



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

1. **NUMBER** 2429
2. **NAME** *Albany Bell Castle*
3. **LOCATION** 86 Guildford Road, Maylands
4. **DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE ENTRY (GENERAL)**
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** Stirling (C)
6. **OWNER**
7. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE (ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL)**

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Mr Peter Albany Bell (usually referred to as Mr Albany Bell) was born in April 1871, in South Australia, and had little formal education before arriving in Western Australia in 1887 with his widowed mother.(1) For six years he was, in turn, a draper's delivery boy, and inland stockman and a shop assistant. In 1894 he opened a small shop in Hay Street, making and selling confectionery and lemon squash.(2) In about 1898 he made a trip to Europe to learn what he could about the trade. This included a side trip to New York where he saw the idea of flavouring milk with vanillas in practice. 'On his return to Western Australia he introduced into his shops milkshakes which is the forerunner of our present milk drinks.'(3) However, after Federation in 1901, the competition from the eastern States led him to begin manufacturing cakes and pastry.(4)

The one shop expanded and developed into an established tea room business. Dating from 1911, the business was formed into a limited liability company by Mr Bell, who admitted into partnership his two former managers, Mr Albert Johnson and Mr Arthur Allen Lightfoot.(5) By 1911 there were eleven tea room establishments in Perth and three in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.(6) Mr Bell was a foundation member of the Y.M.C.A. and later on the director's Board, a J.P. and a Children's Court Magistrate. Among other public philanthropy he led the fight for the first widow's pension of seven shillings and sixpence a week, irrespective of the number of children.(7)

With the developing tea room business Mr Bell purchased, in 1909, part of the former 'Pineapple Estate' located on the Swan River. Mr Bell bought the property, which extended from Thirlmere Road to the northern side of 'The Gables' flat site down to the river, in 1910 with the purpose of building a 'factory in the garden concept'. At the time, the lower part of the site was used as Chinese market gardens.(8)

In 1912 Mr. Bell built a large brick and tile house with verandahs and towers for his large family on nine children. The property covered some 19 acres down to the river, and the site chosen for the house was reputed to have been the site of the first staging inn for horse drawn coaches between Perth and Guildford.(9)

The need to build a factory is recorded in Battye's 'Cyclopedia of Western Australia', '...but already Mr. Bell's enterprise has suggested the supplanting of this large building by a model factory on the banks of the Swan River, within two miles of the

Perth Post Office, where he has purchased nineteen acres of land, forming an ideal spot for a factory for the manufacture and handling of foodstuffs and confectionery. The abundant water supply is one of the chief advantages of this site, 100,000 gallons of water per day being available from natural springs on the property.'(10)

The principles on which the factory were based are explained by Albany Bell's son: 'We learned some of our ideas from Cadbury's in England who had built a special town called Bourneville near Birmingham in order to make nice conditions for the employees and houses for them to live in. The idea of the Mount Lawley factory was to give the employees the nice surroundings in which they would work instead of the terrible industrial housing that had developed in England...' (11)

The Albany Bell Castle was built for Mr Albany Bell's company, 'Albany Bell Ltd', and was designed by Mr Alexander Cameron, of Wright, Powell and Cameron (now Cameron, Chisholm and Nicol). (12) The factory itself was built in two stages. The first stage of two wing buildings was built in 1914. The north wing was a single storey bakehouse with an oven projecting from it and fireboxes in a cellar below. The south wing was double storeyed, the ground floor housing freezer rooms cooled by Compressed gas engines. (13) The second stage was completed in 1919, it being the central block that was built across the front of the other two. (14) The central block contained a basement constructed with '...special double cavity walls for keeping the place for the dipping of chocolates.' (15)

According to National Trust documentation the name of the builder was J. Hawkins & Sons. It was built after a style Mr Bell had seen in San Francisco and was used as a factory which provided the supplies of cakes, pastries, chocolates and other confectionery for his numerous shops in Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. (16) He employed about 400 workers in the shops and in the factory at Maylands. All received two weeks annual leave on full pay before awards required it. In addition, Kalgoorlie employees received rail expenses and two weeks board at a seaside resort, while employees in Perth received a fares allowance covering 150 miles distance from the capital. (17)

