

<b>Area:</b> Geraldton	<b>Place Number:</b> 272	<b>Category:</b> 1
<b>Assessment Date:</b> 30/10/1996	<b>Last Revision Date:</b> 30/11/2009	
<b>HCWA Number:</b> 1072	<b>Asset ID:</b> MCH127104	

### PLACE DETAILS

<b>Name:</b>	Geraldton Courthouse
<b>Other Names:</b>	Geraldton Public Buildings
<b>Type of Place:</b>	Courthouse
<b>Address:</b>	15 Marine Terrace, Cnr Forrest Street
<b>Suburb:</b>	Geraldton

### LOCATION

<b>Map Reference:</b> 14.15	<b>GPS Northing:</b> 6815043.00	<b>GPS Easting:</b> 266849.000
		000



#### Photo Description:

13/04/2008

Tanya Henkel

Imposing facade addresses Marine Terrace.

## SITE DETAILS

<b>Lot No.:</b>	Lot 250-1	<b>Assess No.:</b>	11514
<b>Reserv No.:</b>	22481	<b>Vol/Fol:</b>	3000/ 889
<b>Dia/Plan:</b>			

## USE OF PLACE

<b>Original Use:</b>	Courthouse		
<b>Current Use:</b>	Courthouse		
<b>Ownership:</b>	Western Australian Government		
<b>Public Access:</b>	Restricted	<b>Occupied:</b>	Occupied

## DESCRIPTION

<b>Walls:</b>	Brick	<b>Roof:</b>	Tile
<b>Condition:</b>	Good	<b>Integrity:</b>	
<b>Original fabric:</b>	Original building demolished		
<b>Modifications:</b>	Numerous internal adaptations		

The Courthouse and Public Buildings are of two storey, Flemish bond brick construction with rendered verandah colonnades across the front in a Federation Free Classical style. The front (west), elevation of the building facing Marine Terrace is divided in to five, roughly equal, modules. The modules at the north and south ends are expressed as simple two storey red brick structures. The brick walls are interrupted by a rendered plinth and a band which runs between floors and the symmetrically laid out, square headed, double hung windows which also have rendered sills. On the northern end of the building a secondary entrance is identified by a recessed porch over which there is an arched, three panel window. The large, hipped roof is of terra cotta tiles with several brick and rendered chimneys breaking up the expanse of the orange tiles.

The three centre modules of the building have a ground floor colonnade of square, rendered Tuscan columns rising to support an entablature forming a balustrade to the first floor. The centre module contains the main entry which is relatively understated; being identified simply by a roundel, with a coat of arms, which is incorporated into the balustrade above. The first floor colonnade above the entry is also of simple form, using thin, circular Tuscan columns, sitting on the balustrade, to support a beam for the tiled roof running down to form a first floor verandah. The modules either side of the entry comprise rendered, ground floor columns which extend up through the balustrade to form two impressive, five bay arched colonnades. The colonnades express the full two storey volume

and are capped with a parapet entablature which screens the hipped, tiled roof behind. The parapet projects forward of the column wall below on small corbelled console brackets. It has rendered mouldings and capping and has small expressed piers reflecting the modulation of the colonnade below. The spacing of the colonnade is repeated in the set out of the tall double hung windows in the brick walls behind. An open, grassed forecourt with several low shrubs creates an authoritative setting for the buildings which dominated the street scape.

The interiors of the building were restored in 1989 when partitioning and suspended ceilings from the 1960's were removed. The restoration has allowed the sympathetic integration of modern air conditioning and services. However, this has lowered some ceilings and overall the new finishes appear to have a blandness that would not be expected from the original period of the buildings.

