



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)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 202 Rail and light rail transport
- 303 Mining

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Kalgoorlie Railway Station, with its stone construction in the Federation Arts & Crafts style, and its prominent position, is highly valued by the Kalgoorlie-Boulder community as an identifiable built representation of the significant railway presence in the town since 1896. (Criterion 1.1)

The War Memorial is central to the northern vista along Wilson Street and has aesthetic value for the local community as the recognisable commemoration of those who served Australia during World War One. (Criterion 1.3)

Kalgoorlie Railway Station forms a cultural environment in Forrest Street Kalgoorlie, and terminates the northern vista up Wilson Street from Hannan Street. The railway station is a landmark on the Trans Australian Railway Line and contributes to the townscape and character of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is an example of the transport requirements of the goldfields during the 1880s and 1890s goldrushes in Western Australia when large numbers of people, heavy machinery, ore and timber had to be moved to the fields by the most efficient means. The place illustrates the importance of the railway in the development of the goldfields. (Criterion 2.2)

Constructed in 1896, *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* illustrates the growth of Kalgoorlie as the administrative and transport centre of the Eastern

* 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.

Goldfields. The place was the junction of a major railway system during the gold boom era. (Criterion 2.2)

The War Memorial is highly significant for its associations with Pietro G. Porcelli, Sculptor (1872 – 1943). Porcelli was one of Western Australian's earliest sculptors and made an important contribution to the cultural history of the State, through his works which include a bust of John Forrest, a statue of Alexander Forrest, a statue of C.Y. O'Connor, the Jewish War Memorial as well as various War Memorials around the State.

The War Memorial is highly significant for its associations with Major-General Sir Talbot-Hobbs who unveiled the statue, and is a focal point of the Anzac Day ceremony held in Kalgoorlie each year. (Criterion 2.2 & 2.3)

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is associated with the Wilkie Brothers who were responsible for the construction of the Eastern Goldfields railway line and the station buildings from Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4 SOCIAL VALUE

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is valued by the local and wider community for its ongoing railway associations, its connection with Kalgoorlie's gold boom past, and for its aesthetic and landscape appeal. (Criterion 4.1)

Kalgoorlie Railway Station contributes to the local and wider community's sense of place as a significant reminder of the 1880s and 1890s goldrushes to the region. Its significance is evidenced by the interim listing on the State Register of Heritage Places. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1 RARITY

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is the only remaining, and continuously operating railway station on the Trans Australia Railway Line, in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is believed to be one of the few remaining stone railway station buildings on the Eastern Goldfields line. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is the only remaining, and continuously operating railway station on the Trans Australia Railway Line, in Western Australia. The place demonstrates changes to the railway transport system from 1896/7 to 2001. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is in good condition. The place is maintained on a regular basis.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Kalgoorlie Railway Station has operated continuously as a railway since 1896 and has retained a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place shows some evidence of changes to the fabric, office fitouts, interior refurbishment and reroofing. Despite that, the place displays a moderate to 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

Kalgoorlie Railway Station, a stone and iron construction, was built in 1896 by railway contractors Wilkie Brothers. The place comprises a station building, covered platforms and parcels office. It has been extended and internally altered a number of times over the years, including extensions to the Refreshment Rooms in 1902. *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* underwent renovation and restoration in 1993.

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, known as the Yilgarn Railway, began at the head of the Eastern Railway at Northam.¹ Before the line had reached Southern Cross however, the Coolgardie, and then Kalgoorlie, gold finds were made. The line to Southern Cross was opened on 1 July 1894, and tenders were called for the construction of the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. The Wilkie Brothers won the contract with a price of £64,000 compared to the next closest tender of £150,000. The Wilkies gambled on finishing the line quickly and then making money operating it until it was time to hand over to the Government. Handover time was set at November 1896.²

At this 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. 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 railway system and the centre of the eastern goldfields. One argument for the extension was that it would allow the import of heavy machinery for the opening up of deep mines on the Golden Mile.³

In September 1895, a bill was passed to extend the railway line to Kalgoorlie. The Wilkie Brothers were contracted to immediately continue on when the line reached Coolgardie, which it did on 23 March 1896. The railway line reached Kalgoorlie on 8 September 1896. Included in the contract for the

¹ The name 'Yilgarn Railway' was replaced with 'Eastern Goldfields Railway' in 1899-1900 (WAGR Annual Report, 1900, p. 2), and included, at that time, the lines from Northam to Kalgoorlie, the Boulder Loopline Railway, and the lines from Kalgoorlie to Kanowna and Menzies.

