



**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)

- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 202 Rail & light rail transport
- 106 Workers

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie adds to the cultural environment of the station yard, being a small cottage constructed in the same local stone as the station buildings and clearly connected with the railway operations, although the exterior stonework of the place has been painted. (Criterion 1.3)

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is an important element in the railway environment of the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie was built in 1897 as a result of the gold boom and the construction of the Eastern Goldfields railway line, which provided a rail service to the surrounding mining areas and, later, the Eastern States, making Kalgoorlie an important railway junction. (Criterion 2.1)

* 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.

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie was constructed to provide a residence for the Kalgoorlie Station Master. The size of the place, with four generous main rooms, reflects the status of the position in relation to the adjoining two-room cottages, which were constructed for the platelayers at the same time. (Criterion 2.2)

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is an important element in the collection of buildings that form the Kalgoorlie railway station precinct. The other elements of the precinct are the station buildings, platelayer's cottage, District Engineer's house, parcels office and Railway Institute. The elements of the precinct represent the history of the railway in the town and reflect the importance of the gold boom in the development of the railway and the town since 1897. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie, together with other remaining structures in the Kalgoorlie railway station yard, contributes to the local community's sense of place as a part of the railway history of the town and a reminder of a way of life no longer practised. (Criteria 4.1 & 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is one of the two oldest remaining examples of railway employee housing in Kalgoorlie and is among the oldest remaining on a goldfields railway line. The other example in Kalgoorlie, a platelayer's cottage, is the more intact of the two. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is a modestly scaled representative example of a Federation Bungalow style station master's residence, its size representing the status of the Station Master for whom the dwelling was constructed. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie has been subject to ongoing maintenance works in keeping with its function as worker's accommodation. The place is in good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie has functioned continuously as a dwelling for railway employees. It has recently been adapted for use as part of a group accommodation facility. The place retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie shows evidence of changes to the fabric. The exterior face stone walls have been painted, there is a replacement colourbond roof and new gutters, replacement steel verandah posts and concrete verandah floors to the front and rear verandahs. An interior wall has been removed, modern kitchen fitout installed, and an opening been made in the rear wall into which a sliding glass door has been inserted. *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* displays a low to moderate 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

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is a stone and iron 4-room dwelling constructed in 1897 for the Kalgoorlie Station Master. The place was built by O'Connell Brothers, using stone from a local quarry. *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* has been modified for use as the living quarters section of the railway employee accommodation for single men, known as Forrest House. The discovery of gold at Southern Cross and the subsequent declaration of the area as the Yilgarn goldfield in 1888, brought prospectors to the area in large numbers. In order to exploit the finds and the possible revenue, the State Government commenced 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. This brought an even greater rush to the fields, with thousands of men arriving from the eastern states and overseas and making their way to the area by whatever means possible. When the line reached Southern Cross, construction continued to extend the line to Coolgardie, beginning 24 June 1895.¹ At that point, there was no intention to extend the line to Kalgoorlie, but the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and local mine owners and businessmen campaigned to have the line taken the extra 24 miles (38 kms). Development of the deep reef mines on the Golden Mile depended on the use of heavy machinery, which were more easily and economically transported by

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*, UWA Press, Perth, 1985, pp. 221-225; Webb, M. & A., *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of WA*, Hocking & Co and St George Books, Perth, 1995, pp. 208-211.

rail. 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.² In September 1895, a bill was passed to extend the railway line to Kalgoorlie. The line reached the town on 8 September 1896, and was taken over by the Railways Department on 1 January 1897.³

As part of the work of constructing the line, the contractors, John and Adam Wilkie, were to provide a number of station buildings along the route. These were built by O'Connell Brothers, subcontracting to the Wilkies. The Kalgoorlie station buildings were not ready for occupation at the time of the handover.⁴

To-day the contractors for its [the railway] construction, Messrs Wilkie Brothers, hand over the stretch of railway from Boorabbin to Kalgoorlie, making the whole line from the metropolis a Government affair. This will mean for the fields a more appreciable lowering of rates... Messrs O'Connell Brothers, the contractors for the new railway station and connected buildings, are continuing to make excellent progress. The 400ft long platform walk is built, and the walls of the station house are up to a very good height. The two platelayers' cottages, very cool and comfortable buildings are about finished, and the next substantial stationmaster's residence is in the last stages of completion.⁵

Another newspaper report appeared a week later:

