



**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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways
- 3.2.2 Lodging people
- 3.2.3 Catering for tourists
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 202 Rail & light rail transport
- 311 Hospitality industry & tourism

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) is a picturesque group of railway architecture, constructed in a simple bungalow style to a functional design. (Criterion 1.1)

The corner setting, stepped siting and contrasting colours of the materials make *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* a landmark in the centre of Bridgetown. (Criterion 1.3)

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) forms a cohesive group of single storey red tiled roofed buildings, with a strong contrast between the red brick of the lower buildings and the painted timber weatherboards and fibro of the upper buildings. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) illustrates the provision of accommodation for three men crews of trainmen between shifts on country rail routes, which was necessary to enable operation of Western Australia's extensive rail system, the improved standard of such accommodation in the post-World War II period

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

compared to earlier periods and the consultative process between the Railways Department and Union to ensure satisfactory provision of facilities. (Criterion 2.1)

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) was built in 1949-1950, when Bridgetown was an important rail centre in the South-West, and was the first new trainmen's barracks built for Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) when it began a barracks construction programme post-World War II. (Criterion 2.2)

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) was designed to provide trainmen with accommodation superior in standard to earlier cabin style barracks, to be a model for future trainmen's barracks in Western Australia, and was 'the most up-to-date railway trainmen's barracks in Australia' at its completion. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) is valued by the local community for its association with the railway that played a key role in development of the town and district, by those members of the wider community who lodged there when it was a railway barracks, then accommodation for employees of Greenbushes Tin N.L., and those who have stayed there since it became privately owned and operated budget accommodation in the late 1980s. (Criterion 4.1)

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) contributes to the community's sense of place via its visual and historical connection to the railway precinct. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr), albeit altered to provide some double and family rooms, demonstrates the most up to date purpose built accommodation for trainmen in Australia in the early 1950s, and so far as can be ascertained a rare example of such. (Criteria 5.1 and 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) significant as an element of the Bridgetown railway precinct, which remains a dominant townscape element in the town, as it is in many regional towns. (Criterion 6.1)

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) demonstrates the importance of the railway to the development of the State and to the economy of the regional areas and the importance of the trainmen, i.e. train drivers, firemen and guardsmen, the infrastructure required for them to fulfil their duties in a safe manner, and the efforts of the Railway Union to ensure these facilities were provided. The place also demonstrates the ascendancy of road transportation over rail in the post World War II period, and the growth of tourism and its contribution to the economy of the picturesque towns of the south west of the State. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) is in good condition. The place was initially well constructed with high quality materials and workmanship and was upgraded periodically during its ownership by WAGR. It has been maintained to a good standard by the subsequent and current owners.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) displays a high to moderate degree of integrity. Although the place is not used for its original and intended purpose of trainmen's barracks, it is used for a similar purpose of short term accommodation. The kitchen, dining, lounge and ablutions remain separate to the bedroom blocks.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) displays a high degree of authenticity. The external appearance of the 1950 buildings has had little modification. Internally there have been minor modifications such as the removal of a small number of internal walls to create larger bedrooms and the enclosure of the corridors between the sets of bedrooms. The kitchen and ablution facilities have also been upgraded. The major modification is the 1997 addition of the new office building and female amenities to the site, both of which were improvements required for its ongoing use as budget holiday accommodation.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Robin Chinnery, Historian, and Lynne Farrow, Architect, in 2009, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) comprises a communal facilities block and male ablutions block of brick construction and three accommodation blocks of timber and fibro construction, all with hipped clay tile roofs, linked by tile roofed covered ways, constructed in a simple bungalow style to a functional design. It was designed by the Civil Engineering Branch of Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) in 1948, and built for WAGR by Bunbury builder A. H. Pandal in 1949-50. In 1997, following conversion to budget accommodation under private ownership, an office building and female ablutions block designed by architect Alan Ross were built.

In 1852, A. C. Gregory undertook the original survey of the Geegelup area. In 1855, the first pastoral leases in the district were granted to Edward Hester and John Blechynden, who took up large holdings to which they introduced sheep and cattle. In 1862, John Allnutt began to establish an orchard in the district, which laid the foundation of the fruit growing industry in the area.¹ In 1868, following requests from the European settlers to lay out lots for Geegelup townsite to encourage others to follow suit, T. Campbell Carey surveyed the townsite, and suggested it be named Bridgetown.² On 4 June 1868, the town of Bridgetown was proclaimed by Governor J. S. Hampton, after whom the main street was later named.³ That month the first 56 lots were offered for sale on the townsite, most being two and a half acres in area.⁴ By 1872, there were seven houses including 'the police station, a general store, a small building for an hotel, John Blechynden's and Joe Smith's houses' in the town.⁵ By 1879, there were 20 households, several stores and public houses at Bridgetown, which grew slowly in the 1880s. The pastoral industry and timber cutting were predominant in the district as the fledgling fruit growing industry continued to have difficulties due to its distance from markets in the Colony.⁶

In the 1890s, the building boom in the wake of the Western Australian Gold Boom brought increased demand for sawn timber. Numerous spot mills opened in the Bridgetown area, with the first steam driven mill opening in 1895, and expansion of this industry brought an increase in population in the town and district.⁷

In 1898, opening of the railway between Donnybrook and Bridgetown encouraged expansion of the timber industry and provided the means for the fruit growing industry to expand as a reliable and rapid daily rail service brought the markets

¹ 'Commemorating Fifty Years of Federation, 1901-1951: Nelson District Jubilee Celebrations' Battye Library PR 8679/BRI/51; & *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1968* (Shire of Bridgetown, 1968) p. 4.

² Letters from Assistant Surveyor T. Campbell Carey to Surveyor General Captain Roe, 2 February & 20 April 1868, in *Bridgetown Centenary Year* op. cit., p. 3.

³ *Government Gazette* 16 June 1868.

⁴ *Government Gazette* 30 September 1868.

⁵ May, John 'Recollections' in *Blackwood Times* 16 March 1934.

⁶ *Bridgetown Centenary Year 1868-1878* op. cit., p. 7.

