



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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)

- 2.4 Migrating
- 2.5 Promoting settlement
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 6.4 Building a system of higher education

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 101 Immigration, emigration and refugees
- 402 Education & science

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Balcatta Senior High School is a fine example of Post World War Two Mediterranean style architecture. Its planning takes traditional high school principles and generates generous patterns of movement and a rich variety of internal and external spaces. (Criterion 1.1)

Balcatta Senior High School is a fine example of the work of prominent Western Australian architect, Marshall Clifton. (Criterion 1.2)

Balcatta Senior High School, with its Post World War Two Mediterranean style buildings set on undulating open grounds in a suburban residential setting, has some fine landscape elements that contrast with the buildings in a pleasing manner. It shares these qualities with a number of high schools developed at the same period, but is set apart by the resort-like atmosphere created by the intimate scale of the courtyards, that complements the architectural style. (Criterion 1.3)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Balcatta Senior High School is representative of the post World War Two expansion of the northern suburbs of the Perth metropolitan area. The diverse ethnic and cultural diversity that resulted from post war immigration to the area has had a significant role in the demographic make up of the school over time. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

Balcatta Senior High School was established from 1966 to cater for the wave of children born after World War Two, including many migrant children in the local area, who began reaching high school age from the late 1950s, and continues to promote itself as a multicultural school. (Criterion 2.2)

Balcatta Senior High School is representative of the number of post World War Two secondary schools built in Western Australia as a result of the reorganisation of the existing secondary education system following the introduction of the Education Department's 'Co-educational Comprehensive Community High Schools' policy. Following changes to the secondary school curriculum in the 1960s, it was developed as the second specialist art school in the state. (Criterion 2.2)

Balcatta Senior High School has continued to offer secondary courses to high school aged students from its opening in 1967 up to the present day (March 2011). (Criterion 2.2)

Balcatta Senior High School was designed by prominent Western Australian architect Marshall Clifton, who designed many notable buildings in the State and was particularly known for his use of Mediterranean styling. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Balcatta Senior High School has social value to the teachers, students and individuals who have either worked at, attended or have associations with the school from the time of its opening in 1967 up to the present (November 2009), especially those who have benefited from the school's acclaimed art and dance programs. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Balcatta Senior High School is unusual in that Marshall Clifton produced a school in the Post World War Two Mediterranean style, an application that was little used in the production of school buildings. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Balcatta Senior High School is representative of the secondary schools built in Western Australia during the early post World War Two period following the introduction of the Education Department's 'Co-educational Comprehensive Community High Schools' policy. Since this time, the development of the site has continued to reflect changes and patterns in Education Department policy. Some of these have included: the construction of the science blocks in 1969 as part of

the Commonwealth Laboratories grants program; the construction of the prevocational centre in c. 1969 and its establishment as an arts school in 1973 following the introduction of a streamed educational program; and, the provision of a more specialised library complex in 1974 due to the developing role of library services as part of the general curriculum. (Criterion 6.2)

Balcatta Senior High School was part of a group of early commissions by private architects, in this case Marshall Clifton, breaking the long tradition of high school design by members of the Public Works Department Architectural Division (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Balcatta Senior High School has had regular care and maintenance in recent times. Overall the place is in good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The place continues to serve its original function. There have been changes in teaching methods and in the available subject range, and the school has adapted to provide spaces for these changes. It retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Balcatta Senior High School has continued to evolve through time with a series of cumulative changes. Most of the changes involved further development of the site and the construction of new buildings, either to provide entirely new facilities, or to replace or upgrade previous ones. The existing buildings have been adapted to meet with changing standards and courses. Typical changes include the introduction of carpets or vinyl flooring, improved lighting and ceiling mounted sweep fans, and removal of lockers. Many of the changes have had little impact on the original fabric so that overall the place retains a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Philip Griffiths Architects with Kristy Bizzaca, historian, in November 2009, with amendments and/or additions by Office of Heritage staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Balcatta Senior High School is predominantly a single storey linear plan brick and concrete construction and tiled roof high school complex, set on undulating open grounds in an urban residential setting, principally developed between 1966-1969 in three main stages in the Post World War Two Mediterranean style¹, with numerous additions in matching and contrasting styles. The additions include the Prevocational Centre (1972), Ceramic Centre (1973), Library (1974), Gymnasium and Hall (W.K. Moir Centre) (1980), and the Specialist Art Centre (1990). Other elements include a kiln shed adjacent to the Ceramic Centre.

When Inspector General of Education Cyril Jackson was brought out from England in 1896, part of his duties for the Education Department was to develop a technical education system for post primary aged (secondary) children.² Jackson's, and later Inspector General Cecil Andrews', work resulted in the establishment and provision of a progressive education system from infants schools through to university.³ In the 1900s, Andrews developed the central school system to enable the children of upper level classes to gain the level of junior certificate. Eight of the largest metropolitan schools and two of the Goldfields schools were made Central Schools circa 1909 and the three-year junior certificate courses were introduced.⁴ As part of the newly established post primary/secondary education system, in 1911 Western Australia's first high school, Perth Modern School, was constructed and offered all the modern facilities available to private school students as well as technical education.⁵ In 1918, five-year classes were offered at Perth Modern School.⁶

Up to the construction of the high school at Kent Street in 1939/1940 and its subsequent reclassification to a five-year high school in 1946, Perth Modern School was the only government senior high school in the Perth metropolitan area. The remaining secondary schools in the metropolitan area were 'central schools' with the other senior high schools located in rural Western Australia. Secondary education was substantially provided by private schools.⁷

¹ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, pp 244-247. This describes a similar style as Late Twentieth-Century Perth Regional style. However, Balcatta is much better described as Mediterranean style.

