



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

### Removed Entry

*The interim registration of this place was not made permanent and therefore lapsed on 14 July 2004. Notice of this decision under the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 appeared in the Government Gazette on 27 July 2004.*

1. **DATA BASE No.** 01966
2. **NAME** *Court Hotel (1888, 1905, 1937, 1941, 1955, 1987)*
3. **LOCATION** 50 Beaufort Street, Perth
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**  
Portion of Perth Town Lot W8 together with Lot 123 on Diagram 1819, being the whole of the land contained in Certificates of Title Volume: 1935 Folio: 751 and Volume: 1935 Folio: 750 respectively.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Perth
6. **OWNER** Jane and Nicholas Hart and Janice and Wallace King
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
  - Register of Heritage Places: Interim Entry 14/07/2003
  - National Trust Classification: -----
  - Town Planning Scheme: -----
  - Municipal Inventory: -----
  - Register of the National Estate: -----
8. **CONSERVATION ORDER**  
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9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**  
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10. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
*Court Hotel*, a two-storey stucco, brick and iron hotel, constructed in the Victorian Regency style, and later modified in the Federation Free Classical and Inter War Art Deco styles, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:
 

the place is a rare and early example of a hotel within the City of Perth that has been continually used for its original purpose since its construction in 1888;

the place is an important element of the predominantly late nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape vista north along Beaufort Street as viewed from the James Street Mall. Its massing and scale complement the landmark buildings on the west side of Beaufort Street, including the Old Police Courts, the Western Australian Museum, and the Swan Barracks;

the place was owned from c.1905 by B.C. O'Brien, the first Labor member of the Western Australian Legislative Council, who served in Parliament from 1901 to 1904 and again from 1908 to 1914. He was publican of the hotel from 1905 to 1938, and the hotel continued to be owned by O'Brien's family after his death until c.1950;

the place was used by the Western Australian Trade Union movement as an informal meeting place for most of the twentieth century; and,

the place contributes to the community's sense of place as a well-known building in the vicinity of the Perth Cultural Centre.

The Beer Garden adjacent to the hotel, on Lot 123, is of little significance.

## 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)

- 3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages
- 3.21 Entertaining for profit
- 3.22 Lodging people
- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 7.22 Struggling for inclusion in the political process
- 8.4 Eating and drinking
- 8.5 Associating for mutual aid

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

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 106 Workers
- 311 Hospitality industry and tourism
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 407 Cultural activities
- 603 Local heroes and battlers

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Court Hotel* is an example of a hotel, constructed in the Victorian Regency style, which has been remodelled to exhibit characteristics of the Federation Free Classical style and later, mostly internally, the Inter-War Art Deco style. (Criterion 1.1)

*Court Hotel* is an important element of the predominantly late nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape north along Beaufort Street as viewed from the James Street Mall. Its massing and scale is also complementary to the form of the landmark buildings on the west side of Beaufort Street, such as the Old Police Courts, the Western Australian Museum, and the Swan Barracks. (Criterion 1.3)

*Court Hotel*, together with the adjacent two residences at 30-36 James Street, forms part of a predominantly intact streetscape of late nineteenth century buildings on the northern side of James Street between Beaufort and Stirling Streets and contributes to the streetscape on Beaufort Street. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

\* 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.

*Court Hotel* is among the earliest hotels in the City of Perth, and particularly in the Northbridge area, that are still in use for their original purpose, being been in continuous use as a hotel and tavern from 1888 to 2003. (Criterion 2.1)

*Court Hotel* provided accommodation for large numbers of lodgers in the late nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, an activity that was once prominent in the immediate area. (Criterion 2.1)

*Court Hotel* was part of the development of the southernmost part of Beaufort Street around the time of the de-commissioning of the Old Perth Gaol in the late 1880s. It is also associated with the expansion of the population of Western Australia following the discovery of gold in the mid-1880s. (Criterion 2.2)

*Court Hotel* was owned from c.1905 by B.C. O'Brien, the first Labor member of the Western Australian Legislative Council, who served in Parliament from 1901 to 1904 and again from 1908 to 1914. He was publican of the hotel from 1905 to 1938, and the hotel continued to be owned by O'Brien's family after his death until c.1950. (Criterion 2.3)

*Court Hotel* was remodelled in 1937 under the hand of Perth architect, W.G. Bennett. During the mid to late 1930s, Bennett was responsible for the renovation of a number of existing late nineteenth and early twentieth century hotels and the building of new hotels in the modern styles fashionable at the time. (Criterion 2.3)

### 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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### 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Court Hotel* was used by the Western Australian Trade Union movement as an informal meeting place for most of the twentieth century. (Criterion 4.1)

*Court Hotel* is an important social meeting place for the gay and lesbian community in Perth, who have used its facilities since the early 1990s. (Criterion 4.1)

*Court Hotel* contributes to the general community's sense of place, as a well-known building in the vicinity of the Perth Cultural Centre. (Criterion 4.2)

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

*Court Hotel* is a rare and early example of a hotel within the City of Perth that has been continually used for its original purpose since its construction in 1888. The relatively unchanged rear wing demonstrates the standard of accommodation, which was provided in late nineteenth century hotels, and is unusual in that it continues to be used for accommodation in 2003. (Criterion 5.1 and 5.2)

### 12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

*Court Hotel* is representative of a hotel, constructed in the Victorian Regency style, which has been remodelled to exhibit characteristics of the Federation Free Classical style and later, mostly internally, the Inter-War Art Deco style of architecture. It provides some evidence of the functions of a hotel from the late nineteenth century, with a public bar on the ground floor and the provision of accommodation on the first floor. (Criterion 6.1 and 6.2)

### 12.3 CONDITION

*Court Hotel* is in fair condition.

