



**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.

The wording of this document has been adapted from “Derby Tramway Woolshed, Loch Street Derby, Conservation Plan”; prepared for the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley, 1999, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals with Historian Dr Cathie Clement, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.5 Developing primary production
- 3.8 Moving goods and people
- 3.8.1 Shipping to and from Australian ports
- 3.8.3 Developing harbour facilities
- 3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
- 3.23 Catering for tourists

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 201 River and sea transport
- 202 Rail and light rail transport
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 503 Natural disasters
- 506 Tourism

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Derby Tramway Woolshed, is a simple utilitarian industrial building, originally constructed in 1900 and subsequently altered and modified in 1957, that as the only building remaining from the former goods yard combines with the Wharfinger’s House on the opposite corner of Loch Street to provide a visual reminder of the former tramway and port system. (Criteria 1.1 & 1.3)

Derby Tramway Woolshed is a landmark by virtue of its simple form and industrial character that provide a striking contrast to the adjacent open marsh land, and its location that defines the edge of the Derby town site and marks the former termination of Loch Street. (Criterion 1.3)

* 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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

The Derby Tramway Woolshed, comprising the woolshed, the concrete platform and the boundary fence are the physical remnants of the former goods yard associated with the Derby tramway, which has throughout its history formed an integral component of the infrastructure serving the Derby port, and as such collectively form a significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Derby Tramway Woolshed was constructed in 1900 to facilitate shipping of Kimberley wool, and as such was important in the development of the wool industry and the export of wool from the Kimberley in the early twentieth century. Following the decline of the wool industry in the mid-twentieth century the building was subsequently used for other industrial purposes. (Criterion 2.1)

Derby Tramway Woolshed is a former industrial building associated with the former Derby tramway and port system, which was central to the development of the town and the region from the late nineteenth century to the present. (Criterion 2.2)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Derby Tramway Woolshed has potential to yield information through archaeological investigation that may provide evidence of the earlier industrial use of the site and building, although the removal of the original timber floor and the introduction of a concrete slab floor may have reduced this potential. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Derby Tramway Woolshed is of social significance to the members of the Derby community for whom it represents the early industrial history of the town, as evidenced by community agitation in 1997 to protect the place when demolition was proposed. It is also significant to the many visitors to the region for whom it provides a reminder of the history and remoteness of the Kimberley. (Criterion 4.1)

As one of the earliest structures extant in Derby, locality, the *Derby Tramway Woolshed* contributes to the sense of place of the local community as a reminder of the history of early settlement in the area. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Derby Tramway Woolshed is rare as a good extant example of an industrial building dating from 1900 and as the only known woolshed of its vintage remaining in northern Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Derby Tramway Woolshed is rare as an industrial building dating from 1900 located in the context of the Derby town and former tramway and port system. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

Derby Tramway Woolshed is rare as a reminder of the industrial history of the Kimberley and of the importance of the wool industry to the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a distinctive land use that is in danger of being lost. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Derby Tramway Woolshed is a representative example of a corrugated iron clad industrial building dating from the early 1900s. (Criterion 6.1)

Derby Tramway Woolshed represents the industrial development of the Kimberley ports in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Derby Tramway Woolshed is in good condition. The building was restored with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Council of Western Australia under the 1999/2000 grants program and, since that time, has been maintained by the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Derby Tramway Woolshed has a moderate level of integrity. Although the tramway is no longer extant and the building can no longer be used for its original purpose, it is capable of conservation and use for interpretive purposes.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Derby Tramway Woolshed has moderate to high authenticity.

The woolshed retains considerable original fabric from the original date of construction in 1900 and from the modification program carried out in 1957. Fabric extant from 1900 includes the original timber framing and posts. Doors on the north elevation have been restored to original detail and original fixings have been restored and retained. Fabric extant from 1957 includes the roof structure, wall and roof cladding and probably the door on the eastern elevation. The door on the western elevation has been restored to match. The bargeboards, fascias, gutters and downpipes have been restored to 1957 detail. The original timber floor has been replaced with a concrete slab.

The site retains elements dating from 1900 including the concrete platform on the eastern side of the building. The boundary fence of the former goods yard has high authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The physical evidence has been compiled by Rosemary Rosario, Architectural heritage consultant.

