



**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)**

- 3.22 Lodging people
- 3.26 Providing health services
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements
- 9.1.1 Providing maternity clinics and hospitals

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 107 Settlements
- 404 Community services & facilities
- 504 Depression & boom
- 604 Local heroes & battlers

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a well proportioned and visually pleasing example of a domestic scaled timber framed institutional building, a late example of the Federation Bungalow style, featuring a steeply pitched Marseilles profiled terracotta tile roof, wide shady verandahs, finely detailed joinery and distinctive tapered masonry chimneys with unpainted rough-cast render and brick decoration. (Criterion 1.1)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem*, despite its relatively low profile and set-back from the street behind extensive vegetation, is a landmark in Wyalkatchem. Remnants of former gardens that surround the building are a component of the place's contribution to the visual character of the town. (Criterion 1.3)

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For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

## 11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was the first rest home built in Western Australia through the auspices of the Bush Nursing Society to provide accommodation for women in rural areas prior to them giving birth in the nearby hospital, and the model for other such hostels in this State in the interwar period when common practice changed from home births to hospital deliveries. (Criterion 2.1)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was built in 1922, with funding through the Bush Nursing Trust, which was entrusted with this State's share of a gift of £150,000 from the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in gratitude to the dominions for their service in World War I, which was to be used in particular for the benefit of returned servicemen and their families. Silver Chain Nursing League (latterly Silver Chain Nursing Association), Red Cross, Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association, Returned Services League (RSL), and Country Women's Association (CWA) all assisted the Hostel. (Criterion 2.2)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem*, named after Lady Novar, wife of the former Governor-General (1914-20), was designed by architect A. B. Rieusset and built by J. J. Hewitt & Son. The Eva Carter Ward was named in honour of her service to the women of the district, and particularly to the Hostel and the CWA. (Criterion 2.3)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a fine example of a domestic design form adapted for the specific purpose of a rest home for expectant mothers, which was innovative at the time. (Criterion 2.4)

## 11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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## 11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is highly valued by the community of Wyalkatchem and surrounding districts as an important rural health care facility, having provided accommodation for expectant mothers and others for 30 years, and then serving as the Infant Health Centre (c. 1952-59), and for aesthetic reasons. (Criterion 4.1)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* contributes to the community's sense of place as a landmark in the town and an integral part of the streetscape of Honour Avenue in proximity to Wyalkatchem Hospital. (Criterion 4.2)

## 12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 12. 1. RARITY

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a comparatively rare example of a timber framed building in the Federation Bungalow style with a Marseilles profile, terracotta tiled roof, particularly outside the metropolitan area. (Criterion 5.1)

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was the first of only four purposely designed and built Bush Nursing Society rest homes for expectant mothers, and the longest operational of the hostels. (Criterion 5.2)

## 12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

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## 12.3 CONDITION

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is in fair to good condition as a result of continued occupancy and care. There is evidence of possible structural failure of the timber stumps under the north-eastern side of the building where there are some significant internal cracks. There are some leaks to the roof on the south-western side of the building.

Internally and externally timber weatherboard cladding and paneling and timber joinery are in good condition. The masonry chimneys are sound and the original rough-cast render and brick decoration are in good condition.

Fibrous cement paneling may contain asbestos products.

The once well-tended gardens are in poor condition as a result of lack of water.

## 12.4 INTEGRITY

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* has moderate integrity. It is no longer used for its original nursing home purpose but is in use as a residence. As such the place has long-term viability of use.

## 12.5 AUTHENTICITY

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* has moderate to high authenticity. The external fabric of the original 1922 building is largely intact, although the lattice panels to the verandah balustrade are replacement fabric. The building was altered in 1933-34 and in 1945-48; however, the alterations were contained under the original roofline of the building, involving infilling of the north-eastern verandah. The roof remains as originally constructed although a number of the Marseille profile terracotta tiles are replacements. Some original tiles remain extant, mainly on the south-western side of the building. The masonry chimneys with unpainted rough-cast render and brick decoration are intact, although the terracotta pots have been replaced by metal flues. Internally much of the original fabric and detailing of the building remains extant, including timber joinery. The brick fireplace with gas fire is not original.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Robin Chinnery, Historian and Rosemary Rosario, Architectural Heritage Consultant in April 2007, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a single storey building, of timber construction with a tile roof, a late example of the Federation Bungalow design style, designed by architect A. B. Rieusset and built for the Bush Nursing Society in 1922. A small room was added to the north-east corner of the verandah in 1932-33, and alterations and additions were made in 1945-48.

In 1871, Toodyay Road Board was made responsible for the area that would later become known as Wyalkatchem, derived from the name of a waterhole, called Walkatching, on the track between Goomalling and Yarragin Station. In the 1870s, pastoralists arrived in the district to take up pastoral leases, and a well was sunk at the waterhole in 1881.<sup>1</sup>

In 1902, the railway was extended from Northam to Goomalling, paving the way for the expansion of agricultural settlement. Following the conclusion of a Royal Commission on Immigration and Land Settlement (1905) that 15 miles from the nearest railway was the limit for profitable farming of wheat, a new railway policy was instituted to extend the railway network. In 1906, the railway line was extended from Goomalling to Dowerin.<sup>2</sup> In 1908, when eastward extension of the railway from Dowerin was planned, land was set aside for the future townsite of Wyalkatchem in the vicinity of the tank. In 1909, a Progress Association was formed at Wyalkatchem, whose aims included lobbying for extension of the railway to the town, as the wagon journey to the nearest railhead with a load of bagged wheat could take up to three days. In 1910, the *Dowerin-Merredin Railway Bill* was enacted, enabling extension of the railway to Merredin on the line to the Eastern Goldfields, with a loop-line to through Wyalkatchem, Korrelocking and Kunanoppin, including a railway station at Wyalkatchem.<sup>3</sup> By December, there were five timber-framed buildings at Wyalkatchem, where the first brick building would not be erected until 1919. In 1911, the town site was surveyed, and gazetted with the name spelt as Wyalkatchem.<sup>4</sup> In 1912, a spur line was constructed from Southern Cross to Bullfinch. In 1914, work began on a line to link it with the Northam-Wyalkatchem-Merredin loop, with Wyalkatchem selected as the junction for the two railway lines. World War I (1914-18) delayed work on this line, and the section to Bencubbin was not opened until 1917, followed by completion of the section to Lake Brown in 1923.<sup>5</sup>

Around 1916, a Wyalkatchem Hospital Committee was formed and a district nurse was appointed. In 1918, the first hospital and nurses' quarters were built at Wyalkatchem, which was officially opened on 30 August. It was a so-called tent hospital, 'described as a sitting room and a bedroom for the nurse and two tents for the patients'.<sup>6</sup> Around 1919-20, the hospital was extended.<sup>7</sup>

In 1920, the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem made a gift of £150,000 to Australia, which the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, was authorised to distribute. He divided it equally between the six States, for the primary purpose of establishing Bush Nursing services in rural areas, in particular for the benefit of returned servicemen and their dependents. In Western Australia, King Edward Memorial Hospital received a grant of £10,000, and £15,000 was to be entrusted to the Bush Nursing Trust, which was established for this purpose. In October 1920, the initial trustees, Messrs. Walter Kingsmill (Chairman), H. P. Colebatch, Collier, Alexander Monger and Alfred Carson, resolved to deposit this sum in the Commonwealth Bank, pending a

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1 Rice, John C. *Wyalkatchem: A History of the District* Wyalkatchem Shire Council, 1993.

