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 documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Irene Sauman, Historian, and Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant, in May 2004, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 202 Rail & light rail transport
- 301 Grazing & pastoralism & dairying

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The places and elements within *Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct* are valued for their individual aesthetic characteristics, and together form a significant group. (Criterion 1.1)

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is a dominant landmark element on the north west side of the main commercial centre of Wyalkatchem and

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

contributes significantly to the townscape and character of the town. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct represents the importance of the railway system in the development of rural Western Australia in general, and the wheat growing districts in the central region in particular, bringing economic benefit to the region and the State. (Criterion 2.1)

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct was significant to the development of the town of Wyalkatchem, which was an important railway junction in the central wheatbelt region from 1914 into the 1970s. (Criterion 2.2)

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct was one of five sidings used in the successful trial of bulk handing during the 1931-32 harvest that led to the establishment of Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited in 1933, which brought technological and economic improvements to the handling and transportation of wheat grain in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The design of the 1936 CBH Wheat Bin, and associated grain receival and despatch elements, was a technical innovation of considerable significance in the handling of grain loads. (Criterion 3.3)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is highly valued by the local and wider community for its associations with the railway history and grain growing industry of the region. The preservation of the 1936 CBH Wheat Bin and its use as an agricultural museum, and the ongoing use and maintenance of the various other structures of the group, is indicative of the significance the place has for the district. (Criterion 4.1)

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct provides a sense of place for the residents and wider community of Wyalkatchem as a focus for the town and for its landmark quality. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct includes one of only three remaining examples in the State of 1936 CBH wheat bins featuring a series of curved iron walls. (Criterion 5.1)

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is a rare example of a group comprising the Station Building, Railway Barracks, Wheat Bin, Goods Shed, and Loading Ramp and Crane, in addition to an external signal installation, and demonstrates a way of life and functions no longer practiced. (Criterion 5.1 & Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is a very good representative example of a 1910s-1930s railway group, consisting of a number of structures in a relatively intact setting. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is overall in good condition, although the Railway Barracks require some conservation works to address roof and ground level drainage issues.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct operated continuously as a railway facility until the early 1990s. The Station Building now provides a venue for the regional vet and physiotherapy services, the Railway Barracks provide accommodation for a parasailing organisation and is an overflow facility for the hotel, the CBH Wheat Bin is occupied as the CBH Agricultural Museum, and the Goods Shed is a community recycling facility. All places provide useful functions that have required little or no interventions to the original buildings. Although these functions are not associated with railways, *Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct* demonstrates a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The places comprising *Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct* show minimal evidence of changes to the fabric, and demonstrate a high 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.

Supporting evidence for the CBH Wheat Bin Museum has been taken from Laura Gray, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998. Supporting evidence for the Railway Barracks has been taken from Laura Gray & Irene Sauman, *Conservation Management Plan: Wyalkatchem Railway Barracks*, April 2003.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct comprises Railway Barracks (1911), Lever Frame (c.1916), Loading Ramp & 5-ton Crane (1911-1916), Goods Shed (1923), CBH Wheat Bin (1936), and Station Building (1937). The timber and iron Station Master's House (1916) was demolished in 2003.

The first European settlers in the Wyalkatchem area were pastoralists who took up leases in the 1870s. The town of Wyalkatchem was named for the waterhole called Walkatching, situated on the track between the town of Goomalling and Yarragin Station. The Toodyay Road Board was made responsible for the area in 1871, and a well was sunk at the waterhole in 1881.[1]

In the 1880s, Western Australia was not producing enough wheat for local consumption and had to import flour from the eastern states. A major issue was lack of transport to the markets, as it could take several weeks to haul a wagon load of bagged grain over poor roads to Guildford or the closest coastal port town. And rural transport, consisting generally of seasonal, long-distance one-way traffic, was not attractive to private enterprise.[2]

To make the State self-sufficient, the Government began to actively encourage agriculture and closer land settlement. Two privately constructed land grant railway lines, namely the Midland Railway and the Great Southern Railway, and the government financed South West Railway were built between 1885 and 1894 to assist in opening up the country for settlement. At the same time, the Government surveyed 'agricultural areas' in at least forty localities throughout the south and central regions of the State. Assistance for settlers was provided under the *Homestead Act 1893*, which granted 160 acres with seven years to make improvements, the *Agricultural Bank Act 1894*, which provided long term loans to pay for the improvements, and the establishment of the Bureau of Agriculture (later Department of Agriculture) to provide information and advice on farming in Western Australia. State Farms were established, the first, at Hamel, being the venue for superphosphate trials in 1899, which demonstrated the value of the fertiliser in improving

