



## 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)

- 3.16.1 Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 4.2 Supplying urban services

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

- 111 Depression & Boom
- 404 Community services & utilities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is a fine, restrained example a two storey brick fire station, in the Inter-War Free Classical style. (Criterion 1.1)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is a landmark as a distinctively styled, two storey building built on the front boundary of the lot. (Criterion 1.3)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is part of a civic precinct that includes the two buildings that make up the North Perth Town Hall to the north-west, the former North Perth Post Office to the immediate west, and St. Hilda's Anglican Church, a precinct that has high aesthetic value as a late nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* demonstrates the practice of a fire station and brigade accommodation in a two storey fire station building, of which it is significant example. (Criterion 2.1)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is important as an example of the practice of siting a fire station building in a precinct of public buildings, a common

\* 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.

practice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which had become uncommon by 1926. (Criterion 2.2)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is associated with the rapid expansion of the North Perth area in the late gold boom and early Inter-War period. (Criterion 2.2)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is representative of architecturally designed fire stations built between 1909 and 1929. (Criterion 2.2)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was one of the first fire stations designed by Architect K. C. Duncan, designer of the majority of fire stations built in Western Australia, 1930-60, who was an office bearer and life member of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Association. (Criterion 2.3)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was the first fire training school in the Western Australia, opened in 1957. (Criterion 2.3)

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

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

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is valued by the community of the Town of Vincent as the fire station for North Perth and by the past employees and trainees. (Criterion 4.1)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* contributes to the community's sense of place as part of a precinct of public buildings in View Street, North Perth, all of which have high aesthetic value and all of which were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is one of a small number of extant two storey fire stations built in Western Australia, and is one of only five extant fire stations built in the metropolitan area in the pre 1929 period. (Criterion 5.1)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* demonstrates the distinctive custom and design of a purpose built two storey fire station with brigade accommodation, which is no longer practised in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.2)

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is rare as part of a civic group that includes a fire station in the metropolitan area. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is representative of the design of substantial architecturally designed two storey fire stations built in Western Australia, built in the metropolitan area in the Inter-War period. (Criterion 6.1)

Notwithstanding the adaptations made to parts of the place, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is representative of the design and operation of metropolitan area fire stations in the Inter-War period. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is generally in good condition. There is local deterioration in mortar jointing; some damage to the tiled roof, and the weather side joinery is suffering the impact of long exposure. The floor slabs to outbuildings can still be seen near the eastern boundary in the rear yard. There have been a number of changes made through time that have not impacted on condition.

In 2003, the owners have embarked on a number of projects to adapt the place for contemporary living and have addressed some of the deterioration issues.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* retains a high degree of integrity. The place has not been used as a fire station since the early 1960s, but the residential function and vehicle parking functions have continued. The original intent is reasonably obvious and the current use compatible. The heritage value of the place is capable of being sustained.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The exterior of the place remains remarkably intact with minor changes including filling in of the open front verandah with a glass screen, replacement of the appliance room doors, and some alterations to windows on the side and rear elevations, together with the inclusion of a suspended deck at the rear. The Marseilles pattern tiled roof is original. The principal rooms are remarkably intact, with the exception of the room that has been adapted for a kitchen, and the bathroom areas.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

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

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is a two storey brick and tile fire station in the Inter-War Free Classical style, designed by Architect K. C. Duncan, and built by C. Grayson for the Western Australian Fire Brigade Board in 1926.

In 1850, convict transportation to the Swan River Colony commenced. The Pensioner Guards responsible for the convicts provided the first ready labour force in the Colony from which a fire brigade may have been established, and a fire engine was imported for their use in 1862.<sup>1</sup> In 1885, the first volunteer fire brigade in Western Australia was formed at Fremantle; and in Perth, the first formal unit was formed under the Perth City Council, which operated from under the Perth Town Hall.<sup>2</sup> However, it was not until the gold boom period of the 1890s, when population increased dramatically and tent towns sprang up in urban areas and on the goldfields, with their heightened risk of fire, that numerous additional fire brigades were established. In late 1895, the destruction of many shops and residences by a major fire at Coolgardie, led to the formation of a volunteer fire brigade. Similar brigades were formed also at Cue, Brown Hill (later re-established as North Kalgoorlie) and Esperance.<sup>3</sup>

