



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*

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses contributes to the aesthetic values of the railway precinct in which it is located by its close proximity to the railway line, the relationship between the District Superintendent's House at 2 Forrest Street on the south side of the line and 1 Wittenoom St on the north side, which are both brick constructions of a similar style and period (1898-1902), and the contrast between the earlier (1902-c.1910) and later (1938-1952) residences in the group. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Construction of *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* (1902-1952) to provide accommodation for railway employees at Kalgoorlie is indicative of the town's importance as a railhead established during the gold boom period of the 1890s and its development as a significant railway centre on the Eastern Goldfields and Transcontinental lines. (Criterion 2.1)

The elements of *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses*, together with the nearby stone station master's house and platelayer's cottage (1897) and the brick District Superintendent's house (c.1898), form an important group of railway accommodation in Kalgoorlie. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

No. 1 and 5 Wittenoom Street were built for senior officers of the Eastern District railway division headquartered at Kalgoorlie, specifically the District

* 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.

Locomotive Superintendent (1902) and the Inspector Permanent Way (1938). (Criterion 2.2)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses contributes to the local community's sense of place as a part of the significant railway history of the town. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses is a rare grouping of four individual examples of different styles of railway housing provided by Western Australian Government Railways for its employees and represents the changing social and economic situations effecting the provision of such housing between 1902 and 1952. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The elements of *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* are typical of railway housing between 1900 and the 1950s, as provided by the Western Australian Government Railways for employees, and is representative of the range of employee housing offered during this period. (Criterion 6.1)

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses is representative of a way of life when a large labour force was required to operate the railway service and railway employees were provided with accommodation near their place of work. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses is generally in poor to fair condition, with the later (1952) residence, No. 1A, in fair to good condition. The roof of No. 1 Wittenoom needs refixing; the gutters are rusted and blocked with debris; there is no ground level drainage; there is evidence of rising damp throughout; the verandah posts are rotted at the bases; and, there is evidence of termite activity. No. 3 Wittenoom is vacant and derelict. The front northeast corner shows evidence of fire damage with the timber verandah valance badly charred and the roof sheets unsecured. The weatherboard walls and timber elements of the entire building and outbuildings are severely weathered with much of the paint flaked to reveal bare timber. The roof is lifting in places and there is evidence of rust. The gutters and downpipes are rusted, partially removed in places, full of debris and inadequate. There is extensive evidence of vandalism. No. 5 Wittenoom Street shows evidence of some subsidence around the perimeter of the verandah. The weatherboards and other timber elements are extremely weathered with flaking paint revealing extensive areas of bare timber. The gutters and downpipes are for the most part in poor condition

with rust and debris rendering them ineffective. The structural stability of the brick toilet is questionable.

It appears that very little maintenance has been undertaken on No. 3 and 5 for many years, while the tenants of No. 1 and 1A contribute to the maintenance of those places.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses has functioned continuously as dwellings, although it is no longer exclusively occupied by railway employees for whom the place was built and No. 3 is vacant and derelict. Overall, the identified values could be restored with varying degrees of conservation, and the group has retained a moderate to high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses generally shows minimal evidence of changes to the fabric, despite upgrading of various kitchen and bathroom fittings, a sleepout addition to No. 5, and the adaptation of No. 3 from a single dwelling to two dwellings. Minimal interventions have taken place to any of the dwellings: No. 1 has retained the external face brick walls, original form and cladding to the roof, and timber floors through most of the interior, although the verandah floors have been replaced with concrete, a wall has been removed in the kitchen area and there are rear and side verandah enclosures including bathroom facilities. No. 1A is unchanged, and retains maximum original fabric. No. 3 has clearly been adapted to a dual dwelling, although seemingly with only a doorway intervention. The only change to No. 5 is the enclosure of the south end of the west verandah. *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* displays a 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

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses is a group of four railway houses built between 1902 and 1952, comprising: No. 1, a brick and iron Federation Bungalow style residence (1902) constructed for the District Locomotive Superintendent; No. 3, a weatherboard, asbestos and iron residence (c.1910); No. 5, a standard Improved Mill type timber and iron railway house (1938) built for the Inspector Permanent Way; and, No. 1A, a standard Henry Martin type timber-framed asbestos and iron railway house (1952).

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 goldfinds 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 on 1 July 1894, construction continued immediately to extend the line to Coolgardie.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 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

The first railway houses built in Kalgoorlie were the stone station master's house and two platelayer's cottages, constructed in 1897 on the Forrest Street frontage of the railway station reserve. With the rapid growth of the goldfields and the railway network, which serviced it, the executive work of the railway department at Perth increased to the point of making decentralisation necessary. Four districts were created in March 1897, with

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.

