HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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*

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) is significant aesthetically as a major railway/public building built outside the metropolitan area and as a fine example of a Federation Free Style building designed by the Public Works just prior to World War One. (Criterion 1.1)

The place illustrates a scale of public building and railway station aesthetic not commonly seen in country/regional centres. Visually it has some similarities with the earlier George Temple Poole Perth Central Railway Station. (Criterion 1.2)

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) has landmark qualities that contribute to the Geraldton townscape to distinguish the city as a major regional centre and not just a large country town. The forecourt is relatively under-developed and has the potential to further complement the landmark/townscape qualities of the place. (Criterion 1.3)

The station buildings, platform and track form a railway precinct in their own right. Together with the nearby Courthouse and Bill Sewell Centre (the former Geraldton Regional Hospital), they form a precinct of Government buildings which define the northern boundaries of the old town centre. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) has historic significance as a symbol of Geraldton's early regional importance in providing a vital link between the mining and agricultural activities of the hinterland and the major shipping port in Champion Bay. (Criterion 2.1)

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) provides a link with the early railway heritage of Western Australia for its associations with the first State railway line which

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* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* North Ryde NSW, Angus & Robertson 1989.

ran between Geraldton and Northampton and as the focus of the former Midland Railway. (Criterion 2.2)

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) is an important regional example of Public Works architecture (and possibly that of Hillson Beasley[1]) of the early part of the 20th Century. (Criterion 2.3)

The buildings of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*, and particularly the platform roof, are examples of timber engineering and design that have long since been replaced with the more common use of steel structures. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) has scientific value as a reference point in the cultural history of Western Australia illustrating the importance and reliance on rail for movement of passengers and goods over the long distances between centres of population, and regions of industrial and agricultural activity. (Criterion 3.1)

The place provides an understanding of the human occupation of the region and the rise and fall of the importance of railways in the development of the State. (Criterion 3.2)

The timber structural design and construction of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* provides an understanding of technical innovation and achievement prior to the easy availability and use of steel. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) has significant social and cultural associations for the Geraldton region and the State as a reminder of the role and importance that railways played in the lives of communities beyond Perth and major regional centres. (Criterion 4.1)

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) and the railway has been prominent in the life of the town and has contributed to its sense of place. If in the future the railway bypasses the town centre and the foreshore altogether, this place will play a more significant role in the identification of Geraldton's past. (Criterion 4.2)

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1 Drawings are signed by E.E. Light, Chief Engineer of Existing Lines; however, it was at a time when Beasley was Principal Architect at the Public Works Department and it is more than likely that he was involved in the design. The building expresses some characteristics from Public Works architecture of the period that assist in associating Beasley's possible influence. A similar example is George Temple Poole's involvement with the design of Walkaway Railway Station in the Shire of Greenough when the drawings are signed by the Chief Engineer, not the Principal Architect.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) is a rare example of a major passenger and rail station outside of Perth and Fremantle. In its past it has been ranked third in importance as a centre of rail activity after Perth and Midland. (Criterion 5.1)

The place demonstrates an activity, way of life and industry that has now disappeared from the heart of Geraldton and most regional centres around the State. With the increase in the use of road transport, private cars and Government trends to corporatisation etc., the role of railways has altered and major examples of railway buildings such as this have increased in their heritage significance. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) is highly representative, and a major example of railway architecture of the early 20th Century and the architecture of the Public Works of the period. (Criterion 6.1)