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

2 Statham, Pamela, 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', In Stannage, C. T. (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, 1981, p. 190; Glynn, Sean, *Government Policy and Agricultural Development: A study of the role of government in the development of the Western Australian wheat belt, 1900-1930*, UWA Press, 1975, pp. 53-54.

wheat yields.[3] Transport for large quantities of superphosphate to the farms was added to the need for transport of produce to market.

As production on the goldfields began to fall in the early 1900s, it was noted that 'a large number of men, who were attracted to the State by reports of gold, are now turning their attention to the land'.[4] A Royal Commission on Immigration and Land Settlement, which reported in 1905, looked at providing 'pioneer railways' to encourage land settlement. Its findings, that fifteen miles from the nearest railway was the limit for profitable wheat farming, provided the basis for the new railway policy that commenced in 1906.[5]

The Eastern Railway had been extended from Northam to Goomalling in 1902, to provide a rail service for settlers in that area. As each section of new line opened, settlers pushed further afield in the belief that the line would eventually be extended to reach them.[6] In 1906, the Goomalling railway line was extended northeast to Dowerin. By 1909, there were sufficient settlers in the Wyalkatchem area to form a Progress Association. The extension of the rail line was one of the aims of the Association at this time. A trip to the railhead with a wagonload of bagged grain could take as long as three days, a fact which reinforced the absolute necessity of the railway for the viability of grain production at that time.[7]

In 1910, the *Dowerin-Merredin Railway Bill* was enacted, enabling the extension of the line to Merredin on the Eastern Goldfield line, creating a loop-line, which passed through Wyalkatchem, Korrelocking and Kunanoppin. The Dowerin to Kunanoppin section of line was constructed by contractors Atkins & Finlayson, while the PWD constructed the remaining section to Merredin. The line to Korrelocking was opened on 6 February 1911, and to Merredin on 28 August 1911. The line was built as a light agricultural line using 45-pound rail.[8]

The contract for the Dowerin to Kununoppin section called for only a 39-foot loading platform, passenger platform and metalled approach road at the eight stations in between, including at Wyalkatchem. Kununoppin station was provided with a portable shelter shed and latrine as extra amenities.[9] The Railway Barracks, which had originally been built at Korrelocking during construction of the line, were relocated to Wyalkatchem in 1911.[10] A portable

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3 Appleyard, R. T. 'Western Australia: Economic and demographic Growth, 1850-1914', In Stannage, C. T. (ed), op cit, p. 229; *Bureau of Agriculture Journal*, 7 August 1894, p. 132; Burvill, G. H. *Agriculture in Western Australia: 150 years of development and achievement, 1829-1979*, UWA Press, Perth, 1979, p. 22; Glynn, Sean, op cit.

4 Glynn, Sean, op cit, p. 39, quoting the superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau.

5 Glynn, Sean, op cit, p. 61.

6 Ackland, R. R. B. *Wongan-Ballidu Pioneering Days*, Wongan-Ballidu Shire Council, 1965, pp. 1-5; Glynn, Sean, op cit, p. 63.

7 Ackland, R. R. B. op cit, p. 5.

8 Rice, John C. op cit, p. 35; Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 206-208.

9 WAGR, Dowerin-Merredin-Kununoppin contract, 1910, SROWA, AN260/CCE ACC Item 192.

10 WAGR file, Wyalkatchem trainmen's barracks, 1915-1961, EEL Plan 16188, SROWA, ACC 1781, Item 16188.

shelter shed had been provided at Wyalkatchem by 1912.[11] That year, a spur line was built north from Southern Cross to Bullfinch, and in 1914, construction began on a line to link the Bullfinch spur line with the Northam-Wyalkatchem-Merredin loop. Wyalkatchem was chosen as the junction of the two lines.[12]