2 Ackland, R. R. B. *Wongan-Ballidu Pioneering Days* Wongan-Ballidu Shire Council, 1965, pp. 1-5.

3 Rice, John C. op. cit., p.35; and Gunzberg, Adrian and Austin, J. *Rails Through the Bush* Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 206-08. See Heritage Assessment Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct, RHP 15755, regarding development of the railway.

4 Rice, John C. op. cit., pp. 53-55, p. 96 and p. 159.

5 Gunzberg, Adrian and Austin, J. op. cit., p. 207.

6 Rice, John op. cit., pp. 177-78.

7 *ibid*, p. 179.

decision as to its final investment.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, they called a conference of delegates from the Red Cross, Silver Chain Nursing League (Inc.) and a representative from the Health Department, to determine the best way to proceed in order to fulfill the wishes of the British Red Cross, who formulated a scheme to form the Bush Nursing Society of Western Australia under the joint auspices of the Red Cross and Silver Chain, which was duly approved by the Trust. Membership of the Society was to be drawn from metropolitan and rural areas, and members were to pay an annual subscription. Its main objective would be 'to organise and carry out nursing and related services in country districts, especially maternity nursing', in rural areas where returned servicemen were settling.<sup>9</sup> The Society would operate separately from the Red Cross and Silver Chain and would communicate directly with the Trust when seeking funds for various projects.<sup>10</sup>

For some time, a branch of the Silver Chain at Benjabbering, in the Wyalkatchem district, had been fund raising towards the proposed erection of a rest home for local patients. This initiative followed agreement that funds raised by the branch would be 'shelved for the express purpose of carrying on the grand work of the Chain throughout the bushland', after Mrs Eva Carter mentioned to Mrs Muriel Chase that she 'did not think it fair that proceeds from country entertainments in aid of the Silver Chain should go to Perth when the money was so badly needed for use in the country'.<sup>11</sup> In 1921, the auxiliary committee at Benjabbering, corresponded with the parent organisation regarding a proposed rest home at Wyalkatchem, for which purpose the Under-Secretary for Lands agreed to grant a 99 year lease on a block of land in the townsite, Lot 148, which was across the road from the hospital. The Silver Chain pledged £250 towards its erection conditional upon the Bush Nursing Trust contributing a similar amount and the Benjabbering committee accepting responsibility for management of the proposed home.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, an interim committee of the Bush Nursing Society considered three alternative proposals for a bush nursing scheme in Western Australia: appointment of a traveling nurse; provision of a service to enable expectant mothers to go to King Edward Memorial Hospital; or erecting maternity hostels in rural towns that had maternity hospitals and/or hospitals with maternity facilities. The latter was the alternative agreed upon, as it could ensure young children would not be left on the farm distant from their mother while she awaited the birth of the next child.<sup>13</sup> On 30 August, the inaugural meeting of the Bush Nursing Society discussed a proposal from the above local committee to establish a hostel at Wyalkatchem, resolved to submit it to the Bush Nursing Trust, and to obtain plans and specifications, and estimates of cost.<sup>14</sup> On 21 September, the

<sup>8</sup> Stewart, Noel *Little but Great: Saga of the Silver Chain* Silver Chain Nursing Association, Perth, 1965, p. 126; Rice, John C. op. cit., pp. 183-84, 187; and Minutes, Bush Nursing Trust, Private Archives, Battye Library, Acc. 1011A Item 9, 14 October 1920. For biographies of trustees see *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Trust, op. cit., 25 November, 9 December 1920 and 17 May 1921.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, 1921 to 1947; and Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, Private Archives, Battye Library, Acc. 1011A, Item 7, 1921 to 1947.

<sup>11</sup> *Wyalkatchem Wheatsheaf* 10 October 1922.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes, Silver Chain Nursing League, Private Archives, Battye Library, Acc. 1011A, Item 1 (1909-21), Jan-June 1921; Government Gazette 2 June 1921, p. 980; and Stewart, Noel op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> Rice, John C., op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *ibid*, 30 August 1921.

Trust 'extended general approval' to this proposal.<sup>15</sup> After the local committee expressed 'their entire confidence of the success of the project', and 'their assurance to maintain and control the institution, acting as an auxiliary to the Bush Nursing Society', the Bush Nursing Society committee resolved that 'Lot 148, set apart by the Government for erection of hostel at Wyalkatchem be transferred to the Society'.<sup>16</sup> The Lot was across the road from the hospital, and thus well located for its intended purpose, which reflected changing practices in women's health, in particular the transition from birthing at home or at a maternity home with a midwife in attendance, to hospital births.

Well-established architect Augustine Benedict Rieusset, who had served as president of the Melbourne Architectural and Engineering Association before coming to Western Australia during the gold boom period,<sup>17</sup> prepared plans for the proposed hostel, which were approved at a Special Meeting of the Bush Nursing Society committee on 7 October 1921, subject to the following modifications. The verandah was to be 10 ft wide; rooms to be 14 ft x 12 ft north and south; French windows opening inwards, with fanlights above; fly proof doors throughout; and height of kitchen ceiling to be increased to 11 ft.<sup>18</sup> At the committee's request, Rieusset visited the site and conferred with members of the Wyalkatchem committee 'with a view to deciding on the most suitable siting and other matters in connection with the building'.<sup>19</sup> He reported the site had a fall of 3 ft in 50 ft from south to north, and 2 ft in 50 ft from west to east. Allowing for the building being 12 ins above the ground at the highest point, this would give 6 ft at the lowest point, which would require 'a very considerable extra in the foundations' and involve 'closing in the portion between the ground and verandah plate with some material to prevent cats, fowls etc. from getting under'; and also a handrail and balustrading around the verandah, and steps at the front and rear, at an additional cost of at least £100.<sup>20</sup> The Wyalkatchem committee's recommendations included: the width of the hall be increased to 5 ft; the building be roofed with tiles rather than corrugated galvanised iron; and provision of an additional 1,000 gallon water tank. Rieusset enumerated the estimated cost for each of the above modifications requested by the committee of the Society, to increase the width of the hall and provide the additional tank, which totaled £270. The committee resolved that the architect call tenders for construction and alternate tenders for a tile or corrugated galvanised iron roof.<sup>21</sup>

On 29 November 1921, the committee of the Bush Nursing Society considered 15 tenders received, ranging from £925 for a building with a corrugated galvanised iron roof, plus £80 for tiles, from Messrs. Avery and Spruhan, of Guildford, to R. P. Saunier's tender of £1,486 (iron roof) and £1,551 (tile roof), and resolved to award the contract to the lowest tenderer at £1,005 for a tile roofed building. If their credentials did not prove satisfactory, it was agreed to award it to the next

<sup>15</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Trust, op. cit., 21 September 1921.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 27 September 1921.