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) is a remnant, and representative of, a railway culture and industry that has largely disappeared, and of which few major extensive complexes remain outside the Perth metropolitan area. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The condition of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* is very good. Due to its continued use and occupancy, it has been well maintained over the years. There is little deterioration of the original fabric through age, damp or salt. Now that the buildings are no longer fully occupied, general maintenance and cleaning is poor and if new uses are not found, this may lead to deterioration and abuse in the longer term. There are no outward structural defects; however, further examination by an engineer may reveal some minor problems.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Although it is somewhat diminished without the context of the demolished associated railway workshop buildings, the integrity of the actual *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* building is very high. The forecourt, platform and remaining section of old rail add significantly to the integrity and context of the station buildings and the place overall. Except for the tourism and ticketing office in the old booking hall, the building is now vacant, and compatible uses need to be encouraged.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* buildings is high. Other than the insertion of the first floor office accommodation there has been little intervention with the original fabric. The booking hall's integrity has been compromised by the first floor office accommodation; however, due to its

framed construction it should not be difficult to remove. Minor alterations have involved the modification to some openings onto the platform from various rooms at different times. In addition, the new southern entry has been installed. Internally only one significant alteration has occurred with the removal of a wall between two rooms in the south wing to create a larger office space. This has not diminished the building's ability to function usefully, and the wall could easily be replaced if thought necessary.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This Heritage Assessment, whilst compiled under the name of Bruce Callow & Associates Pty Ltd: Architects has had the documentary evidence compiled by Shan Callow and Tanya Suba, Historians. Bruce Callow, Architect has compiled the physical evidence.

Suggested Curtilage:

The site has been subject to an Urban Design concept by Donaldson Smith & Hooke and the Geraldton City Council has been quoted in local newspapers as wanting to determine the future northern boundary of the site to include an existing storm water drain.[2] Curtilage will therefore be an important aspect of future development around *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*, and we address the physical relationship of the buildings and the site in the context of possible future boundaries below.

All of the previously existing workshop buildings, District Engineer's office (former timber station) and Railway Institute buildings that contributed to the overall size and context of the complex have been removed. Even if all the other buildings have been lost, it is important that as future development encroaches on *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* site and buildings, a sense of space be retained. This can be achieved by maintaining the context of the station buildings with its long platform. To the south it is essential that the platform and site extend down to the historic 'Zero Mile Peg'. To the north it may be impractical to retain the full 50m or more of platform length that now extends beyond any remaining physical context of the place. However, the length of the platform, rail route and possibly the location of former buildings, could be incorporated into paving or other urban design elements to define the size of the original complex. If the northern end of the platform is to be shortened, a new ramped end should be reconstructed north of the original toilet block to balance the extent of the platform at the southern end and to maintain a sense of open space around the railway precinct. This would shorten the platform back to a point near a small existing 'colorbond' shed in the adjoining Westrail bus depot and the existing storm water drainage line. When the fences of the bus depot are removed the northern end of the site will immediately become more spacious and open. The forecourt should not be encroached on to the east and a significant amount of open space, along with the old tracks along the platform, needs to be retained to the west.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) (1915) is, except for a central double-storey section, a single-storey brick and iron building constructed for the Western Australian Government Railways over the period 1912 to 1915.[3]

This is Geraldton's third railway station, and unlike the other two, it was built in Eleanor Street (now Chapman Road). The first, forming part of the Northampton to Geraldton line and located in Marine Terrace (presently the

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2 'City plans future of Old Railway Station', *Midwest Times*, 29 January 1997, p. 8.

3 As no exact date for the commencement or official opening of the station was located, the date

Geraldton Regional Museum), was officially opened in July 1879. Fifteen years later, in 1894, the railway tracks were relocated from the centre of Marine Terrace to the foreshore, and a timber weatherboard station erected about 100 metres further north along Marine Terrace. The move was prompted by the increased traffic through the port, which resulted from the Murchison gold discoveries and the subsequent relocation of the main shipping wharf from Gregory Street to Durlacher Street.[4] Work commenced on the third railway station (*Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*) and associated works on 2 September 1911,[5] and sometime after its completion in June 1915, the timber station building was relocated near to the Railway Institute for use as an office for the District Engineer and Superintendent.[6]

