



**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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.18.2 Banking and lending
- 5.4 Working in offices
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 302 Rural industry & market gardening
- 306 Domestic activities
- 308 Commercial & service industries
- 603 Early settlers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a substantial and well-proportioned two-storey building in the Interwar Art Deco style with elements of the Stripped Classical style. Distinctive detailing includes a projecting two-storey entry portico with rounded corners, fluted columns flanking the entrance porch in bas relief and moulded geometric patterns in bands and panels in the stucco render. (Criterion 1.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is part of a suite of substantial bank buildings designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical and Interwar Art Deco style by the Commonwealth Design Office in the interwar period. (Criterion 1.2)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a substantial landmark building in the town centre of Katanning, due to the monumental quality of the front façade and its location at the head of a significant T-junction on the main street. (Criterion 1.3)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is part of a distinctive streetscape in the commercial centre of Katanning and reflects the scale, proportions and detailing of other buildings in its vicinity to form a complementary precinct dating from the Federation and interwar periods. (Criterion 1.4)

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning demonstrates the intentional conspicuousness of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in metropolitan and regional areas as it expanded in the interwar period from agencies and branches accommodated in rented premises to purpose built premises of substantial scale and imposing modern design to reflect the confidence and stature of the Bank, and the continued custom of incorporating the manager's residence at the first floor of two-storey bank buildings. (Criterion 2.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning was built in 1937, during the period following the Great Depression, in which the Commonwealth Government embarked on a considerable works programme that included construction of numerous new bank premises for the Commonwealth Bank. The continued growth and development of Katanning as a regional centre in the post-war period necessitated alterations and additions to the place in 1958 and 1966. (Criterion 2.2)

Saddler Paul Beeck, whose family were among the well known early settlers in the region, owned and occupied the site of *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* until his death in 1934. (Criterion 2.3)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning was designed by prominent West Australian architect, Edgar Le Blond Henderson, who also designed *St Joseph's Church* (1934), Subiaco, and *St Columba's Church* (1936), South Perth. (Criterion 2.3)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning was built for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia by prominent Katanning builder J.M. Thomson. (Criterion 2.3)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning exemplifies the creative and design excellence that characterise the suite of individually designed bank buildings built for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in this State from 1928 to 1940. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning, is highly valued by the community of Katanning and the surrounding district for social and cultural reasons for its long service as a major financial institution, and for aesthetic reasons as a distinctive and substantial building in Clive Street, the business district of the town, as evidenced also by its inclusion in the Municipal Inventory of the Shire. (Criterion 4.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning, contributes to the community's sense of place as a landmark in Clive Street, in which it is an integral part of the streetscape, and the townscape at the centre of the business district of Katanning. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a rare example in the Great Southern Region of a substantial two-storey building designed in the Interwar Art Deco style with elements of Stripped Classical and one of a small number of two-storey bank buildings exhibiting these stylistic features in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning demonstrates the continuation into the late interwar period of the earlier practice, once common but no longer practised in

2006, of incorporating residential accommodation for the bank manager in bank buildings, albeit the bank manager no longer resides at the place. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The two-storey scale and high quality of materials and workmanship of *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* are representative of bank buildings in general in Western Australia in the interwar period and illustrate the importance given by the banking institutions to creating a substantial presence in the streetscape. (Criterion 6.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning, is representative of the design excellence and high quality of execution of the work of the Commonwealth Design Office in the interwar period. (Criterion 6.1)

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning, demonstrates the core role of banking buildings in the general economy of important regional towns. (Criterion 6.2)

The attachment of a Bank Manager's residence to the banking premises at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, demonstrates an association of uses no longer practised. (Criteria 6.1 and 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is generally in very good condition and has been very well maintained. There is some damp present in the first floor ceilings under the box gutter of the parapet.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is still used for its original and intended purpose of banking and, although the bank currently uses the residence for additional office areas, the residential characteristics are retained. The banking chambers have been adapted by alteration and addition as banking practices changed. The residence has also been adapted by upgrading the services areas. Missing or altered elements could easily be restored. *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* retains a moderate to high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning displays a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The major change has been to the banking chamber, which has been enlarged and altered, although the original spaces are still legible. Most of the other original spaces remain intact and many of the elements are original. The single-storey additions to the southwest side and rear are mid-to-late twentieth century additions. A small number of other elements have been altered internally, the most significant being the introduction of a bathroom into an original bedroom and the upgrading of the kitchen.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian; the physical evidence has been compiled by Lynne Farrow, Architect, of David Heaver and Associates, Architects, in July 2006; with amendments and/or additions by HCWA Register Committee and HCWA Officers.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a two-storey, cement rendered, brick and tile purpose designed bank and bank manager's residence (fmr), built by J.M. Thomson in 1937, on the site previously occupied by Beeck's Saddlery. In 1958, additional office space and toilet facilities were provided, and alterations and a single-storey addition were carried out by T.D. Scott Pty. Ltd. in 1966.

In the 1880s, numerous schemes were proposed for the private development of railways in Western Australia, most being based on a land-grants scheme, whereby the company would receive land along the route in return for building the railway, but only two came to fruition. The West Australian Land Company was responsible for the first of these, the Great Southern Railway connecting Beverley and Albany, which opened to traffic in June 1889.¹ In 1889, at Katanning, destined to become an important centre on the railway line, there were two stores, a private residence, Katanning Hotel, and some timber buildings under construction.² On 20 November 1890, it was announced that the Land Company had declared portion of Kojonup Locations 255 and 256 as a Townsite.³

In 1891, the Piesse brothers built a flourmill at Katanning,⁴ hoping to attract farmers to the district to grow wheat. A number of South Australians of German origin were among them, including Ted Wilhelm, who came to inspect prospects along the Great Southern after he and his brother-in-law, W.F. 'Bill' Beeck, left their farm in South Australia because of the 1889-90 drought. Considering the land in the district had potential for wheat and oat growing, and, having seen the mill, he directed Bill to come to the West. Having selected some land together west of Katanning, Bill reported to his father, Emil Beeck, who came directly himself. Subsequently, he sent Bill back to South Australia to bring the rest of the family, while he selected some land west of Katanning, where he promptly began work. In February 1892, a special train brought the large Beeck family and their possessions, including agricultural machinery, 20 horses, two wagons and two buggies, to Katanning. Most of the Beecks took up land in the district for farming and became well known in the Great Southern in the early twentieth century.⁵

By 1894, Katanning was beginning to establish itself as a centre on the Great Southern Railway. While his brothers had taken up land for farming, soon after his marriage in July 1894, Paul Beeck is believed to have taken up occupation of a vacant lot in the townsite, where he set about establishing himself in business as a saddler. Initially, he and his wife lived in a tent. Later, he built a timber and

¹ Crowley, F.K. *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia from the first settlements to modern times* Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1960, pp. 100-102.