<sup>17</sup> *Wise's Post Office Directory* 1899 to 1921.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit. Note: Mrs Carter, whose husband was Secretary of the local committee, claimed 'Residents of the district prepared the original plans and selected the site'. (*Wyalkatchem Wheatshaeaf* 10 October 1922.)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, and 25 October 1921. Mrs Carter, whose husband was Secretary of the local committee, claimed 'Residents of the district prepared the original plans and selected the site' (*Wyalkatchem Wheatshaeaf* 10 October 1922), but the Minutes recorded Rieusset as having prepared the plans.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *ibid.*, 25 October 1921.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

lowest tenderer, J. J. Hewitt & Son, of Subiaco, who had tendered at £1,192 18s for either roofing material.<sup>22</sup> In early December, after Messrs. Avery and Spruhan advised they had under-estimated their costs and could not carry out the contract for the sum of £1,005, J. J. Hewitt & Son were awarded the contract to build the hostel. The local committee was requested to 'point out' to the contractor the 'exact site' on which the building and outhouses were to be erected as agreed by the local committee and Rieusset,<sup>23</sup> and work commenced in early December. At Christmas time, entertainments held at Wyalkatchem and Benjabbering raised about £60, which was deposited in the bank towards the up-keep of the hostel.<sup>24</sup>

In early February, Rieusset reported satisfactory progress on the erection of the hostel. The Bush Nursing Society committee, determined to quash a rumour that male casualty cases were to be treated at the hostel, sent a letter to the Wyalkatchem committee stating it was to be 'reserved for maternity cases only'.<sup>25</sup> On 7 March, this committee resolved to name the hostel 'The Lady Novar Hostel', in honour of Lady Novar (wife of Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, Governor-General of Australia, 1914-20), who had taken a deep interest in bush nursing in Australia.<sup>26</sup> Following a request from the local committee for screens to be fitted to windows and doors at a cost of £14, the Bush Nursing Society resolved no further expense would be incurred 'at the present time'.<sup>27</sup> Legal advice was sought from the Hon. J. Nicholson regarding the question of leasing the hostel to the 'Wyalkatchem local Nursing Committee', who suggested charging a peppercorn rental of 1s per annum.<sup>28</sup>

In March 1922, the building was completed. After the local committee advised the Bush Nursing Society of their inability to furnish the hostel, Alfred Carson reported Silver Chain would donate £40 towards the cost, and the Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association promised a similar amount.<sup>29</sup> Formed in Western Australia in mid-1917, this Association had taken the lead in a number of districts in assisting the wives/widows and families of servicemen. There were a number of branches of the Association, whose members assisted in various ways, including carrying out repairs and maintenance to existing homes, and, from August 1917, built homes for a number of war widows and their families.<sup>30</sup>

In July 1922, after the local committee at Wyalkatchem requested the name of the hostel be changed to 'Alfred Carson Hostel', they were advised 'it was his wish to associate Lady Novar's name with the building', and as she had been informed of the Society's resolution to name the place the committee would not agree to the request, but when the next such hostel was built 'it was unanimously decided to associate Mr Carson's name with it'.<sup>31</sup> The official opening of the

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22      *ibid*, 29 November 1921.

23      *ibid*, 6 December 1921.

24      *Wyalkatchem Wheatsheaf* 10 October 1922.

25      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *op. cit.*, 7 February 1922.

26      *ibid*, 7 March 1922; and Rice, John C. *op. cit.*, p. 184.

27      *ibid*.

28      *ibid*, and 13 April 1922.

29      *ibid*, 13 April 1922.

30      *The West Australian* July-August 1917; and Assessment Document, ANZAC Cottage, Claremont, RHP 8094.

31      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *op. cit.*, 11 July 1922.

hostel was fixed for 26 September, but as that coincided with Worth's Circus visit to Wyalkatchem, the opening was postponed to Wednesday, 4 October.<sup>32</sup>

On 4 October 1922, when Walter Kingsmill officially opened *Lady Novar Hostel*, the first Bush Nursing Society Hostel in Western Australia, he spoke of the Society's work and his hope 'to see very many rest homes' in the future. Alfred Carson, and members of the Executive Committee, Mrs Dudley Ward, Mrs Alexander, and the Secretary, Mr E. A. Brown, attended the opening, together with a large number of residents from Wyalkatchem and the surrounding districts, including members of local Roads Boards. Mr Carter, Secretary, of the local committee, reported 24 women and nine children 'had been inmates of the hostel since its opening' proving 'its usefulness', and expressed his confidence in its future.<sup>33</sup> Alfred Carson recounted the history of the Bush Nursing Society, praised the work of the local committee, 'expressed great satisfaction at the general aspect of the building', and said committee's choice of site, 'most admirably giving from the balcony such a splendid view of the surrounding country'.<sup>34</sup> After referring to the 'great work done for the women in the back country away from the settlements by Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson, now Lady Novar, in whose honour this first Hostel is named', he read excerpts from her letters expressing 'her delight and that of Lord Novar' at the honour, her 'good wishes' for the Hostel's future, and her intention 'to send along a picture very shortly to hang on the walls of the Home'.<sup>35</sup> Mr Carson 'hoped to see the Lady Novar Hostel prosper and be a real Rest Home for years to come'.<sup>36</sup> The opening was followed by afternoon tea on the balcony, and a ball that evening. Next day the visitors were given a tour of the surrounding district and lunch at Benjabbering Hall before their departure.<sup>37</sup> The committee of the Bush Nursing Society sent Lady Novar an account of the opening, enclosing a small photograph of the place. On 31 October, they resolved to order a brass nameplate for *Lady Novar Hostel*, to be forwarded to Wyalkatchem and affixed to the building.<sup>38</sup>

*Lady Novar Hostel* was placed under the control of a local committee (chaired by Eva Carter), which was responsible for running and furnishing it. A resident matron (Miss Campbell) was appointed, and served from 1923 to 1932, at a salary of 15s per week. The intention was that the Hostel would be self-supporting. In the initial period, it was 'nearly self-supporting', and fund-raising entertainments at Wyalkatchem and Benjaberring raised sufficient money to meet the shortfall of £100.<sup>39</sup> In 1923, there was little fund-raising until a function on 6 December, at which Eva Carter outlined the history of the Hostel and reported the committee was 'badly in want of a little money' towards the cost of running it.<sup>40</sup>

Early photographs (1922-23) show *Lady Novar Hostel* with its distinctive tile roof, painted timber posts and timberwork to the wide verandahs, from which French

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32      *ibid*, 29 August and 26 September 1922; and Rice, John C. *op. cit.* Note: Rice states the opening was to have been on 27 September, but the Minute Books recorded 26 September.

