

## City of Subiaco - Local Government Inventory Place Record

Name	Shirley Court
Address	12 Nicholson Road ,Subiaco
Lot Number	Lot: 58 D/P: 2808
Photograph (2014)	
Construction Date	1937
Architectural Style	Inter-War Functionalist
Historical Notes	<p>Joseph Totterdell had been impressed by flat development on a tour of England and Europe in 1933 and clearly expressed his opinion on the local trend towards flat development in February 1936:</p> <p><i>I am of the opinion that the days of large dwellings are over and that we, as builders and architects, must be prepared to supply people with modern, healthy, well-lighted flats fitted with up-to-date labour-saving devices, said the president of the Master Builders' Federation of Australia (Mr. J. Totterdell) ..... It appeared to him that flats had come to stay. He thought the main reason for this was that owing to the cost of upkeep attached to large residences and the worry and work which necessarily followed, the average citizen preferred to live in a modern up to-date flat convenient to the city, leaving the worry to his landlord, than to have a house in an outer suburb where he had to stay up half the night watering lawns and gardens. This applied particularly to people without families.</i></p> <p><i>Three years ago I had the privilege of travelling over the United Kingdom and Europe and at that tune it was astounding to see the enormous blocks of palatial flats being erected practically right in the heart of London and the large cities of the continent, Mr. Totterdell continued. .... Nearer home we have only to look at Sydney and Melbourne to notice that the residential flat is today more popular than the suburban villa. This is not surprising when it is remembered that the latter often means travelling half the night to and from the city and that, besides the cost of this, the villa owner is faced with heavy charges for municipal water and sewerage rates, insurance, interest on mortgage, etc., as well as tying up portion of his own capital. When every thing is reckoned up it is probably cheaper to pay a reasonable rent for a modern flat near the city and thus leave more spare time for sport and pleasure.</i></p> <p>During 1936 Joseph and Florence Totterdell undertook a further, seven month, overseas tour, visiting Canada, America, England, Ireland and</p>

## City of Subiaco - Local Government Inventory Place Record

	<p>Germany – which appears to have reinforced his views on this matter:</p> <p><i>It is also astounding to see the large number of palatial blocks of flats that have been, and still are, being erected in all the principal cities, and they appear to be the last word in comfort, with central heating, air conditioned, refrigeration, general restaurant, swimming pools, lifts, beautiful gardens laid out. In fact, all comfort and no work seems to be the slogan.</i></p> <p>Both of the Totterdell’s children had grown up and left home by this time and it seems likely that the block of two flats at 12 Nicholson Street was purpose built for Joseph and Florence as a high-quality, low-maintenance alternative to the traditional house. It also seems likely that the name of the place, “Shirley Court”, was chosen to honour their only daughter, Florence Shirley Totterdell (known as Shirley), who was by then married and living in Queensland.</p> <p>As part of his involvement in the construction business, Joseph served as the president of the Master Builders Association of WA (early 1930s) and of the Master Builders Federation of Australia (mid 1930s). In the early 1930s he also entered local politics, serving as a councillor for the City of Perth from 1932.</p> <p>During the time he lived at 12 Nicholson Road, Joseph Totterdell served as Lord Mayor of Perth (1946-1953) and as the Liberal member for West Perth in the Legislative Assembly (1950-1953). In January 1953 he was one of 10 Australians awarded a knighthood the New Years Honours list.</p> <p>In 1949 ownership of the property was transferred from Totterdell Brothers Ltd, into the private ownership of Joseph Totterdell, who remained here until, or shortly before, the time of his death in December 1959.</p> <p>In June 1960 the flats were sold to separate owner/occupiers - Stanley Arthur Huggins (company director/investor/former estate agent) and his wife, Gertrude Lily Huggins; and Frank Graham Chenery (bank manager) and his wife, Leila Adelaide Chenery. At this time Frank Chenery was about 60 years old and Stanley Huggins 57, suggesting that the place had continued to represent good quality accommodation, suited to older businessmen and their wives.</p> <p>Since that time the face brickwork has been painted and the boundary fences changed, but otherwise the original external form and detailing of the place remains largely intact.</p>
Physical Description	<p>The following description has been copied from the <i>Heritage Assessment of Shirley Court, 12 Nicholson Road, Subiaco</i>:</p> <p>Shirley Court, 12 Nicholson Road, Subiaco was designed as a small, domestic-scale, block of two flats with simple detailing derived from the Inter-War Functionalist style.</p> <p>Key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asymmetrical massing.</li> <li>• Low-pitched, tiled, hipped roof.</li> <li>• Single chimney with a corbelled brick cap, located near the south-eastern corner.</li> <li>• Wide boxed eaves, set above two courses of corbelled brickwork.</li> <li>• Variegated red brick walls (now largely painted).</li> <li>• Horizontal emphasis provided by five slightly projecting courses of brickwork.</li> </ul>