Various factors contributed to the building of the third railway station, including the inadequacies of the 1894 timber station and infrastructure to expand and fulfil the increased railway traffic generated by the expansion of the 'Wheat Belt'. Since 1904, and coinciding with the decline in the importance of gold as an income earner, various State Governments encouraged people into agricultural areas to insure the State was self sufficient in wheat. Reminiscent of the Forrest Government's public works programmes of the 1890s, the State Government supported the growth of agriculture by financial assistance for farmers, the promotion of migration from the United Kingdom and the building of road and rail networks.[7]

Planning for the station proceeded against the background of a hard fought State election campaign which, in October 1911, saw the first majority Labor Government since responsible government in 1890. The Labor Party, led by 35 year old John Scadden, won 34 of the 50 Legislative Assembly seats, including Geraldton.[8] There were heightened expectations that wheatbelt areas would continue to expand as a result of Labor Government policy to continue development begun by the Liberals. As a result, it was anticipated that the demand for Geraldton's port and railway facilities would continue to justify a new railway station and alterations to the jetty.[9]

The building of a station and associated works turned out to be a lengthy process. In his annual report to Parliament for 1911, the Deputy Commissioner of Railways, E.S. Hume, mentioned that,

> …'satisfactorily meeting requirements at Geraldton has been a matter of considerable difficulty', but predicted that …'plans as now settled will prove adequate for traffic purposes for many years to come'.[10]

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4 Suba, Tanya; Grundy, Graham; Callow, Bruce; *Geraldton Municipal Inventory,* Perth: HCWA, 1997, Place No. 50: Van Bremen, Ingrid *The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australian Government Buildings under the direction of George Temple Poole 1885-1897,* Perth: UWA Department of Architecture, February 1990 vol. 3 Appendix C9.

5 Votes and Proceedings (V & P) Western Australian Parliament Year ending 30 June 1912, Report No. 14 p. 9 and Appendix L, *Work Carried Out,* p.71.

6 'The New Railway Station', *Geraldton Express,* 27 April 1915; 'Local and General News-New Railway Station Opened', *Geraldton Guardian,* 15 June 1915.

7 Crowley, F.K. *Australia's Western Third,* London: MacMillian 1960 pp. 156-157.

8 Black, David 'Party Politics in Turmoil 1911-1924', in Stannage, C.T. (Ed.) *A New History of Western Australia,* Perth: UWA Press 1981 pp. 381-385.

9 'Geraldton Railway Station' *Geraldton Guardian,* 29 April 1911, p. 3.

10 V & P, Eleventh Session of Eighth Parliament 1911-1912 Vol. 1 p. 891. Report No. 9, Workings of the Government Railways, Year ending 30 June 1911, p. 9.

In the following year's report, £63,000 is mentioned as the cost of the works including the provision of,

> ..'an up-to-date brick passenger station, additional goods shed and siding accommodation and a large carriage shed will be provided together with more convenient and increased facilities for locomotive purposes'.[11]

The £63,000 did not cover street diversion or acquisition of land previously cited as restricting development of railway facilities. It is believed that in 1910, a sum of £10,000 was paid to the Roman Catholic Bishop for land including the Star of the Sea Presentation Convent.[12] A stone and plaque commemorating the site of the Convent is located north-west of the railway station (well outside the suggested curtilage).[13] The Convent was relocated to Sanford Street and renamed Stella Maris Presentation Convent; after recent amalgamation with the former St Patrick's College, it now forms part of Nagle College.

The 1913 annual report, noted that the station was not yet complete. Some idea of the extent of the project can be ascertained from the Deputy Commissioner of Railways' report to parliament:

> Progress has not been as rapid as I would have liked. The requirements of the locomotive depot necessarily had to receive first attention and the engine shed, turntable, underground railway tank, way and works shop and carriage shed have been completed and the erecting and machine shops are nearly complete. The wash out shed is complete except as to the roof. Main water pipes have been laid, but building connections are not yet in. Drains are nearly complete and coal bins are approaching completion. Plate laying is being proceeded with as fast as progress of work permits and 3,000 yards [≈ 2,743 metres] of ballast have been laid. It is hoped that the whole scheme will be entirely completed during the current financial year.[14]

