



# 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)

- 3.24.2 Providing hospital services

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

- 404 Community services & utilities

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE•

*Denmark District Hospital*, in its parkland setting, is valued by the Denmark community for its hospital association and the impact on the northern vista from the centre of the Denmark township. (Criteria 1.1 & 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Denmark District Hospital* was constructed to service the needs of the people of the Group Settlement Scheme of 1922-1928, which helped develop the Denmark region and substantial parts of the south-west of Western Australia. Since 1924, the place has undergone considerable change to remain in use and the Morgue and Matron's Quarters are intact examples of building types from the first stage of development. (Criterion 2.1)

*Denmark District Hospital* is representative of a rural community's co-operative and long-standing commitment to the provision of health facilities in the town evidenced, in particular, by the establishment of the Hospital Comforts Committee which operated from 1949 to 1993. (Criterion 2.1)

#### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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#### 11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

As the central health and medical facility for the district, *Denmark District Hospital* has significance for generations of local people who have had associations with the place and its medical staff. (Criterion 4.1)

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• 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 from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

*Denmark District Hospital* contributes to the community's sense of place by being prominent in location and having associations with generations of residents. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

The Morgue and Matron's quarters have rarity value as extant examples of these building types dating from the 1920s. They are representative of the standard plans for these buildings dating from this period. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Denmark Hospital* is a representative example of a rural hospital facility which has undergone considerable change to remain in use since its inception in 1924. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Denmark Hospital* is in good condition due to a regular maintenance program. The Morgue and Matron's Quarters are in good condition.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Denmark District Hospital* has operated exclusively as a hospital and/or a community health facility. A considerable number of alterations and additions have taken place over the years to accommodate functional changes and facilitate the ongoing use of the place. It has retained a moderate to high degree of integrity.

The Morgue continues to be used and has a high degree of integrity. The Matron's Quarters are now used for an alternate use.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The only evidence of the original 1924 hospital building is the roof form. Some of the 1925 additions are evident in the external materials and roof form. Each development has altered the previously existing fabric of the hospital building. There is no original fabric discernible in the interior of *Denmark District Hospital*. Overall the place has a low degree of authenticity.

The Matron's Quarters (fmr) and the Morgue have remained unchanged over time and as such have 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, Heritage Architect.

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*Denmark District Hospital* is a complex of single-storey timber and iron buildings, many of them interconnected. The place comprises the Main Hospital Building (1924, 1925, 1950s, 1974, 1990s), Morgue (1924), Nurse's Quarters (1925), Matron's Quarters (1925) and Orderly's Room (1925), each showing various periods of development. The Isolation Ward (1936) was demolished in 1974. There are also ancillary buildings such as the Laundry and Boiler Room (1950s) and a zincalume shed (c.1990). Other work has

included the addition of the 'Garden Room' (1996), and numerous and ongoing internal renovations.

The township of Denmark was developed as a timber town by Charles and Edwin Millar. The Millar Brothers logged the district to supply railway sleepers, timber for the gold mines, and for export.<sup>1</sup> Millars built a railway line from Denmark to Torbay (later known as Elleker) on the Great Southern Railway line for the transport of the timber. Denmark was a thriving town with two timber mills until 1903-04, when production began to slow as demand dropped and the supply of suitable trees in the area dwindled. In 1905 the mills closed and Denmark became a ghost town.<sup>2</sup>

The town, buildings, railway line and Millars' land interests were purchased by the State government for £50,000 in 1907. The area was now attractive for farmers as Millars had removed the huge trees which had prevented earlier settlement. About 140 town lots and 250 farm lots were made available for purchase. The town of Denmark developed as a service centre for the rural population. In August 1911, the Denmark Roads Board was formed, and the Denmark State Farm was established in 1912. A dairy industry was begun in 1914.<sup>3</sup> After World War One, Denmark became a summer tourist destination.

