



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is an important visual element in the Goomalling town. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is important for its association with the development of postal and telecommunication services in the Goomalling district. (Criterion 2.1)

The development of the post office parallels the development of the town and district. (Criterion 2.2)

Goomalling Post Office & quarters has an association with Hillson Beasley, PWD Chief Architect from 1905 to 1917, and his successor, William Burden Hardwick. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Goomalling Post Office & quarters has community social value as a communications centre. (Criteria 4.1 & 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is the only structure of its style and period in Goomalling. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is representative of a Post Office and quarters of the period, designed by the State Government's PWD architects, which were typical throughout rural Western Australia. (Criteria 6.1 & 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is in a sound condition. The external face brick work requires some attention but otherwise the place is in moderately good repair.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Goomalling Post Office & quarters has a relatively high degree of integrity. The addition on the eastern side of the quarters detracts from the integrity of the place, but is a reversible intervention. Provision of doorways inside the building have a minimal effect on the overall integrity of the place.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Goomalling Post Office & quarters, overall, demonstrates a moderate to high degree of authenticity. The addition of the 1922-23 extension to the original 1910 building is imperceptible and the 1923 frontage forms the major aesthetic element of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence was compiled by Ian Elliot, Archival Research Officer for the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in 1993. Additional documentary evidence has been compiled and summarised by Laura Gray (B. Arch.) Conservation Professional, who also compiled the physical evidence.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

In 1854, the district of Goomalling was first explored by Assistant Surveyor Austin, on directions from the Government of the day. The Benedictine Monks of New Norcia leased extensive pastoral holdings from the Government, including considerable areas around Goomalling for sheep grazing.

In 1858, one of the first settlers, George Slater, established a dwelling, known as 'The Homestead', on his pastoral lease. It developed into the communication and hospitality centre of the district, with several exploration parties departing from there.¹

In the 1890s, with the prospect of the railway line, the Goomalling area became more closely settled, and the Road Board was established in 1895. At that time the nearest post office was 48 kilometres (30 miles) away at Toodyay.² The railway opened in 1902, the same year that the Goomalling townsite was surveyed, and the 'Place of the Possum' was declared a town in 1903.

Tenders for the fortnightly conveyance of mails on horseback between Toodyay and Southern Cross via Goomalling were invited by the State Government in 1889, and this first official mail service through the Goomalling District was commenced by A.J. Wroth from 1890. This was upgraded to a local weekly service the following year, with the mail carrier W.H. Butterly riding via Culham, Bejoording and Moombekine and visiting all the various homesteads along his route. Butterley's tender was again accepted for 1892, but the contract went to A.D. Glass in 1893, R.W. Dennis in 1894-1895, C.G. Ellery in 1896-1898, J.F. Ellery in 1899 and J.M. Carroll in 1900. By that time a spring cart was in use and the route was defined as stretching from Northam to Batbatting and Dowerin via Slater's, Goomalling, the Quelquelling Road, calling at Mongalin and the homesteads of Messrs Carroll, Enright, Martin, D.T. Morrell, J. Watson, H. Watson jr., J. Norris, H.J. Leeder, J Eaton, W Eaton and James Forward.³

In 1901, the responsibility for the postal services was taken over by the Commonwealth Government and the contract for the weekly Goomalling mail run was secured by James Friend though to 1906.⁴

¹ 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

² Bunney, A, compiled by 'A history of the Post Office in Goomalling', and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c.1985.

³ Government Gazette Postal Services Tenders Index.

⁴ 'Government Gazette' 28 September 1900, p.3611 & 1 March 1901, p.903 and 'C of A. Gazette' 8 August 1903, p.430 & 12 March 1904, p.161.

