf K. (Ed.) *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* Vol. 1, The Free Press, Collier Macmillan Publishers, New York, 1982, p. 131.

25 ibid, pp. 131-132; and Gray, A. Stuart op. cit., p. 99.

26 Dolan, David and Lewis, Christine op. cit.

27 ibid.

28 ibid.

29 Baker, Sir Herbert 'Perth-Australia): First Church of Christ Scientist', in Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, XVII/C.

located, an additional 10 ft. to the length of the building. At the other end of the hall is the entrance porch, with cloak rooms at either side of the foyer. There is also a small side porch. With the main porch and readers' rooms, the overall length of the building is 106 ft.[30] In 1933, the Sunday School was built, and henceforward services were held there until the new church, designed by architects Ochiltree and Hargrave, was built and opened in 1939.[31]

Jack Learmonth Ochiltree (b. Ballarat, Victoria, 1870) had completed his articles under Alfred Dunn, one of Melbourne's leading architects. On completion of his indentures, he travelled to Western Australia, and served in the Lines Department of the Government Railways for three years. During the Western Australian gold boom, he moved to the goldfields and opened a practice at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, which enjoyed 'marked success' through to 1900, when he departed to serve in the Boer War.[32] In 1902, on his return to Western Australia, he established a practice in Perth. In the period 1902-13, large buildings he designed included the Western Australian Club, and a 'very large' factory at West Guildford for Messrs. Cumming, Smith & Co.[33] In addition, he designed many large homesteads on pastoral properties in the North-West and in the Geraldton region. He served as a Councilor for the South Ward of the City of Perth, holding office as Chairman of the Works Committee.[34] In 1914-15, his design work included the new Fire Station at Claremont, Municipal Hall and Offices at Bayswater, a seven room residence at Richardson Avenue, West Perth, five two-storey residences at Fitzgerald Street, Perth, a warehouse for Perth City Council at Murray Street, substantial additions to the Union Brewery at Palmerston Street, Perth, a two-storey building comprising shops and residential accommodation at the corner of William and Brisbane Streets, a two storey building in Beaufort Street[35], electric substations in Perth, and the Wellington Hotel at Bunbury.[36]

In July 1938, Ochiltree and Hargrave drew plans for the proposed *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*. The block Plan shows the site with the pre-existing buildings that fronted George Street which were to be demolished to make way for the new church. Adjacent to the right of way is the Sunday School, and farther east, a brick building to which alterations

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30 Christ Scientist Sunday School, J. L. Ochiltree, Public Health Department SROWA Cons. 5094 Item 403 (1933), November 1932.

31 *Building and Construction* 30 June 1939, p. 4; and *West Australian* 26 June 1939, p. 15.

32 Battye, J. S. *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia* (The Cyclopedia Company, Perth, 1912-13) Vol. 1, p. 542.

33 ibid.

34 ibid.

35 App. 678/14, Building Licences Issued November 1912-October 1915, City of Perth, 7 May 1914, p. 26; and *The W. A. Building, Mining and Engineering Journal*, 4 April and 6 June 1914, p. 20 and p. 17 respectively. Note: The building at Beaufort St. was at Y66. It is not known whether it is extant in 2004. The building at William Street is extant and has been Entered in the State Register of Heritage Places.

36 Kelly, I. 'Architectural Biography 1890-1915' Research undertaken for the Degree of Master of Arts, University of Western Australia, 1991, n.p.; and Pitt Morrison, Margaret 'Immigrant Architects in Western Australia 1885-1905', 1983, n.p.

were to be made for conversion to offices and administrative uses. The plan for the proposed church shows steps from ground level to the main entry which opens into the foyer, and at the side of the building steps to a patio which also opens to the foyer. At one side of the foyer, which opens to the auditorium, are the ladies and men's cloak rooms and at the other an area for literature sales, from which the cleaner's store opens. At the farther end of the auditorium is the rostrum, with a circular passage behind from which open the two readers' rooms. At either side of the rostrum there are double doors leading from the church.[37]

In February 1939, the contract to build *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was awarded to well known builders A. T. Brine and Sons Ltd. at a cost of £.776.[38] Their previous work included the State War Memorial, *W. A. Trustees Buildings, St. Mary's Cathedral, Gledden Buildings*, St. Anne's Hospital, Mount Lawley, St. Mary's Church of England, South Perth, and First Terminal Wheat Silos in Western Australia at Bunbury.[39]

