

Place Details

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Artillery Barracks, 2 Burt St, Fremantle, WA, Australia

Photographs



List	Commonwealth Heritage List
Class	Historic
Legal Status	Listed place (22/06/2004)
Place ID	105332
Place File No	5/12/010/0119

Summary Statement of Significance

The Artillery Barracks are important for their association with the defence of Fremantle Harbour, and with the early defence efforts of the Commonwealth following Federation in 1901. The Barracks pre-date the first major phase of Commonwealth defence development in Australia after 1911. Construction of the Artillery Barracks in 1910, as a component of the Coastal Defence of the Port of Fremantle, was a product of the realisation of the importance for the federated nation to provide its own comprehensive and integrated defence strategy. The additions to the barracks, similarly, were a reflection of subsequent changes to that strategy resulting from development of military technology from 1910-63. The Artillery Barracks are important for their association with the Army Museum of WA and its significant collection which is housed within the complex. (Criterion A.4). (Australian Historic Themes: 7.4 Federating Australia, 7.7 Defending Australia)

The Artillery Barracks building group remains as a major, intact, extant marker of the Coastal Defences of Fremantle for the period between 1910-63 following the dismantling or removal of many elements of Coastal Defence (Criteria B.2 and D.2).

The buildings comprising the Artillery Barracks, although generally built in two phases, are visually cohesive as a group, linked by scale and unity of materials. The grouping is of aesthetic significance due firstly to the streetscape value of the quarters in Queen Victoria Street and secondly to the progressive streetscape values from the approach via Burt Street leading to the restricted entrance opening and finally into the relatively wide parade ground space. The grouping, built on high ground at one of the entries to the City of Fremantle, is of landscape significance and loosely calls up some of the traditional elements of a military barracks (Criterion E.1).

Located at the northern entrance to Fremantle, the barracks complex is a reminder of the war service provided by serving members of the army and of the contribution provided by the installation to the social life of Fremantle and the sense of place of the City of Fremantle. The building group is highly regarded by military heritage groups (Criteria G.1 and H.1).

Official Values

Criterion A Processes

The Artillery Barracks are important for their association with the defence of Fremantle Harbour, and with the early defence efforts of the Commonwealth following Federation in 1901. The Barracks pre-date the first major phase of Commonwealth defence development in Australia after 1911. Construction of the Artillery Barracks in 1910, as a component of the Coastal Defence of the Port of Fremantle, was a product of the realisation of the importance for the federated nation to provide its own comprehensive and integrated defence strategy. The additions to the barracks, similarly, were a reflection of subsequent changes to that strategy resulting from development of military technology from 1910-63. The Artillery Barracks are important for their association with the Army Museum of WA and its significant collection which is housed within the complex.

Attributes

The whole of the barracks, including all buildings and parade ground.

Criterion B Rarity

The Artillery Barracks building group remains as a major, intact, extant marker of the Coastal Defences of Fremantle for the period between 1910-63 following the dismantling or removal of many elements of Coastal Defence.

Attributes

The whole of the barracks, including all buildings and parade ground.

Criterion D Characteristic values

The Artillery Barracks building group remains as a major, intact, extant marker of the Coastal Defences of Fremantle for the period between 1910-63 following the dismantling or removal of many elements of Coastal Defence.

Attributes

The whole of the barracks, including all buildings and parade ground.

Criterion E Aesthetic characteristics

The buildings comprising the Artillery Barracks, although generally built in two phases, are visually cohesive as a group, linked by scale and unity of materials. The grouping is of aesthetic significance due firstly to the streetscape value of the quarters in Queen Victoria Street and secondly to the progressive streetscape values from the approach via Burt Street leading to the restricted entrance opening and finally into the relatively wide parade ground space. The grouping, built on high ground at one of the entries to the City of Fremantle, is of landscape significance and loosely calls up some of the traditional elements of a military barracks.

Attributes

All of the buildings, including their scale, unity of materials and visual cohesion. Other attributes include the streetscape values of the complex as seen from both Queen Victoria Street and Burt Street, plus framed views of the parade ground through the entry opening.

Criterion G Social value

The building group is highly regarded by military heritage groups.

Attributes

The building group including the Army museum.

Criterion H Significant people

Located at the northern entrance to Fremantle, the barracks complex is a reminder of the war service provided by serving members of the army and of the contribution provided by the installation to the social life of Fremantle and the sense of place of the City of Fremantle.

