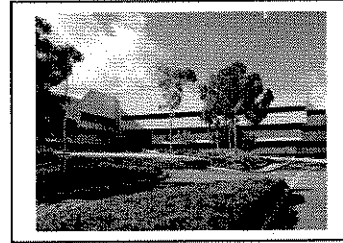




CITY OF VINCENT

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



File No. PLA0098	Address: No.629 (Lot 100) Newcastle Street, Leederville			
Precinct: Oxford Centre	Place Name: John Tonkin Water Centre			
Locality: -	Folio: 380	Lot : 100	D/P: 58812	Vol. 1824

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The place, being the Water Corporation Headquarters ('John Tonkin Water Centre') and associated buildings and grounds, has *considerable historic value* for its continued association with water management for over 100 years.

The place also demonstrates *some aesthetic value* for the design of the c.1980 administration building and 1972 administration building, being innovative in their construction and a local landmark.

CONSULTANT'S MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION:

Draft Municipal Heritage Inventory (Hocking Planning & Architecture) - Management Category A ("Conservation Essential").

OFFICER'S MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION:

N/A - Include the place on the City's Municipal Heritage Inventory - the place has some cultural heritage value to warrant entry onto the City's Municipal Heritage Inventory as a Management Category B - Conservation Recommended.

(NB - Council resolved at its Special Meeting on 2 April 2008, to not include the place on the City's Municipal Heritage Inventory, therefore this recommendation is no longer applicable)

1.0 ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Policy 'Heritage Management - Assessment', adopted by the Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 17 January 2006, has been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

1.1 PRINCIPAL HISTORIC THEMES

- What People Did for a Living (1972 - 2001)

HISTORIC SUB THEMES

- Government Utilities and Agencies

1.2 AESTHETIC VALUE

The place has *some aesthetic value* for the design of the 1980s administration building and 1970s administration building, being innovative in their construction and a local landmark.

1.3 HISTORIC VALUE

The place as a whole, being the Water Corporation Headquarters ('John Tonkin Water Centre') and associated buildings and grounds, has *considerable historic value* for its continued association with water management for over 100 years on the site, including technical and administrative uses.

1.4 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place has *little scientific value*. There is no obvious potential for the place to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the natural or cultural history of the City.

1.5 SOCIAL VALUE

The place has *little social value*. It contributes in a minor way to the community's sense of place.

2.0 DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**2.1 RARITY**

The buildings have *some rarity value* within the City of Vincent, as few purpose-built state government agency buildings of this scale and construction date remain in the inner city. Others include the Department of Sport and Recreation building along Vincent Street (c.2004).

2.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The place as a whole is representative of a range of human activities relating to water resource management in WA. The physical remnants date from the late twentieth century with historical associations of the site dating back to about 1906.

2.3 CONDITION

The place is in *good condition*.

2.4 INTEGRITY

The place is considered to have a *high integrity*, as it has continued to be used for water management purposes for over 100 years.

2.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place is considered to have a *moderate authenticity*, as the buildings generally present themselves as their design intended, although sympathetic modifications have occurred over the years to accommodate change.

3.0 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**3.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

The land along the western side of Loftus Street, between Newcastle Street and Leederville Parade (formerly Aberdeen Street) has been associated with Western Australian water management authorities since the early 1900s. The current main building complex (c.1980) is known as the *John Tonkin Water Centre*, named after WA Premier John Trezise Tonkin (Labor). Previous to this, a two storey administration building was constructed in 1972 along Newcastle Street, which is still extant. An earlier building (not longer extant) was located on the corner of Loftus and Newcastle Streets, serving as pump station of the Metropolitan Waterworks Department and was constructed circa 1906. It was surrounded by a large expanse of depot storage and maintenance sheds. The land has been in continuous use by the Western Australian Water Authority, which has had numerous names over the last 100 years, and has played a critical part in the development of public water works in the Perth metropolitan area.

Water management has been part of the Australian judicial and legislative system since early colonisation. As early as 1802, the importance of water quality was marked by strong Orders to new settlers inhabiting Sydney:

"If any person whatever is detected in throwing any filth into the stream of fresh water, cleaning fish, washing, erecting pig-sties near it, or taking water but at the tanks, on conviction before a magistrate, their houses will be taken down and forfeit £5 for each offence to the Orphan Fund."