For nearly thirty years Albany Bell's tearooms were popular in Western Australia. However, in 1925, as chairman of the Master Caterers' Association, Albany Bell was involved in a disruptive strike with the militant Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union, lasting more than four weeks. Discouraged by the strike, rising costs and fiercer competition, Albany Bell sold his interest in the business in 1928. (18) In an interview with Mr Albany Bell, recorded in 1957, he does not express disappointment that his time in the industry had come to an end: 'I must have been forty years at that (the tea-room business) before finally the Depression of 1930 was caused by the Lord to empty me out of them and I have definitely believed that all through my life I have been given experiences that has given me a vital interest in the Christianising of the natives.' (19)

Several successive owners took over the building: it was in turn a chicken hatchery, a reserve building for WA Newspapers Ltd in case its St George's Tce premises were bombed during the war, and offices of the Department of Transport. In addition, several editions of the 'daily News' were printed there. (20)

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Information in this section is taken from a Conservation Plan entitled, 'Albany Bell Castle Property', prepared for the Civil Aviation Authority by Ronald Bodycoat, of Duncan Stephen & Mercer Architects, November 1992.

The north wing is a single storeyed red brick building with elaborate stucco decoration to the north and west walls. The external leaf is 110mm brickwork in stretcher bond; the internal leaf is 230mm English bond, bagged and painted. A mono pitch roof sloping inwards to eaves guttering, from a castellated parapet along the north and west walls, is supported on timber purlins and timber trusses.

The south wing is a two-storeyed red brick building, with a single-storeyed addition to the east, both with elaborate stucco decoration to the south and west external

walls. The external leaf is also 110mm brickwork in stretcher bond; the internal leaf in 230mm English bond, bagged and painted. A major addition has been added along the entire length of the north face of the single-storeyed section; toilets and a steel stair project outside the northern wall of the two-storeyed section.

The west wing is a red brick building with elaborate stucco decoration to the south, west and north external walls; comprising a main floor with two corner towers, and a basement. Wide brick archways link the west wing to the south and north wings; the northern opening has been bricked up. Ground floor and basement internal walls under the towers are supported on steel beams and columns; it is not known if this is original or whether the internal walls have been removed at some stage.

The Albany Bell Castle building was not the only industrial building in Perth at the time, of such design. The Red Castle Brewery built in the 1890s, although more classical, consisted of similar imagery.

ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place. The assessment and statement of significance relates to the commercial complex, comprising three buildings of unified crenellated design and set in landscaped surroundings. (The buildings marked north, south and central on attached plan)

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The industrial building's distinctive architectural form, set amongst a garden landscape, provides a prominent landmark in Guildford Road.

The particular character derives from the practice elsewhere in the world at the time - to cloth manufacturing processes in buildings with elaborate decorative treatment - red brickwork, embellished with a proliferation of rendered detail, quoins, bands, battlements and prominent corner towers.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

The building has a strong association with Mr. Albany Bell, an important manufacturer and philanthropist in the early years of the 20th century, when Western Australia lagged behind the other States in developing urban industries.

As the factory supplying cakes and confectionery to Bell's chain of tearooms, the building was closely associated with an extensive commercial venture that contributed to the social life of Perth in the 1900s.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

4. SOCIAL VALUE

The landscaped setting was an integral part of Bell's intention to establish a factory in pleasant surrounds, a reflection of his philanthropic concerns for the welfare of his workers.

The architectural presentation of the factory as a high profile building set in landscaped gardens holds value to the community.

5. RARITY

The building is a rare, surviving example of a factory specifically designed to house a manufacturing process and to satisfy the philanthropic approach to the welfare of workers by its founders.

The architectural expression of the factory building as a factory is rare. Although the building followed the stylistic trends of factories in other parts of the country and overseas around the turn of the century, its expression with considerable elaboration of details, towers, battlements, generous natural lighting and garden setting, is uncommon in the Western Australian community.