Attributes

The military styling of the Barracks.

Description

History:

In March 1846, Captain Twiss of the Royal Engineers arrived in the Colony to advise on suitable sites at Fremantle to erect a five gun battery and magazines for defence purposes. Little is known of the outcome of his visit (Kimberly, p 143). Prior to 1890, the defence of ports in Australia relied mainly on the firepower of the ships of the Royal Navy, it being considered too expensive to establish coastal defence installations.

A number of attempts were made to prepare fixed defences of Fremantle with little result other than the establishment of a force known as the Naval Artillery Volunteers in 1879. Their primary task was the seaward defence of Fremantle and they were equipped with two obsolete 6 pounder guns without limbers (gun carriages). Before the construction and

completion of Fremantle Harbour the port facilities at Fremantle mainly consisted a relatively exposed dock called Long Jetty, to the south and west of Cliff Street.

According to correspondence between the Governor and the Colonial Secretary in London, in April 1885, defences planned were passive, with only the volunteer defence force numbering 250-300 being available. By the end of the year, the British Secretary of State for War forwarded a despatch recommending Fremantle be fortified '...at the expense of the Colony' and made available two, RML 7in, 6.5 ton Mk 1 guns together with three, 16 pounder guns mounted on travelling limbers. The guns arrived in 1891, but provision for siting and mounting them did not proceed for a number of reasons, the least of these being the land was not prepared and the guns were considered antiquated. Advisers on these matters were not appointed for the task. The guns lay on the beach for a time, then were taken for storage at Karrakatta until they were eventually mounted in King's Park.

Within Australia, the strategic importance of the western area of the continent was addressed initially in 1889-90 by the provision of funding contributed by all States, to fortify King George Sound. The installation was completed soon after to a good standard. Fremantle, however, was equipped with weapons designed as protection from small cruisers on hit and run raids, rather than invasions from a battle fleet. Close liaison between the Coastal Defence and the Navy was maintained. 'At times of conflict or international tension, the Navy established a Port War Signal Station. These were basically naval observation posts from which to control movement of shipping within the port area and to establish the identity of vessels approaching the port' (Glyde, p 2).

Defence matters were nominally taken over by the Commonwealth at Federation. However, few fortifications were undertaken by the Commonwealth immediately after 1901, the majority of Commonwealth development of defence related facilities of all kinds accelerating after the 1911 Defence Act, in large part in anticipation of the First World War. In Western Australia, Federation saw increasing attention to the defence of Fremantle Harbour, with a battery erected at Arthur's Head, completed in 1907, and at North Fremantle (Fort Forrest), completed in 1908. Both sites are believed to have been demolished. Fremantle Artillery Barracks in Burt Street, Fremantle, were built 1908-1910, to support these batteries.

With the construction of Fremantle Harbour, the need for fixed defences of substance was justified. In 1907 the Fremantle Naval Artillery unit was taken over by the Army and designated initially 11 Company RAGA which provided the permanent core of personnel manning the battery (GA meaning, Garrison Artillery). On 25 September 1909, the land bounded by Tuckfield and Burt Streets was acquired by the Commonwealth for the Army as barracks for the permanent forces responsible for manning the two forts in the Fremantle area. Glyde offers the following description of the construction phase:

'Modern accommodation was constructed and it is thought that 10 Company would have moved into the facility in about March 1909 following their transfer from Albany in September 1908. Initially they lived under canvas whilst they installed the guns and commissioned Fort Forrest and awaited the completion of the Burt Street barracks. There was a good deal of agitation from the public about the Army acquiring this prime piece of real estate'.

Following Federation in 1901, the PWD of WA retained responsibility for many years for the design and construction of Commonwealth Government facilities in WA. This situation is evident in this case. The 1909 drawings were prepared by the PWD of WA and signed by Hillson Beasley. By the time the c.1935 development phase commenced, responsibility for design and construction of Commonwealth facilities rested with the relevant Commonwealth Department

The contract for the building of the barracks was let to T F Carrick in July 1910 and the facilities were completed in June 1911. The buildings were situated around a gravelled parade ground and comprised an orderly room, guard room, a two storey barracks block for forty men, with a detached kitchen, ablution blocks, quartermaster's store and gymnasium. Before the barracks and facilities at Fort Arthur's Head were completed, the troops billeted in a drill hall and in tents along Cantonment Street. Further additions were made to the Artillery Barracks in 1913. An additional barracks block doubling the accommodation, a hospital block, a residence for the commanding officer, quarters for two officers, a warrant officer and three married non-commissioned officers were commenced on 16 January and completed 22 December 1913. Eventually, the barracks had accommodation for the garrison of 120 men; each dormitory accommodated twenty men with an adjacent plain clothes room. Later additions enabled each man to have his own locker. For several years after the Great War (World War One) the Artillery Barracks were used as a military hospital.' (p13)