As a junction station, Wyalkatchem required better facilities including a good water supply, locomotive and engine sheds, a turning triangle, coaling stage, signals and staff. In 1915, Reserve 688, which was the site of the Wyalkatchem well and tank, was vested in the Minister for Railways as a railway water supply.[13] Wyalkatchem was first listed as a manned station in the 1915-1916 WAGR *Annual Report*. In 1916, the Station Master's House (not extant) was constructed from two timber platelayer's cottages, which were moved from Walgoolan and re-built at a cost of £250.[14] The Station Master's House was located on the south side of the station yard, immediately east of the locomotive turning triangle. The Railway Barracks was situated to the west of the triangle.[15]

A galvanised iron cottage and a cabin were relocated to Wyalkatchem from Niagara, on the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line, and a refreshment stall and cabin were relocated from Korrelocking. These buildings were in place on 4 April 1916. The refreshment stall and cabin, weatherboard ladies waiting room, shelter shed, galvanised iron station office, lever frame and an 'out of' goods shed are shown on an enlarged platform area on a 1916 progress plan of the station. A cart dock, 25,000 gallon tank on a 40-foot stand, a five-ton crane beside the loading platform, and the corrugated iron cottage occupied by the refreshment stall lessee are shown on the north side of the station yard. Adjacent to the lessees cottage was a hessian structure occupied by the night station master. The length runner, a track maintenance man, lived in a hut of sleepers and corrugated iron located on the south side of the yard, in the centre of the turning triangle. A stockyard was added at the west end of the yard in 1919.[16]

The railway loop line to link with Bullfinch and Southern Cross was not completed immediately. The section to Bencubbin was opened in 1917 and the section to Lake Brown was completed in 1923, leaving the last section of the line still to be completed. A Class 3 goods shed was added to the Wyalkatchem station yard in 1923. In the 1920s, there was an increase in land settlement as Soldier Settlement and Group Settlement schemes were promoted by the State Government. Hundreds of British migrants arrived in the State to take up land under the latter scheme. More land settlement meant more rail traffic and rail construction. In 1929, the loop line was

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11 WAGR, Wyalkatchem Progress Plan, EEL 13766, 1912-1920s, SROWA, ACC 1642 Item 452.

12 Rice, John C. op cit, p. 74.

13 WAGR file, Wyalkatchem, SROWA, WAS 1208, Item R1352/58.

14 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1915-1916, pp. 68, 74-78; Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) property file for Departmental Property (DP) 346, Properties Section, Westrail building, East Perth.

15 WAGR file, Wyalkatchem trainmen's barracks, Item 16188, op cit, Plan 51991/2; DOLA Reserves Enquiry, Reserve 15439; WAGR property file for Departmental Property 346, op cit.

16 WAGR, Wyalkatchem Progress Plan, EEL 13766, op cit.

completed to Southern Cross with the opening of the Lake Brown-Bullfinch section.[17] Eight railway houses were built at Wyalkatchem in 1929-1930.[18] Some were sited on a Reserve in the residential area of the town, while two were placed on the railway yard reserve.[19] In 1932, staff at Wyalkatchem numbered thirty-four and another four houses were erected in the town in the early 1930s.[20]

The method of handling and transporting wheat had been under scrutiny since the First World War. Wheat was transported in bags, which were filled at the farm direct from the harvester, sewn up in the field and carted to the rail sidings to be stacked, often in the open, ready for loading onto rail trucks. Each bag required 22 stitches and farm diaries record the task of sewing up wheat bags extending over a number of months after harvest. A shortage of bags during harvest was not uncommon and bags represented 14 per cent of the total value of the crop. In 1920, the Western Australian Grain Growers' Co-operative Elevators Ltd was formed to institute bulk handling, but the project failed to eventuate due to high bulk freight costs and the high construction costs of silo storage facilities.[21]

In 1931, 83,988 bags of wheat were railed from Wyalkatchem.[22] With the onset of the Depression, interest was revived in bulk handling as a way of reducing costs to the farmer. Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd (Wesfarmers) devised a cheaper system of bulk handling. John Thomson, General Manager, Henry Braine, Wheat Department Manager and Steve Wood, Chief Wheat Inspector are credited with the design of the various aspects of the system, with engineer Robert Carl Sticht providing the technical expertise. In 1931-32 Westralian Farmers undertook an experiment in bulk wheat handling at five sidings between Dowerin and Wyalkatchem.[23]

> Bulk Wheat. Rapid handling of first deliveries. Wyalkatchem, Nov 12th. The first wheat in bulk to be delivered in this state was delivered this morning at Korrelocking siding. Three deliveries were made.[24]

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17 Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, p. 207.

