

HOUSE, 20 RICHMOND STREET, NORTH PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	House, 20 Richmond St
Other names	Spencer Residence (fmr)
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	18046
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 12 Sep 2006

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	20 Richmond St
Locality	North Perth
Survey	LOT: 1 STR: 69479
Vol/folio	2854/830
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The place has aesthetic value as a large and intact example of the Federation Bungalow Style executed in brick and tile. Although the elevations are obscured from the street there is evidence of the generous roof form and detail that is consistent with the style.</p> <p>The place is located on a prominent corner and is a landmark in the streetscape for its bulk and scale adjacent to much smaller residences.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of North Perth in the Inter War period and this residence was one of the first in the vicinity.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with prominent businessman and community leader Alfred Spencer who made a significant contribution to the community through his role on the Perth City Council and numerous sporting groups and charity organisations.</p> <p>The place is representative as an example of generous residence built for professionals and their families in the early 20th century.</p> <p>This place is valued by the community for the continuity of its presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Residential: Single Storey Residence
Current use	Residential: Single Storey Residence
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	c1915
Walls	Brick Rendered Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Inter-War California Bungalow
Physical description	<p>The dwelling at No.20 Richmond Street is a large rendered brick and tile building constructed in the Federation Bungalow style with elements that reflect the Inter War California Bungalow style.</p> <p>The imposing dwelling is located on the corner of Richmond and Campsie Streets in North Perth. The dwelling has a low pitched, hipped roof form and features three street facing, protruding gables. The two outer protruding gables are truncated at their peak and are supported by thick stone piers to create open verandah spaces underneath. The central gable, is slightly recessed and below there is a timber framed bow window. All three gables feature timber battening.</p> <p>The dwelling is setback approximately six metres from its Richmond Street boundary and two metres from its Campsie Street boundary. Set over two lots the dwelling is delineated from the street by a high wall of brick piers with infill panels.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The eastern section of Richmond Street borders the public open space of the Smith's Lake Drainage Reserve. This section of Richmond Street was developed later than its western counterpart, which formed part of the Leeder Estate subdivision of 1891 including the area bordered by Richmond, Oxford, Bourke and Lonsdale (Loftus) Streets. In 1915 the North Perth section of Richmond Street was described in Wise's Post Office Directories as 'Richmond Road, North Perth off Bent Street', which was so named because of its shape. The street ran from Bent Street to the North Perth boundary. There were only four houses in this section, none of which were numbered at that time.

The large house at No. 20 Richmond Street was constructed on two blocks circa 1915. The City of Perth Rates Books show the owner in 1916 as Sidney Robert Burns with the notation 'new house' shown. In 1917, the occupant was designated as Israel Cohen. His occupation was listed as 'marine dealer', which was also known as a 'bottleo', a collector of empty bottles. Most of these men involved in this business used a horse and cart and a Hessian sack to collect the bottles from people's homes. It was accepted practice for them to go to the rear of the house to collect the 'dead marines' as the empty beer bottles were often called and, if the residents were not at home, just leave the money somewhere handy. At that time the bottles were mainly beer but there was also some used cool drink and other bottles available. In later years the going rate was 1d for beer bottles and 2d for cool drink bottles. The bottleo then sold them back to the brewery and the cool drink firms for a small profit.

The Directories and Rates Books also indicated that Mrs R. Burns was the resident in 1918 and 1919, presumably a relative of Sydney Burns.

In 1920, the owner was designated as the War Service Commission and the occupant Alfred Spencer who designated his occupation as storekeeper. Spencer ultimately became the resident and owner of the place and the property remained in the Spencer family until 2003. Alfred Spencer married Nellie Rebecca Worthy Johnson (c1891-1948) in 1914 and in enlisted with the AIF in 1915, leaving Nellie with their new born son. He served in France where he was wounded more than once. He achieved the rank of Sergeant with the 28th Battalion before being discharged in 1919. The Spencer's had at least 3 children and raised them at this house.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Alfred Spencer (c1891-1982), founded Vox (later called Vox Adeon), a discount retail electrical outlet with its first shop in Perth. He was a member of the Perth City Council for more than two decades from 1943 onwards and was also a member of the Salvation Army and on the Board of Advisors of the Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association. Spencer was also a life member of the West Perth Football Club and became a Justice of the Peace in 1940. In recognition of his active contributions to the community, he was awarded an OBE. He also played a significant role in bringing the Empire (Commonwealth) Games to Western Australia in 1962. The City of Perth records indicated that an extension to the garage was planned in 1951 and a brick toilet in 1958. The house was inherited by Mr Spencer's daughter Nellie Toolin, following her father's death and was sold in 2003.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards indicate that the subject place changed little until around 2015 when the block was subdivided. Two residences were added and an extension built on the original residence. The two additional residences have garages that face Laroche Lane at the rear of the subject place but are numbered 1B and 1C Campsie St (which runs perpendicular to Richmond St). There have been no other visible changes to the original residence since this time.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic Development Cultural Life: Domestic Life Cultural Life: Recreation - Sport	
Associations	Alfred Spencer and family	Owner and occupant
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. NAA: B2455 Spencer Alfred. City of Perth Rates Books	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



ARCHIVAL IMAGES



Alfred Spencer c1950. Courtesy SLWA image b6362171_5.