⁷ Gaines, C. 'Bridgetown 100 Years of History' (Typescript Thesis, 1970, Battye Library) p. 4.

on the Goldfields within reach. With the population of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie increasing, so did the demand for fresh produce. By 1905, the first big shipment of apples was transported by rail from Bridgetown to the Goldfields. With many growers making a lucrative profit, more settlers in the valley began to invest in the new industry and began planting orchards. The arrival of the railway also coincided with significant advances in agricultural technology such as the introduction of super-phosphate, the use of subterranean clover for pasture and fencing wire. Such agricultural supplies could now be easily transported by rail which led to a boost in agricultural production in the Bridgetown area.⁸

Following completion of the railway many construction workers settled in the district, further boosting the population, which had increased to 210.⁹

In c.1905, Trainmen's Barracks were erected at the southern end of the Station Yard, which stretched southward from Steere Street towards Phillips Street, to accommodate trainmen whose shift terminated at Bridgetown. The single storey barracks of timber weatherboard construction under a canopy roof comprised four bedroom cabins, a dining room, a kitchen and ablutions, with latrines at the far south-west corner of the site.¹⁰ The standard design, which provided for a varied number of portable cabins, all covered with a canopy roof, developed from 1904, and was utilised for about 70 years. Individual cabins or a whole complex could be 'readily and economically removed in the event of alteration in the time-table rendering removal desirable.'¹¹

In the late 1920s, road transport began to compete with the railways, but in the 1930s the introduction of refrigerated railway carriages enabled the growth of the district's dairy industry with the Bridgetown Cream Depot opening in 1939.¹²

In 1940, following the outbreak of World War II, the apple industry lost its overseas markets and there were no new plantings. In order to protect the industry during the war years, the Commonwealth legislated to pay owners a grant to purchase all apple and pear crops, and to compensate growers in all fruit producing states. This scheme remained in force in Western Australia until 1951, when the normal export of fruit resumed.¹³ In 1942, the Commonwealth also funded the installation of a modern dehydration plant at Bridgetown, and in 1943-44, the plant produced 110 tons of dried apples, which were shipped to Britain for distribution to the Australian and American armed services. These measures enabled Bridgetown to retain its status as a major apple producing area, attaining its highest apple yield during the mid 1940s. As a consequence the railway continued to provide a vital service in the transportation of the districts produce.¹⁴

With the increased rail traffic, by mid-1946, plans were prepared for reorganisation of the railway yard at Bridgetown. The new layout required relocation of three railway cottages to a site a further 3 ft. from the railway line, removal of the stockyards and the barracks to new positions, and a new site for

⁸ Christensen, P. et al. 'The Blackwood: A valley in transition', Forests Department of WA, 1981, p.20.

⁹ 'Commemorating Fifty Years ...', op. cit.

¹⁰ Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks, in WAGR plans 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' SROWA Cons. 1781 Item 12967, surveyed & plotted 18 May 1905.

¹¹ Annual Report, Western Australian Government Railways, 1904, in *Votes and Proceedings*, 1905, p. 15.

¹² Conservation Management Plan for the Bridgetown Station, Curtin Consultancy Services, March 1999, p24.

¹³ Ibid, Christensen, P. et al, pp.24-26.

¹⁴ Information provided by Robin Chinnery, Historian 12 November 2009.

the barracks was discussed.¹⁵ The Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen's and Cleaners' Union discussed with its local branch, a proposed site in Spencer Street and agreed to it. Their Bunbury branch suggested the new barracks be brick construction with single rooms, similar to the barracks at Northam but with sufficient distance from the kitchen to ensure people sleeping were not disturbed by noise; septic tanks for sewerage; bedroom floors to be covered, rugs and pillows supplied, and they did not want 'cyclone beds'.¹⁶ In July, a sketch plan shows the new Trainmen's Barracks, rectilinear in form similar to the existing trainmen's barracks, on the proposed site at the south-east corner of Phillip and Spencer Streets that was uncleared at this date.¹⁷

In August 1946, the Chief Traffic Manager wrote to the Commissioner of Railways about a three to five year program for barracks construction and recommended Bridgetown be the first preference. This program for barracks construction was initiated in the mid-1940s following the Railway Union's demands for adequate and additional railway housing in country areas. As WAGR and the Workers Homes Board (renamed the State Housing Commission in 1946) argued which agency had responsibility for providing housing in rural locations, construction was delayed until 1948 when Government funding was made available.¹⁸ The program included the construction of new Trainmen's barracks, as well as enlarging and improving existing barracks,¹⁹ to standards approved by the Union.

On 1 November, the Chief Civil Engineer sent the Commissioner a plan of the site for the barracks, which 'was selected after discussion with representatives of the Unions in the District', the Chief Traffic Manager agreed with the site, and proposed it be formally put to the Unions for approval.²⁰ In early 1947, after they formally approved the site, the Minister for Railways granted permission for purchase of portion of Lot 178, one acre one rood 36 perches in area, as there was not a suitable site for new barracks in the railway reserve, and the notice of resumption was gazetted on 19 May.²¹

In May 1947, the Chief Civil Engineer asked the Chief Traffic Manager to confirm the requirement for a 24 bed barracks as requested in August 1946, and inquired whether there were any special considerations. The estimated cost of £12,000 to move the existing barracks and stockyards to make way for the new siding included construction of new barracks but not new stockyards or siding.²² In early October, plans for the proposed barracks at Lot 178 show a U shaped layout with brick and tile buildings aligned with the north-east south-west contours

15 W.A. McCullough, Deputy Chief Civil Engineer, to Commissioner of Railways, in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file – Secretary's Branch, SROWA Cons. 4771 Item R6499, 18 July 1946.

16 General Secretary WA Locomotive Engine Drivers', Firemen's and Cleaners' Union, to Commissioner of Railways, in *ibid*, 24 July 1946.

17 'Proposed New Site for Barracks' in WAGR plans 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks', SROWA Cons. 1781 Item 12967, July 1946.

18 L. Gray and I. Sauman, *Merredin Railway Housing Precinct: Conservation Management Plan* Perth, WA (2009). p.11.

19 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19., cited in Gray and Sauman, *Merredin Railway Housing Precinct* (2009). p. 12.

20 Correspondence in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file – Secretary's Branch, *op. cit.*, 16 Aug. & 1 Nov. 1946 respectively.

21 Correspondence in *ibid*, 30 Jan. to 23 May 1947; *Government Gazette* 19 May 1947; & Certificate of Title Vol. CXCV Fol. 135.

