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Job Number: 20201  
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Directors  
ARK Group  
Level 1 66 King Street  
Perth

Attn: Adam Kapinkoff <adam@arkgroup.com.au>

Griffiths Architects



Dear Adam,

### **BASSENDEAN HOTEL HERITAGE ADVICE**

Thank you for the information provided by you and John Liddiard on the Bassendean Hotel. This letter is intended to provide some background and guidance on the treatment of this local heritage place during its re-imagining.

### **Hotel Exterior Treatment**

This advice is designed to provide some insights into the original intent, the current presentation, and how that might inform future treatment.

### **Background**

Bassendean was originally simply called West Guildford until the town was declared as a separate entity in 1922. At least 5 attempts were made to establish a hotel there, and in once instance in 1905, there was an unsuccessful attempt to re-locate the licence of the Stirling Arms to the town. Several further attempts were made, but the inevitable decision was that West Guildford should stay dry.

Following the Gold Rushes and its perceived excesses, there was a strong reaction to the sale and consumption of alcohol and the temperance movement began to hold sway. Hotel licences were harder to obtain and temperance hotels and coffee palaces became more common.

Finally, in 1927 a 468 signature petition commenced a process that would eventually lead to the construction and licencing of the Bassendean Hotel, with hearings commencing in 1928.

The Bassendean Hotel was built in 1929 for Patrick Connolly by builders Blackmore Brothers to a design by architects J.H.O. Hargrave and E.S. Porter. The construction of the hotel caused

considerable controversy as many community members and churches in the district valued a teetotal lifestyle. An active opposition group formulated a well organised 'No License' campaign to keep Bassendean free of licensed hotels. The campaign failed to gain support with the legislators and the license was granted in 1930 after five attempts. The original design of the hotel featured on the ground floor a Saloon Bar, Public Bar, Parlour, Entrance, Lounge, Office, Dining Room, Kitchen, Staff Dining, Store, Staff Bathroom, Lavatory. On the upper floor were 18 bedrooms, Lounge, Bathrooms, Lavatories and female Staff Bedrooms and Stair Hall. Patrick Connolly was the first licensee for the hotel and the hotel was quickly established as a venue for local events.<sup>1</sup>

Because it was built in the period of restricted trading hours, this and other hotels like and including the Bassenden Hotels were made robust to withstand the 'six o'clock swill'. When completed the hotels had a tiled dado at ground floor level, tuck-pointed brick walls with rendered quoins and string courses with rendered arches to windows, and steel framed windows. The upper floor appears to have had rendered walls from the outset.

Verandahs were timber framed with square timber posts, post brackets, a framed frieze with asbestos cement panels, and a balustrade in the same treatment. Bedrooms were designed to accommodate single men doing business in the town and the nearby industrial areas.

Throughout the 20th century the building underwent additions and alterations as requirements and legislation changed. In the 1950s the hotel was remodelled internally in the style of the period and the majority of the internal fittings and features were removed. In the 1970s, licensing laws no longer required hotels to provide accommodation and taverns became a popular destination. Older hotels such as the Bassendean often found that the first floor accommodation was an unused resource.<sup>2</sup>

Vinyl flooring was laid, walls tiled to dado height, flush ceilings installed and Formica and chrome were the materials used in the bar, with fluorescent light fittings throughout.

In 1973, the hotel was acquired by publican Murray McHenry who undertook major renovations of the premises. It was during the 1970s that a drive-in bottle shop was provided, as well as an expansion of the restaurant which was named 'Paddy Connolly's' in honour of the first owner. In the early 2000s the place was extensively renovated including the addition of a new bottle shop.<sup>3</sup>

It was at this time that much of the damage was done to the presentation of the building exterior. Though verandahs were put back to an approximation of the original, the whole of the building exterior was covered with a bagged cement render, losing all of the original details and homogenising the exterior into the bland treatment that remains today.

## Significance

In 2017, the Town settled on a statement of significance for the hotel when putting it into management category 2 of their municipal inventory.

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<sup>1</sup> Municipal inventory documentary evidence

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

The statement of significance says:

The place has aesthetic value as a good, intact example of the Inter War Free Classical style;

The place has value as a landmark in the streetscape and demonstrates the original town centre of Bassendean;

The place has historic value for its association with the development of Bassendean in the Inter War period and for the community campaign waged against the hotel which illustrates the strength of the temperance movement at the time; and,

The place has social value for the many community members who have worked or attended the place for a variety of reasons since 1930.

This provides guidance for its future treatment. The statement does not mention what is not significance, but changes since its completion have been to its detriment. Remarkably, exterior openings have remained almost untouched in the life of the building and most opening treatments have remained original or have been replaced sympathetically.

### **Conservation and Adaptation Options**

A good conservation option would be to restore the front of the hotel to its original presentation which would add to its visual richness and presentation. There would be no argument with respect to this approach.

Alternatively, a sympathetic approach might be a good one. It is possible to remove the cement render to reveal original features and some trial render removal might determine whether this is possible.

A possible approach, should this not be feasible, would involve tiling the dado, then smooth rendering above, picking out the quoins strings and the like in accordance with the only photograph that is available from the period. Your render in the DRP presentation shows an appropriate approach in terms of the treatment of the dado, openings and render details.

The key is to be respectful of the 'Inter-War Free Classical style and landmark qualities of the place.

The present verandah construction looks like it has a very short life left in it and a new verandah might be erected that takes its cues from the historic verandah, but is more suited to contemporary use. Balustrades should be a simply designed and not introduce Federation period motifs into it. The original verandah did not allow visual access up to it and was designed to provide some privacy to the rooms, which is a function no longer required. Plain detailing such as vertical balusters would be more appropriate than lace or glass in a reimagined verandah.

Other than the balustrades, your DRP presentation seems to confirm this as your preferred approach.

The steel framed windows should be conserved.

Colours are not so important. Though it might be possible to figure our original colours by paint scrapes, the hotel has had many colour schemes and the selection of a colour scheme is not so important for a place of this level of significance, but very important for a good fresh outcome. The present colours take the life and detailing out of the building, and something like the colour contrast and depth of hue of the original building would better present it and breathe new life into it.

We trust this is acceptable and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Griffiths', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PHILIP GRIFFITHS LFRAIA RIBA M.ICOMOS  
ABWA Reg.No. 1071  
for Griffiths Architects