In June 1914, the station was still incomplete. The annual report to parliament describes the work as 'well forward', and by then the 'locomotive depot was complete and the traffic sheds and sidings nearly complete'. Improvements to the water supply and electric lighting had commenced in May and June, and prior to that, in January 1914, complementary work on the jetty had commenced.[15]

Finally and without fanfare, and although not all the associated works were complete, *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* was opened for traffic on 13 June 1915.[16] There had been much anticipation of the opening. The local paper noted that, 'the work of construction has been in progress such a long time-many people think for longer than was necessary-that there has been a good deal of speculation as to when it would be finished.' In addition, the paper

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11 V & P, Year ending 30 June 1912, Report No 14 p. 9. (Despite a search of the Government Gazettes for the appropriate years, an exact tender price and details of construction were not located).

12 Bain, Mary Albertus *A Life of its Own,* Geraldton: City of Geraldton 1996 p. 230. Barrister Arthur du Boulay is said to have owned the land.

13 Photograph Bruce Callow & Associates 18 July 1997; Suba, Tanya et. al. ibid.

14 V & P, Year ending 30 June 1913, Report No. 12 [p. 1377, as renumbered by Battye Library Staff].

15 V & P, Year ending 30 June 1914, Report No. 6, p.8 [p. 456, as renumbered by Battye Library Staff], and Appendix L *Works Carried Out,* p.69.

16 V & P, Year ending 30 June 1915, Report No. 8, p. 8 [p. 1121, as renumbered by Battye Library Staff].

hoped that a formal opening ceremony by the Premier would take place because, 'the importance of the undertaking merits a christening ceremony of some description'.[17] The railway station building was described as, 'solid and substantial' and 'built of brick with facings of stone obtained from Nolba [Chapman Valley]. They present a striking appearance, and the front of the station will be an ornament to the town when the whole scheme is carried out.'[18] The article concludes with a detailed description of the dimensions and purpose of every room in the station building, and the remaining sheds and buildings which made up the railway complex. The entire project is praised by the paper as raising Geraldton's railway system to third in importance behind Perth and Midland Junction.[19]

Since its opening in 1915, *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* and the surrounding infrastructure has undergone changes which reflect what occurred to the state railway system in general. In c.1956, because of the recent conversion from steam to diesel locomotives, the c.1903 railway condenser which had been responsible for the distillation of about 150 million gallons of sea water, was demolished.[20] The last 'Midlander' passenger train from Perth to *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* arrived on Friday 25 July 1975.[21] Passenger traffic ceased from that time, although, in January 1989, plans were announced to have a weekend tourist train run from Perth to Geraldton.[22] During June and July 1989, administration and office staff were moved from *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* to a new operations centre at Narngulu which opened for freight on 15 August.[23] During that month, the goods sheds at the former railway station were demolished.[24] After use as Westrail offices, *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* now functions as the Westrail bus terminal and the headquarters for private tours of the region.[25]

Documentary evidence located in the Westrail archives indicate various changes which occurred in relation to *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* and the original buildings, and these are discussed in the context of the Physical Evidence.[26]

The original railway land and foreshore in front of the station has now become part of a State Government re-development programme through Landcorp and Westrail. This has seen the creation of the 'Batavia Coast Marina' and the preparation of various site options and proposed subdivision

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17 'The New Railway Station', *Geraldton Express,* 27 April 1915.

18 ibid.

19 ibid.

20 'Old Railway Condenser Will Soon Vanish', *Geraldton Guardian,* 11 October 1956.

21 Information from Jeff Austin, Australian Railway Historical Society, 6 October 1997.

22 'Weekend tourist train to start in September' *Geraldton Guardian,* 31 January 1989.

23 Information from Jeff Austin, Australian Railway Historical Society, 10 October 1997 (from *Westrail Weekly Notices*).