Most volunteer fire brigades at this period operated from municipal buildings or sites in return for their voluntary efforts. From 1895, the Government provided some financial assistance to volunteer fire brigades for the purchase of fire engines at Fremantle in 1895, and Perth in 1897, the only brigade that included two permanent members in addition to volunteers, and thereafter at Bunbury, Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Geraldton and Boulder.<sup>4</sup>

In 1898, the Western Australian Fire Brigades' Association was formed. Although members of the Association were from Perth Brigade, there was also strong representation from both the Murchison and Eastern goldfields.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Battye, J. S. *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia* (The Cyclopedia Company, Perth, 1912-13) Vol. 2, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> *A Centenary of Service: Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia 1899-1999* (Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, Perth, 1999) p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, Kenneth A. *Ready, Aye Ready: A History of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Movement in Western Australia*, Wills, Moira (Ed.) (The Western Australian Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association, (Inc.) and the League of Champion Firemen, Perth, 1989) p. 58 and p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> Battye, J. S. op. cit., pp. 405-406.

<sup>5</sup> 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' Prepared by the Department of Contract and Management Services for the Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia, August 1997.

In 1898, the Fire Brigades Act was passed, which established a Board, nominated by the contributors, namely the Government, fire-underwriters, and municipalities, the latter having the choice as to whether they availed themselves of the provisions of the Act, to control and maintain fire fighting services within Perth.<sup>6</sup> In 1899, a site was reserved at the corner of Irwin and Murray Streets, Perth, for the purpose of a fire station, for which Architects Cavanagh and Cavanagh drew plans. Known as the No. 1 Fire Station, it was officially opened in July 1903.<sup>7</sup>

By 1904, when the Western Australian Fire Brigades' Association drew up a constitution, there were 23 brigades affiliated with it.<sup>8</sup> In 1906, concerns were raised in Parliament as to the number of brigades registered with the W. A. Fire Brigade Board, as only two were registered, Perth and Fremantle (registered in 1905). In 1907, a proposed Act for the Constitution of District Fire Brigade Boards was debated, but it was discharged from the Legislative Council.<sup>9</sup>

In the decade 1898-1908, an additional ten volunteer fire brigades were established, including those at North Fremantle, East Fremantle, Cottesloe, Bayswater, Claremont, Subiaco, Leederville, and North Perth.<sup>10</sup>

On 17 October 1906, Louisa Bell McEwan, married woman, of Leederville, was registered as the sole proprietor of portion of Swan Location 653, being Lot 24 on Plan 2422, 20 and six tenths perches in area.<sup>11</sup> In the future, it would become the site of *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)*.

In December 1909, the District Fire Brigades Act was passed, making it compulsory for fire brigades to register with the Board and for all local authorities to accept the provisions of the Act and to contribute to the costs of the Board.<sup>12</sup> By this Act, the Board was empowered to procure property and also to authorise the sale or exchange of existing properties for fire brigade purposes.<sup>13</sup> In 1910, 10 new brigades were established under the Board's control, which also took over responsibility for 36 existing fire brigades, including the North Perth Municipal Fire Brigade, and set about replacing or up-grading the properties as required in the pre World War One period.<sup>14</sup>

In 1911, the existing North Perth Fire Station, at the south-eastern corner of Fitzgerald and Forrest Streets, was upgraded.<sup>15</sup> In 1912, an adjoining site was purchased 'with the view to enlargement of that station when funds are available', and alterations and additions were made to the fire station.<sup>16</sup>

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6 Battye, J. S. op. cit., p. 406.

7 Fire Brigade Board Annual Reports, 1899-1901.

8 Wood, Kenneth A. op. cit., p. 52.

9 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., p. 19.

10 Wood, Kenneth A. op. cit., pp. 36-37.

11 Certificate of Title Vol. 380 Fol. 112.

12 Battye, J. S. op. cit., p. 406.

13 District Fire Brigades Act, 1909, Section 28.

14 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., p. 24.

