

BAKER AVENUE PRECINCT, PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Baker Avenue Precinct
Other names	
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	17967
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 03 Jul 2006

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	1-19 Baker Ave
Locality	Perth
Survey	
Vol/folio	
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Moderate</p> <p>Contributes to the heritage of the locality. Has some altered or modified elements, not necessarily detracting from the overall significance of the place.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 3</p> <p>Conservation of the place is desirable.</p> <p>Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place and retain original fabric where feasible.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>Baker Avenue Precinct has aesthetic significance as a cohesive row of dwellings exhibiting characteristics of the Inter-war bungalow style, providing a coherent character with varied detail.</p> <p>The dwellings contribute to the quality and setting of the surrounding area, and provide an important contribution to the vista of Birdwood Square.</p> <p>Its aesthetic qualities as a whole are defined by the overall form, style, height, setback and selection of materials of the place in contributing to the uniformity of the streetscape.</p> <p>Baker Avenue has historic value as the dwellings were developed at a time when there was a change of focus of suburban development from development driven by land speculation to planned communities with particular emphasis placed on amenity as encouraged through the Garden City movement as interpreted by the City of Perth.</p> <p>The precinct has social value for the community as it has been an intact and cohesive grouping since the 1920s and contributes to the community sense of place.</p>

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

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1927 onwards
Walls	Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Inter-War California Bungalow

Physical description	<p>The avenue comprises ten brick and tile Inter-war bungalows, which have a consistent setback and lot configuration, which responds to the slight curve in the avenue. Whilst all the dwellings along the street have different design features and presentations to the street there are several common elements, which include: gable ends with decorative battens in a vertical orientation; verandahs, which are supported by rendered brick piers with columns above, tiled roofs; timber casement window arrangements with mullion detail and consistent side setbacks.</p> <p>Most dwellings along the street have retained much of their original form, detailing and presentation to the street except for two of the dwellings. The dwelling at No. 1 (Lot 2) Baker Avenue, which is located at the southern end of the avenue and has a side frontage to Brisbane Street, is completely concealed behind a garage and brick wall.</p> <p>The place at No.3 Baker Avenue has had a second storey timber addition, which is well setback and comprises a white corner window and chimney.</p>
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CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	There are two high brick walls, which obscure the facades of Nos. 17 and 19 Baker Avenue.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION	
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Birdwood Square is a place of cultural significance to the Nyoongar people. Named Chalyeding, the area was once a system of inland lakes, swamps and lagoons which extended from East Perth across the northern part of the city. These wetlands sustained the Nyoongar people during the late spring, summer and early autumn months when fresh water reserves ran low and food was plentiful. The wetlands were important for accommodating gatherings where trade and ceremonies took place. Other lakes and swamps in the immediate northern vicinity of the early Perth township were Lake Kingsford (site of the current Perth railway station), Lake Irwin (Perth Entertainment Centre), Lake Thomson (Mews Swamp between Lake, Brisbane and Beaufort Streets) and Lake Henderson (parts of what is now Robertson Park and Dorrien Gardens).

Birdwood Square was originally known as 'First Swamp' by the early European settlers. It was renamed Lake Poulett after the Fourth Earl of Poulett in the early 1800s, as it was fashionable for streets and parks to be named after English dignitaries at the time. It was also referred to casually as Lakey's Garden in later years. The lake was drained circa 1872 after severe flooding in the city. It was partially filled during one period of use as the town rubbish dump, but it is understood that there was a nursery established there at some stage. Later Chinese market gardeners began growing produce there. The Chinese were the first ethnic group to move into the North Perth area during the Western Australian gold boom in the early 1890s. The fertile soil and plentiful water supply of the drained wetlands were ideally suited to traditional Chinese farming methods. This enabled them to meet the demand for fresh fruit and vegetables resulting from the expansion of Perth's population to the north. One of the Chinese market gardeners at Birdwood Square was Joes Kong. He farmed the garden at the intersection of Bulwer and Beaufort Streets, until it was purchased by the City of Perth in 1913.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

As can be seen from early Perth Water Department Plans, there were a number of structures built along the south-eastern corner of Birdwood Square at the junction of Brisbane and Beaufort Streets circa 1897. However, these dwellings were demolished presumably for the creation of Birdwood Square in 1913 when the surrounding Chinese market gardens were purchased by the City of Perth in 1913. By this time, the City of Perth was actively purchasing Chinese market gardens in the North Perth area for conversion into public parks and reserves. This was the result of the 'City Beautiful' philosophy promoted by the visionary Town Clerk, W. E. Bold, in the early 1900s. The philosophy was picked up in the City of Perth's General Purposes Committee report in 1906, which stated that there was 'no responsibility more important than attending to the parks and reserves, which in all the big centres of population add so materially to the beauty of the city and so much to the pleasure of people. These occasional splashes of green turf, umbrageous trees and cool waters, standing out in pleasant relief from the sordid monotony of dense settlement, dust and smoke, are well called 'lungs of the city'. No vision of the city beautiful - the ideal centre for comfortable, convenient and pleasurable living is without such oasis in the desert of grass-less roads of asphalt, closely packed houses and smoke vomiting factories.'

There was also deep feeling within the community that the Chinese gardens (partly because of their use of human manure) were unsanitary and a health hazard. Bold undertook a tour of Britain and North America to gather information about municipal experiments and improvements. On his return he further developed his 'Greater Perth' concept to embrace satellite garden and seaside suburbs, and an overall plan on 'City Beautiful' lines. The 'Greater Perth' movement was implemented during World War I when Leederville, North Perth and Victoria Park joined the city; the inner suburb of Subiaco resolved to remain independent. In the mid-1920s the Council, at Bold's suggestion, invited the architects Hope and Klem to design satellite towns on the new lands at Floreat Park, Wembley Park and City Beach.

