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.

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE[*]

The classical proportions and detailing of the 1912 Post Office building presents a fine example of the Federation Free style, executed in local stone. (Criterion 1.1)

Moora Post Office & Quarters displays creative and artistic excellence in the use of local stone, which is a feature of the town of Moora. (Criterion 1.2)

Located on a dominant corner, *Moora Post Office & Quarters* makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. Although a single-storey building, the high roofline of the 1912 addition lends the place a substantial quality appropriate for a civic building. (Criterion 1.3)

Together with the Drover's Inn (formerly the Commercial Hotel), which is located on the opposite corner, *Moora Post Office and Quarters* is a landmark in Moora. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Moora Post Office & Quarters has close associations with the construction and operation of the Midland Railway. The original post office was built following completion of the railway, as Moora became the main administrative and commercial centre of the Central Midlands. Successful land sales by the Midland Railway Company and accompanying increase in the density of settlement necessitated the 1912 additions. (Criterion 2.1)

The location of *Moora Post Office & Quarters*, Moora Railway Station and the Drovers Inn (formerly the Commercial Hotel) is representative of town planning in both rural and urban centres associated with railways. (Criterion 2.1)

Moora Post Office & Quarters has significant associations with the Public Works Department of Western Australia, most notably with George Temple Poole, who was responsible for the design of 1896 building, and

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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.

with Hillson Beasley, who was responsible for the design of the 1912 additions. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The underfloor ventilation system to the original building may contribute significantly to lack of damp and the good condition of all stages of the building. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Moora Post Office & Quarters is a focal point for the town and district, having served as the centre for postal and telecommunications since 1896. (Criterion 4.1)

Having operated as a post office since 1896, *Moora Post Office & Quarters* contributes to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Moora Post Office & Quarters is one of two known extant examples where post office additions were built to adjoin the original post office and quarters. The other is at Pingelly, built in 1892 and 1918. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Both stages of construction of *Moora Post Office & Quarters* are representative of the standard designs adopted for post offices in Western Australia by the Public Works Department, under the direction of George Temple Poole and Hillson Beasley. At Moora, the use of local stone by Beasley is a clear attempt to marry the 1912 addition with the existing 1896 building. (Criterion 6.1)

The two building campaigns evident at *Moora Post Office & Quarters* are representative of a number of post offices throughout Western Australia. This occurred particularly in rural areas, where the original building soon became inadequate to meet the needs of expanding communications networks, necessitating replacement or substantial additions. In such cases, the original building was given over entirely to residential use. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally, the condition of *Moora Post Office & Quarters* is good due to sound engineering, robust materials, continued occupation and ongoing maintenance.

Little has been done to significantly alter the appearance of the two stages of buildings apart from painting the exterior stone work. It is currently painted white. This may reflect changing aesthetic values and, arguably, a continued dislike of highly patterned and coloured contrasting stone.

Moora Post Office & Quarters reflects the high standard of practice within the Public Works Department of Western Australia at the time and of the architects George Temple Poole and Hillson Beasely.

The underfloor ventilation system to the original building may contribute significantly to lack of damp and the good condition of all stages of the building.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Having been continuously used as a post office and residence since construction, *Moora Post Office & Quarters* has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Moora Post Office & Quarters demonstrates a moderate to high degree of authenticity with much of the original building fabric being retained. Most of the original interior joinery has been removed or significantly altered. Contributing to the high degree of authenticity are the phone box

in the postal hall, the strong room and the fireplace in the original bedroom.

13.   **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Jacqui Sherriff, historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Phil Bennett, Architectural Consultant.

13. 1   **DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

Moora Post Office and Quarters, a single-storey stone and corrugated iron building, constructed in two stages, was built by the Public Works Department of Western Australia as a purpose built post office and residence. Moora Post Office has been in continuous use as a post office serving Moora and surrounding districts since its construction.   The residence has also been in continuous use.

The town of Moora is the major administrative and commercial centre of the Central Midlands, an extensive rural district. The town developed from the mid 1890s, following the completion of the Midland Railway from Guildford to Geraldton in 1894, although pastoralists had been in the area since the mid-1840s.