The broader area of Leederville extended across what is now the Mitchell Freeway, and was distinguished by its close location to the large expanse of water, Lake Monger. Mr William Leeder, after whom the area was named, was an early settler who acquired some 288 acres. By 1838 Mr Leeder had established the Leeder Hotel in Perth and had a house on the south-east corner of Lake Monger. The area was used largely for market gardening, dairy farming and poultry. Increasing population meant that the Leeder estate was subdivided in 1890. At this time, services such as water were poor and residents relied on private water tanks and wells.

The pressures of water management were exacerbated by the discovery of gold in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in 1892-1893, with an influx of population in a land where water was scarce and distances great. The flow on effects of gold discovery in remote areas was later to affect the population and building boom which occurred in Perth in the late 1890s. Mr William Traylen (after whom the current park adjacent to the John Tonkin Water Centre is named) was a Member for Greenough and a public health campaigner, as well as a Perth Councillor. In response to the growing pressures of inadequate water supply and complaints from ratepayers as to the soaring costs of installing pipes and water connections, Mr Traylen a bill which was past in parliament as the Municipal Water Supply Preservations Act of 1892.

Despite efforts, the year of 1896 saw an outbreak of Typhoid which killed 89 people that year. It was reported that in Perth city, up to twenty people shared a single cesspit and it was about this time that the City of Perth introduced Inspectors of Nuisances, who reported on defective drainage and cesspits¹. Fuelled by water shortages because of a drought which lasted most of the 1890s, as well as rapid increase of population, the Council was forced to supply water by horse and cart. In the same year the Metropolitan Water Board was established². Throughout the early 1890s, artesian bore drilling continued throughout metropolitan Perth, including Leederville and Claremont. The 1896 metropolitan sewerage plans show the subject land at the corner of Newcastle and Loftus Streets as swampy vacant land, and not occupied by any building, though surrounding streets were well established by this time.

By 1900 the area of Leederville had become built up, forming part of the outskirts of the city of Perth, with various mixes of residential, commercial and industrial buildings being constructed in the area of the southern end of Oxford Street. By 1906, the Wise's Post Office Directories first lists the '*Metropolitan Waterworks Board (pumping station) (T.Eilbeck chief inspector)*' at the corner of Newcastle and Loftus Streets. In 1910 the chief inspector is listed as Mr Thomas Worth. A photograph from 1912 illustrates the brick gabled metal roof building with works and horses outside. The early 1900s were a period of consolidation, with mains and reticulated sewers and stormwater drainage being installed throughout Perth.

¹ Le Page, J.S.H. *Building a state: the story of the Public Works Department in Western Australia 1829-1985*. Water Authority of WA, Leederville, 1986. p.154.p.259.

² Ibid. p.259

By the start of the First World War in 1914, the listing describes the site as Metropolitan Waterworks Board, with Mr G.D Sanderson in charge, but with the addition of the Government Metropolitan Waterworks Stores. In 1920, the same appears with a further addition of 'Maintenance and Construction' and 'Maintenance Room'. Photographs of the building dated 1920s clearly show the electricity poles, gas street lamps and tram lines (refer Appendix B). By 1938, the site has been further expanded to accommodate a 'Meter yard' and the 'Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Garage and Transport' section. Since its inception on the site, it shared the land with neighbours M.G Bon, of Bond & Sons Bakers, later Flour Millers. The bakery and then flour mill are listed as occupying the land just behind the MWSSD site up until the 1950s. Other familiar and local land-mark industrial businesses in the immediate vicinity were the Cullity Timber Yards and Administration (now the HQ Youth Facility and Skate Park) and Venable Hardware.

The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board (MWSSD) continued to use the site a major depot up until the 1970s and 1980s, when large administration buildings were constructed on the site³. The depot included various garages, welding shops, stores, carpenter's shop, worker's mess room, electrical fitters, surveyor's room and the pumping station⁴.