It is understood that Birdwood Square was re-named in honour of Sir William Riddell Birdwood, who served as a Commander of the Anzacs in Gallipoli during the World War I. At this time, Sir William was a household name in Australia. London Plane trees (*Platanus acerifolia*) were planted along the street boundaries of Birdwood Square as typical of the period. 'At the time, interesting specimen trees were used in lawns and to close off and create vistas.' Jacaranda and Brush Box trees were planted along Baker Avenue as the latter were believed to be eminently suitable for street trees.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The City of Perth Metropolitan Sewerage Map Plans indicate that Baker Avenue was not extant at the beginning of the 20th century and formed part of a large area, which was used for Chinese market gardening. The Wise Post Office Directory first list Baker Avenue in 1928. One can conclude from the above discussion that Baker Avenue was developed at a time when there was a change of focus of suburban development from development driven by land speculation, to planned communities with particular emphasis placed on amenity as encouraged through the Garden City movement. There are no records or references, which suggests that the subject dwellings were directly associated with W.E. Bold who promoted the concepts of the Garden City.

An article in The West Australian in September 1925 described how the City of Perth subdivided the 10 lots adjacent to Birdwood Square. The lots were to be auctioned on October 1925 with the condition that the lots could not be commercial uses and the new dwellings had to have tile roofs and be set 15ft (4.5m) back from the front boundary.

In April 1928, the West Australian described that the 'avenue is now nearly filled with tile roof brick residences facing the square'. It was also noted that the new home for Mr R.C. Leslie at 15 Baker Avenue was designed by architect Jack Learmonth Ochiltree and to be built by contractor F. Hahn for £1487. Interestingly Frank Hahn is recorded as living at 19 Baker Avenue which suggests he built this residence.

There are five people listed as occupants of the street in 1928, when it is first listed in the Wise Post Office Directory. The occupants were; Francis Green, John P. Waters, Oliver H. Crenllin, Henry Kell and Frank Hahn. No numbers were listed at this time It appears that by 1930 the whole street had been built out with the following occupants; Morris Hoffman at No. 1 Baker Avenue; No. 3 not listed; Sylvester Lane at No. 5; Dennis Fitzgerald at No. 7; John Waters at No. 9; Oliver Crenllin at No.11, Jesse Lawrence at No. 13; Robert Leslie at No. 15; Henry Kell at No. 17 and Frank Hahn at No.19. In 1938 the residents were Morris Hoffman (No.1), R.J Basstion (No.30, Mrs Elizabeth Gilligan (No. 5), Dennis Fitzgerald (No.7), John P. Water (No. 9), Charles I. Watson (No. 11), Ron Turville (No. 13), Mrs E Leslie (No. 15), Henry A. Kell (No. 17) and Frank B. Dungey (No. 19), who apparently worked in a salt refinery. In 1949 Bastion, Dennis Fitzgerald, the Waters family, Charles Watson and Frank Dungey were all still in the residence by the occupants of the other houses had changed.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards show the ten buildings that take up the Nos. 1-19 on Baker St. The early 1980s saw the addition of backyard pools in two residences, and the late 1980s No. 11 had an extension added. In the early 1990s the back portion of No. 7 was changed into a parking area, and the late 1990s a new roof was added to No. 3, and a second residential structure added to the rear of No. 1. Around 2006 an extension was added to the back of No. 3, and sometime around 2009 additional structures were added to the rear of No. 5. In 2010 further extension was added to the side of No. 3.

Starting in 2015, No. 15 had a large structure built on the rear of the block, finishing around 2017, as did No. 9. The street facing portions of the 10 buildings on Baker St have remained unchanged throughout the aerial photographs, with the exception of the roof on No. 3.

Historic theme	Economy: Manufacturing and Secondary Industry Infrastructure: Development of Settlements and Services	
Associations	W. E. Bold Francis Green John P. Waters Oliver H. Crenllin Henry Kell Frank Hahn Robert Leslie Jack L. Ochiltrie	Town clerk Occupant Occupant Occupant Occupant Occupant, builder Owner and occupant Architect
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. The West Australian, 19 Sept 1925, p. 12; 21 April 1928, p. 10.	

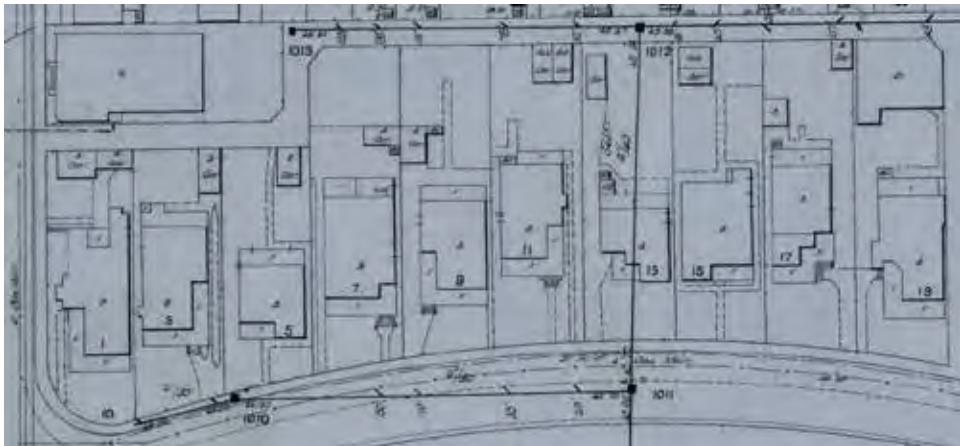
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



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Sewerage Plan 1955. Courtesy SROWA Series 634 cons 4156 item 0093