Supporting documentary evidence has been taken from "Derby Tramway Woolshed, Loch Street Derby, Conservation Plan"; prepared for the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley, 1999, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals with Historian Dr Cathie Clement, pp.13-16.

The recommended curtilage for *Derby Tramway Woolshed* is the area bound by Elder Street to the east, the 1997 extension of Loch Street to the port on the south, and the existing perimeter fence that marks the western and northern boundaries of the former goods yard (1958).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to "Derby Tramway Woolshed, Loch Street Derby, Conservation Plan"; prepared for the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley, 1999, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals with Historian Dr Cathie Clement.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Derby Tramway Woolshed site comprises an area of approximately 7 hectares, covered with pindan and grass and bounded by a perimeter fence constructed of former tram rails and wire (1957). There are a number of shrubs and trees close to the perimeter fence and a boab tree (*Adansonia gregorii*) on the edge of the marsh adjacent to Elder Street. The site contains a former woolshed (1900 and 1957) former loading platform (1900) and a concrete slab from a former toilet block (1957). The site comprises part of a former goods yard, the full extent of which is no longer evident due to the construction of a new road to the port in 1997 that required the removal of goods yard structures, including a goods shed (1957). There is no evidence of these former structures extant.

Derby Tramway Woolshed is located on the edge of the tidal marshland that separates the townsite of Derby from the Indian Ocean. The GPS co-ordinates for the Loch Street end of the woolshed site are 8087068N by 51 966483E. On the eastern side of Elder Street, and on the corner of Loch Street, is the Wharfinger's House formerly associated with the Derby port and currently used for museum purposes.

To prevent it from being washed away, the tramway that ran from the goods yard to the port was constructed on a strip of filled ground to raise it above the level of the marsh. The tram-lines are not extant, but the raised strip of land on which the line was laid was evident until 1997 when the new road was built on its alignment. The construction of the new road necessitated the removal of the goods shed (1957) that also formed part of the former goods yard development.

The perimeter fence is constructed of former tram rails that have been used as fence posts. These have been bent over slightly at the top and support cyclone mesh fencing and some sections of barbed wire. The fence is overgrown with shrubs and weeds. Adjacent to the fence and towards the western end of the site there is a pile of former tramway elements including rails, wheels and other rusted metal items.

Between the fence and to the north of the woolshed the concrete slab of the former toilet block remains extant. There are several steel posts indicating that the building was probably clad with fibrous cement sheet that has been removed.

The slab is approximately 2.5m wide by 9.8m long and located approximately 9.6m from the woolshed.

Approximately 11m east of the woolshed is a loading platform, which is ramped at the eastern end (1900). The platform and ramp are approximately 7.5m wide and 19m long. The structure, constructed of concrete blocks using local stone and rock for aggregate, is overgrown with grass and weeds.

The woolshed is a simple, timber framed, corrugated iron clad, rectangular structure 18.24m long and 12.19m wide, with a corrugated iron gabled roof. The building has a concrete slab floor and four door openings. Doors on the west and east are located at the points where the tramway originally ran through the building. The two doors on the north were used for the delivery of goods (wool) for transporting to the port. The building is unlined with the timber structure exposed internally.

The woolshed is supported on a structure comprising timber posts 200mm x 150mm, with horizontal and diagonal timber bracing along the sides of the building. The posts are at 3.65m centres on the long sides of the building and at 3.04m centres at either end. Posts are set on concrete footings. The roof is supported on a timber posts 200mm x 200mm set in 300mm x 300mm concrete piers located on the centre line of the building and corresponding to the five 3.65m structural bays of the building. The structure dates from the original 1900 period of construction other than bracing to the top sections of the walls, which was modified in 1957 for the altered roof form. The roof structure modified in 1957 utilises iron rails for rafters and bracing with the roof sheeting fixed to 125mm x 75mm timber purlins. The roof has a 15-degree pitch.