18 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1929, p. 17 & 1930, p. 17; WAGR, Alphabetical index to contracts, 1901-1966, SROWA, AN 260 ACC 2581; WAGR file, Wyalkatchem departmental housing, Part 1, List of Wyalkatchem departmental properties, November 1971, SROWA, WAS 1208 CONS 4771 Item R6334, 1936-1973.

19 WAGR, Wyalkatchem departmental housing, part 1, op cit, January 1966; WAGR, Wyalkatchem improvements, Vol. 2, 18 February 1976, SROWA, WAS 1208 CONS 4771 Item R6176.

20 WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, part 1, SROWA, AN262/7 ACC 1389 Item 1769, 31 August 1932.

21 Goldfinch, Richenda (ed), *Legends of the Grain Game: Stories of the people who built Co-operative Bulk Handling*, CBH, West Perth, 2003, p. 20; *A Co-operative Enterprise: A progressive history of Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited to 31st October, 1950*, [CBH, West Perth], 1969, p. 5.

22 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1933, cited in Laura Gray, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998, p. 11.

23 Goldfinch, Richenda (ed), op cit, pp. 14-16; Reymond, C. 'Bulk Handling of Wheat: Experiments in Our State', *The Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 31 December 1931, pp. 10-11; *A Co-operative Enterprise*, op cit, p. 5;

24 *West Australian*, 13 November 1931, quoted in Richenda Goldfinch (ed), op cit, pp. 20-21.

> There can be no doubt whatever of the popularity of the system with farmers. Quick dispatch at the siding means less delay; the same bags can be used over and over again; sewing the bags is unnecessary.[25]

The new method of bulk grain storage and handling consisted of horizontal storage bins rather than the orthodox vertical concrete silos. The principal used in designing the bin was the 'wedge theory', where the weight of wheat in the bin (the downward pressure) balanced the horizontal pressure. This was achieved by a system of tie rods and internal concrete anchors. Each storage bay in a bin was independent, making the structure flexible enough to deal with the different levels of wheat in various parts of the bin during the loading and unloading process. Economy was achieved by the use of corrugated iron for the walls and roof. A mobile grain elevator, loaded with the aid of a Clarke shovel, was used to get the grain into the bin and from the bin to the rail truck. Rail trucks were modified with hessian and canvas side extensions and a canvas cover supported by canes, which were held in place by the weight of the wheat.[26]

Following the success of the trial, Westralian Farmers Co-operative and the Trustees of the Wheat Pool of Western Australia (established in 1922 to handle wheat marketing) combined to establish Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd (CBH) on 5 April 1933. CBH established bins at 53 sidings in 1933-34, including a temporary bin at Wyalkatchem, which was in place in November 1933 for the first delivery of bulk wheat to the station yard.[27] In 1934, amid much controversy and opposition from vested interests, expansion was halted by the Government until a Royal Commission reported favourably on the scheme on 31 July 1935. The Bulk Handling Act (1935) was proclaimed on 1 February 1936, granting CBH sole rights to handle wheat in Western Australia.[28]

In 1936, the CBH Wheat Bin was erected at Wyalkatchem.

> [A] new type of bin was installed in Wyalkatchem; it was used as a school of instruction and was built by potential supervisors and foremen under the direction of Stan Sutton; it was largely due to Stan's efforts that subsequent building programmes were so successful.[29]

The first grain delivery to the Wyalkatchem '1936' bin was on 9 November 1936.[30] Each bay in the '1936' bin was 7-foot 3-inches wide and 46-feet long. The roof was 22-feet high at the peak, supported on timber posts, and was largely independent of the walls. Each bay could hold about 115 tons of wheat.[31]

In 1937, a new timber and tile Station Building was constructed at Wyalkatchem, replacing the assorted structures that had been in use since

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25 *West Australian*, 18 December 1931, quoted in Richenda Goldfinch (ed), op cit, p. 21.