Goomalling's first Postmaster, the local grocer, Ivon H. Royal, picked up mail from a box at the eastern end of Railway Terrace twice a week, after it was brought from Northam by a mail carrier, and delivered it from his shop.⁵

Agitation for a Post Office in the town of Goomalling began in 1904.⁶ Post Office facilities were inaugurated in Goomalling on 1 December 1904, an allowance of £15-0-0 per annum being paid to F.J. Mann, manager of Munyard & Kenworthy, wholesale and retail grocers, to act as non-official Postmaster. Deliveries by mail carrier were stepped up to twice weekly in April 1905, prompting Mann to request a higher allowance. His duties included sorting Dowerin and Goomalling mail, the issuing of postal notes and stamps, and registering of letters and parcels. When Mann departed Goomalling in June that year, his postal duties were transferred to Munyard and Kenworthy's new manager, Mr J. Laffan. As a result of Mann's complaints, his successor's allowance was increased to £19-0-0 per annum from 1 July 1905.⁷

From 1 October 1906, post office functions at Goomalling were taken over by the Railway Department, which could offer telegraphic facilities,⁸ in the Railway Station building which had been completed in 1904. Effectively, the Railway Station doubled as the Post Office, and the Stationmaster took on the additional duties of Postmaster in return for the allowance. Initially there was much criticism of the unsatisfactory manner in which the postal business was conducted at the station, culminating in the removal of the officer in charge. Matters improved under the new Stationmaster, C.C. McKay.⁹ Strangely, despite the fact that most Goomalling mail could be delivered by rail, a three year contract for a thrice weekly mail delivery service in a spring cart between Northam and Goomalling was commenced by W.J. Chidlow in January 1907.¹⁰ Telephone facilities for public use were installed at the Railway Station in May 1907.¹¹

During the latter half of 1907, the Goomalling Progress Association agitated through their Federal member, Sir John Forrest, for Money Order facilities, then for a separate semi official Post and Telegraph Office, complaining that the Railway Station was too small. Inquiries by the PMG Divisional Inspector revealed that there was no reserve for postal purposes within the townsite, though Lots 8 and 9 had been set aside as Reserve 8800 for 'Government Buildings' in 1903. Lot 8 was regazetted as Reserve 11369 for 'Commonwealth Government Buildings' in 1908 but there was no provision for a building at that time.¹²

⁵ Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c.1985.

⁶ *The Northam Advertiser* 31 August 1904, p.2 and *The Newcastle Herald* 12 November 1904, p.5.

⁷ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 16/927/05.

⁸ George E.Owen *The Post, Telegraph & Telephone Offices of Western Australia: An alphabetical list* Perth: George E. Owen 1958/1976.

⁹ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

¹⁰ 'C. of A. Gazette' 22 September 1906, p.1190, 20 October 1906, p.1269 & 5 January 1907, p.9.

¹¹ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 27/384/11.

¹² Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 27/1305/10.

However, as a direct result of the Progress Association approaches, tenders for conducting a semi-official office at Goomalling were called in May 1908. The successful applicant was Thomas H. Coles who rented 'Bryson's Hall', a three year old timber and iron building on Lot 3 that had previously done duty as Dining Rooms, then as a Public Hall. Coles installed a counter and pigeon holes, the telephone was connected to the building, and the position of Postmaster was transferred from MacKay to Thomas Henry Coles on 4 August 1908, when the Post Office received semi official status, enabling a contract with a private individual to provide a full time postal service. It was known as a 'Contract Office'.¹³ Money Order facilities were initiated within six days of opening, and by the end of September, a Savings Bank Agency had been opened and a Telegraph Morse Set had been installed. Later, a 'silent cabinet' was obtained to house the public telephone.¹⁴ Only two lines extended between Goomalling and Northam, one from the station, and the other from the Post Office. The latter, also shared by Dowerin and Jennacubbine, was used for both telephone and telegraph services creating frustrating delays in communication that proved a great inconvenience both to Coles and the general public.¹⁵

On 6 November 1908, the Divisional Inspector recommended that provision for an official Post Office building be made on the 1909-1910 Home Affairs Estimates. A sketch plan prepared by the Chief Architect was considerably modified by the Divisional Inspector who suggested a full width verandah, wooden posts rather than brick pillars, relocating the counter to give the staff more space, deleting the telephone lobby in favour of using the existing 'silent cabinet', and, where the front of the building was originally set back from the footpath, having open wings in the fence rather than a gate.¹⁶ The local Progress Association asked Sir John Forrest to request 13 private letter boxes and a telephone exchange in the proposed building.¹⁷ The expenditure was approved in March 1909 and an amount of £850 (later increased) was included in the estimates by August.¹⁸