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

CONDITION

According to a report compiled in November 1992, the external fabric is in sound condition.(21) Roofs are all modern except for the curved cantilevered awning on the east side of the west wing which is original corrugated iron sheeting painted.

The interiors of all buildings are in a deteriorated condition as a result of the changing succession of uses. Older style partitions survive in all areas of the building together with a variation of floor finishes and services.

INTEGRITY

External - Minor restoration of brickwork is required but rendered decoration is generally in sound presentation, particularly to the south, west and north outer faces where painting has recently been carried out.

Interior - As a result of the successive changes of uses, the original integrity of the interiors has been degraded.

AUTHENTICITY

Exterior - The facades of the building retain a high level of authenticity.

Exterior - Because of the finishes to the original interiors have been transformed and all plant and equipment has been removed there is a subsequent low level of authenticity.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Albany Bell Castle is a place of cultural heritage significance. The place, established as a confectionery factory in 1914 by Mr Peter Albany Bell, an innovator and philanthropist, presents as a distinctive and uncommon group of three separate buildings of high stylistic profile set in a landscaped environment.

The siting of the attractive factory buildings in a landscaped setting has historic and social significance, as a reflection of the philanthropic desire of Albany Bell to provide an amenable working environment for his employees.

The aesthetic significance is in the combination of the strong architectural character of the buildings, expressed in red battlemented brick walls and corner towers, decorated with elaborate rendered bands, quoins and dressings to openings, and the landscaped environment set back from the street on an exceptional site on high ground above the Swan River.

REFERENCES

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2. *ibid.*
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4. Nairn & Serle. 'Australian Dictionary of Biography', Vol. 7, p.259

5. Battye, J.S. (ed) 'The Cyclopedia of Western Australia', 1912, Vol. 1, p.741
6. Nairn, B & Serle, G (eds) 'Australian Dictionary of Biography', Vol. 7, p.259
7. Information contained in a letter to the 'Heritage Commission Special Committee', from Mr A.M. Bell (eldest son of Albany Bell), dated 17 October, 1974. Battye Library, PR8119/1 (Copy held on file)
8. Information contained in a letter to the National Trust of Australia (WA), from Mr R.A. Bell, dated 11 April, 1973. (Copy on file)
9. Campbell, R and van Bremen, I. 'Albany Bell Factory: A Conservation Analysis', commissioned by the Civil Aviation Authority, April 1989, p.1
10. Battye, J.S. (ed) 'The Cyclopedia of Western Australia', Vol. 1, p.741
11. Bell, A. Maston. 'Transcript of an interview about Albany Bell, Pineapple Estate, Chicken Hatchery, World War I', recorded by Chris Jeffrey, Battye Library OH1568, p.7. For more information concerning the Bourneville tradition refer to Campbell & van Bremen, p.2
12. 'West Australian' (East Suburban News) 15 September, 1977, p.2
13. Campbell & van Bremen, 'Albany Bell Factory Building', p.3
14. *ibid.* and Bell, A. Maston, OH74, p.5
15. OH1568, p.14
16. 'West Australian' (East Suburban News) 15 September, 1977, p.2
17. Battye, J.S. (ed) 'The Cyclopedia of Western Australia', Vol 1, p.742
18. Nairn & Serle. 'Australian Dictionary of Biography', Vol 7, p.259
19. Bell, Albany, 'Transcript of an interview with A. Bell about early Perth', conducted and recorded by Rev. A.R. Wright in 1957, Battye Library, OH126, p.7
20. 'West Australian' (East Suburban News) 15 September, 1977, p.2
21. Bodycoat, R. 'Albany Bell Castle Property: Conservation Plan', prepared for the Civil Aviation Authority, November 1992

**8. REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES
(DATE OF GAZETAL)**

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| Interim Entry | 02/07/1993 |
| Permanent Entry | 01/07/1994 |

9. CONSERVATION ORDER

10. HERITAGE AGREEMENT

11. REFERENCES