



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. 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.

11.1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The Free Classical style of the *Fitzgerald Hotel* is striking in design, the stucco moulding being in sharp relief to the face brickwork and yet the building maintains a residential scale. (Criterion 1.1)

The essential part of the *Fitzgerald Hotel's* townscape role is in anchoring the intersection of Fitzgerald and John Streets with its strong, well detailed presence. The building is recognised as a landmark in the west end of Northbridge. (Criterion 1.3)

Despite the width of the street, the *Fitzgerald Hotel* is visually linked to St Brigid's Church, Hall and School and the former Sisters of Mercy Convent. Together the buildings form the nucleus of what was once a thriving residential neighbourhood. The *Fitzgerald Hotel* is now the only surviving pre WW11 building on the east side of Fitzgerald Street between Roe and Aberdeen Streets. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The *Fitzgerald Hotel* has historic value as evidence of a period, prior to World War 11, when this part of Northbridge was a thriving residential neighbourhood. (Criterion 2.1)

The *Fitzgerald Hotel* is of historic value for its association with Ernest S.Porter, of Porter & Thomas, architect of the prominent Perth hotels, the Palace and Railway Hotels. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The *Fitzgerald Hotel* is representative of the corner hotels built to cater for the growing suburbs in the early years of this century. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The interior of the hotel has been subject to fire and vandalism and there is little of value remaining. However, the external fabric of the building is structurally sound.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Changes to the exterior of the building have been minimal, however, little original interior detailing exist. Overall, the building has a medium degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The exterior of the building retains a reasonable degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The following documentary evidence on the Fitzgerald Hotel (formerly the Clarendon Hotel) is based largely upon the report *Fitzgerald Hotel* by Marcus Collins and Billy Wilkes (1991). The corner site, occupied by the *Fitzgerald Hotel*, has been continuously occupied by a hotel since 1885.

In the 1850s many hotels were built by enterprising individuals, causing some concern to Governor Kennedy. In Perth there was one hotel for every 73.6 adult males, and in Fremantle there was an even greater percentage of hotels.¹ Many hotels were located along the riverside, both as resorts and to cater for the transport route provided by the Swan River.² Amongst these were the *Applecross* and *Osborne* (Claremont) Hotels.

The development of the railway from Perth to Fremantle between 1879 and 1881 not only provided improved transport, but altered the pattern of land subdivision and residential construction in adjacent areas. The growth of suburbs such as Cottesloe, Leederville and Subiaco were a direct consequence of the railway, and many hotels were built adjacent to stations, in the immediate years following the opening of the railways. Typical of these were the *Subiaco Hotel*, the *Claremont Hotel* and the *Clarendon Hotel* which was constructed on Fitzgerald Street in 1885, close to the West Perth Station.

Fitzgerald Street has always been an important transport link between the city centre and the farms and industry north of the city. Its significance increased with the development of suburbs in North Perth, Mount Lawley

¹ Collins, M. & Wilkes, B. *Fitzgerald Hotel* (for the Heritage Council of Western Australia 1991), citing Kimberly, W.D. *History of West Australia*, Melbourne 1897.

² *ibid.*, Pitt Morison, M. & White, J. *Western Towns & Buildings*.

and Osborne Park in the early 1900s, as can be measured by the number of hotels that were erected along its length, particularly on corner locations.

In 1885, the owner of *Clarendon Hotel* was Grove and Monger, and the licensee was John Molloy. The land use was described as "Hotel, cottage and vacant ground". T G Molloy purchased the property in 1896, and in 1897 a shop was added to the land use. In 1901, the land use was described as "Hotel, cottage, factory and shop."

Caroline de Mori in her book, *Time Gentleman, a history of the hotel industry in Western Australia*, suggests that the *Clarendon Hotel* was one of Perth's better hotels in the 1890s, where patrons would receive fine food and liquor, good service, a comfortable bed and the company of others.³ The *Clarendon Hotel* was one of the first hotels to install electric lights, telephones and reticulated water.⁴ A horse trough existed on the corner outside the hotel until the 1930s. Farmers and market gardeners would tether their horses while *en route* to the Wellington Street markets.

On 19 December, 1898, twelve publicans founded the Perth Licensed Victuallers Association, which in turn became the Western Australian Hotels Association. Amongst these twelve leading hoteliers is listed John Ryan of the *Clarendon Hotel*, who played a prominent role in the Association's battle to improve workers' rights.

The earliest records from Perth City Council's Building Department indicate that a building licence was issued in 1905 although these plans have been lost, and no photos found. The Stanley Brewery bought the *Clarendon Hotel* in 1902, and in 1925, submitted development plans to the City of Perth to "rebuild" the Hotel. Ernest S Porter, of architectural firm Porter & Thomas, designed a two storey, pressed red brick hotel building in the Free Classical style, which replaced much of the previous hotel. The drawings indicate the original Kitchen, Scullery, Pantry and Store Room were retained, the new section being the main building which survives today. Porter and Thomas had previously designed the prominent Palace Hotel and the Railway Hotel in Perth, as well as numerous other buildings in the city and country towns.