22 Correspondence in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks', *ibid*, 22 May 1947.

of the site, with communal facilities comprising kitchen, dining room and lounge at the base and bedroom wings at each side. The east wing was to comprise five bedrooms and communal ablutions at the end, with seven bedrooms to the west wing. Initially, all bedrooms were to be 12 ft. x 10 ft., with verandahs to the inside walls of the two blocks opening to an inner courtyard, and verandahs around the facilities block.²³ In late October, the plans were modified to provide a larger barracks with four levels of buildings. At the lowest level a brick and tile building comprises a communal kitchen, dining and lounge, and has a verandah to all sides. Buildings at the other levels were to be timber weatherboard to dado height and fibrolite above. The first level has three blocks of bedrooms, each three bedrooms; the next has two blocks of bedrooms, a storeroom and ablutions opposite the storeroom; and there are three blocks of bedrooms at the top level. A central covered way connects the levels and there are connecting verandahs at the north-west side of the bedroom blocks.²⁴ An un-dated plan shows modifications to provide three bedroom blocks at top level, four at the middle, and one block of bedrooms, a storeroom and lavatory block at the lowest bedroom level, and no change to communal facilities at the lowest level as planned in late October.²⁵ In November, the Commissioner for Railways was advised the terraced layout for the barracks was dictated by the topography of the site. The communal section was to be brick construction and the bedrooms timber and fibrolite; and 'In light of views expressed by the Royal Commissioner, single rooms 10' x 8' are allowed for, the rooms being in sets of three, thus catering for individual train crews in separate units', to accommodate 24 men at an estimated cost of £6500.²⁶ In early 1948, the new plans for *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* were submitted to the Unions, who agreed to the proposed layout.²⁷

On 21 April 1948, Portion of Bridgetown Town Lot 178 was transferred to the Crown.²⁸ By late April, plans were sufficiently advanced to proceed with estimates to build them by contract for labour and materials. The estimated cost was £8600 to build bedroom sections in timber and fibrolite lined with plasterboard, and the communal section in brick, with tile roofs to all buildings. There was to be a plunge bath in the ablution block and a 20 cubic foot refrigerator in the kitchen. A 5000 gallon tank at the top of the site would provide fire protection and back-up in case of a failure of the town water supply. The Department was to be responsible for all site works, including diversion of the creek at the rear of the site. A site plan for the new Trainmen's Barracks shows the site in relation to the railway yards, approximately one block from it, diagonally opposite the corner of Spencer and Phillip Streets, the tank on a stand at the rear of the site, and the existing cabin type trainmen's barracks.²⁹

²³ 'Proposed Barracks', Bridgetown, in WAGR plans 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks', SROWA Cons. 1781 Item 12967, drawn 13 Oct. 1947.

²⁴ 'Proposed Trainmen's Barracks', in *ibid*, drawn 28 Oct. 1947.

²⁵ 'Proposed Trainmen's Barracks', in *ibid*, n.d.

²⁶ Chief Civil Engineer to Commissioner for Railways in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file – Secretary's Branch, *op. cit.*, 25 Nov. 1947.

²⁷ Deputy Chief Civil Engineer to Deputy Commissioner of Railways, in *ibid*, 26 April 1948.

²⁸ Certificates of Title Vol. CXCIV Fol. 135 & Vol. 1109 Fol. 360.

²⁹ Correspondence & memos in *ibid*, April 1948; & Site Plan, Proposed Trainmen's Barracks, Bridgetown, in SROWA Cons. 1781 Item 37195, drawn 11 Feb. & checked 10 Sept. 1948.

In 1948, plans were prepared for *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* and, in accord with the plan of late October 1947, show the complex extending over four levels to follow the slope of the elevated site and aligned on a 45 degree angle to the corner of Spencer and Phillip Streets, with the creek along the north side of the site. The brick and tile building at the lowest level comprises a kitchen, communal dining room and lounge room with verandahs to all sides. At the same level, to the rear of this building, is an ablution block with two showers, two water closets (w.c.s) three urinals, a bathroom, boiler room and a woodshed. There is a walkway from the dining hall block past the ablutions block to the bedroom blocks connected by covered ways and steps. The first raised level comprises one bedroom block of three bedrooms and a store room; the next level comprises four bedroom blocks each of three bedrooms; and the top level comprises three bedrooms blocks each of three bedrooms. The latter buildings are all shown as to be constructed of timber weatherboard to dado height and fibrolite above.³⁰

In early 1949, tenders were called for the Trainmen's Barracks. The only tender received was from A. H. Pental, of Bunbury, at £8,150, which was accepted as recommended by the Deputy Chief Civil Engineer, who noted he had completed several projects for the Department 'and his work has been satisfactory and his dealings cordial'.³¹ The new barracks were to be 'something better than had been attempted elsewhere'.³² In August, the Commissioner visited and noted good progress being made on the erection of the barracks, the plan for which was 'much better than previous type', but he was disappointed much of the timber being used was of poor quality.³³ In March 1950, the Chief Civil Engineer noted instructions to district engineers to watch and report poor quality materials, but he was 'not hopeful of achieving any improvement under present conditions'³⁴, probably due to limited availability of building materials as restrictions imposed during World War II continued in force until June 1952.

Construction of the new barracks, which 'will be, or equal to, the most modern in the State', aroused 'much local interest' and Nelson Press requested a copy of 'plan specifications' to publish an illustration, which was provided.³⁵ Information in the accompanying letter, duly incorporated in an article in the *Blackwood-Warren Sentinel*, noted the 10 ft. x 8 ft. single bedrooms were 'an innovation in trainmen's barracks construction in this State'.³⁶ The barracks were designed to sleep eight individual train crews – i.e. a driver, fireman and guard, away from the communal facilities. Also noted were wood fire stoves and a 20 cubic foot refrigerator to the kitchen; hot and cold water to be connected throughout the facility, and provision of septic tanks. All windows and doors were to have fly wire. Hand basins and the plunge bath were to be cast iron, enamelled. There was to be modern furniture for the fit-out, with a steel locker in each bedroom,

30 Proposed Trainmen's Barracks, Bridgetown, in SROWA Cons. 1781 Item 37195, drawn 22 March & checked 10 Sept. 1948

31 Deputy Chief Civil Engineer to Commissioner of Railways in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file – Secretary's Branch, op. cit., 23 Feb. 1949.