James Clinch and the Lefroy brothers were the first to take up extensive leases in the area.[1] Others followed, living on isolated properties with few services for several years. The first official mail service to the district started in 1857, with the regular delivery of mail to McPherson's property, 'Glentromie', which acted as a depot for those living further out.[2] This service continued until 1867, when the Perth-Geraldton mail run was re-routed to cater for inland settlers. The new route, officially surveyed by Alexander Forrest in 1870, passed through New Norcia, Walebing, Berkshire Valley, Marrah, Coorow and Carnamah, and on to Geraldton. There was soon a weekly mail run, either on horseback or by cart, with three contractors operating the run in stages.   Berkshire Valley (approximately 20 km east of Moora) became one of a series of staging posts.[3] This service continued until the construction of the Midland Railway between Midland and Geraldton.

Work on the Midland Railway, a land grant railway to be constructed on similar lines to Anthony Horden's Great Southern Railway, commenced in March 1886, under the direction of contractor, Edward Keane. The first section of the line, from Geraldton to Walkway, opened on 1 July 1887. Meanwhile, work at the southern end of the line had ceased due to lack of finance and work remained at a stand still until March 1890, when a new company was floated in England to complete the line. Edward Keane continued as the contractor.[4] The Midland Railway was constructed from

1   Laurie, Maxine, *Tracks through the Midlands: A History of the Moora District*, Shire of Moora, Moora, 1995, p. 9. The name Moora is believed to have been derived from Moira Well, the Aboriginal name for a year-round pool in the Moore River, approximately 1km west of the town.
2   ibid.
3   ibid., pp. 23-4.
4   Australian Railways Historical Society (WA Division) Inc, 'Centenary of the Midland Railway 1894-1994 - Commemorative Souvenir Booklet', Perth, 1994, p. 5. John Waddington was responsible for the proposal to construct the Midland Railway. His interest was taken

both ends in stages and as each section was finished, Edward Keane began running trains on the completed sections.[5] The Railway was finally completed on 2 November 1894, with the first train taking 14 hours to travel from Midland to Walkaway.[6] From 24 November, regular mixed passenger and goods trains were operating on the line.[7]

The construction of the Midland Railway had a significant effect on the delivery of mail in the district. As each section of the line was completed, Edward Keane was able to obtain the contract for the conveyance of mails by train to that point. In 1892, James Atkinson won the contract for delivering mail from the Moore River (Mogumber) railway platform to Berkshire Valley and Long's Station, via New Norcia, once a week on horseback. William Long continued the service from his property to Yandenooka, where the Midland Railway again took up the contract, completing the rest of the run to Geraldton.[8] This service continued the following year, with F. W. Clinch taking over Atkinson's contract. Long's contract was altered to terminate at Arrino. Edward Keane's Midland Railway Company carried the mail between Guildford and Moore River twice a week in each direction, and between Arrino and Geraldton once a week.[9]

The line between Moore River and Moora opened on 2 July 1894 and the Moora Railway Station was built soon after. Located at the end of Dandaragan Street, the Railway Station was the first substantial building in the town.[10] Moora soon became the main distribution point for mail in the district and on 5 October 1894, a tender was called for the delivery of mail from Moora Railway Station to Dandaragan Post Office and vice versa, twice a week in a spring vehicle. This was won by M. Dodd for £49/5/0 per annum. At the same time, G. Bishop was awarded the tender for the delivery of mail from Moora Railway Station to Berkshire Valley, via Walebing, twice a week.[11] William Long continued to deliver the mail between Moore River and Arrino, via New Norcia, and Berkshire Valley,

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over by Herbert William Bond when the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia was floated in March 1890.

[5]   ibid.

[6]   Searle, M. J., 'A Short History of the Midland Railway Company', in Australian Railway Historical Society, *Bulletin*, January 1984.

[7]   Official recognition of the Midland Railway came in April 1895, with a notice in the Government Gazette on 2 April and Edward Keane was appointed the General Manager in June that year. The Midland Railway Company was placed in receivership the following year and Keane was dismissed for bankruptcy. The receivership was discharged on 31 July 1901. The Midland Railway Company continued to operate until 1 August 1964, when its assets and liabilities were taken over by the Western Australian Government.

[8]   Annual Report of the Post Master General of the Year 1892, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1893.

[9]   Annual Report of the Post Master General for the Year 1893, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1894.

[10]   Australian Railways Historical Society (WA Division) Inc, op. cit., p. 5. Moora was a major watering station on the Midland Railway.

