



Heritage List

Place Record Forms



Place Details

Name of Place: Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr), Riverbank Reformatory for Boys, Riverbank Secure Treatment Centre for Boys

Local Government Inventory Number: 82

Assessment Number: 159400

Property Key: 428052

HCWA Number: 18404

Site Details

Address: 130 Hamersley Road Caversham

Lot/Plan Diagram: 9332/ D14007

Dates

Construction Date: 1960

Use/s of Place

Original Use General: GOVERNMENTAL

Original Use Specific:

Current Use General: VACANT/UNUSED

General Use Specific: Vacant/unused

Historic Theme General: SOCIAL & CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Historic Theme Specific: Law & order

Description:

Riverbank Detention Centre is a former youth detention facility comprising a secure walled compound with a central court yard containing a single-storey masonry, concrete and fibrous cement roofed building designed around a quadrangle; three former residences comprising one detached house and one duplex in the vernacular style typical of the 1960s and 70s; in a riparian setting with an orchard of mature olive trees, open paddocks and areas of indigenous vegetation.

Significant Interior:

Unknown

History:

The Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department in 1958 noted that: 'money was set aside to commence the building of a closed reformatory at Caversham, where 11 acres of ground have been purchased. This building will be the first in Australia deliberately planned from the outset as a maximum security reformatory for boys. The Public Works Department, Architectural Division, in consultation with the Child Welfare Department officers, have planned a building which, while giving maximum security, should provide a wide variety of occupational interests and the ancillary services necessary to undertake the care and reformation of the less tractable delinquent boys.'

Statement of Significance:

The place tangibly shows the development and implementation of child welfare practices by the Western Australian Government, particularly in the secure care and treatment of thirteen to eighteen year old male offenders from 1960 to 1997;

The place is significant to the many male offenders and staff who stayed there during its time of operation as a secure facility for teenagers from 1960 to 1997 and for vulnerable adults from 1998 to c.2001. One of these juvenile offenders was the future lead singer of AC/DC, Bon Scott (1946-80);

The buildings are a representative example of utilitarian architectural design by the Public Works Department of Western Australia in the 1960s, exhibiting some elements of the Post War International Style;

HERITAGE LIST



The series of decorative wrought iron security door and window grilles that are located strategically throughout the complex exhibit aesthetic design qualities that are in contrast with the overall utilitarian nature of the site.

The place was one of the earliest 'ribbon' land grants to be issued in the Swan district and was developed by the prominent Hamersley family who owned the land from 1837 to c.1940s, as a large agricultural landholding known as 'Pyrton';

The setting on the north-western banks of the Swan River provides a tranquil rural environment that includes cultural landscape elements that date from the earliest period of settlement of the Swan Valley in the early to mid 19th century;

The place has potential to yield important information through archaeological investigation of the former use and development of the site from the 1830s to the 1950s; and,

The cabin/cell accommodation at Riverbank Detention Centre (fmr) Caversham is a rare extant example of this form of accommodation used for juveniles at this period.

Management Category:

Category 1

Exceptional significance to the locality

Category description:

Essential to the heritage of the locality. Rare or outstanding example.

Desirable Outcome:

Inclusion on Heritage List.

These places are often included in the State Register of Heritage Places and will be afforded the highest level of protection both through the provisions of the Heritage Act and the Scheme.

Note: All development applications for properties on the State Register must be referred to HCWA.

Other Images:

HERITAGE LIST