32 Notes from Commissioner's inspection, 14-18 Feb. 1949, in *ibid*.

33 Notes from Commissioner's visit, 16-19 August 1949, in *ibid*.

34 Chief Civil Engineer to Secretary W.A.G.R.C., in *ibid*, 1 March 1950.

35 F.L Semmler, Manager, The Nelson Press, Bridgetown, to Secretary W.A.G.R.C., 6 June 1950.

36 Secretary W.A.G.R.C. reply to request from F. L. Semmler, in *ibid*, 12 June 1950; & *Blackwood-Warren Sentinel* 29 June 1950.

and electric lighting throughout. The total cost would 'exceed £8000', and when completed the place 'will be one of the most up-to-date railway trainmen's barracks in Australia'.³⁷ Some furniture from the old barracks was re-used. New furnishings included five new beds mattresses and pillows, 'increased linen', 15 rugs, 10 bedroom chairs, and six leather lounge chairs for the lounge room that was to have linoleum floor covering.³⁸ By 31 October, *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* was completed and awaiting assembly and delivery of furniture, and the place was occupied in December 1950.³⁹

In early January 1951, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees thanked the Secretary for Railways for the 'fine new barracks' that were 'now in use and one and all are very happy about the new building'.⁴⁰ When the Commissioner inspected the barracks, he noted they were 'very satisfactory', the refrigerator was working well and was 'well cared for by the men' and he recommended installing them at other barracks.⁴¹

In July 1953, after the Roads Board notified its concern regarding the lack of laundry facilities at *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)*. The Secretary for Railways advised the Public Health Department they were 'the most modern barracks on the railway system', but as they were designed only for overnight accommodation such facilities were not provided. However, 'in view of the acute housing shortage' at Bridgetown, some semi-permanent residents were being accommodated at the barracks, and as a temporary measure troughs for their use were erected in the open area adjacent to the bathhouse as there was no funding available for a separate wash house.⁴²

In October 1953, a traced plan of 'Proposed singlemen's quarters on site of old Barracks' shows the site in the Station Yard with ten cabins.⁴³ In late October, another traced plan entitled 'Proposed site for single men's barracks' shows a site closer to Phillip Street with much the same layout. A revised scheme prepared in November shows four cabins combined and roofed for a two room kitchen-dining building instead of two separate buildings, six bedroom cabins instead of ten, and a double e.c. including a urinal.⁴⁴ The estimated cost for this proposal plus guttering, paving etc., was £810, plus an additional £225 for re-erection and alterations to four cabins from Brunswick Junction, where new Barracks were built, as part of an erection scheme for the financial year 1953-54. Approval was granted in late May, and it was 'practically complete' by 31 August 1954.⁴⁵ A request for approval for works including a lean-to annexe to the kitchen/dining room block painting, an e.c. and urinal, and fencing to complete the accommodation was denied as no funds were available for 1954-55, but work still

37 *ibid.*

38 Chief Traffic Manager to Secretary, W.A.G.R.C., in *ibid*, 20 June 1950

39 Chief Civil Engineer to Chief Traffic Manager in *ibid*, 25 Oct. 1950; & Annual Report

40 Chief Civil Engineer to Chief Traffic Manager, 25 Oct 1950 General Secretary to Secretary for Railways, & Chief Civil Engineer to Secretary W.A.G.R.C., in *ibid*, 25 Oct. 1950, 4 & 16 Jan. 1951.

41 Notes from Commissioner's inspection tour, in *ibid*, 20 Feb. 1952.

42 Secretary for Railways to Deputy Commissioner of Public Health in *ibid*, 8 July 1953.

43 'Proposed singlemen's quarters on site of old Barracks', Bridgetown, in *ibid*, traced 9 Oct. 1953.

44 'Proposed single men's barracks', & 'Single Men's Cabins Accommodation Revised Scheme', in *ibid*, 30 Oct. & 23 Nov. 1953 respectively.

45 Civil Engineering Branch form requesting approval, approval, & memo, in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file – Secretary's Branch, *op. cit.*, 7 April, 25 & 27 May, & 31 Aug. 1954.

proceeded. In September, the Chief Civil Engineer was instructed to call an immediate halt to the project unless another project was deferred or delayed to enable funds to be transferred across. In late October, funds were found to continue the project.⁴⁶ The superior standard of accommodation at the Trainmen's Barracks was apparent when the Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union requested electric light, a bathroom mirror, a refrigerator, kitchen cupboards, a copper and troughs be installed in the single-men's quarters that provided permanent residence for men working at the depot, 'some of whom were evicted from the barracks', i.e. the Trainmen's Barracks, where they had enjoyed a higher standard of amenities.⁴⁷

In May 1956, it was reported the Trainmen's Barracks were in good condition; ornamental shrubs were doing well and would 'improve' the general appearance of the place, but no details of plantings were given.⁴⁸ In April 1957, the Union requested sun protection be provided for at least three bedrooms. The verandahs on the west provided shade from the afternoon sun and the slope of the site meant the buildings shaded the east windows of lower levels. The top level was used for men sleeping during the day to ensure least disturbance but they could not rest due to the heat so sun shades were needed on the east wall. It was also recommended insulation be installed above the ceilings in the top three rooms, which was completed in May.⁴⁹

On 5 July 1960, the single-men's quarters at Bridgetown were closed, and thereafter single-men were accommodated as permanent boarders at *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)*, which was sometimes referred to as the single-men's quarters.⁵⁰ In 1963, there were 11 permanent boarders at the Barracks when a request for laundry facilities was approved and implemented.⁵¹ In late 1969, the 24 bedrooms at the barracks were fully occupied by five permanent Bridgetown staff (two drivers and three cleaners), 12 so-called 'foreign staff' relieving at Bridgetown, six crews rostered to book off there, and one emergency. Therefore approval was given for use of DP (Departmental Property) 1259 in Carey Street, a two bedroom house that was vacant, to accommodate additional workers to be sent to Bridgetown to clear an accumulation of traffic. Three additional crews were currently operating from Bridgetown doing ballasting work that would last about six months more, and in January an extra crew would come on for the fruit season, which was an annual provision, and they would require accommodation. In July 1970, the Carey Street house was no longer needed and it was vacated.⁵²

⁴⁶ Correspondence in *ibid*, August to October 1954.

⁴⁷ General Secretary, Western Australian Locomotive Engine Drivers', Firemens' and Cleaners' Union, to Secretary, W.A.G.R.C., in *ibid*, 5 April 1955.

⁴⁸ Notes from inspection by Assistant Commissioner (Commercial), in *ibid*, 9 May 1956.

⁴⁹ Chief Traffic Manager to Secretary W.A.G.R.C., in *ibid*, 18 April 1957; correspondence & memos in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file Civil Engineering Branch, SROWA Cons. 4801 Item CE 10090, 23 Jan. to 28 May 1957.

⁵⁰ Memos in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file Civil Engineering Branch, *ibid*, July-Aug. 1960.

⁵¹ *ibid*, March to Nov. 1963.

⁵² Chief Traffic Manager to Acting Secretary W.A.G.R.C., & to Secretary W.A.G.R.C. in *ibid*, 1 Dec. 1969 & 20 July 1970 respectively.