² Palassis Architects, 'Conservation Plan for Perth Modern School', prepared for CAMS, March 1998, Vol. 1, p. 95.

³ Centre for WA History (Gregory, J. & Smith, L.), 'A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia', prepared for the Building Management Authority, 1995, pp. xi, 19 – 23.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 19 – 20.

⁵ 'Conservation Plan for Perth Modern School', op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 20 – 21.

⁶ Heritage & Conservation Professionals, 'John Curtin College of the Arts', 28/8/2001, HCWA assessment documentation, p. 15.

⁷ Heritage & Conservation Professionals, op. cit., p. 15; Education Department Annual Report, 1947, p. 6; Education Department Annual Report, 1951, p. 10.

In the early years of the post World War Two period, Western Australia's secondary education policy was considerably changed and, in the eyes of the administration of the time, in so doing became a more non-selective, comprehensive, co-educational system.⁸ The reorganisation of this area of the state's education system was due to various factors, which included the implementation of a new Education Act in 1944 that allowed for free secondary education, increased economic prosperity, changing educational techniques, and also an awareness within the community of the benefits of education.⁹ In July 1946, the central schools, with the exception of Boulder and Kalgoorlie, were reclassified as high schools resulting in the establishment of six five-year senior high schools and 11 three-year high schools; 17 high schools in total.¹⁰ This was followed by the reorganisation of all high schools and staff in order to meet the new requirements and the introduction of 'Co-educational Comprehensive Community High Schools', thus allowing children from the age of thirteen to attend the comprehensive high schools without them having to sit the Secondary School examination.¹¹

In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, there were many reports of over accommodation in the existing high schools primarily because of the increase in population in the post war period and the higher numbers of students staying on to secondary education.¹² At the same time, yet another change in education policy saw the reduction in class sizes leaving the existing buildings unable to accommodate the larger number of classes.¹³ By 1949, it was recognised that at least two new high schools would have to be provided in the Perth metropolitan area¹⁴; however, in 1951, the Education Department reported that no money for building works had been allocated for high schools since the construction of Kent Street in 1939.¹⁵

Western Australia's population was increasing rapidly as a result of the post-war baby boom. The wave of baby boomer children began reaching high school age in the 1950s and put tremendous pressure on the existing school facilities.¹⁶ In addition, the Federal Government had vigorously pursued an immigration policy to boost the numbers of Australian workers, including supporting over 19,000 displaced persons to come to Western Australia between 1947 and 1952. Those migrants that best fit the immigration department's criteria were young adult

⁸ Education Department Annual Report, 1965, pp. 9 – 10; see also Centre for WA History (Gregory, J. & Smith, L.), 'A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia', prepared for the Building Management Authority, 1995, pp. 41 – 42, 43 – 44.

⁹ Education Department Annual Report, 1948, p. 9; Education Department Annual Report, 1965, pp. 9 – 10; Gregory & Smith, op. cit., pp. 41 – 42.

¹⁰ Education Department Annual Report, 1947, p. 6. The five-year senior high schools provided for the education of students towards the awarding of the 'leaving' certificate, and the three-year high schools for the earning of the 'junior' certificate.

¹¹ Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p. 44; & p. 43.

¹² For example: Education Department Annual Report, 1948, p. 5; Education Department Annual Report, 1949, p. 5; Education Department Annual Report, 1950, p. 5; Education Department Annual Report, 1951, p. 10; see also Education Department Annual Report, 1965, p. 12.

¹³ Education Department Annual Report, 1965, p. 12.

¹⁴ Education Department Annual Report, 1949, p. 5.

¹⁵ Education Department Annual Report, 1951, p. 10.

¹⁶ Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p.37.

workers, many of whom had young families.¹⁷ By the late 1950s, these children were swelling the already increasing number of Australian children reaching the age for secondary education.

Recognition of the need to accelerate the Department's high school building program was reinforced by figures released in 1953 recording an increase from 57,000 high school enrolments in 1946 to 87,000 in 1954 and estimates that this would grow approximately 1,200 to 1,500 students per annum in the years to come.¹⁸ Consequently, the Education Department announced that 'unless some buildings for High Schools can be provided during 1954, working the schools in shifts will become common practice'.¹⁹ In this same year, the Director of Education, T. L. Robertson, recommended that construction immediately commence on high schools at Midland Junction (later Governor Stirling), Mount Lawley, Fremantle (later John Curtin) and Armadale with the first sections to be opened in 1955. He went on to suggest that work also soon begin on high schools at Tuart Hill, Hollywood and Applecross.²⁰

Work on the construction of the first of Western Australia's post World War Two high schools; Governor Stirling, Mount Lawley, Armadale and John Curtin commenced in 1954/1955.²¹ In February 1956, classes began in the first stages of the high schools, with Mount Lawley and Armadale offering three-year courses and Governor Stirling and John Curtin offering five-year courses.²² Yet, this was only the first stage of each of the individual high schools and work still continued on the construction of second and third stages of the schools up to approximately 1958.²³ Extensive additions were also carried out at the pre-World War Two secondary school buildings to bring them in line with current standards and education techniques.²⁴

The overall design plan for the post World War Two high schools was based on the lineal classroom block design around a central quadrangle ('H' design); a design which had been used by the Public Works Department for school buildings for much of the twentieth century. The lineal classroom block design allowed for staged growth of schools in order to meet accommodation needs and for extensions beyond the confines of the quadrangle to be accommodated. This was an ideal in the post World War Two situation as it allowed high schools to take students as soon as the first stages of the classroom blocks had been completed thus alleviating the over accommodation problems of the secondary