² *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, p. 7.

³ *Government Gazette* 20 November 1890.

⁴ *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, pp. 8-14.

⁵ Bignell, Merle *A Place to Meet: A History of the Shire of Katanning, Western Australia* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1981, pp. 94-95 and pp. 102-105.

iron shop with residential quarters attached,⁶ as it was customary in the period for business proprietors to live in quarters attached to their business.

In the late 1890s, Katanning continued to grow and develop. Major buildings included the Mechanics' Institute (1896), St. Andrew's Anglican Church (1898) and the Baptist Church, for which the foundation stone was laid in 1900.⁷

On 31 January 1900, Paul August Beeck was registered as the sole proprietor of Katanning Town Lot 204, one rood and 14 perches in area, the future site of the *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*. The Lot had frontage to Clive Street, and was bounded by a right-of-way at the rear, which is shown adjoining Baker Street on the plan.⁸ On this site Paul Beeck built his business premises and residence, which remained in his ownership until his death in 1934.⁹ He 'became renowned for his geniality', 'a wizard with leather', who could also 'make an excellent iron tank, mend a watch, cut hair, give a smooth shave, and, if necessary, pull a tooth for a desperate patient.'¹⁰ His wife, Mary, established herself as Katanning's sole laundress for many years.¹¹ Paul Beeck's business in Clive Street was advertised in the first issue of the *Great Southern Herald* on 5 October 1901.¹² A photograph (1906) shows the timber and iron building, with a wide verandah at the front, and signage reading 'P.A. BEECK SADDLER & S'.¹³

In 1901, a new two-storey store, of brick construction, was built in Clive Street, indicative of the gradual 'spread of the town from the existing apex of Austral Terrace'.¹⁴ The W.A. Bank opened a branch at Katanning, in rented premises at the newly completed 'Coffee Palace', until their own bank premises were built at the corner of Clive and Taylor Streets.¹⁵ In 1902, a branch of the National Bank opened in rented premises at Piesse's Buildings. In 1904, new purpose built bank premises were erected at the corner of Austral Terrace and Clive Street for the Katanning branch of the National Bank, and a branch of the Union Bank opened in rented premises in Clive Street on 23 December.¹⁶ In 1907, the Government Savings Bank of Western Australia opened a branch at Katanning, in rented premises in Clive Street, opposite the Post Office.¹⁷ In 1910, the Bank of New South Wales opened a branch in Albion Street.¹⁸

Under the Commonwealth Bank Act of 1911, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia was established, 'empowered to conduct both savings and general (trading) bank business, with the security of a Federal Government guarantee'.¹⁹

6 Bignell, Merle op. cit., p. 105 and p. 153.

7 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, pp. 8-14.

8 Certificate of Title Vol. CLXXXVI Fol. 112.

9 Certificate of Title Vol. CLXXXVI Fol. 112.

10 Bignell, Merle op. cit., p. 105 and p. 153.

11 HCWA Place 1350, Backlog Review Form.

12 Advertisers in *Great Southern Herald* 5 October 1901, in Bignell, Merle op. cit., p. 184.

13 Photograph, Paul Beeck's saddlery, reproduced in Bignell, Merle op. cit., opposite p. 116.

14 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, p. 14.

15 Bignell, Merle *A Place to Meet: A History of the Shire of Katanning, Western Australia* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1981, p. 177.

16 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, p. 18 and p. 26. Note: Bignell states the National Bank branch opened in 1891. (Bignell, Merle op. cit., p. 95.)

17 'Commonwealth Bank of Australia Representation at Katanning WA' Commonwealth Bank Archives, Sydney.

18 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, p. 19.

19 'History of the Commonwealth Bank's Representation at Northam WA 1931-1953', p. 1, Banking Operations, Group Support, courtesy Commonwealth Bank Archives Section, Sydney, quoted in

In January 1913, the Commonwealth Bank commenced business operations in Western Australia, with the 164 Post Offices in the State, including that at Katanning, acting on its behalf.²⁰

In 1926, the Government Savings Bank of Western Australia changed its name to the State Savings Bank of Western Australia, which merged with the Commonwealth Bank on 31 October 1931.²¹ The shop premises in Austral Terrace rented by the State Savings Bank continued in use for the Commonwealth Bank, under inaugural manager E.J. Cooper, previously manager of the Katanning branch of the State Savings Bank.²²

In the early 1930s, as the Great Depression continued, in an effort to assist in alleviating unemployment, the Commonwealth Government instigated numerous projects and expanded its programme of public works, including construction of Government buildings. Throughout Australia, numerous substantial bank premises would be erected for the Commonwealth Bank under this programme.²³ At Katanning, the Commonwealth Bank was still leasing an office in Austral Terrace from the Piesse Estate, but as it was considered unlikely any of the block of which it was part would be offered for sale, an inspection of the town was made with a view to acquiring a suitable site on which to build bank premises. Particular note was made of two sites in Clive Street: the vacant corner lot, Lot 206, adjoining the Agricultural Bank, and Lot 204, 'opposite the Post Office', where a boot maker occupied 'an old dilapidated weatherboard and galvanised iron building'.²⁴ By the mid-1930s, most of the banks with their own premises were established in Clive Street, which had become the commercial centre of Katanning, hence the Commonwealth Bank's interest in these lots.