² 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;

³ Wilson, H. H. *The Golden Miles*, Rigby, 1977, pp. 173; Webb, M. & A., op cit, pp. 208-211, 288-293.

Eastern Goldfields line was the construction of railway station buildings, but the Wilkies had been so busy operating the line for maximum profit that almost all the ballasting and most of the station buildings and goods sheds were still to be constructed, including *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*. Official handover of the railway line was affected on 31 December 1896 (or 1 January 1897).⁴ The Government transferred staff to Kalgoorlie on 31 December ready to take up their new duties at *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*, but a report in the *Morning Herald* of 1 January 1897 stated that 'in regard to the accommodation of the Government staff, it will take another fortnight at least before the new railway station is completed'.⁵

In 1897, less than twelve months after the line was opened, it was reported in the Annual Report of the Railways Department that traffic to the goldfields 'had largely increased', and duplication of the line from Northam to Kalgoorlie was under consideration.⁶ In 1900, the Coolgardie/Kalgoorlie duplication was underway, and 'the completion of these works, and of the marshalling and new Goods Yard at Kalgoorlie will alleviate the severe strain under which the traffic has been conducted in the Kalgoorlie district'.⁷ The work done at this time included an overbridge across the station yard, which appears to have been replaced at a later date by a steel structure.⁸

No tender for the construction of the station buildings has been located in the *West Australian Government Gazette*, from 1896 to 1903, and no mention of construction of station buildings has been found in the annual reports, so it is assumed that *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* as existing is the building constructed by the Wilkie Brothers (with later alterations)⁹. A tender was called for extensions to the Refreshment Rooms attached to *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* in 1902. The plans located for this latter work indicate that *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*, as constructed in stone, was in existence.¹⁰ The Refreshment Room extensions considerably enlarged the facilities at *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* at the time. A roof over the platform was also added, and a cellar was added to the Refreshment Room bar in 1904.¹¹

It was reported in 1900, that 80% of the traffic on the Eastern Goldfields line passed through Kalgoorlie. In 1904, there were 161 people employed at the Kalgoorlie Railway Yards, including forty-five in the Goods section, as compared to 431 in Perth and 239 at Fremantle.¹² In 1920, decentralised

4 **Note:** Various dates are reported for this handover depending on the source. It is not always clear what is being handed over, eg, section of line, entire line, station, etc. Dates can vary by months, but these two dates appear to refer to the station (Sources are local histories, and *A Brief History of the Western Australian Government Railways*, WAGR, 1975).

5 Webb, M. & A., op cit, p. 303; Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, p. 238.

6 Railway Department Annual Report, 1897, p. 19.

7 Railway Department Annual Report, 1900, pp. 17, 19 & 36.

8 Railway Department Annual Report, 1907, p. 72; physical evidence.

9 HCWA staff research failed to find documentation of the construction of the station building. As plans and the exact construction dates are unavailable, it cannot be stated with certainty which Chief architect was responsible for the design of *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*. George Temple Poole resigned as Chief Architect for the PWD at the end of 1896, to be replaced by John Grainger. It is likely that Poole designed *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*, but if it was still to be constructed when Grainger took over, he may well have altered or amended the design.

10 Railway Department Annual Report, 1900, pp. 17 & 19; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1896-1903; Plans of alterations to refreshment rooms, Kalgoorlie Station, WAGR EEL 6236/1, 1902.

