

SILVER CHAIN NURSING ASSOCIATION, PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Silver Chain Nursing Association
Other names	Silver Chain Nursing League Muriel Chase Memorial Cottage Myola Cottage
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	11451
State Heritage Register:	18 August 2025
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 18 August 2025

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	19 Wright St
Locality	Perth
Survey	Lot 101 DP 69483
Vol/folio	1731/241
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>The Silver Chain Nursing Association is a fine example of the Inter War California Bungalow style.</p> <p>The Association grew from community concern for poor children into a popular movement encompassing all levels of Perth society. This movement led to the establishment of the Infant Health Association and infant health centres, then diversified into aged care when the house was opened as a hostel in 1916, with purpose built cottages from 1920.</p> <p>The organisation grew, under Vice Regal patronage, through various nomenclatures, until 1963 when it became known as the Silver Chain Nursing organisation.</p> <p>This place is valued by the community for its continuity in the streetscape since the early 20th century and for its association with the provision of community services to all sectors of the community.</p>

PLACE USE

Original use	Health: Other
Current use	Health: Other
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Construction date	1920; 1926; 1937; 1954-56; 1957; 1963; 1974; 1980-81
Walls	Brick
Roof	Terracotta tile
Architectural Style	Inter War California Bungalow
Physical description	<p>The one storey building has a symmetrical front and gable roof of terracotta tile. The building façade is symmetrical, with a pair of narrow double hung windows in a bay either side of the central front door.</p> <p>The timber verandah runs along the front of the building and features timber supports, simple curved valances and a timber balustrade either side of the wide entrance. The window sashes each consist of 6 square panes, and the red brick walls have horizontal rendered stripes. There is a finial atop the gable, and the pair of chimneys on either side have heavy vertical stucco decoration.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1904, Western Australia did not have a children's hospital and it had the highest infant mortality rate in Australia. At that time, the weekly newspaper 'Western Mail' ran a Children's Column by 'Aunt Mary', Muriel Chase. A letter from a reader Arthur Grundy prompted Aunt Mary to suggest the establishment of a society 'for mutual helpfulness', known as the Silver Chain with members as Silver Links who paid a one shilling membership each year. The motto of the organisation would be 'Little but Great'. The idea was to help poor children. The Silver Chain officially commenced on 3 June 1905.

The next suggestion was that money raised could pay for a district nurse, who would go from house to house to help care for sick children who were not sent to hospital. In 1907, the first Silver Chain nurse Sister S. L. Copley, was appointed. Adults began to get involved in the society with gifts in cash and nursing requisites. By Feb 1908, there were 1,500 children enrolled as Silver Links and Nurse Copley was writing regular letters to the Children's Corner. Prominent citizens such as Dr Winthrop Hackett, Lady Bedford, wife of the Governor, and Bishop Riley, as well as many daughters of prominent families became involved in the fundraising. In 1922, the Leederville area got its first district Silver Chain Nurse, Nurse Talbot.

Ten years after the Silver Chain Nursing League had been established, it was decided to establish cottage homes for the aged. In 1916, a small cottage was rented in Wright Street as the first Silver Chain Cottage Home. The Wise's Post Office Directories indicate that this cottage was located at No. 49 Wright Street between Lincoln and Broom Streets, with Mrs. M. Slater, a nurse, as a proprietor in that year. This cottage, which was located to the north of the subject place, was listed as Silver Chain Cottage Home (Mrs. A. Morgan, Matron) between 1917-1920.

On 3 October 1920, the first purpose built cottage homes were opened on the subject site at Wright Street. They were built by J. Todd and opened by the Governor Sir Francis Newdegate in the presence of approximately 200 people. Part of the building was named Dr. Gertrude Mead Cottage and another part was named the Leederville Cottage because it had been financed by the Leederville committee. The Wise's Post Office Directories illustrate that the subject place was named Silver Chain Nursing League and numbered 21 at this time, with Mrs. A. J. Morgan as the Matron.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1924, 18 residents from 60-92 years of age were in occupation. On 5 July 1926, two new wings of additional cottages were opened by Governor Sir William Campion and Lady Campion, and the foundation stone for further extensions was laid by Bishop Riley. Nurse Cherry was appointed resident nurse of the Cottage Homes in 1929. The Muriel Chase Memorial Cottage was opened in November 1937 with Boas Oldham and Ednie-Brown as the Architects. A new section with four bedrooms was constructed and the kitchen and bathroom area was renovated in the same year. Alterations and additions were undertaken in 1954 and 1956 with more rooms and offices constructed.

In 1955, the Myola Cottage was erected as a gift from the Myola Club. A Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage & Drainage Department (MWSSD) Plan dated 1955 shows that there were a row of identical brick cottages, each with a front verandah, running around the north east corner of Wright and Lincoln Streets. A spacious lawn was located behind the cottages, with other brick buildings next to it. There were a number of ramps appearing on the map which indicate that the subject place was operated as an aged care home. In 1956, the Silver Chain Nursing Association moved its administration offices to the Wright Street premises, after occupying space in The West Australian Chambers free of charge for many years.

A further wing of cottage homes was opened in May 1957 which provided 11 single rooms, one double room, a new lounge and ablution block. In 1963, a new office building was constructed to the south of the existing buildings. A first floor addition was extended in 1974. In 1980-81, a major renovation was undertaken at the subject place which included the demolition of most of the Cottage Homes, except for Myola Cottage and Mead Cottage, and the construction of a new aged hostel began to replace the Cottage Homes. The hostel had a communal building connected by covered walkways to three single-storey residential buildings.

In 1996, a planning application for additions to an existing hostel at No. 21 Wright Street was granted conditional approval by the Town of Vincent. The application proposed to construct a new single storey building to the rear of the existing cottage (known as 'Mead House'), which contained 14 single bedrooms. Currently, the subject place is numbered No. 19 Wright Street which is served as Silver Chain's Central Service Centre within the Perth metropolitan area, whilst the Cottage Homes is still operating to its original purpose.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The organisation has been known as the Silver Chain Nursing Association, Inc. since 1963. Previous names have been: Silver Chain Nursing League, Silver Chain District Nursing Association and Silver Chain District & Bush Nursing Association (after amalgamation with the Bush Nursing Society).

Historic theme	Social Services: Health	
Associations	Silver Chain Nursing Association	Owners and occupiers
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

