



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)

- 3.22 Lodging people
- 3.8.6 Building & maintaining railways
- 5.2 Organizing workers and work places

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers
- 202 Rail & light rail transport

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Barracks and Railway Houses of *Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group* form a distinct cultural environment of railway accommodation spanning almost five decades from the establishment of the Barracks in 1902, to the dwellings built in 1949. (Criterion 1.3)

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group is an integral element within the residential railway area of Kalgoorlie, which comprises dwellings in Forrest Street and further north on Wittenoom Street in the railway station reserve. (Criterion 1.4)

The Railway Houses within *Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group* contribute to the residential streetscape as a small cohesive group of residences of similar design, exhibiting features of the Inter-war California Bungalow style. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group was constructed as part of the statewide railway services provided in the early to mid twentieth century in keeping with government policy to provide rail employees with accommodation in close proximity to railway stations, a practice that is being phased out. (Criterion 2.1)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

The elements of *Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group* were constructed in 1902 and 1949, during two periods of rapid growth for railway services in Western Australia, namely the gold boom of the 1890s and early 1900s and the reconstruction and development period immediately following World War Two. (Criteria 2.1& 2.2)

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group was constructed when Kalgoorlie was the major eastern goldfields rail centre, from 1897 to the 1920s, and later when it was the junction town of the standard gauge trans-continental and narrow gauge State lines from 1917 to 1968. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group was constructed for, and operated as accommodation for railway employees at Kalgoorlie between 1902 to 2001. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group contributes to the local community's sense of place as a part of the railway history of Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

The Barracks in *Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group* is one of the few remaining intact examples of a brick railway barracks constructed prior to the adoption of the 1904 cabin-type timber barracks as a standard within the railway system in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Railway Houses of *Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group* is representative of railway employee housing provided in the 1940s and 1950s to the Improved Mill type design, which was a standard design utilized during the period. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group is in poor to fair condition.

The Barracks are in fair condition with no major issues other than evidence of rust on the roof, the roof drainage system, some fretting brickwork on the lower walls, weathered external timbers in most areas except where they are protected by verandahs, and damaged verandah posts.

The Railway Houses are in poor condition. There is evidence of some subsidence around the perimeter of the verandahs. The roof and general structure of 2 Chapple Street is unstable. The weatherboards and other timber elements are weathered with flaking paint and split timbers. The places are all vacant, windows boarded, and damage from vandalism is evident throughout and the yards are unkempt.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group has a low to moderate degree of integrity. The place functioned continuously as dwellings for railway employees and others, until 2001 when 2 Chapple, 4 Chapple and 46 Wittenoom Streets were boarded up. The Barracks has provided accommodation primarily as a boarding house for a number of years, since being a railway employees' facility. It is unlikely that 2 Chapple, 4 Chapple and 46 Wittenoom Street can be inhabited again, while the Barracks continue to be occupied.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group displays a high degree of authenticity. The Railway Houses and Barracks shows minimal evidence of changes to the fabric, except for the side verandah enclosures on the dwellings and the concrete verandahs and removal of a wall between two rooms at the Barracks.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Conservation Consultant.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group comprises the drivers' and guards' barracks built in 1902 and three timber and tile Improved Mill type dwellings constructed in 1948, by the Western Australian Government Railways Commission (WAGR), as accommodation for employees. The buildings are sited on Reserve 8316 on the corner of Chapple and Wittenoom Streets, opposite the Kalgoorlie railway station reserve.

The discovery of gold at Southern Cross, and the subsequent declaration of the area as the Yilgarn goldfield in 1888, prompted the State Government to commence construction of a railway to serve the area. The line began at the head of the Eastern Railway at Northam. Before the line reached Southern Cross, the Coolgardie, and then Kalgoorlie gold-finds were made. The line to Southern Cross was opened on 1 July 1894, by which time a decision had been made to extend it to Coolgardie.¹ At that point, there was no intention to extend the line to Kalgoorlie, but the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and local mine owners and businessmen, began a campaign to have the line taken the extra 24 miles (38 kms). Plans were already underway to construct a branch line to Menzies, and both Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were vying to be the junction for this line and thus become the centre of the eastern goldfields.²

In September 1895, a bill was passed to extend the railway line to Kalgoorlie. The line was completed to Kalgoorlie on 8 September 1896 and the Railways Department took over operation of the line from the contractor on 1 January

¹ Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J., *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, p. 206; Le Page, J. S. H., *Building a State: The story of the Public Works Department of WA, 1829-1985*, Perth, UWA Press, pp. 221-225; Webb, M. & A., *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of WA*, Hocking & Co and St George Books, Perth, 1995, p. 208-211;

² Wilson, H. H., *The Golden Miles*, Rigby, 1977, pp. 173; Webb, M. & A., *op cit*, pp. 208-211, 288-293; Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. *op cit*, p. 238; *A Brief History of the Western Australian Government Railways*, WAGR, 1975.