Work in connection with the new railway buildings continues to progress speedily though there is at present rather a shortage in the supply to hand of building stone. A chat with the Government supervisor of the work, Mr J Riekje, a vigorous and cheery up to date veteran in railway work, at which he has been for two score years, reveals to one the dispatch with which the work is being done... Messrs O'Connell Bros have been the contractors for the works along the whole of the upper end of the line... In Mr Reikie's [sic] comments on the methods of Messrs O'Connell Bros. he speaks in complimentary terms of the experienced efficiency of their system of work and of the economy in material of the employee. There can be no doubt that the railway section and other buildings that Kalgoorlie is to have will be a superior nature throughout, and such as this place will have good reason to be proud of. A portion of the station building, including the ladies' waiting room and several other apartments, is up to the roof level and the rest of the long row of connected buildings is to be proceeded with without delay. The two platelayers' cottages, as well as the stationmaster's residence, are about finished now to the completed stage of flooring. These buildings are not only designed for full comfort, with wide front and back verandahs, but are strikingly effective in appearance. The main device that makes the exterior remarkably neat and finished was the tinting of the mortar of the same shade as the stones, and the framing of the pretty blocks of stone in black lines. This is a very successful bit of work.⁶

A report on 13 February 1897 stated that the 'residential portions – the two

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*, Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR), Perth, 1975.

⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1 January 1897, pp. 2-3; WAGR *Annual report*, 1896, p. 10.

⁵ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1 January 1897, pp. 2-3.

⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 9 January 1897, p. 2. Riekje is spelt three different ways in this article.

platelayers' cottages and the stationmaster's residence – are finished'.⁷ *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* was occupied by the Kalgoorlie Station Master for many years. William Allen was the first Station Master at Kalgoorlie. He opened both the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie stations when they were taken over from the contractors, and was then stationed at Northam for a time, before being appointed as chief stationmaster at Kalgoorlie in 1900. Improvements were made to *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* in 1900, and it appears that the brick kitchen addition was carried out at this time. The room is shown on a 1903 plan of the station yard.⁸ In 1910, the position was occupied by Henry (Harry) O'Connor, who was previously station master at Golden Gate, a local station on the loop line. The railway officers on the goldfield lines were experienced railwaymen recruited from the eastern states, many of them from New South Wales.⁹ O. Seldon was the Station Master in 1920, and in 1927, the position was occupied by C. E. Street. He was responsible for fourteen salaried and fifty-seven waged staff employed in the coaching and goods sections, from the Assistant Station Master to the waiting room attendant.¹⁰ Later Station Master's were J. McGowan (1930), Stan Davidson and Arthur Moyle.¹¹ In 1938, there was an increase in rail traffic through Kalgoorlie, credited to the introduction of separate passenger and goods trains in place of the mixed service previously in operation, and to a new interstate schedule.¹² A new five-room residence was constructed on Wittenoom Street for the Inspector Permanent Way in 1938, as part of the general expansion of services at this time. The occupant of the position had resided in one of the two-room platelayer's cottages since around 1900.¹³

Following World War Two, railway services were in demand during a period of growth and prosperity for both agriculture and mining. WAGR undertook a concerted housing construction programme throughout the State. It is not known when *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* ceased to be occupied by the Station Master, but it is possible that he was provided with upgraded accommodation following construction of new railway houses in Kalgoorlie after World War Two.¹⁴ The Kalgoorlie Station Master's position was downgraded following the opening of the standard gauge line through to Fremantle in 1968. There was no longer any need for passengers traveling interstate to change trains at Kalgoorlie. Passenger services were reduced to a daily round trip between Perth and Kalgoorlie by the *Prospector* with the *Indian Pacific* making a short stopover as it passed through twice a week. Small goods and parcels traffic continued to provide work, but with a much reduced station staff.

Rationalisations and changes in technology and services had resulted in a

⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 February 1897, p. 4.

⁸ *WAGR Annual Report*, 1900, p. 36; WAGR, EEL Plan 6501, SROWA, ACC 1781, 6501.

⁹ *The Western Argus*, 10 March 1903, p. 24; Wise's Post Office Directory, 1902 & 1910.

¹⁰ WAGR, Metropolitan-Suburban and Country Stations: Committee's Reports, 1927, p. 128.

¹¹ Wise's Post Office Directory, 1930-1949.

¹² *WAGR Annual Report*, 1938, pp. 7 & 24.

¹³ WAGR file, Kalgoorlie Station Master's House, 1938-1954, SROWA, ACC 1781, Item 32462;

¹⁴ *WAGR Annual Report*, 1938, p. 23; Wise's Post Office Directory, 1900-1930.

No early WAGR files for the property were located at WAGR headquarters, East Perth or the Kalgoorlie office.

decrease in WAGR staff by almost 50% throughout the State by 1988.¹⁵ In the 1990s, *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* was converted for use as singlemen's quarters for railway employees. The four main rooms of the place are used as kitchen and living areas, with detached sleeping quarters and an ablution block added at the rear around a central private courtyard. A number of alterations have been made to the fabric of the place in keeping with this function, including removal of the brick kitchen addition (1900).¹⁶

In 2000, the sale of the WAGR 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 railway staff in Kalgoorlie.¹⁷ Following the sale, WAGR intends to dispose of a number of the remaining buildings in the Kalgoorlie railway yard, including *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie*. *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* is part of the Kalgoorlie railway station precinct on Forrest Street, comprising the station buildings, former District Engineer's house, Platelayer's Cottage, Parcels Office and War Memorial. A number of the buildings in the station yard, fronting Forrest Street, are leased out including part of the Parcels Office. The Railway Institute, on the opposite side of Forrest Street, is also part of the precinct. Kalgoorlie Railway precinct and *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* was entered on the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Municipal Heritage Inventory on 31 October 1995, and given a level 1 management category, recommending it for inclusion on the State Register.¹⁸ The precinct was entered on the Register of the National Estate on 21 October 1980.

