



## 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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 4.3 Developing urban institutions
- 7.1 Governing Australia as a province of the British Empire
- 7.2 Developing institutions for self government and democracy
- 7.6 Administering Australia

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

- 401 Government and politics
- 403 Law and order
- 404 Community services and utilities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

An intact complex of law and order buildings of complimentary age, construction and detailing, dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Albany Courthouse Complex* includes the Albany Courthouse, constructed in 1897 in the Federation Romanesque Style, the Lockup and Keeper's Quarters constructed in 1908, and the Sergeant's Quarter, constructed in 1909, both in the Federation Queen Anne Style. (Criterion 1.1)

With their moderately pitched roofs, front gables with adjacent verandahs and classically proportioned windows, the Lockup and Keeper's Quarters and Sergeant's Quarters are fine examples of single storey brick buildings in the Federation Queen Anne style. (Criterion 1.1)

The Albany Courthouse, a substantial two-storey building constructed of red Albany brick and designed in the Federation Romanesque Style, is an important and unique example of the work of George Temple Poole. The massing and proportions of the building are well balanced and a variety of design features, particularly on the front façade, give the building

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\* 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.

considerable interest. These features include the grey local granite plinth and entry arches, especially the asymmetrical convolute arch to the main entry, the curved walls on the south façade, and the rendered and decorated frieze below the eaves line, with its portholes. (Criterion 1.2)

The first floor court room of the Albany Courthouse displays a high degree of design excellence with its double volume, plastered frieze, high level portholes, tall windows, imposing pedimented doors and extensive dark stained panelling and joinery. Other interior spaces are large and well proportioned and have high quality finishes. The ceilings are high and windows are large and provide good natural lighting. (Criterion 1.2)

As one of the tallest and most visually prominent buildings on Stirling Terrace, the Albany Courthouse is a landmark building in Albany, both from the harbour/Stirling Terrace and also as an important component of the vistas from the top of Collie Street and Mount Melville. The distinctive simple hipped roof form with its grey green tiles and the decorated frieze of the first floor courtroom are a visually prominent element in the town. The imposing granite arch at the main entrance makes a strong statement in addressing its corner location. (Criteria 1.3 & 1.4)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is an important component of the aesthetic of the Albany environs, contributing to the important streetscape of Stirling Terrace. (Criterion 1.4)

## 11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

The Lockup and Keeper's Quarters were constructed to support the functions of Albany Courthouse and to provide an increase in the facilities available for short term prisoners, as by the early twentieth century the existing lockup facilities in Albany were no longer adequate. (Criterion 2.1)

Albany Courthouse has been the seat of justice in Albany and the Great Southern Region from 1898 to the present. Albany Courthouse was constructed at the end of the twentieth century, at a time when the economy and population of Western Australia, including Albany, increased dramatically due to the gold rushes. At the time of the construction of Albany Courthouse, Albany was the major port for Western Australia. There was a great need for increased court facilities in the Albany region, as the previous court facilities located in the Albany Post Office (fmr) became inadequate. Western Australia's prosperity at this time enabled the funding of a significant amount of public works infrastructure, of which the *Albany Courthouse Complex* was included. Albany was the last courthouse to be designed in this era and reputedly the most grand. (Criterion 2.1 & 2.2)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* was designed by the Public Works Department under the supervision of Chief Architects, George Temple Poole, in charge of the Public Works Department between 1885 and 1897, and Hillson Beasley, and was built by Charles Layton and William Trott, tradesmen, and Francis Bird, the supervising architect for the Public Works Department. (Criterion 2.3)

## 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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## 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

A number of social services are delivered from *Albany Courthouse Complex*. The Courthouse is the regional seat of justice for all Western Australian courts when they are in session in the Great Southern Region. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Assessment of Stamp Duty, Bailiff, Victim Support Service and Court Welfare Officers also operate from the Courthouse. (Criterion 4.1)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is highly valued by community for its associations with the development of justice in Albany and the region. The Lockup and Keeper's Quarters provides a social function as an administration centre for the processing of detainees. (Criterion 4.1)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is valued for its contribution to the historic character of Albany and contributes to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is unusual as a grand scale regional justice complex, still maintaining its original function. *Albany Courthouse Complex* is the only such complex of law and order buildings in the Great Southern Region. (Criterion 5.1)

The first floor courtroom is a unique design and is a rare example in Western Australia of a relatively intact courtroom dating from the 1890s. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is characteristic of the architecture of the Public Works Department of Western Australia under the direction of Chief Architects George Temple Poole and Hillson Beasley. (Criterion 6.1)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is very strong statement of the kinds of facilities provided to maintain law and order in regional Western Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criterion 6.2)