11 Railway Department Annual Report 1907, p. 72.

12 Railway Department Annual Report 1904, p. 82.

control and supervision was introduced, with responsibility for the Eastern Goldfields line being transferred to Kalgoorlie.¹³

Kalgoorlie Railway Station has been extended and altered internally a number of times over the years, but few WAGR files have survived to document these changes. The traffic through the station considerably lessened after World War One when gold mining went into a decline. Later, road transport had an adverse impact on the place as it did on all rail services. A major change to *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* occurred when the standard gauge line to Perth was opened in 1968. Previous to this, passengers travelling between Perth and the eastern states had changed trains at Kalgoorlie, between the standard gauge line of the eastern states and the narrower West Australian gauge line. Following the construction of a standard gauge line through to Perth, *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* had less use and some of its services, including the Refreshment Room, were closed. All goods services were transferred to the West Kalgoorlie station at this time. It was suggested in 1975, that *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* could be renovated and restored, but the place received a coat of paint instead.¹⁴ Restoration and renovation work was carried out to most of *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* in 1993.¹⁵

In 2001, *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* is little used in comparison to its heyday. Two passenger trains utilise a small section of the long platform on a regular basis. The *Prospector* makes a daily round trip between Perth and Kalgoorlie, and the *Indian Pacific* passes through twice a week.

Parcels Office

Tenders for a railway parcels and luggage store at Kalgoorlie were called in April 1900 and awarded to George Smith the following month, at a cost of £1,2112.12.0.¹⁶ This price would indicate a reasonably substantial building. A parcels office or luggage store is not marked on site plans of the early 1900s, but the current Parcels Office is on the site of what is referred to as the Cloak Room on the early site plans. The Parcels Office as existing is of similar size and shape to the early Cloak Room. They would appear to be one and the same building.¹⁷

In 1970, a report on the parcels office stated that it was too small and could not handle the parcels traffic at that time. (The parcels office only handled non-perishable goods, perishable goods being loaded direct from the platform.) Extensions to the parcels office, costing \$14,650 were completed in 1972.¹⁸

In 2001, the Parcels Office is no longer part of the railway station operations. The building is used mainly for storage and a small area is occupied as an office by the OKA representative for the region.

¹³ Railway Department Annual Report 1920, p. 24.

¹⁴ *A Brief History of the Western Australian Government Railways*, WAGR, 1975; Maunsell, G. & Partners, *Report on the siting of a yard at Kalgoorlie*, Perth, WAGR, 1964; *West Kalgoorlie and Parkeston amalgamation of Westrail and Australian National Railways operations*, Westrail & ANA, 1984; WAGR File R5729: 1967-1976, WAS 1208 CONS 4780.

¹⁵ Physical evidence and information obtained during physical inspection.

¹⁶ *West Australian Government Gazette*, 6 April 1900, p. 163 & 25 May 1900, p. 850.

¹⁷ WAGR File R5729: 1967-1976; Plan EEL 6501, 1903.

¹⁸ WAGR File R5729: 1967-1976; Site plan 61593, bituminized parking around Parcels Office, 1972.

War Memorial

The War Memorial statue situated in front of *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* is similar to that at the Boulder Railway Station. Both are World War One memorials created by sculptor Pietro (Peter) Porcelli, and are the focal point of the Anzac Day ceremonies held each year. Both memorials were privately commissioned and are claimed to have been posed for by the same returned soldier.¹⁹

The Kalgoorlie War Memorial was one of three which depict figures of lions, the other two being at Yarloop and West Leederville. A description of the work reads:

Shields on the four sides of the sub-base bear the words, Gallipoli, France, Belgium and Palestine, with suitable heraldic devices. Marble figures of lions, in miniature, rest upon the buttressed corners of the base. Above the cap of the pedestal is the figure of an advancing Australian soldier of heroic stature. The granite pedestal was quarried from Bulla Bulling; the figure was cast in Italian bronze.²⁰

Porcelli was responsible for over a dozen war memorials in the years after World War One, as well as many other works which included the bust of Sir John Forrest, the statue of C. Y. O'Connor, an effigy of Bishop Kelly of Geraldton, the Lord Forrest Mausoleum, and headstones in Perth and Fremantle Cemeteries.²¹

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is located within the railway reserve, three blocks north of, and parallel to Hannan Street, in the Kalgoorlie townsite. The building is located on a bitumen platform that extends east and west along the south side of the railway track. The railway reserve runs parallel with Forrest Street in Kalgoorlie. Wilson Street is terminated by Forrest Street and the railway station at its northern end.