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- 17 Peters, Nonja, *Milk and Honey – but no Gold: Postwar Immigration to Western Australia 1945-1964*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 2001, pp.1-23.
- 18 Education Department Annual Report, 1953, p. 6. These figures come directly from Education Department Annual Reports. It is not known whether they include the number of pupils attending private schools.
- 19 Ibid, p. 6.
- 20 Ibid, pp. 6 & 7. It should be noted that concurrent to these recommendations was the preparation of a report of inquiry into secondary education under V. Box, Superintendent of Secondary Education, in 1952 to 1954. A majority of the issues raised in the report echo those in the annual reports of the time with the Box Report recommending the establishment of large, efficient, comprehensive high schools in the outer suburbs of the metropolitan region. (Gregory & Smith, op. cit., pp. 43 – 44.)
- 21 Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 11.
- 22 Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 11; Heritage & Conservation Professionals, HCWA Register Documentation, John Curtin College of the Arts, 28/8/2001, p. 15.
- 23 See Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 1.
- 24 Education Department Annual Report, 1958, p. 9.

system in the immediate period.²⁵ The Public Works Department Architectural Division had one of its three drawing offices dedicated to the design of education buildings. The entire oeuvre of the drawing office of this period produce high schools on the same aesthetic principles.

By 1962 there were 37 high and senior high schools in Western Australia, 26 of which had been built since 1952.²⁶ Secondary school enrolments in the State increased almost fourfold between 1950 and 1968, with the portion in government schools increasing from 68% to 75%.²⁷

The year 1962 marked the closing of the last single sex high schools as part of the establishment of the Education Department's 'Co-educational Comprehensive Community High Schools'.²⁸ As part of this process, the curriculum itself was under review and new courses were developed and implemented. This in turn led to the changes in the design of facilities for various subjects. In the Manual Training subject area, the use of the original manual training centres²⁹ in the grounds of primary schools was stopped 'in favour of grouped rooms within the respective high schools'.³⁰ Similarly, the old accommodation for Home Science classes was gradually being replaced with rooms with modern equipment and fittings. The 1962 Annual Report indicated that 11 new centres had been opened during the year.³¹

The next year, in 1963, the compulsory school aged for children was raised to the year ending a child's fourteenth birthday.³²

The northern part of what was then the Perth Roads Board (and later became the City of Stirling in 1971) underwent rapid suburban expansion in the post World War Two period as a result of the enormous growth in population due to post war immigration.³³ The population in Perth increased from 30,689 people in 1947 to 84,045 in 1961.³⁴ While residential development intensified in the already established inner city areas like Mount Lawley and Maylands, the outlying areas of the Roads Board such as Dianella, Nollamara, Balga and the eastern edge of Balcatta began to be subdivided and settled in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the driving forces behind this was the State Housing Commission, and there were substantial numbers of returned servicemen granted homes in these areas.³⁵

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- 25 Kelsall Binet Architects in association with Kris Bizzaca, 'A Pictorial Guide to Standard Terminology for Government School Buildings (1890-1945)', prepared for the CAMS, 2002; See Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 1; Education Department Annual Report, 1956, p. 14.
- 26 Education Department Annual Report, 1961, p. 7.
- 27 Helm, M.H. 'The Democratization of State Secondary Education' in *Education in Western Australia*, ed. W.D. Neal, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979, p.225.
- 28 Education Department Annual Report, 1962, p. 17.
- 29 Manual training centres and household management centres were constructed as part of the establishment of the technical education system by Inspector Generals' of Education Cyril Jackson and later Cecil Andrews in the early 1900s. (Gregory & Smith, op. cit., op. cit., pp. xi, 19 – 23.)
- 30 Education Department Annual Report, 1961, p. 18.
- 31 Ibid; Education Department Annual Report, 1962, p. 18.
- 32 Ibid, p. 9.
- 33 Cooper, W.S. & McDonald, G., *Diversity's Challenge: A History of the City of Stirling*, City of Stirling, 1999, pp. 320 & 356.
- 34 Ibid, p. 320.
- 35 Ibid, pp. 320, 323, 325 – 326, 358; Easton, L. A., *Stirling City*, Stirling City Council & UWA Press, Western Australia, 1971, Ch. 10.

Balcatta was rezoned from rural to urban in 1961, and as a result many market gardeners moved further north. New residential developments were opened up and the population expanded accordingly.³⁶

A feature of the post World War Two settlement of the northern parts of the Perth Roads Board, as was the case for other suburbs in the metropolitan area, was the enormous change in the social and cultural demography. What had been places that comprised mostly of Australian-born residents now represented diverse cultures with people settling in the area from such countries as Italy, Netherlands, Yugoslavia, China, Japan and Vietnam. This ethnic diversity can be seen at a naturalisation ceremony that took place in Perth in June 1960 in which 103 people were involved representing approximately 10 countries.³⁷

More public facilities were provided in response to the growth as outlined above.³⁸ This included the erection of purpose built high schools in Mount Lawley in (1954/1955) and in Balcatta in 1966/1967, followed by Morley in 1970.