With the approval of the proposed extension of the railway line northwards to Wongan Hills, Goomalling experienced a surge in development and progress in the district and the Post Office was an urgent facility for the soon to be railway junction town. Tenders were called for the Goomalling Post Office in November 1909, a contract gazetted as having been secured by J.F. Thomas.¹⁹ However, the first tender proved to be informal so the contract was resubmitted for consideration of other tenders received, the work eventually going to John G. Fettes of East Perth.²⁰ Town Lot 8 was purchased freehold by the Commonwealth of Australia in April 1910 for the valued cost of £225.²¹

¹³ Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c.1985.

¹⁴ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 27/1305/10.

¹⁵ *The Northam Advertiser* 25 June 1910, p.2.

¹⁶ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

¹⁷ *The Northam Advertiser* 18 May 1910, p.3.

¹⁸ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

¹⁹ 'Government Gazette' 26 November 1909, p. 3697 & 11 March 1910, p 724.

²⁰ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

²¹ DOLA -CT 461/191 & Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

Mr McEwen, Inspector of Public Buildings, supervised the laying down of the concrete foundations early in May 1910,²² and a detailed description of the building was published the following month:

Although only half finished, the new post office forms and imposing structure on the southern side of Railway Parade. Covering a space of 58 feet in depth by 32 feet frontage the building will, when finished, prove a masterpiece of the builder's hand. The walls are built on the 'cavity' system, thus ensuring proof against any leakage from a heavy downpour of rain. The main office runs the full length of the structure and will be fitted with letter receivers and private letter boxes, whilst a public telephone bureau will be established on the verandah in front of the building. It was originally intended to have the telephone in the main office, but the authorities realising that 'calls' may be required at times other than when the post office will be open, have studied the public as above. The residence, which will have its location on the east side, contains a sitting room, three bedrooms, kitchen, pantry, storeroom and bathroom, in addition to a spacious hall at the entrance, extending three parts of the building. The edifice has been constructed on a solid foundation of concrete 2 feet in thickness and will have in addition to the front verandah a porch and verandah on the eastern side. The time for completion of the building is 30 September, but the contractor expects to be ready before the specified time.²³

Fettes completed the building by mid September at a cost of £1,074-15-7, and all lines and fittings were transferred before the end of the month. Coles agreed to remain at the helm under contract until the Postmaster's position was filled. He reported moving into the new office and quarters on 29 September 1910.²⁴ In October, the increase in business led to the authorities to transfer a young man named Faulkner from Midland to assist Coles.²⁵ The new Postmaster, Charles H.S. Parish, transferred from Dongara, took over from Coles on 5 November 1910.²⁶

During November, the Chairman of the Progress Association was asked what had happened to the private boxes. After explaining that these had to be imported from America, he assured members that Sir John Forrest was moving in the matter. The boxes arrived in June 1911, but then lay in the Post Office yard for a frustrating five months before they were installed. Initially 20 boxes were erected although the frame had room for three times that number.²⁷

By 1911, a daily train and mail service was operating between Perth and Goomalling, and an Assistant Postmaster had been stationed at Goomalling, with the office open daily from 9.00am to 6.00pm Mondays to Saturdays

²² *The Northam Advertiser* 7 May 1910, p.4.

²³ *The Northam Advertiser* 4 June 1910, p.3.

²⁴ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

²⁵ *The Northam Advertiser* 22 October 1910, p.2.

²⁶ Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 26/1305/10.