Following a review of coastal defences in the early 1930s, the construction of new defences around Australia commenced in 1933 with the installation of the Oliver's Hill Battery at Rottnest by a team lead by Major Scriven and assisted by Lieutenant Hussey in 1934: '6 Heavy Battery RAA carried out the work for which the Artillery was responsible in WA. The unit was based at the Fremantle Artillery Barracks in Burt Street, Fremantle. It was also responsible for the care and maintenance of the existing facilities at Fremantle and Albany.' (Glyde, 1991, p17).

At the outbreak of the 1939-45 conflict, the 3rd Heavy Brigade RAA (P) was in the process of being redesignated 3rd Heavy Regiment, comprising Regimental Headquarters and 11 Heavy Battery, stationed at the Artillery Barracks, Burt Street Fremantle. The supporting engineer unit, 5th Fortress Company RAE (P) was stationed at Kingstown Barracks with a small detachment situated at the Burt Street Barracks. 'Also stationed at Artillery Barracks Fremantle was an anti-aircraft cadre of RAA (P) Troops armed with two, 3in mobile towed anti-aircraft guns attached and under command of the Commander Coast Defences for Administration and Training, although not part of the Coast Artillery Defences.' (Holder, Coast Defence Batteries, p8). During the Second World War a tunnel was constructed to an underground Control Room located to the south of the Signal Station on Cantonment Hill. The Signal Station was constructed in brick with a signal mast to the north.

The HQ Fremantle Fortress was disbanded immediately at the end of the war. The last known unit associated with Coastal Artillery, formed during the period 1939-45 was the WA Fortress Engineers formed in December 1945. It comprised a power and water supply section and a work section. After the cessation of hostilities in the Korean Conflict and, later, the National Service training programme, the Coastal Artillery branch of the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) was disbanded, the facilities were dismantled and the equipment disposed of, in 1963.

Since then the accommodation has been utilised by various defence groups and is currently occupied by the WA University Regiment, the Army Museum of WA and 56 Regimental Cadet Unit. These three units occupy specific buildings as well as sharing the facilities such as the parade ground.

The original stages of construction on the site were as follows: Work commenced on the Artillery Barracks site in 1910 by the builder, T F Carrick. The first barrack block (the westernmost section) was completed in 1911 at a cost of around 12,850 pounds, the second block in 1913 together with a hospital, commanding officer's residence, two officers' quarters, warrant officers' quarters and block of quarters for non commissioned officers. Others buildings also date from the 1910 construction phase. The central building linking the two barracks wings was built c 1935.

Le Page, in his book *Building a State*, indicates the cost of the 1913 additions to be 14,035 pounds, the administration of the contracts by the PWD to be among several undertaken by that organisation for the Commonwealth between 1901-25. The following text has been extracted from the report prepared by the Department of Works, c 1970:

'This is one of the few complete groups of historical buildings existing in WA today where most of the buildings involved were constructed in a relatively short period (1910-13). This has resulted in a very fine grouping around the central parade ground of carefully related buildings, constructed in similar styles and materials and dominated by the massiveness of the traditional main barracks block. After nearly sixty years of service these buildings are still in good condition considering the nature of the materials used. Generally brickwork is in excellent condition although mortar requires some touching up in exposed conditions. The limestone used was quarried in Cottesloe in an area bounded by Marmion, Eric, Broome and Napier Streets. Although basically sound some of the stonework has suffered on the surfaces on exposed elevations of the barracks block. Much of the external joinery, especially in the main barracks block, will require replacing in the not too distant future. The tiled roofs are generally in good condition at this time as it is obvious the original tiles have been replaced'.

Physical Description:

The site is near the north-eastern end of Fremantle Harbour against the southern end of the Traffic Bridge across the Swan River. The northern end of the site is a limestone bluff called Cantonment Hill rising to a peak about 33m above sea level. A former Drill Hall cut into the limestone cliff at this point and the former signal station located on the highest point, are not included in the present assessment. The land between 21m and 33m above sea level on the site has not been built on. The southern third of the site slopes down from 21m to 9m above sea level and provides the space for the barracks. Along the western boundary, a row of quarters for married staff, built of red brick and tile with limestone detail, face west and are accessed from Queen Victoria Street (which becomes Canning Highway at the northern end of the site).