In 1971, plans were drafted by architects Forbes & Fitzhardinge for a two storey administration building along the Newcastle Street edge of the Water Authority site. The building was to be constructed in rationalised pre-cast concrete elements, and at the time was considered to be extremely modern⁵. Its design included technician rooms, conference and projector room, lunchroom, photocopy room and laboratories⁶. The building still stands, although it is dwarfed in size by the subsequent construction of the c.1980 administration centre. In 1979 the Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium was held in Perth. Giving the C.M Munro Memorial Address, Mr K.W Lewis, Director General and Engineer in Chief of the South Australian Water Authority, outlined the importance of integrating external social, economic, and demographic influences for water resource planning, stating that:

"Water business in Australia is faced by a dynamic environment no less than any other sector, and the rate of change, and the number of important changing influences, are, if anything, increasing.

*The transition to a more symbiotic relationship [between government and customers] is difficult but most necessary as it is no exaggeration to say that water authorities today stand or fall with their ability to develop such relationships with the customers they serve."*⁷

The 1983 elections saw Labor voted into government and the Public Works and Water were split into two separate departments. John Tonkin was then the Minister for Water Resources (previously the Minister for Works in 1957 and then Premier 1971-1974). The large atrium style administration centre c.1980 by Cameron Chisholm & Nichol Architects required extensions not long after its construction, mainly to car parking and walkways⁸. The election saw the split of the Public Works

³ It is anticipated that oral histories currently being conducted by the City of Vincent Local Studies Library with employees of the Water Corporation (formerly Water Department) will provide additional insight into the operational aspects of the site.

⁴ Survey map of the site, Local Studies Collection 1968 and 1980.

⁵ Other innovation in concrete constructed buildings include the Francis Street Museum building.

⁶ Building Licence 852/72

⁷ Lewis, K.W. 'Modern Developments in Water Administration' in *Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium, Perth*. 1979. p.1 &4.

⁸ Building Licence

department and the Water department, raising various complaints from staff who were moved from Dumas House to the Leederville offices, who were reportedly unhappy about the 'open plan concept' and poor insulation.⁹

John Tonkin, after whom the administration complex is named, was WA Premier (Labor) from 1971 to 1974. He was born in Boulder, WA in 1907 and entered politics at an early age, after initially starting a career as a teacher. Tonkin's period in office is marked by the establishment of the first office of the ombudsman, Aboriginal Lands Trust and Environmental Protection Council. Tonkin also reduced the voting age to 18.

In 2007 masterplanning for the Leederville commercial area ('Oxford Centre' precinct) is being undertaken by the City of Vincent and the Water Corporation. This relates to the management of commercial and residential uses, traffic and amenity for the area.

3.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Water Corporation Headquarters occupies a large area of land (roughly 35,000 square metres) defined by the corner of Loftus Street and Leederville Parade (formerly the western end of Aberdeen Street), and abuts the commercial and recreational land along the western end of Newcastle Street, Frame Court and William Traylen Park. The building is surrounded by car parking to the northern section of the lot, and vegetation and mature trees along the south and east borders.

The c.1980 building was constructed in the Late Twentieth century style, in continuous horizontal bands of concrete and dark tinted glass, with internal atriums, escalators and walkways.

The 1972 building stands along the Newcastle Street boundary composed of T-form precast concrete. It is two storeys, rectangular in shape and painted cream.

To the south and east, the site is bounded by significant roads, Loftus Street and Leederville Parade, and the Mitchell Freeway. The Newcastle Street boundary is characterised by the 1972 administration building, parking and vegetation. Across the road on the northern side of Newcastle Street is mixed office and warehouse uses, with new residential infill, also of two storey height.

3.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

There is no extant comparisons for the former pumping station available, which was located near the corner of Newcastle and Loftus Street.

The 1972 building is not represented in any of the existing entries on the Municipal Heritage Inventory and there are no comparative buildings within the City of Vincent. The c.1980 building represented a new style of institutional design emerging from the late 1970s and can be seen in other major government buildings in Perth, such as the Royal Children Hospital building at the corner of Hay and Thomas Street. There are no comparative examples of this type within the City of Vincent.

3.4 REFERENCES

Parliamentary Hansard transcript:

⁹ Le Page, p.623.

