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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 2.1 Recovering the experience of Australia's earliest inhabitants
- 3.7.3 Moving goods and people on land
- 3.7.4 Building and maintaining railways
- 3.7.5 Building and maintaining roads
- 4.1.2 Making suburbs

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 202 Rail and light rail transport
- 203 Road transport

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Perth Station Building and *Horseshoe Bridge* are of considerable aesthetic value. The balustrade detailing and swan sculptures on the newel posts of the *Horseshoe Bridge* contribute to the aesthetic quality of the precinct. (Criterion 1.1)

Horseshoe Bridge represents an innovative solution to the problem of bridging a railway in a confined site in the days of horsedrawn transport. The detailing of the bridge façade is of a high quality of design. Perth Station Building demonstrates excellence in design and detailing. (Criterion 1.2)

Perth Station Building and *Horseshoe Bridge* contribute significantly to the streetscape of Wellington Street. (Criterion 1.3)

The Perth Station Building is a particularly well-articulated example of a building in the Victorian Free Classical Style and, as such, provides an important termination at the northern end of Forrest Place, the main civic plaza in the City of Perth. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

* 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* , Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

The place marks the development of the Fremantle to Guildford Railway in 1881 and the subsequent development of the State's rail network, the major communication link within Western Australia from that time until the latter part of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.1)

Perth Railway Station was one of the first three stations established in the Perth urban area. Its siting significantly influenced the commercial development of the city and the railway network influenced the pattern and rate of suburban growth in Perth dating from the 1890s. (Criterion 2.1)

Constructed in 1904, *Horseshoe Bridge* is one of the oldest surviving intact bridges in central Perth. It is representative of the growth of the railway and its impact upon the road transport system in Central Perth. The growth of the railways caused the railway crossing to be closed for much of the day, necessitating an overbridge. In a site with no land for approaches, the Horseshoe plan proved the only solution to achieve required gradients for horsedrawn vehicles. (Criterion 2.2)

Perth Railway Precinct has been associated with the work of a number of Government Architects and Engineers who have been significant figures in the history of the State. These include: James H. Thomas, who surveyed the first railway routes, determined the site of the Perth Station; John Arthur Wright, who initiated major improvements to the building and network in the late 1880s; Richard Roach Jewell, the architect of first Perth Station building; George Temple Poole, the architect for the present station building, and supervising architect for numerous station buildings in the 1890s; and C.Y. O'Connor, engineer responsible for design, construction and redevelopment of the railway network in the 1890s and who occupied an office in the Perth Station building. (Criterion 2.3)

The *Horseshoe Bridge* is a unique example of its type. It demonstrates an innovative solution in an elegant form to the problem of bridging a railway when space was restricted. The bridge is an outstanding example of a major urban railway overbridge of its time. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The precinct is a benchmark site in central Perth having been actively part of the city's development since 1881. (Criterion 3.1)

The precinct is located on land that was part of Lake Kingsford, one of the largest lakes in the area at the time of the establishment of the city. The lake was an important food source for the Nyungar Aboriginal Group who inhabited the area before European settlement. The area holds strong spiritual association with the Nyungar people. A site within the precinct [S2184] is listed under the Aboriginal Heritage Act as an ethnographic site of significance for hunting and mythology reasons.

The precinct has the potential to demonstrate the development of railway technology and operations from 1879 to the present day. Most of this information is on the surface, but the site has potential to yield archeological items that will contribute to this understanding. Anticipated location of information is under the later platform, landscape or track structures. (Criterion 3.2)

The *Horseshoe Bridge* is an outstanding example of a major urban railway overbridge. Its form results from an innovative solution to the problem of a railway crossing for horsedrawn vehicles within tight urban constraints. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The area in which *Perth Railway Precinct* is sited is significant to the Nyungar Aboriginal Group, as indicated by its listing under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

The precinct is highly valued by the community of Perth as a principal transport interchange. It is the point of departure or arrival for many intrastate travellers. For large numbers of commuters it is a point of interchange in their daily routine.

The precinct is an important meeting place and a linking element between central Perth and Northbridge. (Criterion 4.1)

Perth Railway Station Precinct contributes greatly to the community's sense of place. It has been an evolving part of central Perth since 1881. The Perth Station Building, *Horseshoe Bridge* and Barrack Street Bridge (to a lesser extent) contribute to the quality and aesthetics of the place. They exhibit design characteristics that are valued by the community. Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The precinct contains the Perth Station Building, the principal station within the Western Australian Railway network.

The Government funding and operation of the principal State railway system from its inception is uncommon in Australia.