*Court Hotel* has been in use since 1888 and has not deteriorated to any great extent. There is evidence of cracking to the brickwork and patching of the external façade, mainly at the first floor level. The roof cladding appears to be in good condition and there is no evidence of water ingress. The floor to the public bar on the corner of Beaufort and James street has been replaced due to structural failure.

### 12.4 INTEGRITY

*Court Hotel* has a high degree of integrity.

*Court Hotel* has remained in continuous use and is capable of continuing to function as a hotel that provides public bar facilities on the ground floor and accommodation on the first floor.

### 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

*Court Hotel* has a moderate degree of authenticity.

*Court Hotel* retains much of its original form, comprising the main wing fronting Beaufort Street and the two parallel wings, along James Street and to the rear. The street facades were modified in 1905 and again in 1937, and on the whole present as they initially did following these changes, although the verandah to both street fronts has been lost. The balustrading to the parapet and the pediment to Beaufort Street façade have also been lost. Some additional changes have been made to the ground floor windows and door openings on the Beaufort Street facade. Internally the Beaufort Street wing has been modified, more extensively on the ground floor than the first floor. These changes date mostly from the 1937 remodelling, when this wing along with the James Street wing were modified, however much of the original fabric and layout is evident throughout. The rear wing remains largely as constructed.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Wayne Moredoundt, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Palassis Architects.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Court Hotel* is a two storey stucco, brick and iron hotel, constructed in 1888, on the corner of James and Beaufort Street.

The European history of the Northbridge<sup>1</sup> area dates from the earliest years of the Swan River Colony. The Colony was officially proclaimed in June 1829 by Captain James Stirling, and the townsite of Perth established by the felling of a jarrah tree near the site of the future town hall in Barrack Street. It was the first British colony in Australia founded exclusively for private settlement, and the only one to be founded on the basis of a land grant system.<sup>2</sup>

After an area was reserved for the townsite, surrounding lands were surveyed for settlers whose land grant entitlements were apportioned according to the value of the goods and labour they brought with them into the Colony. An 1833 plan for the townsite of Perth by J. Arrowsmith, a

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<sup>1</sup> The name Northbridge was given to this area north of the railway line in 1979.

<sup>2</sup> P. Statham, 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', in C.T. Stannage, (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, 1981, p.181.

cartographer in London, shows the Northbridge area roughly between what would be Beaufort and Lord Streets, with some surveyed lots and streets overlaying a system of swamps and lakes.<sup>3</sup>

The Guildford Road (subsequently renamed Lord Street) was to become the main road from the townsite of Perth to the other major inland settlement at Guildford. Five years later another plan of the townsite surveyed by Assistant Surveyor A. Hillman, and published in 1838 by J. Arrowsmith, shows most of the major streets and surveyed blocks mapped out in the Northbridge area.<sup>4</sup>

As indicated on the early maps for the townsite of Perth, the land immediately to the north was low lying, swampy, and less favourable for settlement. It was also further from the river, which then provided the major means of transport for both people and goods. Therefore, although the major roads in the Northbridge area had been surveyed by the late 1830s, the area's development was impeded until work commenced on draining the swamps.

From c.1848, drainage works were carried out in the Northbridge area, resulting in good fertile soil, areas that could be used for the cultivation of market gardens. This encouraged the spread of settlement from the main townsite, that is, around the south end of Beaufort Street, and sections of Murray and Wellington Streets to the north. This land was mainly taken up by discharged soldiers, artisans and small land holders. They built small cottages such as those shown in a view of lower Beaufort Street, taken in the 1860s from the Old Gaol (constructed in 1853 off Beaufort Street) looking towards Perth. This image also shows the considerable density of worker's cottages that had developed in the area.<sup>5</sup> Having the town's major gaol located in this area would not have made it attractive to the upper social classes of the time.

Convict labour was introduced to the Colony in 1850, and between that date and 1884, the population in Perth increased almost five-fold. The increase in the population meant a greater demand for fresh food. Fortunately the Northbridge area, with its fertile soils and proximity to the townsite, proved ideal for the establishment of market gardens. By the 1870s Perth was surrounded by gardens in a fan shape that spread out from Cole's garden in the east to Leeder's garden in the west.<sup>6</sup>

A major change to the area came with the construction of the Fremantle to Guildford railway, which opened in 1881. This became the main transport route for goods and people between the port of Fremantle and Perth, and between Perth and Guildford. Moreover, the construction of the railway line to the north of Perth shifted the city's main entry point away from the river,

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<sup>3</sup> Plan of the townsite of Perth as published in 1833 by J. Arrowsmith, London. CN150/71c. Battye Library.

<sup>4</sup> Map of Perth townsite dated 1838 by Assistant Surveyor A. Hillman. CN150/17d. Battye Library.

<sup>5</sup> Photograph from Battye library collection, presented with commentary in M. Pitt Morrison and J. White, 'Builders and Buildings' in Stannage, (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, pp.521-22.

<sup>6</sup> Stannage, *The People of Perth: a social history of Western Australia's capital city*, Perth, 1979, p.128.

diminishing the importance to the city of the river approach.<sup>7</sup> In addition, industrial and commercial development increased north of the railway line.<sup>8</sup>

The discovery of gold in the 1880s and 1890s saw a four-fold increase in the State's population and a subsequent demand for rental accommodation close to the city.<sup>9</sup> During these years the Northbridge area was substantially redeveloped, with existing lots being further subdivided for housing and commercial development.<sup>10</sup> Hotels providing accommodation were also established in the area. These included the Beaufort Arms (c. 1890) on the corner of Beaufort and Newcastle Streets (since demolished), the Court Hotel (1888) on the corner of Beaufort and James Street, and the Aberdeen Hotel (1886) in Aberdeen Street.<sup>11</sup>

