



## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

### 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 6.1 Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self education

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 408 Institutions

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The brick building of *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is a fine example of Inter-war Stripped Classical style of architecture in Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 1.1)

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is an integral element in the railway environment of Kalgoorlie, being situated opposite the railway station yard. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* was constructed in 1934 to replace the 1902 Institute building, which had been destroyed by fire. The Kalgoorlie Institute organisation was established as a direct result of the development of the Eastern Goldfields Railway and associated railway lines. The railways served the goldfields and provided a link with the eastern states of Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* was constructed in 1934 to provide a venue for the educational and recreational needs of the several hundred railway workers in Kalgoorlie, on a site that had been used for the purpose since 1902. The later declining use of the place was a result of changes to railway services and the changing needs of the Institute membership. (Criterion 2.2)

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* was associated with the railway presence in Kalgoorlie from 1934 to 2000. (Criterion 2.3)

#### 11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

## **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is highly valued by the Kalgoorlie community in general and the railway community in particular, for its social associations, and its association with the railway history of the town. (Criterion 4.1)

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* contributes to the local community's sense of place as a remnant of the town's railway history, and as a substantial and imposing building which has stood on Forrest Street opposite the railway station yard since 1934. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1 RARITY**

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### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is a singular example of its type. The front section of the building is a fine example of Inter-war Stripped Classical style of architecture in Kalgoorlie, and within the railway environment throughout the state. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is in fair condition. It has recently been vacated and vandals have damaged some fabric, but most damage has been caused by the boarding of windows and doors. No maintenance has been undertaken for many years.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* has functioned and developed as a railway facility for the social and recreational needs of railway employees. Most of the interior fittings and furniture remain intact in situ. The place has retained a moderate degree of integrity

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The place has minimal evidence of alterations to the original fabric except for the obvious patio extensions along the east side, the more recent toilet fitout in the ladies dressing-room area, and the recent boarding over of windows and doors with steel sheets. *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* displays a high degree of authenticity.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Conservation Consultant.

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* comprises a single-storey brick and iron building fronting Forrest Street, with a timber and iron hall attached at the rear. The place was constructed in 1934 to replace the 1902 timber and iron Railway Institute building that was destroyed by fire on 26 December 1933. *Railway*

*Institute, Kalgoorlie* was designed and constructed by West Australian Government Railways. It is currently vacant and boarded up.

The discovery of gold at Southern Cross and the subsequent declaration of the area as the Yilgarn goldfield in 1888, prompted the State Government to commence construction of a railway to serve the area. The line began at the head of the Eastern Railway at Northam. Before the line reached Southern Cross, the Coolgardie, and then Kalgoorlie gold-finds were made. The line to Southern Cross was opened on 1 July 1894, by which time a decision had been made to extend it to Coolgardie.<sup>1</sup> At that point, there was no intention to extend the line to Kalgoorlie, but the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and local mine owners and businessmen, began a campaign to have the line taken the extra 24 miles (38 kms). Plans were already underway to construct a branch line to Menzies, and both Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were vying to be the junction for this line and thus become the centre of the eastern goldfields.<sup>2</sup> In September 1895, a bill was passed to extend the railway line to Kalgoorlie, which was reached on 8 September 1896. Official handover of the railway line was affected on 1 January 1897.<sup>3</sup>

Less than twelve months after the line was opened, the Annual Report of the Railways Department noted that traffic to the goldfields 'had largely increased', and duplication of the line from Northam to Kalgoorlie was under consideration.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime, a branch line from Kalgoorlie to Menzies was begun in August 1897, reaching Menzies on 23 March 1898. The line was handed over to the government on 13 February 1899. The extension to Leonora was taken over by the Railways Department on 12 January 1903.<sup>5</sup> The Boulder Loopline Railway, 8.75 miles (14 kms) in length, was also constructed during this period, providing a line from Kalgoorlie to Boulder, through the mining area of the Golden Mile. Control of this line was transferred to the Railways Department on 1 February 1898.<sup>6</sup>

In 1900, 80% of the traffic on the Eastern Goldfields line passed through Kalgoorlie.<sup>7</sup> In October that year, it was reported that 'at an early date it is intended to call a meeting regarding the formation of a Railway Institute at Kalgoorlie, which it is felt will prove beneficial to all concerned, and be a step in the right direction'.<sup>8</sup> In 1902, a timber and iron Railway Institute building was constructed on Lot 207 in Forrest Street, Kalgoorlie, opposite the railway yard reserve. The building was described as 'Hall, Reading Room and Passage', and was financed locally with the help of a loan.<sup>9</sup>