[http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hans35.nsf/\(ATT\)/0DE60C9EC813B22E482565FD00045AC0/\\$file/C0828008.PDF](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hans35.nsf/(ATT)/0DE60C9EC813B22E482565FD00045AC0/$file/C0828008.PDF) (Accessed: 18/03/2007)

Parliamentary Hansard transcript:

<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hans35.nsf/16ab30a0303e54f448256bf7002049e8/b15243bfc2bf18134825660000025e19?OpenDocument>
(Accessed: 18/03/2007)

Media Release, City of Vincent:

<http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/cproot/1443/13249/Leederville%20Masterplan.pdf>
(Accessed: 18/03/2007)

Constitutional Centre of Western Australia:

<http://www.ccentre.wa.gov.au/index.cfm?event=premiersJohnTonkin> (Accessed: 13/03/2007)

Inner Metropolitan Heritage Survey: Hyde Park Precinct. D'Arcy, R. Part III of Three. National Trust (WA), 1990.

Le Page, J.S.H. *Building a state: the story of the Public Works Department in Western Australia 1829-1985.* Water Authority of WA, Leederville, 1986.

Lewis, K.W. 'Modern Developments in Water Administration' in *Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium, Perth.* 1979.

Building Licences 1972 and 1984.

Metropolitan Sewerage Plans 1986 and 1901.

3.5 PROVISIONAL NOTES

No internal inspections were carried out for this inspection and as such the statements relating to condition and authenticity relate only to what is visible from the public domain.

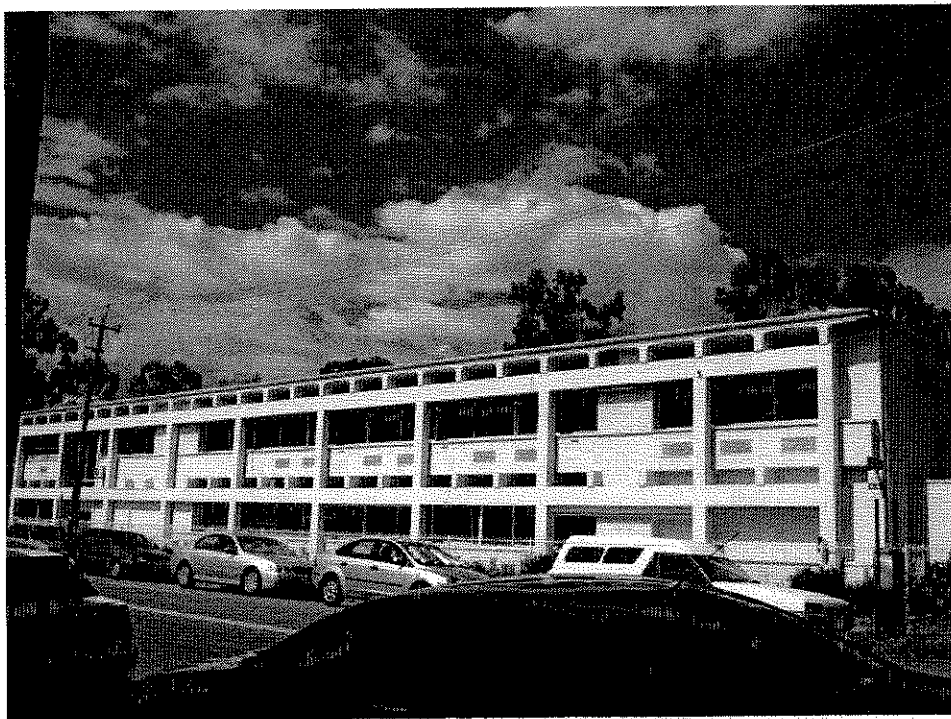
Appendix 1: Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
1. Population and settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aboriginal occupation b. Surveys and land allocation c. Workers d. Technology e. Government policy f. Depression and boom g. Exploitation h. Residential development i. Redevelopment and infill j. Refurbishment and recycling
2. Transport and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Roads b. Horses c. Rail d. Mail services e. Newspapers f. Telecommunications g. Bus transport h. Trams
3. What people did for a living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rural activities b. Domestic activities c. Factories d. Retail and commercial businesses e. Government utilities and agencies f. Service industries
4. What people did together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Government and politics b. Education c. Law and order d. Community services and utilities e. Sport, recreation and entertainment f. Religion g. Cultural activities h. Health i. Community organisations j. Environment
5. Outside influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wars b. Other national and world events c. Depression and boom d. Transport routes e. Immigration
6. Famous people and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aborigines b. Early settlement c. Local heroes and battlers d. Famous and infamous