15 WAFBB Special Committees Minute Book, 1910-12.

16 WAFBB Special Committees Minute Book, 26 June 1912.

North Perth was expanding more rapidly than any other metropolitan suburb in this pre World War I period, during which 150 new buildings were built, including council chambers in View Street.<sup>17</sup> These were built adjacent to the existing Town Hall (1902). Located at 24-26 View Street, The North Perth Town Hall Complex, as the group is now known, has been entered on the State Register of Heritage Places.<sup>18</sup>

In the pre World War One period, most members of the fire brigades were volunteers. A smaller number were permanent, and there were also a number of auxiliary staff, officers who were called upon for assistance when required, being paid according to the fires they attended rather than a regular wage. There was increasing concern regarding the conditions for volunteers, in particular the allowance paid to the auxiliaries, and the disbanding of volunteer fire brigades.<sup>19</sup> In 1912, a meeting between the Board and the Western Australian Fire Brigades' Association agreed it was essential permanent firemen be employed in the metropolitan area, but not in country areas outside of Midland Junction. In 1915, the Board concluded that in general it was preferable to employ permanent and auxiliary staff at a station rather than a mix of permanent and volunteer staff, which was not always harmonious. However, the manpower shortage during World War One did not enable this policy to be fully implemented until the Inter-War period.<sup>20</sup>

In the period 1910-17, 42 new fire stations were opened by the Fire Brigades Board, the majority in the pre World War One period, in which standard designs for fire stations were first contemplated, although this did not eventuate until the inter-war period. In many instances, initial sketches were prepared by the Chief Officer, and the station was built by the brigade, or alternatively under the supervision of a local architect. The Board also utilised the services of some architects for more than one station over a number of years. The most notable example was J. L. Ochiltree, who designed fire stations at Claremont (1914), Bunbury (1915), McCourt Street, Leederville (1926), and Collie (1929).<sup>21</sup>

In 1916, North Perth Post Office was built at the corner of View and Leake Streets, opposite the North Perth Town Hall Complex.<sup>22</sup> The former post office has been entered on the State Register of Heritage Places. This section of View Street was central to North Perth, with the cluster of civic buildings around the View Street-Leake Street intersection, and, to the east, on the north side of View Street, the North Perth School, and on the south side, St. Hilda's Anglican Church.

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17 Batty, J. S. op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 554.

18 HCWA Database Place No. 2216.

19 Wood, Kenneth A. op. cit., p. 37.

20 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., pp. 27-28.

21 Fire Rescue Heritage Database, cited in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., p. 25.

22 HCWA Database Place No. 2215.

In 1923, the Fire Brigades Board renewed its resolution from 1912, that volunteer fire brigades would not operate in the metropolitan area, and subsequently the volunteer fire brigades at Leederville, East Fremantle and Subiaco disbanded. However, Guildford, West Guildford and Queens Park, continued.<sup>23</sup>

In 1923, Architect K. C. Duncan offered his services to the Board. In 1925, it was suggested that his services be engaged in preparing plans for fire stations. From 1926, he and Ochiltree were commissioned by the Board, along with some local architects in country areas who designed stations in their localities, for example, Lavater, who drew plans for Wagin and Katanning.<sup>24</sup> In the inter-war period, Duncan served as a volunteer fireman. He held various positions in the Volunteer Fire Brigades' Association, and was made a life member in 1937. He served on the Executive Committee (1924-42), and he was also Secretary of the Association (1937-41).<sup>25</sup>

In the mid 1920s, there was "rapid building growth" in North Perth, necessitating the purchase of "a more centrally situated site" for the building of a new fire station in the suburb.<sup>26</sup> In August 1925, J. L. Ochiltree was directed to draw plans for a new North Perth Fire Station.<sup>27</sup> But subsequently, the Chief Officer was requested to prepare a rough sketch of the proposed new station, and K. C. Duncan was engaged "in connection with the work."<sup>28</sup>

Duncan's design shows the proposed two storey fire station opening to the street. The engine room is at the west side of the building, having a concrete floor, with a central pit. Three doors open from the engine room: the northernmost to the watch room, which also opens to the street, the next door to a bedroom, and the third door to the stair hall, which leads to the first floor. Further rooms at the ground floor are the dining room, which opens at the south-east to a bathroom, which opens to the rear yard. At the south-west corner of the building, is the store room. External stairs from the first floor are located at the rear. There are five main rooms at the first floor, with a balcony on the west and north sides, above the engine room. At the rear, are a store and a bathroom.