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1 Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, p. 206; Le Page, J. S. H. *Building a State: The story of the Public Works Department of WA, 1829-1985*, Perth, UWA Press, pp. 221-225; Webb, M. & A. *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of WA*, (2 vols), Hocking & Co and St George Books, Perth, 1995, p. 208-211;

2 Wilson, H. H. *The Golden Miles*, Rigby, 1977, pp. 173; Webb, M. & A., op cit, pp. 208-211, 288-293.

3 Webb, M. & A., op cit, p. 303; Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, p. 238; *A Brief History of the Western Australian Government Railways*, WAGR, 1975.

4 *WAGR Annual Report*, 1897, p. 19.

5 Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J., op cit, p. 207.

6 *WAGR Annual Report* to 30 June 1898, p. 21.

7 *ibid*, 1900, pp. 17, 19 & 36.

8 *The Western Australian Railway Gazette*, 13 October 1900, p. 1.

9 *ibid*, 16 July 1906, p. 6.

With reference to the Kalgoorlie Institute... [t]hree gentlemen, not heads of branches, had made themselves absolutely liable to the bank for between four and five hundred pounds, representing the construction costs.<sup>10</sup>

The railway institute movement in Western Australia began in 1888, when a Railway Employees' Reading Room was constructed in Wellington Street. A few years later, when the Railway Department needed more office space, it paid out the remaining loan on the Reading Room and took it over to house the staff of the Electrical Engineer.<sup>11</sup> An institute for railwaymen was not established in Perth until the WA Railway Institute was formed at a meeting held on 12 November 1897. The move was claimed to be prompted by the establishment of several similar institutions in the eastern states, but the establishment of an Institute in Northam and the laying of the foundation stone for its new headquarters on 28 July 1897, was probably a major factor.<sup>12</sup>

At Northam, the reconstruction and expansion of the railway yards had resulted in an establishment of over 200 railwaymen, many with families, making up a considerable proportion of the town's population in 1897. Housing estates were established near the railway yards with many blocks taken up by railway and mill workers so that the area developed as Northam's 'working class' section. The congregation of such a large railway workforce prompted George Throssell's wife, Anne to suggest the construction of an institute for railwaymen, similar to the Mechanic's Institute, which her husband had been active in promoting for Northam some years earlier. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, with which the Throssell's were involved, also supported the establishment of an Institute in the town.<sup>13</sup>

Although the Kalgoorlie Institute was independent of the WA Railway Institute, arrangements were made for the interchange of books and periodicals and the transfer of membership. In addition, the WA Institute gave a donation of £25 to the new organisation. The disadvantages of independence quickly became evident, however, especially in the matters of finance, and in February 1903, the Kalgoorlie Institute amalgamated with the WA Railway Institute. The WA Institute took over the loan on the Kalgoorlie Institute building, and the Government provided £150 toward the £400 owing. A new constitution was enacted, setting up an executive body of President and Council, headquartered in Perth, and a branch body comprising a Chairman and Committee to administer the Kalgoorlie branch.<sup>14</sup> The Kalgoorlie Railway Institute was the first branch of the WA Railway Institute, as the Northam Institute, although the first to be established, remained an independent entity until 1917.

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10 *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 January 1935, p. 5, quoting a speech made in 1905.

11 'The Railway Institute, past and present', Part 1, *The W.A. Railway and Tramway Magazine*, November 1929, pp. 11-12.

12 'The Railway Institute, past and present', Part 2, *The W.A. Railway and Tramway Magazine*, December 1929, pp. 10-11; *Northam Advertiser*, Saturday 31 July 1897, p. 3. **Note:** The Railway Institute Building, Surry Hills, NSW and the Railway Institute Hall at the Ipswich Railway Workshops Complex, Queensland are registered places on the National Estate, while the Victorian Railways Institute Building, Ararat, Vic is listed as an indicative place.

13 *Northam Advertiser*, Saturday 31 July 1897, p. 3; Garden, Donald S, op cit, p. 150-151.

14 *ibid*, 16 November 1903, pp. 9-10; 'The Railway Institute, past and present', Part 2, op cit.