Secondary schools continued to be constructed throughout the 1960s in order to meet the demand for this type of education in the Perth outer suburbs, which bore the brunt of the post war population boom. In the mid 1960s, school sites also began to be designed by private architectural firms in addition to the Public Works Department such as that commenced at Balcatta in 1966.³⁹ The location of ethnic clubs in Balcatta through the 1960s, including the Yugoslav and Macedonian Club along with three others, indicates the predominance of migrants in the area in this period.⁴⁰

Designed by prominent architect Marshall Clifton,⁴¹ the single storey *Balcatta Senior High School* took an H-shaped form with classroom wings on either side of a central core comprising the administration, ablutions and canteen facilities. Incorporated in the various classroom wings was accommodation for teaching the sciences, manual arts, home sciences, arts and crafts, music and typing. Sports grounds were located to the north of the school buildings.⁴² Clifton's choice of

36 Cooper & McDonald, op. cit. p.359.

37 Cooper & McDonald, op. cit., p. 322.

38 Easton, op. cit., Ch. 11 & 12.

39 Education Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 55; *West Australian*, 24/6/1966.

40 Cooper & McDonald, op. cit., p. 382.

41 In 1929, Marshall Clifton commenced work as an assistant architect at the PWD, which was immediately followed by a short stint with architect George Herbert Parry before he travelled to England in mid 1930. There, he was employed by one of London's leading architects, E. Vincent Harris, and also studied at the Royal Academy's School of Architecture. Clifton returned to Western Australia in 1932. From 1932 to 1937, he worked in partnership with Parry after which he had his own practice. Along with other young Western Australian architects such as Reginald Summerhayes, Clifton became known for his designs in the Mediterranean and Inter War Functionalist styles. Some of his buildings include Coronado Hotel (1940), Flats, 72-74 Thomas Street, West Perth (1933) and Lewis House (1949). (Chapman, B. & Richards, D., *Marshall Clifton: Architect and Artist*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1989, pp. 21 - 23, pp. 47 - 49; Richards, D., 'Clifton: the Spanish Scene', in *The Architect*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 1988, pp. 16 - 20; HCWA Online Database.)

42 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, April 1966, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Elevations, April 1966, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Floor Plan of General Scheme, April 1966, BMW E-CADD.

architectural style reflects a general trend towards European stylistic elements among Western Australian architects around this time.⁴³

The first stage of the Balcatta high school opened in 1967 for the intake of first year secondary students.⁴⁴ A feature of this stage was the main entrance to Poincaire Street, which consisted of a substantial series of connecting arches constructed in off-form concrete.⁴⁵

By 1969, the third stage of *Balcatta Senior High School*, including the home sciences block⁴⁶, was completed.⁴⁷ This meant that the school was able to take its first fourth year students in 1970, formally giving it senior high school status.⁴⁸

It was also at this time, in 1969, that a separate science block was erected to the north-west of the main school buildings as part of a national Commonwealth Laboratory program, which was initially funded by a Commonwealth Government grant system, and later jointly by the Commonwealth and State.⁴⁹ A modernised science curriculum had been instituted in 1965⁵⁰, and as a result specialist science and other facilities had begun to be added to high schools.⁵¹ The first three-room science units erected as part of this scheme were undertaken at Mount Lawley Senior High School, Tuart Hill and Applecross in 1965.⁵² The science/laboratory block was one of the first specialist rooms to be built at high schools and signalled changes to the curriculum as discussed in more detail below.⁵³

A 1969 site plan of the science block shows a separate technical drawing classroom also as being under construction.⁵⁴ Located to the north-east of the main school buildings, this was done as part of the first stage of a purpose built prevocational centre.⁵⁵

Completed in 1972⁵⁶, this prevocational centre represented a shift in the secondary curriculum due to criticism about the large size of the comprehensive high schools and in particular about the level of individual principal or

43 Although the school was to cater for many students from Mediterranean backgrounds, it is unlikely that Clifton designed with this demographic in mind, as he Clifton was particularly known for his Mediterranean style designs, it is possible that he was chosen for th

44 Education Department Annual Report, 1967, pp. 7 & 21.

45 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Elevations, April 1966, BMW E-CADD.

46 Education Department Annual Report, 1969, p. 20.

47 Education Department Annual Report, 1969, pp. 13 & 20.

48 Education Department Annual Report, 1970, p. 4.

49 Education Department Annual Report, 1969, p. 13; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, October 1969, BMW E-CADD.

50 Education Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 17.

51 Education Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 7.

52 Education Department Annual Report, 1965, p. 30; Education Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 18.

53 Education Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 7.

54 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, October 1969, BMW E-CADD.

55 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, October 1969, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, June 1972, BMW E-CADD.

56 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, October 1969, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, January 1972, BMW E-CADD. The January 1972 plan shows new rooms were also being added to the western end of the south-western classroom wing. (Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, January 1972, BMW E-CADD.)

teacher/student contact in the early 1960s.⁵⁷ Director-General of Education T. L. Robertson instigated a review of the secondary education system in 1963 with the main results being the abolition of the scholarship system and raising of the compulsory school age to fifteen years in 1965.⁵⁸ Subsequent to this, the secondary curriculum was changed so as to accommodate the now 'much wider range of academic abilities'.⁵⁹ One of the ways this was done was through the introduction of prevocational courses for students not proceeding to external examinations in 1966. Purpose built centres were constructed for the practical courses; the first of which was built at Belmont in 1966 and followed by centres at John Forrest and Bentley in 1967.⁶⁰ The centre at *Balcatta Senior High School* followed this trend.

These 1960s changes to the secondary school curriculum were to have a significant impact on the development of *Balcatta Senior High School* in another way. The year 1968 saw 'the creation of special classes for highly talented pupils in music and art'.⁶¹ The Education Department's Annual Report stated:

The schools chosen were Perth Modern School for music and Applecross for art. In both cases, applications were called for and selective procedures applied to determine the intake. The students form part of the school they attend for all purposes other than instruction in the special subject. Here they receive out-of-school tuition from leaders in the field in the general community. Already the indications are that both experiments are successful and that the students concerned are receiving a valuable addition in the direction of provision for their special ability.⁶²

In 1973, the decision was made to commence special art classes at a second high school and *Balcatta Senior High School* was selected due to its geographic location.⁶³ To accommodate this new focus, additions were carried out to *Balcatta Senior High School*. These included: classrooms to the north-western wing; photography and graphics rooms to the north-eastern wing; and, a ceramics centre.⁶⁴ The latter was the first centre to be built in a Western Australian high school with the one at Applecross being opened later, in 1975.⁶⁵

Plans were drawn up for a new library at *Balcatta Senior High School* in 1974.⁶⁶ There was increasing recognition in the 1960s of the role of library services in the education of students and, as a result, libraries at high schools were reorganised to accommodate the appointment of teacher-librarians, the integration of library activities and student learning, and to provide a central resource centre.⁶⁷ The first of the specialised library blocks comprising reading rooms, bookstores,

57 Education Department Annual Report, 1960, p. 7; Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p. 51.

58 Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p. 51; Education Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 7.