24 'End of an Era', *Geraldton Guardian,* 4 August 1989, p.6.

25 Suba, Tanya et. al. ibid.

26 WAGR (Westrail) Drawings, Geraldton Railway Station 1913-1989, E.E.L Plan No. 13408/ Sheets 1-14, 1913-14; Plan No. 13537, 1913; Plan No. 14156 / Sheets 1-3, 1913-14; Plan No. 57215/3 Sheets 1-3 1965; Plan No. 62718 1970; Plan No. 65479/9 Sheets 1-3, 1972; Plan No. 79268 Sheet Nos. 1,2,7, 1989.

of the surrounding land for commercial and residential use.[27] Redevelopment has already involved a realignment of the rail line and resulted in train access to the station platform being prevented because of the new curvature of the line.[28] There are also proposals to completely re-route the rail line to the wharves east and south of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* so that the City is no longer cut off from the foreshore. The planning proposals indicate that the former station will become surrounded by a new commercial/urban context with few opportunities to reference its original rail yard setting.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) and associated railway yards and buildings were sandwiched between Chapman Road and the coast. The station building and platform is all that remains and is set back off the west side, and at a slight angle to Chapman Road which is the main road running out of the city centre, north along the coast. The railway line runs between Chapman Road and the coast as it comes into the city from the north and then between the town and the foreshore on its way to the harbour wharves. The railway line has been re-aligned so that it curves away from the former station and the section of track against the platform is now redundant and unable to be connected to the mainline because of incorrect curvature and alignment.[29]

The station building is located just north of the intersection of Chapman Road with Forrest Street. Just beyond the southern end of the platform (approximately 11m from the small building on the end of the platform) is the 'Zero Mile Peg' for the Geraldton region. Forrest Street, running at right angles to the station, provided the point for the railhead of the station branch line adjacent to the site of the former Railway Institute Hall. A new (c1990), single-storey brick building, accommodating Social Security offices is now located on the former Railway Institute site immediately to the south of the railway platform on the north-west corner of Chapman Road and Forrest Street. Opposite the end of the former railhead in Forrest Street, are Geraldton's early 20th Century, Public Buildings and Courthouse located on the corner of Marine Terrace. Further north along Chapman Road, and to the east on the corner of Lewis Street is the 'Old' Prison and adjacent to this, running through to Bayly Street, is the former Victoria Hospital. The two-storey stone complex is now known as the Bill Sewell Centre. These are all major buildings that can be loosely associated to form a precinct of Government buildings that now identifies the northern boundary of the old town centre.

To the north of the station and forecourt fronting Chapman Road, is a fenced Westrail bus depot, washdown and storage area which backs onto the northern end of the long rail platform.

To the west of the station, on the platform side, the rail yards have been completely cleared of all buildings. The site is open across to the sea, interrupted only by the re-aligned rail line sweeping across to the foreshore

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27 *Batavia Coast Marina - Geraldton;* various site option drawings prepared by consultants Donaldson Smith & Hooke Urban design, March 1997.

28 Information from Westrail engineer Laurie Piggett, June 1997.

29 ibid.

and a new road connecting the town with the new marina. To the north-west, and just out from the northern end of the platform in what would have been the middle of the old railyards is a large granite boulder with a commemorative plaque. This was placed in 1995 to recognise the original site where the Presentation Sisters started their education work in Geraldton with the 'Star of the Sea Convent' in 1891.

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) today comprises the original main station building completed in 1915, with its 150 metre long platform. Immediately to the north of the main building, separated by only 2 metres, is the original toilet block and, immediately to the south, a former lamp room. Beyond this, at the bottom of the platform ramp, the 'Zero Mile Peg' is located. All other buildings, which originally constituted the station, workshops and railyards, have been removed. Accordingly the extent of the railway complex has been lost and only the station, platform and old tracks set the former context of the place.

