

# KYILLA PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Kyilla Primary School
Other names	Selkirk Street Infants School
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	25720
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	4 Selkirk St
Locality	North Perth
Survey	LOT: 10426 D/P: 188980
Vol/folio	LR3048/856
Reserve	RES: 38268

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p><b>Considerable</b> Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p><b>Category 2</b> 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 is representative of the pattern of linear expansion typical of many schools, which expanded to reflect the development and population growth of the local area.</p> <p>The original portions of the school are a late representative example of a primary school in the Inter-War Georgian Revival style located in the Metropolitan region.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of North Perth in the Inter War and post war period when population growth lead to demands for services.</p> <p>The existence of both Boys' and Girls' Shelter Sheds that date from the early years of the establishment of the school is likely to be rare.</p> <p>The place has social value for the many members of the community who have attended the place as students, teachers or the family and friends of those who have attended the school for a range of purposes.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Educational: Primary School
Current use	Educational: Primary School
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1944; 1946; 1948; 1972; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2010; 2021
Walls	Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Inter War Georgian Revival

Physical description	<p>The school is located on a triangular 1.37ha site, well below the ideal of 3.5 to 4ha per school, and it is therefore a compact complex of school buildings constructed between 1945 and 2015. There is a long and ongoing history of additions, alterations, relocations and reuse of the schools' buildings to meet its contemporary needs. There are a number of mature trees (mostly Queensland Box (<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>) on the site, particularly around the perimeter, and in front of the main entrance. There is a small oval in the eastern corner of the site. The larger open space of Kyilla Park lies adjacent further south and is utilised by the school.</p> <p>Main Block 1945 (with later extensions in a matching style): a rectangular brick building, rendered above a high face brick plinth, with a tile roof. The central entry is recessed in a projecting bay with a rectangular pediment. The multi-paned double hung windows either side of the entry are slightly forward of the classroom windows that are arranged symmetrically along the rest of the facade.</p>
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CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	Small Shelter Shed Type E (c.1946): currently used as a bicycle shed, this is a timber framed building clad in painted weatherboard with a clay tile roof and concrete floor. Original seating remains around the internal perimeter. Mounting points for central seating have been removed (mounting points on concrete floor are still evident) and there is some termite damage.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Land was resumed on Selkirk St, North Perth for a 'West Mount Lawley School' in 1928. Adjoining residential lots were soon being marketed as being in a desirable location close to the proposed new school site. However it appears that no buildings were erected on the site for nearly 20 years, despite the growing population of the area.

The advent of WWII in 1939 resulted in material and labour shortages, and had a significant effect on building programs in the state. To address the need for a school in the area, in November 1941 a 'jarrah school room (30ft by 20ft) was proposed to be relocated from Herne Hill' to the site, with enrolments due to open after Christmas. However, it appears that Perth City Council, residents and the Education Department objected to this proposal as the area had been designated 'brick only', meaning no timber buildings could be erected. As a result, local children were still being bussed to schools in adjoining districts in 1943. Later that year, residents met with the Minister for Education to lobby for a new school for the area.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Plans were drawn up the following year (1944) for a new brick school and are initialled J. H. These show a school designed to be constructed incrementally. Although the initial proposal was for only two classrooms, these were envisaged to ultimately be part of a much larger complex based on a central block of six classrooms facing Selkirk St arranged either side of a central entry flanked by staff rooms. Future expansion was indicated with two wings of classrooms angled north at either end of the central block. The central block is shown as having Open Air Teaching Space to the rear, consistent with the Montessori-based teaching philosophy. The angled wings were to have narrower verandahs. Boys and girls 'latrines' were to be built at the far side of the site along Ford St, with a gravel play area immediately behind the two new classrooms. Space on the site was also allocated for a future assembly hall.

Detailed plans from later in 1944 show the first two classrooms each with three large south-facing sash windows, corner fire places and blackboards. The place opened as 'Selkirk-street Infants' School' in February 1945.

In 1946, plans were drawn up to expand the school following the original design. Two new classrooms were to be constructed to the east of a new entry and administration centre, which contained a head teacher's room, teachers' common room, stores and pantry. Again the new classrooms opened onto open air teaching space. These plans show that by this time the boys and girls 'latrines' had been constructed, as well as a type E shelter shed.

The newly expanded school was opened by the Director of Education in November 1946, with the Western Mail commenting that it made 'an architectural addition' to the slowly expanding suburb. The school was referred to as Kyilla School in the press, although PWD plans continued to refer to it as Selkirk Street School through to about 1950.

No documentation has been found to explain why the school changed its name, but it was probably linked to the idea that kyilla was an Aboriginal word meaning 'north'. The term was well known during the 30s and 40s through its association with the 'giant 21-seater inter-capital airliner' Kyilla. Touted as the largest and fastest plane in Australia, the plane was regularly in the news. Further research would be necessary to confirm if kyilla is an Aboriginal word, and if the school was one of the first in Western Australia to have an Aboriginal name.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A second shelter shed (type H) was constructed in about 1948 close to the Boys' Latrines/Toilets, and therefore probably functioned as the Boys' Shelter Shed. The original Shelter Shed would therefore have become the Girls' Shelter Shed. Plans were also proposed for a Bristol Classroom to be constructed at this time, but instead the eastern portion of the existing open air teaching space was enclosed to create a new classroom. Subsequent plans show this area was later used as a library.

During the 1950s or 60s, the 1945 shelter shed was enclosed. Enclosure of shelter sheds was typical in this era as their use as a lunch area declined.

In 1972, toilets were added to the western end of the Main Block in a matching architectural style, and it is likely that the original 'latrines'/toilets were decommissioned at this time. They have subsequently been used for storage. In 1974, a new classroom was added to the eastern end of the Main Block, again in a matching style.

At some point between 1974 and 1998, the open air teaching area behind the Main Block was enclosed to create a canteen, and library and teaching area.

In 1997, the school built an undercover assembly area on the location of the 1945 shelter shed, which was moved to its current (2016) location adjacent to what had been the Girls' Latrine/Toilet. It now functions as a sports equipment storage room. Plans from this period show other temporary accommodation was added to the site to address increasing demand.

In 1998, the Main Block underwent extensive alterations to the entrance and staff rooms to create a more open-plan reception area, resulting in the removal of original internal walls and fixtures such as fire places.

A Library Resource Centre was built in 1999 on the site of a previous transportable. The Building the Education Revolution (BER) program in 2010 resulted in the removal of several transportables and trees, and the construction of a block of four new classrooms. At least

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 2015, a further transportable was required and was proposed to be located on the site of the small shelter shed. An alternative location was found, however in 2016, another transportable is required and is again proposed for the site of the small shelter shed.

Additional transportable classrooms have been relocated to the site in the 2010s, and in 2021 a major new two storey teaching block was constructed in the south west corner of the site.

<b>Historic theme</b>	Social Services: Education Peopling WA: Demographic Development	
<b>Associations</b>	Public Works Department of WA	Architect and builder
<b>Sources</b>	P25720 Kyilla Primary School inHerit database entry, DPLH.	

## ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



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*Kyilla Primary School, 1953. Courtesy City of Vincent Local History Collection image 1013681*