26 Goldfinch, Richenda (ed), op cit, pp. 4-6, 11-16; *A Co-operative Enterprise*, op cit, pp. 6-8.

27 Rice, J. C. op cit, cited in Laura Gray, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998, pp. 11.

28 Goldfinch, Richenda (ed), op cit, pp. 4-16.

29 Goldfinch, Richenda (ed), op cit, p. 83, quoting from *The Elevator*, December 1974.

30 *The Company: Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited*, c.1997 and Rice, J. C. op cit, cited in Laura Gray, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998, pp. 9-11.

31 *A Co-operative Enterprise*, op cit, pp. 6-8.

1916. The Station Building was built to a 1924 plan, known as a larger Type 2, reserved for country junction stations. Wyalkatchem Station Building was constructed to WAGR Plan 30703 and, together with an overhead pedestrian bridge, cost £2,697.[32]

In 1940, there were fifteen departmental houses at Wyalkatchem, all tenanted by railway employees. The Railway Barracks was crowded, with five single railwaymen living in the place. Following the end of World War Two, a concerted housing programme was undertaken by the Railways Department. In 1948, four cabins were located on the stock and saleyard reserve at Wyalkatchem and in 1951, four imported, pre-cut houses were erected.[33]

The Goods Shed was upgraded in 1950, but what this entailed has not been ascertained. In 1956, a 1954 PRB type wheat bin was added to the station yard to increase grain storage capacity from 160,000 to 260,000 bushels. The Barracks were enlarged with an extra four cabins and upgraded in 1956-57.[34]

The railway yard was considered an eyesore by the local Roads Board, and a concerted effort was made in the late 1960s to improve it. Grading of the site, better drainage, removal of unwanted structures, and the planting of trees were part of the work done over the next decade and more. Employee houses were removed and the water tower and tank cleared off the site, being no longer required due to the gradual introduction of diesel locomotives since 1956. The overhead footbridge was removed on 14 November 1974.[35]

In 1972, an improved CBH grain handling installation was constructed on the east side of town, adjacent to the Bencubbin line, with new grain bins and rail siding. The 1954 CBH bin was cleared from the railway yard, but the original 1936 Wheat Bin was retained for historical purposes. The cabins on Grace Street were removed between 1971 and 1974, and on 14 November 1974 the overhead footbridge was removed. The stockyards and the turning triangle were removed in 1976.[36]

In 1981, the 1936 CBH Wheat Bin was taken over for an Agricultural Museum and was classified by the National Trust. The structure was nominated for the Register of the National Estate in 1982.

In the 1980s, rationalisations and changes in technology and services resulted in a decrease in Railway Department staff by almost 50%, to 5,567 in 1988. Railway houses were leased to private tenants, sold for removal or demolished.[37] The population of the Wyalkatchem district was 1,060 in 1976, but had fallen to 732 by 1993 with the trend toward larger landholdings.[38]

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32 Uhe, Phillipa, *Survey of Railway Heritage in Western Australia*, National Trust, March 1994, entry B3-1.

33 WAGR file, Wyalkatchem departmental housing, Item R6334, part 1, op cit.

34 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19; WAGR property file for DP 346, op cit.

35 WAGR file, Wyalkatchem improvements, Vol. 2, Item R6176, op cit.

36 WAGR File, Wyalkatchem improvements, Vol. 2, Item R6176, op cit.

37 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1988, p. 22; WAGR property file for DP 346, op cit.

38 WA Department of Local Government, *Wyalkatchem Statistical Profile*, August 1993.

A conservation plan was prepared for the Wyalkatchem Wheat Bin in 1998, and in 2003, a conservation plan was prepared for the Railway Barracks. In 2003, the Station Master's House was assessed as below threshold for the State Register and the place was demolished.

In 2004, Wyalkatchem station yard is no longer used for railway purposes, although the line is still in use, mainly for the seasonal transport of wheat and fertiliser. The Station Building, Goods Shed, Railway Barracks and CBH Wheat Bin are leased by the Shire of Wyalkatchem at peppercorn rental. The Station Building is occupied as offices and consulting rooms for the regional vet and physiotherapy services; the Railway Barracks provide accommodation for a parasailing organisation and is an overflow facility for the hotel; the CBH Wheat Bin showcases the agricultural history of the region, as the CBH Agricultural Museum; and, the Goods Shed is a community recycle facility.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct comprises a timber and tile Station Building (1937) and external Lever Frame, Goods Shed and timber and gravel Loading Ramp and 5-ton Crane, Railway Barracks (1911, 1919, 1921, 1956), CBH Wheat Bin (1936), and the site of the Station Masters House (-2003).