The main building sits as a long, horizontal painted brick and rendered structure, approximately 5.5m wide and some 65m long (plus toilet and lamp room buildings). It faces onto a stark, open, barely landscaped forecourt, which addresses Chapman Road. The style of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* buildings illustrates elements of the 'blood & bandage' decoration or the Federation Free Style period[30], and was presumably from the Public Works portfolio on behalf of the State Railways; possibly under the hand of Principal Architect Hillson Beasley. However, the original drawings for the project, dated 1912, 1913 & 1914 are signed by E.E. Light – 'Chief Engineer of Existing Lines'[31].

The roof over the long, narrow brick building is pitched corrugated iron, hipped at the ends and with small gambrels at the ends of the long ridge line which is only broken by several large brick chimneys, with rendered mouldings. The front elevation is dominated by the central, two-storey entry which projects forward of the rest of the building to punctuate the otherwise single-storey facade and long roof line. The pediment and gable end decoration of the two-storey entry is said to have been inspired by the Perth Railway Station and the resemblance is evident. The decoration of the pediment features a corbelled or dentured parapet coping which provides a triangular frame to rendered floral mouldings either side of a circular vent. The vent was originally louvred but is now filled with a piece of flat PGI sheeting. The apex of the pediment is crowned with a decorative moulding, which supported a now displaced flagstaff. There is rendered lettering under the pediment stating 'GERALDTON RAILWAY STATION'. Below the pediment, at first floor level, four double hung windows, with rendered piers between them, originally formed highlights from the upper part of the tall space over the former booking hall. A first floor was incorporated into this volume in the mid 1960s to provide more office accommodation. Externally the windows have had unfortunate aluminium awnings added to them for sun protection. In 1970, further additions were made to the first floor on both

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30 Apperly, R. et al., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: styles and terms from 1788 to the present,* Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1989.

31 Drawings: *Geraldton - New Station Buildings: Copy of E.E.L. Plan No.13408/14, Sheet Nos.1- 11,* dated variously from 1912 - 1914, from the drawing files of Westrail.

the north and south sides of the centre section to provide more office space. The additions have been incorporated in a reasonably sympathetic way to maintain its symmetry. They are of framed construction with rendered, flush jointed fibre cement sheeting painted to match the surrounding brickwork. Large, nine panel awning sash windows in a horizontal, rather than a vertical format, identify the addition from the original fenestration of the central section.

A wide veranda, supported on stop chamfered timber posts sits in front of the two-storey section to protect the ground floor entry to the former booking hall which is now a tourist and ticketing office. A panelled timber frieze across the top of the columns supports the front edge and gutter of the hipped, corrugated iron veranda roof. The main entry is a pair of double, timber, glazed doors with sidelights and an arched highlight over. Either side of the doors is a single double hung window with a semi-circular arch.

The single-storey wings extending to the north and south from the two-storey entry are of terracotta red painted brick with a dark brown painted plinth of rendered brick or stone facings as referred to in the Documentary Evidence. Tall double hung windows with shallow arched heads punctuate these long wings. A cream painted rendered band running horizontally between windows and up over the arched heads accentuates these. Another cream horizontal band also runs at sill level joining the projecting rendered sills, and, in combination with the upper band, provides the 'blood & bandage' character of the building.

Symmetrically located towards the end of each wing (two windows from the end) are minor entry points featuring a small decorative timber gable with finial. The entry to the north was the former public entry onto the platform and is complete with decorative wrought iron gates inside a rendered archway. The top of the arch has been infilled at some later time with a vertical, open timber panel. In 1972, the entry was enclosed on each side with glazed timber doors to form a new foyer for the parcel office. In the late 1980s, this end of the building was further modified to house the Railway Institute after their timber premises off Forrest Street were demolished. The entry to the south was also made in the late 1980s, to house the District Engineer's office after their building (the relocated, former timber railway station) to the south was demolished. Previously this opening had been a large window with a raised sill; all set into rendered gable end designed originally to balance the public entry at the northern end. The conversion to an office entry for the District Engineer has been sympathetically incorporated so that only the trained eye can detect the minor differences that indicate it is not original. The arch over the southern entry is slightly flattened compared to the semi-circular arch over the northern entry, but this is original as indicated on 1913 drawings. With the exception of a double width window in the middle of the north wing, all other openings on the east face are single, double hung windows with raised sills. This is evidenced by original drawings which indicate that this was formerly a pair of double doors giving public access to a serving counter in the parcel office.