59 Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p. 51.

60 Education Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 21.

61 Education Department Annual Report, 1968, pp. 20 – 21.

62 Ibid.

63 Education Department Annual Report, 1973, p. 21.

64 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Site Plan, June 1972, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta High School, Ceramic Centre & Staff Room, Plans & Elevations, June 1972, BMW E-CADD.

65 Education Department Annual Report, 1975, p. 11.

66 Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta Senior High School, Site Plan, June 1974, BMW E-CADD; Marshall Clifton Architect, Balcatta Senior High School, New Library, June 1974, BMW E-CADD.

67 Education Department Annual Report, 1963, p. 38; Education Department Annual Report, 1964, p. 18; Education Department Annual Report, 1965, pp. 30 – 31.

classrooms and workspaces were, like the science blocks before them, funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments as part of a national program. Specialised libraries had begun to be built in 1968.⁶⁸ The new library blocks tended to break the pattern of the existing high school plans and were based on the 'cluster block' or 'faculty' model.⁶⁹

In 1975, the Education Department reported the 'first demountable to be modified for home economics use has provided some relief at Balcatta Senior High School.'⁷⁰ This marked the beginning of a number of works undertaken to Balcatta Senior High School in the 1970s and 1980s. Among these alterations and upgrades were: further additions to the home economics area;⁷¹ a new gymnasium and hall to the northern end of the central core designed by architect Peter Hunt;⁷² sun screens to the home economics centre;⁷³ and, a roof to the courtyard of the prevocational centre.⁷⁴

In 1989/1990, the Education Department Annual Report announced that major extensions had been undertaken at several schools including *Balcatta Senior High School*.⁷⁵ This comprised the erection of a two storey arts and crafts block at the south-eastern end of the main school buildings as well as a new kiln shed to the ceramics centre.⁷⁶

Since this time, in c. 1992, additions and alterations were completed to the manual arts block and prevocational centre.⁷⁷

In 2004, the Department of Housing and Works commissioned a thematic study of post-World War Two secondary schools in Western Australia. From this study four metropolitan government high schools of the 1950s and 1960s were identified as the best representative examples of their type and were earmarked to be assessed at a later date for possible inclusion in the State Register of Heritage Places. In 2005, the Office of Heritage revised this list to include the following schools; Mt Helena (Eastern Hills) Senior High School; Hampton Senior High School; *Balcatta Senior High School* and Applecross Senior High School.

With announcement of the Australian Government's \$64 million plan for rebuilding schools in May 2008, came the news that *Balcatta Senior High School* would be earmarked for major works as part of the Building the Education Revolution program. As part of this process, and in light of the place having been identified by a comparative study in 2004 as warranting further investigation, it

68 Education Department Annual Report, 1968, p. 21; Education Department Annual Report, 1969, p. 13; Gregory & Smith, op. cit., p. 54.

69 Information provided by Phil Griffiths, March 2004.

70 Education Department Annual Report, 1975, p. 18.

71 Balcatta High School, Additions 1977, Plans & Elevations, Drwg. No. A1, BMW E-CADD.

72 Balcatta Senior High School, Community Hall, Site Plan, December 1978, BMW E-CADD.

73 Balcatta High School, Sun screening to Home Economics, August 1980, Drwg. No. 1, BMW E-CADD.

74 Balcatta Senior High School, Prevocational Centre, Roof Steel Work over Courtyard, July 1985, BMW E-CADD.

75 Education Department Annual Report, 1989/1990, p. 34.

76 Balcatta Senior High School, Arts and Crafts Facility, Drwg. No. A1, BMW E-CADD; Balcatta Senior High School, Arts and Crafts Facility, Drwg. No. A2, BMW E-CADD.

77 Balcatta Senior High School, Manual Arts Block and Prevocational Centre Additions, Part Site Plan, April 1992, BMW E-CADD; Balcatta Senior High School, Manual Arts Block and Prevocational Centre Additions, Part Site Plan, December 1992, BMW E-CADD; Balcatta Senior High School, Alterations & Upgrade, Manual Arts – Photography & Pre-vocation, March 1992, BMW E-CADD.

was determined that a heritage assessment of *Balcatta Senior High School* was required as a matter of priority.

Balcatta Senior High School has a very strong reputation for its specialist classes associated with Visual Arts, which is a part of the Department of Education's Gifted and Talented Program. Dance and Multimedia Graphics are also offered as part of its specialist program as well as soccer and volleyball.⁷⁸

The 1980 Gymnasium and Hall, known as the Moir Centre, was used as a community recreational centre and operated jointly with the local community. The gallery area of the 1990 Specialist Art Centre is believed to be the only dedicated art gallery in the state to be located within a school.⁷⁹

Recent examples of the school's activities in the community have been the participation of Year 10 students in a workshop with members of the City of Stirling about graffiti and the raising of \$1150 for its sister school, Treng Trayeoung Secondary School, located in a poverty-stricken, rural area in Cambodia.⁸⁰ Some well-known graduates include notable author and artist Shaun Tan,⁸¹ Australian Rules Football player Les Fong and former CEO of WA Health Services Department Neil Fong.⁸²

While the current demographics of the school are not known, *Balcatta Senior High School* continues to promote itself as 'a multicultural learning community',⁸³ suggesting the migrant make-up of the area when the school was founded continues to be reflected in the student population.