The railway institute movement began to spread across the State, with branches opening at Bunbury, Brunswick Junction and Wagin in 1904.<sup>15</sup> In 1906, to facilitate its growing function, the Perth Institute was given the use of the whole building in which it had its rooms, as well as the two adjoining buildings then occupied by the Audit Branch. A new façade was constructed across the front of the three buildings, inscribed with the words 'W A Govt Railways and Tramways Institute'.<sup>16</sup>

As well as improving the Perth headquarters, work was also undertaken to 'alter and improve' the Kalgoorlie Institute building, including the addition of a billiard room:

...it is intended to place a billiard-table and complete the lining of the class rooms and concert hall, and when this is done, which should be within the next week or two (as authority has been given for the work to be carried out, and arrangements have been made with Messrs. Alcock and Co., of Perth, to supply one of their very latest club tables), this branch will be up-to-date and the members in a position to spend many a pleasant and interesting hour therein.<sup>17</sup>

The Railway Department provided ongoing support to the organisation, as noted in its 1918 Annual Report:

This institution has again had a successful year. There has been a very satisfactory increase in membership, and the facilities afforded for recreation and education have been well availed of by the staff. The institute has been particularly valuable to the Department and staff alike, for the reason that it enables the latter to become proficient in the various phases of railway working. Under existing circumstances, which have necessitated the engagement of a large number of new hands to fill the places of experienced members of staff who are absent with the Expeditionary Forces, it is necessary that an institution such as this should be readily available for training purposes. The institute is worthy of every encouragement and assistance which can reasonably be given.<sup>18</sup>

The educational curriculum covered 'safe working, time-table, and rostering, telegraphy, station accounts, locomotive mechanics, internal combustion engine, and shorthand', and provided 'facilities in all essential railway subjects to enable staff to become efficient in their particular spheres of the service'.<sup>19</sup> Other activities organised through the Institutes included a musical society, debating group, golf tournaments, billiard tournaments, rifle shooting, and regular socials and dances.

In 1927, membership of Institutes in the state had reached 6,655, which represented 83% of total railway staff.<sup>20</sup> The Depression resulted in a number of retrenchments in the Railway Department, reflected in membership of the Railway Institutes. Kalgoorlie membership dropped from 391 in 1929, to 316 in 1931, and remained around 300 during most of the 1930s. Despite the fall in membership, improvements were carried out to the Kalgoorlie Railway Institute building in 1932, and further additions were planned, as the hall was not large enough to cater for the numbers attending the weekly Saturday night dance. Money was raised for the project through the holding of social functions, and a plan and estimate for the additions were

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15 *ibid*, 16 June 1904, p. 4.

16 *The Western Australian Railway Gazette*, 19 June 1906, p. 2.

17 *ibid*, 19 June 1906, p. 2 & 16 July 1906, p. 8.

18 *WAGR Annual Report*, 1918, p. 12.

19 *ibid*, 1924, p. 19.

20 *ibid*, 1928, p. 19.

prepared by the Chief Civil Engineer.<sup>21</sup> The planned additions were not carried out, however, as a fire destroyed the Institute building on 26 December 1933.

For the third Christmas evening in succession in Kalgoorlie, a serious fire occurred, when early on Sunday morning, the railway institute, in Forrest-street, Kalgoorlie, and a five-roomed wood and iron house immediately adjoining the institute were destroyed by fire. The blaze apparently originated in a lane between the cottage and the institute which was also constructed of wood and iron, and, fanned by a stiff easterly breeze, the flames leaped to the adjoining premises...

The railway institute it is understood, was insured, but the amount could not be ascertained yesterday. The building contained a splendid library for the use of railway employees and adjoining the library was a billiards room, in which were two tables. The dancing portion of the structure was at the rear of the reading room and a piano in that portion was also destroyed. In the office of the institute was a small iron safe, containing a sum of money, which is believed to be intact...

The first obstacles encountered by the firefighters were the barbed wire entanglements, evidently erected to prevent entry to the entertainments held in the institute... Another difficulty was the fact that one side of the railway premises was a quantity of bitumen, while the house on the western side was only three feet from the institute....