²⁷ *The Northam Advertiser* 16 November 1910, p.3., 10 June 1911, p.3, 5 July 1911, p.3 & 11 November 1911, p.3.

inclusive.²⁸ In 1911, the Goomalling Wongan Hills Railway line opened and further eastwards and northwards expansion took place.²⁹

The need for a local telephone exchange, first requested in 1910, was discussed at Progress Association meetings at regular intervals. An application endorsed by thirteen would-be subscribers finally met with the approval of the authorities in August 1912. Poles, wires, home-sets and exchange equipment were installed the following year, all connections, fourteen altogether, being completed by 24 June. After testing, the service commenced at 9.00am on 28 June 1913, ushering in a new era of communications for Goomalling residents.³⁰

Entries in W.A. Postal Directories indicate that Parish was Postmaster from 1910 to 1917, E Hall (Postmistress) in 1918-1919, P Teider in 1920-1921, and A.E. Sainsbury from 1922 to 1927. By the time Sainsbury took over, weather recording was being done at the Post Office, and the staff had increased to include a clerk, telephonists and telegram messengers. The Goomalling Post Office had the reputation of being one of the cleanest in the state under Sainsbury, who kept his messenger boys sweeping, dusting and polishing when not engaged in delivering telegrams.³¹

The overcrowded conditions in the office, for both staff and public, were recognised soon after Sainsbury's arrival, and in August 1922, PWD architects under the direction of the Principal PWD Architect, Hardwick, drew up plans to extend the frontage of the building out to the footpath.³² Tenders for this work were invited in November 1922, and the contract was secured by H.J. Dawkins in January 1923, at a cost of £515.³³ Dawkins commenced work immediately and, from 26 January to 10 May, postal business was conducted in the War Memorial Hall. Sainsbury took the opportunity during this upheaval to take six week's holiday, leaving Miss Giblett in charge.³⁴ Within days of re-opening the enlarged Post Office, the trunk line service between Goomalling and Northam was improved with the opening of two new lines.³⁵

From the end of 1929, the Post Office closed for business on Wednesday afternoons and opened all day Saturdays. Variations to the mail service depended on train timetables and the Perth GPO.³⁶

In 1938, the Post Office was elevated to a Grade Two office with a permanent staff comprising the Postmaster, Postal Clerk, 2 telephonists and a Telegraph messenger. By 15 September 1938, it was thought necessary to abolish the

²⁸ Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

²⁹ 'Conservation Plan Refreshment Rooms Goomalling Railway Station' October 1993 Hocking Planning & Architecture.

³⁰ *The Northam Advertiser* 16 November 1910, p.3. and Australian Archives PMG File K1 Box 32/674/12.

³¹ 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

³² Australian Archives PWD plan WA 22242.

³³ 'Government Gazette' 24 November 1922, p. 2189 & 26 January 1923, p.125.

³⁴ *Central Districts Advocate* 27 January 1923, p.2, 31 March 1923, p.2 & 3, 12 May 1923, p.2.

³⁵ *Central Districts Advocate* 19 May 1923, p.2.

³⁶ Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

part-time position of Postal Assistant and the Postal Clerk was required to do Messenger services. By 1942, the telephone traffic had decreased and a permanent telephonist was no longer required. A revival of the postal traffic was not expected due to the close proximity to the major regional centre of Northam, and the re-routing of Wongan Hills traffic direct from Perth, and not through Goomalling.³⁷

Postmasters residing in the building after Sainsbury were R. Counsel 1928 to 1932 (in November 1931, late in Counsel's term, renovations involving two painters, a plumber and a carpenter were carried out to the value of £65), M. Mullamby 1932 to 1935, G. Langford (noted for his musical ability and golf) 1935 to 1942, C.L. Clarke 1942 to 1947, J.F. McCann (a good sportsman who coached many junior tennis players) 1947 to 1957, S.F. O'Neill 1957 to 1964, T. K. Downes 1964 to 1971.³⁸

In 1955, a building for the use of the technician staff and the installation of new Long Line Equipment was proposed at the rear of the Post Office. This brick building was constructed between 1957 and 1960.³⁹ That portion of the original lot has been subdivided from the lot where the *Goomalling Post Office & quarters* is situated.