1897. The stone station master's residence and two permanent way cottages were built on the Forrest Street frontage of the station reserve in 1897.³ A Railways Department plan of 1903 shows a small drivers' barracks in the area between the station building and the stationmaster's house, which would have been the first between-shift accommodation provided for the trainmen.⁴

Less than twelve months after the line was opened, the 1897 *Annual Report* of the Railways Department noted that traffic to the goldfields 'had largely increased', and duplication of the line from Northam to Kalgoorlie was under consideration.⁵ In the meantime, a line from Kalgoorlie to Menzies was begun in August 1897, reaching Menzies on 23 March 1898, and the section from Menzies to Leonora was taken over by the Railways Department on 12 January 1903.⁶ The Boulder Loopline Railway, 8.75 miles (14 kms) in length, was also constructed during this period, providing a line from Kalgoorlie to Boulder, through the mining area of the Golden Mile. Control of this line was transferred to the Railways Department on 1 February 1898.⁷

Eighty percent of the traffic on the Eastern Goldfields line passed through Kalgoorlie and in 1898, the headquarters of the Railway Department's Eastern Division was relocated from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie as a result of this traffic. A residence for the District Superintendent was built at 2 Forrest Street c.1898, and a new guards and drivers' (trainmen's) Barracks and a residence for the Locomotive Inspector was approved in 1900-1901.⁸ The site for the Barracks was gazetted on the corner of Chapple and Wittenoom streets, opposite the railway station reserve. The land was declared Reserve 8316 on 18 July 1902.⁹

The Barracks at Kalgoorlie were constructed in brick and were built just prior to the adoption in 1904 of a new barrack design, which utilised timber cabins and was the standard for the next sixty or so years for reasons of ease of construction, portability and low cost. The new barrack design was detailed in the Department's 1904 *Annual Report*:

Barracks... have been constructed of portable cabins placed on a flooring of old sleepers, and the whole establishment covered with a second roof. The circulation of air, combined with the shade, afford the maximum degree of coolness possible which is so necessary for those whose duties necessitate their sleeping during the day. At the same time the whole establishment can be readily and economically removed in the event of alteration in the time-table rendering removal desirable.¹⁰

The issue of transportability of accommodation was an important one. The railway service was subject to the variations in production of the mineral fields and the State's farming regions, and to changes in technology and procedures of railway operations. When gold production began to fall in the

3 Webb, M. & A., op cit, p. 303; WAGR *Annual report*, 1896, p. 10; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1 January 1897, pp. 2-3.

4 WAGR, EEL Plan 6501, 1903, SROWA, ACC 1781, 6501. No other information has been located regarding this building.

5 West Australian Government Railways (WAGR), *Annual Report*, 1897, p. 19.

6 Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J., op cit, p. 207.

7 WAGR *Annual Report* to 30 June 1898, p. 21.

8 Site plan of Railway Reserve, c. 1995, showing location of houses, WAGR property file DP 403, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth; WAGR *Annual Report*, 1900, pp. 17, 19 & 36 and 1901, p. 37.

9 WAGR *Annual Report*, 1901, p. 37; DOLA Reserves Enquiry, Reserve 8316 gazetted for Railway Drivers' Barracks.

10 WAGR *Annual Report*, 1904, p. 15.

very early 1900s, railway services were reduced accordingly and the station buildings and dwellings on the goldfields lines became surplus to requirements. Because most of these were constructed in stone, they could not be economically relocated.¹¹

Trainmen's barracks provided between-shift accommodation for train operating staff when they were away from their home station. Barracks for trainmen were separate constructions to barracks for single employees, because the shift-work factor in the trainmen's employment often necessitated sleeping during the day. A kitchen was provided for the men to prepare meals from food they brought with them in their 'tucker box', which as distinct from a lunch box which provided one prepared meal. At larger barracks, a dining room was provided, as well as a resident caretaker. It was the caretaker's job to change the bed linen for each new occupant, and keep the place clean and well-maintained.¹²