Mr. J. Clelland, who played the violin at the dance in the institute on Saturday night, left his instrument in the hall and it was destroyed in the fire. It was a severe loss.<sup>22</sup>

A new and larger building was planned to replace the one destroyed. In the meantime, the weekly dance was moved to the Town Hall, and re-scheduled for Monday to prevent clashing with the picture show held in the Town Hall on Saturday evenings.

The plans and specifications for *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* were prepared by Oliver Harper of the Civil Engineering Branch, under the direction of the Chief Civil Engineer, and construction operations were in the hands of the District Engineer, C. R. A. Stewart. Inspector of Works and Buildings, J. Kennedy, supervised construction.<sup>23</sup> The building was constructed in Inter-War Stripped Classical style, popular between the wars for public and institutional buildings as it provided the prestige of classical design while adhering to the trend for simplicity and reduced ornamentation.

The same building site is being used but approximately twice the floorspace will be available. The Institute proper which will occupy the front portion of the block and is to be constructed in brick will consist of commodious library, reading and billiard rooms, while provision has also been made for two roomy classrooms so arranged as to permit their being opened up into one large lecture room. These classrooms will prove a great boon to railwaymen in connection with the free educational classes which comprise a very important phase of Railway Institute activities. Accommodation for this purpose was not available in the old premises.

At the rear of this brick portion is to be erected an exceedingly fine hall which will have a clear floor space measuring 78ft. by 50ft. - roughly twice the size of the one it is to replace. This building will be constructed with external walls of dressed weatherboard and lined to a height of 5ft. with a

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21 *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 30 September 1933, p. 27.

22 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, December 26, 1933, p. 2.

23 *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 July 1934, pp. 9-10.

jarrah dado above which, and for the ceiling, fibrous plaster is to be used. The appointments for the hall will include roomy dressing rooms, one each for ladies and gentlemen, an elevated band stage, a storeroom, and a conveniently located kitchen...

The Mayor (Mr. J. Brimage) and Councillors of Kalgoorlie have rendered practical assistance in the matter, and amongst other things, have made available a parcel of land to accommodate outbuildings for which there was insufficient room on the Institute block...<sup>24</sup>

The comment in this report that classrooms were not available in the original building is at odds with the July 1906 statement in the *Railway Gazette*, which reported that work was underway to 'complete the lining of the classrooms', but these rooms may have been used for a different purpose by 1933.<sup>25</sup> The extra land granted by the Kalgoorlie Council comprised an 81 sqm section of Lot 206 at the rear of the site, where the toilets were situated. This was designated Lot 3238 and gazetted Reserve 21988 on 12 May 1939.<sup>26</sup>

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* was opened on 15 December 1934. The opening was attended by J. A. Ellis, Commissioner of Railways, and J. W. Broadfoot and F. Merrifield, President and Secretary respectively of the WA Railway Institute Executive Council, as well as a number of Institute Councillors. The visitors were given a civic reception by the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, E. E. Brimage.<sup>27</sup>

In 1939, the WA Railway Institute had ten branches and sub-branches at larger centres, and twenty sectional libraries at other railway towns.<sup>28</sup> In 1940, membership throughout the State stood at 8,317, of whom 374 were members of *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie*.<sup>29</sup> Among the activities held were fundraising events, such as the 'entertainment' held at *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* on behalf of the Kalgoorlie RSL, on 18 August 1945, and which raised £18-16-2 after costs of a similar amount. A large percentage of monies received by branch Institutes was forwarded to the Perth headquarters, and spending always had to be approved by the Executive Council. In December 1945, the Kalgoorlie Committee was given permission to make an alteration to the reading room, and to purchase two large easy chairs.<sup>30</sup> The alteration carried out at this time was most likely the removal of the two screen walls between the reading room and the library, which originally formed a small lobby at the Forrest Street entrance.<sup>31</sup>

The report on the Kalgoorlie Institute branch for the end of 1945 stated that:

Once again it is pleasing to report continued activity at this branch, resulting in a satisfactory conclusion to the year's operation.

The requirements of the library and reading room were carefully attended to, supplies of new books, magazines and periodicals being made available whenever possible. The recreation provided in the billiard room was again availed of to a large extent by members interested in this form of recreation.

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24 *ibid*, 1 July 1934, pp. 9-10.

25 *The Western Australian Railway Gazette*, 16 July 1906, p. 8.

26 CCE Plan 29354, sheet 2; Dola Reserves Enquiry for Reserve 21988.

27 *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 February 1935, pp.9-10.