The Parents and Citizens Association is also active with all funds raised going towards improving the school community. These have included the subsidy of the Chaplain's wage, the development of the school website and recognition of student achievement.⁸⁴

In 2010, *Balcatta Senior High School* continues to operate to the purpose for which it was constructed.⁸⁵

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Balcatta Senior High School is predominantly a single storey linear plan brick and concrete construction and tiled roof high school complex, set on undulating open grounds in an urban residential setting, principally developed between 1966-1969 in three main stages in the Post World War Two Mediterranean style, with numerous additions in matching and contrasting styles. The additions include the Prevocational Centre (1972), Ceramic Centre (1973), Library (1974), Gymnasium and Hall (W.K. Moir Centre) (1980), and the Specialist Art Centre (1990). Other

78 Information from Ms Anna Kristancic, Principal, Balcatta Senior High School, 15/3/2010; <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/>, 25/3/2010.

79 Balcatta Senior High School website <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/> accessed 6 August 2010.

80 Information from Ms Anna Kristancic, Principal, Balcatta Senior High School, 15/3/2010; <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/>, 25/3/2010.

81 Department of Education and Training media release, 'Balcatta Senior High School graduate takes on the world', 30 March 2005, <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/docs/balcatta.pdf> accessed 2 August 2010.

82 Information from Ms Anna Kristancic, Principal, Balcatta Senior High School, 15/3/2010.

83 Balcatta Senior High School website <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/> accessed 6 August 2010.

84 Information from Ms Anna Kristancic, Principal, Balcatta Senior High School, 15/3/2010; <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/>, 25/3/2010.

85 <http://www.balcattashs.wa.edu.au/>, 2/11/2009.

elements include a kiln shed adjacent to the Ceramic Centre.

Balcatta Senior High School is located to the south of the Balcatta town centre. The site is bounded by Amelia Street to the north, residences to the east, Poincare Street to the south, and Cedric Street to the west. West Balcatta Primary School is located immediately to the northwest, north of Amelia Street. The site is surrounded by residences, and a small reserve is located to the west, across Cedric Street.

Site and setting

The main building group is set on the east-west axis, normal to Poincare Street, with the main orientation being to the north and south. The buildings are predominantly located on the level south-eastern section of the site. The land falls away steeply from the buildings towards the oval to the west, and towards the tennis courts, basketball courts, swimming pool and hockey field to the north.

The landscape setting include open grassed areas to the south and west of the buildings, with mature plantings of Eucalypts, Peppermint trees, Washingtonia Palms, Cocos Palms, Dwarf Agonis, Canary Island Palms, Bottlebrush, and an oval to the north-west of the school, surrounded by mature Eucalypts trees. Access to the school comprises two driveways off Poincare Street at the south-west and south-east corners of the site, and two footpaths off Amelia Street, to the east and the west of the hockey field located to the east of the swimming pool. There are lawns, tree plantings and sculptural seating in the intimately scaled courtyards, which lends the site a resort feel. The landscape is further set apart from that of other school sites by the presence of a prominent limestone outcrop, known as "The Pinnacles", located to the north-east of the buildings.

The developed part of the site is surrounded by a black painted metal picket style fence.

Hard surfaces are generally bitumen with concrete kerbs, concrete, with geometrically patterned brick inserts in some areas. The building has a number of sets of original decorative wrought iron gates.

The site plan indicates the general disposition of the built and landscaped environment, together with building names and dates of construction where these are known.

Principal Stages of Development 1966-69 (three phases)

The main elements of the school, which comprise the majority of the extant fabric, were established over a short period and these elements were planned to develop sequentially as demand justified the provision of further accommodation, gradually completing an overall master plan. The first three phases of development, designed by Marshall Clifton Architect, were laid out in linear form, but are set apart from the development of other high schools by a plan that was driven by the central administration block and assembly area, resulting in an H-shaped form with classroom wings on either side of the central core. The linear form was designed to promote cross ventilation and allow light from two sides. The development commenced with two sets of three wings, including two toilet blocks, to the west and to the east of the central block, followed by two further wings to the north on each side, and finally the west and east wings, resulting in the enclosure of the southern courtyards.

The group of buildings that make up the first three major phases is designed in the Post World War Two Mediterranean Style. The key external features of the central core are a substantial series of connecting arches to the southern main entrance, constructed in off-form concrete, flanked by covered colonnades with white pre-cast concrete columns arranged in pairs. The external walls of the bulk of the buildings are constructed in stretcher bond Bickley valley grey concrete masonry, with white pre-cast concrete beams and columns along the verandahs. Some of the beams are now painted in bright colours. The verandah floors are concrete, with inlaid brick patterns aligned with the columns. The outward facing walls generally have full width steel framed windows in a timber surround, arranged in two panels with nine panes, separated by a pre-cast concrete pillar, with the two top panes being sash windows, and the smaller bottom panels being inward opening hopper windows. The walls facing onto verandahs generally did have metal construction lockers which have been removed and replaced with a skin of brickwork. Windowsills are generally red face brick, and internal walls are generally salmon coloured face brick. The central core has a flat Colorbond spandek roof, while the classroom wings have low pitched-roofs clad with Swiss pattern terra cotta tiles. Generally access into the rooms is via sliding doors. The archways leading to the courtyards have decorative wrought iron security gates.