By April 1939, building of the new church was well advanced, as evident in a photograph showing it under construction, at what was then known as 'St. George's place'.[40]

In June 1939, the new church was completed. It was featured in an article in *Building and Construction*, under the headline

'MODERN TREND IN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

New Building for First Church of Christ Scientist, Perth'

and the accompanying photograph bore the caption 'View of the exterior of the edifice … showing its modern and imposing design.'[41] The place was 'a beautiful example of the modern trend in architecture', in which 'a number of features have been introduced that make the building one of the city's most imposing structures', and bore 'every evidence of intimate attention to design and lay-out.'[42] The new building was described as follows:

> The exterior treatment is in stucco- imitation stone- and gives a pleasing appearance, while similarly modern lines have been followed in the interior treatment.
>
> This beautiful fane stands at the intersection of St. George's-terrace and George-street, and contains a dignified foyer, entrance to which is gained through an imposing portico. There is seen the beautiful parquetry floor, in which local jarrah and she-oak have been used by the expert crafts-men of Bunning Bros. Ltd. to bring an air of dignity and charm to this section of the building.
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> Foyer and church interior have been carried out in waltex by Waltex Products Ltd., who have been responsible for a considerable quantity of plastic decorative work in this State during the past eight years.

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37 Ochiltree and Hargrave, Chartered Architects, Proposed First Church of Christ Scientist, July 1938.

38 *Building and Construction* 10 February, 28 April and 30 June 1939.

39 ibid, 30 June 1939, p. 5.

40 ibid, 28 April 1939, p. 5.

41 ibid, 30 June 1939, p. 3.

42 ibid.

> The walls are in pale cream, while the walls of the semi-circular rostrum have been similarly treated, being relieved with bands of white. They have been beautified with artistic grills (behind which are amplifiers from the organ) and with modern light fittings in matching tonings.[43]

Under the headline 'Splendid Lighting' it was reported

> Special attention has been paid to natural lighting, and in this regard deep gravé work is seen in the windows in a most pleasing style. This is a type of sand-blasted plate-glass carrying designs in keeping with the remainder of the interior treatment, and represents First church to be so treated in this State.[44]

Deep Gravé Sand Blast Glass was 'the latest type of glass decoration', and the work for the new church, by Barnett Bros. (1934) Ltd., was 'the biggest contract ever carried out in Western Australia for this type of work'.[45]

Artificial lighting had been carefully considered also, and electrical contractor, J. L. Mattinson, achieved 'excellent effect' with the installation of lighting that was 'in fitting and harmony with the remainder of the interior'.[46] The lighting included 'two handsome wall brackets' at the main entrance; 'a handsome Haloe fitting in the centre' of the foyer, 'supported by brackets to match on the walls', and a replica of the Haloe fitting in the foyer entrance.[47] There were 15 laylights whose glasses were 'treated with a deep gravé line forming a margin which gives the glasses an effect in keeping with the side windows in the main body of the church, along with '15 curved glass wall brackets', in tonings to match the general colour of the interior.[48] The sand-blasting treatment was also repeated on the doors, and the 'effectiveness and artistry' of the whole was praised.[49]

With a view to the future, there was provision for installation of an electric organ. The church provided accommodation for 650 people and more than 200 yards of carpet were laid to the aisles. It was noted that 'every possible facility in keeping with modern architecture has been added, even to the sunken recess for the organ'.[50] There was 'that pleasing combination of dignity, simplicity and homeliness' in the new building, 'with the modern touch in the design and fittings'.[51] It was 'the achievement of an ideal, a structure that is in keeping with a modern city and a growing community, a place of beauty in which to worship.'[52]

The timber parquetry flooring for the new church was supplied by Bunning Bros. Ltd., whilst Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd. supplied jarrah timber flooring, skirtings, architraves etc., and G. Campagnoli was responsible for all terrazzo work. The well known firm of Perth Modelling Works Ltd. manufactured the 'Plasterite ' ceilings, and were also responsible for the

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43 ibid.
44 ibid. p. 4.
45 ibid. p. 6.
46 Ibid. p. 4.
47 ibid.
48 ibid.
49 ibid.
50 ibid.
51 ibid.
52 ibid.