Double doors open from the engine room to the rear yard. The area immediately behind the engine room was to be concrete, then gravel, in which the pole was to be set at the south-western corner. To the rear of the yard, a hose washing trough runs parallel to the western boundary of the lot, and the lavatory block is located towards the south-east corner of the lot. A

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<sup>23</sup> Western Australian Fire Brigades Board Annual Report 1923, p. 3; Wood, Kenneth A. op. cit., p. 60; and *A Centenary of Service ...* op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Wood, Kenneth A. *Ready, Aye, Ready* op. cit., pp. 109-112.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in North Perth Fire Station (Former #1) in Fire Rescue Heritage Database, cited in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' p. 2.

new fence was to be erected along the rear boundary, with double gates to the right-of-way, near the western side boundary.<sup>29</sup>

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was one of the first fire stations designed by Duncan, who was to be responsible for the design of many fire stations built in Western Australia over the next 40 years. In the period 1909-29, a total of 54 fire stations were opened, of which 11 were substantial, architecturally designed buildings, including North Perth Fire Station.<sup>30</sup>

The central location in North Perth of Lot 24 of Swan Location 653, adjoining the North Perth Post Office and in close proximity to the civic buildings, was well suited to the needs of the Western Australian Fire Brigade Board, which purchased the lot from Louisa Bell McEwan on 21 October 1925.<sup>31</sup> It was anticipated that "Building operations will start in the immediate future."<sup>32</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fire brigade buildings had often been sited on land owned by the local government authority, and in proximity to its civic buildings. In some instances, such as East Fremantle, these were located in the vicinity of government buildings such as post office and/or police station. However, by the inter-war period, such siting had become less common, as most new fire brigade buildings were built on land acquired for the purpose by the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board, and there was seldom vacant land available in similar locations.

In 1926, the contract for building the new *North Perth Fire Station(fmr)* at 21 View Street, North Perth, was awarded to C. Grayson, at a cost of £2,572.<sup>33</sup> On 1 April, the building permit was issued.<sup>34</sup> The place was duly built to Duncan's design, and was completed on 11 October.<sup>35</sup> The walls were of face brick construction with rendered pilasters, horizontal bands, lintels, and sills, with a parapet to the main facade, and on the side walls, simple rendered string courses. The windows were timber framed. The roof was a hipped tiled roof, with a gable end behind the parapet. On the stepped parapet, there was a stepped name plate reading 'North Perth AD 1926'.<sup>36</sup> The words 'Fire Station' were on the rendered panel between the ground and first floor, but they have been removed since the place was sold in

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29 K. C. Duncan, Proposed Fire Station North Perth for the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board, City of Perth Archives Building Envelope C274/26, courtesy Town of Vincent.

30 *A Centenary of Service ...* op. cit., p. 110.

31 Certificate of Title Vol. 380 Fol. 112.

32 Quoted in North Perth Fire Station (Former #1) in Fire Rescue Heritage Database op. cit.

33 North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' p. 2.

34 K. C. Duncan, Proposed Fire Station North Perth op. cit.

35 North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' p. 2.

36 North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in Fire Rescue Heritage Database op. cit.



1963.<sup>37</sup> Of 12 new fire stations built in the period 1920-29, North Perth Fire and Northam appear to have been the only two storey buildings.<sup>38</sup>

On 9 November 1926, the North Perth Fire Brigade transferred to the new North Perth Fire Station, which was officially opened on 16 November 1926.<sup>39</sup> In accordance with Section 26 of the Act, the old station at Fitzgerald Street reverted to the City of Perth. It was demolished in 1926, and the site was re-developed.<sup>40</sup>

From 1926 to 1956, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* served its intended purpose. In 1956, it was decided that Osborne Park Fire Station would be manned by the staff from North Perth Fire Station, which was to be closed “in accordance with the first stage of the Board’s development plan for the metropolitan area.”<sup>41</sup> On 28 November 1956, North Perth Fire Station was closed, and the staff transferred to Osborne Park.<sup>42</sup> North Perth Fire Station was duly decommissioned.

From 1957 to 1962, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was utilised by the Fire Brigades’ Board as the first training school, and to accommodate the Board’s Electrical Workshops, which were transferred there from the Board’s headquarters.<sup>43</sup> Previously, there had been little formal training for firemen, who trained on the job at the various fire stations. Half day training sessions were conducted at the *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* by officers seconded from operational duties for this purpose. A total of 31 trainees were inducted into the Fire Service after training there. In 1962, a new complex was built at Belmont, which included training facilities. Consequently, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was no longer required for training purposes, and it was decided to sell the place.<sup>44</sup>

In April 1963, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was transferred from the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board to Jury Tolcon, master baker, of Alma Road, North Perth.<sup>45</sup> He purchased the place at a cost of £4,000, with a view to possibly residing there in his future retirement. During his ownership, the ground floor area fronting the street was leased to a manufacturer’s agent for commercial purposes, and the remainder of the place was leased as residential accommodation.<sup>46</sup> A photograph taken during Tolcon’s ownership shows the balcony enclosed with eight pane

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37     ibid, pp. 2-3.