*Albany Courthouse Complex* is representative of the 34 courthouses constructed in Western Australia in the last decade of the nineteenth century as part of the large infrastructure of public works constructed to administer the growing Colony. This was twice as many as the total number of courthouses existing in Western Australia at the time. (Criterion 6.2)

The Lockup and Keeper's Quarters is representative of the type of dual purpose facilities constructed throughout Western Australia at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century for the accommodation of gaol warden's and the detention of short term prisoners. (Criteria 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

The condition of the Albany Courthouse is good although the box gutters in the roof have had a history of problems and the replacement of ceilings to the first and ground floors of the west wing are probably a result of the box gutters leaking. Other areas of concern are the deteriorated state of the roof tiles, fretting of the bricks, particularly on the north façade of the building, some rising damp in the brickwork visible in the present bailiff's office and the condition of the joinery which requires urgent repainting.

The Lockup section of the Lockup & Keeper's Quarters is in a fair to poor condition with some elements in poor condition. Externally the joinery requires repainting. The brickwork to the yard wall is in poor condition with many bricks fretting. The base of the walls is damp with moss growing on it. The roof over the females' yard is in poor condition and requires reinstating or removing.

Internally, all surfaces require repainting. The roof is leaking and requires assessment and repair.

The Keeper's Section of the Lockup & Keeper's Quarters is in fair condition; external work required is the adequate disposal of stormwater from the front yard, repainting of the joinery, repair of the cracking sills, assessment of the roof for leaking and removal of the concrete verandah floor.

Internally the building requires repainting. There is some cracking at the top of the internal walls in the living room and kitchen.

The Sergeant's Quarters is generally in fair to good condition. Major problems are the damp in the base of the brickwork to the bedrooms and living rooms and cracking in the masonry at the rear of the building where the brickwork appears to be falling away. Internally, the building is in good condition, apart from the presence of damp in the base of the walls causing spalling and efflorescence in the brickwork and plaster.

#### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Albany Courthouse Complex* has a high degree of integrity. The Albany Courthouse is still used for its intended purpose, as is the Sergeant's Quarters. The Lockup is partially used for the office of the Australian Integrated Management Services staff, in effect the present day jailers and the adjacent Keepers Quarters is still used as a residence although not for staff associated with the complex.

#### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Albany Courthouse Complex* displays a high degree of authenticity. All three buildings have had minor additions which could be easily removed. The two original laundries have been added to and garages introduced to the courthouse and Sergeant's Quarters. Fencing, paving and landscaping have also been altered.

The authenticity of the Albany Courthouse is high. The south, east and west facades have had very little alteration. The north façade has been altered by the addition of a toilet block and alteration of the skillion section at the first floor level. The original shingle roof was replaced with concrete tiles in 1961. This resulted in the loss of the decorative ridge detail and the dormer ventilators to the roof.

Internally most of the spaces retain their original form and a large proportion of the original fabric of the building is intact. A number of walls have been removed on the ground floor to create another smaller court on the ground floor. There are other areas where fabric has been introduced to the building that could easily be removed. A number of fire surrounds have been removed. The original latrine areas to the skillion section at the north of the building have been modified considerably although retaining their original function. The open balcony to the east of this section has been enclosed and converted to a toilet. A number of other minor modifications have been made.

The Lockup and Keeper's Quarters displays a high degree of authenticity. Major alterations are the conversion of the females' yard into a bathroom/laundry in 1956 and the addition of a toilet and aluminium and glass enclosure to the rear of the Keeper's Quarters.

The Sergeant's Quarters displays a high degree of authenticity. The major alterations are an additional toilet which has been constructed on the rear of the building and the upgrading of kitchen and bathroom fixtures and fittings. The original double hung timber sash window to the kitchen has been replaced with an aluminium slider.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Key sections of the supporting evidence have been taken from 'Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Housing and Works on behalf of the Department of Justice by David Heaver & Associates in May 2002.

Key sections: 3. Documentary Evidence (pp29-58), 4. Physical Evidence (pp59-140), 5. Analysis of the Documentary and Physical Evidence (pp141-150), 8. Graded Zones and Elements of Significance (pp174-192)

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to 'Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Housing and Works on behalf of the Department of Justice by David Heaver & Associates in May 2002.

#### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence, refer to 'Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Housing and Works on behalf of the Department of Justice by David Heaver & Associates in May 2002.

#### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

For a Comparative Analysis, refer to 'Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Housing and Works on behalf of the Department of Justice by David Heaver & Associates in May 2002.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

'Albany Courthouse Precinct Conservation Plan', prepared for the Department of Housing and Works on behalf of the Department of Justice by David Heaver & Associates in May 2002.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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