## HISTORY

<b>Construction Date:</b>	1897	<b>Source:</b>	Bain, M.A.
<b>Architect:</b>	Unknown		
<b>Builder:</b>	Unknown		

Plans for the Courthouse building were completed on 3 June, 1897 and tenders were advertised on 5 June, 1897. ("Geraldton Advertiser", 13/1/1899) At the time of their construction there was a strong secessionist movement in the north of Western Australia. In the event of a separate state being formed Geraldton was to be its capital, and it has been suggested that the Premier, Sir John Forrest, ordered the erection of these buildings to placate these sentiments. (Geraldton Heritage Trail) Built on Lots 250 and 251 adjoining the Railway Hotel to the west and portion of the site of the Pensioners' Barracks to the east, the foundation stone for the Courthouse and Government buildings was laid on 1 October, 1897 by the Acting Premier, the Hon. Edward Horne Wittenoom, a long-time businessman of the town. ("Geraldton Advertiser", 1/10/1897 & Bain, M.A., "A Life of its Own", City of Geraldton, 1996, p220) The foundation stone consisted of two large blocks of Albany blue granite faced with marble and inscribed with "This stone was laid by the Hon E.H. Wittenoom, Acting Premier and Minister of Mines on October 12, 1897." Beneath the stone were placed drawings of the building and copies of Geraldton and Perth newspapers and the Government Gazette, a list of the Western Australian legislature and a set of WA postage stamps. ("Geraldton Advertiser", 4/10/1897)

Local newspaper articles indicate that there was some difficulty in securing occupants for the Public Offices, possibly because of the lack of money to furnish the buildings. ("Geraldton Advertiser", 13/1/1899)

An article in the local paper described the building prior to construction: "The main building will be two storeys high the two sides containing a court on either side of the principal entrance being 40 feet above the street, while the centre and extremities are lower being built of brick with cement columns, parapet and cornices and a red tiled roof. In the centre is the official entrance leading to the office of the Government Resident; the offices of the collector of Customs, two treasury offices, Lands and Mines offices and those of the Registrar of births and deaths and two strong rooms." The article continues to describe the proposed building which was estimated to cost £21,000. (Op Cit, "Geraldton Advertiser")

The buildings provided accommodation for the Lands and Mines Department, Treasury, Police, Customs and Shipping and included police and sessions courts. ("Geraldton Advertiser", 1/10/1897)

The Courthouse was redeveloped in 1989, the work undertaken by the Geraldton Building Company. ("The West Australian", 1/5/1991, p51)

Changes included the removal of extensive fittings and suspended ceilings which had been installed during the 1960s as well as remodelling of the interior to facilitate the use of the building as a modern courthouse. A single storey extension was added on to the rear of the building to house the bailiff's office. The 'new' Courthouse was reopened on 15 September, 1989. ("Geraldton Courthouse", Brochure on the redevelopment, 1989)

## HISTORIC THEMES

<b>HCWA:</b>	403 Law and order
<b>AHC:</b>	7.6.4 Dispensing justice

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Courthouse and Public Buildings have very high aesthetic, social and historic significance for Geraldton and the State. It is a major example of a civic, two storey, Federation Free Classical style of building outside the metropolitan area. Its authenticity and integrity is very high and the buildings are of landmark quality, adding importantly to the town and street scapes. Socially and historically the buildings represent the seat of 100 years of law and order for the region. They mark the political decision making that saw their construction as a statement of prosperity for the town and the State during a period that also saw strong activity from the secessionist movement.

## MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

<b>Management Category:</b>	1
<b>Level of Significance:</b>	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
<b>Management Recommendation:</b>	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, 01/10/1999

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Considine & Griffiths Architects, "Geraldton Foreshore Conservation Plan", 2002 - Building 1.  
Hocking Planning & Architecture, "Conservation Plan for Geraldton Courthouse", prepared for the Ministry of Justice, August 1998.  
GLLSPC - Buildings (Miscellaneous) & Geraldton (General).  
GHSPC.  
Feilman & Associates, "Survey of Places of Historic and Landscape Significance in Geraldton", 1977.  
"Geraldton Advertiser".  
"The West Australian".  
Bain, M.A., "A Life of its Own", City of Geraldton, 1996.  
Thiel, P.W.H., "Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia", Perth, 1901, p.591.

## OTHER PHOTOS



**Photo Description:**

30/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

Large, prominently situated building.