In June 1970, the kitchen floor at the single-men's quarters was re-covered and in 1971 electric wall heaters were installed in the kitchen and dining room at *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)*.⁵³

In April 1972, with only one crew booking off at Bridgetown each day and three permanent boarders at the barracks, it was under-utilised and removal of some sleeping units was considered. In June, the District Engineer advised there was no objection to removing the top wing, but first it would be used as temporary quarters for the Mobile Gang while their vans were under repair, which should be completed by September. Instructions were given for arrangements to be made for removal of this wing of nine bedrooms after September, but it was deferred due to delays to repairs to the van. In October, it was decided to retain the top wing as it had electric fans and power points and instead remove the lower wing that did not. In 1973, due to further delays to the repairs to the van, the Mobile Gang were not expected to vacate the barracks until July, when it was proposed to proceed with removal of the lower wing, comprising four, three bedroom, units in good condition. Potential re-use elsewhere was considered but rejected as the incline of the site made access by a jinker impossible or would require expensive earthworks, negating the cost benefit, so demolition would be required, which would necessitate subsequent repair to the covered way to retain access to the top wing. The Acting District Engineer advised the intention to construct new barracks at Manjimup would render those at Bridgetown redundant. He considered it better to leave them intact, locking the lower wing and not using it to avoid maintenance costs until the whole barracks was closed, then to arrange for the place to be offered for sale or demolition, and this course of action was approved. Delay to the development of Manjimup did not alter this view.⁵⁴

In July 1976, Premier Charles Court (later Sir Charles) advised the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes that Cabinet had considered transferring the Barracks to the Shire, accepted it should be transferred as of 5 September, and its use should be something to help the local community 'to help itself'.⁵⁵ Cabinet supported strong moves to encourage tourism in Bridgetown, including generous funding to expand the caravan park and relocate the tourist information centre, and 'making available the Westrail single men's barracks for tourist purposes, subject to consultation between the Shire, the Department of Education and the Community Recreation Council - on terms acceptable to the Shire'.⁵⁶

In 1977, Westrail continued to use the place as there was insufficient barracks accommodation at Manjimup. When the depot there was reorganised, it was arranged for train crews to be transported by taxi from Bridgetown. In addition to the Traffic Branch requirements, seven welders were staying at the barracks and required accommodation until at least mid-June. It was evident Westrail would require barracks at Bridgetown for some time. The government had committed the place to other community use, and the Shire was inquiring when it could occupy the buildings, and a proposal to convert a departmental house in Carey

53 Correspondence & memos in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file Civil Engineering Branch, SROWA Cons. 4801 Item CE 10090, March 1970 to October 1971.

54 Correspondence & memos in *ibid*, April 1972 to Nov. 1973; & in 'Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks' WAGR file - Secretary's Branch Part Two, SROWA Cons 4771 Item R6499, 1973.

55 Correspondence in 'Accommodation – Barracks – Bridgetown' WAGR File, Vol. 1, SROWA Cons. 5704 Item 05729, 21 July 1976.

56 *ibid*.

Street for use as barracks was discussed. The District Traffic manager saw a need to progress conversion of the house as there had been no maintenance to the barracks beyond immediate repairs in recent years due to the anticipated decommissioning and transfer to Manjimup. However, members of the Australian Railways' Union strongly opposed any proposal to close the barracks and use houses in lieu. It was concluded Westrail would need to retain the barracks for at least another year at which time the matter could be reconsidered in the light of how transfers to Manjimup were going. The Chief Civil Engineer was requested to organise some outstanding maintenance works especially to the dining room, kitchen, and ablutions, and estimates were obtained for upgrading the electrical installation to the kitchen, dining room and lounge room, but the file does not record the outcome.⁵⁷ The Pensioners' League requested use of *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* for aged accommodation, but this did not eventuate.⁵⁸ On 9 January 1978, the operation as Traffic Barracks ceased, the Traffic Branch vacated and the place was handed over for use by the Chief Civil Engineer's Branch.⁵⁹ In June, Westrail's commitment to arrange for the Shire to use the place should they need it for community purposes was noted, but it appeared unlikely as the Shire had recently acquired another property.⁶⁰

In September 1979, the District Engineer asked the Shire Clerk whether the 'Old Railway Barracks' was still required for community purposes.⁶¹ In November, a submission suggesting it be converted to a 'low-cost holiday centre for single and low income families' was considered.⁶² Premier Charles Court was advised Westrail had no further use for the barracks due to transfer of the railway depot to Manjimup, the Shire had no firm proposal to take it over at this stage and was considering this suggestion. If the place was to be used for other than the initial reason (i.e. community use) that the Government had committed it to the Shire, then Westrail would require compensation and the estimated current value of the place was \$25,000.⁶³ In January 1980, the Shire requested the Premier to make the barracks available to it 'free of cost for community purposes', noting 'considerable funds would need to be found to modify and upgrade the buildings for a suitable purpose whether it be low cost accommodation as discussed with the CWA (Country Women's Association) or some other suitable purpose by the Shire or another approved organisation', and the Shire did not have much money.⁶⁴ The Premier requested all papers related to issues concerning the Bridgetown barracks, noting that when it was decided to relocate the depot to Manjimup it had been agreed to provide a subsidy for Bridgetown caravan park and make 'the railway depot available for a cheap tourist youth type travel accommodation'.⁶⁵ However, there was now concern in Bridgetown about the future of caravan parks as the industry was in rapid decline, especially due to a rise in fuel prices, and it was suggested to transfer money intended for the

57 Correspondence & memos. in *ibid*, Jan. to May 1977.

58 Correspondence in *ibid*, May to June 1977.

59 Correspondence & memos. in *ibid*, Jan. to Feb. 1978.

60 Notes from Commissioner's inspection tour in *ibid*, 18-20 June 1978.

61 Correspondence in *ibid*, 17 Sept. 1979.

62 Extract copied from Hansard notes of Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in *ibid*, 14 Nov. 1979.

63 Correspondence & memos in *ibid*, November 1979.

64 Eric Molyneux, Shire Clerk Bridgetown-Greenbushes to Premier Charles Court in *ibid*, 8 Jan. 1980.

65 Memo, marked 'Urgent', to Under Secretary in *ibid*, 24 Jan. 1980.

subsidy 'to fixing up the barracks for cheap youth and tourist accommodation', which he considered 'logical on the surface' but he wanted to be fully informed before any commitment.⁶⁶

On 29 January 1980, the Commissioner for Railways advised there was no note about payment when it was decided to offer the barracks to the Shire in 1976. In the present commercial environment he recommended 'Westrail receive payment for the current value of the place including land, but in view of the circumstances of that offer, i.e. relocation of the railway depot from Bridgetown to Manjimup and the subsequent impact on the Bridgetown community, he suggested the buildings be leased to the Shire on a peppercorn basis for 'say, 21 years' provided they were 'used for "community" and not for profit making purposes'.⁶⁷