33      *Wyalkatchem Wheatsheaf* 10 October 1922, p. 3.

34      *ibid*.

35      *ibid*.

36      *ibid*.

37      *ibid*, 17 October 1922, p. 3.

38      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *op. cit.*, 31 October 1922.

39      *Wyalkatchem Wheatsheaf*, 11 Dec 1923; and Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *op. cit.*, 1922-32.

40      *ibid*.



doors open to the main rooms, and the brass nameplate mounted below the window-light beside the front door. The grounds were not yet landscaped.<sup>41</sup>

In 1924, further additions were made to the hospital, comprising a men's ward, operating theatre, and staff rooms; and new nurses' quarters were built in 1927.<sup>42</sup>

In the interwar period, Eva Carter, continued to work for the benefit of women in the Wyalkatchem district. In 1925, she formed a branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) at Benjabbering, which was the fourth branch in Western Australia, and served as one of three inaugural vice-presidents of this branch, which disbanded in 1929. Around this period, a branch of the Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association was formed at Benjabbering, of which Eva Carter was president. In 1935, at the annual conference of the Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association she was made a life member.<sup>43</sup> In the late 1930s, this organisation declined as support for the CWA grew. At Wyalkatchem, where the initial branch of the CWA had survived for less than a year in 1926-27, a branch was re-formed in 1936, which would survive for more than 50 years. As elsewhere, the branch raised funds through provision of refreshments at functions in the town and district. It contributed valuable support to *Lady Novar Hostel*, cooperating with Silver Chain to supply furnishings and linen.<sup>44</sup>

In 1926, the Wyalkatchem branch of the Returned Services League (RSL) paid £25 for the Hostel to be painted.<sup>45</sup> In November, the Bush Nursing Society committee agreed to grant the 'Lady Novar Hostel Committee' the sum of £25 towards the erection of a cyclone wire fence around the hostel.<sup>46</sup> On 1 March 1928, following an inspection visit to the place by six Bush Nursing Society committee members in September 1927, they resolved to grant £10 10s towards fencing the grounds, and, 'In view of the number of indigent patients housed at the Hostel since its inception who were unable to pay board and residence', the sum of £20 to the Hostel Committee.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1920s, the Soldier Settlement and Group Settlement Schemes promoted by the State Government led to an influx of British immigrants to Western Australia to take up land. Expansion of agricultural settlement required further extension of the rail network, and the Lake Brown-Bullfinch section of the aforementioned loop line was finally completed and opened in 1929,<sup>48</sup> which stimulated growth in the district and in the town of Wyalkatchem.

In late 1930, the Bush Nursing Society loaned the Lady Novar committee £40 interest free for twelve months to assist them in their financial difficulties, but the financial situation at Wyalkatchem proved to be an ongoing concern. In October 1932, Mrs Muriel Chase and Miss M. Holder, reporting on their inspection visit to Wyalkatchem and Kununoppin, noted that 'with only two rooms to let', one of which had to be kept specifically for expectant mothers, there was 'no room space to make the Hostel a paying proposition' to enable it to be self-supporting,

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41 Photograph, courtesy N. Maitland, reproduced in Rice, John op. cit., p. 188; and photographs in album held at Shire of Wyalkatchem.

42 Rice, John op. cit., pp. 179-80.

43 Rice, John C. op. cit., pp. 249-250.

44 *ibid*, and p. 184.

45 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 11 November 1935.

46 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 7 November 1926.

47 *ibid*, 1 March 1928.

48 Gunzberg, Adrian and Austin, J. op. cit., p. 207.

and suggested building two little cubicles on the verandah, similar to the corner room at the Muriel Chase Hostel at Kununoppin, which would enable the place to accommodate two boarders, such as teachers.<sup>49</sup> Quotes were obtained, and subsequently Mr Carter built the addition at the north-east corner. He had failed to obtain a permit from the Roads Board, which required the removal of a partition in 1933.<sup>50</sup> A school teacher came to board, and when four school children from 'a considerable distance outback' also came to board in early 1934, the cubicles were 'appreciated', and the Hostel survived 'a very troubled year' (1933-34).<sup>51</sup>

In 1935, two school teachers, a typist, and two schoolgirls boarded at the *Lady Novar Hostel*. A large back room, 'cold, poor and bare' with two narrow beds, was set aside for expectant mothers, but few came to stay, as with the advent of two other hospitals in close proximity to Wyalkatchem and motorised transport, they could go directly to hospital rather than coming into the Hostel to await the birth of their baby at Wyalkatchem Hospital. One of the indigent cases, whose costs were met by the Bush Nursing Society on the recommendation of Dr Corr, was the wife and young child of a sustenance worker, who had only the clothes they were wearing when they arrived at the Hostel and nothing for the new baby. The local committee, Matron Miller, and the boarders, clothed the family, who 'benefited considerably through the hostel fare'.<sup>52</sup> In September 1935, the Bush Nursing Society committee discussed the future of the Hostel, and resolved it should carry on for six months, during which the possibility of establishing a Bush Nursing Centre at the place instead of the rest home would be investigated.<sup>53</sup> In June 1936, it was reported the Hostel had made 'good progress', and it was 'a very active and appreciated centre', catering to the above boarders and a number of mothers.<sup>54</sup> The following year, other than in the school holiday periods when the child boarders were absent, the Hostel was self-supporting under Matron Lord, and accommodated around 35 expectant mothers.<sup>55</sup> In 1938, their numbers decreased as there was no doctor in the district and consequently few women came to give birth at Wyalkatchem Hospital. After the local committee expressed concern about the financial responsibility, the Bush Nursing Society took over administrative responsibility for *Lady Novar Hostel*.<sup>56</sup>

During World War II, under matron Lord and her successors, *Lady Novar Hostel* was well used in most years by expectant mothers, women from outlying areas who were receiving out-patient treatment at the hospital, and by women who had family members seriously ill in hospital, including some women from Soldier Settlement areas in the district. In 1945, when Sister Jury was Matron at the hostel, she arranged with the officer in charge of the Prisoner of War (POW)

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49 1930 to 3 October 1932.

50 *ibid*, December 1932 to May 1933.

51 Annual Report Bush Nursing Society, 1933-34, in *ibid*, 30 June 1934.

52 Report on inspection visit to Wyalkatchem and Kununoppin, July 1935, and Annual Report, 1934-35, in *ibid*, July 1935.

53 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, *ibid*, 16 September 1935.

