



HERITAGE
COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is valued by the community of Albany for its landmark quality. The building, which is in a mock Tudor style, recalls the English origins of many of the people of Albany of the time of construction, and is in marked contrast, in both style and materials, with the surrounding buildings. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room demonstrates a civic concern in the early 1900s for the provision of shelter for cabmen and their horses, and a later concern for the provision of public facilities for women travellers. (Criterion 2.1)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is highly valued for its association with local travel, originally by horse-drawn cabs, now by taxis. (Criterion 4.1)

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room, a recognised tourist attraction due to its mock Tudor architecture and prominent siting, is an Albany landmark. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Due to the specialised nature of the original building *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* has a high degree of rarity. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The provision of a large extension, namely the *Women's Rest Room*, to the original building for the comfort of female travellers, displays a magnanimous civic mindedness. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The integrity of the *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* is moderate. Originally women had a handsome and welcoming room, now they have little more than a toilet area. The urbane and civic nature of the original design is diminished.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The fabric of *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* is authentic with the exception of the Tudor styled roof, which is not original, but is similar to the original roof.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Sarah Stephenson BA. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room, formerly the Cabmen's Shelter and Women's Rest Room, is located on Reserve 19464 at the foot of York Street.¹

The Cabmen's Shelter was built in 1909², and the Women's Rest Room, a later addition, was built in 1926.³ The building is a representation of mock Tudor architecture, popular in this period due to its association with Britain.⁴

Several years prior to the erection of the Cabmen's Shelter, Albany Town Council recognised that a convenience was needed to provide cabmen and their horses with shelter, but funds could not be raised to commence work on the site.⁵

In 1908 the building was partially funded by Mr and Mrs F.R. Dymes (nee Hassall), an Albany solicitor and prominent public figure.⁶ The total cost of the Cabmen's Shelter was £125, of which Mr Dymes contributed £75 and the Albany Town Council the remaining £50.⁷

On 28 April 1909, the Cabmen's Shelter was formally donated to the Town of Albany. Mr Dymes handed over the key to Acting Mayor Cr. Mawson, who declared the building open for public purposes.⁸ Mawson stated his intention to add a break to protect and secure the cabmen's horses, and remarked that:

It pleased him very much to see the building where it was and he hoped that it would in future serve as a landmark in the progress of the place.⁹

When Mr F.R. Dymes died on 25 January 1921, aged 71, the *Albany Advertiser* reported: 'A lasting monument to his memory will be the picturesque building at the foot of York Street, which he gave to the town for use as a Cabmen's Shelter'.¹⁰

In 1919, local Albany ladies' societies held the first of many bazaars to raise funds for a Women's Rest Room and a meeting room.¹¹ Over several years they collected the sum of £760.¹²

On 30 October 1926, *Women's Rest Room* was officially opened as an extension to the Cabmen's Shelter.¹³ A memorial tablet was laid by Mayor Mr P.

1 National Trust Assessment Form, 4 April 1977.

2 *Albany Advertiser*, 28 April 1909.

3 *Albany Advertiser*, 30 October 1926.

4 Apperly, Irving and Reynolds *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* (Angus & Robertson, 1989) p.86-89.

5 *Albany Advertiser*, 28 April 1909.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Albany Advertiser*, 29 January 1921.

11 *Albany Advertiser*, 30 October 1926.

12 *Ibid.*

Lambert, who declared it open for public convenience, for the benefit of mothers visiting from out of town, or travelling on the railway.¹⁴ The Women's Committee were left to raise £200 to furnish *Women's Rest Room*.¹⁵

In 1976, the building was extended to provide additional facilities, and the roof was re-shingled.¹⁶

In 1995, with the horse and cab long since replaced by the taxi, the place is popularly referred to as *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* and continues to be used as a public convenience.¹⁷ Due to its unusual mock Tudor architecture and prominent siting at the bottom of York Street, *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* is a tourist attraction and Albany landmark.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is a single storeyed timber framed building with a shingled roof. It comprises the original one room Cabmen's Shelter (1909), the addition of the Women's Rest Room (1926), an extension to the Women's Rest Room (1976), and recent alterations and additions (1995).

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is situated at the bottom of York Street, on the south-west corner of the intersection with Stirling Terrace. To the north of Stirling Terrace and opposite *Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room* is Albany House and the London Hotel. Diagonally opposite are the Empire Buildings. Immediately to the west is Victoria Gardens, which extend between Stirling Terrace and Lower Stirling Terrace, and the former Railway Station.

The Cabmen's Shelter (1909) was a single room, about three metres by four metres, providing shelter for cab drivers. Today the room is used to receive telephone bookings for taxis and relay the information to cab drivers by radio. The original building, aligned in a north-south direction, parallel to York Street, is largely intact. It was, and is still, entered by a door under a central projecting awning, independent of the main gabled roof. To the east is a bay window. The building has half timbered external walls with a smooth textured render. Internally, the walls are lined with jarrah boards to dado height, with a plaster finish above. The floor is timber boarding. The 1909 building is in a Federation Queen Anne style; the main indicators being the lead light over the entrance, which has a rising sun motif with flowing radiating lines and an organic, curvilinear surround.

The addition of the Women's Rest Room (1926) has a less organic quality in the detailing - window panes do not have the curved decorative leadwork of the earlier building and the gable details are more simple. The addition, being about six times the area of the original Cabmen's shelter, is in good condition with few modifications. The Women's Rest Room is approached from an eastern porch, which leads to a hallway. To the right, north, of the hallway is

¹³ *Albany Advertiser*, 30 October 1926.

¹⁴ *First Settlement Heritage Trail, Settlement and Development of the Albany District* (A Commonwealth State Bicentennial Project, 1988)

¹⁵ *Albany Advertiser*, 30 October 1926.

¹⁶ *First Settlement Heritage Trail, Settlement and Development of the Albany District* (A Commonwealth State Bicentennial Project, 1988)

¹⁷ National Trust Assessment Form, 4 April 1977.

an interconnecting door with the original building. To the left, south, of the hallway is a small room, now used as an office by the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Proceeding straight ahead, west, through the hallway is a large room, presumably the Women's Rest Room itself, which now serves as a meeting room for the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Off to the left of this room is a kitchen, a small verandah and a small yard for the storage of bins. The 1926 addition has a similar construction to the original, with the exception that the external half-timbered walls have a rough-cast finish.

The 1976 addition consisted of a women's toilet and a baby feeding area. The extension was arranged in a rectangle aligned north-south, on the western side of the Women's Rest Room, immediately beyond the principal room and kitchen.

In 1995, men's toilets were incorporated into the building by means of altering the layout of the women's toilets, extending the building southwards and providing a third gabled entrance to the north-west. This required that the size of the baby feeding area be reduced, and men have to cross this area to get to the men's toilets.

The construction of the 1976-1995 extensions consists of smooth textured external walls, probably consisting of compressed cement sheets, plaster walls internally, and concrete floors.

Taxi Rank and Women's Rest Room is in good condition.

13.3 REFERENCES