The Barracks were originally designed with 6 bedrooms, kitchen, dining room and caretaker's room. Before the place was completed it was enlarged with the addition of another four bedrooms. WAGR EEL Plan 4495 shows the addition of the four rooms with the notation 'Contract to be finished in 3 week's time 29/10/01'. The physical evidence indicates a seamless construction of the ten bedrooms. The ablution block, comprising bathroom, lavatory and locker room, is shown on the plan as located on the east side of the main building, but the physical evidence indicates that the ablution block was originally built on the west side.¹³

Despite the general downturn in gold production after 1903, and a reduction of traffic on some of the branch lines, Kalgoorlie remained a busy rail centre. In 1904, there were 161 people employed at the Kalgoorlie Railway Yards, making it one of the busiest country station yards.¹⁴ From 1917, it was the junction of the interstate standard gauge and West Australian narrow gauge railway lines. At Parkeston, four miles (6.4 kms) east of the Kalgoorlie station, freight was moved by manpower from one line to the other, while passengers changed trains at Kalgoorlie station.

William Legatt is recorded as the caretaker at the Barracks from at least 1910 to 1920. By 1925, part of the Barracks was occupied as the office of the District Engineer and his staff, an indication of the reduced local traffic on the line and resultant reduced use by trainmen. It may have been during use by the District Engineer that a wall was removed between two of the bedrooms at the end of the Barracks to make a larger space for a drafting office.¹⁵

In the 1930s, there was another small mining boom as prices improved and people tried their luck on the goldfields during the Depression creating a housing shortage in Kalgoorlie. Some railway men recently transferred to the town found it impossible to get a house of any kind and many had to leave their families behind. The Commissioner for Railways reiterated Departmental policy on letting private enterprise and market forces provide rental housing in municipalities. He claimed that the Department had enough trouble providing housing in smaller centres, and that 'in the early days

11 WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, September 1944, SROWA, AN262/7 ACC 1389 Item 1769.

12 Various WAGR property files and plans.

13 WAGR, EEL Plan 4495, undated, SROWA, ACC 1781 CCE 5225.

14 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1904, p. 82.

15 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1905-1935; WAGR, residential property file for DP1609, 26 Ward Street, Kalgoorlie, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

substantial accommodation had been provided at many goldfield centres, and in the majority of cases these had since been demolished or were untenanted'.¹⁶

In 1935, Kalgoorlie had nine employees on the waiting list for railway housing. The Workers' Homes Board (later State Housing Commission) was building houses in Kalgoorlie by 1936, so the Railway Department let the Board fill the gap in the housing supply.¹⁷

Following World War Two, railway services were in high demand during a period of growth and prosperity for both agriculture and mining. When it became apparent that neither the State Housing Commission nor private enterprise could fill the housing needs of railway employees outside the Perth metropolitan area, WAGR undertook a concerted housing construction programme.¹⁸

Almost since inception of railways in Western Australia this Department has provided some houses for its employees throughout the system... This need to provide houses for employees is dictated to a large extent by the very nature of our industry because railway staff, particularly those associated with operations, i.e. station staff, guards, drivers and trackmen, are transient and must move from depot to depot to gain experience and promotion. It would be impracticable, therefore, to expect such staff to provide their own houses and, indeed, as many are in the lower wage bracket it would be beyond their resources. Many houses at various locations are reserved specifically for nominated "key" personnel, but for obvious reasons reservations are kept to a minimum.¹⁹

The standard house design constructed by WAGR for railway employees between the 1930s and 1950s was the Improved Mill type house, developed from a design built for mill workers at Dwellingup. It replaced the standard 1920s Bungalow design railway house. The Improved Mill type was constructed from rectangular 6-inch weatherboards, which were less expensive to produce than tapered boards. It had a kitchen/living room, sitting room, three bedrooms, a short passage, verandahs on three sides, and a bathroom on the back verandah.²⁰ As with the Bungalow, the Improved Mill type house was erected by labour contract, with the timber supplied by WAGR's Banksiadale mill. In 1948, it was reported that:

The 'Improved Mill Type' house is of weatherboard construction, five rooms, tile roof, with all the usual conveniences and is of pleasing design. Thirty of these houses have already been constructed, or are under construction ... In an endeavour to accelerate the provision of these houses a well-equipped woodworking workshop is being established at West Midland for the production of joinery and to carry out such pre-fabrication as is possible.²¹

16 WAGR file, Kalgoorlie - employee housing, SRO, AN262/7, ACC 1389 Item 1642/1938.

17 WAGR file, Kalgoorlie - employee housing, Item 1642/1938, op cit; WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, SROWA, AN262/7 ACC 1389 Item 1769, 30 April 1935.