[11]   *Government Gazette* 5 October 1894, p. 982; 7 December 1894, p. 1233.

twice a week.[12]   Once the Midland Railway was completed, all mails on the direct route between Midland and Geraldton were carried by train.

Moora gradually developed into a town providing services and amenities for the growing local population.[13] Its role as the main distribution point for mails in the district was further reinforced in August 1894, when local landowner H. B. Lefroy wrote to the Premier, John Forrest, regarding the establishment of the Midlands Railway (Moora) post office:

> Moora will be the centre on the Midland Railway from which the Victoria Plains and the Dandarragan [sic] Districts will be served and will also, upon the completion of the proposed telegraph line to Dandarragan, will be a telegraph station. I think therefore that a Post Office might at once be established and Mr John Woods appointed Post Master.[14]

Woods was officially appointed Post Master at Moora, a temporary position, on 1 October 1894, on a salary of £20 a year. He was given £5 worth of stamps and stationary with which to commence postal services.[15] It is unclear whether Woods operated the Post Office from the Railway Station or from another location in town.[16] Mail was delivered by rail from the General Post Office in Perth, three times a week and M. Dodd and P. P. & M. Lanigan continued the twice-weekly spring cart mail runs to the outlying districts.[17]

The townsite of Moora was declared in April 1895, by which time 96 Town Lots and 62 Suburban Lots had already been surveyed, with several lots reserved for public utility[18]. In June that year, part Town Lot 8, Reserve 2799, opposite Moora Station, was set aside for the purpose of Post and Telegraph Offices.[19] It was standard practice in town planning to reserve land for public utilities when town sites were surveyed and laid out and it was common to locate the post office on one corner opposite the railway station, with the hotel on the other.[20] The initial layout of Moora followed this trend.[21]

In August 1895, H. W. Venn, Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works, called for tenders for the construction of a post office at

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[12]   This constituted two separate contracts; the first from Moore River to Berkshire Valley and the second from Berkshire Valley to Arrino. Report of the Post Master General 1894/5, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1895.

[13]   The town initially developed from two campsites, one for the railway men and the other for travellers. Laurie, op. cit., p. 40.

[14]   National Archives, K1, Box 3/2270/94, Appointment of Post Master - Moora Post Office, 1894.

[15]   ibid.

[16]   John Woods may have been the Station Master, as these two positions were often amalgamated.

[17]   Report of the Post Master General for the year 1894/5, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1895.

[18]   *Government Gazette*, 12 April 1895, pp. 487, 490, 497.

[19]   *Government Gazette*, 28 June 1895, p. 909.

[20]   Pope, B., Bush, F., Broomfield, W., Kelsall, D., 'Historical and Architectural Assessment of Post Offices in Western Australia owned by Australia Post as at 21st July 1991', National Trust of Australia (WA), Perth, 1993.

[21]   The Commercial Hotel (now known as the Drovers Inn) was built opposite the post office in 1908. The original Moora Railway Station was demolished c. 1970 and replaced by a brick building. The new station is located several metres to the north of the Dandaragan Street intersection, interrupting the railway town planning model.

Moora. The contract was let to Charles Innes on 31 October at a price of £746/3/6, for completion by 31 January 1896.[22]

Between 1885 and 1900, several important and a number of minor post and telegraph offices were erected throughout Western Australia, primarily due to the establishment and expansion of railways, capital arising from the gold rushes and the associated increase in population and agricultural settlement. The first offices were built to a standard design, under the direction of George Temple Poole, Chief Architect of the PWD from 1885 to 1896. In the 1890s, there was a deliberate policy to slightly modify the standard design for each post office.[23] *Moora Post Office & Quarters* exemplifies this trend, being a variation of the standard design for the domestic-scaled Class 4 post and telegraph offices, in which one room of the quarters was set aside as a postal hall.[24] The drawings for *Moora Post Office & Quarters*, one of the last to be built during Poole's term, were signed by the Chief Architect.[25]

Charles Innes completed the building in the time required and the Report of the Public Works Department for 1895/6 provides a brief description of the completed building:

> This building is erected of stone at the corner of Dandarragan and Padbury Street, west of the railway Station, and contains public office and three-roomed quarters for the post-master.[26]

The building was set back from Padbury Street, with entrance to the postal hall gained from Dandaragan Street, through the front garden. A separate water closet was located in the yard.[27]

Moora was connected to the telegraph system in September 1896, and Scott Lily, who replaced John Woods as Post Master, was the first telegraph officer.[28] In 1905, Moora Post Office was connected to Walebing by telephone. Both facilities provided increased services for the local population.