The main entrance to the barracks leads into the parade ground from Burt Street, the southern boundary between two single storey buildings forming a gateway. The eastern boundary is on the Tuckfield Street alignment, but is security fenced. None of the buildings address Tuckfield Street. The complex has retained two features of the traditional layout of a barracks building with fortified walls (suggested by the single storey buildings around the site) and a security gate. In streetscape terms, the progression from Queen Victoria Street, with its suggestion of a complex beyond evidenced by the neat row housing, is heightened by the approach along Burt Street with the narrow opening of the main gate. Advancing through the gates, the space of the parade ground opens up; confrontation with the two storey building ahead completes the array of elements for an emotional experience of progressing through consciously contrived spaces. On entering the bituminised parade ground from Burt Street, the enclosed space is bounded on the north by the two storey barracks building with the c 1935 infill. The remaining buildings present generally as a single storey red brick enclosure to the parade ground. The cross-fall in the site provides basement accommodation to those buildings on the western perimeter.

Building materials have remained restricted to red brick with limestone detail, tiled roofs and timber joinery. The introduction of stone string courses in the outer leaf of the main building in the 1910-13 construction phase is unusual. The architects have juxtaposed the stone wall surfaces between the plinth and base course on some buildings and the frieze and gable on others. The stonework serves to break up what would otherwise be large areas of brickwork and provide a pattern of horizontal emphasis to counter the verticality suggested by the proportions of the openings, particularly in the larger buildings. In addition, the stonework, being of a similar colour and texture to the mortar joints in the brickwork serves to reduce the impact of the dark red brick wall surfaces.

The restraint in not painting the external masonry surfaces of the complex has ensured the intended horizontal and vertical design emphases remain visually intact, both within and from beyond the complex. The roof ventilators and mixture of balcony balustrade designs, together with the fine roof trusses in the gymnasium are of interest. The interior fittings of the former hospital, now the officers'/sergeants' mess is also significant although probably much modified from the original fitout. The utilitarian nature of the interiors reflects the ambience of the exterior. Many of the internal walls were tuck pointed brickwork (now painted) with cement rendered flush bead moulded dado below. Ceilings are generally timber boarding. Ablutions on the north side of the barracks buildings are of considerable significance due to the intactness of the fixtures, including the partitions. Much important fabric is in evidence.

The group, essentially utilitarian in execution could best be categorised as a simple form of the Federation Free Classical design style as described in Apperly et al, 1995. The c 1935 addition, the infill building between the 1911 and

the 1913 barracks, was designed in the inter-war Stripped Classical style. The peripheral buildings arrayed around the parade ground have been well built in matching materials, but without adornment. They are typical of Commonwealth Government construction of the period. Being of visually matching materials, the lesser buildings help to enclose the parade ground and unify the whole group.

History Not Available

Condition and Integrity

The buildings generally appear in sound condition. Apart from sections of the buildings needing specific and, in some sections, urgent maintenance, the complex is in good shape. Except where ceilings have been either sub-ceiled or replaced, the original finishes of the complex generally, are simply under the paint. Additions since the original construction in the main are not excessively intrusive. Many original interior fixtures and fittings, although old, remain in useable condition. (1996)

Location

2 Burt Street, comprising generally the whole of the block bounded by Burt, Queen Victoria, and Tuckfield Streets and Canning Highway, Fremantle.

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Box 20, M39/40-244 Fremantle ARA Barracks, Erection of Skidding Store.

Maps, Plans Ref: K1109/1,

Folder 10, Fremantle Barracks - 12 Maps,

1923, 1939 - Skidding Store. 1947-1974

Undated map, RAA Barracks, CA7528 (former number)

Folder 14, Gun House-7 maps, 64-62 Tuckfield St (GOC House)

Folder 21. - 2 maps, Rifle Cottage and Officers Quarters.

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Place Details

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Fremantle Inner Harbour, Victoria Quay Rd, Fremantle, WA, Australia

Photographs



List	National Heritage List
Class	Historic
Legal Status	Nomination now ineligible for PPAL
Place ID	105871
Place File No	5/12/010/0183