In *Western Australian Post Office Directory* (1929), the Licensee is listed as Steve C McHenry, who was later associated with the *Nedlands Park Hotel*. Mr McHenry's second wife, Hazel, remembers her husband as saying he was made Licensee when he was 21 years old(which confirms the date, 1925), after having gained experience in the hotel industry working with his uncle, Mr Ryan, at the "Perth Hotel". She also remembers him immediately undertaking major improvements to the hotel, which corresponds with the dated drawings. Prior to undertaking the improvements she remembers Mr McHenry as saying the hotel was in a run-down state.

Although it was not considered acceptable during the late 1920s and early 1930s for women to patronise hotels, a special lounge was established for 'professional' women who worked in nearby Roe Street. It seems that male

³ *ibid.*, de Mori, C. *Time Gentleman, a history of the hotel industry in Western Australia*.

⁴ *ibid.*, *WA Post Office Directories*.

patrons were also attracted to the "Roe Street Ladies' Lounge", and Steve McHenry was often quoted as saying, "I had more fights than feeds."

The hotel continued to serve as a meeting place for local residents, even though the neighbourhood gradually re-developed for commercial purposes. In 1950, alterations were made to the hotel, including the removal of the existing bar and installation of a new bar, and the incorporation of the Bottle Shop into the adjoining Public Bar. Further alterations were carried out in 1952, when the two shops on John Street were converted to a drinking Lounge.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, the hotel was owned by Denis Marshall and Dallas Dempster. In 1984, the name of the *Clarendon Hotel* changed to *Fitzgerald Hotel*. The hotel was purchased by the Department of Planning and Urban Development for road widening purposes, and in 1990 sold, subject to a demolition order, to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth.

In February, 1992, the City of Perth refused the new owner consent to demolish the hotel building so as to construct a two storey office building on the site. A subsequent appeal was made to the Town Planning Appeal Tribunal by the owner. At this time, the Minister for Planning asked the Department of Planning and Urban Development to amend the Metropolitan Region Scheme, and delete the road widening requirement on Fitzgerald Street. While the future of the *Fitzgerald Hotel* building is under consideration, the owner has secured the building to avoid ingress by vandals. Negotiations continue with the owner regarding possible adaptive re-use of the hotel, thereby furthering the City of Perth's proposal to regenerate West Russell Square as an inner city housing precinct.

The place was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in 1991. The building is noted by the City of Perth in its Planning Scheme as a building of historic and architectural interest, and is identified in *The Northbridge Study* as a landmark building.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The *Fitzgerald Hotel* is a two storey building designed by Ernest S. Porter in 1925. The building is designed in the Free-Classical Style, and in recognition of the importance of the intersection, the building addresses the corner through the use of imposing classical details, reminiscent of Porter's earlier work.

The building is constructed in load bearing, pressed red bricks, featuring stucco mouldings and covered with a corrugated iron roof. The building facade is articulated with decorative treatment to emphasise the major entry points and the intersection. The private entrance on Fitzgerald Street, and the entrances to the Public Bar and shops, are flanked on either side by rendered rusticated pilasters on the ground floor. Ionic pilasters, supporting pediments, continue on the upper level, to give the building a vertical emphasis. The ground floor is shaded with a pressed metal canopy.

The upper level square headed windows feature heavily moulded surrounds surmounted by a pediment. The truncated corner has a blind window on which the hotel name was once displayed. The building is then topped with a parapet featuring Italianate balusters, which shields the roof from the street.

The ground floor brickwork is 350mm (14 inches), except for the rendered pilasters which are 450mm (18 inches) piers. The bricks are similar to those used in the original Kitchen but are laid in English bond. The Balcony on the first floor extends to both wings and not just to the John Street wing as indicated in the 1925 drawing. The junction between the upper part of the original Kitchen and the first floor is negotiated by a parapet wall, the header courses of the 230mm (9 inches) rear wall of the hotel coursing in with the header courses of the Kitchen wall every other header course.

The Kitchen block is a self-contained single storey building connected at ground floor level through a Lobby/Servery area. The walls are constructed of brickwork in English garden-wall bond. The interior has been 'modernised' a number of times, obliterating much of the original interior. While the building was disused vandalism occurred, with the removal of doors, architraves and skirting boards. Fragments of original trim still exist, and are Victorian Italianate in detail, and differ from those in the remainder of the building.

Two windows at the ground floor level at the north end of Fitzgerald Street have retained their cut glass lead windows. Other features include pressed metal ceilings to the canopy, decorative cornices in the Dining Room and Public Bar, formal Entry Hall, timber staircase and verandahs at the rear of the building.

Except for the bricking up of the original shopfronts on John Street, the hotel facade remains intact. Internally, the building has undergone a series of alterations and additions in 1950, 1952, 1962 and which can be traced from drawings submitted to the Licensing Court. What had been a cellular plan had been gradually opened up as part of the 'modernisation' process. The most radical change was incorporating the two shops into the hotel.

While the building has stood empty for four years vandalism has taken its toll. Doors, architraves, skirting boards, counters, floor boards, joists and the rear staircase have been removed. A fire has caused damage to part of the upper floor and roof. Despite this damage, the building structure remains relatively sound.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition

The Northbridge Study, Perth City Council, 1991.

Collins, M. & Wilkes B. *Fitzgerald Hotel* (for the Heritage Council of Western Australia, Perth, 1991).

de Mori, C. *Time Gentlemen, a history of the hotel industry in Western Australia.*