On 6 December 1934, the Manager of the Commonwealth Bank, Perth, reported the death of the owner of Lot 204, noted the Road Board had condemned the buildings, and requested authority from the Governor of the Bank to negotiate the purchase of the site, 'an excellent one for the Bank's purposes'.²⁵ He was instructed to pursue inquiries regarding Lot 206, where 'premises ... would be a little more conspicuous than would be the case on block 204', but 'in case the Government might have other ideas about block 206', if possible he should arrange an option to purchase Lot 204.²⁶ In early 1935, he advised widening of the street leading to the railway yard had reduced the frontage of Lot 206 from 50ft to 38ft, and recommended bidding for Lot 204 when it was offered for sale.²⁷

In February 1935, probate of Paul Beeck's will was granted to the executrix, his widow, Mary Theresa Beeck.²⁸ In September, with little foreseeable prospect of obtaining Lot 206, the Commonwealth Bank decided to bid for Lot 204 as the

Assessment, Commonwealth Bank, Northam (RHP 1871), p. 3.

20 'Commonwealth Bank of Australia Representation at Katanning WA' op. cit.

21 *ibid.*

22 *ibid.*

23 Assessment, Commonwealth Bank, Northam (RHP 1871), p. 4.

24 Correspondence in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Site and Purchase, 1934-35, CBA Archives, December 1934.

25 Correspondence in *ibid.*, 6 December 1934. Note: Paul Beeck died on 1 December 1934. (Certificate of Title Vol. CLXXXVI Fol. 112.)

26 Correspondence in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Site and Purchase, 1934-35, op. cit., 18 December 1934 and 23 January 1935.

27 Correspondence in *ibid.*, 23 January 1935.

28 Certificate of Title Vol. CLXXXVI Fol. 112.

'next best available', when it was offered for sale by tender.²⁹ Purchased at a cost of £1,550, Lot 204 was transferred to the Commonwealth Bank on 22 November.³⁰ Photographs show the old building fronting Clive Street, the residential quarters at the rear and the rear yard.³¹

In February 1936, the Commonwealth Design Office, under Edgar Le Blond Henderson, completed plans for Katanning's proposed Commonwealth Bank. The plans for the ground floor show the Banking Chamber, with the counter across it, a teller's box at the west side and office space to the rear, the Manager's Office, with a store between it and the strong room, and a basin and toilet to the rear of the latter, and the hall with stairs leading to the Manager's Residence above. At the first floor, the hall opens to the living room, dining room, and Bedrooms 1 and 3, and a short passage to the bathroom, toilet, and Bedroom 2, which opens to the rear verandah, as does Bedroom 3. Off the dining room is the kitchen, where doors open at either side of the stove recess to the maid's room, the pantry and the landing for the trades stairs at the west side of the building.³²

The Manager of the Katanning branch, Mr C. Shaw, suggested siting the building 3 ft east of the location shown to improve airflow around it in summer and to increase the distance from the neighbouring butcher's shop on the western side. He considered insufficient space was proposed in the public area, noting the Banking Chamber of the current premises, with an area of 178 sq ft, was inadequate at times, especially on some Stock Sale days. He proposed reducing the size of the manager's office by 2 ft 6 ins to increase the public space from 210 sq ft to 272.5 sq ft. Whilst each of the alternate front elevations was 'attractive', that providing for 'two extra windows over the main doors' was preferred, as 'giving more light and air upstairs.'³³ Locating the drive-way on the west side of the building rather than the east might necessitate transposing the rooms, 'but if this can be done without altering the present lay-out upstairs, we are of the opinion that nothing would be lost as regards the comfort of the occupant.'³⁴ An underground concrete tank for rainwater storage was required at least 10,000 gallons in capacity, together with an overhead tank, 100-200 gallons capacity, as most residents of Katanning found the local scheme water supply unsuitable for domestic use. As the town reservoir was almost empty, Shaw recommended prompt construction of the underground tank to ensure water supplies during the building period.³⁵

Following Shaw's suggestions, it was agreed to locate the building 3 ft farther east, 9 ft from the adjoining property on the west side and 6 ft from that on the east side, the drive-way to be located at the west side, requiring modification of the plans for the trades stair so it would not obstruct the carriageway. The counter would be set back by 'at least another foot' to increase the public space in the Banking Chamber, and the plan for the front elevation was amended.³⁶

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- 29 Correspondence in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Site and Purchase, 1934-35, op. cit., 20 September 1935.
- 30 Certificate of Title Vol. CLXXXVI Fol. 112.
- 31 Photographs, c. 1936, attached to memo. in *ibid*, 29 August 1936.
- 32 Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning WA, in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Building Construction (1935-38). Courtesy CBA Archives, Sydney, 1935-36.
- 33 C. Shaw to Manager, Commonwealth Bank, Perth, 28 February 1936, in *ibid*.
- 34 *ibid*.
- 35 *ibid*.
- 36 Correspondence from Supervisor, Bank Premises Dept., in *ibid*, 12 March 1936.

Initialled E.L.M., the design for the front elevation of the two-storey brick and tile building employs 'stripped down classical organisation, decorative motifs such as fluted recessed reveals, panels and frieze'³⁷ in the Interwar Art Deco style. The design features strong vertical and horizontal lines and curves, and the prominent central bay, with tall vertical piers at each side of the main entrance, is the dominant feature in the street elevation, which is treated in a symmetrical ABA rhythm.³⁸ It demonstrates the intention of the Commonwealth Bank to establish a conspicuous presence in metropolitan and regional areas, including Katanning, as it expanded from agencies and branches accommodated in rented premises to purpose designed and built premises of substantial scale and imposing modern design to reflect the confidence and stature of the Bank.