## City of Subiaco - Local Government Inventory Place Record

	<p>At the first floor these projecting courses were set at the window head level (stepping up over the balcony door) and as a double band framing the corbelled window sill. At the ground floor they were set at the window head level and approx. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> the way up from the window sill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal proportions to the primary window openings.</li> </ul> <p>These have boxed window frames, projecting out from the face of the wall. Each has a wide central pane with a double hung window at either end. The latter were designed with leadlight detailing to both the upper and lower sash (much of which is still intact).</p> <p>At first floor level the boxed windows have corbelled sills. At ground floor level they are set on stepped brick 'brackets'.</p> <p>At the ground floor level the windows are shaded by old canvas awnings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Square proportions to the main side windows, which are each made up of a pair of double hung windows, with matching leadlight detailing.</li> </ul> <p>On the eastern elevation these have boxed framed detailing to match the main facade.</p> <p>On the western elevation (overlooking Rupert Street) they have wall mounted timber frames and simple projecting timber sills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partly cantilevered flat balcony slab to the main (south) facade.</li> </ul> <p>This is supported by a single curved concrete bracket at the western end and has a 'floating' curved corner at the eastern end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline Moderne style balcony balustrade, with widely spaced, slimline metal framing and curved corners.</li> <li>• Single width glazed door, but no windows opening onto the balcony.</li> </ul> <p>This door has full height leadlight detailing to match that to the sash windows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two large, asymmetrically placed, highly decorative wall vents to the main facade (7 brick courses high x 1.5 brick widths wide) – one near the south-western corner at ground floor level and one near the south-eastern corner at first floor level.</li> <li>• Projecting entry porch/stairwell for the first floor flat, set back along the western side of the building.</li> </ul> <p>Note: The original entry point for the ground floor flat is not identifiable from current streetscape views. However, it may have been the door that can be glimpsed partway along the eastern elevation. This is located under what is now an enclosed balcony (on the opposite side of the building to the stairwell).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enclosed rear verandah/balcony (probably originally open or partly open).</li> </ul> <p>The front yard has been partly brick paved ... This area is bounded by a low rendered wall with tall, square rendered piers and spear-topped metal infill panels. Along the Rupert Street frontage there is a high rendered wall.</p> <p>At the rear of the site there is a flat-roofed double garage set back against the eastern boundary, and an open brick paved parking area opening off Rupert Street.</p>
Associations	Joseph Totterdell – Perth Lord Mayor (1946-1953), Liberal member for West Perth in the Legislative Assembly (1950-1953).
Statement of Significance	<p>Shirley Court, 12 Nicholson Road, Subiaco is of cultural heritage significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a good and largely authentic example of a small block of purpose-</li> </ul>

## City of Subiaco - Local Government Inventory Place Record

	<p>built flats erected in Subiaco in the mid-1930s, a period which saw the introduction of this type of development into the suburbs beyond the City and West Perth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As an example of flats built by Totterdell Builders Ltd, a family firm which had been closely associated with the development of Subiaco since they moved here from England in 1904.</li> <li>As an example of flats influenced by overseas tours by one of the Totterdell brothers, Joseph (in 1933 and 1936), after which he specifically commented on the desirability of flats as an alternative to the traditional villa, referring in one article to the slogan <i>“all comfort and no work”</i>.</li> </ul> <p>At a time when both of their children were recently married and living away from Perth, this apparently convinced Joseph and Florence Totterdell that flat living should be their future way of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the home of Joseph Totterdell, master builder, from 1937 until, or shortly before, the time of his death in December 1959.</li> </ul> <p>During this period he served as Lord Mayor of Perth (1946-1953) and as the Liberal member for West Perth in the Legislative Assembly (1950-1953).</p> <p>In January 1953 he became known as Sir Joseph Totterdell, after he was awarded a knighthood the New Years Honours list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a place that attracted owner/occupiers who were older businessmen (a bank manager and a company director/investor) and their wives when the flats were separately sold in 1960 – suggesting that the flats continued to represent good quality accommodation into the mid-twentieth century.</li> </ul>
<p>Level of Significance/ Contribution</p>	<p>Heritage List - Considerable Significance (Level 2)</p> <p><b>Considerable contribution to the heritage values of the Salisbury and Rupert Street heritage area</b></p> <p>Medium to high authenticity</p> <p>The original external form and detailing of the building is largely intact (with the exception of the painting of the former face brickwork).</p> <p>The place is of particular historical significance as evidence of the development of flats as alternative accommodation for the middle and upper middle classes in the inter-war years and for its association with a prominent Subiaco resident, Joseph Totterdel.</p>
<p>Listings</p>	<p>Local Government Inventory – Adopted 4/2/2003 Town Planning Scheme Heritage List – Adopted 16/12/2014 Salisbury &amp; Rupert Street Heritage Area – adopted 11/12/2018</p>
<p>Main Sources / References</p>	<p>2003 Heritage Inventory Place Record Heritage Assessment Report – Prepared by Greenward Consulting October 2014 <i>Heritage Assessment of the Southern End of the Triangle Precinct</i>, prepared by Greenward Consulting, August 2018</p>