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.

Coolgardie designated the headquarters of the Eastern District. A contract for the railway line from Kalgoorlie to Menzies was let on 20 August 1897, and the first section of the Golden Mile loophole, which ran from Kalgoorlie station through Boulder and the large mining tenements, was opened on 8 November 1897, carrying 9,000 passengers in its first week of operation. In May 1898, the headquarters of the Eastern District railway division was relocated to Kalgoorlie, which was rapidly becoming the centre of railway activity in the eastern goldfields.⁴

As a result of this relocation, two brick railway houses were constructed in the station reserve for railway officers. The District Superintendent's house (c.1898) was built at 2 Forrest Street, on the corner of Maritana Street, and the District Locomotive Superintendent's House (1902) was built at 1 Wittenoom Street, on the corner of Maritana Street. The Inspector Permanent Way occupied the stone platelayer's cottage at 20 Forrest Street.⁵ A residence for the District Locomotive Superintendent at Kalgoorlie was approved in the 1901 *Annual Report* of the Railways Department. The house, at 1 Wittenoom Street, was built to the standard station master's house plan of c. 1900, which was for a more substantial house than the stone residence built for the Kalgoorlie station master in 1897. This made it suitable for occupation by an officer one level higher than the station master's position.⁶

The size and style of housing provided for railway employees reflected the importance of the position of the occupant. A platelayer's cottage had two main rooms while the standard station master's residence had four or five rooms. The station master was the lowest of the salaried officers. An inspector would expect a slightly better house than that provided for a station master, but not as grand as the house of a District Engineer, District Locomotive Superintendent or District Traffic Superintendent, who were his immediate superiors. These three officers were of equal standing and were responsible only to the chief of their department, stationed in Perth.⁷

The timber and iron residence at 3 Wittenoom Street was built c.1910. WAGR introduced property numbering around 1910, and 3 Wittenoom Street was numbered Departmental Property (DP) 402, as one of the group of Kalgoorlie railway residences in existence, which were numbered DP 399 to DP 404.⁸ No early records for this residence remain and it is not known who originally occupied the place. The place may have been the first timber railway house built in Kalgoorlie, following the realisation by WAGR that stone and brick structures were not economic on goldfield railway lines as

⁴ Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, pp. 206-7; Webb, M. & A. op cit, pp. 532-533; WAGR, *Annual report*, 1898, p. 40.

⁵ WAGR, EEL Plan 6501, 1903, SROWA, ACC 1781, Item 6236; *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1902-1940.

⁶ WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1901, p. 37; WAGR Plan CCE 2814, Station Master's House; Photograph of the Locomotive Superintendent's House, *Western Argus*, 10 March 1903, p. 25.

⁷ WAGR, Houses for employees, Vols. 1-7, 1962-1975, WAS 1208 CONS 4780, Item R4027/1-7, various comments and statements throughout these files; WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1905, Appendix O: Return of Staff.

⁸ The platelayer's cottages, 20 & 22 Forrest Street (DP 399 & 400), station master's house (DP 401), 1 Wittenoom Street (DP 403), Superintendent's house, 2 Forrest Street (DP 404), from various WAGR property files, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

they could not be easily moved when the goldfield, and related railway activity, declined.⁹

There was no construction of railway housing in Kalgoorlie in the 1910s and 1920s. It was WAGR policy to allow private enterprise to supply housing in established country centres, allowing the Department to concentrate on providing facilities in remote areas where market forces did not operate. However, this approach did not always provide enough suitable accommodation for employees.

Railway activity in Kalgoorlie was still high in the inter-war period, despite the decline in gold production from the heady boom days. Kalgoorlie was the meeting place of the standard gauge transcontinental line and the narrow gauge West Australian line. All freight was transferred manually from one railway system to the other at Parkeston, East Kalgoorlie while passengers changed trains at the central Kalgoorlie station.¹⁰ 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, but also partly as a result of economic recovery from the Depression.¹¹