Although Moora boasted about 20 households, a school, courthouse, police station, hotel and two stores, as well as the new Post Office by 1897, it remained a small town until the Midland Railway Company made a concerted effort to sell off its land after 1900.[29] The Midland Railway Company conducted two successful land sales in 1906 and 1908, which had

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22   *Government Gazette*, 16 August 1895, p. 1360; Report of the Public Works Department for the year 1895/6, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1896.

23   Pope, et. al., op. cit., passim.

24   PWD2471, Standard designs for post and telegraph offices; PWD3691/4 Moora Post and Telegraph Office Drawings. The post offices at Wagin (1892), Pingelly (1892), Narrogin (1892) and Bridgetown (1886) were also built as a single building, with one room set aside for postal functions.

25   PWD3691/4 Moora Post and Telegraph Office Drawings.

26   Report of the Public Works Department for the year 1895/6, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1896.

27   PWD3691/4 - Moora Post and Telegraph Office Drawings.

28   Local sources suggest that the telegraph equipment was located in the present day pantry. This has not been confirmed and the design for Class 4 post offices records this room as 'Larder'. Rosemary Lennox, with Jacqui Sherriff and Phil Bennett, 7 November 1998.

29   Laurie, op. cit., pp. 42-63.

a marked effect on the density of settlement in the district.[30] By 1908, there were sufficient residents in the Moora district to warrant the creation of the Moora Road Board, which ceded from the Victoria Plains Road Board.[31] Moora became the centre of an agricultural district growing in importance, where land was turned to sheep grazing and cereal cropping.

As a result of the land sales, Moora experienced considerable physical growth between 1900 and the end of World War One. New hotels were built, including the imposing Commercial Hotel opposite the Post Office, as were new stores, premises for machinery merchants, an enlarged school, banks, bridges and houses.

The growing population placed increasing pressure on the small Post Office and the Post Master was soon finding the building inadequate to cope with the district's needs. This was further exacerbated with the opening of the Moora telephone exchange in March 1911. The new exchange, located in the Post Office building, initially served 13 buildings in the town, as well as six homesteads beyond the two mile radius from the Post Office.[32]

The first recorded works at *Moora Post Office and Quarters* were in 1911, when a shed was erected to the rear of the residence. The fences were repaired or replaced at the same time.[33]

By early 1912, the Commonwealth Government had recognised the need to increase accommodation for postal services, calling for tenders for additions to Moora Post Office in February 1912.[34] R. Rennie, of 18 Manning Street, Fremantle, was the successful contractor, with a tender of £1,436/8/0. The tender was accepted on June 20 and work commenced soon after, under the supervision of Mr G. Allan of the Public Works Department.

At this time, the Public Works Department of Western Australia was undertaking major post office works on behalf of the Commonwealth Administration.[35] As Chief Government Architect, Hillson Beasley was responsible for overseeing the design of the new works. Several new post offices were built during this period as the pattern of first post office, soon too small to cope with increased population and expanding communications networks and in need of replacement, was repeated in many Western Australian country towns. While in the majority of cases, a separate building was constructed to provide the increased accommodation, at Moora and in a few other centres, additions were made

30   ibid., p. 63. Moora was the centre of the Midland Railway Company land sales, with their agents based in the town.

31   *Government Gazette*, 11 December 1908. The Victoria Plains Road Board was created in 1871, following the granting of Representative Government.

32   National Archives, K1, Box 27/55/11, Moora Telephone Exchange- Drawings No. 265 and 266 showing the position of subscribers from the Moora PO Exchange.

33   *Government Gazette*, 12 May 1911, p. 1454. The contract was completed on 15 August 1911; Annual Report of the Public Works Department, Architectural Division, 1911/12, in *Votes and Proceedings of the WA Parliament,* 1912.

34   *Government Gazette*, 23 February 1912, p. 1093. The call for tenders was readvertised on 26 April 1912.