Shire President Eric Molyneux reminded the Premier of the commitment to transfer the barracks for community use to compensate the impact on the community of relocating the railway depot, and noted of three promises made only the \$20,000 grant to relocate the tourist information centre had been fulfilled. Considerable planning and fund raising was needed for the proposed expansion of the caravan park and even with the \$2 for \$1 government grant on the basis of tenders received twice the amount available would be required, and meanwhile caravan park trade had significantly declined. It was requested the barracks be transferred to the Shire at a cost of \$10,000, the \$60,000 grant for the caravan park be re-allocated to upgrade the buildings and grounds at the barracks, for which purpose the Shire would transfer the \$23,000 raised for the caravan park project.⁶⁸ Modification and upgrade of the barracks would make it suitable for lease 'to private enterprise or some body to provide a suitable tourist or community facility, e.g. low or medium cost family accommodation, or some other tourist oriented or community project'.⁶⁹ The Commissioner for Railways held it would be a commercial enterprise and proposed the buildings be granted at no charge and the land be available for purchase at current valuation as per the Public Works Department (PWD) or at an annual lease of \$1,500 for 21 years, subject to review every three years.⁷⁰ The land was currently valued at \$10,500 and buildings at \$50,000 'on a replacement cost basis less depreciation', but the Valuer General considered this would be 'difficult to realise if offered for sale'.⁷¹

In July 1980, a request from Greenbushes Tin N.L., which was expanding mining operations, to rent the barracks for ten years as there was not sufficient suitable housing available at Greenbushes for its employees, was favourably received by Westrail. The company would repair and paint the place in the first year and pay an 'attractive rent', and the benefit of having 20 extra people living in the town was recognised.⁷² The Shire did not oppose it, but if it did not eventuate or on expiry of the lease, the situation was to 'revert to the present, with the Shire having first option to use the place for tourism or community purposes'.⁷³ The

66 *ibid.*

67 Commissioner for Railways to Minister for Transport in *ibid.*, 29 Jan. 1980.

68 Eric Molyneux to Premier Charles Court in *ibid.*, 14 Feb. 1980.

69 *ibid.*

70 Commissioner of Railways to Minister for Transport and Tourism in *ibid.*, 27 Feb. 1980.

71 Valuer General to to Manager, Property & Services, WAGR, in *ibid.*, 21 May 1980.

72 Commissioner of Railways to Minister for Transport in *ibid.*, 15 July 1980.

73 Eric Molyneux to Mr. Ryder in *ibid.* July-August 1980.

lease to Greenbushes Tin N.L. for ten years commencing on 1 September, was subject to 12 months' termination if the place was required for railway/transport purposes, and the company was responsible for all repairs and maintenance.⁷⁴ The company spent 'several thousand dollars' on improvements including installation of 'a commercial gas cooker and associated improvements'.⁷⁵ The company utilised the Barracks for its employees until September 1986, and when they vacated the place the Shire expressed interest in using it.⁷⁶

In early 1987, a copy of the plans of *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* was sent to several parties who had expressed interest to the Shire. They included a local couple who wanted to use it as holiday units, youth hostels, a 'private contact' who wanted to use it for accommodation, a local youth group, and a Perth company with shops in Bridgetown.⁷⁷ The Shire wanted to see the place used and the Director of Tourism considered it suitable for low-cost accommodation.⁷⁸ After the Shire was unable to secure a tenant due to the small size of rooms and not self-contained, only one toilet facility and no female toilets, stairs not suitable for elderly or disabled access, and a youth hostel already in the town, Westrail took over to advertise the place for lease or sale.⁷⁹ It was valued at \$75,000, \$15,000 for land and \$60,000 for improvements that were well maintained for their age but 'considered obsolete', and, with little interest in Bridgetown and the narrow range of options for future use, the Valuer General advised 'it may be necessary to negotiate a lesser figure than above'.⁸⁰

In October 1987, Westrail received inquiries from a number of people whose proposed uses included short term budget accommodation, a guest house, a private residential college for students from Japan, and workshops for community based activities. Mick Ryan, of Mikmar Marketing & Management, who was 'impressed with the potential and the appearance', noted a house would need to be built on site and ablutions added 'to attract a suitable clientele', and tariffs would have to be kept low 'as there is a limited call on this type of accommodation' offered \$40,000 to purchase the barracks.⁸¹ The only firm offer received was his further offer to rent it at \$50 per week with an option to purchase at \$40,000 cash on 30 June 1989 or any prior date, and as lessee he would be responsible for maintenance and would fence the boundary between the barracks and the neighbouring house. In February 1988, Westrail decided to accept this offer, a lease agreement was drawn up and signed in March, and the barracks was reoccupied for use as short term low cost accommodation.⁸² On 18 April 1989, the place was transferred to Ryan Nominees Pty Ltd and Kingsbury Nominees Pty Ltd, as tenants in common in equal shares. On 3 July, it was transferred to Yongala Investments Pty Ltd, of West Perth, which operated the place as budget accommodation until January 1995, when it was transferred to

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- 74 Mr. Ryder, Property Manager, Westrail, to Mr Lynch of Greenbushes Tin N.L. in *ibid*, 14 August 1980.
 - 75 Westrail Property Manager, L.J. Jackson to Mr. Morris in *ibid*, 17 June 1987.
 - 76 Extract from Bridgetown Council Minutes in *ibid*, 15-16 Sept. 1986.
 - 77 File note in *ibid*, 14 Jan. 1987.
 - 78 File notes in *ibid*, 14 Jan. & 7 April 1987.
 - 79 File notes in *ibid*, May-June 1987.
 - 80 Valuer General to Properties Manager, Westrail, & file notes, in *ibid*, 2 Sept. & Oct.-Nov. respectively.
 - 81 Mick Ryan, to Graeme Morris, Property Manager Westrail, in *ibid*, 22 Oct. 1987.
 - 82 File notes in *ibid*, Nov. 1987 - March 1988.

Joseph Neville Carroll.⁸³ It has not been ascertained what, if any, changes were made to the place in 1989-1995, and whether dividing walls between some of the bedrooms were removed to create larger rooms in this period or somewhat later.