engraved plaques and wall grilles. Painting was carried out by Wood and Son. The aforementioned Mr. Mattinson was responsible for the design and construction of the 'modern electrical installation', in conjunction with the architects.[53]

At the rear of the new church, as proposed, the earlier building had been converted to administrative offices.[54]

On 25 June 1939, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was opened 'Without any ceremony' in the presence of a large congregation.[55] A newspaper report noted that 'Simplicity is the keynote of the design' of the building 'which is reminiscent in its architecture of some of the churches of the denomination in the United States.'[56] Noted features were the 'large hall, with a parquetry floor in sheoak', the 'cream and white' treatment to the interior of the church, 'Massive jarrah pews and heavy carpeting down the aisles' which had 'an impressive effect', and the 'clear lighting from large side windows.'[57] A photograph shows some of the congregation outside the newly opened church.[58] Since mid-1939, regular church services have been held at *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*.[59]

In September 1939, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was featured in *The Architect*, with the accompanying photographs showing the front and side facades, the detail of the main entrance, the entrance foyer with its parquetry floor and ceiling detail, and the Rostrum in the Auditorium, showing the detail of the organ grilles and engraved plaques at either side of the Rostrum.[60] This article provides a description of notable features of the place, including the layout of the interior:

> The Main Entrance is off St. George's Place, leading into a large Foyer with men's and ladies' cloak rooms off same on west side, and with two ushers' rooms and a cleaner's room off same on east side. The Foyer contains the "literature sales" counter, constructed of Queensland Maple plywood.
>
> Two large pairs of doors glazed full with sand blasted gravé glass, give access to the Auditorium or church from the Foyer, while at the northern end of the Auditorium is situated the raised dais or Rostrum, semi-circular in form, with organ console pit immediately in front.
>
> A semi-circular passage behind the Rostrum, leads to the two readers' rooms and the soloists room. The two readers enter the Rostrum at the same time direct from the passage through separate doors in close proximity to their respective rooms.
>
> The Auditorium seats 560. The Pews are constructed with solid jarrah ends, flush panel jarrah plywood backs, the plywood pressed to a framed softwood sore. Separate contract for pews was let to Hearn Bros. and Stead, £ 800 approximately.
>
> The facades were rendered in cement, using coloured cements and graded sands blocked out to obtain a colour blend stone effect.

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53 ibid. pp. 4-6.

54 Ibid. p. 4.

55 *West Australian* 26 June 1939, p. 15.

56 ibid.

57 ibid.

58 ibid. p. 16.

59 *Building and Construction* op. cit

60 *The Architect* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 1939, pp. 20-22.

> A sheoak parquetry floor was laid in the Foyer relieved with jarrah margins; all other floors of jarrah, sanded and waxed. The Auditorium floor laid with a full to the Rostrum. Ceilings throughout of fibrous plaster tinted light ivory, walls of Foyer and Auditorium finished in a deeper ivory scrumble finish of fairly heavy texture. Texts on either side of Rostrum executed in fibrous plaster with incised, tinted letters, organ grilles on each side of Texts. All windows glazed with one quarter inch sand blasted gravé glass. Height, floor to ceiling of Auditorium and Foyer, 22'.[61]

Located at the high point of the western end of St. George's Terrace, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* became a well-known city landmark, part of a notable precinct that included the Barracks, of which only the Arch would remain after the wings were demolished in the late 1960s, and Parliament House.

A Sewerage plan shows *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* in St Georges Place. At the north-eastern corner of the lot are adjoining brick buildings. On the western side of the southern portion of the latter is a verandah, which returns along the southern portion of the northern brick building. The portion of the building at the north side is shown to be of timber construction, with a smaller area at the west side that may be an entry porch.[62]

In 1950, a photograph shows *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* had undergone no major change since its completion in 1939.[63]

On 13 November 1959, the Narrows Bridge and Kwinana were officially opened. Following the bridge's completion, planning commenced for the interchange and development of the road system required for the northerly extension of the freeway and that leading to the city.[64] Land resumed for the new road system included 'a significant portion' of *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*'s land at St. George's Place, and resulted in the removal of the 1933 Sunday School and the building to the rear, originally the Infirmary for the Barracks.[65] Thus the development of the freeway system considerably altered the immediate context of the Church, and led to the building of a new hall and administrative offices.