54 Annual Report, Bush Nursing Society, 1935-36, in *ibid*, 3 August 1936.

55 Annual Report, Bush Nursing Society, 1936-37, in *ibid*.

56 Annual Report, Bush Nursing Society, 1937-38, in *ibid*; and Rice, John C. *op. cit.* p. 184.

camp to obtain some loads of firewood from there, and for the 'loan' of a POW 'if a likely one comes to them' to do some odd jobs at the hostel.<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, in early 1944, plans were obtained from Mr. Mott, of Wyalkatchem, for proposed alterations to *Lady Novar Hostel*. A decision on the contract was held, pending completion of the proposed amalgamation of the Bush Nursing Society with the Silver Chain to become the Silver Chain and Bush Nursing Society Service in June 1944. Thereafter, the Bush Nursing Society committee continued to meet on a regular basis, as per the Minutes of the organisation.<sup>58</sup>

In 1945, work commenced on alterations, additions, and renovations to *Lady Novar Hostel*, as per plans by the honorary architect, Mr. Stephen, of Duncan and Stephen. In November, it was reported the additions to the dining room were 'a great improvement', the two new rooms were 'also satisfactory', but enclosure of part of the verandah with wire to serve as a sleep-out was rather disappointing, as it was on the weather side of the building and the rain came in.<sup>59</sup> In spring 1946, the additions and renovations were completed, and it was hoped to have the official opening of the new rooms in early 1947. Mr Davis, an orderly at the hospital, whose wife had been appointed as Matron at the Hostel, suggested replacing the wire with asbestos sheeting to make 'a very useful room', which was finally completed in 1948.<sup>60</sup>

In the late 1940s, the place was well managed by Mrs Davis, well used by expectant mothers from outlying districts, and for short periods also accommodated a nursing sister from the hospital when there was insufficient staff accommodation there. Mr and Mrs Davis lived at the Hostel, where he erected a garage for his car, established a vegetable garden, erected a new water tank, and made numerous repairs and some improvements, including installing windows and asbestos to enclose part of the verandah.<sup>61</sup>

By 1946, when mobile infant health clinics were introduced in Western Australia, there were 31 infant health centres and 72 sub-centres in the State, and 90% of babies were seen at a centre during their infancy.<sup>62</sup> In the late 1940s and early 1950s, with the post-war baby boom and increased immigration, the number of infant health centres increased rapidly, especially in the outer metropolitan and rural areas. The acquisition of cars widened the area covered by infant health nurses and enabled them to make more frequent visits. In addition to greater access, the role of the infant health service also broadened. Increasing attention was given to the care of toddlers, and numerous infant health clinics allotted one day per week to them from 1947. In the post-war period, an increasing number of centres were established as existing centres outgrew their case loads, and as the population spread more widely with the rapid development of suburban and rural

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57 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 1939 to 1944; Annual Reports, 1939-40 to 1943-44, in *ibid*; and Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, Silver Chain Nursing Association, op. cit. Item 8, April 1945.

58 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 1944, and in Minutes, Silver Chain Nursing Association, Private Archives, Battye Library, Acc. 1011A, Item 8.

59 Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, Silver Chain Nursing Association May-November 1945.

60 *ibid*, November 1945 to December 1947.

61 *ibid*, 1945-1951.

62 'Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health' Vol. 1, 'The History of Community and Child Health Services' (Health Department of Western Australia, Perth, 1991), Table 1.15 and pp. 92-94.

areas in the post-war period, and the need for infant health services grew during the post-war 'baby boom'.<sup>63</sup>

Following the death of Eva Carter on 5 December 1948, the Cowcowing branch of the CWA suggested renaming *Lady Novar Hostel* in her honour, to commemorate her service to the CWA 'and other worthy causes – in particular the Lady Novar Hostel'.<sup>64</sup> The Bush Nursing Society committee decided against it, but suggested naming the large ward at the place for her, which would be furnished by the CWA, which continued to assist the hostel in the post-war period, as did the local branch of the Red Cross. On 15 July 1949, Malcolm Uren, Bush Nursing Convenor, unveiled a plaque at the place, inscribed 'A tribute of gratitude and affection to Eva Carter for her untiring efforts for the welfare of the district from the women of the Wyalkatchem district', at a ceremony attended by about 70 people, including delegates from the Bush Nursing Society and Silver Chain, members of the CWA and the RSL Ladies' Auxiliary, and local residents.<sup>65</sup> A tablet was also placed in the Koorda Ward, but no Koorda residents were able to attend due to poor road conditions.<sup>66</sup>

In September 1950, when 'Wyalkatchem was the only district in the State without a traveling health clinic (perhaps because of the hostel?)', Dr. Stang, Superintendent of Infant Health Services, informed a meeting at Wyalkatchem Road Board, including delegates from neighbouring Road Boards, various organisations and Hugh A. Leslie, Federal Member for Moore, about the service and the role of local committees in each road district. Delegates from Koorda, Dowerin, Kununoppin-Trayning, Mount Marshall, Goomalling and Wyalkatchem formed a Central Committee. On 5 January 1951, at the opening of the Travelling Infant Health Clinic held at Wyalkatchem Town Hall, Sister N. L. Wilson was presented with keys to a car, and the Clinic commenced the following week.<sup>67</sup>

In March 1951, following the unexpected death of Mrs Davis, Sister Thorpe was appointed as housekeeper/matron at *Lady Novar Hostel*. The Bush Nursing Society committee agreed to a request to let a small unused room at the Hostel to the Infant Health Sister for five nights per week provided it did not interfere with the main objective of housing mothers.<sup>68</sup> Through the autumn and early winter the place was busy, under Sister Thorpe and her successor, Mrs Pearce, who was not a trained nurse 'but very capable'.<sup>69</sup> However, there were no expectant mothers in August, few in the spring, and no advance bookings for the summer. Mrs Jacks, who was relieving in the position, reported 'there is a feeling in the town that with better roads and transport, the hostel is no longer very necessary'.<sup>70</sup>

In May 1952, Lot 148 was vested in the Silver Chain and Bush Nursing Service.<sup>71</sup> In the first half of the year, there were only a small number of expectant mothers

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63      *ibid*, p. 94.

64      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, in Minutes, Silver Chain, *op. cit.*, Item 8, 7 February 1949; and Rice, John C. *op. cit.*, p. 184, and pp. 249-50.

65      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, *ibid*, 1949-51; Rice, John *ibid*; and *Wheatbelt Tribune* 21 July 1949, quoted in Rice, John, *ibid*.

66      *ibid*; and Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, *op. cit.*, 25 July 1949.

67      Rice, John C. *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

68      Minutes, Bush Nursing Society Committee, *op. cit.*, March-May 1951.

69      *ibid*, March-August 1951.

70      *ibid*, 13 November 1951.