38     ibid, pp. 3-4.

39     North Perth Fire Station (Former #1) in Fire Rescue Heritage Database op. cit.

40     North Perth Fire Station (Former #1) in Fire Rescue Heritage Database op. cit.

41     Quoted in North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Database, p. 2.

42     North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Database, p. 2.

43     ibid.

44     ibid; and *A Centenary of Service ...* op cit., p. 150. Note: Full time training did not commence at Belmont until 1967. (ibid.)

45     Certificate of Title Vol. 380 Fol. 112.

46     telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 15 July 2003.

casement style windows.<sup>47</sup> No structural changes were made to the place during Tolcon's ownership.<sup>48</sup>

On 10 February 1980, Jury Tolcon died intestate, and subsequently Letters of Administration were granted to Nicholas Tolcon on 18 June 1980.<sup>49</sup> On 15 September 1980, the place was transferred to Wanneroo Nominees Pty Ltd, which took up occupation.<sup>50</sup> At this date, the original doors to the engine room were extant as was the original signage, and the balconies were as in the above-mentioned photograph.<sup>51</sup>

In December 1985, the registered address of the owner was amended to 565 Hay Street, Daglish, and then in April 1986, to a Perth post office box.<sup>52</sup>

In 1995, *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* was included in the Town of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory, which was adopted on 30 August. At this period, the place was in use as a commercial retail store and a photograph shows signage for Side Band Radio Systems above the street entry to the former engine room. The place was afforded a high level of protection under the Town Planning Scheme.<sup>53</sup>

In 1996, the Department of Contract and Management Services undertook a heritage inventory of Western Australian fire stations, which included *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)*. With regard to the physical condition of the place it was noted that the engine room door had been replaced with a roller door, whilst the detailing to the side door to the main facade, which was timber with a glazed upper portion and narrow side windows, remained largely intact. Windows to the first floor had been modified (at an unknown date), although the positions and proportions of the openings remained intact. The recessed balcony over the vehicle bay had been enclosed by aluminum framed glazing (also at an unknown date). Behind the former engine room, there was a brick extension (also of an unknown date).<sup>54</sup> On the basis of an external inspection, the place appeared to be in fair condition, and it was considered that, whilst some elements of the building had been modified, 'the original physical character of the exterior is still clearly visible.'<sup>55</sup> The aforementioned alterations and additions had been implemented in the period 1980-96, without building applications or approvals.<sup>56</sup> It is probable that these alterations included the establishment of a roof top terrace, opening from the rearmost main room at the first floor. This room was

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47 Photograph 0855, Local History Collection, Town of Vincent.

48 Nicholas Tolcon op. cit.

49 Certificate of Title Vol. 380 Fol. 112.

50 Certificates of Title Vol. 380 Fol. 112 and Vol. 1573 Fol. 950.

51 Nicholas Tolcon, op. cit.

52 Certificate of Title Vol. 1573 Fol. 950.

53 Town of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory, 1995.

54 *ibid*, pp. 2-3.

55 *ibid*, p. 3.

56 Search of Building Licence applications for 21 View Street, North Perth, 1926-2003.

converted to a kitchen. All these works were completed prior to spring 2000.<sup>57</sup>

In September 2000, the registered address of the owner was amended to that of the place, i.e. 21 View Street, North Perth.<sup>58</sup>

On 2 December 2001, the place was sold to Andrew Peter Whiteside, and on 6 February 2002, it was transferred to him.<sup>59</sup> On the Certificate of Title, an Easement Benefit was recorded, as per Plan 2422.<sup>60</sup> In 2002-03, he has made some changes to the place, including converting the southernmost portion of the western balcony area to a walk-in robe and bathroom, and alterations to remove the rear store at the first floor to convert the area to a meals area with views to the city and the hills.<sup>61</sup>

In 2003, the place is used as a residence.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is a two storey brick fire station, in the Inter-War Free Classical style, with a Marseilles pattern tiled roof<sup>62</sup>, designed by Architect K. C. Duncan, and built by C. Grayson for the Western Australian Fire Brigade Board in 1926.