Constructed in 1881, the station building is one of the oldest surviving principal City stations in Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

The station building and precinct have been in continual use as a railway facility since 1881.

Horseshoe Bridge is a unique and substantially intact example of its type. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Perth Station building is a competent example of the Victorian Free Classical style as applied to significant public buildings in Western Australia.

The building employs materials commonly used by the Government Architects of the period. Face brickwork with painted stuccoed detail was the most common combination of façade materials on Government buildings of the period. By comparison, Eastern States preferred the use of stone finishes. Corrugated Iron appears to have been the original roof cladding, the standard roofing material for all Government buildings, except for those that warranted special aesthetic consideration. (Criterion 6.1)

Perth Railway Station Precinct has considerable significance being representative of the development of the principal railway station in the Perth and Western Australian railway network. The precinct is one of the smallest and least grand capital city stations in Australia. The precinct is able to demonstrate the development of a key city railway station since 1881, and its adaptation to meet the changing forms of rolling stock, the needs of commuters and the changing place of the station in the adjacent city.

The precinct is representative of the establishment, construction and growth of a Government funded and operated railway system in the City, State and

Interstate. It contains elements directly related to the early developments as well as later constructions, which collectively demonstrate the changing place and priority of the railway system in the fabric and social activity of the immediate environs and the city. Whilst a lot of early structures and tracks have been removed, the fabric which remains is substantially intact and is able to demonstrate aspects of the railway development and operation at the time of construction. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally, the buildings and structures are in good condition. Some corrosion of the bridge structure was noted but it is assumed that this will be rectified in the next cycle of maintenance work. There were no problems identified that threaten the immediate stability of any of the buildings or structures in the precinct. Most structures are to be subject to only adhoc maintenance programmes.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The precinct has a high degree of integrity in that the original intention of the Station building, *Horseshoe Bridge*, Barrack Street Bridge and the Western Footbridge are still intact. Such use is sustainable and likely to continue in the long term.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Horseshoe Bridge has a high degree of authenticity. Whilst it has been structurally modified to meet new usage loadings, the work has been undertaken in a sympathetic manner. Usage of the undercroft areas of the bridge on Wellington Street and Roe Street has, however, meant some modification to original fabric.

Perth Station Building has had a greater level of intervention but its size and repetitive detail gives the overall impression of authenticity. The station building demonstrates a high degree of authenticity in its original fabric. The exterior of the building is generally in good condition and demonstrates a high degree of integrity. Façade changes have been contained within original openings generally. Changes have been restricted to ground level. The most substantial changes are to the north façade where openings have either been enlarged or reduced. The original train shed roof and verandah structures over the platform area have been removed. The interior of the building has been substantially altered. Changes have included removal of original walls, installation of new walls, closing up door openings and cutting new openings. Many of the original ceilings have been either replaced or concealed by modern suspended systems. However, some original details, such as fireplaces and windows, have been retained.

The Barrack Street Bridge has been substantially modified. It demonstrates a moderate degree of authenticity. The substructure appears to have been entirely retained while altered with additional members, while the superstructure has been replaced. No original external materials have been retained other than for the eastern handrail.

The Barrack Street Bridge and timber pedestrian overbridge have had a substantial amount of original fabric removed.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Cox Howlett & Bailey with Jacqui Sheriff and Bill Cooper, Historians, 'Perth Railway Station Precinct Conservation Plan' prepared for the Department of Contract & Management Services on behalf of Westrail and Main Roads in September 1997.

Key sections used: 2.0 Documentary Evidence (p9-36), 4.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence (p37-70).

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Cox Howlett & Bailey with Jacqui Sheriff and Bill Cooper, Historians, 'Perth Railway Station Precinct Conservation Plan' prepared for the Department of Contract & Management Services on behalf of Westrail and Main Roads in September 1997.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Cox Howlett & Bailey with Jacqui Sheriff and Bill Cooper, Historians, 'Perth Railway Station Precinct Conservation Plan' prepared for the Department of Contract & Management Services on behalf of Westrail and Main Roads in September 1997.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a Comparative Analysis refer to Cox Howlett & Bailey with Jacqui Sheriff and Bill Cooper, Historians, 'Perth Railway Station Precinct Conservation Plan' prepared for the Department of Contract & Management Services on behalf of Westrail and Main Roads in September 1997.

13. 4 REFERENCES

Cox Howlett & Bailey with Jacqui Sheriff and Bill Cooper, Historians, 'Perth Railway Station Precinct Conservation Plan' prepared for the Department of Contract & Management Services on behalf of Westrail and Main Roads in September 1997.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