71      *Government Gazette* 2 May 1952, p. 1101.

and a few women with family members in hospital, but in some months there were no guests other than the Infant Health nurse and a young woman telephonist, who was working at the Post Office.<sup>72</sup> Subsequently, it was arranged that Wyalkatchem Road Board would purchase *Lady Novar Hostel* to serve as the Infant Health Centre, from which the mobile clinic would operate.<sup>73</sup> In 1954, the place was vested in the Road Board for Shire Purposes.<sup>74</sup> It continued to be used as the Infant Health Centre until 1959, when a new purpose designed and built Infant Health Centre was completed at Town Lot 60, Honour Avenue, following a £1,000 grant from the Lotteries Commission.<sup>75</sup>

It is believed Dr. Wade resided at *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* for a period, and that the place was later used as accommodation for workers building the swimming pool at Wyalkatchem. Since the early 1960s, it has been a residence, firstly for Paul and Gladys Wilson, and then for Tom and Ros Cleverly and family, when he took up an appointment as the Health Officer, later becoming the Building Surveyor too. The Cleverlys remember that when they moved in the rooms at the north side comprised a waiting room opening through to the consulting room, which opened to a storeroom. The dining room opened to an anteroom, which opened to a bedroom at the north-west. The framed photograph of Lady Novar remained in the dining room. During the 34 years the Cleverlys lived there, some ceilings were replaced, and the interior was painted twice. There were two timber weatherboard outbuildings, including the laundry, and an external wc. The lot was overgrown with bush, which the Road Board cleared for re-establishment of a garden, which was planted with lawns, trees and other plantings. It became somewhat of a landmark in the town, until the Shire refused to pay for the water consumption, and without regular water through the dry summers the lawn areas died. Some of the trees planted by the Cleverlys have survived into the twenty-first century, as have numerous locally indigenous trees that became established from the mid-1960s, after lines were blasted through the property for the town's sewer line. The building itself was connected to sewerage in the 1970s.<sup>76</sup>

Through most of the late 20th century, and into the 21st century, *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* has served as the residence for an officer or employee of Wyalkatchem Road Board (later Shire of Wyalkatchem).<sup>77</sup>

While records from Lady Novar Hostel (fmr) seldom mention the racial descent of the maternity patients, and do not refer to any Aboriginal women that were admitted, it was common practice to either segregate or refuse to treat local Aborigines, up until the 1950s. Hospital authorities in regional areas showed a reluctance to admit Aboriginal patients from the late 1800s, and separate quarters, usually huts, were established during times of disease outbreak.<sup>78</sup> By the late 1920s and early 1930s, most doctors and hospitals in regional areas refused to treat Aborigines, including children, in some cases leading to death.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> ibid, March-June 1952.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes, Wyalkatchem Road Board, 21 July and 18 August 1952; *Wheatbelt Tribune* 28 August 1952; Rice, John C. op. cit.

<sup>74</sup> *Government Gazette*

<sup>75</sup> Infant Health Centres, Wyalkatchem Infant Health Centre, SROWA Cons. 6781 Item 1958/1785.

<sup>76</sup> Tom Cleverly, conversation with Robin Chinnery, March 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Rice, John C. op. cit. p. 186.

<sup>78</sup> Haebich, Anna – *For Their Own Good – Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia 1900-40*, UWA Press, Nedlands, WA 1988 p. 101

<sup>79</sup> Ibid p.236-37

During the 1940s, many regional hospitals continued their neglect toward Aboriginal patients. In 1940, Reverend Atwell reported an incidence resulting in the death of a newborn baby at Pingelly Hospital, when it was left unattended in the 'Native Ward' for nine hours, as well as other similar incidences.<sup>80</sup>

In 1982, *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was assessed by the National Trust of Australia (WA), which Classified the place on 8 March 1983.<sup>81</sup> On 27 March 1983, the place was nominated for the Register of the National Estate, on which it has been included as an Indicative Place.<sup>82</sup>

In 1997-98, *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was re-stumped, the kitchen, bathroom and laundry were renovated, air conditioning was installed, and fencing was up-graded at a cost of \$32,990, to provide a residence for physiotherapist Dean Butler, who commenced the Wheatbelt Physiotherapy Service at Wyalkatchem in February 1998, after local physiotherapist Mrs Linda Maitland departed the district.<sup>83</sup> After Mr. Butler departed, the Shire let the place to an employee, handyman Jeff Fellows, who carried out some renovations, including painting most of the timber dados, which had previously remained unpainted, and who is believed to have made alterations to the rooms along the north side verandah area.<sup>84</sup>

On 4 November 2003, a Management Order was registered on Lot 148, Reserve 17586, vested in the Shire of Wyalkatchem for the purpose of Shire Purposes and Historical Building.<sup>85</sup>

In 2005, when the National Trust of Australia (WA) up-dated the Assessment of *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem*, it was reported that the place should be referred to the Heritage Council of Western Australia for assessment for possible Entry in the Register of Heritage Places. On 10 April 2006, the place was again Classified by National Trust of Australia (WA).<sup>86</sup>

In 2007, the Shire has concerns about the long term situation with regard to *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem*, believing the vesting does not give long term security and prohibits the Shire from making any profit from the place, which continues to be occupied as a residence by a Shire employee.<sup>87</sup> The Shire has carried out some repairs and renovations, including sanding and polishing the timber floors to the front verandah.<sup>88</sup>

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a late example of a Federation Bungalow style, timber framed, weatherboard clad building with a Marseilles profile terracotta tiled roof, constructed in 1922, with extensions carried out in 1932-33 and 1945-48. It was designed by architect A. B. Rieusset and built for the Bush Nursing Society.

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80 Ibid p. 354

81 National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment, 26 November 1982, up-dated 16 October 2005.

82 Place ID 10006, Register of the National Estate.

83 Annual Report, Shire of Wyalkatchem, 1997-98, p. 11 and p. 26.

84 Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 6 March 2007.

85 Certificate of Title Vol. LR 3018 Fol. 490.

86 National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment, 26 November 1982, up-dated 16 October 2005.

87 Scott McKenzie, CEO, Shire of Wyalkatchem, meeting with Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 7 March 2007.

88 Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, March 2007.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is located on the western corner of the intersection of Honour Avenue and Slocum Street in Wyalkatchem, a town in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia located approximately 164 kms north-east of Perth.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is located approximately 600m north-east of the Wyalkatchem town centre in an area featuring community buildings and residences. On the eastern side of Honour Avenue opposite *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is the Wyalkatchem Hospital, while the Wyalkatchem District High School is to the north. Honour Avenue is a wide street, typical of streets in Western Australian country towns, with gravel verges along both sides under a canopy of mature eucalypts.

The site, identified as Reserve 17586, Lot 148, comprises an area of 4,572 sqm with a frontage of approximately 58m onto Honour Avenue. *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* faces south-east to address Honour Avenue, but is set back from the street boundary a distance of approximately 32m. The building is located approximately centrally on the lot. There is a wire mesh fence on steel posts on the Honour Avenue boundary with a pair of steel framed wire mesh gates providing access to the place. From the gate a wide gravel driveway sweeps in a wide curve in front of the former hostel and continues around the building. At the front of the building the edges of the driveway are defined by concrete curbs; however, elsewhere the alignment is only defined by vehicle tracks. There is a slight fall in level across the site from the north-east to the south-west.