In April-May 1936, it was arranged the specifications would include provision for an electric stove and an electric bath heater, and a garage outbuilding for the manager's car.³⁹ It was agreed to provide plate glass front doors to the Banking Chamber with collapsible grille gates for protection after hours, as was the usual practice. After discussion as to whether to provide plain glass to the front windows of the residence or non-actinic glass, as at the Banking Chamber, it was agreed that from a heat point of view the latter was desirable.⁴⁰ In May, a plan for water and sewerage services shows the location of the kitchen sink; altered positions of the wc, bath and hand basin; a wc and hand basin at the ground floor; a 400 gallon overhead tank, connected to all points in the building; a 2,000 gallon and a 1,000 gallon tank; laundry building; garage; and a 5,000 gallon underground tank connecting to the other tanks.⁴¹ When the views of the Bank Premises Department prevailed, provision was made for four 2,000-gallon water tanks on high stands, with this work to be the first stage carried out.⁴²

Tenders were called for the proposed *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, and the contract was awarded to J.M. Thomson, builder and contractor of Katanning, in October, at a cost of £5,397, the lowest of six tenders received. The original estimate of £3,900 approved by the Board of the Bank had been increased 'of necessity for rain water supply, septic sewerage and other essentials', but economies on some other items enabled Thomson's tender to be reduced to £4,754.⁴³ The business had been commenced at Katanning by Alex Thomson in 1905, and had become one of the foremost building companies in the Great Southern Region. In the 1930s, projects J.M. Thomson completed at Katanning included the Commonwealth Oil Refineries Depot, new premises for Elder, Smith & Co., Limited, Nurses' Quarters at Katanning Hospital, and residences for T.H. Harris and F. J. Mitter.⁴⁴

In November 1936, plans for *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* were modified to re-locate the staff lavatory, 'to provide greater privacy in that room, having regard to the nearness of the entrance hall to the residence', to the location of the store on the earlier plan, and the area previously designated for the staff lavatory

37 Commonwealth Bank, in Municipal Inventory, Shire of Katanning, Adopted 25 January 1996.

38 *ibid.*

39 Correspondence from J. W. James, 4 April and 6 May 1936, in *ibid.*

40 Correspondence, August-September 1936, in *ibid.*

41 Commonwealth Bank, Katanning W. A., water and sewerage services, with memo. in *ibid.*, 20 May 1936.

42 Correspondence between Supervisor, Bank Premises Dept., Manager, Commonwealth Bank, Perth, and C. L. Shaw, in *ibid.*, March-August 1936.

43 *Building and Construction* 25 September, 16 and 23 October 1936; and memos. and correspondence, in CBA Archives, *op. cit.*, 27 and 30 October, and 11 November 1936.

44 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939, p. 31.

became a storage area, a re-arrangement which permitted a back door to the building from the office working space.⁴⁵ 'Boncote', manufactured by West Coast Kalsomine Co., was suggested for external painting.⁴⁶ C.A. Illine was awarded the contract for the electrical installation at a cost of £171 8s.⁴⁷

In autumn 1937, after a rather tardy start due mainly to a shortage of good tradesmen, building of *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* proceeded rapidly. By early April, when roof tiling commenced, the first coat of cement work to the exterior was completed, other than the pressed cement frieze over the main door. In early May, plastering was underway, and expenditure of £231 to provide fittings was approved. After the Municipality sank a bore to supplement the town's water supply scheme, the water obtained was unsuitable for drinking but provided water for flushing purposes, enabling conservation of the 8,000 gallon reserve of rain water at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* for domestic purposes. An extra 200-gallon tank was placed on the existing platform to which the scheme water was connected to supply the wc's.⁴⁸ In June, the place was completed at a total cost of £4,936 2s 6d, including counters and bank fittings at £214 11s. Shaw took up residence, and the bank commenced operations in its new, purpose built premises,⁴⁹ from which it continues to operate in 2006.

In 1939, five banks had branches in Katanning: the Commonwealth Bank, Union Bank, National Bank, Bank of New South Wales and Commercial Bank.⁵⁰

In July 1941, A. Thomson was awarded the contract to renovate the Banking Chamber of *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, and to replace the steel windows on the first floor front elevation, but the latter was deferred when he was engaged on Defence Works due to the prevailing conditions in World War II.⁵¹ After the war, subsequent to an inspection of *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, repairs and renovations were recommended in July 1946, including replacing these four steel windows with timber double hung casement windows; enclosure of the sleep-out verandah above the existing dado with adjustable glass louvres; and painting the exterior of the building.⁵² The recommendations were yet to be implemented when in 1949, a report highlighted the continued problems with water penetration from the steel windows to the Banking Chamber and the manager's residence, noting the sashes were faulty in construction and somewhat similar to the Mt. Lawley Branch', where a similar problem had occurred.⁵³ In the view of the Works Superintendent there was adequate working space for the Manager, and his staff of nine men and one woman, but a lack of storage space. He suggested removing the lavatory for staff, which was badly located by the manager's office, using that space as a stationery room, and building a new lavatory block for men and women to be built at the rear of the

45 Supervisor, Premises Department, in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Building Construction (1935-38), 11 November 1936.

46 Supervisor, Premises Department, in *ibid*, 27 November 1936.

47 *Building and Construction* 1 January 1937, p. 5.

48 Correspondence and memos., in Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning, WA, Building Construction (1935-38) *op. cit.*, March-May 1937.

49 Correspondence and memos, in *ibid*, May-June 1937.

50 *Katanning's Jubilee* Great Southern Herald, 1939.

51 Correspondence and Property Reports in Commonwealth Bank, Katanning W. A. Building Renovations, 1939-1955, CBA Archives, 1941-43.

52 Correspondence, Dept. of Works and Housing to Manager, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Perth, in *ibid*, 24 July 1946.