In August 1965, architects Oldham, Boas, Ednie-Brown & Partners drew plans for a new two storey church hall. Sheet No. 1, the site plan, shows the portion of land resumed by Main Roads at St. George's Place, the existing church building with new toilets at the south-west corner, off the cloak rooms, and the proposed new church hall. Sheet No. 2 shows the upper floor of the hall and the detail of the aforementioned new men's and women's toilets, and Sheet No. 3 shows the lower floor of the new building which was designed to accommodate offices.[66] These plans were duly implemented.

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61 ibid, p. 21.

62 Metropolitan Sewerage City of Perth SROWA Cons. 4156 Item 13A.

63 Perth Church of Christian Scientists, June 1950. Battye Library Pictorial Collection 816B/C4027.

64 *Western Roads* November 1984, pp. 4-6.

65 Jill Rees-Robson, fax to Philip Griffiths, 16 June 2004.

66 First Church of Christ Scientist Hall, Oldham, Boas, Ednie-Brown & Partners, Public Health Department SROWA Cons. 5094 Item 2418 (1965) Sheet Nos. 1 and 2, 13 August 1965.

On 11 August 1967, a new Certificate of Title was issued for portion of Perth Town Lot H54 being Lot 12 on Diagram 7441, two roods and seven tenths perches in area. The easement, granted to the Crown in 1906, for the purpose of a sewer beneath the surface as per the attached diagram, continued to be registered on the Certificate.[67]

There were a number of changes to the place in the late twentieth century. The readers' rooms were altered to provide toilet and wash-room facilities for them. In the rostrum area, a new organ was installed, altering the appearance of this area, which was projected forward over the original organ pit. The decorative grills at either side of the rostrum (shown in earlier photographs) were removed. Some internal light fittings were changed; wall sconces in the auditorium were replaced; and the original exterior Art Deco light fittings were removed. The original timber literature desk was removed from the foyer. At the eastern side, the external rendered walls were painted. Security grilles were fitted to some windows and the rear entrance to the Church, and the building was re-roofed.[68]

In March 2001, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* was included in the Municipal Heritage Inventory for the City of Perth, which recommended the place be considered for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places.[69]

In March 2002, the place was assessed by National Trust of Australia (WA), and subsequently Classified on 8 July 2002.[70]

In 2004, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* continues in use as a church.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is an ashlar ruled stucco finish masonry church building with a Colourbond corrugated iron roof, designed in the Inter-War Art Deco style[71] by architects Ochiltree and Hargrave in 1938. It was built in 1938-39, by A. T. Brine and Sons Ltd.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is located on the northern side of the junction of St. Georges Terrace, Malcolm Street and Elder Street. Church Row runs behind the property, alongside other associated church buildings to the northern part of the site. Adjacent to Maynard House, the *Church* sits on one third of this intersection. It is diagonally opposite the Barracks Arch with views across the Mitchell Freeway, which streams past below the site proper, to Parliament House. On the remaining third of the intersection is the Manansaltse building and Eric Silbert Gardens.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth is conspicuous in its context, due to the topography that surrounds the place and the location of the site within the Parliament House Precinct. The construction of the Mitchell freeway and height restrictions within the Parliament House precinct allow *First Church*

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67 Certificate of Title Vol. 38 Fol. 51A.

68 Jill Rees-Robson op. cit.

69 HCWA Database 11595.

70 First Church of Christian Scientist National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment, March 2002.

71 Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present,* Angus and Roberston, North Ryde, 1989. pp.188-191.

of Christ, Scientist, Perth to be a visually prominent building. It is an important land mark on the procession towards the city, along with the Barracks Arch and is a prominent feature in the vista from the terrace of Parliament House.

The site of the church includes carparking, the Sunday school and *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth.* Most of the landscaping to the west and south of the place is located on public land.