In 2002, *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* continues to function as part of the singlemen's quarters known as Forrest House.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is a stone and iron 4-room dwelling built by the O'Connell Brothers for the Kalgoorlie Station Master in 1897, using local stone. The place has been modified for use as the living quarters section of the railway employee accommodation for single men, known as Forrest House.

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie, a single storey stone and iron dwelling, is located on the north side of Forrest Street, backing onto the railway line on the north, and is several lots west of the Kalgoorlie Railway Station. The front boundary is delineated by a 0.900 metre high open timber picket fence, and the remaining boundaries have supersix fences. The flat site features predominantly low shrubbery with some eucalyptus trees along the front fence line and within the front setback. The area within the courtyard space is grassed. Views of the place are obscured by various recent plantings

¹⁵ WAGR Annual Report, 1982 & 1988, p. 22.

¹⁶ Physical evidence; WAGR property file for Departmental Property 401, Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

¹⁷ WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

¹⁸ Hocking Planning and Architecture, *City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Municipal Heritage Inventory*, 1995.

in the front yard. The dwelling displays some characteristics of Federation Bungalow style, although primarily the design is functional and purpose designed for the Station Master.

Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie is a single storey stone construction with a gable roof clad with sheets of custom orb colourbond steel sheeting. The random face stone walls, with smooth squared stone quoins to the window and door openings, have been painted. The front and rear verandahs have separate skillion roofs supported by steel structures. The front verandah is lined with asbestos sheets on the rake, and has a concrete floor. The rear verandah is brick paved. The two chimneys are painted face brick with a corbelled detail. The original timber framed double-hung windows are indiscernible behind metal security screens. Each of the two front windows flanking the central front door has timber louvered shutters on each side. The front door is the original four-panelled door with fanlight. A security door has been fitted. Replacement square profile gutters and rectangular downpipes are in place. The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening into a wide corridor with two rooms each side. The door at the end of the corridor replicates the front door. The interior plastered stone walls and timber detailing are, for the most part, intact. The main four rooms have the original 0.135 metre (5 inch) timber floorboards. The walls are hard plaster with a smooth finish. The ceilings are lined with replacement gyprock sheeting. The original timber skirtings, architraves and four panel doors remain in place. The fireplace in the right front room has been infilled with a gas heater, but the mantelpiece has been retained. A section of original wall has been removed to form an opening between the two rooms on the right. The kitchen fireplace has been removed entirely and the kitchen has a modern fitout, with ceramic wall tiles marking where the fireplace was located. A large opening has also been made in the back wall of the second room on the left, and an aluminium framed sliding glass door has been inserted. Ducted air conditioning has been installed throughout the dwelling. There are several detached and attached accommodation and associated ancillary outbuildings in the rear yard, north of the dwelling. These outbuildings form three sides of the courtyard at the rear of the house. They are prefabricated transportable accommodation facilities comprising two sets of two connected rooms each with six individual rooms, and an ablution facility across the rear of the site. Overall, the place is in good condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Station master's houses constructed from c.1902 to around 1920, were generally four room residences constructed in brick and iron, with front and rear verandahs, and fireplaces on the internal walls. The design resulted in a residence of Victorian Georgian style. Examples can be found at Brunswick Junction (1902), Cranbrook (1902), Darkan (1913) and Bowelling (1919). Variations to the plan occurred in the 1890s, before the standard plan was devised, and occasionally in the early 1900s. The design of *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* is a standard four room residence with passage down the centre and verandah front and rear, but the original position of the chimneys, on the outside wall rather than internal walls, is similar to the timber

station master's house built in 1895 at Donnybrook and c.1902 at Leonora. There is one other example in Kalgoorlie, a platelayer's cottage, which is more intact.

The addition of another room at the rear for use as a kitchen appears to have been a common occurrence in these houses, with both the Kalgoorlie and Donnybrook residences having later kitchen additions off the rear verandah, and Leonora Station Master's House having a cabin addition used as a kitchen. *Station Master's House (fmr), Kalgoorlie* is one of the two oldest remaining examples of railway employee housing in Kalgoorlie and is among the oldest remaining on a goldfields railway line. It is a modestly scaled representative example of a Federation Bungalow style station master's residence, its size representing the status of the Station Master for whom the dwelling was constructed.

13.4 REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