Early medical services for Denmark, prior to World War One, were provided at a small private hospital run by a Dr Berridge, catering mainly for maternity cases. Dr McKenzie succeeded him and, when he left the district, the Roads Board provided a Nursing Home in a three-bedroom house, run by a District Nurse. The Nursing Home only operated from January 1918 to May 1920, however. The population of the district was still less than 300 and the region was struggling economically. The total annual income of the Roads Board was only about £300, and it could not afford to run a Nursing Home or pay for a District Nurse.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Medical Department offered a grant of £100 for 'an approved District Nursing Scheme', or a £200 subsidy for a doctor, the district was too small and too poor to provide the balance of a reasonable income (which was £500-£600 a year for a doctor). By early 1921, Denmark was without even a Nurse, and patients had to travel 40 miles (64 kms) by train to the hospital at Albany for medical attention. By the end of 1922, the population in the Denmark district had increased to 1,000, as two hundred families arrived in the space of sixteen months to take up farms provided under the Group Settlement Scheme. Fifteen group settlements, of about 20 families each, were established in the Denmark Roads Board District.<sup>5</sup>

The Group Settlement Scheme grew from Premier Sir James Mitchell's desire to develop primary industry to a stage where Western Australia was self sufficient. It was fuelled by the rural myth that portrayed small-farm life as idyllic. In reality, the British migrants who joined the scheme were generally ill-prepared and had little farming knowledge, while the land, as in most parts of Australia, was largely unsuitable to small acre farming.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilchrist, W. E. 'The History of Millar's Timber & Trading Co and its Influence on the Timber Industry of Western Australia.' Teacher's Higher Certificate thesis, bound typescript, 1962, pp. 3-30.

<sup>2</sup> Denmark Historical Society, *Koorabup: Selections from Denmark's First Century 1895-1995*, Denmark, 1995, pp. 1-16.

<sup>3</sup> Denmark Historical Society, op cit, pp. 16-25.

<sup>4</sup> Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 4453/1921.

<sup>5</sup> Health Department archives, File 4453/1921, op cit; Denmark Historical Society, op cit, p. 34. The Health Department files state the number of Group Settlements as thirteen; this may be the number of Groups which the Dept. considered were within Denmark's medical catchment area.

To provide medical services for the Denmark settlements Dr Morgan Richards was recruited from Kalgoorlie. He was provided with the house previously used as a Nursing Home for his residence. No building was available to house patients however, and the doctor was forced to send them on to Albany. He arranged for a room in a local boarding house for midwifery patients, but this room was not available during the tourist (summer) season.<sup>6</sup>

In 1923, a petition for the provision of a hospital in Denmark was signed by all sixty families in Group Settlements No. 41, 42 and 58.<sup>7</sup> The Government offered the town a small timber and iron hospital building, the same as that which was being provided for Margaret River, at a cost of £1,100, furnished. The district could not afford to pay for it. When Premier Sir James Mitchell visited the Group Settlements by train in January-February 1924, Dr Richards, who was by then also president of Denmark Roads Board, explained the desperate need for a hospital.<sup>8</sup>

The Premier responded by immediately authorising the provision of a hospital for Denmark of the same type as provided for Margaret River.<sup>9</sup> A section of Reserve 13079, a gazetted gardens site between Scotsdale Road and Peace Street, was selected as the site for *Denmark District Hospital*. An area of 2.1126ha was rezoned Denmark Lot 228 and gazetted Reserve 18587 for hospital purposes.<sup>10</sup> The arrangement for the construction of *Denmark District Hospital* was for Public Works to supply the materials for a timber building with an iron roof and an asbestos-lined interior, and a local builder to provide the labour for the erection. Asbestos was provided for the interior lining rather than plasterboard because it travelled better and stood up to rough handling. The contract for construction was let to A. Jones, at a cost of £176 10s 0d. The contract term was 1 May to 12 June 1924.<sup>11</sup>

While waiting for the new hospital building, Dr Richards requested the use of a timber house which had just been built for the Group Supervisor. He set up a temporary hospital in the house, which was a Standard Type 3 plan with 4 rooms and 2 verandahs. By 5 May, the temporary hospital building was already taxed for accommodation.<sup>12</sup>

*Denmark District Hospital* was ready for occupancy on 3 September 1924. The building had three two-bed wards (one men's, one women's and one maternity), a sitting room and bedroom for the nurse in charge, an attached kitchen and maids room, and verandahs back and front with bathrooms.<sup>13</sup> A Morgue was built off to the east side of the site. The asbestos lining used in the building was weathered from not being covered during transport and was almost black in parts making the interior of *Denmark District Hospital* dingy and unappealing. The site itself was hilly and had to be excavated which presented drainage problems, and the ground was so swampy and boggy that patients had to be carried up from Peace Street (60 to 80 metres away) as no vehicle could get near the hospital door.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Health Department archives, File 4453/1921, op cit, 30 October 1922.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 25 July 1923.