The setting includes irregular patterns of meandering concrete block paths, lawns and plantings. Established trees include White Gum *(Eucalyptus viminalis)*, Western Tea Myrtle/ Pink Melaleuca *(Melaleuca nesophila),* Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*) and Lily-of-the-valley tree *(Pieris japonica)*, with further younger, smaller plantings set in occasional garden beds that generally lie in the lower areas of the gently undulating, lawned grounds. Four park benches are aligned with the building lines and are close to the entrance.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth comprises strongly geometric elevations that are ashlar ruled stucco, coloured to give the appearance of Donnybrook sandstone. The general form of the place appears massive, with the 'stone' surfaces stepped within or outside the surface plane of the elevation. Such articulation is continued to the carved geometric details. A notable detail is the line of continuous carving that ribbons around the top of each façade. Undulating parallel, vertical lines are set between either slightly raised or flat lines of relief, hemming in and limiting the vertical extension of detail.

The building is formed about an essentially symmetrical (rectangular) plan that includes a rectangular shaped main entrance set perpendicular to the auditorium, rostrum and readers' rooms. The place is set at a diagonal to the surrounding grid streets, which extend into the CBD, thus addressing the triple street junction.

The dominant feature of *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* is the main entrance that diagonally addresses the junction of the three streets. Taller than the auditorium that runs along this elevation, the main entrance is formed as a large monumental rectangular portal, suggesting a tower, that is approached across brick paving that links the perimeter footpath with entry steps. Centralized double gates are set deep within the lower half of this part of the façade. These gates are set into stepped back 'stonework', offset within the outside entry frame, that retreats back in through the thickness of the wall, perhaps suggesting massive construction. The gates and its recesses are raised three steps above the ground and form the lower half of this portal section of the elevation. While relatively plain, the cladding, articulated as 'stonework', includes two thick vertical bands of further fluted relief that runs vertically to meet the horizontal panelled band that terminates the parapet

The external auditorium walls are articulated with rusticated line work beneath the windowsill line with the rusticated plinth including engaged piers between windows. The upper walls are ruled out with ashlar line work and the upper section of wall includes five large steel framed acid etched

glass windows, currently protected by metal roller shutters. Either side of each window a fluted pilaster rises from the plinth to the entablature. The entablature runs the length of the building and comprises ruled ashlar work and a simply fluted frieze. The roof is not visible from street level.

A granite foundation stone alongside the entrance simply states the date '1939'.

The entrance area comprises terrazzo steps, wrought iron handrails, wrought iron gates and narrow flanking windows that have had grilles added to them in style that matches the original gates.

A porch over the northern entrance is carried on simplified fluted columns and its roof is a thin flat concrete roof with a fluted fascia.

The interior comprises the entrance, foyer and two offices (originally men's and ladies' cloakrooms), two usher's rooms (now lobbies to toilets), and cleaner's room, then the auditorium, rostrum, and reader's rooms, now also used for toilets, organist and soloist rooms. Two sets of toilets were added to the former usher's rooms.

The foyer is an imposing space, with Sheoak parquetry flooring, rendered and painted walls with fluted pilasters around the entrance doors and steel framed etched glass windows, a pair of doors leading on to St. George's Terrace, plasterboard ceilings with Art Deco motif cornices, and ventilation grilles around the cornice. At the centre of the room a magnificent Art Deco style pendent light provides a visual focus to the room. Wall mounted lights either side of the south entry provide additional lighting. Pairs of timber framed glazed doors provide entrances to the two aisles in the auditorium. A glazed wind lobby has been constructed at the entrance doors and the original literature shelves on the eastern wall have been removed.

Either side of the entrance, the former cloak rooms are simple and tall rooms with carpeted timber floors, chamfered timber skirtings, plastered walls, steel framed etched glass windows, and a plasterboard ceiling. There are suspended fluorescent lights and various pinup boards and literature racks.

The auditorium is a generously proportioned space and is treated very simply, with all of the visual focus on the rostrum area. It has a timber floor carpeted in the aisles, splayed skirtings, plastered walls, ten steel framed acid etched windows, wall mounted lights, curtains and valances to windows, and a stepped Art Deco style ceiling, with built in fluorescent lighting. At the rostrum, the current organ provides a visual focus to the space, along with the rostrum itself, and the flanking wall mounted tablets. Original timber pews are distributed face on to the rostrum in the centre of the auditorium and angled towards the centre of the rostrum along the two aisles.

The rostrum extends out from the organ, which occupies much of the space that was originally the rostrum, and across the former organ pit. The latter remains in evidence as the leading edge of the rostrum. There are steps up to the passage from the auditorium and these have a wrought iron

balustrade. The whole of the rostrum is framed by a bas relief architrave, though the current organ pipes breach the lines of the opening.