The area in the vicinity of Beaufort Street, James Street and Roe Street was already settled by 1880. Major buildings in the area included Perth Gaol (1853) and the Perth Girls and Infants' School (1877). By this time, Perth Lots W8 and W9 was the site of two houses on Beaufort Street, a house and workshop on Stirling Street, and a two room cottage and a workshop and a four room cottage on James Street. The major portion of Lots W8 and W9 was owned by John King Churchyard, with the four roomed cottage on James Street owned by the occupier, William Wiggett, warder, while the house and workshop on Stirling Street was owned by the occupier, James Snowball, carpenter.<sup>12</sup>

In 1884, on the portion of Lots W8 and W9 owned by John Churchyard, the two room cottage on James Street was replaced by a two storey duplex dwelling, while a house and shop was built on Beaufort Street.<sup>13</sup> In the Rate Book entry for 1885, Churchyard is listed as the occupier of the Beaufort Street house and shops and cottage, while his tenants in the James Street terrace house were Edward Sherwood, draftsman, and W.E. Victor, Town Clerk.<sup>14</sup>

The first listing of an (unnamed) hotel on the Beaufort Street site occurs in 1888, with the lessee of the hotel listed as J.J. Grant, publican. The following year a cottage is listed as adjoining this building.<sup>15</sup> It was also in 1888 that the prisoners from the Perth Gaol, opposite on Beaufort Street, were transferred to Fremantle Gaol. After their departure, the old gaol building was used infrequently as a courthouse, before becoming the location for the Geological Survey's collection of specimens in 1889, the founding collection of the Western Australian Museum.<sup>16</sup> This change of use of the old gaol to a courthouse in the same year as the Beaufort Street hotel was built suggests that the hotel was named the 'Court' from the time of its opening, possibly in

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<sup>7</sup> Pitt Morrison and White, 'Builders and Buildings' in Stannage, (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, p.532.

<sup>8</sup> City of Perth Municipal Inventory, Historical Notes for those places in the Northbridge area.

<sup>9</sup> Stannage, *A New History of Western Australia*, p.219.

<sup>10</sup> City of Perth, Thematic Historical Framework, p.H/23. (Undated) Copy of document held by the City of Perth.

<sup>11</sup> HCWA database.

<sup>12</sup> City of Perth Rate Books, West Ward, 1880-1883.

<sup>13</sup> City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1884.

<sup>14</sup> City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1885.

<sup>15</sup> City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1888, 1889.

<sup>16</sup> Considine and Griffiths, Architects, Heritage Assessment for P 2081 1 Museum Street, prepared for the Heritage Council of WA, 1998, p. 5.

an attempt to improve the image of the area following the closure of town's prison establishment.<sup>17</sup>

In 1891, the publican of the hotel is listed as North (?), in 1892, T.(?) J. Ivy, and in 1893 and 1894, Bateman and Brauden(?).<sup>18</sup> From 1895 until 1900, the publican is listed as Fred J. Briggs.<sup>19</sup> According to an account in the *West Australian*, however, in August of 1895, the publican of *Court Hotel* was John Quigley who was charged by police with permitting gambling to take place on his premises and with selling liquor after legal hours. By the following month, according to the newspaper, there had been a change of management at *Court Hotel*, with Fred J. Briggs being the new licensee.<sup>20</sup>

In 1897, two new residences, in the form of a duplex structure, were built by J.K. Churchyard on James Street. The Rate Book for this year gives the value of the hotel and stables on Beaufort Street as £6000, of Churchyard's 1884 duplex residences as £600 each, of the c. 1880 cottage of the Wiggett Estate as £600, and of the new Churchyard duplex as £900 each residence.<sup>21</sup>

The first editions of Wises' Post Office Directory, for 1893-1896, list the building on the corner of James Street and Beaufort Street as *Court Hotel*, a name in continuous use to 2003. The Directory also lists the following hotels in the area immediately north of the railway: the Kensington on Wellington and Lord streets; the Governor Broome on William (then Hutt) and Roe streets (now demolished); the Cosmopolitan (now known as the Aberdeen) in Aberdeen Street; the Clarendon on Fitzgerald and John streets (now offices); the Beaufort Arms on Beaufort and Newcastle streets (now demolished); and the Victoria on James and Milligan (then Melbourne) streets.<sup>22</sup>

The vicinity of the *Court Hotel* was undergoing considerable change in the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. On the other side of Beaufort Street, between James and Francis Street, the Old Gaol and the area surrounding it was being transformed by the construction of a Museum (1896-97), Art Gallery (1901) and State Library (from 1903). Also opposite *Court Hotel*, between James Street and Roe Street, structures connected with the police and magistracy were built, including a police lock-up and stables (1901), the Police Barracks (1905) and the Police Courts (1905).<sup>23</sup>

By 1905, *Court Hotel* was owned by B.C. O'Brien,<sup>24</sup> and it was in this year that alterations were made to the external fabric of the building in order to 'modernize' its appearance. While it had originally been built in a simple 'Victorian Colonial' style, with simple corrugated iron verandah roof over the first floor and decorative wrought iron balustrading at this level,<sup>25</sup>

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17 The Old Gaol had earlier been used as a court from 1856-1863. Considine and Griffiths, *Old Perth Gaol Western Australian Museum Conservation Plan*, 1997, pp. 6-7.

18 City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1891-1894. Some of the handwritten rate book entries are almost indecipherable.

19 City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1895-1900.

20 *West Australian*, 22 August and 18 September, 1895.

21 City of Perth Rate Books, Central Ward, 1897.

22 Wises' Post Office Directory, 1893-96. The only hotels still extant are the Aberdeen and the Victoria (now called 'Rosie O'Grady's').

23 [HCWA database](#).