An amount of £12,000 was allocated toward the construction of 30 railway employee houses in 1937-38.¹² The Inspector Permanent Way, who had been occupying one of the two platelayer's cottages since at least 1903, was provided with a new residence at 5 Wittenoom Street, in 1938. The place was built to the standard design for railway employee houses at this time. This was the Improved Mill type house, a timber construction with an iron roof, which, in the 1930s, had replaced the 1920 three-room Bungalow as the standard railway employee house design. The design of the Mill type was based on a new house provided for timber mill employees at Dwellingup. The house was constructed from rectangular 6-inch weatherboards, which were less expensive to produce than tapered boards. There were several variations of the design, with the Type 4 having verandahs only at the front and back, and the Type 3 having verandahs on three sides.¹³ The Type 3 was the design built at 5 Wittenoom Street. As with the Bungalow, the Improved Mill type house was erected by labour contract with the timber supplied by WAGR's Banksiadale mill. Construction of 5 Wittenoom Street was completed on 18 June 1938, and the place was occupied by the Inspector Permanent Way.¹⁴ 5 Wittenoom Street does not appear in Wise's Post Office Directory for 1938 to 1949, so the occupant of the place at this time is not known.¹⁵

Following the end of World War Two, there was a general housing shortage and lack of building materials, and a drastic shortage of residences for railway employees in country districts. While WAGR considered the

⁹ WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1904, p. 15; WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, September 1944, SRO, AN262/7 ACC 1389 Item 1769.

¹⁰ WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, Item 1769, op cit.

¹¹ WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1938, pp. 7 & 24.

¹² WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1939, p. 27.

¹³ WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, December 1935, Item 1769, op cit.

¹⁴ WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1920, p. 12; WAGR Plan CCE 31559, SRO ACC 1781; WAGR, CCE Plan 31559, 'Proposed site for I.P.W's new residence', 25 October 1937.

¹⁵ *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1938-1949.

provision of workers' homes to be the job of the State Housing Commission (SHC), the SHC was unable to meet the demand on its own and WAGR had to provide large numbers of houses for its employees in order to attract staff and meet the demand for increased services.

To meet the expanding requirements of the department an extensive volume of building work was engaged in during the year... Activities in this direction included the construction of new stations and buildings, alterations and additions to existing structures, improved toilet and sanitary facilities, amenities for staff, barracks, reorganisation of Workshops, etc... In pursuance of the policy to provide housing for staff a vigorous building programme has been undertaken... In an endeavour to accelerate the provision of these houses a well-equipped woodworking workshop is being established at West Midland for the production of joinery and to carry out such pre-fabrication as is possible... A continuous programme of improvements and additions, incorporating the provision of extra rooms, wash-houses, bath-rooms, fly-proof doors and window screens, installation of electric lighting, etc, was also authorised in accordance with applications received, while renovations and painting were carried out under the Deferred Maintenance programme.¹⁶

In spite of these efforts, WAGR was unable to meet demand for construction. It obtained a large number of imported 3-room pre-cut Simms-Cooke houses from England, and contracted Henry Martin & Company to build a number of houses to another design, similar to the Improved Mill type house. Contract number 437, let in 1950, authorised the construction of eight Henry Martin type houses in Kalgoorlie. One was built at 1A Wittenoom Street and the rest were sited on the Forrest Street frontage of the railway station reserve.¹⁷ The eight houses are reported to have been completed on 27 June 1952.¹⁸

In 1966, during the construction of the standard gauge line to Fremantle, the headquarters of the Eastern District was relocated to Merredin, with the removal of senior staff from Kalgoorlie. The construction of the standard gauge line also negated the need for passengers and freight 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 four times a week. Small goods and parcels traffic continued to provide work, but with a much reduced station staff.

During the review of employee housing carried out by the WAGR in 1972, it was revealed that railway housing was generally of a lower standard than that provided by other government departments for its employees, and a general program of improvements was instigated.¹⁹

WAGR property files, dating from the 1950s, provide more detailed information on the occupation of the four residences comprising *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses*.

¹⁶ WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19.

¹⁷ WAGR, *Alphabetical Index to Contracts, 1900-1966*, SROWA, AN 260 ACC 2581; CCE Plan 38084/2, 26 July 1949; WAGR, various property files.

¹⁸ *WAGR Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19; WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, September 1947, Item 1769, op cit; WAGR file, Kalgoorlie employee housing, June 1952, SROWA, AN262/7, ACC 1389, Item 1642/1938.

¹⁹ WAGR, *1972 Housing Review: Report of future housing requirements*, Perth, 1972, Appendix 5.