<sup>8</sup> Health Department archives, File 4453/1921, op cit.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, 13 February and 5 March 1924.

<sup>10</sup> *West Australian Government Gazette*, 11 April 1924, p. 618.

<sup>11</sup> Health Department archives, File 4453/1921, op cit.

<sup>12</sup> Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 1486/1924.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, including sketch plans.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*.

*Denmark District Hospital* was almost immediately too small. There were large numbers of maternity patients as the families on the Group Settlements were young, and accidents and outbreaks of influenza, pneumonia, etc, were frequent. More staff accommodation was also needed. A contract was let to local builder J. B. Thornton to construct Nurses Quarters. Cost of the Quarters was £374 10s 0d, and the contract dates were 30 March to 23 May 1925. The building was not completed until September, however, and then it was discovered that, due to a Public Works mix-up, the place had been built to a typical group settler's house plan with no internal lining to the rooms and no bathroom. The provision of these cost an extra £69 15s 0d.<sup>15</sup>

Another contract was let in 1925, to J. Bald of Leederville. The contract price of £640 13s 8d included an additional ward to be used as a men's ward, a covered way to connect the Main Hospital Building to the Nurse's Quarters, an Orderly's Room, additions to the surgery, and alterations to existing wards. The internal alterations created an operating theatre at the western end. The work was carried out between 10 October and 19 December 1925. No mention is made of the Matron's Quarters in this list of work, but the building appears on the site plan showing work carried out at this time. To cloud the issue, however, the Orderly's Room is not shown on the site plan but is included in the list of work.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1927, two dozen ornamental trees were ordered from the Forestry Department for the grounds of *Denmark District Hospital*. They comprised a selection of *Eucalyptus ficifolia*, *Cinnamon camphora*, *Sterculia accrifolia*, *Acacia pycnantha*, *Quercus lusitanica* and *Acacia elata*.<sup>17</sup>

Dr Richards was replaced by Dr Frederick Taylor Thomas in the late 1920s. He offered to lease *Denmark District Hospital* in return for a government subsidy of £500. The Government considered that they were the winners in this arrangement, and a twelve-month lease was subsequently drawn up. Because of the number of patients in the district that needed to be treated at government expense, that is, with incomes below £4 a week for a married couple, the subsidy was raised to £750. When the Public Works District Architect visited Denmark in January 1931, he found that considerable improvements had been carried out to *Denmark District Hospital*. The interior of the buildings had been painted, gravelling and new plantings had upgraded the grounds, and the Roads Board had installed electric light to the place, following the establishment of the town's powerhouse.<sup>18</sup>

Doctor Arthur Williams took over Taylor Thomas' lease in December 1931, but when the Government reduced the subsidy to £500, he did not renew his lease on the place. *Denmark District Hospital* was instead leased to a nurse, who became the Matron, with the doctor working a private practice.<sup>19</sup> This leasing arrangement continued until after World War Two, but there was a constant turnover of lessees. The main problem appears to have been the heavy workload that the position entailed.

During the Depression, many Group settlers left the district. In 1936, the Roads Board purchased a group cottage for removal to the hospital site for use as an Isolation Ward (demolished in 1974). Re-erection of the building was carried out by J. B. Thornton. Of the total cost of £370, £100 was paid by

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15     ibid.

16     ibid, including sketch plans.

17     ibid, 14 June 1927.

18     Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 682/1930, 1 July 1930.

19     ibid.

the Lotteries' Commission and the balance was shared by the Government and the Roads Board.<sup>20</sup>

In 1937, Matron M. Sinclair, from Onslow, took over *Denmark District Hospital*. She replenished the linen cupboard at her own expense as most items were worn out, and then asked the Medical Department to assist in other ways such as providing new curtains, an incinerator, and extra fencing so she could keep a cow. The Department obliged with a new cowshed and feed store, both with concrete floors, a fowl yard, and a wood shelter near the kitchen. The Department supplied curtain fabric for Matron to make up as required, so she then requested a sewing machine. Around this time the Lotteries' Commission provided £93 to improve roads in the grounds and to provide some fruit trees.<sup>21</sup>