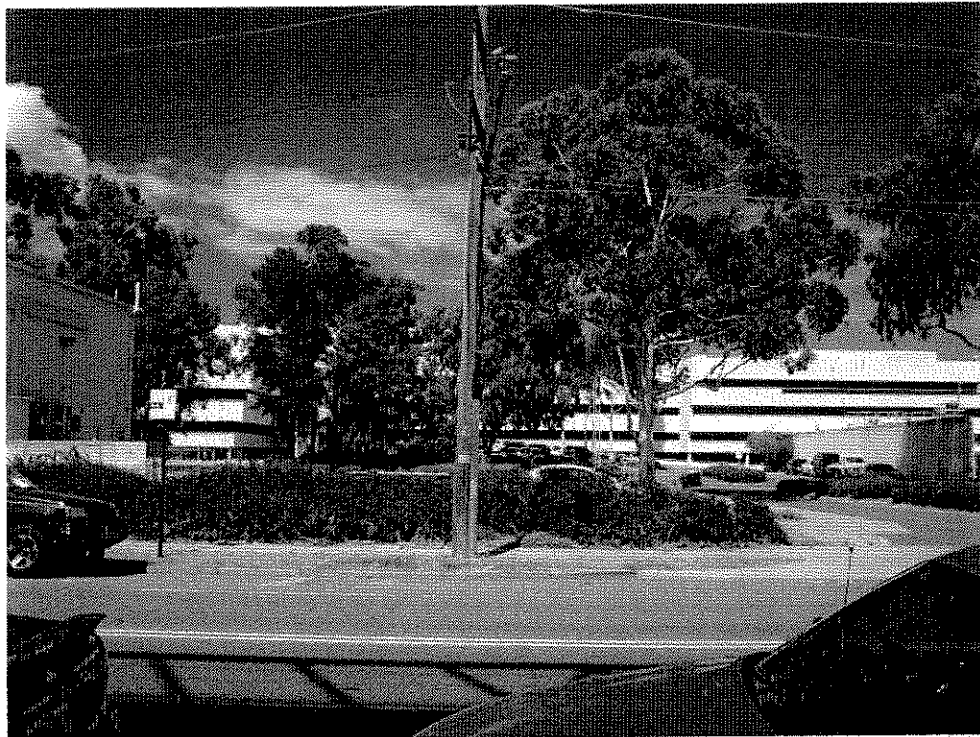
Appendix 2: Photographs



John Tonkin Water Centre - c.1980 building

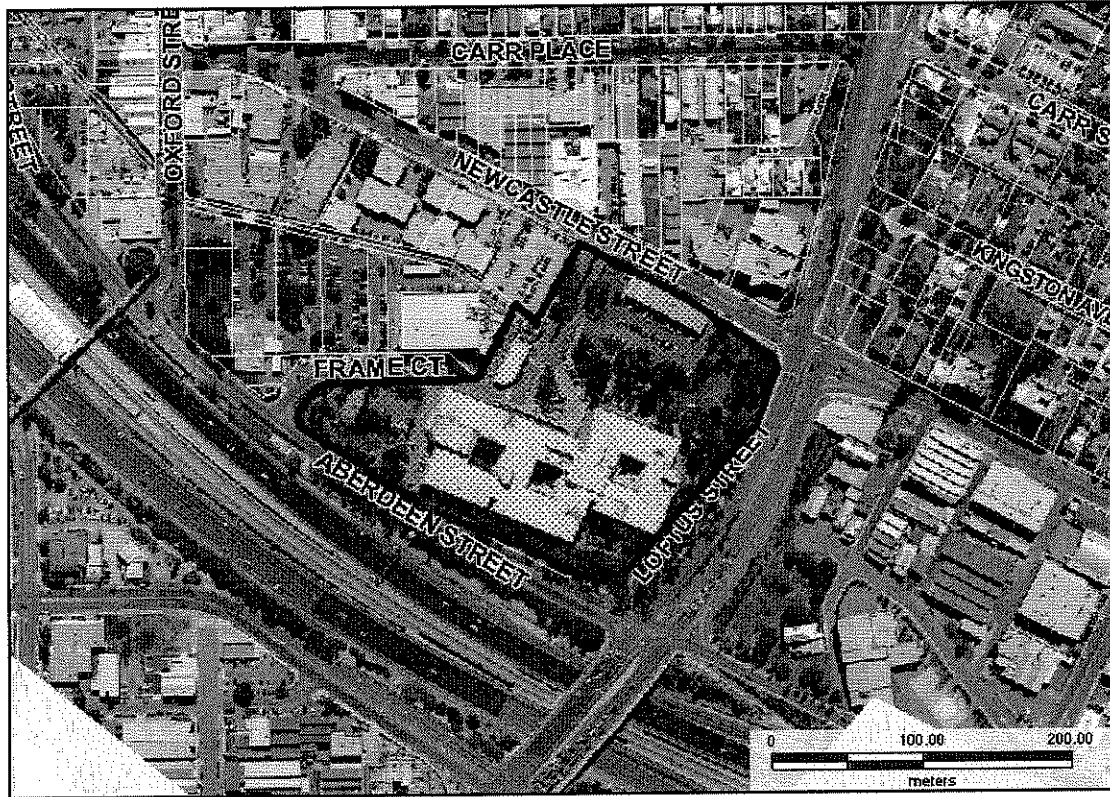


1972 Administration building