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is located in the railway reserve within the Wyalkatchem townsite, central to Railway Terrace on the north east side of the railway line and Grace Street, parallel along the south west side of the railway line. The Barracks and site of the Station Masters House (demolished 2003) are located on the south west side of Grace Street. Within the reserve, the CBH Wheat Bin and two steel framed and clad extensions at the north west end are aligned northwest-southeast, parallel with, and in close proximity to, Railway Terrace, with a number of original and relocated railway cabins and other outbuildings backing along the street front, and a row of mature Flooded Gums along the street verge. The CBH Wheat Bin site is fully fenced with 2.0 metre high cyclone mesh, with access gates at various points around the perimeter, and the main pedestrian entry on the Railway Terrace frontage close to the east corner of the site. Within the fenced area is a collection of rolling stock along the southwest side of the CBH Wheat Bin.

Adjacent to the CBH Wheat Bin, at the southeast end is a c.2000 public toilet facility, and further south of the CBH Wheat Bin is the Loading Ramp and Goods Shed, also on the northeast side of the railway line. Directly opposite the Goods Shed on the southwest side of the railway line is the Station Building. Much of the Grace Street frontage of the Station Building is obscured by verge plantings and a steel clad garage. Opposite the Station Building, on the southwest side of Grace Street, is the Railway Barracks site at an angle to the road, aligned north-south. Further to the southeast of the Railway Barracks, also facing Grace Street, is the site of the Station Masters House.

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct makes a significant contribution to the Wyalkatchem townscape and character, and the CBH Wheat Bin, Station Building, Goods Shed and Crane, and Railway Barracks are landmarks in Wyalkatchem.

The railway Station Building is a single storey structure with a bitumen platform apron surrounding the building. The rectangular plan form comprises two separate buildings under the one main roof, with an open space between the two built sections. The Station Building aligns parallel with the railway line on a northwest-southeast alignment, with a white picket fence along the entire rail side of the platform. A Lever Frame, consisting of a small raised timber platform with remaining signals, is located several metres apart at the southeast end of the station.

The Station Building is a timber framed and clad building with a hipped gambrel roof clad with Marseilles clay tiles. The roof has wide eaves overhanging the perimeter of the building. The eaves are supported by a series of timber brackets. The windows are timber framed in the double hung sash style. There are numerous door entries, both single and double, with original panelled doors in most openings, with clear glass double paned fanlights above. The interior of the building has vertical tongue and groove jarrah dado walls with battened asbestos walls and ceilings. The floors are 0.125 metre (4 inch) jarrah floor boards. The original skirtings, architraves and timber shelving remains insitu. There are back-to-back fireplaces in the north west section of the Station Building, and a single fireplace in the south east section. The fireplaces are original face brick with bullnosed arched header detail. At the southeast end of the platform, a series of levers are in place on a small square timber platform. There is a small timber framed gabled canopy on one side of the platform.

Opposite the Station Building, on the north west side of the line, is the timber framed Goods Shed. A railway line runs through the southwest side of the building. The skillion roofed building is clad with vertical corrugated iron that is painted and features a mural on the wall (facing north east). The southwest side of the building is open at each end, straddling the railway line. The remainder of the building is raised approximately 0.900 metres from ground level, accessed by recently constructed steel stairs. The place is unlined on the interior, and has timber floors. Iron railway line and timber railway sleepers form the footing and retaining foundation structure.

The Crane and Loading Ramp are located immediately to the north west of the Goods Shed, with the 5-ton steel framed block Crane set onto a concrete plinth with timber surrounds. The Loading Ramp is built up and retained by timber railway sleepers and iron railway line construction. The finished surface of the Loading Ramp is gravel.