28 *WAGR Annual Report*, 1939, p. 31.

29 *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 July 1940, p. 30.

30 *ibid*, 1 October 1945, p. 17 & 1 December 1945, p. 18.

31 CCE Plan 29354, 28 May 1934; physical evidence.

Instruction in Telegraphy was made available to students, who on completion of the term sat and passed the annual examination.

As in previous years, the social activity has been such that a substantial amount of revenue has been derived from the dances conducted each week, thus assisting considerably the financial side of the branch.

The building, particularly the hall, is attractive and well cared for, and is appreciated by the large numbers who use it regularly.<sup>32</sup>

In 1950, an extra quarter acre (approx 1,000 sqm) of land was added to the eastern side of the site. This was taken from Town Lot 206, and designated Lot 3620. It was added to Reserve 23038.<sup>33</sup> At some time, a covered patio area has been added on the east side of *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie*, utilising part of this land.<sup>34</sup>

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* established a bowling green on the corner of Maritana Street and Outridge Terrace in 1958, on land granted to the Institute by the Commissioner for Railways, and the Kalgoorlie Railways Institute Recreational and Bowling Club was formed. In 1959, the Club purchased the former Traffic Inspector's house to use as clubrooms, and in 1967, a large School of Mines Drawing Office, donated by the Kalgoorlie Town Council, was moved to the site and converted for use as a hall.<sup>35</sup>

Kalgoorlie remained a busy railway district up until the completion of the standard gauge line in 1968, when there was no longer any need to transfer freight and passengers between standard and narrow gauge services. Another change, brought about by the development of the standard gauge line, was the relocation from Kalgoorlie to Merredin of the WAGR Eastern District headquarters. This took effect from 1 July 1966, and reflected Kalgoorlie's reduced importance as an active rail centre.<sup>36</sup>

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* continued to be well patronised but required ongoing maintenance. In 1971, the ceiling of *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* Hall was replaced with reinforced plasterboard suspended on aluminium sections. The work was done by Kalgoorlie Modelling Works who submitted a quote of \$2,489. Suspended gyprock panel ceilings were installed in the committee room, billiards room, storeroom, ladies cloak room, entrance hall, and library/reading room in 1977. The work was carried out by A. R. & M. L. Metherall at a cost of \$3,032.<sup>37</sup>

Air-conditioning was installed in the Hall in 1981, utilising two surplus air-conditioners from the District Engineer's residence. In 1986, new male and female toilet facilities were installed in the existing female toilet and dressing room area.<sup>38</sup>

In 2000, the sale of Westrail's freight division to private enterprise was finalised. The new owners, a group calling itself Australian Rail Freight Consortium, which includes local company Wesfarmers, became the employer of most of the Westrail staff in Kalgoorlie. This meant that Westrail

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<sup>32</sup> *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 January 1946.

<sup>33</sup> DOLA Reserves Enquiry for Reserve 23038; location map from WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, 1970-2001.

<sup>34</sup> Physical evidence.

<sup>35</sup> WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, op cit; article from the file, 'An Oasis in a Desert', possibly from *Western Aspect*, n.d.

<sup>36</sup> WAGR, Merredin - houses for employee', Part 1, op cit, 28 October 1966.

<sup>37</sup> WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, op cit.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*; unnumbered WAGR drawing, April 1986.



no longer had staff requiring the provision of a Railway Institute building and the place was available for disposal. The Kalgoorlie branch of the WA Railway Institute moved out of *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie*.<sup>39</sup> The local Lions Club have expressed an interest in leasing the place and undertaking restoration work.<sup>40</sup>

In 2001, *Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is vacant, and the place has been subjected to some vandalism. In recent months, a number of the windows and doors have been covered with security screening in the form of flat sheet metal to prevent further access to the place. A heritage assessment of the place has been commissioned as a precursor to disposal.<sup>41</sup>

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie*, is located on the southeast side of Forrest Street just south of, and opposite the Kalgoorlie Railway Station, in Kalgoorlie. The Railway Institute fronts Forrest Street at the street boundary. On the north side of the frontage the site is delineated by a 1.8 metre high supersix fence and double steel mesh gates. The rear of the site, delineated by a corrugated iron fence topped with iron-framed barbed wire, adjoins the right of way on the back boundary. The site is flat. The street view is partially obscured by plantings on the street verge.