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is located in a section of View Street that contains a number of civic buildings including the North Perth Town Hall to the north-west, the former North Perth Post Office to the immediate west, and St. Hilda's Anglican Church and the North Perth School, together with plantings of Hills Figs (*Ficus hillii*) as street trees. The remainder of the street is predominantly residential, with a collection of Federation and Inter-War period houses, together with a lesser number of more recent developments, and the street retains a small town appearance. The civic precinct has high aesthetic value as a late nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape within this broader context.

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is the only building on the site and is located on the front boundary. There is evidence of outbuildings in the form of floor slabs in the rear yard near the eastern boundary, together with fragments of bitumen paving along the western boundary. The documented outbuildings included a set of toilets. There was a hose washing trough also, but there is not trace of the trough. The fences and enclosure of the rear garden comprises a combination on neighbouring buildings' brick walls, brick boundary fences, and corrugated fibrous cement fencing. There are no

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<sup>57</sup> Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Philip Griffiths; and conversation with current owner, Andrew Whiteside, 18 July 2003

<sup>58</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 1573 Fol. 950.

<sup>59</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 1573 Fol. 950.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Site visit and conversation with Andrew Whiteside *op. cit.*

<sup>62</sup> 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. pp. 158-161.

plantings and the ground is covered with mixed grasses and weeds. There is no evidence of any formal garden.

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* a two storey brick fire station, in the Inter-War Free Classical style, with a Marseilles pattern tiled roof. The street frontage is the only part of the building to which the styling is applied. The building is asymmetrically planned, so that unlike most classically styled buildings, the external expression comprises two unequal bays that are made visually cohesive by the application of rusticated stucco pilasters that run through the two storeys of the building, which contrasts with a stretcher bond red brick background. A deep stucco entablature and balustrade separate ground and first floors and the words "FIRE STATION" are just visible on the entablature. The first floor is completed with a stepped parapet with consoles visually buttressing the steps. The words "NORTH PERTH A. D. 1926" appear at high level on the parapet in bas relief lettering and the whole parapet assembly conceals the tiled roof from view from the street. The western side of the station, the widest bay in plan, contains the appliance room and the eastern side the former offices. The appliance bay has a folding metal door in place of the original doors, while the office bay retains a framed and boarded part glazed door, flanked by eight pane sidelights and a six pane hopper light. At first floor level, the eastern side of the building features a large fixed light window with a large centre pane surrounded by a series of small panes, while on the western side, the formerly open verandah has been filled in with sliding aluminium sashes.

The eastern elevation comprises a simple stretcher bond brick wall with a stucco string course, a number of six pane double hung sash windows, breeze block screens to the ground floor windows, and an entrance door to the accommodation part of the station, in a style to match the front door. At first floor level the verandah enclosure has been replaced with mini orb cladding and a fixed light window introduced.

The southern or rear elevation has panoramic views of Perth from the first floor level. Treatments are simple and utilitarian. The eastern side of the building remains largely intact, with its brick walls and original timber windows and one original timber door at ground floor. Two aluminium windows have been installed for the current laundry and bathroom and a door to the former verandah at first floor level has been relocated from the main building line to the verandah. A timber staircase has been removed and replaced with a steel staircase of a plain design. On the western side of the building, a steel construction frame and brick boundary wall have been erected to form additional undercover parking at ground floor level and an extensive deck at first floor level.

The western elevation is set on the site boundary and has a small number of openings that were part of the verandah in the original design and have now been filled in with aluminium framed sliding sashes. Off the terrace, a recycled timber door and casement window assembly has been inserted.

The roof is framed in timber and covered in its original Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles, with rectangular section gutters, a replacement for an earlier gutter type.

There are two floors of accommodation, with the plan form of the ground floor being organized around the appliance room on the western side of the building. To the immediate east of the appliance room lies the offices, with an entrance to the quarters mid way down the eastern wall. There is a kitchen and store to the south that now functions as a laundry, and recently constructed covered area to the west of these rooms to complete the ground floor accommodation. From the side entrance to the quarters, a timber construction stair ascends to the quarters. The quarters are asymmetrically laid out, with a range of rooms and verandah across the front, rooms the full length of the eastern side of the building and an open deck over the covered area mentioned previously, which is a late addition to the place.