A particular feature of the planning in high schools of this period is the creation of the quadrangle as an assembly area, which is also the internal focus of the school. At Balcatta these functions are separated by the presence of intimately scaled courtyards, in addition to the original assembly area with stage to the north of the canteen (replaced by the gymnasium), and the undercover area to the south of the canteen. The courtyards have perimeter verandahs, small lawn areas, sculptural brick seating areas, and mature tree plantings. The courtyards are a strong visual feature of the school. The spaces enclosed by buildings are one of the distinguishing features of this school, carrying the Mediterranean theme into the planning of external spaces, as well through the medium of the buildings.

The interior of the main block stages 1-3 is planned in a linear form with corridor or verandah access to all rooms. A typical classroom originally had a rectangular room with a blackboard at the front of the classroom with timber construction cupboards under it, a pinup board along the length of the internal walls with glass louvres above and student lockers outside, and wide glass windows to allow good lighting and ventilation along the external wall of the classroom. Internal walls are face brick and ceilings are compressed strawboard that was marketed by Stramit. Floors are carpeted or vinyl covered. Some details such as floor finishes, lighting, chalkboards, laboratory benches and pinup boards have been removed and replaced, though most rooms retain original elements.

Most rooms have loose benches, tables and furniture, but the science rooms have built in benches with sinks and gas outlets, some of which are original and some are replacements.

Toilet and change room areas retain their original layouts, fittings and finishes, with some minor upgrades.

The interiors, fittings and finishes are typical of high schools of the period. There are many minor modifications including the installation of carpets and ceiling fans, but the basic planning and main features remain much as built.

All of the buildings in stages 1-3 are in fair condition. Though much of the fabric is

sound, there is some general wear and tear.

Ceramic Centre (1973)

The ceramic centre is part of the additions to accommodate special art classes at Balcatta, and was also designed by Marshall Clifton, in the same style and materials as the original buildings. It forms the east wing joining the original linear wings to the east of the central core. A prominent curved retaining wall was constructed in Bickley valley grey concrete masonry to enclose the kiln area. A small section of this wall was removed to accommodate the Specialist Art Centre. A landscaped garden immediately to the east of the existing kiln area is proposed.

Library (1974)

The current library replaces the earlier library built as part of the administration block during stage 1, now used as the staff room. The library is a free standing building located to the west, designed by Marshall Clifton Architects, in a style and materials that complement the original buildings, but with prominent centrally located south facing skylights, set in a wall clad with Colorbond spandek. Small study areas and offices are located to the north and the south of the main space. The Mediterranean style is reinforced by the addition of a covered balcony to the west, with columns and arched beams identical to that along the existing verandahs, and two small enclosed reading courts to the east of the building.

Gymnasium (W.K. Moir Centre) (1980)

The gymnasium and performing arts centre (W.K.Moir Centre) was designed by Peter Hunt Architect, and is located to the north of the change rooms, replacing the original assembly area. It is a single storey building with a low-pitched gabled roof, constructed in the same materials as the original buildings. The gymnasium has highlight windows to the west, and a first floor mezzanine viewing area to the east. The performing arts hall is located to the east of the gymnasium, and smaller associated rooms are located to the north-east. The main entrance into the centre is from the east, off a covered verandah.

Specialist Art Centre (1990)

The two storey arts and crafts block, including a new kiln shed, is located at the south-east end of the main buildings, and was designed by the Architectural Practice of the Building Management Authority of Western Australia in 1981, in a style and materials that complement the original buildings, with striking glazed gable walls to the south, and a lower ground gallery area. Construction was completed in 1990.

Miscellaneous Structures

The swimming pool has plant sheds and an undercover seating area, and a large shed is located to the north-east of the main buildings.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Post World War Two High Schools

Over accommodation in the existing high schools in the post war period resulted in the acceleration of the Department's high school building program commencing

in 1954.⁸⁶ The first four of Western Australia's post World War Two high schools, Governor Stirling, Mount Lawley, Armadale, and John Curtin, opened in 1956,⁸⁷ with later stages added until approximately 1958.⁸⁸ Other high schools that were opened in the metropolitan area in the years following 1956 were: Tuart Hill and Belmont in 1957; Applecross, Hollywood, Kwinana and Scarborough in 1958/1959; Bentley and Kalamunda in 1959; John Forrest and Swanbourne in 1961; and, Cyril Jackson, Churchlands and Hamilton Hill in 1963.⁸⁹ By 1962 there were 37 government high and senior high schools in Western Australia, 26 of which had been built since 1952.⁹⁰ Extensive additions were also carried out at the pre-World War Two secondary school buildings to bring them in line with current standards and education techniques.⁹¹

The overall design plan for the post World War Two high schools was based on the lineal classroom block design around a central quadrangle ('H' design). This plan dominated high school design until the late 1960s, especially those designed by the PWD. Not only were the plans common, varying only to cater for site size and slopes, but the same aesthetic model was adapted to suit, with low pitched tiled or asbestos cement roofs, steel widows, concrete frames and brick infill being the dominant materials. Internal courtyards were simple grassed areas with few tree plantings, surrounded by the classroom ranges, with lockers, seats and high level louvred windows to provide cross ventilation. Verandahs were granolithic finished, with steel columns and steel balustrades, with extruded plastic handrails. When private architects were commissioned to design high schools from the mid 1960s, the PWD's standard planning was adopted by them and adapted marginally to suit their respective design aesthetic predilections as exemplified at Cyril Jackson, Hampton and Balcatta Senior High Schools. Many of the high schools also have a short wing (usually comprising a toilet block or canteen on the ground level with classrooms above) within the enclosed 'u' space that serves as a division between two quadrangles/courtyard areas. The high schools vary from one storey, two-storey and three-storey construction; however, the majority have lineal wings in some form with some type of open verandah area ventilation.

