



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Rocks sits dominantly in the middle of a sloping site. It has a substantial scale for a house in a Western Australia country town and is built in stone. The restrained detail of the exterior is similar in character, if not in detail, to that of other buildings of the period in Albany, including the Town Hall (1886), St John's Church (1864), the original section of the old Post Office (1865) and Scots Church (1875). The stone building and the grounds have characteristics which are highly valued by the community and the stone building, with its restrained architectural character, is strongly evocative of early Victorian style, despite being built in the 1880s. *The Rocks* sits comfortably within the historical and current context of Albany. (Criterion 1.1)

The quality of the views from the building and the grounds, and in particular the panoramic views provided by the width of the site, are notable. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The old marri trees are of some importance as evidence of the original vegetation on the site and for their long association with the development of the property. (Criterion 2.1)

The place has considerable local historic value through its diverse uses associated with civic, military and community functions; regional value, particularly for its time as a school hostel; and state value for its time as a vice-regal residence. (Criterion 2.2)

Its association with three Western Australian Governors provides a certain status to the history of the place on a state basis, but its main historic associations are with the town of Albany and the Great Southern Region, its original owner W. G. Knight, the wounded soldiers of World War One, its time as a Girls School, further military use during World War Two, and the

* 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.

girls and women who lived there from 1950-1975 while it was a high school hostel. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Scientific value specific to the place is limited to performance of an unusual wall construction. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The place is important as a whole for its long association with the local community, which commenced during World War One when local volunteers were responsible for maintaining the grounds and ministering to the welfare of the patients. (Criterion 4.1)

After its demise as a vice-regal residence, community involvement with the property continued with its use for the Park School, quarters for the Australian Women's Service, a private hospital, CWA hostel for girls, Slow Learning Children's hostel and support facilities for the Activ Foundation. (Criterion 4.1)

The building has played an important role in the history of Albany and to the many hundreds of people who have used or lived in it. The building contributes strongly to a sense of place in Albany. (Criterion 4.2)

The name of the property, *The Rocks*, is also longstanding and is important as part of the identity of the place. It is ironic that, on the site, the features which presumably gave the place its name are now hidden from view. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

As a housing type - large scale two storey stone construction of early Victorian style - the building is the only one of its kind in Albany. It is also rare for a house within a town as developed as Albany to remain on such a large land holding. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The important features of the site which have remained constant since the establishment of the property are: its prominence in the surrounding neighbourhood and landmark quality; the spacious grounds surrounding the house which allow for unobstructed views of the scenic landscape from the building and grounds and protect the view of the house from outside the site; and the superb panoramic scenery itself which is amongst the finest in the state. (Criterion 6.1)

The Rocks is highly representative of concepts of house, hospital and school which have all but disappeared from our lives. It is a fine example of a house built not just to house a well-to-do Victorian family, but also as a symbol of their authority and power within the town. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Most of the stone building is in sound condition with the exception of the front verandah which is in need of structural repairs and the rear stair well which has a severe damp problem. There is some cracking around the front windows at ground level, but this is minor for a building of this age. The ensuite to the main bedroom upstairs has caused cracking problems in the ceiling to the boudoir below which requires structural attention. The roof timbers appear to be sound and the whole roof is understood to have been re-sheeted in 1979. The rear section of the dining room has subsided on the northern end due to the movement of stumps below the floor. Overall, the condition of the place is sound.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Originally constructed as a private residence, the place has been put to diverse public uses over the years, most recently as a holiday venue for the disabled. Nevertheless, the original intent of the place remains visually obvious and the current owner plans to use it as a private residence, thus restoring its integrity. The integrity of the place is high.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has been re-roofed, the floor around the rear stairwell has been replaced with concrete and the stud framed buildings to the rear have been much changed over the years. Surfaces have been reclad and windows replaced. The bathrooms to the rear have been completely refitted on at least two occasions. Nevertheless, the overall structural frame and roof form is largely unchanged. The authenticity of the place is moderate.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Donaldson Smith & Hooke and Oline Richards, 'Reserve 27280 "The Rocks", Albany, Conservation Plan', prepared for the Building Management Authority, August 1994.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to Donaldson Smith & Hooke and Oline Richards, 'Reserve 27280 "The Rocks", Albany, Conservation Plan', prepared for the Building Management Authority, August 1994.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to Donaldson Smith & Hooke and Oline Richards, 'Reserve 27280 "The Rocks", Albany, Conservation Plan', prepared for the Building Management Authority, August 1994.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

Donaldson Smith & Hooke and Oline Richards, 'Reserve 27280 "The Rocks", Albany, Conservation Plan', prepared for the Building Management Authority, August 1994.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