Room 1 is the appliance room or engine room and it has a concrete floor, glazed metro pattern wall tiles to the dado, finished with a dado tile, plastered upper wall and a pressed metal ceiling. There is a modern folding door in the north elevation, replacing the original timber doors. The rear of the southern side of the building is open to the rear yard. Panelled timber doors lead off to the east and the office and quarters. The space is used as a garage.

The front room, formerly the watch room (Room 2) has a 5" boarded timber floor, corner fireplace, moulded timber skirtings and panelled and glazed front door with sidelights as previously noted. It has a pressed metal ceiling and a door to the south linking it to the adjoining office. The adjoining office (Room 3), formerly the watch bedroom, uses the same material and has a double hung sash window to its eastern wall, and a large built in timber construction cupboard on the northern wall. The two spaces are used as living spaces.

In the centre of the plan on the eastern side is the quarters' entrance or stair hall (Room 4), which uses the same material and design as Room 1. It has a finely built timber staircase with large square newels, a wreathed handrails and simple vertical balusters.

Adjoining the entrance is Room 5, originally a kitchen/dining room. It has timber floors, moulded skirtings, 6 pane double hung ash windows, pressed metal ceiling, the fireplace and hobs for a wood range, and a set of 1960s period cupboards.

The adjoining room, Room 7 (originally the bathroom) is a single space that has been divided with partition walls to form two water closets. It has glass faced cement rendered walls, a 4 pane double hung sash window, and a framed and boarded rear door.

The final room at ground floor level is Room 6 (originally a store), which has an external door only. It is currently used as laundry, and has a timber floor, plastered walls, a replacement plasterboard ceiling and a 6 pane double hung sash window, and a single pane double hung sash window, together

with a set of shelves on the northern wall made in ladder frame construction. The wall plaster is in fair to poor repair.

Room 10 was an outside verandah and enclosed store, but has been enclosed and altered. It now has a hoop pine ply floor, plasterboard lined and face brick walls, an external framed, boarded and glazed timber door (relocated from the opening to the immediate north), and an aluminium framed window that provides a view over the City. Room 11 (an original bathroom), the adjacent bathroom, uses the same finishes and is fitted out with a modern bath hob, cupboards and sanitary fittings.

Area 9 is an open deck, and is a later addition, with a 1970s period brick wall to the west, a terracotta tiled floor, steel balustrade, and introduced windows and doors on the eastern side into the present kitchen area.

Room 12 (originally simply labelled room) is the kitchen and it has a glazed tile floor, recently installed laminate finished kitchen fittings, a plasterboard ceiling.

The remaining rooms 13-17 (also originally simply labelled rooms) have timber floors, most of which have been polished, moulded skirtings, plastered walls, lath and plaster ceilings, picture rails, and 6 pane double hung sash windows. Two of the bedrooms are carpeted and the living room has a corner fireplace. This room is unusual in only having a fixed light to the exterior.

The verandah that once extended across over half the northern elevation and along the whole of the original western elevations is enclosed on the northern elevation with an aluminium framed window. Most of the western side has been enclosed to form an ensuite bathroom and a walk in wardrobe. Openings have been made in the western wall of Room 14 to provide access to these two areas. The area that remains as enclosed verandah has a terracotta tiled floor, face brick walls and an unpainted asbestos cement and timber cover batten ceiling.

The changes include the loss of outbuildings, and tower, replacement of the appliance room doors, enclosure of the verandah, the construction of the covered area and deck and the introduction of bathrooms and a kitchen at first floor into existing accommodation, together with the uses of part of the verandah as a bathroom and dressing room.

Externally there is some mortar fretting, deterioration of joinery on the weather sides of the building, and some deterioration of roofing tiles. Apart from the laundry area, the interiors are generally well kept and in good condition.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fire brigades' buildings were often sited on local government owned land by the authority, and in proximity to its civic buildings, which, in some instances, such as East

Fremantle, were located in the vicinity of government buildings such as post office and/or police station. Such siting became less common post World War One, when most new fire brigade buildings were built on land purchased by the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board, and vacant land in similar locations was seldom available.

In the period 1910-17, of 42 new fire stations were opened, only four were substantial purpose built masonry buildings.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, in the period 1920-29, of 12 new fire stations built, at least seven were substantial, architecturally designed buildings<sup>64</sup>, including *North Perth Fire Station (fmr)*, which is one of first fire stations designed by K. C. Duncan. The locating of the place within the established group of public buildings in View Street was an uncommon occurrence by the late 1920s.