The CBH Wheat Bin is located north of the Goods Shed, aligned in the same direction, parallel with the railway line and Railway Terrace, but located closer to Railway Terrace. The Wheat Bin comprises, predominantly, a bush timber structural frame of Salmon Gum with chamfered milled jarrah posts supporting curved bays of horizontal corrugated iron that form the walls of the 61-metre long building. The gable roof is asymmetrical over the roof and forms a break pitch along the entire south west side of the building. The milled posts along the south west wall protrude through the roof cladding to connect to a horizontal timber platform that facilitates grain loading. The roof sheeting in that proximity is designed to be removed for the grain loading function. To provide access to the interior of the Wheat Bin for museum purposes, two

curved bay sections have been removed near the east corner of the northeast wall, and two flat steel doors installed. The removed panels have been placed in storage. The entire interior of the Wheat Bin is unlined and the original flat metal floor remains intact with rubber mat pathways laid over. The timber framed corrugated iron ablution and other shed on the Railway Terrace side, have some heritage significance. There are also railway elements that have been relocated to the site, that are of some significance; 2 signals, and a WAGR Gs4 wheel wagon.

The Railway Barracks comprise a detached kitchen/dining facility at the north end connected by a covered way to the ablutions to the south and then to 12 cabins aligned each side of a central corridor under a single roof. Another set of 4 cabins are located under a separate roof structure, connected at the south end of the structure by another covered way. The single storey group are timber framed and weatherboard clad structures. The cabins are each mounted on railway lines on concrete footings. The gable roofs are clad with corrugated iron. The roof structure over the cabins is supported by rows of timber posts along each of the outer sides of the rows of cabins, with vertical corrugated iron valance aprons along both sides and in the gable infills. The interiors of the cabins are predominantly painted tongue and groove timber lined walls and ceilings, and timber floors, except for the 4 cabins at the southern end, which are lined with battened asbestos on the walls and ceilings. The ablution areas have concrete floors. Throughout, the doors are timber ledge and brace and the windows are double hung timber sashes. The original timber window ledges, bakelite switches and lamp sockets and flywire doors remain insitu in the cabins. The kitchen and bathrooms have c.1980s fitouts, although the original brick chimneys in the dining room and kitchen remain on the north wall.

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is in good condition overall, although the Railway Barracks require some conservation works to address roof and ground level drainage issues and weathered timbers.

The c.2000 public toilet facility on the Railway Terrace frontage of the railway yard, the steel clad shed in front of the station on the Grace Street frontage, the two steel framed and clad extensions north west of the CBH Wheat Bin and the rolling stock along the south west side of the CBH Wheat Bin have no heritage significance.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The Wyalkatchem Railway Barracks are of similar design to barracks at Wongan Hills (1914) and Pinjarra (1911). Both these barracks occupy a station yard reserve with other intact railway structures.

There are five other railway barracks entered on the State Register of Heritage Places. Most are registered as part of railway precincts. These are:

- P2778 Yalgoo Railway Station Group, which dates from 1898, includes a stone and corruated iron barracks building.
- P3097 It is part of the Pinjarra Railway Yards, comprising barracks (1912), goods shed, carriage shed and engine shed. The Pinjarra barracks are of similar design to Wyalkatchem Railway Barracks.

- P12414 Railway Barracks, Wongan Hills Wongan Hills also has an intact railway barracks (1914) with a similar configuration, comprising 16 weatherboard cabins in two rows under one roof structure. The associated precinct also includes a water tower with square tank (c.1911), goods shed (c.1911), station master's house (1915), ramp and crane (1964) and station building (1965).[39]
- P15722 Rawlinna Townsite includes a 1957 concrete block railway barracks building, which at the time of assessment for registration (2002) remained in use for accommodation.
- P15867 Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group inlcudes a 1902 brick and iron barracks building, one of the few remaining in the style used prior to the 1904 introduction of cabin-style barracks such as those at Wyalkatchem.

Kalannie, in the Dalwallinu Shire, has early barracks similar to those at Wyalkatchem, as well as a more recent barracks building. In the Mount Marshall Shire, there is a smaller barracks at Beacon in a less significant railway precinct, and the barracks at Bencubbin are of a different design, featuring separate cabins not under a main roof. None of these are listed on the relevant Municipal Heritage Inventories.

Of those railway barracks listed in the Heritage Council database, Hyden's barracks (1930) comprise only two cabins, and the railway barracks at Cue are of a different design and have been moved to another site. At Mukinbudin, a number of the barrack cabins have been relocated to the local caravan park for use as overnight accommodation, following the example set by Bruce Rock several years ago, while the remainder have been demolished.