The station building is set back a considerable distance from Forrest Street and has a bitumen carpark and one-way access road. Central within the vista north along Wilson Street, is a War Memorial, surrounded by a fence. With a minimum setback to Forrest Street, the Parcels Office is located on the east side of the railway station building. Framing the west side of the railway station is a steel pedestrian overpass, and a row of railway houses in Forrest Street, set relatively close to the road, and opposite the railway station's Railway Institute.

The station building is constructed of local stone, in warm mellow gold, pink and cream tones. The stone in the original section of the building has recently been repointed after render was removed from the face of the stone. There is evidence of several periods of construction. Extensions on the east end (refreshment rooms) are constructed of a similar stone, although differences are obvious in the texture, face finish, size, laying pattern and workmanship. The stone is regular in form, particularly in the quoining around the window and door openings, and the arched headers over the openings. A concrete rendered plinth is in place around the perimeter of the building.

¹⁹ From HCWA Heritage Assessment, 4639, Boulder Station, Subway & Loopline; Keane, Rev Br S. B., 'Pietro G. Porcelli, Sculptor, 1872-1943', In Royal West Australian Historical Society, *Early Days*, Vol. 8, No. 5, pp. 9-28.

²⁰ Keane, Rev Br S. B., op cit.

²¹ *ibid.*

The roof is clad with long sheets of colorbond sheeting in a custom orb profile, and fixed with Tek screws. The roof has a low-pitched gable pavilion extending the length of the building, parallel with the platform, and is gabled at the east end. The south frontage (Forrest Street) features a gable each end of the west end building's verandah, a gable portico to the entry at the east end of the building, and a gable roofed monitor window extending parallel with the building, over the east end.

There are two entries into the railway station building. The main passenger entry is central within the western section of the frontage, signalled by the clock mounted on the verandah roof. The second entry is at the east end, in the 1902 extension, signalled by a dominant gable roofed portico that extends beyond the building line.

The door and window openings along the north (platform) and south (Forrest Street) frontages form a regular rhythm. Most of the windows are timber framed double hung sashes in single format, except those in a central position where the timber framed windows are six paned fixed windows with a three-paned arched fanlight. On the platform side of the building (north), similar windows are in the same positions as those in the south elevation. However, on the platform side of the building from the waiting room eastwards, all the windows have a timber infill panel below the sill. The panel infill features diagonal timber boards. On the arched windows the two separate panels have the diagonals meeting at the centre on the upward slant. On the south side of the building the sills are concrete. The main entry doors into the waiting room are a set of double panelled doors with glazed panels in the top sections, and a three-paned arched fanlight above, similar to the arched windows. Directly opposite, another set of similar doors opens onto the railway platform. The doors throughout have six panels. All the doors have new hardware, and it may be that some doors are new material.

The interior of the station building was completely refurbished in 1993. There is no evidence of any original fitouts or furnishings. The ceilings have been replaced with plasterboard and ceiling roses are in place. It is unknown if these are replicas of the originals. The hard plaster walls have been restored and repainted. In the waiting room, MDF panelled board forms a dado around the room to sill height. The counter is panelled timber with roller shutter screens. It is difficult to tell whether the architraves and skirtings are original or replicas. The patterned ceramic tiled floor is a result of the 1993 refurbishment. The rooms west of the waiting room are a series of small rooms, providing a kiosk, kitchen for the train crew caterers (Delray), storerooms and public toilet facilities. All except the storerooms have been refurbished.

The offices east of the waiting room are a series of interconnected rooms with plasterboard lined partitioned spaces with matching skirtings and semi glazed flush panel doors, or full panelled doors. The office of the standard gauge infrastructure manager, Wesnet Rail Pty Ltd, located at the east end was also restored in 1993. The open plan area has moveable partitions. The roof structure is revealed and the monitor window further highlights the structure. Airconditioning ducts and fluorescent lighting are also suspended from the roof space. The roof structure is supported on engaged columns at regular intervals along the north and south walls.

