



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 The Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages
- 3.22 Lodging people
- 5.4 Working in offices
- 8.4 Eating and drinking

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- Σ 308 Commercial services and industries
- Σ 311 Hospitality industry and tourism
- Σ 404 Community services and utilities

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie exhibits strong aesthetic characteristics of the Federation Free Classical and Federation Filigree styles. The juxtaposition of the original elements of the building, together with the 1935 additions, make up an aesthetically pleasing collection of built elements. With its Flemish bond tuck-pointed brick walls, well-proportioned and decoratively treated openings and deep verandahs, *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* makes a fine and strong aesthetic statement. Some of the major interior spaces have fine aesthetic qualities in terms of proportions of the spaces (such as the billiard room) and their detail (such as the entry and stair off Lefroy Street). (Criterion 1.1)

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is an eclectic assemblage of Federation Free Classical and Federation Filigree styles elements, sited to take advantage of the prominent street location. The 1896-1900 elements are of a competent design, whilst the 1935 additions are very simple and are representative of standard contemporary architectural practice. These additions fit sympathetically with the original buildings. (Criterion 1.2)

For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms 0171 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is located in an historic street of national significance and is an integral part of its strong aesthetic qualities. *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* is part of a small but important collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings in Bayley Street. Its location on the corner of Bayley and Lefroy streets gives the building additional prominence and so the place has both significant precinctual and landmark qualities. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is associated with the discovery of gold near Coolgardie by Bayley and Ford in 1892, and the subsequent mass migration of gold seekers to this area. The discovery of gold and the burgeoning town at Coolgardie signalled the further exploration and settlement of the remainder of what became known as the Eastern Goldfields area. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie represents Coolgardie's development as the mining, business and administrative centre of the Eastern Goldfields during the 1890s, and is a visual reminder of this boom period when, by the end of this decade, the town was third only to Perth and Fremantle in terms of population, at a time when Australia was generally in a deep economic recession. (Criterion 2.2)

Together with the other remaining buildings on Bayley Street, *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* is representative of a time in Coolgardie's boom period when Bayley Street was the main thoroughfare and the location of the town's primary administrative, business and social interests. The development of *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* first as offices and then as a hotel is an indication of the importance of its location. (Criterion 2.2)

The conversion of *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* from the offices of Alexander Matheson to use as a hotel is indicative of the height of Coolgardie's development during the late 1890s, when approximately twenty three hotels were in existence, the majority of these situated on the main thoroughfare of Bayley Street. (Criterion 2.2)

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is associated with a number of people including Alexander Matheson, architect Archer W. Hoskings, as well as publicans and local personalities George Robertson, Elsie Gear, and Donovan 'Curly' Nicholls. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie represents the local population boom of the goldrushes and has the potential to yield information leading to a greater understanding of this important period of Western Australia's history. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is significant to the Coolgardie community and to the wider community and contributes to these communities' sense of place for several reasons: as a reminder of the boom period of Coolgardie when it was the mining, business and administrative centre of the Eastern Goldfields; for its substantial corner presence on the Bayley Street streetscape, which was the main thoroughfare of the Coolgardie gold town; and, for its use as a hotel

from 1900 to 1965 and its function as a local meeting place, and its current use as a boarding house/bed and breakfast. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

Recognition of Coolgardie as an historic town, together with the listing of *Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie* by the National Trust of Australia (WA), its entry in the Register of the National Estate, and the inclusion of the place in the Shire of Coolgardie's Municipal Inventory with a Category 1 allocation, are also a measure of social significance. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is unusual in that it was a purpose built office building, which was later converted for use as a hotel at a very early stage of its existence. (Criterion 5.1)

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is one of three surviving buildings that represent a fragment of Coolgardie's twenty three hotels in the gold boom period. The other survivors are the Denver City, which still functions as a hotel, and Marvel Bar, which serves as the R.S.L. Club. Coolgardie's historic significance to the state, its diminishing stock of permanent buildings, and the fragility of most of the surviving buildings contribute to the rarity of the place. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie is a fine example of the use of the Federation Free Classical and Federation Filigree styles of architecture and also of the theme of hotels located on corner sites. (Criterion 6.1)

Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie represents Coolgardie's development and rapid change as the mining, business and administrative centre of the Eastern Goldfields and is a visual reminder of this boom period when the town was third only to Perth and Fremantle in terms of its population. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The fabric remains in sufficiently good condition to properly represent its fine aesthetic, historic and social values. The conversion of ground floor spaces to bathrooms has generally had a negative impact on the fabric of the place. Many of the problems that are impacting on the fabric are the result of a lack of rigorous maintenance programs, attrition of time, reactive soil movement, and ingress of damp. Overall the place varies from very good to very poor condition depending on location.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The precise nature of the original intent is no longer readily legible because the physical evidence of its use as offices is all but obliterated. However, the hotel uses since 1900 are reflected in the present use as a hostel. Most of the cumulative maintenance to the exterior of the 1896-1900 sections of the building has been appropriate, with the exception of the treatment of the public and saloon bars. The loss of the bars and the dining room has diminished the integrity of the place. Overall the place retains a moderate degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Much of the original fabric of each of the stages of construction remains in place and intact. Some detail has been lost and a number of rooms have been altered for alternative uses. The changes to the 1935 additions have had some of the most significant impact. The verandah was a later addition and has been replaced and altered through time such that the present verdant is not authentic. Some room interiors remain intact, while others have been almost completely renewed or altered. Most of this occurred in the period since 1935. Overall the place retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Key sections of the supporting evidence has been taken from 'Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan', prepared for Larry James and Tracy Evans by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd and Kristy Bizzaca, in December 2000.

Key sections used: 1.0 Documentary Evidence (ppl-23), 2.0 Physical Evidence (pp24-69), 3.0 Analysis of Documentary and Physical Evidence (pp70-75), 6.0 Graded Zones and Elements of Significance (pp 83-94).

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For an analysis of the Documentary Evidence, refer to 'Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan', prepared for Larry James and Tracy Evans by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd and Kristy Bizzaca, in December 2000.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For an analysis of the Physical Evidence, refer to 'Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan', prepared for Larry James and Tracy Evans by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd and Kristy Bizzaca, in December 2000.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a Comparative Analysis, refer to 'Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan', prepared for Larry James and Tracy Evans by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd and Kristy Bizzaca, in December 2000.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

'Railway Hotel (fmr), Coolgardie Conservation Plan', prepared for Larry James and Tracy Evans by Considine & Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd and Kristy Bizzaca, in December 2000.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The precise nature and timing of all changes are not known, as no original plans have been found of the building or the works carried out since its construction.

Further to this, it is not clear the precise manner in which the place originally functioned as an office. If information was to be found at a later date it would go a long way as to explaining the scope of the original works and the work

carried out in 1900, for its conversion to a hotel.

The want of this information is no impediment to ascertaining significance, but may assist with the long-term conservation of the place. In the meantime, there is much conservation work to be done simply to stabilise the main significant fabric. There is ample evidence to assist with some of the more urgent tasks, including the repair work required to the main street frontage verandahs, which are in a very poor state and are part of the most important fabric in terms of the streetscape presence of the building.

Little is known of Archer W. Hoskings, the architect of the original buildings and further research into his works may be beneficial.