In 1995, architect Alan Ross prepared plans for additions to 'Backpackers Hotel, Spencer Street, Bridgetown', of brick construction with tile roofs, comprising a female amenities block with showers, basins and toilets, at the same level as the existing male ablutions building, with a covered way between them, and an office block comprising an office, a toilet for disabled use, and a storeroom at the same level as the communal facilities, with an entry way between it and the female ablutions. The kitchen was to be largely refitted, the dining room left unchanged, with a new wall furnace to be installed on the internal wall of the lounge room and the fireplace reinstated. There was to be a new carpark off Phillips Street.⁸⁴

In 1996, *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* was included in the Municipal Inventory for the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.⁸⁵

In March 1997, Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes approved the plans for the additions to *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)*. In May, the Shire approved plans prepared by Scott & Associates, Consulting Engineers, for the proposed ablution extension, and subsequently the additions were completed.⁸⁶

In 1997, portion of Lot 178 was subdivided into Lot 2, the site of the barracks, 3620 square metres, fronting Spencer and Phillips Streets, and Lot 3, 2380 square metres, fronting Phillips Street, with a right of carriageway as shown on Diagram 93078. On 30 October 1998, Bridgetown Backpackers Ltd was registered as owner of Lot 2.⁸⁷

In 2009, *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* continues in operation as Bridgetown Valley Lodge, offering single, double, twin share and family budget accommodation, with communal ablutions and a communal kitchen, dining and lounge rooms.⁸⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) comprises a communal facilities block and male ablutions block of brick construction and three accommodation blocks of timber and fibro construction, all with hipped clay tile roofs, linked by tile roofed covered ways, built in a simple bungalow style to a functional design. It was designed by the Civil Engineering Branch of Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) in 1948, and built for WAGR by Bunbury builder A. H. Pandal in 1949-50. In 1997, following conversion to budget accommodation under private ownership, an office building and female ablutions block designed by architect Alan Ross were built.

⁸³ Hon. W.N. Stretch, to Minister for Racing & Gaming, representing Minister for Transport, Questions on Notice, Legislative Council, in *ibid*, 30 August 1989; & Certificate of Title Vol. 1109 Fol. 360.

⁸⁴ Alan Ross Architect 'Backpackers Hotel Spencer Street Bridgetown', Oct. 1995, courtesy of owner Terry Mathews, and the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

⁸⁵ Railway Barracks (fmr), in Municipal Inventory Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Adopted 29 August 1996.

⁸⁶ Scott & Associates 'Proposed Ablution Extension Backpackers Hostel'; & site visit, Robin Chinnery & Lynne Farrow, 23 March 2009.

⁸⁷ Diagram 93078, 18 March 1997, approved Western Australian Planning Commission 4 Nov. 1997.

⁸⁸ Site visit, Robin Chinnery & Lynne Farrow, 23 March 2009.

Bridgetown is a small picturesque rural town with a population of about 2,500. It is sited in a moderately steep valley, with the main part of the town located above the east bank of the Geegelup Creek. The main street, Hampton Street, follows the creek line in a roughly north-south axis, and the railway line is located behind the lots bordering the east side of Hampton Street.

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) is located on Lot 2 Phillips Street, a large lot of 3,620 sq. metres on the corner of Spencer and Phillips Streets. The geographical centre of Bridgetown is the junction of Hampton Road and Steere Street and Lot 2 is located about 1.25 kilometres south of the town centre and about 1 km to the south of Bridgetown Railway Station. The railway precinct stretches south to within a few hundred metres of Lot 2. The site rises with a moderately steep incline of about 1 in 6 from Spencer Street at the west to the eastern boundary. A level gravel car park has been cut into the north side of the Lot. There is a steep bank between Phillips Street and the car park, which has been planted with native vegetation. A sloping lawn leads down to Spencer Street on the west side of the Lot, and there is a mix of lawn and shrubs in the courtyards between the buildings. Behind the buildings on the east side of the Lot is an area of red gravel.

The buildings are set on an angle of approximately 45 degrees to the boundaries, following the natural contours of the site. The entrance block, communal facilities block and male ablutions block are all set at the lowest level. The three accommodation blocks rise up the hill, each on its own separate tier about a metre above the level below.

The entrance block, which is located on the northern corner of the complex, was constructed c.1997-8. It was designed in a similar scale and form as the original buildings and uses similar materials. The walls are constructed of red bricks, the roof is hipped form and the tiles are red clay. The entrance is located on the north-east side of this building, which has a projecting gabled portico located slightly off centre over the entrance way. There are two double hung timber sash windows to the office to the right (north-east) and a projecting bay to the south-east of the entrance contains a bank of high level windows to the ladies ablutions area.

The entrance way leads though to the covered way between the communal facilities block and the male ablution block. These buildings are constructed of red face brick and have hipped roofs with red clay tiles. The communal facilities block has a 2.4 metre wide breakback verandah around all four sides. There are three external flush panel doors on the south-east façade, leading into the kitchen, dining room and lounge. At the north-east end of the façade is a wide protruding bay that contains the kitchen stove. There are three double hung timber sash windows in this façade. The north-west façade of this block faces Spencer Street and has a series of 6 symmetrically placed double hung timber sash windows, each with a painted concrete lintel over.

The male ablutions block is located opposite the kitchen and has two double hung timber sash windows in its north-west façade. The entrance door is on the south-west façade, with a bank of louvred windows next to the door. There are four small louvred windows on the north-west façade. A small laundry with a skillion roof is attached to the north-west side of the male ablution block.

Stepping up the hill behind the brick buildings are the three accommodation blocks, each on its own separate tier, and linked by a covered way. A concrete access ramp for the disabled was constructed between the communal facilities block and the lowest of the accommodation blocks as part of the 1997 works.

The accommodation blocks are long narrow timber framed buildings of a single room width with the lower part of the walls clad with jarrah weatherboard, and the upper part clad in fibro. Each wing has a 1.8 metre wide skillion verandah on its north-west side.

The narrow areas that separated the original blocks of three bedrooms as shown on the original plans have now been converted into storage areas by the introduction of walls and a door.

The westernmost accommodation wing initially consisted of three small bedrooms and a store that was the same size as the bedrooms. However, the two rooms at the south-west end of the wing have been converted to one larger room by the removal of the former internal dividing wall.

The central wing is the longest wing, and initially comprised four lots of three bedrooms, a total of 12, now with two storage areas. There are three areas where a dividing wall has been removed to create a larger bedroom. The easternmost wing, on the highest level, contains 9 bedrooms, which have not been altered, with two storage areas.

The internal layout of the 1997 entrance block comprises a central entrance way, which is an open passage, with an office and disabled toilet opening off on the north-west side and the female ablutions area to the south-east, accessed by a verandah on its south-west façade.

The communal facilities block consists of three medium sized rooms; a kitchen at the north-east end, a dining room in the centre and a lounge at the south-west end of the building. The kitchen is 5 metres square, with the entrance door at the south-west end of the south-east wall. There is a chimney alcove in this wall which now houses a large stainless steel stove. There are two double hung timber sash windows on each of the external walls, and an archway on the south-west wall which leads into the dining room.