24 Information about B.C. O'Brien found in Obituary in *West Australian*, 13 December 1938.

25 Undated photographs, Batty Library Collection, #5137P, 21357P. The latter image appears in George Seddon and David Ravine, *A city and its setting: images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Perth, 1986, , as Figure 7:7, p. 118, where it is

photographs taken in the 1920s show decorative concrete balustrading along the roof-line, as well as a prominent pediment on the Beaufort Street frontage and the simple verandah roof replaced with a bullnose profile.<sup>26</sup> There were also a number of relatively minor internal changes made to *Court Hotel*, such as new flooring to the Saloon Bar, and the removal of some doors and portions of walls.<sup>27</sup>

*Court Hotel* was owned by Bartholomew Cornelius (B.C.) O'Brien from c. 1905 until his death in 1938, and continued in the ownership of his family from that time until c. 1950.<sup>28</sup> O'Brien, born 1868, arrived in Western Australia from Victoria in the 1890s after a number of years as a drover. He was Mayor of Cue, and also operated a hotel in that town, before moving to Perth. He and his wife Eliza Blanche (nee Dawson) had three children, all of whom were born in hotels.<sup>29</sup> O'Brien was the first Labor member of the Western Australian Legislative Council, serving from 1901 to 1904 and again from 1908 to 1914, when he was elected by the casting vote of the returning officer. He served in the AIF in France from 1916 to 1918, and died in 1938 at *Court Hotel*.<sup>30</sup>

O'Brien's hotel played an important role as an informal meeting place for union members who established the Perth Trades Hall at Shearer's Memorial Hall in 1910, a few doors north of *Court Hotel* in Beaufort Street.<sup>31</sup> Trades Hall replaced Shearer's Hall, and was the location of the base for both the industrial and political activities of the Western Australian labour movement from 1910 to 1985. *Court Hotel* was known as the union movement's 'watering hole'.<sup>32</sup> A former staff member to Jack Marks in the 1960s recalled that 'it was an era when business was done in pubs'.<sup>33</sup> Patricia (Pat) Giles, Secretary of the Hospital Employees Union from 1975, noted that in order to make herself heard as the only woman involved in the Trades and Labour Council at that time, she had to spend time in the bar after meetings.<sup>34</sup> Use of *Court Hotel* for socializing by union officials and members would also have been encouraged by the decision not to proceed with 1914 plans for a billiard room, lounge and supper room in the Trades Hall.<sup>35</sup> The close relationship of

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described as a view from the Town Hall in the 1870s. This is incorrect, and is more accurately dated as being between 1888 and 1894.

26 Battye Library Collection, 3041B/10, 3041B/11.

27 City of Perth Building Files, 660/05, Plan (Alterations) 1905.

28 ..... *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, p.6. notes that this is 'the longest continuous hotel-keeping record for one family in any hotel in Australia', but this is most likely hyperbole.

29 *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, p.6.

30 J.S. Battye, (ed), *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, facsimile edition, Hesperian Press, Perth, 1985, Volume 1, pp. 331-332; David Black & Geoffrey Bolton, *Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia*, Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, Perth, 1990, p.153; Obituary in *West Australian*, 13 December 1938.

31 Although officially known as the Trades Hall from 1912. Ian Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall 1912-1983', *Papers in Labour History*, No. 22, December 1999, pp. 6-22. A foundation stone affixed to the front of the building states that the stone was laid by Andrew Fisher, Labor Prime Minister, on 8/8/1911.

32 Undated photograph of prominent trade unionists sharing a beer at *Court Hotel*, Jolly Read, *Marksy: the life of Jack Marks*, South Fremantle, Read Media, 1988, p.186.

33 Anne di Giuseppe, quoted in Jolly Read, *Marksy*, p.161.

34 Transcript of interview with Patricia Giles, 5 October 1988, part of the Trades and Labour Council of Western Australia Oral History Project, J.S. Battye Oral History collection, OH. 2065, pp. 5-6.

35 Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 9.

unionists with *Court Hotel* is also evident from a 1955 plan, showing an access way connecting the Hotel to the 1934 Trades Hall, which stood on the site now occupied by Curtin House.<sup>36</sup>

In 1923, the Trades Hall was extended to the rear of the existing building, with a large hall (153ft long and 51ft wide), known as Unity Theatre, to be used for large meetings.<sup>37</sup> By 1924, 47 unions were represented at the Trades Hall.<sup>38</sup> In 1930, parts of the original Churchyard estate (Lots W8 and W9) were offered for sale and the Perth Trades Hall Association acquired the four small lots between the Trades Hall and *Court Hotel*.<sup>39</sup> In 1934, the three small brick cottages and two storey shop and dwelling on this lot were demolished and a new building (the New Trades Hall) was constructed. This three storey building, bridging the space between the original Trades Hall and *Court Hotel*, comprised seven shops on the ground level, a sixteen room hostel on the first floor, and two three-roomed flats on the second floor separated by a pergola-covered outdoor space.<sup>40</sup>

In 1948, the first floor hostel of the New Trades Hall building was converted into union offices, with the State Executive of the Australian Labor Federation relocated to the basement level of the building.<sup>41</sup> In 1966, the high-ceilinged Unity Theatre of the Trades Hall was divided horizontally to create more union office space.<sup>42</sup> In 1973, the seven shops, office and residential accommodation of the (new) Trades Hall building was demolished to make way for the multi-storey office building known as Curtin House.<sup>43</sup> Around 1982, Curtin House was sold to the State Superannuation Board. With the proceeds, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) purchased *Court Hotel*, built a new Labor Centre on the north side of the original Trades Hall, and commenced to renovate the latter building. In 1985, the Trades and Labour Council sold the parts of the original Trades Hall that it owned (the ground and first floor offices) to Delaney (Art) Galleries for an exhibition space, and moved to premises in Brewer Street. The ALP subsequently sold its basement space to Delaney Galleries, retaining only the Unity Theatre and the Labor Centre, renamed the Beaufort Centre in 1999.<sup>44</sup>

One important aspect of the economic viability of *Court Hotel* in the late nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries, in terms of location, was its situation within an area popular with boarders and lodgers, mostly single men. Northbridge's central location and proximity to public transport shaped its development as an area providing short and medium term accommodation. *Court Hotel* was particularly well served in terms of public transport, with Perth Railway Station a short distance away, and with the

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<sup>36</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 1772/55.