By the late 1930s, there was some improvement in the situation of the settlement and the Government suggested reducing the hospital subsidy to £350. The Matron at the time strongly opposed the reduction, citing as her reasons the influenza, pneumonia and mumps epidemics; more poor people in the area than she had seen anywhere else in Australia, and a recent installation of a sustenance gang of men, aged around sixty years, who were ready targets for the epidemics. 'The subsidy is put to good benefit by the citizens of Denmark and Walpole and the many sustenance workers incorporated' she wrote in her reply to the Medical Department. The subsidy remained at £500.<sup>22</sup>

During World War Two, *Denmark District Hospital* was leased by Sister Ethel Keane, whose husband was serving overseas. Sister Keane had a child with her. When she wanted to leave Denmark in March 1942, the Government increased the subsidy to £600 and provided an elderly nurse as an assistant, to encourage her to stay, as qualified staff were difficult to find at this time, many being occupied with the war effort. Sister Keane remained at Denmark until August 1943.<sup>23</sup>

In the late 1940s, *Denmark District Hospital* was closed temporarily due to lack of staff. No work had been done on upgrading the place since 1925, and the poor facilities did little to encourage staff recruitment. There was no hot water system, no sewerage system, and only a copper, troughs and hand wringer for washing. There was no nursery, and newborn babies had to be accommodated on the verandah. Blackberries grew around and under the buildings, and in summer, the rain water supply had to be supplemented with water carted by the Roads Board, who did not always have time to attend to the matter.<sup>24</sup>

In 1949, a Hospital Comforts Committee was formed to raise funds for improvements and to lobby the government for more assistance. There was talk at this time of building a new hospital but funds for this were not available. When *Denmark District Hospital* reopened after its temporary closure, the nurses occupied the old Isolation Ward, and helped with domestic duties. It is not clear what the Nurse's Quarters were used for at this time, but they are later recorded as being occupied by various allied health services

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20 Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 116/1936.

21 *ibid.*

22 *ibid.*, 18 & 24 August 1939.

23 Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 372/1940.

24 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', notes supplied by Denmark Historical Society, 1999.

such as Silver Chain and Community Health Services. In 1952, *Denmark District Hospital* was closed again due to staffing problems.<sup>25</sup>

Following submissions from the Hospital Comforts Committee and the local doctor, Dr Evan Williams, the Government decided that, with extensive upgrading and alterations, *Denmark District Hospital* could function well and attract trained staff until a new hospital could be built. Work carried out at this time added a new wing on the north-east corner of the Main Hospital Building, to house a labour ward and other facilities. The extension created a courtyard between itself and the kitchen wing. A new X-ray unit, operating table and various amenities were provided by the Hospital Comforts Committee. Agricultural School students helped clean up the gardens and staff from Whittakers' Mill took down dangerous trees on the site.<sup>26</sup>

Further improvements were carried out after *Denmark District Hospital* reopened. The verandah ceilings were lined to stop condensation from the iron roof dripping onto the patients. A hot water system with associated boiler room, an extensive drainage system for the site, and septic sewerage were installed at a total cost of £7,353, funded by the Lotteries Commission and the Government. A new Laundry was added near the Orderly's Room, and the kitchen was extended northwards into an existing storage area necessitating the construction of a new chimney, this time with hobs for keeping food warm at the edge of the stove.<sup>27</sup>

In 1955, staff at *Denmark District Hospital* comprised Matron (Mrs Sheila Hill), three Nursing Sisters, four Nursing assistants, cook, laundress, three maids, a part-time maid, an Orderly and a relieving Orderly. Accommodation comprised one 4-bed women's ward, one 4-bed men's ward, one special room, two beds on the enclosed front verandah, and a 4-bed midwifery ward.<sup>28</sup>

In 1957, a nursery, bathroom and darkroom were added at the east end of the Main Hospital Building, costing £2,250. A children's ward was still needed, but the Government had by then acquired a piece of land for a new hospital building and did not want to spend more money on *Denmark District Hospital*, planning on having a new building by the late 1960s. The acquired site, Reserve 13246 on Bayley Street, had been the other option, in 1924, for the original hospital site. A children's ward was obtained, however, by remodelling an existing storage area in the 1952 wing. The cost of £521 3s 0d was funded equally by the Hospital Comforts Fund, the Government, and the Lotteries Commission, and was completed in October 1961.<sup>29</sup>

In 1963, a geriatric ward was added. This was a freestanding building at the east end of the Main Hospital Building, accessible from the covered way to the former Nurse's Quarters. It was constructed by N. O. Thornton, and the cost of £1,000 was provided by the Hospital Comforts Committee. The Health Dept requested the PWD 'to keep an eye on the job without insisting on the usual Public Works standard of finish', as a new hospital was 'envisaged in 5 years'. The PWD Clerk in Charge later wrote that 'contrary to

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25 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit. No Health Department File was available for this period.