1 Wittenoom Street (1902). The *Western Argus* has W. H. Stanley as the occupant of 1 Wittenoom Street in 1903.²⁰ The following year, Joseph Fell was the first District Locomotive Superintendent listed in *Wise's Post Office Directory* at Wittenoom Street. He was followed by James Richmond (1905-1909), Charles Hadlow (1911-1915), Alfred Hemingway (1916-1920s), Peter T. Hayward (1925-1930s) and Otto F. Pember (1940s).²¹ Charles Hadlow began his railway career as an engine cleaner at Fremantle in 1886 and rose to the position of Superintendent of Locomotive Running prior to his retirement in 1934.²² In 1888, Alfred Hemingway was locomotive foreman with the West Australian Land Company, owners of the Great Southern line. He joined the Railway Department when the Government took over the line in 1898.²³

By 1950, the position of District Locomotive Superintendent had been made redundant at Kalgoorlie, although it was still an occupied post in the other railway districts in the State. Locomotive Shed Foreman was then the senior loco position at Kalgoorlie, and the occupant of the position occupied the residence at 1 Wittenoom Street. In 1951, the foreman was H. Johnson. Rent for the property at this time was £1.6.0 a week. The place continued to be occupied by the Locomotive Shed Foreman until the late 1970s. From around 1979 to 1994, 1 Wittenoom Street was occupied by Checker, D. Holmes, and then Locomotive Operator R. Cook, who installed ducted air conditioning to the place. Cook remained in residence until 2000.²⁴

1A Wittenoom Street (1952). Between 1958 and 1999, 1A Wittenoom Street (1952) was occupied by various waged employees, including M. Bailey, M. Sheridan (Clerk), B. Williams (Trackman), R. Gallagher and Danny Flynn (Locomotive Operator). The place was renovated in the 1980s. In 1983, the interior walls were relined, and new ceilings were fitted by W. M. & C. Corless Ceilings. In 1986, a new kitchen was fitted by Holman Cabinet and Furniture Factory, the bathroom was remodelled with a new bath, shower and vanity unit, the toilet was moved into the laundry, the bathroom, laundry and toilet floors were tiled and concrete paths and driveway were provided.²⁵

3 Wittenoom Street (c.1910). This place first appears in *Wise's Post Office Directory* in 1911, as the second house in this section of Wittenoom Street. Robert Blair is given as the occupant from 1911 to 1919. In 1920, Mrs Mary Blair was the tenant, followed by Herbert O'Connor (1920s -1930s). The place is not listed in the 1940s.²⁶ In 1955, the large timber residence was converted into two flats, designated DP402A (3B Wittenoom Street) and DP402B (3A Wittenoom Street). The conversion was carried out to provide extra accommodation for married officers. The place was reserved for the Traffic Inspector (3A) and the Inspector Permanent Way (3B), whose original residence at 5 Wittenoom Street was then almost twenty years old. When

²⁰ *Western Argus*, 10 March 1903, p. 25, op cit. The newspaper gives his title as Locomotive Inspector.

²¹ *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1900-1949.

²² *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 July 1934, p. 28.

²³ *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*, Facsimile of 1901 edition, Perth, Hesperian Press, 2000, p. 523.

²⁴ WAGR property file for DP 403, op cit.

²⁵ WAGR property file for DP 1019, 1A Wittenoom Street, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

²⁶ *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1900-1949. There is an entry for 3 Wittenoom Street in the 1940s, but this actually refers to No. 5, occupied by Inspector Charles Joss.

the Eastern District headquarters was transferred to Merredin in 1966, both these positions were transferred as well and the residence reverted to the housing pool. Later occupants held the positions of fireman, assistant line & signal maintainer, trade's assistant, driver, yardman and trackman.²⁷

Following WAGR's 1972 housing review, 3 Wittenoom Street was listed for minimum maintenance. By 1983, it was in poor condition with rotting bathroom timbers and white ants in the floor, and was considered unsuitable for employee accommodation. The employee tenants were moved to new residences and the place was leased on an 'as is' basis, that is, on the understanding that no general maintenance would be carried out. The place continued to be occupied by railway employees. The flat at 3B was occupied by Trades Assistant J. Busby in 1988. He was a member of the Goldfields Model Railway Club, which occupied 3A in the mid 1990s when the place became unfit for habitation. Busby wanted to purchase the residence, but its poor condition and location on a railway reserve made finance for the purchase difficult to obtain. He eventually purchased a house elsewhere in Kalgoorlie but continued to rent 3 Wittenoom Street for a time where he worked on his model railways.²⁸