The side and rear boundaries of the site have fences of approximately 1.8m in height. The north-eastern boundary onto Slocum Street has a timber picket fence, the north-western (rear) boundary has a fibrous cement fence and the south-western boundary has a metal paneled fence. The site is covered by sandy soil and low scrub with a variety of indigenous trees and shrubs. At the front of the former hostel on the north-eastern side of the site there is evidence of former lawns and landscaped gardens. However, these have not been maintained and the lawns have died.

There are several outbuildings at the rear of the former hostel. These include a metal framed and clad garage, a metal clad shed and a steel framed double carport with a metal deck roof. All these structures are recent. There is also a 'Hills-Hoist' rotary washing-line and a metal framed tank stand with a partly dismantled water tank. At the back of the building (north-eastern side) there is a metal skillion roofed porch with green shade cloth sides and adjacent is a solar paneled hot water system on a steel frame. There is a small area of timber decking of recent origin adjacent to the skillion roofed porch.

A concrete spoon drain has been constructed along the north-eastern side of the building to collect run-off where the ground slopes towards it. A concrete edged planter bed has been constructed along the south-western side of the building extending around the corner to the front.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a substantial building, a late example of the Federation Bungalow architectural style.<sup>89</sup> It is rectangular in plan form and, as originally constructed, comprised a core area of four rooms with a central passage to the kitchen and other service areas at the rear. It was constructed with a wide verandah on all sides under a steeply pitched, hipped roof. Over time

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<sup>89</sup> Apperly, et al, *A Pictorial Guide*, op. cit., pp. 206-09.

minor additions and alterations have been carried out, including the enclosure of the north-eastern side verandah and minor alterations and additions at the back. Elements that identify the architectural style of the building include the large simple roof plain, the deep shaded verandah, sparingly decorated timber posts and the use of rough cast render on the chimneys.<sup>90</sup>

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* is a timber framed building elevated above the ground on 100mm square timber stumps with metal ant caps. The building has a wide timber floored verandah on the south-west and south-eastern sides and an enclosed verandah on the north-eastern side. The hipped Marseille profile tiled roof extends over the verandahs where it is unlined. Timber posts are 120mm square with a timber balustrade at 850mm above floor level with timber lattice in-fill panels. The posts feature simple timber decoration at the top in the form of an elongated triangular panel on either side of the post. At the front of the building there is a flight of five timber steps up to the verandah and a timber ramp. The steps and ramp have matching balustrade and timber lattice paneling.

The external walls of the building are clad with timber weatherboards to sill height, 1m above ground level, and with timber battened fibrous cement panels above. A section of the south-western verandah has been enclosed at the rear with fibrous cement panels. The weather-boards are painted a dark red-brown and the fibrous cement paneling is cream coloured. At the back of the building, the walls of the w.c. and of the fireplace to the kitchen are brick.

The hipped roof extends over the verandahs on all sides with a slight break in the pitch over the verandah. There are two vented gables at the apex of the roof, facing south-west and north-east, with terracotta finials and timber battened linings. The Marseilles profile tiled roof comprises some original and some replacement tiles. Original tiles generally remain extant on the south-west side of the building. There are two tall chimneys on the north-eastern side of the roof. These are tapered and of masonry construction with unpainted roughcast render and decorative vertical lines of brickwork and two rows of brick banding near the top. Both chimneys have metal flues at the top replacing original terracotta pots.

Original joinery comprises the front doors, a matching door at the back of the central passage, a series of French doors opening onto the verandah, a timber window to the kitchen, timber internal doors and a decorative timber frieze in the central passage. There are a series of more recent timber framed windows to the rooms along the enclosed north-eastern verandah and some recent aluminium framed windows. Joinery is generally painted white throughout the building.

The front door is central to the front (south-eastern) elevation and comprises a timber-paneled door with three vertical timber panels below six panes of obscure glass. There is a timber side panel with a small clear window in the upper portion. There are timber-framed fanlights over the door and side panel with three and two obscure glazed panes respectively. The back door is of matching detail but, as a result of alterations at the rear of the former hostel, is now internal. The obscure glass is ripple glass of the type typically found in buildings from the interwar period and is probably original.

There are four sets of French doors opening to the front and side verandahs. These comprise pairs of timber doors with timber panels at the bottom and glass

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Ibid.



above comprising a clear section and four small panes of obscure glass. There is a fanlight comprising five obscure glazed lights above each pair of French doors.

There is a timber framed sliding window to the kitchen with two sashes, each comprising twelve small panes of clear glass. This window is probably original although it is unlike any other window in the building. There are more recent timber framed casement windows with horizontal glazing bars on the north-eastern elevation and on the eastern corner, where the former verandah has been enclosed. There is a recent aluminium framed window to the south-eastern elevation opening onto the verandah and two aluminium framed windows to the laundry.

Original internal doors are timber framed with two vertical timber panels to the lower section with six obscure glass panels and fanlights with three obscure glass panes. There are some more recent flush panel doors to the rear of the building and between the rooms on the north-eastern verandah and a ledged and braced door to the rear bathroom.

Internally *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem* comprises four original rooms opening from the central passage, four rooms on the north-eastern side of the building in the space of the enclosed verandah and a kitchen, bathroom, laundry and wc opening off the enclosed back verandah.

The front door opens into the 1.5m wide central passage from which two rooms open on either side. At the back, the passage opens into the enclosed back verandah from which the kitchen, laundry, bathroom and wc open. The second room on the north-eastern side of the central passage has had a portion of wall removed to open into the enclosed side verandah. The four rooms on the former verandah open from each other. The room on the eastern corner opens onto the front verandah from French doors.

Internal wall linings throughout are timber tongued and grooved paneling to dado height with battened fibrous plaster above. Ceilings are battened fibrous plaster 3.34m high. Floors are tongue and groove timber floorboards 130mm wide. There is an original decorative timber frieze in the passage featuring a vertical timber grille pattern over the passage. There are fireplaces in each of the two original north-eastern rooms. One is a masonry surround with a timber mantle and the other is has a recent face brick fireplace surround with a gas fire. There is a Metters No.2 Stove in the kitchen in an original hearth with recent ceramic tiling. A small pantry with timber shelving opens off the kitchen. Kitchen cupboards and fittings and the plasterboard kitchen ceiling are recent. There are four original timber framed lockers attached to the wall outside the door to the kitchen from the enclosed back verandah.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem* is in fair to good condition as a result of continued occupancy and care. The floorboards to the verandah have been lifted, repaired and reinstated and are in fair condition. There are some large cracks in the front office on the eastern corner of the building that suggest that the structure has dropped slightly, possibly as a result of failure of some of the timber stumps under the north-eastern side of the building. There is an area of damp on the ceiling of the front room on the south-western side, probably resulting from failure of the original roof tiles that remain extant over this portion of the roof.

