



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)

- 7.5 Developing local administrative structures and authorities
- 7.5.7 Dispensing justice

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 403 Social and civic activities – law and order

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is an example of architecture designed by the Colonial Architect George Temple Poole. It exhibits the aesthetic qualities of regional vernacular architecture, in a simple and conservative design, with some influences of Victorian Regency architecture. Hillson Beasley's addition in 1911 was similarly simple and conservative in design. (Criterion 1.1)

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is located in a prominent position in Antares Street, Southern Cross, between the post office and school, in the original government sector, and is opposite the civic centre of Southern Cross. It contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the civic and government cultural environment of Southern Cross. *Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr)* makes an important contribution to the unity of the Antares streetscape. The building also stands alone as an individual element in the streetscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is integral within the historic fabric of Southern Cross and, together with the post office and quarters, was part of the first permanent government complex in the Eastern Goldfields. (Criterion 2.1)

* 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 House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is associated with the administration of civic and mining law in the Yilgarn goldfields since 1892 and, as a result, is associated with the mining and economical development of Southern Cross between 1892 and c. 1975. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

With the support of the Government, *Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr)* was constructed at the instigation of Michael John Finnerty, who was appointed Warden of the Yilgarn in May 1889 and was Resident Magistrate for the Southern Cross district from January 1891. (Criterion 2.3)

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is associated with various resident magistrates, wardens and mining Registrars who have worked and/or lived at the place. Other associations include all the prospectors and miners who had dealings with the Mining Registrar's office and court between 1892 and c. 1975. (Criterion 2.3)

Of more recent significance are the associations with the Shire of Yilgarn who took over ownership to conserve the place for the Southern Cross and Yilgarn district communities, the Southern Cross Historical Society and the Yilgarn History Museum committee, who manage the place and maintain a volunteer roster to present the place to the public. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) has the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of cultural history as a research or teaching site. The use of local clay fired bricks and gimlet roof rafters and floor frame timbers is unusual in a government building and demonstrates the conditions in Southern Cross in 1892 when it was constructed. (Criterion 3.1)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is highly valued by the community of Southern Cross and the Yilgarn district, and the wider community of Western Australia for social, cultural and aesthetic reasons as the first permanent structure built by the Government in the Eastern Goldfields. It is valued for the associations with the development of the goldfields and the most prosperous period in the history of Western Australia in the 1890s. The associations with the continued development of the Yilgarn Goldfields is significant. (Criterion 4.1)

More recently the social significance of the place is demonstrated by the daily opening of the place as the Yilgarn History Museum, representing the history of the region. (Criterion 4.1)

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) contributes to the community's sense of place through its association with mining, the courts, and as a museum. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) is part of an uncommon structure. In 1892, it was built in conjunction with the adjoining post office and quarters, and originally included the Warden's quarters. In 1901, the singular government building was split into two separate ownerships; the Federal Government had ownership of the post office and quarters, and the

Courthouse and Warden's quarters became State Government owned. (Criterion 5.1)

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) demonstrates a distinctive way of life associated with the administration and control of mining and other legislation in the Yilgarn district, which is no longer practised. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The former Court House is a representative example of a regional vernacular design by George Temple Poole. Similarly, the Registrar's office addition, designed by Hillson Beasley, is a contrast to the other designs he was undertaking at the time. Both architects demonstrated the constraints of the remote goldfields location in the practical design solutions and use of local materials. (Criterion 6.1)

Court House & Registrar's Office (fmr) clearly demonstrates and represents a range of activities associated with the way of life for people associated with the administration of civic and mining law in the goldfields between 1892 and c. 1975. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The present condition of the place is, for the most part, good. Although maintenance takes place on a regular basis, there are some elements which require attention.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The original intention is clear despite the demolition of the adjoining dwelling in the 1950s, and the presentation of the place as a Museum. The place has retained a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The 1892 fabric is intact, except for some minor alterations when the Registrar's office was added in 1911, and some minor alterations after the demolition of the adjoining quarters in the 1950s. The 1911 fabric remains intact. The place has a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, 'Yilgarn History Museum Courthouse & Mining Registrar's Office Building (fmr) Conservation Plan' prepared for Shire of Yilgarn in August 1999.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, 'Yilgarn History Museum Courthouse & Mining Registrar's Office Building (fmr) Conservation Plan' prepared for Shire of Yilgarn in August 1999.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, 'Yilgarn History Museum Courthouse & Mining

Registrar's Office Building (fmr) Conservation Plan' prepared for Shire of Yilgarn in August 1999.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a Comparative Analysis refer to Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, 'Yilgarn History Museum Courthouse & Mining Registrar's Office Building (fmr) Conservation Plan' prepared for Shire of Yilgarn in August 1999.

13.4 REFERENCES

Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant, 'Yilgarn History Museum Courthouse & Mining Registrar's Office Building (fmr) Conservation Plan' prepared for Shire of Yilgarn in August 1999.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