5 Wittenoom Street (1938). 5 Wittenoom Street was not located in *Wise's Post Office Directory* for 1938 to 1945, so the occupant of the place at that time is not known.²⁹ Charles E. Joss was the Permanent Way Inspector at Kalgoorlie from 1945 to 1952, and was the last Inspector to occupy the residence. He was transferred to Bunbury where he remained until his retirement in 1966.³⁰ In November 1956, No. 5 was occupied by Guard, A. Hyde. He complained that the place was in poor condition, with the chimney in the front room falling down, among other things. Despite the shortcomings of the place, Hyde remained in residence for over 20 years. In 1987, Trackmaster L. Millar was occupying the place. Maintenance was carried out in 1994, at which time the existing sleepout was fully enclosed and the kitchen cupboards renovated. A suspended ceiling had been fitted in the living room at some time, and in September 2000 the ceiling rose on the original ceiling was removed and refitted to the new ceiling.³¹

By 1988, rationalisations, and changes in technology and services had resulted in a decrease in WAGR staff by almost 50% throughout the State. More and more railway houses were being leased to private tenants as railway staff numbers were reduced, and many residences were sold. WAGR planned to divest itself of all its residential property by 1999, but those houses sited on the railway station reserves have issues of noise and vibration due to their proximity to the line.³² In 2000, the sale of the WAGR freight division to private enterprise was finalised. The new owners,

²⁷ WAGR property file for DP 402, 3 Wittenoom Street, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth; plan showing the proposed conversion.

²⁸ WAGR property file for DP 402, op cit.

²⁹ *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1935-1949. This section of Wittenoom Street has two entries to the early 1930s, up to 15 entries (numbered 1-26) between 1935 and 1941, and two again from that time, making it difficult to discern the railway houses. It is not known if these extra entries are an error, or if they represent temporary housing during the Depression years.

³⁰ *The Railways Institute Magazine*, October 1966, p. 3.

³¹ WAGR, property file for DP 860, 5 Wittenoom Street, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

³² WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1988, p. 22; WAGR, property file for DP 860, op cit.

a group calling itself Australian Rail Freight Consortium, which includes local company Wesfarmers, became the employer of most of the railway staff in Kalgoorlie. WAGR no longer has a need for the railway houses in *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses*.³³

In 2002, No. 1, 1A and 5 Wittenoom Street are tenanted while No. 3 is unoccupied.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The physical evidence is based on inspections carried out for WAGR in March 2001.

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses is a group of four railway houses built between 1902 and 1952, comprising: No. 1, a brick and iron Federation Bungalow style residence (1902) constructed for the Locomotive Inspector; No. 3, a weatherboard, asbestos and iron residence (c.1905); No. 5, a standard Improved Mill type timber and iron railway house (1938) built for the Inspector Permanent Way; and, No. 1A, a standard Henry Martin type timber-framed asbestos and iron railway house (1952).

The four dwellings that comprise *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* are situated on the south side of Wittenoom Street. The dwellings back onto (south) the railway line and the remainder of the Kalgoorlie railway station reserve. *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* is located at the western end of the reserve, immediately east of the Maritana Street railway bridge. There are no other buildings on the north side of the reserve. The dwellings face a recreation reserve on the north side of Wittenoom Street.

The front, Wittenoom Street, boundary of *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* is delineated by a 0.900 metre high timber-framed cyclone mesh fence (1 Wittenoom Street), a vertical supersix fence (1A Wittenoom Street) and a painted corrugated iron fence (3 & 5 Wittenoom Street). The side and rear boundaries of each residence have supersix fences, except for the east boundary of 1 Wittenoom Street which is the same 0.900m high timber-framed cyclone mesh fence as on the street boundary (north). The residence at 1 Wittenoom Street faces east, toward the Maritana Street Bridge, while the other three residences face Wittenoom Street. Each residence has a separate vehicular and pedestrian entry. The site is flat and mostly grassed with mature trees in the front yards of each residence. There are a number of Lilac trees, a Bougainvillea and pencil pines at No. 1 and a pencil pine at No. 1A. The overgrown plantings at 3 Wittenoom Street obscure views of the building from most angles.

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses comprises four houses of various periods of construction between 1902 and 1952. The residence at 1 Wittenoom Street is a 1902 brick and iron house displaying some characteristics of Federation Bungalow style; 1A Wittenoom Street is a standard 1950s Henry Martin type timber-framed, asbestos clad building with an iron roof; 3 Wittenoom Street is a c.1910 weatherboard, asbestos and iron residence; and 5 Wittenoom Street is a timber construction with a tile roof, displaying some characteristics of Inter-war Californian Bungalow style. Neither 1A nor 3 Wittenoom Street displays characteristics of any

³³ WAGR, Kalgoorlie Railway Institute property file, Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.
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particular style but No. 1A is a standard railway design Henry Martin dwelling. Primarily, the design of each residence is functional and purpose designed for railway employees within the availability of WAGR resources at the time.

