

WALCOTT CENTRE, MOUNT LAWLEY



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Walcott Centre
Other names	Walcott Street Reception Home Government Receiving Depot Child Welfare Rec 3 Walcott St address alternative 399 Lord st alternative
Place type	Individual building or group
HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	15731
State Heritage Register:	14 May 2002
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 12 Sep 2006 Register of the National Estate Indicative Place
SITE LOCATION	
Street address	399 Lord St
Locality	Mount Lawley
Survey	Lot 144 SP 31792
Vol/folio	Lot 144 SP 31792
Reserve	7337

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	Exceptional Essential to the heritage of the area. Rare or outstanding example. Consider for nomination for State Register of Heritage Places if not already included.
Management category	Category 1 The place should be retained and conserved. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place and be in accordance with a Conservation Plan if one is in place.
Statement of significance	<p>The main buildings, exhibiting characteristics of the Federation Bungalow architectural style, and adjacent landscaped areas addressing Walcott Street, provide a pleasing group of buildings and garden areas typical of a government institution of the inter-war period enhanced by its domestic quality appropriate to the use of the place for the accommodation of children.</p> <p>The security fence is the only known example of a curved corrugated galvanized iron fence of its type, and as such is a rare structure.</p> <p>The place played a role in the welfare of State wards of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origin from the 1920s to the 1980s and is significant to all sectors of the wider community for its role in child welfare services in Western Australia.</p> <p>The place is the oldest government run institution providing child welfare services in the State and was the only government receiving home from 1921 until 1984, and the only fully government funded child welfare institution until 1960. It has played a significant role in the development and implementation of Child Welfare practices by the State government, particularly in the areas of adoption, foster care and institutional care, and in the treatment of neglected, orphaned and delinquent youths from the 1920s to the 1980s.</p>

SIGNIFICANCE	
Statement of significance	The place has strong associations for those people who, as children, for family or other reasons spent time living in the institution, and for the matrons, nurses and general staff who worked and lived there.

PLACE USE	
Original use	Governmental: Other
Current use	Residential: Institutional Housing
Other use	Governmental: Other

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1921; 1929; 1980
Walls	Common Brick Limestone Rendered Brick Roughcast render
Roof	Corrugated sheet metal Terracotta tile
Architectural Style	Federation Bungalow

Physical description	<p>The group of buildings are all single storey. The Main Building and former Nurses' Quarters are in the Federation Bungalow style.</p> <p>MAIN BUILDING: This building is brick and tile with a hipped roof. The roof ends in a gable which is rendered with a louvered timber roof vent. One metre of the brickwork is exposed with render above it. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes or fixed pane and awning windows.</p> <p>FORMER NURSES' QUARTERS: The original rectangular shaped building has been added to the rear at right angles.</p>
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CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	<p>The front of the building consists of two rooms with a verandah along the Walcott Street elevation. The original part of the building is timber framed, clad in weatherboards and rough cast render. The verandah is located under a skillion roof</p> <p>WORKSHOPS: These buildings are rectangular in plan and are constructed with bricks, asbestos sheeting, and weatherboards. A zincalume shed is attached to the rear of the Metal Workshop</p> <p>WOODSHED: This building is rectangular in plan with a hipped roof. It is clad with metal sheets and has a set of metal double doors.</p> <p>DETENTION WARD: The main building is surrounded by verandahs which are infilled. The original cells are in the centre of the building, although many of the internal walls have been removed. The original walls are constructed from brick and the newer section is constructed with bricks and timber frame clad in weatherboard.</p> <p>FORMER BOY'S FLAT: The building consists of three rooms in an L shape with a verandah on the southern elevation. It is timber framed and clad in asbestos with a corrugated iron hipped roof.</p> <p>WORKSHED: This is a simple timber framed weatherboard building consisting of two rooms. It has a hipped corrugated iron roof and timber floorboards.</p> <p>LAUNDRY: This is a rectangular brick building with rendered panels and brick infill. It has a parapet wall at the eastern and western ends and high timber framed windows. The roof is gabled, and a steel framed verandah is located on the north and west ends.</p> <p>DEMOUNTABLE: A demountable building is used by the TAFE and is a typical cement sheet clad demountable classroom.</p>

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The subject place, now known as the Walcott Centre, was variously called the State Children's Receiving Home/Depot, Government Receiving Home/Depot and Mount Lawley (Children's) Receiving Home/Depot. Under the 1874 Industrial Schools Act the State could care and educate orphans and destitute children, and place juvenile offenders in institutions other than prisons, such as Industrial Schools.

These schools came under the Public Charities Department under 1907 when the State Children's Department was formed. The first Government Receiving Depot was established at Subiaco. It was relocated to West Perth when its buildings were converted for the King Edward Memorial Hospital. Following a Royal Commission in 1919 into conditions at the West Perth facility (which was described as 'unsuitable' and 'undesirable') the State Government started to build a new facility in Lord/Walcott streets for the Government Receiving Depot. This was to house children waiting for entry to a Child Welfare Institution or were in juvenile detention.