53 Property Report, and Works Supervisor to Assistant Manager, in *ibid*, February and May 1949.

premises.⁵⁴ Quotes were obtained for removal and re-erection of the Chubb Strongroom Door to a new position.⁵⁵ At a later date, the steel windows on the first floor front elevation were replaced with timber framed windows.⁵⁶

In 1950-51, alterations to the place provided a second teller's box; a further ground tank and electric pump were installed to supplement the water supply; and alterations and improvements were made to the kitchen.⁵⁷ It has not been ascertained if the maid's room shown on the 1936 plan was converted to a laundry at this date or at a later period. In 1955, a storeroom was erected, and the interior and exterior of the place were painted.⁵⁸

In the post-war period, Katanning continued to grow and develop as a regional centre, with consequent growth in business for the banks. In March 1958, it was reported that, with a staff of five women and two men in the office at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, there was no spare space, and 'no proper storage or staff rooms have been provided'.⁵⁹ It was recommended male toilet and wash basin facilities be installed in the existing storage area at the rear of the strong room, an extension be built at the rear of the building to provide a new store-room, and one of the rear windows from the office be converted to a doorway.⁶⁰ Katanning builders Messrs. Philpott and Baldwin, who were clients of the branch, completed the project to provide additional toilet facilities and 'extra working space' at a cost of £801 in 1958.⁶¹ In 1959, the interior of the residence was painted, and the interior of the bank and the exterior in 1962-63.⁶²

In 1963, when it was decided to appoint a Rural Valuer for the south-western district, the choice of location was between Katanning and Albany, so the respective bank premises were investigated. At Katanning, they were considered only just sufficient for requirements, with very limited counter space, and if extensions were made to the place, in addition to accommodating the Valuer, the deficiency should be overcome.⁶³ In September 1964, it was reported the layout of the office at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* was poor, with the short counter across it crowding the check sheet space, access through the flap in the enquiry counter between the office and public spaces was inconvenient, and no area for private interviews with the accountant. The owners of the adjoining general store were going to lease the excess land at the rear of the premises, to be surfaced for use as a free car park accessed from the rear street. It was recommended the Banking Chamber be widened, absorbing the existing 10 ft driveway at the west side of the building, which was seldom used by the manager, who mostly used the vehicle entry from the street at the rear. The proposed addition would permit a counter, almost twice as long as the existing counter, to run from front to rear of

54 Works Supervisor to Assistant Manager, *ibid.*

55 Chubb's Australian Company Limited to Superintendent, Bank Premises Department, in *ibid.*, 1 September 1949.

56 Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Lynne Farrow, 21 March 2006.

57 Memos. and extracts, July 1950-February 1951.

58 Extract from Minor Maintenance Report, W. A. in *ibid.*, 5 January 1956.

59 Correspondence in Commonwealth Bank of Australia Katanning W. A., Building Renovations 1958-66, 13 March 1958.

60 *ibid.*

61 Correspondence and extract from Western Australian Monthly Building Programme Report, in *ibid.*, 1 August and October 1958.

62 Extracts from Western Australian Monthly Building Programme Report, in *ibid.*, Jan 1960, and Nov 1962-Mar 1963.

63 Chief Manager, Western Australia to Managing Director, Sydney, in *ibid.*, 30 August 1963.

the building; enable an office layout 'in keeping with the bank's current standards'; permit a two entrance approach to the Bank, from Clive Street and the new rear car park; and allow future extension of the Chamber 'at the most economical cost, should development warrant it'.⁶⁴ Whilst the existing premises could accommodate the Development Bank, which wanted to establish a District Rural Office at Katanning with three staff, in view of the above, it was recommended the data assessed be confirmed, and planning proceed for the work to be undertaken in the 1965-66 financial year.⁶⁵

In February 1965, the Bank's Planning Committee approved a sketch plan for additions and alterations to *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* at an estimated cost of £11,650, plus extraneous items at £210, and architectural fees at £830. Subsequently, whilst working drawings were in preparation, minor modifications made to the floor plan prepared by the project architect included transferring the store to one end of the staff lunch room and extending the voucher room to incorporate the space made available, enabling retention of a portion of the rear wall to form one of the walls to the voucher room. When the Board curtailed the Bank's capital expenditure programme for 1965-66, this project was among the major works deferred. However, after reviewing the proposal the Chief Manager strongly recommended 'the project be allowed to proceed as early as possible'.⁶⁶ By late January 1966, working drawings were completed, with the estimated costs revised to £15,392 (\$30,784), plus extraneous items as above, and architectural fees at £1,077 (\$2,154).⁶⁷ After tenders were called, approval was granted for acceptance of the lowest tender, at \$39,112, from T.D. Scott Pty. Ltd., of Bunbury, the aforesaid extraneous items, and architectural fees of \$2,738.⁶⁸ As per the plans, the main entry doors to the 1937 building were replaced with a pair of windows, and a single-storey addition with a parapet roof was built at the west side of the building, with entrance doors from Clive Street; the public space was increased and more working space provided for staff; a new storage room was added, and a new entry made from the rear car park.⁶⁹

From the 1980s, as banking practices changed with the introduction of electronic banking and centralisation of services, many bank branches were closed in metropolitan and regional areas as banks further rationalised their operations. Financial difficulties experienced by farmers competing in changing international markets sometimes resulted in foreclosures and forced sales, leading to a change in attitude towards the banks.⁷⁰ It is indicative of the role of Katanning as a major centre in the Great Southern, second only to Albany, that the major banks, including *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, have maintained continuous service.

In March 1982, a photograph shows the front façade of the place after the 1966 alterations and additions, with an air conditioner inserted in a first floor window.⁷¹

64 Bank Premises Department, in *ibid*, 29 September 1964.

65 *ibid*.

66 Memos re Bank Premises: Katanning, WA in *ibid*, 26 April 1965 and 27 January 1966.

67 Memo re Bank Premises: Katanning, WA in *ibid*, 27 January 1966.

68 Extract from Branches Committee Meeting No. 1666, in *ibid*, 14-15 April 1966.

69 Commonwealth Bank, Katanning WA Alterations & Additions, 7 January 1965; Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Representation at Katanning WA, CBA Archives.

70 Fisher, David 'Rural finance in Western Australia, 1829-1979' in Burvill, George H. (Ed.) *Agriculture in Western Australia, 1829-1979* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1979.