The elevational treatment to the walls of the building on the west/platform side is similar in finish and appearance except for the long continuous veranda type roof, running the length of the building and cantilevered out to

the edge of the platform. There are no gable entries at each end of the wings because the platform roof provides protection. There are several single entry doors from offices onto the platform side and several combined servery windows with cantilevered counter/sills supported on brackets from what was the former parcel office on the north side. Some openings have been modified as the use of rooms has been changed over the years. The central, two-storey section mimics the front facade and the gable end pediment is complete with its circular louvred vent. The platform is paved bitumen with a formed concrete overhanging edge, 850 mm above the top of the rails. A section of old rail track remains along the front of the platform and is important as a contextual element to the place.

The construction of the long platform roof is impressive in its scale and use of large timber members. The roof is over 7m wide and is supported on 200 x 200 mm stop chamfered timber columns, 3.65m high and at 5.8m centres. The columns support 200 x 75 mm timber beams, which cantilever out 3m to the edge of the platform. The span of the beams are shortened by 45^0 struts that project out from the columns 1.25m down from the top. The beams support a 330 mm deep facia and gutter at the edge and 200 x 75 mm purlins at 900 mm centres to which the roof sheeting is fixed. The purlin across the top of the column also benefits from struts on the sides of the columns although these may be decorative only. All roof timbers are dressed and stop chamfered, and the columns have moulded skirtings forming both a base and a capital just below the struts. Whilst the roof sheeting is continuous, original drawings indicate the location of a roof light running the length of the building between the first two purlins adjacent to the wall. The veranda/platform roof attaches to wall at the eaves overhang of the main roof. The height of the eaves at the wall is 4.3m and they are detailed with corbelled timber brackets and battening all around the building.

The platform roof does not continue across the face of the toilet and former lamp room buildings at each end of the building. These end buildings are finished with a simple corrugated iron roof with hips and gambrel ends, and eaves details similar to the main building. In addition, original drawings indicate a projecting ventilated louvre monitor type ridge along the toilet roof, but this has been removed in recent re-roofing.

The main building at *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* is only one room wide and is accommodated in two single-storey wings either side of a central two storey entry that was previously the booking hall. The uses of rooms and buildings have changed significantly as the role of railways has been modified and adapted over the years to suit changes such as coal and steam; diesel and electric; passenger and goods; rail and road transport; corporatisation and privatisation; downsizing and out-sourcing; manpower, mechanisation and computerisation. The table below reflects use changes of rooms within the station buildings as identified from Westrail drawing files from 1912 through to the 1990s.

Rooms listed start from the south end of the platform and work to the north. Drawings indicate many rooms in the south wing have had doors and windows onto the platform altered several times. Doors between rooms have also been added and removed. The only major alterations to spaces have

southern entry for the District Engineer's [D.E] Office; and (3) the removal of a wall between two offices in the south wing to form a large general office.

The internal spaces of the building are similarly finished with hardwall plastered walls up to 4.75m high, although in recent times, some have been lowered approximately 500 mm to accommodate air conditioning ducts. Where original ceilings remain they appear to be lathe and plaster without any cornice (eg: general office in south wing). Elsewhere they have been replaced with plasterboard and coved cornices. Drawings indicate that the high level ceiling over the former booking hall was pressed metal, but this has since been replaced or covered with plasterboard when the first floor was inserted. The ceiling level in the ground floor booking hall is now only 3.6m. Due to its framed construction, the first floor accommodation could be removed so that the booking hall was returned to its original form and volume. The stair to the first floor is timber framed and the balustrade has simple, 'Modern' style with steel rod balusters and a red, plastic moulding capped flat bar handrail.