Wyalkatchem Goods Shed is a standard Class 3 design measuring 25-foot x 30-foot. The Class 3 goods shed was built in varying lengths, sometimes as multiples of the standard unit and sometimes to an arbitrary length depending on local requirements. The Class 3 shed at Sandstone was built 60 feet in length but half of this has been cannibalised to repair the remaining half, while the goods shed at Dalwallinu (1927) is made up of two standard units and measures 50-foot x 30-foot. The width of the Class 3 shed, at 30 feet, appears to have remained the standard for all. The Class 3 shed typically enclosed the railway line to provide weather protection during the loading and unloading of goods, which were often carried on open rail trucks covered with a tarpaulin. The floor of the shed was raised to provide a platform level with the bed of the rail truck. The original flooring was timber, replaced in many cases with concrete. All classes of goods shed were typically timber-framed buildings clad in corrugated iron.[40]

Other Class 3 goods sheds are located at Boyup Brook (1912) and Pemberton (1926). The Boyup Brook station yard also consists of a standard

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39 HCWA assessment documentation for Wongan Hills Barracks (Place 12414) and Pinjarra Railway Yards (Place 3097).

40 Uhe (Rogers), Phillipa, *Survey of Railway Heritage in Western Australia*, National Trust of Australia (WA), March 1994, Typology Section [p.15]; John Taylor Architect, *Sandstone Goods Shed Conservation Plan*, 2002.

small brick station building of the period that has been extended in timber.[41] The railway yard at Pemberton includes a weatherboard and iron Type 2 country station building, a staff cabin, toilets, 3-ton crane and low-level platform. The buildings are leased to the Pemberton Tramway Company, which runs a tourist rail operation.[42]

The Wyalkatchem CBH Wheat Bin is one of only three remaining 1936 bins. One bin has been retained in each of three main grain growing areas in the State, with Wyalkatchem representing the eastern district, Wubin the north and Pingrup the south. The Wubin bin has a concrete floor, and Wyalkatchem Wheat Bin has the only remaining example of the original steel door.[43] The Wyalkatchem CBH Wheat Bin is more than twice the length of the Wubin bin. The Wubin Wheat Bin (Place 0666) is on the State Register.[44]

The Wyalkatchem Station Building is one of four larger Type 2 station buildings, which were constructed at country railway junctions. Others of the type were constructed at Brookton (1924), Tambellup (1926) and Donnybrook (1929).

At Tambellup, the weatherboards have been painted white. The station building, together with the brick station master's house, is leased by the Wool Foundation and both buildings are in good condition. Donnybrook station building is leased by the Shire of Donnybrook. A conservation plan has been prepared for the building and the place has recently undergone considerable restoration work. It is occupied by the Donnybrook Tourist Bureau, and is regsitered as part of P5012 *Donnybrook Railway Precinct.* Brookton station building is leased by the Brookton Shire and is occupied by an Arts and Crafts Centre, an op shop run by the Anglican Ladies Guild, and the Brookton Tourism Association. A conservation plan is being prepared for the building. Brookton also has a goods shed.[45]

There are a number of cranes remaining in various station yards, some with associated loading ramps. Dumbleyung, on the former Wagin-Newdegate branch of the Great Southern line, includes a goods shed, goods platform and crane, and wheat bin. Donnybrook has a 5-ton crane but no loading ramp. Both a 5-ton crane (1965) and loading ramp are extant at Darkan, in association with a 1912-1913 station building and station master's house. Wickepin railway yard includes a goods shed (1911), 5-ton crane and loading ramp (1913), station building and station master's house (1913).[46]

Wyalkatchem Railway and CBH Precinct is a very good example of a 1910s-1930s group of railway structures. The Signal Landing is an unusual feature. No other examples of this structure are known of.

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41 Uhe (Rogers), Phillipa, op cit, Entry D2-5.

42 Uhe (Rogers), Phillipa, op cit, Entry D2-9.

43 Gray, Laura, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998.

44 Gray, Laura, *Wheat Bin Wyalkatchem Conservation Plan*, 1998. Wubin Wheat Bin was registered in 1992 based on a brief National Trust assessment.

45 Gray, Laura & Sauman, Irene, *Brookton Railway Station Conservation Plan*, 2004.

46 HCWA assessment documentation, Darkan Railway Station Precinct (Place 2703).

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

WAGR files relating to Wyalkatchem Railway station yard, State Records Office of WA, WAS 1208 and AN 260.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