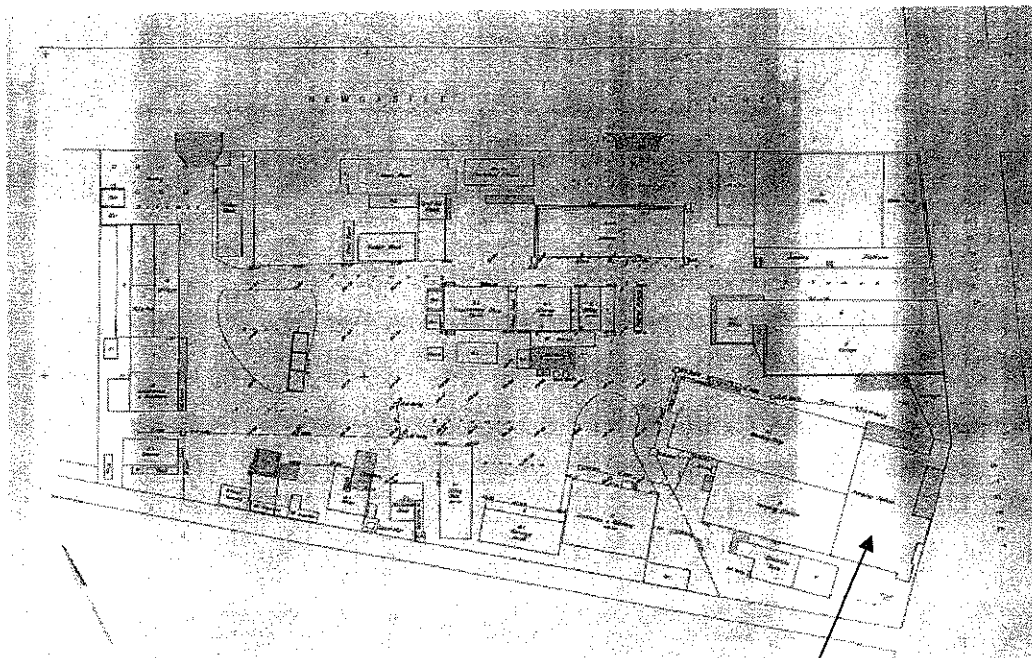


Looking south from Newcastle Street - part of 1972 Administration building to left,
with c.1980 building in the background

