



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

The group of buildings and intervening spaces comprising the remaining evidence of the Coolgardie station yard have a moderate degree of importance to the community for their aesthetic characteristics, more so as a formerly well composed set of places in an industrial setting than for their individual aesthetically pleasing characteristics. The two main structures, *Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed*, are particularly important for their collective effect and their spatial relationship which reveals something of the functional and organisational nature of the site. Each building has its own distinctive aesthetical quality and, together, the group and its open spaces contribute to the community's sense of history and place. (Criterion 1.1)

The elevations of *Coolgardie Railway Station* are aesthetically pleasing and the simplicity of the design contributes to the charm and elegance of building. *Goods Shed* is an example of a once common type and has an elegant simplicity in its lines. (Criterion 1.2)

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed contributes to the aesthetic values of the setting, by its landmark quality, as a former entry statement to the town. (Criterion 1.3)

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed contributes to the aesthetic values of the setting as part of a precinct containing several important heritage places. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *Coolgardie Railway Station* building, together with the extension of the railway line from its previous terminus at Southern Cross in 1896, marked the beginning of the development and growth of communications and transport systems into the goldfields. It led to a large improvement in the quality of life for the people living in the goldfields. This also improved production with a flow-on effect which helped to underpin the economy of Western Australia. It also marked the beginning of the State Government's involvement in the progressive extension of the north-eastern railway network. The completion of the railway had an impact on

Coolgardie's demographic growth, the development of the goldfields and subsequent increase in revenue for the state and the construction of permanent structures in the town of Coolgardie. (Criterion 2.1)

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed is a reflection of the rapid growth of Coolgardie, following the discovery of the eastern goldfields, which created one of the most important goldrushes in the history of Australia, which substantially affected the development of the State of Western Australia and impacted on the economy of Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed has association with an eminent Chief Architect from the Public Works Department, George Temple Poole, who was responsible for the design of a large number of public buildings in the state, many of which are heritage listed. (Criterion 2.3)

The place is also associated with the State Engineer-in-Chief, C. Y. O'Connor, who was responsible for effecting the development of the goldfields through the establishment of a railway network and permanent water supply, as well as many other engineering achievements throughout Western Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

The opening of the railway was a significant state-wide event. The opening was attended by Governor Smith, the Premier, Sir John Forrest, members of cabinet and many other dignitaries. (Criterion 2.3)

The buildings demonstrate a simple elegance and grace, the *Coolgardie Railway Station* building as an interpretation of Federation Academic Classical and Federation Free Classical architecture, and the *goods shed*, simply as a very fine industrial structure that combines well with the remaining buildings on site that demonstrate the nature of a late 19th Century railway station complex. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

As one of the state's earlier railways and one to which so little has been added, the site has some scientific value in its potential to yield information on a late nineteenth century railway station complex. (Criterion 3.1)

A wider understanding of the nature of a late nineteenth century railway complex would be available from this site through archaeological and further documentary research. The site has not been built over and much evidence remains of the locations of previous structures and the arrangement of the site. (Criterion 3.2)

There is no evidence to suggest that there were any particular technical innovations in the construction of various elements on the site and the documentary evidence suggests that much of what was constructed was of a standard pattern. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed has social value for its role in the transportation of people and supplies to and from the town of Coolgardie to the western seaboard. The improvement of transportation dramatically improved living conditions for the people of Coolgardie and its surrounding

districts, and, in more recent times, the community has claimed it as one of the symbols of Coolgardie's former prosperity contributing to the community's sense of continuity of place as a museum. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed are of comparative rarity as they are amongst a small number of late 19th Century railway buildings to survive without being obscured by large scale change and redevelopment. (Criterion 5.1)

The remaining buildings and sites are evidence of a form of railway operation and railway workers' existence that has long passed and provides evidence of the high status of the various levels of railway workers accommodation in relation to other housing in Coolgardie. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed are representative of major railway stations of the late 19th Century, in spite of many adaptive changes to the buildings. The representative value, without interpretation or conservation, is reduced by the loss of the various outbuildings, fences and other site elements. (Criterion 6.1)

The place occupies an important position in its capacity to demonstrate, with the aid of interpretation, the manner in which a railway complex operated with a barracks accommodation and ancillary facilities. The surrounding quarters are an important integral part of the ability of the complex to demonstrate a wide range of station related activities. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed is generally in poor condition.

Detailed considerations of condition may be found in, Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

12.4 INTEGRITY

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed has a moderate level of integrity. Its integrity being diminished by the closure of the station and adaptation to a museum.

For a discussion of the integrity of the place, refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed has a high level of authenticity with great deal of original fabric existing in both structures, much of what is visible is authentic.

For a discussion of the authenticity of the place, refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of supporting evidence prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).

13.3 REFERENCES

Considine and Griffiths Architects: 'Coolgardie Railway Station and Goods Shed, Conservation Plan' (prepared for the Shire of Coolgardie, August 1996).