35   Annual Report of the Public Works Department, Architectural Division, 1911/12, in *Votes of Proceedings of the WA Parliament*, 1912.

to adjoin the existing building. In all cases, the earlier post office building was entirely given over to residential use.[36]

The additions to Moora Post Office were completed on 20 December 1912.[37] The *Midlands Advertiser* provides a good account of the work:

> Mr R. Rennie, contractor for the new Post Office at Moora, has completed the work. The buildings presents a fine appearance, and evidence is not lacking that good artisans have been employed and the best material used...The local white stone, which was obtained from Mr D. W. Griffith's quarry, together with the style of architecture adopted, makes an imposing building on the corner of Dandaragan and Padbury streets. The stone work is rock faced with chiselled margins draft and base, and is nicely pointed with black joint, with heavy overhanging roof specially ventilated. The office is 38 ft x 31 ft in the clear and is fitted with a strong room with Mr Kutz's fireproof door. All of the furniture is of a substantial nature, and a fine jarrah counter runs the full width of the building. Plenty of ventilation is provided with wall vents and ceiling panels with cowls through the roof. Mail receiving boxes are placed in the porch, and above these are fitted private letter boxes.[38]

The new building, located on the corner of Dandaragan and Padbury streets, presented a much more substantial building than the earlier post office. On completion of the new building, the old postal hall became a lounge room in the Quarters. Works may also have been undertaken at the rear of the residence at this time, to provide a second bedroom and bathroom and laundry facilities. A telegram sent from Perth to the head office in Melbourne on 9 December 1912 stated that 'Moora new office completed today...cont[ractor] anxious to commence renovations old building'.[39]

On 8 July 1913, Moora Post Office firmly took its place as the centre of the town, with the new town boundaries being measured at a five mile radius of the building.[40]

By the mid-1920s, staff at Moora Post Office had grown considerably to keep up with local demand for services. The 1927 staff rota shows that there were six staff at Moora Post Office, including the Post Master, Mr E. Harris, two postal assistants, W. Schorer and M. C. Taylor, two permanent messengers, G. S. Newman and J. Morgan, and one temporary messenger, T. Newman. Mr Harris' daughters, Olive and Violet, operated the 24 hour telephone exchange which had approximately 80 subscribers.[41] Business transacted at Moora included ordinary postal services, telegrams, money orders, postal notes, savings bank, old age and war pension payments, repatriation advance repayments, War Service Homes repayments, trunk line calls, the telephone exchange and private boxes and bags. Moora continued to be the mail distribution point for mail deliveries for the surrounding agricultural districts.[42] In November 1927, the District

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36   Pope, et. al., op. cit., passim and search of HCWA database.
37   Public Records Office, AN 7/14, Acc 1124, #10, PWD Contract Books, Moora Post Office Additions.
38   *Midlands Advertiser*, 6 December 1912, p. 5.
39   National Archives, K1, Box 34/11/1171/12.
40   Laurie, op. cit., p 66. This was ratified at a meeting of the Moora Road Board on 8 July 1913.
41   National Archives, K1184/1, 172/1, Moora Post Office, Staffing 31/12/23 to 4/9/51 - Staff rota 1927.
42   ibid. - Statement of Business transacted, 14 February 1927.

Inspector reported that the there had been a 20% increase in telegrams, as well as an increase in telephone services over the past 12 months, placing increased pressure on staff.[43]

The onset of the Great Depression meant that no new postal staff were appointed, aside from Miss Flood, who at 15 years old, was appointed a part time telephonist in January 1929.[44] There were few changes in staffing and services, until 1942, when two additional postal clerks were employed to cope with the 'abnormal increase in business...owing to war-time development'.[45] By 1949, the telephone exchange employed four full time telephonists and one night attendant, catering for the needs of approximately 115 subscribers. Five staff were employed in the post office.[46]

Works were undertaken at *Moora Post Office and Quarters* c. 1953. These included the extension of the lean-to at the rear of the Post Office, replacement of the kitchen window, relocation of the bathroom window and new doorways between the living room and dining room (original bedroom) in the Quarters and between the exchange and staff room in the Post Office. The bathroom and kitchen were also fitted out with improved facilities, including a new wood stove in the kitchen.[47]

In the early 1960s, the telephone exchange was transferred to the recently completed Long Line Equipment Building located to the rear of the Post Office in Dandaragan Street. With the removal of the exchange, additional space was available within the Post Office building for postal services. The new telephone system, installed in June 1961, introduced pip tone timing trunk calls and metered local calls.[48] In 1964, the Commonwealth Works Department let a contract for renovations to the Moora Post Office for £4,691/0/0.[49] While the nature of the works undertaken at this time has not been determined, they may have involved the rearrangement of the postal hall and exterior painting.[50]