There are 84 Secondary Schools on the HCWA database, 46 of which are located in the metropolitan area. Of these 46 places, 13 are on the State Register of Heritage Places. The following metropolitan high schools are predominantly two storey and are designed in the Post World War Two International style:

- P06366 Tuart Hill Senior High School (1957, PWD designed);
- P04240 Mount Lawley Senior High School (1954,PWD designed, below threshold in 2001)

⁸⁶ Education Department Annual Report, 1953, pp. 6 & 7.

⁸⁷ Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 11; Heritage & Conservation Professionals, op. cit., p. 15. **Note:** John Curtin has elements of an earlier education building campaign on the site. This is the two storey brick Manual Trades Block, which was constructed circa 1943 after the existing manual arts building in South Terrace was taken over for defence purposes in 1941 and in view of the then proposals for the erection of a new Fremantle Technical High School. (Heritage & Conservation Professionals, op. cit., pp. 4 & 5.)

⁸⁸ See Education Department Annual Report, 1955, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Education Department Annual Reports, 1955 – 1963.

⁹⁰ Education Department Annual Report, 1961, p. 7.

⁹¹ Education Department Annual Report, 1958, p. 9.

- P08710 Melville Senior High School (1961, PWD designed)
- P08828 John Forrest Senior High School (1961, PWD designed)
- P08829 Hamilton Hill Senior High School (1963)
- P08921 Kalamunda Senior High School (1962, PWD designed)
- P09013 Mirrabooka Senior High School (1965, PWD designed)
- P06464 Applecross Senior High School (1957, PWD designed) In the current assessment program.

Other high schools that were opened in the metropolitan area in the years following 1956 and vary from the two-storey Post World War Two International style include:

- P1654 Governor Stirling Senior High School (1956, Post War Two International style, predominantly three storey) There are plans to demolish the school in 2010.
- P08254 Bentley Senior High School (1960, Post War International style, single storey buildings) The pattern of development differs from other schools by way of the four wings extending from the quadrangle system.
- P01435 Armadale Senior High School (1956, PWD designed, Post World War Two International style, predominantly single storey) In the current assessment program.
- P08954 Cyril Jackson Senior High School (1962, Silver Fairbrother and Associates, Post War International style, single storey) In the current assessment program.
- P08253 Kwinana Senior High School (1959, Post World War Two International style) The original building format is single storey with separate two storey additions.
- P09995 South Fremantle Senior High School (1967, predominantly single storey, Post War Perth Regional style)
- P09823 Hampton Senior High School (1966, Forbes & Fitzhardinge, Brutalist style) In the current assessment program.
- P09011 Eastern Hills Senior High School (1962, PWD designed, predominantly single adaptation of the California Bungalow style, with elements of the Post War International style) Returned from the Minister unsigned, 2011.
- P10516 Como Senior High School (1968, Post War Perth regional style)

Kewdale, which opened in 1966 as a three-year secondary school and was reclassified a senior high school in 1972, was designed by architectural firm Forbes and Fitzhardinge. It is no longer a government high school, having been sold to the Australian Islamic College in 2000 for use as a K-12 school.

The following Post War period metropolitan schools have been demolished: Hollywood Senior High School (1958), Scarborough Senior High School (1958/1959); Swanbourne Senior High School (1961), and City Beach Senior High School (1966).

Four high schools, which still operate to their original purpose, have been entered into the Register of Heritage Places. These are *Perth Modern School* (1910), *Northam Senior High School* (1921), *Kent Street Senior High School* (1939) and *John Curtin College of Performing Arts* (1943).⁹² Both Perth Modern and John Curtin include substantial 1950s additions in the Post War International style along similar design to the Post World War Two schools.

Post World War Two Mediterranean style

As this is not a style listed in the Office of Heritage database, it is difficult to conclude how many other places in a similar style are extant. One other post-World War Two place, P08110 *St Philip's Anglican Church*, Cottesloe (1965, Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional style, designed by Julius Elischer, RHP) is noted as including 'abstracted Mediterranean elements'.⁹³

Many residences in Perth's northern suburbs, especially those with a high Mediterranean migrant element, include Mediterranean style motifs. However, other public buildings in this style have not been identified to date.

Marshall Clifton

The Office of Heritage database includes 37 places designed by Marshall Clifton. Eighteen of these are residences. Most of the others are hotels, halls or churches. The only other educational institution noted is P13702 University of Western Australia, where Clifton designed the Arts faculty building in the 1960s.

Much of Clifton's work demonstrates Mediterranean influences, and he became known as a proponent of Mediterranean style.

Conclusions

While many aspects of the development of *Balcatta Senior High School* reflect changing demographics, shifts in education policy, and closely aligned planning principles, it is distinguished from the other schools of the period by its planning of external spaces, its Mediterranean building styling, and detailing.

Balcatta Senior High School is a rare example of a Post World War Two Mediterranean style building, and especially unusual as a public building designed in this style.

Balcatta Senior High School is a fine example of Marshall Clifton's work.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

An existing caretaker's residence is shown on a 1966 site plan, but its location is no longer within the current site boundary. The purpose for a caretaker's residence on the site, possibly prior to the construction of the school, may be the subject of further research.

Further research may find more information about the social history of *Balcatta Senior High School*.

⁹² Information from HCWA Database, 20/9/2009.

⁹³ Office of Heritage database searches, 3 August 2010.

Further research may establish whether John Oldham was responsible for the original landscape design at the place, as he was Government Landscape Architect at the time it was constructed and as such responsible for landscaping government buildings.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Erickson & Taylor, '11 Saladin Street, Swanbourne: The Oldham House: Conservation Plan', 2008, p.86.