Several rooms (former Porter's room & Stationmaster's offices) have had fireplaces but surrounds have been removed and the openings filled flush with the breast wall of the chimneys (which remain). Throughout the building there is a picture rail on the walls at a height of 4m and a chair rail 840 mm above the floor. Other than for the concrete floor in the reception for the District Engineer's office (former store), floors generally are timber boarded with carpet (vinyl in booking hall). There are 320 mm deep moulded timber skirtings throughout the building. Joinery and window frames are timber with four panel doors and single pane double hung windows. The heads of the windows are square on the inside but the top sash has been shaped to follow the line of the brick arch externally where it slides up behind.

In 1997, the appearance and condition of *Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)* buildings is very good, as, until recently, they been maintained to a reasonable high standard. They are beginning to show signs of tiredness through lack of recent occupation and cleaning, but otherwise are immediately useable and functional. They are very sound and from a visual inspection, appear to have no apparent structural problems. Cracking and settlement is minimal and there is little deterioration of the building from aging, damp/water or salt.

The buildings are sound and functional and therefore suitable for many uses compatible with the significance of the place. Ideally, a strong association with transport and/or tourism uses would be the most appropriate use of the buildings. However, provided major changes to internal or external spaces were not required, such use could extend to restaurant or tea rooms as one might have encountered at a railway station in the past; although there does not appear to have been one in Geraldton. Other compatible uses might be museum, conferencing facilities, offices or even retailing. Overall it is important to try and retain a reasonable amount of public access to and about the place. Provided the uses are appropriate, and the relevant conservation plans and agreements are in place, it need not be necessary for the place to remain in public hands.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Suba, Tanya; Grundy, Graham; Callow, Bruce; *Geraldton Municipal Inventory (Draft)* Perth: HCWA, June 1997.

13. 4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Schedule of Room Changes & Uses.

1912-14	1965	1970 -1989	1992	1997
Ground Floor – south				
Lamp & fuel room	Equipment & Aux. plant		Radio Equipment.	Store room
Porters Rm	Crew Room & fmr Guards' Room	Locker Rm	District Engineer	Vacant
Store room	Telephone operators' Room	& Telex & switchboard.	Recept. for D.E. front entry added	Vacant
Instrument Rm	Yard Foreman's Rm	Yard Foreman	General Office - wall removed.	Vacant
S.M. Clerks Office	S.M. Office & S.M. Clerks – space subdivided	S.M. Office.	Large General Office - wall removed	Vacant
Station Master	Staff clerk & junior typist office	Station Master	Engineer & Asst Eng.	Vacant
Spare Room	Comm. Rep & Traffic Insp.	Spare Rm	Structures Sup.	
Booking Hall	Booking Hall, stair added to 1st floor offices. #	Booking Hall & stair	Booking Hall & stair	Tourism Ticket Office
Booking Office	Booking Office	Booking Office	Booking Office	Tourism Off. & Staff Rm.
First Floor (Rooms marked # are recommended for removal from the former Booking Hall)				
Booking Hall (two storey volume)	3 new offices & stair added for Staff, Transport & General Clerks. #	Offices for Staff, Transport & General Clerks. #	Conference Rm (walls removed) #	Vacant
		Typists & Records Office added to south 1970. #	'Ambulance Room. #	Ambulance/ storeroom #
		D.T.S. Office added to north 1970. #	Store Room. #	Vacant
Ground Floor – North				
Parcels & Luggage	Parcels Office	Ambulance Room & Goods Office	Railway Institute	Vacant
Northern Entry	Northern Entry	Foyer and former Parcels Off. public counter	Foyer	Vacant
Ladies Waiting Rm.	Staff Room	Locker Room	Sales Office	Vacant
Toilet Block	Toilet Block	Toilet Block	Toilet Block	Toilet Block