The amenities building at the front displays some characteristics of Inter-war Stripped Classical style. Typical of the style, the building has symmetrical massing, minimal use of classical motifs, and an appearance that is progressive yet conservative in character. The hall at the rear is more in a functional vernacular style in response to the function of the place.

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie*, comprises two separate but attached buildings. At the front is the single storey brick and iron amenity building. Adjoining that building, in the same building line, and extending the length of the site, almost to the rear boundary, is the timber and iron hall building. Although the buildings are different constructions with separate roofs, they are connected by a corridor.

### Front amenity building (1934)

The front building is a predominantly brick and iron construction. The face brick is laid in a stretcher bond, with rendered detailing. The double-hipped roof has gambrel vents, and is clad with corrugated iron and has exposed rafters. The original profile gutters are in place together with the round downpipes and decorative rainheads. The chimney was not visible from the ground level inspection. The building is a simple rectangular building comprising a lobby, library, reading room, billiard room, two class rooms, ladies and gents dressing rooms and a corridor at the rear that connects to the north east side entry (main entry to hall) and the hall. The dressing rooms and corridor are a timber-framed construction clad with weatherboards on the exterior.

The face brick front façade is symmetrical with a central bay with stepped parapet, flanked by a smaller bay each side. Each bay is delineated by face brick pilasters. The stepped parapet and remainder of the parapet has a rendered trim, and there is a moulded cornice detail across the front. There are four openings balanced across the frontage, three are windows, and the

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39 WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, op cit.

40 *ibid*.

41 *ibid*; physical evidence.

fourth opening is the double entry doors in the same proportion as the windows. The windows and doors have a rendered header detail and the windowsills are bullnose bricks. The double front doors are ledged and braced tongue and groove timber doors with a 12-pane fixed fanlight above. The timber-framed casement windows are configured in pairs with double paned fanlights above each six paned window.

The interior is relatively intact and includes original furniture and fittings. The double entry doors open into a boxlike lobby with tongue and groove jarrah walls, a flat ceiling, and double swing doors opening into the library. The doors are panelled with glazing in the top halves. One door has 'members' and the other 'only' in the original shadow-line etching. The library and reading room form one large space. It has 100mm (4 inch) jarrah floorboards, hard plaster walls and a recent gyprock ceiling in the library and the original battened asbestos ceiling in place in the reading room. Shelves, cabinets, wall pictures, memorabilia, writing tables and reading chairs remain insitu. The original pointed brick fireplace, with arched detail and corbelled bricks supporting the plain painted mantelpiece, is intact.

A single door from the library gives entry into the billiard room. The timber floor is intact with a raised dias along the southwest wall, a relatively common feature. As for the remainder of the brick building, the walls are hard plaster and the plasterboard ceiling is flat with suspended fluorescent lighting. There is a high plain skirting board, and the architraves are flat tapered timber with square corner detailing. In the north corner, there is a truncated fireplace backing onto the fireplace in the library, and exactly the same design except the mantelpiece is the original unpainted timber. Two billiard tables are in place; one is original and one a replacement. A number of original seats are also in place on the raised platform and around the remaining perimeter of the room. Similarly in the classrooms, divided by fold-panel doors, there is a truncated fireplace backing onto the two aforementioned fireplaces, and furniture including reading tables, and a ticket-box door. From the billiard room, behind the classrooms and billiard room is the gents' dressing room. It is part of the timber construction of the front building and has timber dado walls and features two stained jarrah vertical tongue and groove cubicles each side of the window on the northeast wall. The interior of the window has been painted. There is an assortment of furniture and paraphernalia in the room. The ladies dressing room is somewhat smaller than shown on the plan, with another room at the end of the corridor, exiting onto the south west side of the hall.

### **The hall**

The hall adjoins the rear of the amenities building and is accessed from the north east side, down the corridor that is under the roof of the front building, with double doors central to the hall. It is a simple rectangular building comprising the hall with the stage central at the rear. It is a timber framed, weatherboard and iron clad construction, except for the kitchen in the south corner that differs from the plan and is constructed of face brick with a parapet on the rear boundary. The gambrel-hipped roof is clad with corrugated iron and has eaves lined with lengthwise spaced timber battens. A separate skillion roof covers the stage and kitchen areas across the rear of the building. The gambrels are infilled with horizontal timber vents. The original profile gutters are in place together with the round downpipes and decorative rainheads. Window and door openings are balanced along each side of the hall, alternating window and double doors. The sets of double doors are ledged and braced tongue and groove timber doors with a 12-pane

fixed fanlight above. The timber-framed casement windows are configured in pairs with double paned fanlights above each six paned window. The south west side of the building was inaccessible. The northeast side windows and doors have been 'boarded' on the exterior with flat sheets of steel bolted to the window and door architraves.