The platforms are bitumen with concrete returns along the railway line edges. There is evidence of many repairs to the bitumen, but it is in good condition. The platform extends to the east and west from the station building and these extensions have the appearance of an island platform. A second platform

(south) at the east end of the station building is fenced along the railway line, and provides for carparking for railway employees. The main roof of the station building extends over the platform adjacent to the station building, which is supported by columns and functional four-way timber struts, and then extends east and west forming separate gable roofs supported by series of central posts. The timber posts are rectangular and tapered to the top, above a moulded timber detail. A number of the posts have railway line reinforcement each side. Every alternate post also has an original rainhead and downpipe angled in from the roof edge. There is evidence of termite damage in some of the posts.

A free standing ticket booth is extant on the west platform. It is a timber framed and clad box-like construction with glazed panels above the vertical tongue and groove dado lining. The entire booth has been painted, including the glazing.

The Parcels Office, a separate building located in front of the station building at the eastern end, is timber framed and clad with vertical sheets of painted corrugated iron on the external walls and on the gable roof. The gable ends each have two horizontal sets of 4 timber-slatted vents. The western wall of the building is lined with sheets of vertical profile asbestos. The underside of the cantilevered boxed canopy along that side and the series of sliding doors are clad with vertical profile metal deck sheeting. There is a concrete apron along the west side. There is a flat roofed extension across the south frontage on Forrest Street, and the area under the cantilevered canopy along the east side has been enclosed with vertical corrugated iron sheeting. The original 12 pane windows are double hung sashes in timber frames. There are vertical metal bars fitted on the interior. The more recent enclosure at the front has aluminium sliding windows with wire mesh fitted externally. The interior has concrete floor, and the ceiling is flat lined with asbestos sheets as are the walls. The original scales are extant, central on the north wall. A row of timber columns is in place along the centre of the building, in a line beneath the roof ridge. The area to the east of the building is fenced with galvanised mesh fencing extending along the Forrest Street frontage.

A World War One memorial comprising stone plinth and bronze statue is situated in a central position in the station forecourt. The statue is enclosed within a decorative iron fence.

Kalgoorlie Railway Station is in good condition. It has been used continuously since 1896 as a railway station and, although change has taken place to facilitate the continued function, there has been relatively minimal intervention to the original fabric. This includes the entire reroofing of the place and the 1993 restoration. The place has retained a high degree of integrity and moderate to high degree of authenticity.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The Coolgardie Railway Station, constructed early in 1896, is similar in style to *Kalgoorlie Railway Station*. It was designed by George Temple Poole, and constructed by the Wilkie brothers as part of their contract to extend the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie.²²

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Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op. cit. p206

Many of Kalgoorlie's landmark buildings from the late nineteenth century, such as *Kalgoorlie Public Buildings*, were designed by PWD architect John Grainger. These have not been compared with *Kalgoorlie Railway Station* due to uncertainty regarding who designed the place.

13. 4 REFERENCES

WAGR files on Kalgoorlie Railway Station at SRO.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research about the opening of the station building in early 1897.

Further research to ascertain the date of construction of the later steel pedestrian overpass. Many of the earlier timber railway pedestrian bridges were replaced in the 1960s and 1970s.

There are a number of railway houses west of the railway station in Forrest Street: No. 10 is a typical railway house c.1950s – Asbestos clad;

No. 12-14 is a stone dwelling c.1900 - more than likely the Stationmaster's house (plan 3403)

Nos. 16 & 17, is a typical railway house c.1950s – Asbestos clad;

No. 22 Stone dwelling c.1900 - more than likely the Inspector of Public Works cottage (plan 3403);

Nos. 24, 26 & 28, is a typical railway house c.1950s – Asbestos clad.

There is also a railway house west of the railway station, in Forrest Street, facing Maritana Street. This appears to have been the District Superintendent's house (plan 3403).²³

²³ WAGR EEL Plan 3403, c.1900.