1 Wittenoom Street

No. 1 is a single storey double brick construction with a hipped roof clad with corrugated iron. The red face brick is laid in a Flemish bond on the front elevation, facing east, and the remainder of the place is laid in a stretcher bond. The main roof covers the verandahs across the front and both sides, and extends in a skillion over the rear rooms and verandah. The underside of the verandah roofs is painted. The two main double chimneys are face brick with a rendered corbelled detail. The kitchen chimney is a tall slender face brick chimney with brick corbel and a rendered square insert at the top.

The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening into a corridor with two rooms each side. At the end of the corridor, there is the dining room with the kitchen on the right (north) and office on the left (south). At the rear is an enclosed verandah with the bathroom and toilet on the left and laundry on the right.

The verandahs are supported by square timber posts in steel stirrups, and have concrete floors. The western bay of the north verandah has a timber framed asbestos clad dado enclosure, and the west wall is a full height enclosure. The central front door is the original four-panelled door with sidelights and fanlight. The sidelights are detailed with small red glass squares at the top and bottom and geometric designed printed glass in between. The original timber framed double hung sash windows remain in place throughout the main brick dwelling. The window openings are detailed with a double brick arch header and concrete sill. The kitchen window on the north side has a decorative timber framed metal clad awning. Colonial profile gutters are in place but there is minimal evidence of downpipes to provide adequate discharge from the roof, or any ground level drainage.

The main four rooms have the original 0.135 metre (5 inch) timber floorboards. The walls and ceilings are lined with plasterboard, and the skirtings, architraves and original four panel doors are in place. Halfway down the corridor is a simple moulded archway. The front room on the left has a moulded picture rail. Each of the four main rooms has back-to-back brick fireplaces that have been boarded over, but the mantelpieces have been retained. The kitchen also has a brick fireplace although the stove and mantelpiece have been removed. The kitchen has a modern fitout. The kitchen, dining and office ceilings are lined with painted matchboard on the rake. The door at the end of the corridor has a fanlight detail. The rear wet areas have concrete floors and modern fitouts. The rear (west) wall is lined on the exterior with asbestos, and an aluminium sliding glass door accesses outside. Ducted air conditioning has been installed throughout the dwelling. The original interior fabric is mostly intact throughout.

There are several detached outbuildings comprising steel framed and clad garages, carport and sheds, in the rear yard, west of the dwelling.

The roof and roof drainage system are in fair condition although some sheets need refixing and the gutters contain debris. The verandah posts are rotted at the bases, and there is evidence of termite activity in the front door timber frame of the front door. Overall, the place is in fair condition, although there is little evidence of maintenance taking place.

1A Wittenoom Street

1A is a single-storey timber-framed building with asbestos cladding. The hipped roof is clad with corrugated iron, and breaks pitch to cover the verandah that returns around half of the front and left side of the building. The verandahs are supported by evenly spaced square timber posts. The face brick chimneys are rectangular in form.

The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening directly into the living room. Opposite the front door is a doorway into a corridor running left (east) and right (west). Along the corridor on the right are two bedrooms and the bathroom, and to the left are another bedroom and the kitchen, which is also accessed from a door in the living room. The kitchen leads out to the laundry with the toilet on the right.

The front verandah has a concrete floor and an open picket balustrade around the edges except the west wall that is timber framed and clad with asbestos. The central front door has five glazed panels in a vertical format. The original timber framed windows have been replaced with aluminium-framed windows throughout. Square profile gutters are in place but there is only evidence of some sections of downpipes that are inadequate in providing discharge from the roof. There is no ground level drainage.

The main five rooms have the original 0.100 metre (4 inch) timber floorboards. The ceilings and walls are lined with battened plasterboard, although some ceilings have been replaced with gyprock. The walls are battened in a horizontal format to dado height, and vertical format above. The skirtings, architraves and original flush panel doors and hardware are in place. There is a fireplace in the living room. The kitchen fireplace was removed during a recent kitchen refurbishment. The living room fireplace is face brick, painted, with corbelled brick detail supporting a plain timber mantel that has also been painted. The bathroom and laundry have recent fitouts and the toilet is new. The original interior fabric is predominantly intact throughout.

There is a standard WAGR detached steel-framed carport on the east side of the dwelling.

1A Wittenoom Street is in a fair to good condition with no evidence of damage or deterioration of any fabric.