<sup>37</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 8. Also, photograph of Unity Theatre being constructed, Battye Pictorial Collection, 5764P. A commemorative marker, presently in the lobby of the Beaufort Centre, states that P. Collier, Leader of the State Parliamentary Labor Party, was present to commence the extension of the Perth Trades Hall on 30/7/1922.

<sup>38</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 12. Also photograph of completed building (1934) showing the large pergola-covered roof space. Battye Pictorial Collection, 4405B/2.

<sup>41</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', pp. 13-14.

<sup>42</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', pp. 15-16.

<sup>43</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 16. Photograph of (new) Trades Hall building in 1972, just prior to demolition, also showing part of *Court Hotel* and the original Trades Hall. Battye Pictorial Collection, 4326B/24/35.

<sup>44</sup> Monk, 'Perth's Trade Hall', p. 17.

tramway running north out of the city along Beaufort Street.<sup>45</sup> Also nearby was the Perth Public Hospital, the GPO and other of the main government offices. According to a newspaper account in 1895, the Hotel had around 40 lodgers staying at any particular time.<sup>46</sup> Within the immediate vicinity there were also lodging houses at 30 and 32 James Street (from around 1910), at 36 James Street (from around 1915), and at 34 and 38 James Street (from around 1930). There were also lodging houses at 58 and 60 Beaufort Street (from around 1915), and at 56 Beaufort Street (from around 1935).<sup>47</sup>

Changes to *Court Hotel* occurred in the early 1930s. During this time, the original 1880 cottage at 38 James Street, which had been in use as a lodging house until then, was demolished to provide car parking space for the hotel.<sup>48</sup> In 1937, alterations and additions to *Court Hotel* were carried out to plans developed by Perth architect, W.G. Bennett.<sup>49</sup> Changes included a new lounge, sunroof, internal fit-out and remodelled dining room. Exterior walls were tiled to dado height, with new entrances to both James and Beaufort Street. An article in *Building and Construction Journal* following completion of the remodelling drew attention to the 'lavish and effective use of glass',<sup>50</sup> including leadlight in the double doors to the Beaufort and James Street entrances, the hall doors to the lounge and saloon bar, and the rear doors to the courtyard and fernery, and extensive decorative use of mirrors. Floor coverings were modernised throughout, and sections of the floor behind the bars was replaced with 'Carpetol', a composition flooring. The lounge featured textured walls, a large central fireplace, wall lamps, modernistic patterned carpet, and custom designed furniture. A new staircase from the lounge had wrought iron balustrades with a jarrah handrail and carpeted steps. The fit-out included five bars, predominantly in chrome and blue. The sunroof, constructed over the flat roof of the lounge and accessible from the first floor, was almost 1000 square feet (approx. 93 square metres) in area, with an iron piping handrail to give the impression of a ship's deck.<sup>51</sup> By this time the hotel was being managed by O'Brien's son Stan, a 'well-known sportsman and city councillor'.<sup>52</sup> The article also notes the hotel's close proximity to the Labor Party head quarters, and O'Brien's links to both places.<sup>53</sup>

During the mid to late 1930s, Bennett was responsible for the renovation of a number of existing late nineteenth and early twentieth century hotels and the building of new hotels in the modern styles fashionable at the time, as part of a post-Depression expansion of architecture in Western Australia. In the Perth region, these projects included the remodelling of the interior of the Savoy Hotel, the Esplanade Hotel, and the Bohemia Hotel. The Ocean Beach

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<sup>45</sup> From Beaufort Street, trams ran north and north-west to North Perth, Leederville, Mt Lawley and Osbourne Park; south to Barrack Square and the ferry jetties, south-east to East Perth, the Causeway and Victoria Park, and south-west to Crawley, West Perth and Subiaco. Battye Map Collection, 11/4/13, 1911-14.

<sup>46</sup> *West Australian*, 18 September 1895.

<sup>47</sup> Wises' Post Office Directories, 1900-1949.

<sup>48</sup> Wises' Post Office Directories, 1930-1935.

<sup>49</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 46/38.

<sup>50</sup> *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, p.4

<sup>51</sup> *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, pp.4-7.

<sup>52</sup> *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, p.6.

<sup>53</sup> *Building and Construction Journal*, 10 June 1938, p.6.

Hotel, Cottesloe had also been renovated and altered by Bennett in 1936, while the Scarborough Beach Hotel was newly built in 1938.<sup>54</sup>

*Court Hotel* was one of the many hotels constructed, or reconstructed, in Perth during the years following the Depression. During the later half of the 1930s, the modern aesthetic in architecture and design, and the modern lifestyle of dining and dancing at clubs and hotels, was gaining broad international popularity via the mediums of the Hollywood movie, illustrated magazines and the press. These media were themselves gaining in sophistication through continuing advances in technology. In Western Australia, the local trade journal, *Building and Construction*, carried regular articles about the Modern Movement in Europe, Great Britain and America. It also featured the work of local architects and their achievements. Many travelled interstate and overseas to explore the latest design solutions for their work. The emphasis was on 'progress', new technologies, and a general sense of optimism for the future, which was reflected in the styles adopted for the buildings constructed during this time.<sup>55</sup>

