

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 47	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 29/10/1996	Last Revision Date: 02/10/2009	
HCWA Number: 1049	Asset ID: MCH126711	

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	Birdwood House
Other Names:	46 Chapman Road, cnr Forrest Street
Type of Place:	RSL Hall
Address:	46 Chapman Road, cnr Forrest Street
Suburb:	Geraldton

LOCATION

Map Reference: 15.15	GPS Northing: 6814981.00	GPS Easting: 266953.000
	GPS Northing: 0000	GPS Easting: 000



Photo Description:

2/08/2007

Rod Milne

View from Chapman Road.

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 1118	Assess No.:	11714
Reserv No.:		Vol/Fol:	
Dia/Plan:			

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	RSL Hall	Occupied:	Occupied
Current Use:	RSL Hall		
Ownership:			
Public Access:	Restricted		

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	Brick	Roof:	Asbestos
Condition:	Good	Integrity:	
Original fabric:			
Modifications:	Additions to rear		

Birdwood House sits, in association with the War Memorial, at a prominent intersection in the town centre. It is a simple, rectangular brick building with a gable end corrugated asbestos roof. The front facade has rendered mouldings, parapet and entablature supported on precast concrete columns forming a classical entry porch. The lower section of the front wall remains in un-rendered red brickwork as are the side walls except for rendered lintels over windows. The front facade provides a dignified entry and good mannered contribution to the streetscape in the style of the "Inter-war Georgian Revival or Free Classical " period. There are some elements of "art deco" about the detailing in leadlight glass to the entry doors (and formerly the front windows now replaced with plane glass), internal cornices and ceiling decoration. The internal planning is relatively simple with administration, meeting rooms, and ladies "retiring room" at the front. Behind these is the large function room. Further extensions for kitchens, toilets and a museum room have been carried out at the rear.

HISTORY

Construction Date:	1935	Source:	"Geraldton Guardian & Express"
Architect:	Tom Roberts		
Builder:	A.E. Crothers		

On 25 April, 1917 a branch of the Returned Soldiers Association (later the Returned Services League) was formed in Geraldton with Captain W.C. Robinson of the 10th Light Horse appointed as the first President. On 25 April, 1918 the RSA held its first ANZAC Day service. On 3 June, 1930 the Women's Auxiliary Committee was formed to work in conjunction with the Geraldton Sub-Branch of the RSL. (Burns, A.C. "Brief History of the Returned Soldiers Association", 1987) Housed in the old institute at the west end of Marine Terrace for several years, the Geraldton Sub Branch of the Returned Soldiers' League wanted to secure more suitable accommodation for their activities as well as to erect a fitting memorial for those who died during World War I (approximately 138). Following several years of careful planning a site was selected on the corner of Eleanor (now Chapman Road) and Forrest Streets. The site was originally a pound with the block alongside originally zoned as a market garden site. (Ibid.) Clearing and leveling of the block cost £140.3s.10d. The building was designed by architect, Mr. Tom Roberts and the contractor for the erection of the building was Mr A.E. Crothers. While the building was funded by RSL members and the Institute Trust, much of the fittings and furniture for the new building were donated by residents of Geraldton. The building, constructed from Cardup pressed bricks from the Bootenal Brickworks, was named after Field Marshall Sir William Birdwood, a "famous leader of the Anzacs". (Ibid. & "Geraldton Guardian & Express", 3/9/1935) A newspaper report of the day contains a very detailed description of the building which is described as being "strikingly designed" and "very imposing". ("Geraldton Guardian & Express", 3/9/1935) The design for the laying out of the Birdwood House grounds was prepared by Mr. W.P. Edwards and included plantings and a fountain. (Ibid) A seed from a Lone Pine at Gallipoli was planted on the site in November, 1969, however did not survive. (GLLSCVF No. G1299A & "Geraldton Guardian", 11/11/1969) On Sunday, 1 September, 1935, the War Memorial was unveiled by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir James Mitchell, while the State President of the R.S.L., Mr A. Yeates, performed the official opening of Birdwood House. ("Geraldton Guardian & Express", 3/9/1935) Unable to attend the official opening, Field Marshall Sir William Birdwood visited Geraldton two years later on 27 August, 1937. He was greeted with a special Guard of Honour, with various celebrations and honours throughout the day. ("A History of our Memorial", n.d.) Previously held in the Town Hall and in later years in Lester Square, ANZAC Day services were subsequently held in the grounds of Birdwood House. ("Geraldton Guardian & Express", 25/4/1936)

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA:	501 World wars and other wars
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AHC:	603 Local heroes and battlers 7.7.3 Going to war 8.8 Remembering the fallen 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Birdwood House has very high historic and social significance for the Geraldton community as the meeting place and focal point for the RSL and Anzac services. The building has high aesthetic significance for its style, rarity and contribution to the Geraldton townscape.

RECOMMENDATION:

Great care needs to be taken to preserve the facade and interiors of Birdwood House which have high integrity. The building's context with the War Memorial must not be diminished although some softening of the landscape with low planting or greening of the front forecourt, without obscuring the prominence of the place, may lessen its severity in the streetscape.

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

No other listings

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

"Geraldton: a photographic history", Geraldton Regional Library, 2004.
 Burns, A.C., "Brief History of the Returned Soldiers Association", 1987.
 "Geraldton Guardian & Express".
 "Geraldton Guardian".

GLLSCVF - G1299A.

GLLSPC - Buildings (Miscellaneous) & Geraldton (General).
"Pictorial Souvenir of Geraldton, WA".

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

29/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

View of the south and west elevations.