Externally the woolshed is clad with 2.13mm x 1.21mm sheets of corrugated galvanized iron nailed to the timber framing. The external cladding has been restored and painted a light cream colour. The roof sheeting also comprises 2.13mm x 1.21mm sheets of corrugated galvanized iron. The roof has been restored and new timber barge boards fixed to the east and west elevations. There are timber fascias and new galvanized iron ogee profile gutters and round downpipes to the north and south elevations. Timber fascias, barge boards and rainwater goods are painted brown.

The woolshed has four door openings all of which date from the original period of construction in 1900. The two doors on the north elevation are recent timber framed, ledged and braced paneled doors constructed to original detail, on the basis of original drawings, and fixed with restored original (1900) iron hinges and bolts.

The doors to the west and east elevations are corrugated iron clad sliding doors on original sliding mechanisms fixed externally above the door openings.

The woolshed has a concrete slab floor of recent origin. There are a number of concrete footings on the concrete slab believed used for machines associated with more recent industrial uses of the building. The building was originally constructed with tram lines running through the southern side laid on a section of fill. The remainder of the building had an elevated timber floor supported on concrete block footings. There is no evidence of the original floor extant.

The building contains various fittings relating to the more recent industrial use of the building. The building has basic electrical fittings, however these are not connected or operational. There is an electrical meter box on the inside of the eastern wall. There are fluorescent tubes fixed to the timber posts internally. The lights are not operational.

Physical evidence indicates that the woolshed comprises fabric from the original construction in 1900 and from the 1957 modifications. The platform and ramp date from 1900. The date of the fence is not known, however it probably dates from the 1950s redevelopment. The toilet block footings also date from the 1950s. Structural elements, including posts and wall framing, generally date from 1900. Bracing at the top of the wall frames and the roof structure date from 1957, when the roof form was changed from a saw-tooth roof to a gabled roof form. Corrugated iron cladding probably dates from 1957.

The Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley received a grant under the Heritage Council of Western Australia's 1999/2000 Grants Program for works to the woolshed. Works carried out included repair, replacement of damaged sheets, and re-fixing of the cgi cladding; re-fixing of the roof trusses along the ridge to meet Worksafe requirements; a new steel door to the west elevation to secure the building to original detail; new gutters and downpipes; restoration to original (1900) detail of the timber doors on the north elevation; and external painting.

Derby Tramway Woolshed is in good condition as a result of the works carried out under the Heritage Grants Program and continued maintenance by the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley. At the time of inspection (September 2004) the building was not occupied, however proposals for use for interpretive purposes are under consideration by the Shire.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Turn of the century, timber framed industrial buildings are generally rare in Western Australia. A number of other coastal ports are known to have had tramways. In the north, this included Broome and Wyndham. There are no known similar structures to the Derby woolshed at these ports.

A search of heritage databases in other states revealed no comparable examples of woolsheds or woolstores in northern Australia.¹ The two 'woolsheds' identified in this search were both shearing sheds on inland station properties. The only example of a comparable place identified was Cairns Wharf Complex, Queensland, which includes a number of long gable-end sheds associated with the port, two of which are connected by a clock tower. The wharves date from the 1910s, with extant associated buildings constructed from the 1920s. One of the sheds, Whites Sugar Shed, is of high authenticity and retains machinery associated with packing and storing sugar for export.² Staff at the heritage agencies in Queensland and the Northern Territory indicated that they were not aware of any places comparative to *Derby Tramway Woolshed*.³

The woolshed is similar to standard goods sheds constructed by the WAGR in the early decades of the twentieth century. There are a number of railway goods sheds extant in Western Australia. An example is the goods shed (1897) at P00486 *Claremont Railway Station* that is included within the registered curtilage for the place.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

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- 1 'Northern Australia' for the purposes of this search was taken to mean north of the Tropic of Capricorn.
 - 2 Australian Heritage Places Inventory, <http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/index.html>, 17 February 2005. Keywords searched were: woolshed, woolstore, industrial, and wharf, with plural and split-form variations.
 - 3 Clare Schulz, phone conversations with staff at Environmental Protection Authority – Cultural Heritage Branch, Queensland and Office of the Environment and Heritage, Northern Territory, 17 February 2005.

“Derby Tramway Woolshed, Loch Street Derby, Conservation Plan”; prepared for the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley, 1999, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals with Historian Dr Cathie Clement.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