The dining room measures 4.7 x 4 metres, with the entrance door at the north-east end of the south-east wall, and a double hung timber sash window beside it. There are two double hung timber sash windows on the north-west wall, and a single flush panel door on the south-west wall which leads into the lounge.

The lounge is the largest of the three rooms, 5 metres x 4.7. The entrance door is also at the north-east end of the south-east wall. There are two double hung timber sash windows beside it and two double hung timber sash windows on the north-west wall. An attractive feature is a wide brick fireplace with a jarrah mantle shelf located in the centre of the south-west wall.

Internally, the accommodation blocks comprise a series of small bedrooms, each 3.3 metres x 2.4 metres in size. Each bedroom has a single flush panel external door and a double hung timber sash window in the centre of the opposite external wall. In some instances the dividing walls between two bedrooms has been removed to create a larger room.

Internal finishes in the 1950s buildings are similar and include jarrah floors (the kitchen and ablution block floors are tiled), plastered and painted walls, plaster ceiling, 75 mm coved cornice, lightly moulded timber architraves and splayed timber skirtings. The ceilings are 2.9 metres high.

The condition of the place appears to be good. There are some minor defects such as cracking in the concrete verandah floors and repainting is required to some areas of the exposed walls of the timber accommodation blocks. The place was well constructed with high quality workmanship and materials and was upgraded and maintained on a regular basis by WAGR/Westrail. The subsequent and current owners have also maintained the place in good condition to be attractive to guests.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

In Western Australia a relatively small number of the once numerous trainmen's barracks built as railway housing to accommodate trainmen, and single-men's barracks that accommodated single railway employees, have survived into the twenty-first century, and very few are entered on the Register of Heritage Places (RHP). The standard plan cabin style barracks (1912) at Pinjarra Railway Yards are part of a group that includes a goods shed, carriage shed and engine shed located in the railway reserve, the usual location for barracks at this period. *Railway Barracks, Wongan Hills*, also a standard pattern cabin style, timber framed and clad railway barracks, erected in 1914, were considerably enlarged in 1920-21, and upgraded bathroom facilities were added in 1959. At Wyalkatchem, the cabin style trainmen's barracks (c. 1911; 1957) has a similar configuration, and is also part of a railway precinct that includes a stationmaster's house, goods shed, crane, and station building. These barracks have been converted to backpackers' accommodation, and continue in this use in the early 2000s.

Most other purpose built railway barracks on the Heritage Council of Western Australia (HCWA) database also date from the Federation and Inter-War periods, in which cabin style barracks to the above pattern predominated, and were similarly located in a railway precinct alongside the railway line as was the norm. The database does not include information about the design of Ongerup Railway Barracks (fmr) (1912) that serve as Ongerup Museum. At Cue, the former railway barracks, which were not to the standard cabin style design, have been relocated to another site and a large corrugated iron shed built over the timber weatherboard clad building. Hyden Railway Barracks (1930), a small cabin style barracks comprises only two cabins. These three are listed in their respective Municipal Inventories as are Boyup Brook (1909), and Albany, where the Co-operative Society building (1870) was purchased and converted to barracks in the late 1970s.

At Kalannie cabin style barracks are extant and also a more recent building. Beacon Railway Barracks (1930; current use not noted) comprises 16 cabins in two rows under a single roof with a kitchen/dining facility at one end. The barracks at Bencubbin are of different design with separate cabins not under a main roof. Railway Barracks, Coorow, comprises three sets of buildings, with corrugated iron roofs, in a line. At Bruce Rock, some barrack cabins were relocated to the caravan park to be used for overnight accommodation, an

example followed at Mukinbudin, where the remainder of the cabins were demolished. None of these barracks are listed on Municipal Inventories.

Designed in 1948, and built in 1949-50, *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* was innovative and intended to set an example for the future design and construction of railway barracks, particularly trainmen's barracks, in Western Australia in the post-World War II period. In the early 1950s, the design for new barracks built at Brunswick Junction was modelled on Bridgetown, but was larger with 44 bedrooms in three blocks, two of 12 bedrooms each (to accommodate three man train crews), and one of 20 bedrooms. The buildings were timber framed with internal lining of plasterboard and external cladding of 'Calterra fabric' rendered with cement, with flat pitched roofs of fibrolite corrugated sheeting instead of the tile roofs at Bridgetown.⁸⁹ As at Bridgetown, the Brunswick Junction barracks were angled to the street alignment to suit the contours of the site. HCWA database does not include information about railway buildings at Brunswick Junction and it is not known whether the barracks are extant. The database does not include any information about barracks constructed after *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)*, and it has not been possible to ascertain the number of barracks that were built to a similar design or how many survive into 2009. In the late twentieth century, the practice of providing railway housing for employees, including accommodating trainmen in barracks, was curtailed, and where the buildings were no longer required by Westrail (now Public Transport Authority, PTA) they were often disposed of or demolished.

Style

Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr) was constructed in a simple bungalow style to a functional design. Comparable places to *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* would be other buildings designed strictly for functional purposes, and not based upon any architectural style. Some examples of similar residential buildings are:

Northam Army Camp (RHP 6126), although a much larger collection of buildings, reflects the same functional approach to design. The accommodation huts were built of corrugated iron walls and roof with timber window frames, which internally fitted six bedrooms of equal size. The huts were aligned on a sloping hill, and all constructed in the utilitarian style, and void of decoration.

Cue Pensioners Cottages (RHP 6516), a group of six small corrugated iron cottages, which are simple and utilitarian in their form, and aesthetically appropriate for their function.⁹⁰

There are a number of Forestry Cottages entered into the HCWA database which were constructed to a standard design devoid of an architectural style or decoration. The cottage purely functioned to accommodate Forestry Department staff, and the simple weatherboard and corrugated iron roof structures accomplished this.

⁸⁹ Annual Report, Western Australian Government Railways for year ended 30 June 1952, in *Votes and Proceedings*, 1953, Vol. 3, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation for Cue Pensioners' Cottages, (2003). p. 1.

There are many other examples of buildings constructed without consideration of a specific architectural style or design. Specifically those built to accommodate state workers, when the design type is cheaper and easier if it is regulated and simple.

In conclusion, *Bridgetown Trainmen's Barracks (fmr)* was innovative in the post-World War II period, when it was one of the most modern trainmen's barracks in Australia and the most modern in Western Australia, and a model for the design of future trainmen's barracks in this State, and so far as can be ascertained it is a rare example of such a place.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

People who have privately owned the place and those closely associated with it since it has been in private ownership may have further information about the conversion for its use as budget accommodation and the 1990s additions.