71 Photograph by Frank Sharr, HCWA Place No. 1350.

In the post-WWII period, the practice of business proprietors and bank manager's residing in quarters attached to their business premises gradually ceased. As at most banks, the residence at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, ceased to be used for its original purpose.⁷² The bedrooms and living rooms were converted to other uses, including storage and office space, with minor alterations to accommodate the changes in use, whilst the kitchen, bathroom and laundry have remained more or less unchanged.⁷³

In 1985-86, air conditioning was installed at the place.⁷⁴

The Commonwealth Bank first introduced Keycard Savings Accounts, with a plastic Keycard to utilise Automatic Telling Machines (ATMs) in February 1981, but the facility was not introduced at *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* until November 1993, with a terminal installed in place of the windows which had replaced the main entry doors in 1966.⁷⁵ In the 1990s, *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* was re-furnished and alterations made to the lay out to provide additional public space and office space, and to accommodate up-dated accounting and security equipment.⁷⁶ There has been little change in recent years, other than replacement of an air conditioning unit, which had burnt out.⁷⁷

In 2006, *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, continues to be occupied as a bank. The Banking Chamber is devoted to public and office space, the strong room continues in use, and the original manager's office is used for storage. At the first floor, the bathroom and kitchen facilities are used by bank staff, whilst the major rooms and bedrooms are used by the bank for various purposes, including interviews and/or presentations, additional office space and storage.⁷⁸ A future re-arrangement to improve the current layout of the bank is contemplated.⁷⁹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a two-storey rendered brick building with a hipped tiled roof comprising a Banking Chambers and Bank Manager's Residence constructed 1936 in the Interwar Art Deco style with elements of the Interwar Stripped Classical Style.

Siting

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is located at Lot 204, no. 110 Clive Street, the main street of Katanning, and is set in the central business precinct of the town, almost opposite the Post Office. Located at the head of the T-junction of Richardson Street, the monumental two-storey Interwar Art Deco façade of the building gives it a strong landmark presence in the centre of the town.

The place is sited with its façade on the front boundary of Lot 204, which has an area of 1365 sqm. The Lot is over 90m deep and spans through to Baker Street at the rear, which provides vehicular access for the place. A single garage has

⁷² Marina Stanley, Archivist, Commonwealth Bank Archives, Sydney, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, March 2006.

⁷³ Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Lynne Farrow, 21 March 2006.

⁷⁴ Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Representation at Katanning WA, CBA Archives.

⁷⁵ Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Representation at Katanning WA, CBA Archives.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Phillip Schotte, Manager, Commonwealth Bank, Katanning, conversation with Robin Chinnery, 21 March 2006.

⁷⁸ Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Lynne Farrow, 21 March 2006.

⁷⁹ Phillip Schotte, *op. cit.*

been constructed about 6m from the east corner of the building. The Lot is otherwise vacant and is paved extensively with bitumen. There is no planting on the Lot.

The Banking Chambers occupies the ground floor and the Bank Manager's Residence occupies the first floor of the building. A footpath approximately 1m wide leads from Clive Street between the building and the boundary on the northeast side up to the front porch of the Bank Manager's Residence, which is constructed with a parapet on the boundary and is located half way up the north-east side of the building.

A single-storey wing added to the southwest side of the building has been constructed up to the boundary with a parapet wall. Additions to the rear constructed at the same period have extended the building approximately 4m to the southeast.

Development on the adjacent lot to the northeast is built up to the boundary with a parapet. A driveway adjacent to the southwest parapet is located on the adjoining Lot.

External form, style and details

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning is a two storey rendered and painted brick building with a hipped tile roof designed in the Interwar Art Deco style with elements of the Interwar Stripped Classical style. A single storey addition to the southwest side and southeast (rear), built in 1966, is constructed in a simple contemporary style.

The front façade of the original structure is symmetrical, and is dominated by the vertical proportions of the wide central bay, which projects forward with rounded corners as a two-storey portico with a parapeted lintel. The main roof of the building is a simple hip clad with terracotta tiles. The wide eaves are boxed. A decorated frieze, approximately 400mm deep, runs around the front and two side walls below the eaves.

The main entrance to the bank was originally located in the centre of this portico, and the opening which remains is flanked by two wide fluted columns that rise in bas relief to the head of the first floor windows, where they support the parapet lintel.

The original plans do not show the projecting central bay; however, a perspective of the bank shows a pair of doors that appear glazed, set flush with the projecting front plane of the building, and it is likely these would have opened into a lobby, with a further pair of glazed doors opening into the Banking Chamber. New entrance doors were introduced in 1966 across the single storey additions at the west end of the façade. Whilst the opening of the original doors remains, the lobby has been altered, with the external leaf of doors removed and an ATM introduced in the location of the inner doors.

The decorated transom of the original external door remains, as do the two square lights of the highlight. A decorated panel between the highlight and the first floor windows is noted in the Shire of Katanning Municipal Heritage Inventory as being 'the only remaining evidence of Beeck's Saddlery'.⁸⁰ This evidence is not easily interpreted in the highly stylised geometric pattern. Above the panel, a pair of double hung timber sash windows with a wide separating mullion sits on a

⁸⁰ Municipal Heritage Inventory, Shire of Katanning.

moulded and decorated sill. A fine horizontal timber transom divides the panes of the sashes.

The parapet is decorated with two inverted string lines close to its head, the central section of the lower band consisting of a row of geometric motifs. The individual letters of 'Commonwealth Bank' are mounted in the centre of the parapet.

A tall narrow panel stretching from ground floor windowsill to first floor window head has been positioned centrally in each of the side bays of the façade. Each of these panels contains one ground floor and one first floor window, separated by a panel of vertical corrugations that reflects the fluting of the columns. The ground floor window is steel and is divided into 5 horizontal lights by narrow steel transoms, with a wide transom above the lower three lights, which is decorated with five horizontal rectangles in relief. The upper window is timber. An air conditioning unit is an intrusive element in each of the upper sashes on the first floor. The sills have the same mouldings and geometric patterns as the central windows.

A plinth runs around the base of the building.

A single-storey wing was added to the southwest side of the building in 1966. A parapet wall on the side boundary projects forward to the front boundary, with the front plane of the addition set back about half way between the two planes of the front façade. The two side walls of the addition are projecting fins, which are clad with grey ceramic tiles. A parapet clad with fibre cement and containing the yellow and black diamond shaped logo of the Commonwealth Bank is mounted in the centre of the parapet over the new front door. The entrance door, a pair of automatic brown anodised aluminium doors with matching sidelights, is recessed back into the plane of the recessed bays.