In the case of *Court Hotel*, the external stylistic modifications carried out in 1937 were minimal. The existing verandahs and balconies were retained, while a new roof was constructed over the wing of the hotel along James Street. However, more extensive interior modifications were undertaken. A new lounge area was added on the ground floor, connecting the existing north and south wings of the hotel. Above this was constructed a flat roof, which would be joined to the existing balcony to the Beaufort Street wing. There were also changes made to the configuration of the rooms on the ground floor of the building. On the James Street side of the Hotel, the Bar Parlour was replaced by an Entrance Hall with a new doorway to James Street and the Dining Room was increased in size. On the Beaufort Street portion of the Hotel, a new private entrance providing access to the residential quarters on the first floor was inserted at the northern end of the building. The Billiard Saloon was replaced by an expanded Saloon Bar. In the middle portion of the Beaufort Street section of the Hotel, where there had been two Parlours divided by an Entrance Hall, there was constructed a Saloon Bar and a Public Bar, with a new Bottle Shop between. All three of these rooms had doors opening to Beaufort Street.<sup>56</sup>

Further additions to *Court Hotel* were constructed in 1941 to the design of Perth architect, Claude L. Harrison. A new lavatory block was built on the second floor, across the space between the north and south wings, at the back of the hotel. There were also new covered balconies on the western side of the new lavatory addition, with steps to connect the new portion to the existing flat roof over the central lounge.<sup>57</sup> In 1946, minor alterations were carried out, with new folding windows added to the Bottle Department.<sup>58</sup>

Alterations to *Court Hotel* were undertaken in 1955, when a new beer garden was constructed at the rear of the existing buildings, with a stage area, a

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<sup>54</sup> *Building and Construction Journal*, 29 January 1937.

<sup>55</sup> See Robyn Taylor, 'An investigation into the nature of modernism and modernity during the 1930s in Perth, Western Australia, through the study of specific buildings and related art and design forms', PhD thesis, the University of Western Australia, 1993.

<sup>56</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 46/38; Proposed additions and alterations and specifications, 1938.

<sup>57</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 308/41; Proposed additions and specifications, 1941.

<sup>58</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 486/46; Proposed new folding windows to bottle dept., 1946.

servery bar and ancillary facilities.<sup>59</sup> Minor repairs and renovations to the Hotel were carried out in 1969.<sup>60</sup>

At some time after 1953 and before 1972, a major change to the external appearance of *Court Hotel* occurred, with the verandahs being removed from both the Beaufort Street and James Street frontages of the building. This was replaced by an awning over the corner entrance to the Hotel.<sup>61</sup>

In 1979, The Perth Trades Hall Inc. purchased the hotel.<sup>62</sup> By 1987, *Court Hotel* faced de-licensing because its owners had ignored an eight month old health order to refurbish the interior. According to ALP State Secretary Steven Smith, the delay was due to extensive planning for a major redevelopment of the site.<sup>63</sup> Soon afterwards, the architects, Barrett Koivisto Scatena, submitted plans to the Council for approval. This work mainly involved replacing damaged or inadequate building fabric and bringing internal finishes to required Health Department standards.<sup>64</sup>

In 1992, ownership of *Court Hotel* was transferred to Rodney John Kelly.<sup>65</sup> From around this time, the Hotel shifted its focus to cater for a gay and lesbian clientele. Since then, *Court Hotel* has become a place of great importance to these communities in Perth, being the venue of choice for a wide range of gay and lesbian social functions and activities, although it was neither the first nor the only such venue. Towards the end of 1992, the owner of *Court Hotel* arranged to carry out a series of improvements to the interior of the premises.<sup>66</sup> Further alterations and additions were proposed in 1994. Most significantly, these plans involved the restitution of the original hotel verandahs. As this move required approval from the Department of Land Administration, it was not proceeded with. In 1997, the owners of *Court Hotel* arranged to remove and replace an existing bar with a new fit-out.<sup>67</sup> This fit-out also included replacing part of the floor of the main bar area with compressed sheet.<sup>68</sup>

In 1998, title to *Court Hotel* was transferred to Nicholas and Jane Hart, and Wallace and Janice King.<sup>69</sup> The focus of the Hotel on the gay and lesbian community continued under this new ownership. In 1999, *Court Hotel* was included in the City of Perth's Draft Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places and considered to be of 'considerable (local) significance' (Category Two). The final version of the Municipal Inventory did not include these properties

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59 City of Perth Building Files, 1772/55, New Beer garden, 1955.

60 City of Perth Building Files, 1318/69; Proposed repairs and renovations, 1969.

61 None of the available Perth City Council files on *Court Hotel* give any indication as to when the original verandahs were removed. Plans for alterations and additions in 1938 and 1941 show the verandahs extant. Subsequent plans also give no indication of this major change. Furthermore, an aerial photograph taken on 30/10/1953 shows the verandahs in place, while a photograph from 26/11/1972 shows the Hotel with the verandahs removed and the corner awning in place. WA 124 Metro Regional Run 8 (148-165); 30/10/53 6" 7920'; Battye Pictorial Collection, 4326B/24/34.

62 Certificate of Title Volume 1162 Folio 40.

63 *West Australia*, 11 December 1987.

64 City of Perth Building Files, 53/88; Refurbishment, 1988.

65 Certificate of Title, CT 1935 750, CT 1935 751.

66 City of Perth Building Files, 92/1119; Proposed alterations, 1992.

67 City of Perth Building Files, 97/9518.

68 Hocking Planning & Architecture, submission to HCWA, 29 May 2003, p.6.

69 Certificate of Title, Transfer G988331, 24/12/1998.

as Perth City Councillors decided to exclude from the listing any places that did not have Category One classification.<sup>70</sup>

A redevelopment proposal for *Court Hotel*, together with two adjacent residences on James Street, was put forward in 2002. This scheme, by architects Cameron, Chisholm and Nichol, proposed that the existing 1888 *Court Hotel* building be demolished to make way for an eleven storey 'Court Apartments' building.<sup>71</sup> In February 2003 Perth City Councillors voted unanimously to grant approval for the development application, including the demolition of all the existing structures on the site.<sup>72</sup> A Conservation Order under Section 59 (2) of the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 issued by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards, on 18 March 2003, and was in force until 1 May 2003. Palassis Architects was subsequently commissioned by the Heritage Council (WA) to prepare assessment documentation to enable the Heritage Council to evaluate the cultural heritage significance of *Court Hotel*.