18 Worker's Homes Board file, standard type houses to be erected for railway employees, SROWA, AN 150/2 ACC 962, Item 246/48 Box 11, 31 October & 18 November 1947; *WAGR Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19; WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, Item 1769, op cit, September 1947.

19 'Railway Housing: A brief summation', 1974, a 2-page insertion in WAGR, *1972 Housing Review: Report on future housing requirements*, bound typescript, Battye Library.

20 WAGR file, Provision of houses for employees, Part 1, op cit, December 1935.

21 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1948, pp. 17-19.

The construction of three Improved Mill type Railway Houses for Kalgoorlie was authorised in 1948, on contract number 398. The successful tenderer was C. B. Wilby with a price of £1,185 for labour.²² The site chosen was Reserve 8316, the site of the Barracks on the corner of Chapple and Wittenoom streets.

The Railway Houses were completed in 1949, and were built with the most basic facilities, largely due to cost restrictions and the shortage of building supplies following World War Two. Hot water for the bathroom had to be heated in the laundry copper. Drainage systems provided for the houses were generally inadequate, causing many problems.²³

The shortage of housing following World War Two may have been the reason for the relocation of the District Engineer's office from the Barracks to the station building around 1950. In 1958, there were two permanent boarders at the Barracks and the rest of the rooms were fully utilised. The crew of the Kalgoorlie Express, Westland and Norseman trains used the place. In the early 1960s, a family occupied the part of the Barracks formerly used as the District Engineer's office. The two end bedrooms were used as kitchen/dining room. The coarse language of the trainmen and the noise of the children caused conflict between the two groups of occupants. The family were moved out and the whole of the Barracks were made available for trainmen.

In November 1962, work began on the standard gauge line between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle, and there was increased use of the Barracks. Following the opening of the line in November 1968, Kalgoorlie became little more than a short stopover for passenger and freight trains on the east-west railway route. The headquarters for WAGR's Eastern District had already been moved from Kalgoorlie to Merredin on 1 July 1966, but while the number of resident employees may have been reduced, there was serious overcrowding at the Barracks by 1969, with up to fourteen conductors being booked off at the one time.²⁴ The facilities at the Barracks had undergone little change, and two basins, two showers and wood stoves in both kitchens were provided. The ablution facilities were upgraded and two gas stoves to each of the two kitchens and hot water units over sink. Work done for £1,547.

In 1972, there were thirty departmental houses available in Kalgoorlie and the Barracks were overcrowded, with forty employees using the place', 'making it possibly the most crowded in the State. Air conditioning was installed in the two dining rooms, and fans provided in each bedroom, but newly constructed barrack buildings had air conditioning in each bedroom, including the new female barracks in Kalgoorlie. Kalgoorlie Barracks required an expensive refurbishment to bring it up to the living conditions

²² WAGR Alphabetical Index to Contracts, 1900-1966, SROWA, AN 260 ACC 2581; WAGR file, Kalgoorlie, departmental houses, SROWA, AN262/7 ACC 1398 Item 1642/1938; *WAGR Annual report* 1948, pp. 17-19.

²³ WAGR property file for DP 971 972 & 973, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

²⁴ WAGR file, Merredin - houses for employee, Part 1, SRO, WAS 1208, CONS 4780 Item R4951, 28 October 1966.

expected in the early 1970s.²⁵ In 1976, new barracks were built at Kalgoorlie for the trainmen.²⁶

46 Wittenoom Street.²⁷

The residence at 46 Wittenoom Street was designated for the occupation of the Traffic Inspector. Plans for a new Traffic Inspector's house had been drawn up in 1934, but the place had not been constructed at that time due to financial considerations.²⁸ The place was occupied by Inspector A Small in 1949. In 1952, Inspector Small wanted a verandah dado fitted, as the verandah faced the Barracks and the dado provided privacy when sleeping out in summer months. He also requested a picture rail so as not have to put nails in the walls, and pointed out that the recently constructed Henry Martin type railway houses (1950-51) had picture rails.²⁹ The picture rail was provided, but the verandah dado was not installed at that time.