The northeast side elevation is also rendered with stucco with stonework coursing lines. A porch to the manager's residence is located in the centre of this wall. There are three vertically proportioned windows at the first floor level with projecting sills, which are moulded. A horizontally proportioned window has a plain projecting sill. The decorated frieze returns beneath the lining of the boxed eaves. A square downpipe is located between two of the windows. A cast iron plumbing pipe is an intrusive element.

The southwest side elevation consists of the plain single storey parapet of the 1966 addition, with the first floor windows of the original façade behind. There are six vertically proportioned windows at the first floor level, with horizontal transoms. An air-conditioning unit and ductwork are mounted on top of the parapet. The boxed eaves and decorated frieze return along this façade.

The rear elevation of the building has been considerably altered, but retains its original roofline at first floor level, where it is a double hip with a central box gutter. The roof over the original first floor verandah on the east corner of the building has been enclosed with fibre cement cladding and aluminium sliding windows. A brick addition at the ground floor level spans the width of the building, and provides rear access to the building with a set of brown aluminium doors that match the front doors. A series of high-level horizontally proportioned windows runs across the east side of this addition. These have vertical steel bars bolted across their faces. An external steel stair with mesh balustrading has been installed on the south corner of the building. This has been reconfigured from the original stair.

Internal layout and details

The Banking Chambers are located on the ground floor. The present banking chamber has been enlarged from the original by extending the building to the southwest (side) and the southeast (rear). Most of the corresponding external walls have been removed, with a few pillars left to support the first floor. The original ground floor toilet and adjacent basin area have been removed, although the bank vault remains. The public area is now located in the single storey extension to the southwest and an open plan office created from the original Banking Chamber. A public counter has been installed down the south west side of the original banking chamber. Four small office rooms are located in the rear (south-east) extension, partitioned off by glazed panels. A panel ceiling has been introduced to the Banking Chambers at 3.3m. The skirting in the Banking Chambers has been altered to 100mm bullnosed.

The original Manager's Office is extant on the north corner of the building and is now used as a storeroom. Some of the original moulded varnished timber skirting remains in this room, as does the original wall finish, which has stonework coursing worked into the plaster finish. The ceiling of the Bank Manager's Office is plasterboard with coved cornices and has been introduced beneath the original ceiling. A flush panel door into a store in the projecting section at the west end of the front wall retains its original splayed varnished timber architrave original door handle. This store and door were not shown on the original drawing but appear to be part of the original construction.

The original strong room is also extant complete with thick steel door. A small store between the Bank Manager's Office and the stair is extant, although the door has been altered.

The hall and stairs of the Bank Manager's Residence are extant on in the middle of the northeast wall. The original decorated plaster ceiling is extant in the hall of the Bank Manager's Residence, where it is 3.9m high. A light fitting in the centre of the ceiling appears original. The original varnished skirting and architraves are also extant in this space; however, both doors have been altered. The original front door has been altered to a high security door. The stairs are relatively plain and rise up between two full height walls. Again the skirtings are the original moulded and varnished timber. The original timber handrail is extant on both sides of the stair.

The original staff toilet and adjacent washbasin area have been removed, and a small store cupboard constructed in the northeast portion of the toilet.

The first floor layout has had little alteration from the original. The stair rises to a generous hall in the centre of the building. There are two major rooms opening off the hall to the front of the building: the living room on the west corner, and the main bedroom on the north corner of the building. The dining room opens off the southwest wall of the hall, and was connected to the living room by a pair of glazed timber doors, which have been filled in with a pin up panel. The kitchen is located next to the dining room but has no direct access from the hall. The second bedroom opens off the southeast wall of the hall, and a short corridor off the northeast wall provides access to a toilet (next to the stairs), bathroom and third bedroom on the east corner of the main building.

A verandah at the rear of the building has been enclosed. The maid's room at the southwest end of the verandah has been converted to a laundry. A former pantry

on the south corner of the building is now a passage leading to the external staircase. This replaces an original staircase and was reconfigured in steel.

Most of the original details remain on first floor. The most striking feature of the interior is the dark varnished jarrah timber used on skirtings, architraves, windows, sills and doors. Some of the rooms retain their original highly moulded ceilings, cornices and ceiling roses.

The central hall is a medium sized space, just over 3sqm, which retains its deep moulded skirting and ornate decorated plaster ceiling. A 2.1m high glazed jarrah partition divides the hall. A varnished jarrah cupboard in the south corner appears original as the skirting returns around its base. The two front rooms are generous sized rooms, 5m x 4.5m, which retain most of their original features, with highly moulded and decorated ceilings and painted picture rails. Both these rooms have alcoves in the front walls, corresponding to the projecting central bay of the building. The living room retains its original substantial face brick fireplace with its thick jarrah mantle shelf. Each room has four timber windows, one in the recessed bay, one in each wall of the front corners of the building, and two in the side walls. These are double hung timber windows with fine timber transoms dividing each pane into two horizontal lights. The living room also has the frame for a pair of timber glazed doors. These have been removed and stored in the verandah, and replaced with pin up board.

The dining room also retains most of its original characteristics, including varnished timberwork, painted picture rail and patterned ceiling and cornice. However, one of the original windows has been filled in, leaving one at the south end of the external wall. The door into the kitchen is located at the south end of the wall, rather than the north side as shown on the original plan.

The kitchen has been altered from the original, with kitchen benches and cupboards that appear to date from the 1950s introduced to the three internal walls. A fireplace and door into the maid's quarters shown on the original drawing is not extant. The ceiling has also been replaced. There are two painted timber windows on the external wall that mirror the detailing of the original windows but appear introduced, as only one window was shown on the original drawing. A door in the south end of the rear wall, which leads out to the external rear stair and present laundry, appears original but has been painted.

The second bedroom, in the centre of the house, is a long narrow room with a pair of glazed timber doors in the centre of the external wall. The ceiling is plainer than the more important rooms, and may have been replaced. The external verandah has been enclosed with aluminium windows and a flat ceiling introduced.

The third bedroom on the east corner of the building has been converted into a ladies toilet, with a toilet cubicle introduced to the east corner of the room and a vanity bench and basin along the northwest wall in the north corner. Mosaic tiles have been laid on the floor. The door into the rear verandah has been blocked in. The room retains its original window and picture rail at window head height.