In 2003, *Court Hotel* continues to be used as a hotel and tavern.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Court Hotel* is a two storey stucco, brick and iron hotel on a prominent corner location, constructed in 1888.

*Court Hotel* is situated on the north east corner of the intersection of Beaufort Street and James Street. Beaufort Street is a four lane road carrying traffic north from the city. It is planted with plane and box trees to the western side.

*Court Hotel* is the focal corner of the vistas along Beaufort Street from James Street Mall. The eastern side of Beaufort Street comprises two storey commercial buildings with nil setbacks, dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These masonry buildings, which include the Delaney Gallery and the United Friendly Societies building, display characteristics of Victorian and Federation architectural styles. The notable exceptions to this intact streetscape are the dominant multi-storey 'Curtin House', set back from the street front immediately to the north of *Court Hotel*, and the Myer Megamart and loading bay on the south side of James Street.

On the western side of Beaufort Street, James Street has been closed to vehicular traffic to form the James Street Mall, a pedestrian pathway lined by plane trees, which is flanked by the WA Museum to the north and the Art Gallery of WA to the south. These buildings and the associated open spaces form part of the Perth Cultural Centre. The Centenary Gallery building (former Police Courts) is located at the southern end of this section of Beaufort Street, on the corner of Roe Street. It is a two storey stone building in the Federation Academic Classical style. The Eastern Wing of the WA Museum is opposite *Court Hotel*. It is a three storey brick, stone and terracotta building in a predominately Federation Romanesque architectural style.

The section of James Street running east from Beaufort Street is a one way, two laned road planted with plane trees to the southern side, and featuring a

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<sup>70</sup> 'Municipal Heritage Inventory', 1/100 Urgent Business, City of Perth Council Minutes, 13 March 2001. 'Municipal Heritage Inventory', 1/100 Urgent Business, City of Perth Council Minutes, 13 March 2001.

<sup>71</sup> City of Perth Building Files, 02/393; DA submission 'Court Apartments', September 2002, revised December 2002.

<sup>72</sup> Reported in *Out in Perth*, 1 March 2003, p. 4.

predominantly intact streetscape of late nineteenth century buildings on the northern side of between Beaufort and Stirling Streets. *Court Hotel* returns along James Street, with an open courtyard to its eastern side framed by a brick wall and double gates. To the east of the courtyard are two two-storey paired dwellings, with a two-storey masonry building in the Federation Free Classical style forming the street corner at the Stirling Street intersection. The Myer Megamart, a recent single storey warehouse/commercial building, has been constructed on the south side of James Street between Beaufort Street and Stirling Street, and occupies the entire street block. Where it faces the Beaufort Street/ James street corner opposite *Court Hotel*, it is of a similar scale to the place.

*Court Hotel* is a two storey stucco, brick and iron hotel, constructed in the Victorian Regency style, and later modified using elements of the Federation Free Classical and - mostly internally - Inter War Art Deco styles.

*Court Hotel* comprises a main wing fronting Beaufort Street and two parallel wings, one along James Street and one to the rear. These wings are two storeyed and form a U-shaped plan, which has been modified by the linking of the James Street wing and the rear wing by an eastern wing. A single storey lounge has been constructed in the centre adjoining the Beaufort and James Street wings with a flat deck at first floor level.

The street elevations comprise ashlar rendered masonry with a painted tiled finish to sill height on the James Street elevation and above sill height on the Beaufort Street elevation. The Beaufort Street elevation comprises timber framed double doors to the northern end, with Art Deco motifs to the glazing. There is a single door and a three pane window directly adjacent to the south. The central section of this elevation comprises single doors about a large six pane widow. There are timber framed double hung windows to the southern end of this elevation. The first floor elevation comprises regularly spaced double hung windows and two doors opening to Juliet balconies. All but one of these windows is hooded.

The corner elevation comprises double doors at ground level and a double door opening to a Juliet balcony on the first floor. A cantilevered awning, dating from the mid twentieth century, returns around the corner to the ground floor. The James Street elevation has evenly spaced windows to the ground and first floors with an entry door on the ground floor. The windows to the James Street elevation are not hooded and are mostly double hung with some casement windows.

The rendered parapet features a protruding cornice and an unbroken swan-necked pediment at the corner. There is a tiled capping beyond the parapet and a corrugated iron hipped roof is visible from the street. The tall decorative chimneys feature terracotta pots.

The eastern wing is painted brick and features mostly timber framed double hung windows. It has a timber framed verandah to the western side facing into the centre of the hotel. The rear wing has a skillion roof to a parapet on the northern lot boundary. The rooms to this rear wing open south on to a timber framed verandah. The doors are timber framed four panel and the windows double hung.

The deck to the lounge retains evidence of the first floor verandah to the east of the main wing. The timber posts and roof to this verandah are still extant. The windows and doors to this elevation retain original detailing including multi-paned doors and windows.

Internally, the rooms have timber floorboards throughout, with the exception of some areas of replacement flooring on the ground floor, with carpet to the rooms on the first floor. The cellar under the corner of the building has concrete floors. The public bar to the main wing on Beaufort Street has ceilings dating from the inter-war and post-war period. The internal wall finishes comprise painted render. The render has been stripped back on some sections of wall. There is evidence of a bricked up chimney to the internal wall towards the southern end of the public bar. The entry hall, from James Street leads to an inter war staircase and an open lounge. The former dining room on the east of the entry has an inter war ceiling, painted rendered walls and a fireplace with a replacement decorative marble mantelpiece. At the northern end of the entry hall double doors, with Art Deco motifs, open to the eastern side.

