

# RESIDENCE, 148 PALMERSTON ST, PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
<b>Place name</b>	Residence, 148 Palmerston St
<b>Other names</b>	Backpackers' Hostel The Witches Hat
<b>Place type</b>	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
<b>inHerit ID:</b>	4568
<b>State Heritage Register:</b>	
<b>Other Listing:</b>	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
<b>Street address</b>	148 Palmerston St
<b>Locality</b>	Perth
<b>Survey</b>	LOT: 18 D/P: 24614
<b>Vol/folio</b>	1226/562
<b>Reserve</b>	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Level of significance</b>	<b>Considerable</b> Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.
<b>Management category</b>	<b>Category 2</b> Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.
<b>Statement of significance</b>	<p>This place is a rare and intact example of the Tudor Revival style in brick and stone with a prominent corner tower that makes it a landmark in the streetscape.</p> <p>The place reflects the expansion and development of residential and commercial buildings on the city fringes during the rapid population increase of the 1890's gold boom and the early years of the twentieth century.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with leading members of the Perth community including the first owner railway engineer William Dartnell and his family.</p> <p>The place is representative of a substantial residential building for affluent members of the community and 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	
<b>Original use</b>	Residential: Single Storey Residence
<b>Current use</b>	Residential: Single Storey Residence
<b>Other use</b>	

### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

<b>Construction date</b>	1898; 1960s; 2000s
<b>Walls</b>	Limestone Brick
<b>Roof</b>	Terracotta tile
<b>Architectural Style</b>	Tudor Revival
<b>Physical description</b>	<p>An unusual and substantial single storey residence with a complex roof form with gables framing a corner turret, to both facades. These in turn are set within projecting gables which frame the outer ends of both facades. The gable ends and turret base are half-timbered, in an Arts and Crafts detail. The bow verandah returns around the corner of the house and along both principal frontages. It is supported by turned posts and sits on a limestone foundation.</p> <p>The rooms in the projecting gables have bay windows with iron awnings over. Dominant corner Symmetrical design</p>
<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Integrity</b>	High
<b>Authenticity</b>	High

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Palmerston Street, which was just a dirt track in its very early years, was named after Lord Henry Palmerston, aka Henry John Temple. He was Britain's Prime Minister from 1855 until his death in 1865 and interestingly a relative of Perth Government Architect, George Temple Poole. The northern end of the street began to develop towards the end of the 1890s. No. 148 Palmerston Street is situated on town Lot N76. The place is one of several substantial homes, built in Palmerston Street at around this time. It became known as the 'Witch's Hat' referring to the conical corner turret of the building.

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The land was first owned by John R.R. Keane who sold it to explorer and property developer Alexander Forrest in May 1889. He sold it to C. H. James around 1895, who further subdivided the land and William Whitney Dartnell bought the last piece in 1897. Initially it was numbered 122 Palmerston Street. The house was erected in 1898 for William Dartnell, his wife Eliza and their four children. Dartnell was a railway engineer who had been recruited by Chief Engineer, C.Y. O'Conner. The 1898 City of Perth rate books indicate that it was occupied by his family from the time that it was constructed. He arrived in Western Australia with his family from New Zealand in early 1892 and was appointed as an engineer under O'Connor. Three years later he was appointed as Chief Engineer of Existing Lines but he also worked at developing the railway infrastructure and helped design the Horseshoe and Barrack Street bridges.

The house was constructed by Frederick Wilhelm Gustav Liebe who also built His Majesty's Theatre and the first Perth Art Gallery. It was very lavish, involving costly materials and decorative pieces; and a tennis court was built on the adjacent block. Tennis parties were held there with the spectators reportedly sitting in a 'garden-kiosk' and being served refreshing drinks by a maid. According to Wise's Post Office Directories, the Dartnalls remained in residence until 1927 when it was purchased by Mary Anne Coates. She resided there with Franz Bergman whom she later married but, by 1930, they had moved out and it was leased to Mrs Kate Jeffery.

Mrs Jeffery and her husband opened a bake house at the rear, which had a frontage onto Earl Street. Permission to carry out alterations to this was given to Mrs Coates by the City of Perth in 1936. Following this, the bake house was run for many years by the Epis family and was known as 'The Bakery'. Michele (Mick) Epis and his wife Theresa ran the bakery there for nearly 10 years until they amalgamated with another baker and moved to East Perth because of the need for larger premises. The place was then used as a motor mechanic's workshop and in 1949, the last year of the Directories, Ern Leng was listed as the resident.

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1961 building permission was given for additions to the rear factory for Steel Craft. These turned it into a larger industrial workshop where wrought iron work and general engineering was carried out. At that time the premises were owned by Arnold Zweig who had purchased them in 1959. After his death in 1964 it was in the hands of the Public Trustees. It was then used as a hostel. The Caprionas 'Rose and Santo' purchased the property in 1970 and in 1971 alterations and additions were carried out, which included new toilets and a kitchen area. Following this the buildings were used as an after-care home for psychiatric patients and a school. The school was run by the Aranda Marga, who had 15 students there in the late 1970s. By 1982 the house and workshop were being used as a home for aged persons.

In 1996 an application for demolition was denied because of the building's heritage significance and local interest. It was purchased that same year (1996) by the Berbatis family company, C. G. Berbatis Holdings Pty Ltd. By this time both the house and the bakery were considerably run down but careful renovation over a period of time successfully restored much of its former glory. This work was carried out under the direction of architect L. Cotter, engineer G. Naoum and builder Terry Bell of Tawbel Pty Ltd. It was then converted into an upper level backpackers/tourist hostel and marketed under the name of 'Witch's Hat'. The 'Witch's Hat' offers shared accommodation, a TV lounge, an internet lounge, a landscaped courtyard and pool and 24-hour check-in. It was described in the Lonely Planet as having 'an air of class' and it took out an award for the Best Small Hostel in Western Australia in 2007. In 2008 it was ranked as No. 2 in WA on Hostelworld, an independent backpacker accommodation website. In 2008 it was managed by Iain 'Hopper' McTavish. As of 2020 the manager was Julia Denison.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onward show the aforementioned addition to the block in the 1960s. The subject place remained unchanged from then until the late 1990s into the early 2000s when an extension was added, linking the two structures on the site. There have been no visible changes since that time.

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

<b>Historic theme</b>	Peopling WA: Demographic Development Cultural Life: Domestic Life	
<b>Associations</b>	John R.R. Keane Alexander Forrest C. H. James William Whitney Dartnell Dartnell family Frederick Wilhelm Gustav Liebe Mary Anne Coates Kate Jeffery Michele and Theresa Epis Ern Leng Rose and Santo Caprionas C. G. Berbatis Holdings Pty Ltd L. Cotter G. Naoum Terry Bell - Tawbel Pty Ltd Iain McTavish Julia Denison	Landowner Landowner Landowner Owner Owners Builder Owner Resident Residents Resident Owners Owner Architect Engineer Builder Manager Manager
<b>Sources</b>	Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903-1983. Wises Post Office Directories. Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006. Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