26 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit.

27 Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 5678/ 1954.

28 Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 5709/1956.

29 Health Department archives, File 5678/1954, op cit; AN 349 ACC 1003, File 5515/1961.

my expectations, the building appears to fit in with the other buildings quite satisfactorily and consequently, it should be a considerable asset'.<sup>30</sup>

The Geriatric ward was officially opened early in November 1963, by Denmark Shire President S. F. Ravenhill.<sup>31</sup> The ward had not been supplied with its own bathroom, however, and the four elderly female occupants had to traipse across the hospital to reach the only female bathroom. As these patients were not drawing on their pensions while they were in hospital they used their accumulating funds to finance the addition of a bathroom to the ward.<sup>32</sup>

By 1966, the Health Department believed that *Denmark District Hospital* needed either to be extensively upgraded within the following twelve to eighteen months, or rebuilt. The decision hinged on whether Denmark needed a fully functioning hospital with an operating theatre, or only a nursing home. Residents in the district wanted a hospital with all facilities. As well as the immediate Denmark district, *Denmark District Hospital* also served Walpole, which had a population of 500. By 1968, however, finance was still not available for a new hospital and no improvements had been made.<sup>33</sup>

The Hospital Comforts Committee organised a public meeting on 21 April 1969, and a petition, asking for improvements to the operating theatre, x-ray room and outpatients facilities, and accompanied by thirteen pages of signatures, was forwarded to the Government. The result was a decision to demolish the Isolation Ward and construct the new facilities on the site. While the Isolation Ward had been used as nurse's quarters since 1952, most staff were now local residents who had their own accommodation in the town.<sup>34</sup> The new extensions were eventually completed in July 1974, and included an operating theatre, with all support facilities, an outpatients clinic, and office.<sup>35</sup>

By 1978, the Health Department had decided that a new hospital for Denmark was 'extremely unlikely' and the site which had been obtained for a new facility was sold for residential use. The Department began to assist more with ongoing expenses of *Denmark District Hospital* and the Hospital Comforts Committee was able to concentrate on supplying the 'comfort' items such as televisions and radios, etc. At this time also, internal alterations provided a new staff dining room, nurse's station and children's ward.<sup>36</sup>

A growing need in the 1980s, was accommodation for frail aged residents. These were currently housed in Geriatric Ward 4, but while the building was considered comfortable and well maintained, it was not functionally practical for acute and long-term care. A Frail Aged Committee was set up to raise funds for unit accommodation for the aged. Denmark Lodge was built in 1989 on a section of Waterfall Park, Reserve 13079, which adjoins the western end of *Denmark District Hospital* site. The place was under the control of the Denmark Association for the Care of the Frail Aged and Disabled, Inc.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of the 1980s, local doctors were no longer interested in performing surgery at *Denmark District Hospital*, but were sending surgery patients to Albany instead. To make better use of available facilities, the operating

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<sup>30</sup> Health Department archives, File 5515/1961, op cit, 5 July 1963.

<sup>31</sup> *Denmark Post*, 7 November 1963.

<sup>32</sup> 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit.

<sup>33</sup> Health Department archives, AN 349 ACC 1003, File 7024/1966; 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit.

<sup>34</sup> Health Department archives, File 7024/1966, op cit.