The former rostrum space, once an exedra plan, is now divided up into space for organ pipes and for the organist.

A semicircular corridor runs around the former rostrum and this has been partitioned to make a room for visiting soloists. Two rooms to the north of the corridor reserved for the readers have been divided into two spaces each to provide toilets and space for the readers.

Returning to the lobby, the two usher's rooms are similar in style to the former cloak rooms, but instead of the original windows in the east wall there are doors leading into the toilet additions.

The toilets are utilitarian with vinyl covered concrete floors, plastered walls, low flush ceilings, modern partitions, and fittings.

Changes to the place include reduction of the church site, the removal of all early buildings, the construction of a new Sunday school, and a recent landscape. The church itself has had numerous minor alterations, including the addition of shutters, some additional grilles, toilets added to the cloakrooms (previously usher's rooms), the cloak rooms have been turned into offices, modifications to the rostrum and organ area, sealing over the organ pit to provide more rostrum space, closure of part of the corridor for the organist, and division of the two reader's rooms at the rear of the rostrum. The eastern side of the rendered external walls has been painted. The underlying fabric, exterior, foyer and auditorium are substantially intact. Overall the place retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

The landscape and building are well maintained and present very well. The place appears to be much appreciated by its users.

There is no surface evidence of any of the early buildings noted in the documentary evidence.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

In Australia, the Inter-War Art Deco design style was frequently employed in the design of commercial and residential interiors, in retail shop fronts, and in the design of cinemas in the 1930s. The style made use of 'vivid decorative elements which served no particular function', 'Straight lines - often three in parallel - were used horizontally, vertically and diagonally in conjunction with geometric curves', and 'Eye-catching materials and finishes were preferred, such as chromium-plated steel, plywood faced with exotic veneers, and coloured opaque glass (Vitrolite and Carrara glass)'.[72]

In Perth, there are few buildings which exhibit the defining characteristics of the style to the degree evident in *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*, as the design style favored in Western Australia was often more of a hybrid form, such as a blending of characteristics of the Inter-War Functionalist and Inter-War Art Deco styles. The style was also used more frequently for

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[72] Apperly, Richard, Irving, Robert, and Reynolds, Peter op. cit., p. 188.

facades than for entire buildings. *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*, is rare as a fine example of the style applied to both interior and exterior detailing.

By the late 1930s, having practised as an architect in Western Australia for over 40 years, Jack Learmonth Ochiltree, of Ochiltree and Hargrave, was well-established and well known. In 1938-39, the firm designed two especially acclaimed buildings in the Inter-War Art Deco style, *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* and *St John Ambulance Building* (1940, HCWA 02132), built by C. W. Arnott. The two buildings are of comparable scale and the exterior treatment of both is imitation stone stucco. Notable Inter-War period commercial buildings that may be compared with them include *W. H. & H. O. Wills Warehouse (fmr)* (1927) in the Inter-War Chicagoesque style, built under the direction of Oldham, Boas & Ednie-Brown, and Newspaper House (1932), designed by Hobbs, Smith and Forbes. Other examples of buildings in the Inter-War Art Deco design style include the *Regal Theatre* (1936-37) the *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade*(c. 1936), and perhaps Sherwood Court (1937). A photograph of *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth* is the only Western Australian example of the Inter-War Art Deco style included in *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1878 to the Present*, where the caption noted it is 'An unusually powerful building.'[73]

It is unusual to find an example of the Inter-War Art Deco style applied to a church building. Of the 110 Inter-War Art Deco style places noted in the HCWA database, only four others are identified as having a religious function. *First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth*. On the information available, all four of these appear to be less substantial buildings and poorer examples of the style.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

'First Church of Christ, Scientist, George Street, Perth' in *The Architect* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 1939

'Modern Trend in Church Architecture - New Building for First Church of Christ Scientist' in *Building and Construction* 30 June 1939

National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment First Church of Christian Scientist (sic). Assessed by Vyonne Geneve, Ron Facius and Mary McNeill, March 2002.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research in records held by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Perth may reveal additional information about the place, including information about how Sir Herbert Baker came to design the proposed hall.

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73 ibid.