In 1966, there were seven postal officers employed at Moora Post Office. At this time, the population of the Shire of Moora was approximately 4,300, with the area devoted principally to wheat and sheep farming. Aside from the Post Office, there was one public letter box and one public telephone in the town. Mails were dispatched to and received from the GPO in Perth, and Moora was the parent office for 18 sub-offices and a number of outlying offices. Both rail and road transport were used to carry the mails, and four roadside mail services originated from Moora, covering a considerable distance. The bags were conveyed between the Post Office and the Railway Station by the Junior Postal Officer, who also delivered to 154

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[43]   ibid. - District Inspector's Report, 2 November 1927.
[44]   ibid.
[45]   ibid.
[46]   ibid.
[47]   National Archives, Commonwealth Department of Works, Post Office, Moora - Additions and Alterations, Drawing, WA 10833, 12.1.1953.
[48]   *Midlands Advocate*, 15 June 1961.
[49]   National Archives, K1209/1, NN, Moora Post Office, Folder 2 – Correspondence, cards, plans 1911-1964.
[50]   A comparison between the c. 1953 works plan and a c. 1983 plan shows that the internal layout of the postal hall had been altered at same stage in the interim.

delivery points around the town. The Post Office also serviced 144 private boxes and Post Restante. The Post Master also continued to supervise the telephone switchboard.[51]

The automatic telephone exchange for Moora was brought into service on 18 October 1972, and subscriber direct dialling to all STD centres throughout Australia two years later. The 14 telephonists employed at the Moora exchange were no longer required.[52] The Post Master General's Department was reorganised into separate statutory authorities on 1 July 1975, with Post Masters throughout Australia no longer responsible for overseeing local telephone services.

By 1983, the internal layout of the postal hall had been rearranged from the original, with the relocation of the counter and the installation of partitions to provide a separate office for the post master and to separate the public space from the space behind the counter. By this time, the original tank stand at the rear of the post office had been removed and roller doors and loading dock for the delivery and dispatch of mail installed.[53]

Circa 1995, Moora Post Office received its corporate fitout, in the economic manner of Australia Post. As part of Australia Post's campaign to reduce its property portfolio, *Moora Post Office and Quarters* was sold in mid-1998 to local residents, both of whom were previous employees in the Post Office. In 1998, the Post Office continues to be used for its original purpose and remains the parent office for the district, being the collection and distribution point for 22 centres in the Central Midlands. The Quarters is rented out by the owners and continues to be used as a residence. The place was included in the Shire of Moora's Municipal Inventory in 1997, based on historic and aesthetic values.[54]

13. 2   PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Moora Post Office & Quarters is sited on the corner of Dandagaran and Padbury streets on what is the most prominent corner of the town. *Moora Post Office & Quarters* follows the development pattern typical of the time (eg. Claremont) where the Post Office was situated opposite the Railway Station and the main hotel in the town. The Drovers Inn (formerly the Commercial Hotel) is on the opposite corner to the *Moora Post Office & Quarters* and the original Railway Station was located at the intersection of the two streets.

The rear of the Quarters opens out into a contemporary domestic garden with an expanse of lawn surrounded by flower beds that follow the perimeter fence and the exterior walls of the Quarters. No significant planting is evident, however, it would appear that the Quarters have always been within a garden setting. A corrugated iron tank on timber stand and steel framed carport are located to the north of the Quarters. The carport roof abuts the timber eaves of the Quarters.

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[51]   National Archives, K433/1, XP 1117, Moora Post Office, c. 1944-1977.
[52]   *Midlands Advocate*, 26 October 1972; 10 October 1974.
[53]   Australia Post Plan, W2-0517, Moora Post Office and Quarters, Floor Plan, c. 1983.
[54]   Gray, Laura, in association with Whelans, 'Shire of Moora Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places', prepared for the Shire of Moora, June 1997.

The two adjoining structures allows two distinct architectural styles of post office development to be expressed. In what appears to be an attempt to marry the two structures together, both buildings are constructed from local stone, with timber framed corrugated iron roofs, timber floors and timber joinery. A slightly different stone has been used in the two stages of building, the first with a more even colour and less variation in its markings. As the second structure has been painted, it may be the stone was considered inferior due to its distinctive and busy markings. The stone is generally described as Talc stone, and appears much like Toodyay stone.