The positioning of the bathroom and toilet is the reverse of that shown on the original plan, with the toilet next to the stair. The May 1936 plan for water and sewerage services showed the positions that are extant in 2006. An unusual feature is the set of four winding stairs that leads up to the toilet.

The bathroom appears to have been upgraded in the 1950s, with the introduction of mosaic floor tiles, laminated plastic vanity and shower screen.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Since the early 1900s, most major banks have operated in Katanning. In the pre-WWI and interwar periods, most established purpose-built premises in the business district, Clive Street. None of these have been entered in the Register of Heritage Places. There are five banks in Katanning at the present date (2006). The earliest extant is the National Bank (1904, altered 1980s) on the corner of Clive Street and Austral Terrace. ANZ Bank, Katanning (P01352), at 93 Clive Street, is currently under assessment. This two-storey building (1911), in the Federation Free Classical design style, comprises the bank at the ground floor, and the commodious manager's residence at the first floor (leased to tenants as a residence in 2006). Challenge Bank (1913), at 127 Clive Street, is also a Federation Free Classical design, but is a single-storey rendered building with a tiled roof. Bankwest is a single-storey building on Clive Street, dating from 1922, which appears to have been altered in the 1980s. *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* is the only bank building in Katanning designed in the Interwar Art Deco style, an uncommon design style in the Great Southern Region.

The Register of Heritage Places includes 24 bank buildings. Some continue to be used as banks, for example *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, and Commonwealth Bank, Northam. Some have been converted to other purposes, including a number located in the Great Southern region: for example Albany House, at Albany, designed in the Victorian Free Classical style, completed 1885; National Bank of Australia Limited (fmr) (1881), designed in the Victorian Academic Classical style, present day Vancouver House; and Western Australian Bank (fmr) (1891), designed by architect J.J. Talbot Hobbs, in the Federation Academic Classical style. Both latter banks included a manager's residence, general practice into the interwar period when *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* was built. In the South-West, among those converted to other purposes, is Commonwealth Bank (fmr) at Bunbury, designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical style, and completed 1928, which was among the first of a suite of individually designed bank buildings built for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in this State in the period 1928-40. *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* exemplifies the creative and design excellence that characterised the work of the Commonwealth Design Office in this period.

There are 113 Interwar Art Deco style places listed on the HCWA database, 15 of which are banks, and of those, five are Commonwealth Banks. In addition to *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*, the other Commonwealth Banks listed as being in the Interwar Art Deco style are at Northam (1934), Mount Lawley (1938), Geraldton (1938) and Narrogin (1940). However, Commonwealth Bank, Northam is in the Interwar Stripped Classical style.⁸¹ It strongly resembles Katanning in the composition of its front façade but the detailing is classical rather than Art Deco. The front façade of Commonwealth Bank, Narrogin, is also similar in composition to that of Katanning, with the notable difference that the roof is fully concealed behind a curved Art Deco parapet.

In the mid-1930s, following the Great Depression, the Commonwealth Government embarked on a considerable works programme, which included construction of numerous new bank premises for the Commonwealth Bank, including the above-mentioned. Commonwealth Bank at Northam, in the Interwar Stripped Classical design style, has 'a strongly modelled façade and an

⁸¹ Register Document, Commonwealth Bank, Northam HCWA Place No. 01871.

overwhelming vertical scale which ensures an imposing presence in the streetscape'.⁸² It had the manager's residence at the first floor, with the Banking Chamber, manager's office and strong room at the ground floor, in common with *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning*.⁸³ Commonwealth Bank, Narrogin, in the Interwar Stripped Classical style, and with Art Deco features, completed in 1940,⁸⁴ has been recommended for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places, as has Commonwealth Bank, Mount Lawley, in the Interwar Art Deco style, completed in 1938.

Of the 32 banks on the State Register of Heritage Places, 11 are two-storey bank buildings, of which only 4 are constructed wholly or in part in the Stripped Classical Style.

- P01816 *Commonwealth Bank*, Narrogin, (1940) is designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical Style, with Art Deco features.
- P04575 *Commonwealth Bank*, Bunbury, (1928), is wholly designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical style.
- P01871 *Commonwealth Bank* Northam (1923), designed in the Interwar Beaux Arts style, has both Interwar Art Deco, and Interwar Stripped Classical features.
- P06607 Commonwealth Bank, Mt Lawley (1938), and P13456 Commonwealth Bank, Geraldton (fmr), (1938), which are not on the Register, are both designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical style, with Art Deco features.

Other banks in the Stripped Classical style include the following places, only one of which is on the Register:

- P14764 *National Bank (fmr)*, Northbridge, 1921. This place is registered as part of a precinct, P3795.
- P1498 National Bank, Manjimup, (1914)
- P8220, Bank of New South Wales (fmr), Corrigin (1926)
- P00243, Bank of New South Wales, Bridgetown, (1938) also a two-storey bank.
- P00453 Bankwest Building, Carnamah (1930).

Therefore, *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* is one of a relatively small number of two-storey interwar bank buildings in the Interwar Stripped Classical design style in this State. According to the HCWA database *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* is also the only building designed in the Interwar Stripped Classical style in the Great Southern region. *Commonwealth Bank, Katanning* exemplifies the creative and design excellence that characterised the expansive building programme undertaken by the Commonwealth Bank in Western Australia in the period 1928-40.

⁸² Register Document, Commonwealth Bank, Northam, HCWA Place No. 01871, p. 1.

⁸³ *ibid*, p. 6.

⁸⁴ Description, HCWA Place No. 1816.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Courtesy Commonwealth Bank Archives, Sydney:

‘Commonwealth Bank of Australia Representation at Katanning WA’

Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning WA, Site and Purchase, 1934-35

Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Katanning WA, Building Construction, 1935-38

Commonwealth Bank, Katanning W. A. Building Renovations, 1939-55

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may reveal additional information about the place, including when the maid’s room shown on the 1936 plan was converted to a laundry, and regarding removal of outbuildings.

The 1966 Floor Plans were not located.