Internally the building is well maintained. Internally and externally timber weatherboard cladding and timber joinery are in good condition. The masonry

chimneys are sound and the original rough-cast render and brick decoration are in good condition.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* at Wyalkatchem was the first rest home established by the Bush Nursing Society for expectant mothers, and a model for those which followed, namely *Lady Champion Hostel* (1926), at Busselton, of brick and tile construction in the Federation Bungalow style, Alfred and Eva Carson Hostel (c. 1928) at Denmark, and Muriel Chase Hostel (1930), at Kununoppin, of timber, fibro and iron construction, also in that style, all of which were architect designed and purpose built, and operated under a resident matron. At Northcliffe, there was a timber framed iron clad shed on a site where the local Group Settlers hoped a more substantial hostel building would be erected, but this was not fulfilled. Other communities were unable to realise their vision to erect a hostel because they were unable to raise sufficient funds and/or guarantee to support the facility.<sup>91</sup> All the above-mentioned hostels experienced financial difficulties as their efforts to be self-supporting proved unsuccessful, with costs generally exceeding the income from expectant mothers and other paying guests or boarders.<sup>92</sup>

Expectant mothers appear to have been in the minority among those who stayed at *Lady Champion Hostel (fmr)* in the late interwar and World War II period, following the erection of hospital and hostel facilities at Margaret River in closer proximity to the Group Settlement areas of the South-West. Alterations and additions were made to this hostel in 1945, but it was little used for its intended purpose in the post-war period. It was sold to serve as the Busselton Infant Health Centre from 1947 to 1954, when a new Infant Health Centre was built, and the former hostel was sold.

Alfred and Eva Carson Hostel, also known as Former Headmaster's House (P14312), ceased operations in the 1940s, and, after a period of occupation by the headmaster of the Agricultural College, efforts were made to reclaim it in the mid-1940s. In 1950, it was sold to become the Infant Health Centre.<sup>93</sup> The house was later sold again to the Public Works Department used initially by headmasters, and later as boarding housing for single teachers. In 1994 it was carefully restored and is now used as a private residence.<sup>94</sup>

Muriel Chase Hostel served as residential quarters for medical staff at the hospital for many years, before being utilised for senior citizens.<sup>95</sup> In the post-war period, the increase in motor transport rendered the Bush Nursing hostels unnecessary as expectant mothers could delay going to town to the hospital until close to the birth rather than needing to stay close to the hospital in the latter stage of their pregnancy.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr), Wyalkatchem* was the first of the Bush Nursing Society hostels for expectant mothers, and the last operational hostel, ceasing to be used for its original purpose in 1952-53, when it became an Infant Health Centre.

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<sup>91</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, op. cit., 1932-1944; and Stewart, Noel op. cit., pp. 127-29.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes, Bush Nursing Society, ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Chetkovich, Jean and Gare, Deborah A Chain of Care: A History of the Silver Chain Nursing Association 1905-2005 University of Notre Dame Press, Fremantle, 2005, pp.144-46

<sup>94</sup> Shire of Denmark Municipal Heritage Inventory

<sup>95</sup> Muriel Chase Building, Shire of Trayning, Municipal Inventory.

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem* is similar in style and construction to the Muriel Chase Hostel, also known as Hospital Nurses Quarters (fmr) (P2601), at Kununoppin. However, its terracotta tiled roof differs from the corrugated iron roof of the Kununoppin building and also the French doors opening to the verandah.

Timber framed, weatherboard clad buildings of this size, and from this era, generally have corrugated iron roofs and such buildings with Marseilles profile tiled roofs are relatively rare. Of the 546 Federation Bungalow places in the HCWA database, only eight, including *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem*, are listed as having timber walls together with tile roofs, six of which are in Bassendean. Although this small proportion is likely to be skewed somewhat by the large number of very substantial residences included in the database, which are more likely to be built of brick or stone than timber, it still indicates that timber and tile was an unusual combination for Federation Bungalow style places.

Tiles were used to roof many Federation Bungalow style places in the metropolitan area, but were relatively uncommon in regional areas, due largely to the cost of transporting the tiles. The HCWA database lists thirteen Federation Bungalow places with tile roofs outside the metropolitan area, compared with 79 within the metropolitan area. Besides *Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem*, only two other of these regional places have timber walls, indicating that the combination of timber and tile was a particularly uncommon choice.

A. B. Rieusset was born in Ramsgate, UK, in 1854, and migrated to Melbourne in 1883. He practiced successfully as an architect in Melbourne prior to coming to Western Australia in 1894, including winning a design competition for the Melbourne fire station in 1892, serving as president of the Architectural and Engineering Association, and being an influential architectural teacher.<sup>96</sup>

The HCWA database lists only three other places designed by A. B. Rieusset: P00138 St Anne's Church Complex, Belmont, a brick and tile Federation Gothic church constructed in 1914 (Below Threshold, 2004); P00723 *All Saints' Anglican Church, Donnybrook*, a Donnybrook Stone and iron Federation Gothic church built in 1906 (RHP); and, St Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Bridgetown (part of the Catholic group P00259), a simple brick and iron church building with cement rendered façade (on the HCWA assessment program).<sup>97</sup> Rieusset also designed a number of metropolitan houses, a school in Wellington Street, Perth (1907) and an exhibition building in Hay Street, Perth, which cannot be identified in the HCWA database.<sup>98</sup> Rieusset continued to be listed as an architect in the Post Office Directories until his death in 1936, aged 82.<sup>99</sup>

*Lady Novar Hostel (fmr)*, *Wyalkatchem* is the only extant example identified to date of A. B. Rieusset's domestic architecture, although his work achieved note in Victoria prior to his move to Western Australia in the 1890s, and he is known to have practiced as an architect designing suburban residences in Perth.

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<sup>96</sup> Ian P. Kelly, 'Architectural Biography, 1890-1915', in 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)', M.A. Thesis, UWA, 1991.

<sup>97</sup> HCWA database, 19 December 2008.

<sup>98</sup> Ian P. Kelly, 'Architectural Biography, 1890-1915', in 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)', M.A. Thesis, UWA, 1991.

<sup>99</sup> H. Wise & Co., *Western Australian Post Office Directories*, online at [http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/pdf/battye/pods/Post\\_Office\\_Directories\\_Contents.html](http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/pdf/battye/pods/Post_Office_Directories_Contents.html)

*Lady Novar Hostel* was the first and longest operational Bush Nursing Society hostel in Western Australia. It is a rare example of a Federation Bungalow of timber construction with a tiled roof, particularly outside the metropolitan area.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

National Trust of Australia (WA) Classified: 8 March 1983. Assessment up-dated by Don Newman, Judi Murray and Gail Dodd, 16 October 2005.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

No plans of the place were located by Silver Chain or at the Shire of Wyalkatchem. Further research may reveal additional information about the place and its uses.