

PURTELL'S BUILDINGS, WEST PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Purtell's Buildings
Other names	Commercial Building, 380-388 Newcastle St
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8732
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	380-388 Newcastle St
Locality	West Perth
Survey	LOT: 1 - 5 STR: 11770
Vol/folio	Various
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The place is a good and largely intact example of shops and premises built in the Federation Free Classical style on a prominent corner location which contributes to its landmark quality 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 the common practice where small stores and services were located within walking distances of nearby homes, and the shop proprietors lived in the same premises.</p> <p>This 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 an example of accommodation available for working families dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Commercial: Shop/Retail Store Residential: Conjoined Residences
Current use	Commercial: Shop/Retail Store Residential: Conjoined Residences
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1906
Walls	Rendered Brick Painted Brick
Roof	Corrugated metal sheeting
Architectural Style	Federation Free Classical

Physical description	<p>The two-storey brick and iron row of six shops is located on the corner of Newcastle Street and Fitzgerald Street with a nil set back to the road verge and a truncated corner entrance point.</p> <p>The building has a distinct parapet that is decorated with regularly spaced pilasters above a continuous string course. The parapet has the words 'Purtell's Building' embossed along its southern elevation and sets of circle motifs, which are cut into the brickwork and spaced evenly between the pilasters.</p> <p>Each of the six shops has its own hipped iron roof, which are concealed by the decorative parapet. The upper bull nose verandah is supported by turned timber posts, which are connected by a timber balustrade.</p> <p>The tenancies along the first floor are divided by a continuation of the pilaster detail of the parapet and each contains a timber framed sash window. The building is facing brick with stuccoed detailing and below dado.</p>
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CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	<p>Over the years some of the original materials have been replaced. An interesting component of the shopfronts is a decorative glass panel, with mullion detail, above the height of the doors, which runs the length of each shopfront. This detail only remains on three of the tenancies and has been replaced or concealed on the others.</p> <p>A small portion of the building runs along Fitzgerald Street. This portion comprises the corner shop's east facing window with a nil setback to the road verge and a recessed side entry with a separate bull nose verandah.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	Moderate
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

At the beginning of the 1890s there were few houses situated within Perth and much of the area was still scrubland. In 1884, just prior to the Gold Boom, the population of the Perth district was just over 6000. The 1890s Gold Boom brought a huge influx of prospectors to the State, many of whom became permanent settlers. In 1891, the population had grown to 9,500 and in 1901 it was nearly 44,000. By the end of the Gold Boom in 1911, the population of Perth had reached 87,000. The Northbridge area was highly attractive for investment purposes and because of its proximity to the city and transport routes. Various Buildings, cottages and commercial premises, which provided a range of goods and services, began to appear along Newcastle Street, Fitzgerald Street (formally known as Ellen Street), Aberdeen Street and William Streets in the latter half of the 1890s and particularly in the first decade of the twentieth century. The land in and around these streets were used for a variety of purposes including stables and industry.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Wise's Post Office Directories for 1895/6 indicate that William Tapping ran a dairy in this area. The more substantial retail developments were generally not constructed until the area was reasonably well developed and the population large enough to support a number of specialty shops. The place at No. 380 -388 was no exception, being constructed c1906, after more than a decade of continuous development in the area.

The two-storey building was constructed with six shops on the ground floor and residential accommodation above. It was situated on Lot Y181. It is difficult to ascertain the precise construction date of the subject place as the street numbering in the Wise Post Office Directories changes frequently in the first decade of the twentieth century and as no original Building Licence plans were located.

In 1905, there is no reference to any form of shop at the corner of Fitzgerald and Newcastle Streets, rather W. Werrett's Perseverance Wood Yard is listed. In 1907, Mr W Birt a Confectioner is listed at No. 310 Newcastle Street; Mrs F Schulster was listed at No. 312 and William Cody a boot maker was listed with no street address.

The City of Perth Rates Books designate the owner in 1906 as Louis Benari, and in 1907 Gertrude Mary Regan. Louis Benari was a merchant who lived in Charles Street West Perth in 1906. No information has been found in relation to Gertrude Regan, or the origin for the name 'Purtell's Buildings'.

