

COPLEY'S BANK BUILDINGS (FMR), PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Copley's Bank Buildings (fmr)
Other names	The Blue Room Perth Bus Terminal Commercial Building, 323 William St
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8731
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 12 Sep 2007 Municipal Inventory Adopted 27 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	323 William St
Locality	Perth
Survey	LOT: 50 D/P: 65603
Vol/folio	1884/910
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.
Management category	Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.
Statement of significance	<p>The place is a good intact example of the Inter War Functionalist style which is largely intact on the upper level and demonstrates the original form and detail.</p> <p>The place is a landmark in the streetscape for its scale and location on a prominent corner.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of this area north of Perth in the Inter War period as a dance hall and roller skating rink.</p> <p>It has historic value for its association with the Midland Bus Company who established this place and the surrounding site as Perth's first Bus terminal in 1952.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with prominent architects of the inter war period, Powell Cameron and Chisholm.</p> <p>The place is valued by the community for the continuity of its presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p> <p>The place has social value as the location of the former Bus Terminal which would have been visited by large sections of the community in the 1950s.</p>

PLACE USE

Original use	Commercial: shop/retail Residential: Two storey residence
Current use	Commercial: Shop/ Retail
Other use	Transport/Communications: Road - Other Commercial: other

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Construction date	1937
Walls	Rendered Brick
Roof	Corrugated Metal sheeting
Architectural Style	Inter-War Functionalist
Physical description	The two storey Art Deco building is central about a truncated street corner. The corner features a cylindrical tower with a clock and flag pole. The walls of the building are rendered with horizontal lines. The suspended awning incorporates horizontal detailing and is stepped up on the corner. The metal framed windows have horizontal lights corresponding with the stripes on the building wall.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The bed of Lake Thomson was used for farming and market gardening until the 1880s, at which time parcels of the land were sold off. William Street, which initially only ended at Newcastle Street, was extended northward across the reclaimed lake bed. The site on the northwest corner of Newcastle and William streets was occupied with residences on the immediate corner, while Chinese market gardens continued to operate behind, bounded at the rear by Forbes Lane.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1936, tenders were called by architect's Powell Cameron and Chisholm for the construction of a two storey business premises for Copley's Bank Ltd. As described in the 'The West Australian', 'the building will be constructed of reinforced concrete and steel, and the external walls will be treated in cream stucco. A clock turret, rising 40ft from the ground, will form the corner section of the structure. The premises will be sub-divided to suit tenants.' Of the 15 tenders submitted the successful tenderer was Finlay and Stoneman's tender of £5591.

During construction in mid 1937 a severe storm hit the structure under construction and it was noted that brick walls for the imposing structure had been completed in readiness for the erection of the roof. The strong winds blew over two of the walls 'but the steel-reinforced concrete floor was not fractured by the fall of the many tons of bricks'. This information indicates that the proposal to construct the building of reinforced concrete did not proceed.

In October 1937, Copley's Bank Ltd advertised the property for rent. The ground floor of 8000 square feet would 'suit draper, grocer, furniture or motor showroom. Corner position.' The first floor was a separate tenancy and was advertised as 'Factory, above previous shop, 4500 square feet, suit clothing manufacturer or other manufacturing line.'

In November 1937, Samuel Copley (1859-1937) the founder of Copleys' Bank died in London where he had lived for many years. Samuel Copley was a highly successful businessman and property developer, and amongst his many projects he and R.T. Robinson purchased and subdivided the landholding which became Mount Lawley.

It is not clear whether this place was occupied in late 1937 however by March 1938 the building was opened as 'The Blue Room' cabaret and reception centre. The opening of the event was performed by J.T. Franklin MLC who congratulated the general manager Edson R. Banks on the venture. On the opening the ground floor was largely open space with one large octagonal pillar in the centre and a space for a band and tables around the sides of the room. The upper floor which was larger than the ground floor was used for the supper and promoted as a venue for future event. As expected, the decorations were coloured blue.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1952, the building was officially opened by the Minister for Transport Mr Simpson as Perth's first bus passenger terminal station. The building was described in The West Australian as of 'modern design, comfort and convenience, the bus station compares with the facilities at airport terminals established in the capital cities of Australia'. In the article describing the opening it is stated that the building was also formerly a roller skating rink.

Various corrugated iron structures were established on the open section of the site for housing the buses, and a brick motor works building with an open shed at the rear was constructed on the William Street frontage, on the corner of Forbes Lane. The building is currently occupied with retail premises and offices.

As of 2024 the retailers on the subject site include The Moon bar, Pietro Gelateria, Grab-and Go Deli, and Western Union.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards indicate the subject site changed little until the early 1990s when an addition was constructed on the Newcastle St side of the existing building, adding more retail spaces to the corner. There have been no other visible changes since then.

Historic theme	Economy: Commerce Infrastructure: Transport and Communications Cultural Life: Recreations - Arts, Culture and Entertainment Cultural Life: Recreation - Sport	
Associations	Powell Cameron and Chisholm Finlay and Stoneman Samuel Copley	Architects Builders Original owner
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006. Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. The West Australian, 5 December 1936, p. 4; 9 January 1937, p. 6; 23 January 1937, p. 4; 6 May 1937, pp 20-21; 15 October 1937, p. 32; 26 July 1952, p. 7.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