3 Wittenoom Street

No. 3 comprises two accommodation units with separate entrances under one main roof. 3B is located at the front with the entry on the east side. 3A is located at the rear with the front entry on the south side facing the railway line. Neither of the entries is visually obvious, and the place is not readily recognisable as a dual occupancy. There are no paths leading to either front entry and the rear dwelling is accessed on the west side by passing outbuildings on that side.

The floor plan reveals that the front unit was originally one room with a verandah on three sides, connecting to the rear unit with a central corridor and verandah on the south and west sides. 3A is accessed on the south side, at the original front, facing the railway line. The verandah on the east side of the south frontage has been enclosed with a timber frame and asbestos cladding and louvred windows, with the door opening onto the verandah near the front door. Bedroom 1 on the plan extends to the verandah line and has a gable roof. The extension is evidenced on the west wall where there is a join in the weatherboards. The front door opens into a central corridor with two rooms on the right (although only one is accessible from 3A corridor, and the other is accessed from 3B) and three rooms on the left. The end of the corridor has been closed, but would originally have continued through to dwelling 3B. The west verandah extends along the side to the third room (kitchen), which opens onto the verandah.

3B is accessed part way down the east side. The entry is located on the verandah, but part of the verandah on the north end has been enclosed, isolating the entry. The door opens into a large entry space with bedrooms 1 and 2 on the right, lounge on the left, the kitchen ahead of the entry, and the bathroom off the kitchen, on the right.

Dwelling 3A was inaccessible at the time of inspection, but much could be determined through the windows.

The building is timber framed and clad with weatherboards. The hipped roof is clad with corrugated iron and has a gable feature on the south frontage facing the railway line. The face brick chimneys are corbelled and show evidence of having been painted. The original profile gutters are in place but there is only evidence of some sections of downpipes that are inadequate in providing discharge from the roof. There is no ground level drainage. The verandahs across the front and west side are supported by evenly spaced square timber posts. The verandah across the front and the entry alcove on the east side have vertical timber valances with gothic detail and cutouts. The west verandah has a skillion roof that is separate from the main roof. The original timber verandah floors have been replaced by concrete. The original timber framed double hung sash windows have been retained. The south entry door into 3A is typical of c.1900 four-panel door with side panels, sidelights and fanlight.

The interior floors are a combination of replacement 0.100 metre (4 inch) and original 0.135 metre (5 inch) timber floorboards. The walls and most of the ceilings are lined with the original exposed battened plasterboard and some ceilings are lined with more recent replacement gyprock. The dado of the kitchen in 3A is lined with wallpaper. The skirtings, architraves and original four panel doors and hardware are in place throughout. The fireplaces in bedroom 2 of 3A and the lounge of 3B are boarded, and the back-to-back brick fireplace in the kitchen still has the timber mantelpiece. Both kitchens have a basic 1950's three-cupboard sink fitout. The south verandah enclosure has a plasterboard ceiling lining on the rake. The interior fabric of each place is mostly intact throughout.

The outbuildings are located on the west side, adjacent to the kitchen of 3B, and further towards the north, near the north west corner of the verandah. Both outbuildings face south. They each comprise a skillion roofed

weatherboard clad toilet and open south facing laundry, with concrete floors and a double concrete trough in place.

The front northeast corner of the dwelling shows evidence of fire damage with the timber valance badly charred and the roof sheets unsecured. The weatherboard walls and timber elements of the entire building and outbuildings are severely weathered with much of the paint flaked to reveal bare timber. There are several areas of the east wall where weatherboards have been removed or vandalised. The roof is lifting in places and there is evidence of rust. The gutters and downpipes have been partially removed in places and those that remain are rusted, full of debris. There is evidence of vandalism in broken window glazing and a panel is missing from the front door to 3B. Overall, the place is in poor condition on the exterior and fair on the interior.

5 Wittenoom Street

No. 5 is a single-storey timber framed building with painted shiplap weatherboard cladding. The predominantly hipped roof is clad with short sheets of corrugated iron, and features a gable on the east frontage and the main roof covers the verandah that wraps around three sides of the building. The windows on the front gabled wall, and on the west side, each have timber framed fixed awnings with corrugated iron cladding. The verandahs are supported by evenly spaced square timber posts with an asbestos dado wall. The south end and central west side verandah has been enclosed with asbestos sheeted walls and aluminium framed windows. The painted face brick chimneys are corbelled.

The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening into a corridor with two rooms on the left, one room on the right, and the kitchen straight ahead, accessing the third room on the left. The kitchen accesses straight through to the rear verandah with the bathroom on the left. The kitchen also opens through to the east side verandah comprising two small rooms.