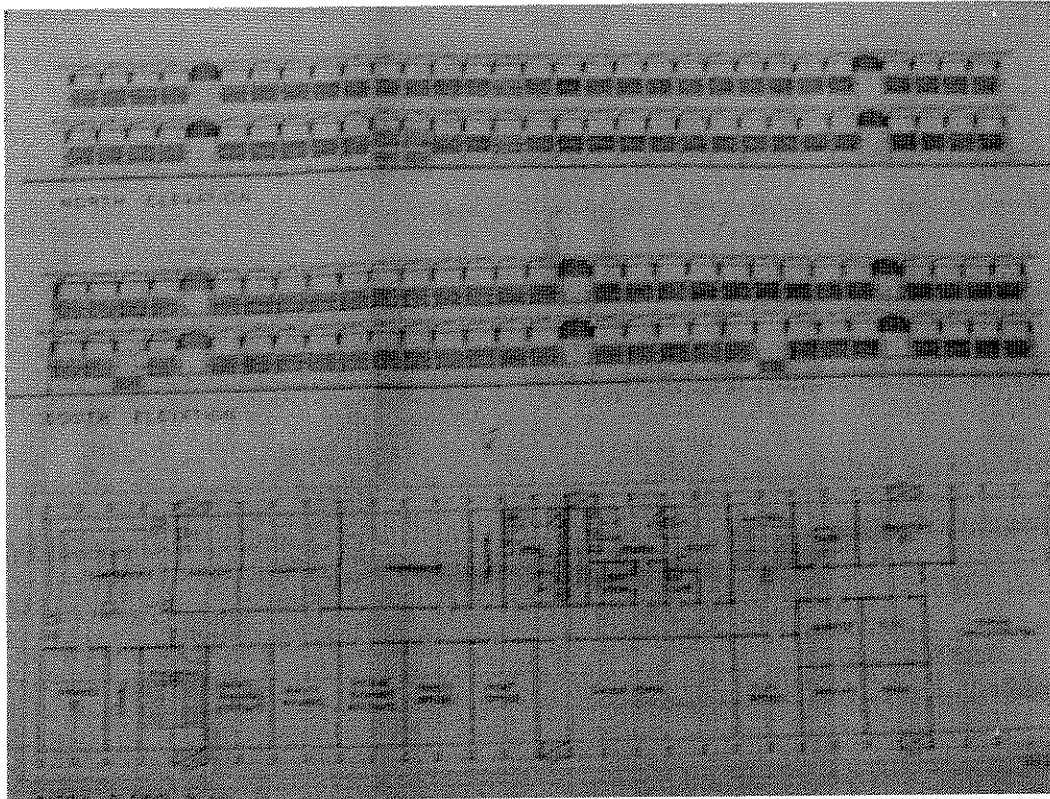
Appendix 3 : Maps and Plans



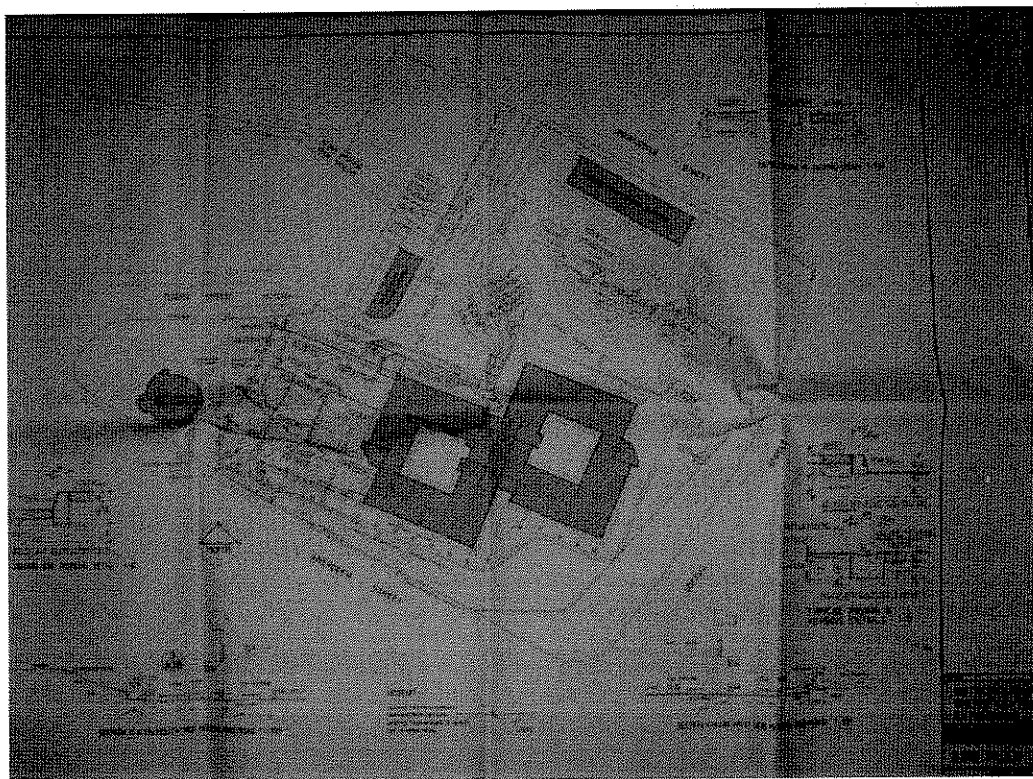
2006 Aerial photograph of the John Tonkin Water Centre.