By 1932 children were also taken into care if their mothers could not care for them while they were in hospital. The centre dealt with approximately 700 admissions and discharges annually and there was an average of 40 children in residence at the centre at a time. The ages ranged from a few days old to 17 years. The detention wards housed juveniles awaiting trial in the Children's Court, delinquents and uncontrollable children. These wards were separated from the other children's wards and were often unoccupied as the juveniles were often granted bail. The State Children's Department's Annual Report for 1922 stated 'the new buildings have been occupied for 12 months and the change from the old site has proved beneficial in many directions, and has undoubtedly tended to reduce the morality amongst the young infants'. The location of the Detention Wards adjacent to the main building had reduced overhead charges. The matron had the power to grant bail, and this was being freely exercised when there is no serious objection.

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In 1926 substantial works were carried out on the buildings. By 1929 when the establishment was listed in Wise's Post Office Directories for the first time (under the Walcott Street address) the Matron was Isabella J. Borwick. By that stage the depot had become very overcrowded. In the 1930s some public buildings were neglected as a result of the Great Depression but a program of maintenance works was started in 1937. In the 1930s the Depot had 14 staff including a matron, three nurses, four female attendants and one male attendant, a male clerk, a cook, laundress, seamstress and a gardener. The seamstress, along with the older girls, made clothing for the children to be given to foster parents.

From 1934 what were then considered 'backward' or sub-normal' children were sent there and a kindergarten commenced. School-aged inmates attended Maylands Primary School or Mount Lawley Senior High School. In 1938 it was reported that the Depot was able to house 64 children, 16 babies, 31 children aged two and up, with 9 beds for girls aged fourteen and up and 8 beds in the detention ward. Matron Borwick retired that year. In 1949 the last year of the Directories the Matron was Miss Vera Gill.

An article in the Daily News the following year (26 January 1950) reported that it was known to its neighbours as the 'gaol in the city'. The view from the street was of 'barred windows, cyclone wire enclosures, high picket fencing and barbed wire'. Between 1955 and 1957 additions and alterations were made to the buildings. In 1955 the dormitory building was configured so that the nursery and girls were located on the east wing. The west wing was the boys' side. The kitchen, dining room and scullery were located in the south wing and the north wing was the matron's room, sewing and clothes room. The intersection of these wings was an open play area. The nurses' quarters were located in a separate building to the north-west of the main building.

From the late 1950s the name changed to the Child Welfare Reception Home. Then between the 1960s and the 1990s changes in the structure of the government departments changed the use of the Walcott Centre. In 1960 the Child Welfare Department built other facilities to house State Wards. Due to this the amount of children reduced in the Child Welfare Reception Home. Children between the ages of three and eighteen only stayed at the Reception Home for a short time (one to eight days) while waiting for a permanent placement. The other facilities housed children for longer periods. In the late 1960s and 1970s special education programs were introduced and a school was

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recognised by the Education Department in 1975. Changes in Departmental practices also meant that during the 1970s Aboriginal children made up between one third and one half of the children at the Reception Home. Extensive renovations were carried out in 1971 and 1972. In the 1970s training programs were established to help find employment for those wards of an employable aged. Those who worked went to their jobs daily and returned in the evenings.

In 1980 the name was changed to the Walcott Centre to reflect the change in the focus of the facility towards the corrective management of children. In 1984 two Community Service Programs (C-BOP) were relocated to the centre and it no longer catered for residents. Until 1993 it was the headquarters for the C-BOP Offenders Program, a new government initiative which coordinated work programs for juvenile offenders. In the early 1990s part of the east wing was used by Worksyde, an employment and training support program funded by the YMCA and Ministry of Justice. It was (2008) vested with the Ministry of Justice and offers rehabilitation and counselling to juvenile and adult offenders. Two workshops were used for community programs and part of the east wing is occupied by the Court Diversion Service for those with drug problems. The nurses' quarters had not been used since a fire in the 1990s.

In 1987 the land comprising the compound area and western car park was acquired by the Mount Lawley TAFE campus, with some of the Walcott Centre buildings used as classrooms. A fence divided the two areas. TAFE also took over the laundry building and the detention ward for classrooms circa 1990. In 1997 the latter was substantially renovated. Other subsequent changes in the TAFE portion included a demountable building and other associated amenities. The subject place was entered on the State Register of Heritage Places Permanent List on 14 May 2002. Some further alterations took place in 2006, which included an addition to the workshop and a security upgrade. Further works were planned for the period 2008 to 2010.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards indicate that the form and extent of the main buildings at the subject place have changed little since then.

Historic theme	Social Services: General Social Services Social Services: Education
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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Associations	
Sources	P15731 Walcott Centre Assessment Documentation, DPLH, 2002.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