<sup>35</sup> 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*; Health Department File DE 05.06.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid* & DE 05.05 Vol. 1.



theatre was converted to a birth suite. The old the old birth suite became a patient lounge, and its attached bathroom became an assisted ensuite. Major upgrading of the kitchen was also carried out at this time. The renovation work was carried out by Thornton Building Co, at a cost of \$126,545. Other work carried out in the early 1990s, included gutting and refitting the maternity ward (\$27,720), and construction of a new office for the Director of Nursing (\$29,700).<sup>38</sup>

Staff changes saw the retirement of Matron Biddy Osborne, in 1987, after twenty seven years at *Denmark District Hospital* as Sister and Matron. She was the last Matron to be so called, as the title of the position was changed to Director of Nursing. The Hospital Comforts Committee, associated with *Denmark District Hospital* since 1949, was disbanded in 1993, as no further calls were being made on their services.<sup>39</sup>

The former Nurse's Quarters had been occupied for some time by a variety of allied health services, including the Silver Chain, Community Health Office & Child Health Consulting Rooms. A new meeting room was required for these services, as well as upgraded kitchen and bathroom facilities. Architects Hobbs Smith & Holmes, designed a free standing steel framed addition on the east side of the former Nurse's Quarters. The work of constructing it, and of upgrading the interior of the former Nurse's Quarters, was carried out in 1996, by S. R. & C. M. Dearden at a cost of \$61,763. The resulting room was officially named the 'Garden Room'.<sup>40</sup>

An assessment of *Denmark District Hospital* by the Health Department, in May 1997, found that the place was a very old structure which had been added to and renovated over a considerable number of years, resulting in a building configuration that was not optimal for modern requirements. The assessment found that the district required a multi-purpose health facility which involved all facets of primary, acute and continuing care, except surgery. Aged care was a key necessity, as while aged units were available on the adjoining site, there was still no aged hostel.<sup>41</sup>

In 1998, the Denmark Association for the Care of the Frail Aged & Disabled, Inc, handed control of Denmark Lodge to *Denmark District Hospital*, and went into voluntary termination. *Denmark District Hospital* entered into a multi-purpose service agreement with the State and Commonwealth Governments on 1 July 1998.<sup>42</sup>

In 1999, *Denmark District Hospital* continues to function as the district's primary health institution. The 1974 emergency care section is currently undergoing internal renovations, while the Health Department undertakes a site survey for a new facility.<sup>43</sup>

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Denmark District Hospital* is situated in parkland setting in a block bounded by Peace Street, Scotsdale Road and Horsley Road, on the north side of the town of Denmark. The site slopes down from Scotsdale Rd in the north, is banked behind and in front of the hospital, and slopes down to the creek along the

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38 Health Department File DE 05.05 Vol. 1; File 06-03-01.

39 'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', op cit.

40 Health Department File DE 05.05 Vol. 1.

41 Health Department File DE 05.06& File DE 05.05 Vol. 2.

42 ibid.

43 Health Department File DE 05.05 Vol. 2, July 1999; physical inspection.

Peace Street frontage, rising again towards the south (town) side of the site. Separate from the hospital building, on the west side, are units for the aged.

*Denmark District Hospital* comprises a number of interconnected and detached buildings. All the buildings are raised from the ground across the front to accommodate the slope of the land and are at ground level across the rear of the buildings. The interconnected buildings comprise the Main Hospital Building, (1924 hospital, 1925 additions, 1950s additions), the emergency care section (1974 additions, 1990 additions, 1999 refurbishment), palliative care section (1963 geriatric ward), allied health/medical records (1925 Nurses Quarters), Matron's Quarters (fmr) (1925) and the 'Garden Room' (1996). The detached buildings at the rear (north) side of the hospital, are the store (c.1990), store rooms (1925 Orderly's Room, 1950s Laundry) and the Morgue (1924).

*Denmark District Hospital* displays no specific characteristics of any style indicators described in Apperly.<sup>44</sup> It is mostly a rural functional style showing the change and development that has taken place over the years. The buildings at *Denmark District Hospital* are timber framed, single-storey buildings clad with 'asbestos' sheeting, or the original weatherboards (with the exception of the 'Garden Room' which is steel-framed). The corrugated iron clad roofs are hipped on the main building where the roof form of the original building and the 1925 additions are evident. The detached buildings and other interconnected buildings have gable roofs with skillion extensions over the verandahs.

The layout of *Denmark District Hospital* has been developed along the east west alignment of the original building following the contours of the land. Externally, the only evidence of the original hospital is the roof, viewed from Scotsdale Rd. The 1925 additions are evidenced by the intact Matron's Quarters (fmr), the roof form and materials, the external weatherboards on the Nurses' Quarters (fmr), and the east wall of the Main Hospital Building. The Morgue remains intact.

