

BOWRA AND O'DEA BEAUFORT ST, PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Bowra and O'Dea Beaufort St
Other names	Pensioner Funeral Services Arthur E. Davies & Co.
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8586
State Heritage Register:	15 Dec 2009
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995 Art Deco Significant Bldg Survey Completed 30 Jun 1994 Classified by the National Trust Classified 12 Mar 2001

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	359 Beaufort St
Locality	Perth
Survey	LOT: 103 D/P: 92080
Vol/folio	2106/55
Reserve	—

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>Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street exhibits a streamlined effect that implies cleanliness and efficiency, reflecting the modernisation of the funeral industry at the time of its construction; while preserving a sense of solemnity, restraint and discretion essential to the sombre nature of its intended business.</p> <p>Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street, is a good example of a small scale building designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style of architecture.</p> <p>Being of a distinctive design and located on a prominent corner site, Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street has strong landmark qualities and contributes to the community's sense of place.</p> <p>Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street was built at a time when the professionalism of the funeral industry was consolidated in Western Australia. In the first decades of the twentieth century the trend was for undertakers to specialise in the provision of funeral services, phasing out the prior practise of providing other services, such as cabinet making or wheelwrighting, from the same premises. At the same time they increasingly provided modernised services, such as embalming, motorised hearses and refrigeration.</p> <p>Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street is associated with two of Western Australia's most prominent and longest running firms in the funeral industry, Arthur E. Davies and Co., and Bowra and O'Dea.</p>

SIGNIFICANCE	
Statement of significance	Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street was designed by Samuel Rosenthal, a significant architect in Western Australia in the inter-war period, known primarily for his cinema designs.
	The windows in the chapel at Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street were to a design by Barnett Brothers, a firm known for their stained glass and who provided the windows in several notable religious buildings in Western Australia.
	It is likely that Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street holds a special place in the memory of the community of families and friends who have lost loved ones and mourned that loss at the premises over the many years of its operation.
	Bowra and O'Dea, Beaufort Street contributes to the local community's sense of place for its iconic presence since its construction. Its social value is evidenced by its inclusion in the City of Vincent's Municipal Inventory.

PLACE USE	
Original use	Health: other
Current use	Commercial: office
Other use	Religious: chapel

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1937
Walls	Rendered Brick
Roof	Corrugated metal sheeting
Architectural Style	Inter War Moderene

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	A single storey building in the Inter-War Moderne style. It is mostly symmetrical about the street corner, with prominent heavy stucco banding. Elements of the Moderne style include the cantilevered window awning, moderne cartouche with horizontal banding, rippled moulding on the parapet, and the vertical element on the parapet that supports a cross. The underside of the suspended awning is pressed metal from Bristle. Zero setbacks to the street frontages.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The area on the southwest corner of Beaufort and Bulwer streets was the site of Lake Poulet, (named after [possibly] Lord Poulett, whose wife Mary was married to Lord Beaufort) and also known as First Swamp. The area was occupied by Chinese market gardens where locals could purchase fresh vegetables until about 1920, when the lake bed was filled in (this was partly achieved by using it as a rubbish dump). The site was redeveloped as Birdwood Square (named after General Birdwood who was a prominent general in World War I). Even though it was used regularly for hockey matches and other sports, it was still 'very sloppy in winter' (Eleanor Jefferies), with some surrounding residential development.

In February 1915, Lot N117 was subdivided and Lot 5 (the portion on the corner) was transferred to Arthur Pemberthy who was described as a 'land owner of Perth'. In 1923 it was purchased by a group of three men, one of whom was Patrick Andrew Connolly. On 17 August 1936 the land was purchased by Wallace Arthur Harold Green (undertaker) and Jasper William Green (commercial manager), owners of Arthur E. Davies & Co.

Arthur Davies had set up in business in Fremantle in 1888. From the 1890's on this firm was one of the three main undertaking firms in Fremantle and Perth. Their annual advertisement in Wise's Post Office Directories stated 'the oldest firm; the newest methods'.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The firm was sold to William Jonas Green in 1904 and on his death in 1913, was taken over by one of his sons, Jasper William Green. Two of Jasper's brothers, Wallace Arthur and Horace Leslie Green later joined him in the business. The building on the northeast corner overlooking Birdwood Square was purpose built as a funeral parlour in 1937 at a time when increasing professionalism was changing the industry. Prior to that, undertakers had also been involved in wheelwrighting and cabinet making; and the hearses were horse-drawn, necessitating the keeping of horses and carriages. In the early part of the 20th century, undertakers were beginning to provide a more modern service which included refrigeration and embalming and motorised hearses. Cremation was also gradually becoming accepted and this practice grew in popularity after the 1929 Cremation Act.

The place was constructed for funeral directors Arthur E. Davies & Co, and was designed by architect Samuel Rosenthal of Perth, who had gained a reputation as a cinema specialist. Barnett Brothers, who were noted for their stained glass, provided the 14 windows for the chapel and two in the original mortuary. After these new premises were completed the firm inserted a new advertisement in the Post Office Directories which featured this new branch and offered 'continual service day and night at all branches and a complete and efficient funeral service'.

In 1948, Wallace Arthur Harold Green took over the business on his own. On 8 June 1954, the property was sold to a Victorian company which opened at Amgoorie Tea warehouse. Several other businesses followed and then on 17 April 1972, the premises were purchased by the undertakers, J .D Green Pty Ltd.

On 22 November 1977 the name was changed to W.A.H Green Pty Ltd. W.A H Green's businesses, which included these premises at No. 359 Beaufort Street, was purchased by the firm of Bowra O'Dea on 1 September 1978. This too was a long-established undertaking firm, the partnership having being formed by Michael O'Dea and William Bowra in 1892. (The partnership had actually been dissolved in 1913 upon William Bowra's retirement but Michael O'Dea retained the name.) The firm operated the Beaufort Street premises under the banner of 'Pensioner Funeral Services'. The mortuary was not used at this time as all this preparation took place in the in their main branch at No. 68 Stirling Street, Perth.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Renovations were carried out in 1992 (architect Walter Hunter, then of South Perth) and in 1997 a very large modern mortuary was built on the block next door (the firm had purchased the house on the northern side in 1995). This new mortuary became the firm's main preparation area and the one in Stirling Street was decommissioned. Following this, the place became the main office of the firm and the residence of the mortuary manager.

Historic theme	Social Services:Health Economy: Commerce	
Associations	Samuel Rosenthal	Architect
Sources	P8586 Bowra and O'Dea Beaufort St Assessment Documentation, Department of Planning Lands and Heritage. Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006. Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

