



# 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)

- 6.0 Educating
- 8.10 Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences

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

- 402 Education and science
- 407 Cultural activities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*PICA* is a good example of the Federation Free Classical style of architecture. Its form and simplified use of classical detailing exhibits a sense of visual confidence. (Criterion 1.1)

Due to its scale and architectural detail, *PICA* is an important and distinctive landmark north of the railway line. (Criterion 1.3)

Together with the former Perth Gaol and *Hackett Hall* (the former library), *PICA & Arts House* form part of an historic precinct within the Perth Cultural Centre. However, the major redevelopment of the 1970s and 1980s has fragmented the precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The buildings that comprise Arts House are of historic significance due to their relationship with changing educational policy c. 1900. The Monitor's School was the first of its type in Western Australia, and reflected the Government's commitment to provide post-primary education facilities, with particular reference to teacher training. The Manual Training School and Cookery and Laundry Centre are representative of the desire to provide students with practical skills. (Criterion 2.2)

*PICA & Arts House* were constructed as part of the Perth Central School, the first central school in Western Australia, the philosophy of which was to provide a complete educational facility, with opportunities for post-

---

\* 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.

primary education. Other Central Schools were modelled on the Perth site. (Criterion 2.2)

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the place was one of several campuses around Perth that formed the Perth Technical College. Known as the James Street Annexe, the place was a popular post secondary education facility. (Criterion 2.2)

The establishment of PICA as a central venue for contemporary arts was a major initiative of both the state and federal governments in the late 1980s. The varied response to the physical changes to the building in the early 1990s formed part of the emerging debate about the management of heritage places in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

The construction of Perth Central School was the largest project undertaken for the Education Department in the 1890s, a period of social, demographic and economic change in Western Australia. Within this context, the place is a significant example of the work undertaken by the Public Works Department during this period. (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

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

There is archaeological research potential in much of the adjoining James Street Mall area, under the three surviving Arts House buildings and in the area between the PICA building and the former Monitors' School. (Criterion 3.1)

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

Through its use as an educational facility over a period of ninety years, the place has a significant associative value for the thousands of people who have studied there. With particular reference to the larger building's use between 1936 and 1958, PICA is still widely known as the old Boys' School. (Criterion 4.1)

*PICA & Arts House* is valued by sections of the community as a major centre for contemporary arts in Western Australia. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

Due to the scale of the buildings, particularly the Boy's School (PICA) and the extent of the complex, which incorporated separate schools for infants, boys and girls on one site, as well as purpose-built facilities for post-primary education, Perth Central School was an unusually large school complex in the early 1900s. Of all the elements of the site, only *PICA & Arts House* remain. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

The Monitors' School was the first purpose-built school of its type constructed in Western Australia and served as a model for later Monitor's Schools. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The place is representative of the shift in educational policy at the turn of the twentieth century and the buildings illustrate the government's commitment to providing a curriculum and technical training classes beyond primary level. Subsequent changes in the use of the various buildings illustrate key changes in education policy through to the late 1980s. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

The place is in generally in fair to good condition.

Damage to the former Manual Training School building, caused by termites, has been treated. The roof sheeting and external joinery to the former Cookery and Laundry Centre and Monitors' School require attention.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Although no longer in its original use, the place does retain a community and education focus as the Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts (PICA) and venue for various arts organisations (Arts House).

Overall, the place has a moderate degree of integrity.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

In general, the external fabric and detailing has been retained.

Although the internal detailing and layout of the buildings are not authentic, some evidence has survived to illustrate the original (largely functional) standard of the internal detailing.

Overall, the place has a moderate degree of authenticity.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of the Arts, May 1995.

Hocking Planning & Architecture, 'Arts House Conservation Plan', prepared for Ministry for Culture and the Arts, October 1998.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of the Arts, May 1995.

Hocking Planning & Architecture, 'Arts House Conservation Plan', prepared for Ministry for Culture and the Arts, October 1998.

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of the Arts, May 1995.

Hocking Planning & Architecture, 'Arts House Conservation Plan', prepared for Ministry for Culture and the Arts, October 1998.

#### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a discussion of comparative places, refer to Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of the Arts, May 1995.

Hocking Planning & Architecture, 'Arts House Conservation Plan', prepared for Ministry for Culture and the Arts, October 1998.

#### **13.4 REFERENCES**

Building Management Authority, 'Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Former Perth Boys' and Girls' Schools), Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of the Arts, May 1995.

Hocking Planning & Architecture, 'Arts House Conservation Plan', prepared for Ministry for Culture and the Arts, October 1998.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

-----