The Goomalling Exchange ended up with four switchboards, two trunk and two local. Up to eight telephonists and two or three night telephonists were needed to run this exchange, providing a 24 hour a day service.⁴⁰

In 1961, private mail boxes were installed at the Post Office. In 1968 the Post Officer's position was removed leaving only an Assistant Postal Officer, Postmaster and Postal Clerk. On 19 October 1971, Frank R. Bunney commenced in the position of Postmaster at Goomalling, and attained the distinction of being the longest serving Postmaster by the time he transferred to Northlands on the 22 May 1984. In 1972, alterations were made to the accommodation section of the building. In 1973, the Director of the Postmaster General's Department visited the Goomalling Post Office.⁴¹ In 1974, the Postal Clerk Position was withdrawn, and after the Manual Exchange closed the A.P.O. became part-time.⁴²

Rainfall reporting for the Weather Bureau in Perth was done at the Goomalling Post Office until 1975.⁴³ The manual telephone exchange operated until 18 March 1979, when it was closed down, all the telephonists were made redundant and the entire district converted to STD.⁴⁴

³⁷ Australian Archives series K1184/1 item 120/3.

³⁸ 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985 and *The Weekly Gazette* 4 December 1931, p.2.

³⁹ *Central Districts Herald* 27 October 1955, p3.

⁴⁰ Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

⁴¹ Australian Archives Series K715/1 Item 1887/96 Postmaster's Diary 1952-1981.

⁴² Bunney, A, Op cit, and 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and Present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ 'Goomalling, WA.: Past and present Vol. 3' Goomalling Historical Society c1985 and Australian Archives Series K715/1 Item 1887/96 Postmaster's Diary 1952-1981.

On 1 April 1993, the Post Office was purchased by the incumbent Postmaster, Ray Johnson, who had been appointed in 1984. The Postmaster General's Department, consolidated and reformed as Australia Post, subsequently rationalised its assets, selling many post offices throughout the state and retaining the Postmasters and postal activities under licence.

In 1994, the existing owners extended the living quarters with an additional enclosed room beyond the verandah, which had been enclosed.

The Goomalling Post Office continues to serve the function of postal services and the licensed Postmaster and family reside in the attached living accommodation.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Goomalling Post Office & quarters is located on lot 40 Railway Terrace in Goomalling. It is central within the main street of Goomalling which runs parallel with the railway line which is on the north side of the street.

The Post Office is situated at the front boundary of the site, with the integral quarters accessed from an entry on the east side of the property. The quarters are attached to and immediately behind the Post Office, and both sections comprise one building under the same roof. A separate structure at the rear of the building comprises the laundry and toilet facilities. A timber framed and fibro clad extension has been added on the east side of the building, with another entry door in the vicinity of the residential entry. The residential entry porch is detailed with turned timber posts, vertical timber balustrading and a feature gable. It has been clad with clear poly-carbonate corrugated iron sheeting. On the west side of the building, along the boundary, a skillion roofed brick room was added to provide for the battery storage for the phone exchange. A door on the west side of the post office has a flat roofed porch covering the entry.

The street facade of the building is symmetrical with a recessed entry and porch each side with a central bank of five timber framed casement windows across the front. The building is a brick construction, and the front facade and side returns are finished with a string course at sill and head level of the window, with rough cast render above the brick dado. The gambrel roof is clad with corrugated iron.

The Post Office is accessed from the double entry doors on the west side, the east side doors no longer providing access, and the new private post boxes being inserted into the south wall. The Post Office is a spacious room with the original fabric in evidence for the most part. The timber and glass screen wall which separated the manual phone exchange from the Post Office is still in place, and shows evidence of some alterations during the time that it was functional. A flush panel door leads directly into the hallway of the Postmaster's quarters, at a raised floor level (one step). The hall way leads to the front door and master bedroom on the left, or straight ahead to a bedroom accessed on the right, or the living room ahead. A double door space has been made between the living room and the kitchen. The 'French' doors from the living room lead onto the former verandah which has been extended to make a large room.

- 1910 Original Building
c.1922? Battery Room
1923 5 metre extension added to the front of the post office.
c.1950 Enclosed quarters verandah
c.1960 Separate toilet and laundry
c.1960 New door on west side of Post Office
1994 Remove verandah enclosure and extend.

13.3 REFERENCES

Bunney, A, compiled by 'A history of the Post Office in Goomalling'.

Owen, GE *The Postal History of Western Australia, 1829-1901* Melbourne, 1959.

Pope, Brian, 'Post Offices owned by Australia Post in Western Australia', prepared for the National Trust, Perth, 1991.