Internally, there is no evidence of the 1924 original fabric or the 1925 additions, except the Matron's Quarters (fmr). The hospital has undergone regular upgrades and refurbishments over many years in line with maintaining a functioning hospital facility.

The front of the Main Hospital Building faces south. A timber-framed structure overhangs the retained bank in front of the main entry, giving views to the town centre of Denmark. The Main Hospital Building is clad with vertical profile 'asbestos' sheeting, and has aluminium framed sliding glass windows along the frontage, infilling the area of the original verandah. The main entrance is recessed within the verandah space, and accessed by a series of stairs covered in rubber tiles. West of the main entry the ambulance entry is located central under a canopy at the front of the emergency care section.

The Main Hospital Building entry opens into a short corridor which intersects with the central east-west corridor of the hospital. Right in the east-west corridor is the maternity wing (1925 additions and 1957 nursery addition). There is no evidence of any 1925 original fabric. The timber floors are covered with carpet tiles, the walls have an 'asbestos' dado with vertical battens, above which the walls and ceilings are gyprock. The doors throughout are flush panel and all fixtures and fittings are up-to-date.

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<sup>44</sup> Apperly, Richard, op cit.

Left of the main entry, along the east-west corridor, is a series of three wards which show minimal evidence of having been the original hospital. The layout of the wards is different from the original layout. Doors open from the wards into additional rooms which were originally the front verandah that has subsequently been enclosed across the front. The floors are timber covered with carpet tiles. The verandah floors are at a lower level than the main area and the floor subsides in several places. The walls of the wards and verandahs are gyprock. The ceilings are gyprock throughout and the verandah is lined on the rake.

Opposite the wards, off the corridor, is a small, enclosed courtyard without a roof. Further right along the corridor is the kitchen (1924). There is no evidence of any original fabric. The kitchen and associated storerooms are fitted out with up-to-date kitchen facilities. Vinyl covers the concrete floor, there are ceramic glazed tiles on splash back sections of the hard plaster walls, the ceiling is lined with gyprock sheets, and stainless steel fixtures and fittings are in place.

The corridor, which was the original rear verandah of the hospital, has a concrete floor with carpet tiles. The walls are gyprock, doors are flush panelled, and the ceiling is clad with suspended acoustic panels except along the south where the angled ceiling evidences the line of the original 1924 verandah roof.

Double doors enter into the emergency care section where the corridor angles left. The emergency care section is currently undergoing extensive renovation. The temporary emergency treatment room is an up-to-date fitout with gyprock walls and ceilings. The birth suite on the right at the end of the corridor, is temporarily the operating theatre. The room is well equipped with a spa bath, tiled splash back, gyprock walls and ceilings and a concrete floor laid with carpet tiles. The north wall features two stained glass windows. Utility rooms in the same vicinity are fitted out with similar materials.

Directly ahead of the Main Hospital Building entry, the corridor widens. On the right is the newly fitted lounge and a utility room. On the left is the open courtyard, and a corridor to the kitchen. Ahead is the staff dining room and right is a corridor leading to a number of other connected buildings. The right wall of the corridor has the weatherboard external wall cladding of the 1925 constructed covered walkway, and the 1925 constructed east wall of the Main Hospital Building can be viewed from the corridor.

The corridor diverts at an angle to the right. It is lined with gyprock on the walls and ceilings, has a timber floor laid with carpet tiles, and timber sills to the aluminium framed windows. On the right of the corridor is the palliative care ward (1963 geriatric ward). It is lined with gyprock walls and ceilings in the main area. The enclosed verandah is lined with 'asbestos' sheets with vertical battens and the ceiling is lined on the rake. The front of the veranda is enclosed with sliding glass aluminium framed doors and windows. The exterior of the building is lined with vertical format 'asbestos' sheeting.

Further along the corridor, on the left, a very narrow enclosed corridor, on an angle to the left, leads to a set of four steps up to the verandah of the former Matron's Quarters. Although the verandah has been enclosed (1950s), the remainder of the one room building is intact. The interior is clad with flat sheets of asbestos with vertical battens. The plasterboard ceiling is battened. The fireplace has been boarded over and the plain timber mantle is in place. The door is the original ledge and brace door, and the flywire door is still in

place. The timber floors are in place in the room and the verandah. The windows have been replaced with aluminium framed windows. The west window has a canopy that has been replicated on the verandah wall enclosure. The external weatherboards, gable roof and most of the metal chimney are intact.