Any further attempt to unify the two structures has not occurred as the later addition is quite easily distinguished as the public building with its high roof and eaves line, leaving the earlier structure more domestic in appearance.

The earlier building (1896) is a simple rectangular structure with a single hipped roofed. The building is solidly built with its public entrance facing Dandagaran Street (south) under a low verandah that slopes steeply as a continuous extension of the roof line. This form of building is typical of late Victorian vernacular architecture which responded to the bright light and summer heat of Western Australia. The eaves of this building are timber lined with spacing to allow air circulation within the roof space, again a response to the climate. Also of note are the underfloor ventilators evident at ground level on the northern elevation of the building. These do not appear on the original plans so it is possible they were installed at a later date and may indicate the building required more underfloor ventilation. No serious rising damp has been detected, which may indicate the ventilators have been successful.

A stone chimney, originally serving three open fireplaces within the postal hall and the residence, protrudes through the apex of the roof. The chimney for the kitchen fireplace, on the eastern wall, is now enclosed by later additions. Both chimneys are unpainted and have simple rendered tops and retain two of the original plain cylindrical terracotta chimney pots.

The original timber framed double hung windows are set back into the stone walls. The upper sash is divided into nine square panes with the lower sash divided vertically into two panes. The lintels and sills are generous in their proportions, and whilst likely to have been rendered originally, they are now painted, maintaining a contrast to the stone walls. Some changes have occurred to the exterior of this building. The kitchen now has a pair of double hung c. 1950s windows with rendered panels down either side of the window opening. The sashes in these windows are divided into two horizontal panes which match the detailing and style of the front door to the current lounge room, originally the postal hall.

In 1912/1913, additions were made to the rear of the Quarters. At this time it is probable the alcove verandah, located under the main roof of the house adjacent to the kitchen, was enclosed creating another bedroom. The window to this room matches the original nine pane windows but does not appear on the original drawings. It is also probable that a timber framed and weatherboard clad bathroom and laundry were constructed, at

this time, off the new bedroom. This addition currently houses the bathroom and laundry but the fittings and finishes have been replaced, most likely in the 1950s. The timber addition has continued the same eaves line and utilised the same detailing with the spaced soffit batons unifying the form of the building but changing in its material. The laundry now has an aluminium window located within the timber addition and this window lintel is lower than the original windows.

Whilst a verandah running along the western wall is not shown on the original drawings, a verandah exists that is similar in detail and form to that on the southern elevation. Both are steeply pitched as they are continuous extensions of the main roof and both are lined with boarding. The western verandah has been enclosed, creating a sleep out. This room now has a skylight.

The second Post Office, built in 1912, is easily recognisable as a public building and may be described as being of Federation Free style. It is very similar in style and form to the Wagin Post Office which was constructed a year earlier. Both Post Offices were designed by the Public Works Department under the direction of Principal Architect, Hillson Beasley. One major difference to the Wagin Post Office is that Moora Post Office is constructed of stone. The stone is rough faced but with smoothed edges in uneven coursing but its overall appearance is harmonious and well detailed. The exterior stone walls are thought to have been painted in the 1960s; however, the rear northern wall, which is now an interior wall, remains unpainted and reveals the highly patterned nature of the stone.

Abutting the original Post Office, the second structure is sited in front of the earlier building allowing the public entry to open directly onto the pavement in contrast to the small garden area that existed before entering the earlier Post Office. The rear wall of the second structure originally terminated just beyond midway of the eastern wall of the original building, allowing a doorway to connect into the residence from a verandah at the rear of the second Post Office. This verandah has now been extended and enclosed creating a mail sorting area that opens outside through two roller doors acting as a loading bay. The siting of the new structure allowed the small pantry room to retain its windows. This window, whilst extant internally, has been blocked by later additions creating an interior room.

The second structure allowed the first to be adapted for the sole use as the Post Master's quarters with the original postal hall and office being converted to a lounge room and the original lounge room being converted to a dining room. The front door to the quarters is through the original public entry into the lounge room. This room has a large fireplace that has been modified and re-rendered. The three southern windows are in their original state and retain their original hardware, but the western windows have been modified to house an air conditioner. In the 1950s, a doorway was opened from this room into what was the original bedroom, which retains the only surviving original fireplace. This room now serves as a thoroughfare into the mail sorting area and connects into the passage that leads to the kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom.

