

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 140	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 30/10/1996	Last Revision Date: 03/11/2009	
HCWA Number: 13390	Asset ID: MCH127095	

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	Geraldton Primary School
Other Names:	Geraldton District High School, State School, Mixed School
Type of Place:	School
Address:	75 Fitzgerald Street
Suburb:	Geraldton

LOCATION

Map Reference: 14.15	GPS Northing: 6814154.00	GPS Easting: 266437.000
	0000	000



Photo Description:

16/04/2010

Tanya Henkel

Two storey brick building at Geraldton Primary School.

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 60	Assess No.:	11602
Reserv No.:	4111	Vol/Fol:	
Dia/Plan:			

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	School		
Current Use:	School		
Ownership:	Western Australian Government		
Public Access:	Restricted	Occupied:	Occupied

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	Stone/Brick	Roof:	Tile & CGI
Condition:	Fair	Integrity:	
Original fabric:	Highly intact		
Modifications:	Numerous additions over time		

The Geraldton Primary School has been built in various stages starting with the original 1878, single storey, stone classrooms, styled in a simple Victorian Georgian or Regency manner. They comprised a symmetrical plan with two large, high ceiling rooms at each end with two smaller classrooms between. They have since been built around and obscured from the street (south), but the rear of the stone buildings are still visible on one side of the internal quadrangle area. Inside the original rooms 'mini-orb', corrugated iron ceilings are still present. The original shingle roof was replaced with concrete roof tiles but has now been replaced with galvanised corrugated iron roof sheeting. The original buildings appear to have been followed by more stone classrooms. In 1911 a major, two storey, red brick addition at the front, in a restrained Federation Free Style, with some Arts and Craft influences, was designed by government architect Hillson Beasley. Copies of the original drawings are displayed in the Administration offices, illustrating the 'new' science room, classroom and central hall with its tall double volume, typical of the time (see also old Midland Junction School). The school has had numerous other additions to expand facilities when it became a district high school up until the 1940's when a new purpose built high school was built. Its continued use as a primary school has seen more additions in the 60's, through to the 1996 construction of a new library and a covered assembly area and now an additional multi purpose building. All periods of extensions to the school are typical of the style, and philosophies influencing government school design of the day. In 2009 a tall metal pole and wire mesh infill fence was erected to the perimeter of the

playground addressing Fitzgerald and Sanford Streets to address vandalism and social issues.

HISTORY

Construction Date: 1878 **Source:** Burns, A.C.
Architect: Hillson Beasley (1911)
Builder: Creswick & Stewart

The foundation stone to the original school was laid by Lady Ord on 4 October, 1878. The school opened in that year with Alfred Carson as the first headmaster, and 51 boys and 49 girls in attendance. It is believed to be one of the oldest schools still in use in the state. Prior to its construction, school classes were conducted in the Missions to Seamen Building built in 1861.

The contract for the school was carried out by Mr. Creswick and Mr A. Stewart was the contractor for the stonework. Built to Government plans, the stone school with a shingle roof, comprised four rooms to seat 250 children, with boys and girls segregated. (Burns, A.C., "Geraldton Primary School, 1878-1978", p3 & 12)

Constance Norris describes the school: "The Government School was where it is now in Fitzgerald Street and consisted of four rooms, two for girls and two for boys. The rooms were separated by archways, and a wooden partition between the front verandah, and a paling fence that separated the yards. Dull government brown paint, and glass through which we could not see, made them dull drab places." (Norris, C., "Memories of Champion Bay or Old Geraldton", Soroptimist International of Geraldton, 1989, p9) Further, the Constance Norris book includes a sketch plan of the original school building as well as descriptions of the activities at the school. (Ibid., p11-14) Norris describes extensions to the school building: "Two big cloakrooms were built in front of the four rooms, and a long corridor, cement floored, where the front verandahs had been." (Ibid., p14)

In 1917 the school also became a District High School and remained as such until 1940 when it was reclassified as the Geraldton Primary School, following the opening of a senior college in Carson Terrace in 1939. (Op Cit, Burns., p9 & 13) Over the years new classrooms were built around the nucleus of the original structure, including extensions carried out in 1978 and 1995, the latter being a new library building. (Ibid., p11)

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA: 402 Education and science
408 Institutions

AHC: 6.2 Establishing schools
3.26 Providing health services

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldton Primary School has very high aesthetic, historical and social significance for Geraldton and the State; being one of the oldest and continuously used schools outside the metropolitan area and one that is representative of the typical growth periods, styles and adaptations of government schools. It may also have scientific significance in being able to provide an understanding of the changes and influences on educational philosophy and practices in the State since the mid-late 19th Century. The school has the highest level of integrity and authenticity, and the buildings are in excellent condition, all because of the continued occupation and use of the site for its original purpose. The main school buildings addressing Fitzgerald Street make a positive contribution to the built environment of the locale.

RECOMMENDATION:

A conservation plan should be carried out to identify significant fabric from various construction periods and to guide future, alterations, additions and maintenance of the Geraldton Primary School. Any work on the buildings needs to be carried out in a way to ensure protection, conservation and clear definition of the original fabric from the various construction periods. In particular the original 1878 building and others through to the Inter War period require the highest level of protection.

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Management Category:	1
Level of Significance:	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
Management Recommendation:	Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.

OTHER LISTINGS

Heritage Council of WA - Register, 17/10/2003

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Burns, A.C., "Geraldton Primary School, 1878-1978".

Norris, C., "Memories of Champion Bay or Old Geraldton", Soroptimist International of Geraldton, 1989.

Feilman & Associates, "Survey of Places of Historic and Landscape Significance in Geraldton", 1977.

GHSPC.

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

30/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

Original stone section as viewed from central quadrangle.



Photo Description:

30/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

Brick two storey section of Geraldton Primary School addressing Fitzgerald Street.