In 1907, there are six shop uses listed for the premise at No. 378 - 386 including a butcher at No. 378, a costumers shop at No. 380, a dealer at No. 382, Mrs F Schulster grocer shop at No. 384 and William Cody a boot maker was listed at No. 386.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The place is referred to as Nos. 378 - 386 Newcastle Street until 1938 when it was renumbered to Nos. 380-388 Newcastle Street. A review of the Wise Post Office Directories indicates that the shop tenancies changed frequently. In 1910 the row of shops was occupied by William Allen's butcher shop, 'Alexandra Tea Rooms', William B. Soutar a grocer and Sam Kee's laundry was still there. In 1915 the shops were occupied by Michael Wynne's butcher shop, the Miss O'Dea's Austral Tea Rooms, a green grocer and Sam Kee's laundry. At this time one shop was not occupied and one tenancy did not have a use associated with it. In 1920 the shops continued to be occupied by Michael Wynne's butcher shop, Mrs E Batty's Tea Rooms, one green grocer and one grocer. At this time one tenancy was not occupied and one tenancy did not have a use associated with it.

In 1930, following the Great Depression of 1929, all the shops were tenanted with Reg Lege's Butcher Shop in the corner tenancy, Ms Alice Jones's dressmaker, Hurtle Jenkins' Teas Rooms, one green grocer and one grocer and by J Polinelli's Fish and Chip Shop. The replacement of Sam Kee's laundry with Mr J. Polinelli's Fish and chip shop is illustrative of the changing ethnic composition of the area as a new wave of migrants took up residency. The building continued to be inhabited by mixed businesses up until the late 1930s. However, around this time the uses became less assured as in 1940 only two of the tenancies were in operation and the other two were vacant.

After World War II Perth's popularity as a suburb declined. People preferred the new suburbs as commercial expansion began to encroach on the residential areas, changing the character of the busier streets. The drop in demand for housing in Perth led to lower rents in the 1960s and early 1970s and, with less income, many of the houses and shops became very dilapidated. Larger commercial firms began to move into the area in the 1970s and 80s. The busy streets 'Newcastle, William and Beaufort' were particularly vulnerable and the result was the demolition of numbers of small shops and dwellings. They were replaced by large-scale outlets, warehouses, car yards and small office blocks.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A number of Building Licence plans for the building were located and provide an insight into the various alterations that have occurred to the place over time. In 1982, plans were submitted by Brett Nominees for the refurbishment of the shops at Nos. 380 - 388 Newcastle Street and the adjacent shop at No. 121 Fitzgerald Street. The works at this time involved: the demolition of all existing sheds, WC's and laundries to the yard area all of which was then landscaped and paved; the upgrade of the toilet facilities for the shop staff behind tenancy 2 (No.382 Newcastle Street); the re-roofing and repair of the first floor balcony joinery; new kitchens to the rear of all tenancies and the provision of laundry and bathroom facilities to the first floor and the application of a new render and paint to external brick work.

In 1985, a set of plans, submitted by Chris Robinson and Associates were received for a pizza bar on the ground floor and tea rooms along the first floor of the corner tenancy. The application was refused as the premises could not accommodate the required number of parking areas. Revised plans were submitted in 1986, which removed the tea room component upstairs in order to reduce the required number of car parking bays. This application was approved.

On 12 May 2004, the Heritage Council of Western Australia wrote to the City of Vincent advising that they had received a referral pursuant to section 9 of the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 in respect to the Purtell's Building. The Heritage Council advised that its Register Committee considered that the place may have cultural heritage value and determined to add the place onto its Heritage Assessment program. No further action in this regard has been taken.

In 2007, one of the owners of the subject property received financial assistance through the Town of Vincent Heritage Assistance Fund to undertake conservation works to the external wall including the removal of paint and tuckpointing.

Since that time the place has been minimally changed externally.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic development Cultural Life: Domestic Life Economy: Commerce	
Associations		
Sources	Landgate aerial photographs, 1954-2024 City of Perth Rates Books Western Mail, 8 April 1905, p. 21.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