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is one of only five fire stations built in the pre 1930 period that survive in the metropolitan area, all of which are substantial, individually architect designed, two storey buildings, and the only one designed by Duncan. The others are Perth (1901), Fremantle (1910), Claremont (1914) and Leederville (c. 1926), the two latter designed by Ochiltree.<sup>65</sup> In the period 1920-29, most fire stations built in the country were single storey buildings other than the two storey Northam Fire Station.<sup>66</sup>

During the Great Depression, building activity was curtailed in Western Australia as elsewhere, and no new fire stations were built between 1929 and 1933. As the State began to recover from the Depression, the Fire Brigades' Board entered a period of intense building activity. In the period 1934-38, 18 new stations were built, most of which were designed by K. C. Duncan, who had developed a standard plan for country fire stations in 1932.<sup>67</sup> Duncan's standard design fire stations were of more modest design than those designed in the pre 1930 period, and were generally single storey buildings.<sup>68</sup> During the World War Two period, only two new fire stations were built, at Harvey and Beverley.<sup>69</sup>

In the post World War Two period, the design of fire stations evolved with changes in the service. Since fire brigade members were no longer required to reside at the station, accommodation space was no longer required. Thus the design of new fire stations did not include accommodation, and at the older fire stations often the pre-existing accommodation areas were converted to other uses. A new standard design for fire stations was developed by Duncan, with the original stations

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<sup>63</sup> *Thematic History of Fire Brigades in Western Australia* Department of Construction and Management Services, Western Australia, 1996) p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *A Centenary of Service ...* pp. 110-113. Note: Whilst this text gives 1926 as date of construction for Leederville, in *North Perth Fire Station (Former #2)* op. cit., p. 3, it is reported as 1926 (p. 3) and 1928 (p. 4).

<sup>66</sup> *North Perth Fire Station (Former #2)* op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' op. cit., pp. 37-38.

<sup>68</sup> *North Perth Fire Station (Former #2)* op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> *A Centenary of Service ...* p. 112.

at Osborne Park and Melville marking the transition. Duncan, Stephen and Mercer's standard floor plan designs for fire stations were utilised for many fire stations in Western Australia in the late 1950s and 1960s.<sup>70</sup>

*North Perth Fire Station (fmr)* is significant as one of only five fire stations in the metropolitan area built prior to 1930 that are extant in 2003, one of the first fire stations designed by K. C. Duncan, and one of only two, two storey fire stations built in Western Australia in the period 1920-29 that survive in 2003, the other being Northam Fire Station (fmr). It is significant also as part of a precinct of public buildings in View Street, North Perth, especially as few similarly sited fire stations are believed to have survived into the twenty-first century. The precinct includes the North Perth Town Hall Complex and the North Perth Post Office, which have been entered on the State Register of Heritage Places, together with St. Hilda's Anglican Church.

Perth or No 1 Fire Station (1901) in Murray Street was designed by Cavanagh and Cavanagh and is constructed on limestone in a Federation Romanesque style and is an imposing building in an important heritage precinct in Murray Street Perth. The place was decommissioned in the 1980s and became the W.A. Fire Brigades Museum. Fremantle (1910) is classically derived and sits on the edge of an important commercial precinct at the end of Phillimore Street in Fremantle. It has been decommissioned and is used as a restaurant. Claremont (1914) on Stirling Highway was designed by Jack Ochiltree and is isolated as a civic building in a suburban context, located almost at the mid point between Claremont and Cottesloe. It is a classically derived design and has been included in the Register of Heritage places. The place has been decommissioned and has been used as a café and offices. Leederville (c. 1926) in McCourt Street is also located away from a town centre at a point where Leederville, Subiaco and Wembley join together. It is a classically derived building. The place has been decommissioned and has been used as an art gallery and residence with offices. The whole set of buildings are architecturally designed and are fine buildings.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

North Perth Fire Station (Former #2) in 'Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Heritage Inventory' Prepared by the Department of Contract and Management Services for the Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia, August 1997.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research in records held by FESA may reveal further information about the use of the place 1926-62, and also in regard to the enclosure of the balcony.

Efforts to identify and contact the individual owner/occupier of the place in the late twentieth century, when the place was owned by Wanneroo

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<sup>70</sup> *A Centenary of Service ...* p. 112.



Nominees, were unsuccessful. Further research may uncover the information, and subsequently it may be possible to ascertain further information about the changes to the place in the period 1980-2001.