Further along, the corridor terminates at the entry into the allied health/medical records building (1925 Nurses Quarters). The external fabric is the original weatherboards. The internal layout has been altered with the removal of one wall between two rooms, and the formation of a central hallway. The entire interior has been refurbished with gyprock walls and ceilings, aluminium framed windows and up-to-date fitouts.

On the left of the rear enclosed verandah of the allied health/medical records building is a door leading to the external pathway to the Morgue, straight ahead, and to the 'Garden Room', to the right, with a zincalume clad store immediately to the left of the path. The 'Garden Room' is lined with gyprock walls and ceilings on the interior and hardiplank sheeting on the exterior. It has a gable roof consistent with most of the other buildings in the complex. A series of sliding glass aluminium framed windows provide views of the garden setting.

Up the path, and behind the 'Garden Room' is the Morgue (1924). It is a single room building clad with weatherboards. It has a simple gable roof, a single ledge and brace door and a louvred window on the south side. The original gurney is still in use, and an original cupboard is attached to the wall. The interior is lined with asbestos and there is a concrete floor. The Morgue still functions.

Behind the Main Hospital Building are the storerooms, which comprise the 1925 Orderly's Room (fmr) and the 1950s Laundry. There is no evidence of any 1925 original fabric in the timber framed asbestos clad buildings, which have refurbished fitouts.

*Denmark Hospital* is in good condition. It has undergone numerous extensions and alterations to facilitate the ongoing function of a hospital and health facility in a rural town, and has a moderate degree of integrity. The only evidence of the original 1924 hospital building is the roof form. The 1925 additions are similarly evidenced in the roof form and the remains of some external weatherboard wall claddings, although the Matron's Quarters (fmr) has been retained intact. Overall, there is minimal original fabric with the exception of the Morgue, the Matron's Quarters (fmr), and exterior of the 1925 Nurses' Quarters. The place has a low degree of authenticity.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

*Denmark District Hospital* is an example of an ongoing rural hospital facility, which has continued to adapt to the changing requirements of its population base, in comparison to some rural hospitals which have closed because they were outgrown by the districts they served, such as: *Rosella House*, and *Bill Sewell Community Recreation Complex*, both in Geraldton, *Vancouver Arts Centre*, Albany, and *York Hospital Precinct*; or were no longer fully utilised by a dwindling population base which also had access to modern health facilities in a larger centre, such as *Wongan Hills Hospital* (fmr).

Built as a result of the establishment of the Group Settlement Scheme, *Denmark District Hospital* was constructed at the same time, and to the same design, as the Hospital Building (1924) which is part of *Old Hospital Complex*, Margaret River. While *Old Hospital Complex*, Margaret River developed in a

similar way to *Denmark District Hospital*, the former has not operated as a hospital since 1990 and, apart from refurbishment carried out in 1993 for its new function as a community centre, was last altered in 1975, and retains more of its original fabric. *Old Hospital Complex*, Margaret River is listed on the State Register of Heritage Places.<sup>45</sup>

The original design of *Denmark District Hospital* was functional and basic, in comparison to hospital buildings constructed at the turn of the century such as: *Old York Hospital* (1896); the 1897 hospital buildings in the *Bill Sewell Community Recreation Complex*, Geraldton; *Vancouver Arts Centre*, Albany (1887); and *Uralia*, Northam (1902), which all show more decorative style features.

While *Denmark District Hospital* has survived as a hospital facility to 1999, it has been earmarked for replacement since the late 1950s, and only lack of available finance for a new facility, and the involvement of the local community, has kept it fully operational.

Of the other district hospitals considered for the Register of Heritage Places, including Moora District Hospital (1911), Wagin District Hospital (1908+), *Bruce Rock Memorial Hospital* (Memorial House; 1922) and Plantagenet District Hospital (1936), none have extant morgues and Matron's Quarters dating from the 1920s. The morgue at Wagin District Hospital, a brick and iron building, was constructed in 1908.

#### 13.4 REFERENCES

Health Department archives and current files on Denmark District Hospital, 1921-1999.

'Denmark Hospital Comforts Committee', notes provided by Denmark Historical Society.

#### 13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

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