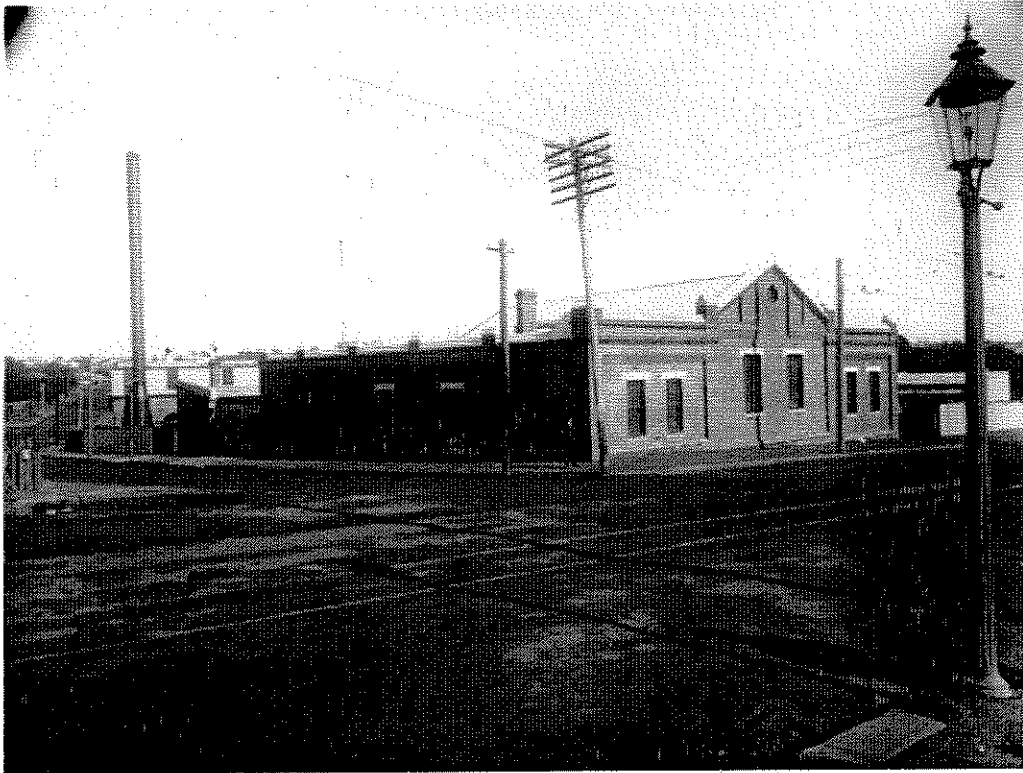
Survey plan of the site, corner Loftus and Newcastle Streets (date unknown - late 1960s?). Arrow points to the 1906 pump station building.



1971 Plans (Forbes & Fitzhardinge Architects) for new administration building along Newcastle Street, which was constructed adjacent to the 1906 pump station building.



1984 Plans for the extensions to the c.1980 John Tonkin Water Centre (Cameron Chisholm & Nicol Architects) . The highlighted rectangular building to the top along Newcastle Street is the original 1971 administration building.



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Leederville pump station corner Loftus and Newcastle Street - Water Works Board 1920s (curtesy Batty Library) - Loftus Street to the left, Newcastle Street to the right.