

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 46	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 29/10/1996	Last Revision Date: 02/10/2009	
HCWA Number: 1058	Asset ID: MCH126691	

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	Geraldton Art Gallery
Other Names:	Geraldton Town Hall
Type of Place:	Art Gallery
Address:	22-24 Chapman Road, cnr Durlacher Street
Suburb:	Geraldton

LOCATION

Map Reference:	15.15	GPS Northing:	6814786.00	GPS Easting:	266797.000
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Photo Description:

3/08/2007

Rod Milne

Decorative pediment detailing.

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 384	Assess No.:	11724
Reserv No.:	3197	Vol/Fol:	375/191
Dia/Plan:			

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	Town Hall		
Current Use:	Art Gallery		
Ownership:	City of Geraldton-Greenough		
Public Access:	Restricted	Occupied:	Occupied

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	Brick	Roof:	Asbestos
Condition:	Not Applicable	Integrity:	
Original fabric:			
Modifications:	Front section colonnaded for pedestrian access		

The Geraldton Art Gallery, former Town Hall, is located on the corner of Chapman Road and Durlacher Streets in the heart of the town and provides a prominent landmark with its two storey, "Federation Academic Classical" [1] facades.

The front and side elevations are typically symmetrical for its style with double height, square, engaged columns supporting an entablature, parapets and a triangular pediment at the front. The walls are painted, rendered cement with mouldings over brick. Between the columns, arched windows to the first floor and square headed windows to the ground floor punctuate the facades. The original entry on the front (Chapman Road) elevation is identified by a small pediment and entablature supported on moulded, corbelled brackets over the former entry doors. Above this, the elevation culminates in a large decorated pediment that interrupts the parapet which otherwise caps the building. The entry has been modified with the art gallery alterations so that access is now gained at the Durlacher Street side. A colonnade has been created at street level behind the original facade to accommodate a footpath where road widening has now occurred in front of the building.

Internally, the complete form of the original town hall was modified in 1988 to house the art gallery and provide smaller administration spaces. The most significant change being the installation of a complete first floor, replacing the former balcony area that hung at the west end of the hall

opposite the stage. It is not known how intrusive the alterations are and recovered.

To the Durlacher Street lot frontage there is a low rendered masonry wall with metal railing infill. Three mature date palms are a feature of the lawned area to the north of the building.

[1] Apperly R et al., "A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture" (Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1989) pp: 102-103

HISTORY

Construction Date:	1907	Source:	"Geraldton Express"
Architect:	Oldham & Cox		
Builder:	James Brownlie		

The first movement for the erection of a town hall was made in 1896 when the Council invited competitive designs, but did not proceed further at that stage. The proposal was revived by the Mayor, Mr F.G. Armstrong in November 1905 and on 22 March 1906 a scheme was submitted showing that a hall could be erected without additional taxation on the ratepayers. Subsequently a referendum was held on 17 May which gave a majority of two to one in favour of the town hall. ("Opening of the Geraldton Town Hall - Souvenir Booklet", 12 July, 1907 & "Geraldton Express", 30/3/1906)

A Municipal loan of £3500 with interest of 102-12-6 was accepted from Mr J.E. Burt. ("Geraldton Express", 3/12/1906) The Town Hall was erected on a block of ground granted by the Government for the purpose and situated on the corner of Eleanor (now Chapman Road) and Durlacher Streets. (Souvenir Booklet) The foundation stone was laid on 28 January, 1907 by Sir Edward Horne Wittenoom. A copy of the history of Geraldton was laid under the foundation stone. The building was designed by Oldham and Cox and Mr James Brownlie secured the contract for construction, ("Geraldton Express", 30/1/1907), for a cost of £3,778. (Wilson, H.H., "Geraldton Sketchbook", p11 & Bain, M.A., "A Life of its Own", City of Geraldton, 1996, p297)

Description of the place - "The Hall faces Eleanor Street and has a frontage of 45 feet by a depth of 125 feet. The front elevation rises to a height of 37 feet. Its total seating capacity is 1,100 people." (Souvenir Booklet) The furnishings cost approximately £400.

The Town Hall was officially opened by the Governor, Sir Frederick Bedford on 12 July, 1907. ("Geraldton Express", 14/6/1907 & Wilson, p11) Many other ceremonies were held to mark the opening, including a torchlight procession through the streets and a concert held in the new town hall. (Wilson, p11) The Governor travelled on a special train from Perth to attend the opening ceremony. 1000 people were at the ceremony with the City Band and the Mayor, Mr F.G. Armstrong, in attendance.

("Geraldton Express", 12/7/1907)

The Town Hall was used for concerts, dances, exhibitions, film shows, civic functions, plays as well as being the headquarters of the Citizens' Advice Bureau. (Bain, p297) ANZAC Day Services were also held in the Hall for a number of years, following which they were transferred to Lester Square and then to Birdwood House in 1936. ("Geraldton Guardian & Express", 25/4/1936)

In the early 1980s the Town Hall was threatened with demolition, however a public outcry, including lobbying from a group called the Friends of the Old Town Hall (FROTH), prevented this from taking place. (Heritage Trail & Bain, p297)

In 1984 the building was renovated to a design by local architect Lewis Eves. The work was undertaken as a Community Employment Programme (CEP) project and saw the building converted into an Art Gallery.

(Heritage Trail & Bain, p298) On 6 August, 1984 the Geraldton Art Gallery was opened in the Old Town Hall by the Governor General, Sir Ninian Steven. (K. Gallaher, "List of openings, inaugurations, foundations", Local Studies Collection, Geraldton Library)

Refer to State Register documentation for further information.

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA:	400 Social and civic activities 404 Community services and utilities 407 Cultural activities
AHC:	8.10.4 Designing and building fine buildings 8.1 Organising recreation 8.10.2 Creating visual arts

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Geraldton Town Hall/Art Gallery is of very high aesthetic, historic and cultural significance to the Geraldton community and the State. It is a rare surviving example of public building in Geraldton and of its type in regional centres outside of Perth. The building makes an important contribution to the built fabric of Geraldton's CBD and is held in high esteem by the local community.

RECOMMENDATION:

Ongoing maintenance, conservation and any proposed development of the place should be guided by the recommendations of the Conservation Plan. Investigation is required to determine the integrity of the former internal spaces and whether future restoration is a possible option at some future time.

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, 02/09/1997
National Trust of WA - Classified, 02/08/1982
Australian Heritage Commission - Register, 14/05/1991

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

"Geraldton: a photographic history", Geraldton Regional Library, 2004.
"Opening of the Geraldton Town Hall - Souvenir Booklet", 1907.
"Geraldton Express".
Wilson, H.H., "Geraldton Sketchbook".
Bain, M.A., "A Life of its Own", City of Geraldton, 1996.
Gallaher, K., "List of openings, inaugurations, foundations".
Geraldton Heritage Trail.
GLLSPC - Buildings (Town Hall).
Feilman & Associates, "Survey of Places of Historic and Landscape Significance in Geraldton", 1977.

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

29/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

Building addresses a main intersection.