The interior is a spacious hall with a built up timber stage central at the south end with a timber arched proscenium. There are three sets of doors down each side of the hall with windows in between. There is a store on the left side of the stage and kitchen on the right. The floors are 75mm (3 inch) tongue and groove jarrah boards. The walls are lined with vertical 100mm (4 inch) tongue and groove jarrah boards to 1.5 metre dado height, with battened asbestos sheeting above. The stage and kitchen are lined with battened asbestos setting. The hall ceiling is lined with suspended acoustic panels. There are many timber benches in place around the perimeter of the hall and in the corridor. The stage ceiling is lined on the curve of the proscenium, and the rake of the skillion roof. The kitchen layout differs from the plan in that the exterior door opens to the rear of the stage. The fitout is very basic, with cupboards and an open servery through to the hall. There is a large round table, with a central stepped pediment leg, in the centre of the kitchen.

Adjoining the north east side of the hall is a large undercover area, bar and toilet facilities. The structures are ad-hoc. The undercover structure is steel framed with a relatively flat steel sheeted roof. The area is concreted except for the north east side towards the front where there is an expanse of lawn. The north east side of the undercover area is enclosed with a vertical corrugated iron dado with asbestos sheeting above. The buildings are intrusive.

#### **Front building - Condition**

The front building on the site is in good condition. Structurally the building appears to be sound. Maintenance that has been undertaken until recently is no longer taking place. The roof was not visible, but the nature of its design, with a centre box gutter and another box gutter adjoining the hall roof indicates potential problems. The visible gutters, downpipes and drainage are all intact. The timber detailing is weathered and most windows and doors on the northeast side are boarded up. The interior fabric, fittings and furniture are in fair to good condition.

#### **Hall - Condition**

The hall at the rear of the front building is in fair to good condition. Structurally the building appears to be sound. Maintenance that has been undertaken until recently is no longer taking place. Most of the roof was not visible, but where it was visible, at the rear, there was evidence of loose sheets. The visible gutters were not adequately fixed at the rear, but otherwise appeared to be in fair condition and the downpipes and drainage are intact. The timber weatherboards and detailing are weathered and the paint is flaking, revealing bare timber in places. The windows and doors on the northeast side are boarded up. The interior fabric, fittings and furniture are in fair condition.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION<sup>42</sup>

*Railway Institute, Kalgoorlie* is one of a number of purpose-built railway institute buildings remaining. The Perth Railway Institute building in Wellington Street was constructed in 1897, but it was built to house the Metropolitan Water Works Board and was not occupied by the Institute until 1979. Northam Railway Institute was constructed in 1897 in Federation Free Classical style and is the oldest such building in Western Australia. Other Institutes include: Midland (1910); Merredin (c. 1920 and 1962); Narrogin (1929); Bunbury (new building in 1959); and Collie (new building in 1956).

Other buildings in Inter-War Stripped Classical style in Western Australia include two that are on the State Register: the former Commonwealth Bank, Bunbury (4575), and Community Health Services, Broome (5368). A number of bank buildings in the State are also constructed in the style: Bank of New South Wales at Corrigin and Bridgetown; Bankwest Building, Carnamah; National Bank, Manjimup and Northam; and the former National Bank, 214 William Street, Perth; as well as Post Office, Angelo Street, South Perth; Toodyay and Wagin fire stations; Dalkeith Primary School; and, Manjimup Infant Health Centre. The style was popular between the wars for public and institutional buildings as it provided the prestige of classical design while adhering to the trend for simplicity and reduced ornamentation.

### 13.4 REFERENCES

WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, 1970-2001.

### 13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

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<sup>42</sup> HCWA assessment documentation No. 2146, Railways Institute Building (fmr); WA Railway Institute journal published under various titles; *WAGR Annual Reports*; HCWA database.