The front verandahs are floored with the original 0.100 metre (4 inch) boards. The central front and back doors are four-panel doors with two horizontal panels at the top. The original timber framed double hung sash windows remain in place throughout the main dwelling. Square profile gutters are in place but there is minimal evidence of downpipes to provide adequate discharge from the roof, or any ground level drainage.

The five main rooms have the original 0.100 metre (4 inch) timber floorboards. The ceilings are lined with the original battened plasterboard and the cornice has a horizontal simple decorative detail. The walls have a vertical tongue and groove timber dado wall, painted, with battened plasterboard above. The skirtings, architraves and original doors and hardware are in place. Two of the bedroom doors have glass panels. There is a fireplace back-to-back in the living room and the kitchen. The living room fireplace is face brick with corbelled brick detail supporting a painted timber mantel. The kitchen fireplace is fitted with the original wood stove and simple bracketed timber mantle, and the room has the original basic three-cupboard sink fitout. The bathroom walls are plyboard and the fitout comprises a boxed bath and basin attached to the wall. The interior fabric is predominantly intact throughout.

The laundry and toilet are separate detached buildings on the east side at the rear of the dwelling. The toilet is brick with a curved corrugated iron roof. Adjacent to the toilet is the laundry. It is a timber framed and weatherboard-clad structure with a tiled skillion roof, concrete floor, and unlined walls on the interior. It is fitted out with a double concrete trough and brick copper stand, with the copper missing. There is a standard WAGR detached steel framed carport on the east side of the dwelling, and a corrugated iron clad gable-roofed cabin near the south rear boundary of the property.

No. 5 shows evidence of some subsidence around the perimeter of the verandah. The weatherboards and other timber elements are extremely weathered with flaking paint revealing extensive areas of bare timber. The gutters and downpipes are for the most part in poor condition with debris rendering them ineffective. The detached brick toilet appears to be structurally unsound, as the south wall has pulled away from the connecting walls. The backyard is generally unkempt. There are no plantings of significance, the yard being mostly overgrown weeds and a few Eucalypt trees. Overall, the place is in a poor to fair condition, and there is little evidence of maintenance taking place.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

No. 1 Wittenoom Street is a brick railway residence built to the standard station master's house design of c.1900. A verandah on the west side is a later addition. A similar addition was made to the Leonora station master's house (c. 1905), and appears to have been a concession to the goldfields climate. There are a number of brick railway residences built to this standard design, among them the station master's houses at Brunswick Junction, Cranbrook, Darkan, Bowelling and Kelmscott, and twenty-two employee residences at Merredin on Kitchener Road and Todd Street, part of *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin*.

1A Wittenoom Street is a standard Henry Martin house, one of eight built in Kalgoorlie, the other seven extant on the Forrest Street frontage of the railway reserve. Fourteen Henry Martin houses were built at Merredin, twelve of them as part of the *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin*, while another six were built at Brunswick Junction and another group, number unknown, were built at Katanning.³⁴

The Improved Mill type house at 5 Wittenoom Street was one of a number of railway residences constructed to this standard design in the 1930s to 1950s. The place was designed to have an iron roof, but a number of those constructed after World War Two were built with tile roofs when iron was in short supply. Three examples of the Improved Mill style, with tile roofs, are located at 46 Wittenoom and 2-4 Chapple Street, Kalgoorlie in association with the former railway barracks. Other examples of the style are in Stickland Street, Wongan Hills (6), *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin* (4) and Wagin (2).

³⁴ Contracts no. 431, 433, 436 & 437, WAGR, Alphabetical Index to Contracts, 1900-1966, op cit; WAGR CCE Plan 38084/2, 26 July 1949.

3 Wittenoom Street is a non-standard timber railway house built in the first decade of the nineteenth century. No information has been located of similar remaining railway houses.

Wittenoom Street Railway Houses bears some comparison, although on a much smaller scale, to the *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin*. Both groups include examples of the brick and iron residence based on the c.1900 standard station master's design, the Improved Mill style railway house and the Henry Martin type house. *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin* comprises eleven, six and six examples respectively of these places, alternating over two street blocks on Todd Street and Kitchener Road. *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* is a compact grouping of one of each of these railway house types, plus one early (c.1910) non-standard timber railway house. The development of the group has been ad-hoc. The condition of the *Wittenoom Street Railway Houses* is considerably poorer than the Merredin precinct, with No. 3 being derelict, vandalised and uninhabitable, and No. 5 in poor condition in spite of being occupied. *Railway Housing Precinct, Merredin* is in generally good condition with all dwellings occupied.

13.4 REFERENCES

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