The rooms to the first floor of the Beaufort Street and James Street wings show evidence of inter-war modifications, with ceiling details and Art Deco motifs to glazed doors. The rear wing retains early detailing in the form of corrugated iron and flush plaster ceilings. The lath to the plaster ceilings is visible in the store on the ground floor.

The area to the east of the hotel is reached via an opening, at ground level, in the centre of the eastern most wing. The rooms above this opening are supported on steel columns. It is a brick paved beer garden with palm trees, water features and an outdoor bar. A brick wall is set back from the street front to the beer garden and forms a small car parking area planted with a plane tree.

*Court Hotel* retains much of its original form, comprising the main wing fronting Beaufort Street and the two parallel wings, along James Street and to the rear. The street facades were modified in 1905 and again in 1937, and on the whole present as they initially did following these changes, although the verandah to both street fronts has been lost. The balustrading to the parapet and the pediment to Beaufort Street façade have also been lost. Some additional changes have been made to the ground floor windows and door openings on the Beaufort Street facade. Internally the Beaufort Street wing has been modified, more extensively on the ground floor than the first floor. These changes date mostly from the 1937 remodelling, when this wing along with the James Street wing were modified, however much of the original fabric and layout is evident throughout. The fabric and layout of the bars is a later addition. The most recent ground floor changes involved the removal of fabric, sometimes referred to as deconstruction, and were completed using similar techniques to those that had been considered innovative when applied earlier at the Queens Hotel in Beaufort Street. The rear wing remains largely as constructed, with the exception of a section converted to a suite with ensuite bathroom and toilet. It has a moderate degree of authenticity.

*Court Hotel* has been in use since 1888 and appears not to have deteriorated to any great extent. There is evidence of cracking to the brickwork and patching of the external façade, mainly at the first floor level. The roof cladding appears to be in good condition and there is no evidence of water ingress. The floor to the public bar on the corner of Beaufort and James street has been replaced due to structural failure.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

*Court Hotel* may be compared to other hotels constructed in the City of Perth in the 1880s. It is an example of a hotel, constructed in the Victorian Regency style, which has been remodelled to exhibit characteristics of the Federation

Free Classical style and later, mostly internally, the Inter-War Art Deco style. It may be compared to the Aberdeen Hotel (1886), Rosie O'Grady's (c1885), the Beaufort Arms (c 1890, now demolished) and the Governor Broome Hotel (1886, now demolished).

The Aberdeen Hotel at 76-88 Aberdeen Street, which is entered in the State Register of Heritage Places, has fine aesthetic characteristics, mostly in the retardaire Victorian Italianate style. It is in a similar condition with a similar level of integrity. It has a similar level of authenticity and, unlike *Court Hotel*, little of the form and function of the early hotel remains.<sup>73</sup>

Rosie O'Grady's Hotel at the corner of James and Milligan Streets, was constructed in c1885 and is representative of the design of two-storey hotels, many of which were situated on street corners with public room on the ground floor and accommodation on the first floor. It was considered by the Heritage Council in 1999 to be below the threshold for entry into the State Register. It has a similar plan to *Court Hotel* and was largely altered in the Inter-War period. It has been restored to simulate the original style of architecture. It has a lower level of integrity and authenticity than *Court Hotel*.

The Beaufort Arms Hotel, on the corner of Beaufort and Newcastle Streets, and the Governor Broome Hotel, on the corner of William and Roe Streets, also displayed similarities to *Court Hotel*. They have both been demolished, which serves to increase the rarity of *Court Hotel* within the City of Perth.

Other Hotels in the area include the Great Western (1896, now the Brass Monkey), which no longer provides accommodation, the Clarendon (1925, also known as the Fitzgerald), which is now used for offices, and the Britannia (1897), which is now a youth hostel.

In addition to *Court Hotel*, the Heritage Council's database lists only 20 hotels built before 1890 in the Perth metropolitan area, many of which are no longer in use as hotels. Five of these are located within the City of Perth.

The Heritage Council's database lists Rosie O'Grady's as the earliest extant hotel in Northbridge, built approximately three years before *Court Hotel*. The earliest extant hotel in the City of Perth, constructed in 1882, is listed as the Royal Hotel.

*Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939 Southern Region, Western Australia*<sup>74</sup> lists 42 hotels in the City of Perth, of which 21 have been demolished. Of those that remain, 7 were no longer used as hotels when the survey was published, in 1997. Six were constructed prior to 1890, and a further 11 between 1894 and 1914, six of which were no longer in use as hotels in 1997. (There are no hotels listed as having been constructed between 1890 and 1894). The only pre-World War One hotels within the City of Perth that offer both accommodation and tavern services are Globe Hotel (constructed 1895), which is now a backpackers hostel, and Melbourne Hotel (1895), neither of which are in Northbridge. A further 3 pre-1914 hotels offer accommodation only, and 5 provide tavern or public bar facilities only.<sup>75</sup>

*Court Hotel* is a good example of a late nineteenth century hotel, and is comparatively rare as an early Northbridge hotel that has been continually in use for this function since its construction.

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<sup>73</sup> Palassis Architects. Heritage Assessment for P4061 *Aberdeen Hotel and St Johns Building*, prepared for the Heritage Council of WA in 2002.

<sup>74</sup> Julia Ball, David Kelsall & John Pigeon. *Statewide Survey of Hotels 1829-1939 Southern Region, Western Australia*, November 1997.

<sup>75</sup> Clare Schulz, HCWA Staff, telephone conversations with hotel staff, 4 June 2003.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

No key references.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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