Generally, the room layouts have not been altered with all door and window openings remaining in their original locations. The original four panel doors to the kitchen, bedroom, pantry and dining room remain as do most of the door and window architraves. All the ceilings appear to have been replaced over the years with the possible exception of that in the original bedroom.

The kitchen was extensively remodelled in the 1950s but the fireplace and mantle are evident from its original period. Across the passage from the kitchen is the original lounge room, now the master bedroom with its original door opening into the lounge and original window now opening into the enclosed verandah sleepout. The bedroom has lost its fireplace but the chimney breast is evident, as are the wall vents and skirtings. The sleepout retains the timber lined verandah ceiling and is enclosed with louvred windows to the west.

The public entry to the current postal hall is located under a porch on the south and eastern corner of the building which is the most prominent part of the building. Further along the porch to the east are the post boxes and of note are the early stamp vending machines still located in the exterior stone wall. The front door has been replaced with an aluminium framed door and side light. The porch has been tiled quite recently and will need to be modified to cater for disabled access.

Inside the postal hall is the contemporary red and grey Australia Post standard fitout with a suspended panelled ceiling which is lower than the tops of the windows. Almost all the original details and joinery have been lost with the exception of the dado line within the render and the architraves to the windows. The strong room and the timber floor, currently carpeted, are original. The timber board walled phone box with its original door remains near the front door; however, its outside access is infilled with asbestos sheet. The postal hall has been altered and expanded over the years but its point of access and orientation remain extensively intact.

Additions to the rear of the Post Office have been made over the years but the available documentary evidence has failed to establish exactly when these were undertaken. The male toilet appears to have been constructed in the 1950s as does the concrete floor within the mail sorting area. All these additions are under a skillion roof with the street facade being rendered, which is currently painted white.

Generally, the condition of *Moora Post Office & Quarters* is good as the place has been in constant use and been well maintained over the years. Apart from the maintenance the place is solidly constructed and well design to withstand the local elements. The roofing, roof plumbing and site drainage all appear to be in good condition. The corrugated iron appears to have been replaced on both structures ensuring the longevity of the structural components. No significant deterioration of the structure or fabric was noted during this inspection which was conducted shortly after the wet winter months.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION [55]

A number of post offices/additions were built in Western Australia to provide increased postal accommodation, the majority of them during Hillson Beasley's term as Chief Architect (1905-1916). Additions to the original *Bridgetown Post Office* (1886) in 1912 were undertaken in a similar manner to those at Moora, with the new post office building adjoining the existing building. However, the original post office at Bridgetown was demolished in the 1980s.

Pingelly Post Office was also built in two stages, with the first stage (1892) designed by G. T. Poole and the second stage (1918) designed by W. B. Hardwick. As at Moora, the buildings are adjoining. *Pingelly Post Office* is constructed of brick and tile.

Wagin Post Office (1913) displays similar design characteristics to the Moora Post Office 1912 additions. The Wagin Post Office was built as a separate building to the original post office (1893), which became solely a residence. The earlier Wagin Post Office, similar in design to the original Moora Post Office, was demolished and rebuilt in 1937. *Wagin Post Office* is constructed of brick and tile. Facilities at Katanning and Narrogin were also increased in 1912, with the construction of separate brick and tile post offices. As in other centres, the original *Katanning Post Office* (1892) and *Narrogin Post Office* (1892) were given over to residential use. Other post offices built during Hillson's term include those at Beverley, Cunderdin, Donnybrook, Goomalling, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Northam and Victoria Park.

Buildings in Moora constructed of local stone include St John the Baptist Church, Kintore Street (c. 1909), St James Anglican Church, Roberts Street (1911), Moora Uniting Church, Padbury Street (1909), the base of the Drover's Inn, Padbury Street (formerly the Commercial Hotel, 1908), the former courthouse and gaol (c. 1897) and Walebing Post Office and Residence (c. 1895). The Municipal Inventory states that the stone for the Baptist and Anglican churches, as well as for the base of the hotel, was excavated from D. W. Griffiths' quarry.

13. 4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

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[55] The information for the post offices is based on a summary of post offices entered on the Register of Heritage Places and Pope, et. al., op. cit. The information regarding places constructed of local stone is based on entries in the Shire of Moora Municipal Inventory.