By the mid 1950s, the place had been allocated to the housing pool, and was occupied by Clerk B. Edmonds. In 1958, he had a sleepout erected on the east side verandah. He was a long-term tenant, remaining at 46 Wittenoom Street until 1975. Later tenants were a Signaller, Yardmaster, Guard, and Train Despatcher. New floor coverings and Holland blinds were installed in 1989.

2 Chapple Street.³⁰

In July 1951, Fitter's Assistant Low requested a bath water heater for 2 Chapple Street, pointing out that the recently built Henry Martin type houses were supplied with bath water heaters. It is not recorded if one was supplied. In 1962, a dado was fitted to the verandah. In 1963, Driver J. E. McCallum paid £10 for the addition of a garage, which amount was reimbursed. Clerk F. Power installed a gas stove in 1973, and Driver R. Lancaster was reimbursed for a rotary clothes hoist, carpets and air conditioner in 1975. In 1983, Fireman R. Dowell added a garden shed. The following year, Shed Foreman R. Soulsby provided a list of problems associated with 2 Chapple Street, claiming vibration from trains caused the windows to rattle and dust to fall from the ceiling. All the windows were loose and 'stuffed with paper' and the bathroom timbers were rotten, with water running down the bathroom wall and under the house. Soulsby vacated the place in July 1985. He was followed by Driver's Assistant G. Sainsbury, who entered into a three-year lease on the place, and later shared with another Driver's Assistant.

In 1991, Station Relief Officer S. Ferguson was the tenant. Ferguson was interested in purchasing 2 Chapple Street, but because it was situated on a Reserve with other buildings, subdivision was required before a sale could take place.

25 *WAGR 1972 Housing Review: Report on future housing requirements*, bound typescript, Appendix 5; WAGR File, Kalgoorlie Trainmen's Barracks, 27 April 1972, SROWA, CONS 4771 WAS 1208, R5821, 1956-1975

26 *WAGR Annual report, 19776-77*, p. 32.

27 All information in this section from WAGR property file for DP 971, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

28 WAGR CCE Plan 29458, 10 July 1934, SRO, ACC 1781. This house was to be DP 860, but a different house, built for the Inspector Per Way in 1938, was numbered DP 860 instead.

29 Henry Martin type railway houses were asbestos, timber & iron houses, similar in design to the Improved Mill type. Henry Martin & Co built a number of them for the railway department in several country towns.

30 All information in this section from WAGR property file for DP 972, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

In 1997, repairs to the roof were carried out on two occasions due to roof timbers slipping and damaging hip and ridge tiles. It was suggested that 2 Chapple Street be disposed of, but the issue of the Reserve made this difficult. Another suggestion was to demolish and replace with a transportable house. Relief Officer Ferguson was transferred to Merredin and accepted a \$1,000 reimbursement for the air conditioning he had installed. Although the air conditioning unit was worth more than twice that amount, the Department could not offer more due to the condition of the house.

4 Chapple Street.³¹

The house at 4 Chapple Street was constructed some three feet below street level and no drains were provided for downpipes, resulting in the backyard flooding during wet weather. In October 1949, Telegraph Operator E. Cahill requested a front fence so that he could 'do up' the front yard. Although Cahill was informed that he should realise labour and material were still in acutely short supply, a link mesh fence was erected. In July 1951, Cahill, then Assistant Station Master, requested a bath water heater.

In December 1959, Painter T. Mullins asked for a sleepout enclosure to be erected on the side verandah, as he had three daughters and three sons to accommodate. The sleepout was provided almost three years later, in October 1962. The following year, Mullins left his employment with the Department. Fireman B. Stephen was reimbursed for a gas stove and a clothes hoist in 1976, and Shunter J. McGill qualified for the water allowance in 1981. When McGill vacated the place in 1986, 4 Chapple Street was under consideration for use as barracks accommodation. The place was eventually rented on an 'as is' basis, and was tenanted, first, by a Technician, then an Assistant Line & Signal Maintainer and finally a Driver. In February 2000, Driver C. Bradbury queried the amount of his rent, which was \$29 a week. The tenant of 2 Chapple Street was only paying \$15 a week and had air conditioning and other 'mod cons'. The reply informed that Bradbury's rent was correct, it was the rent on 2 Chapple Street that was wrong.

By 1988, rationalisations, and changes in technology and services had resulted in a decrease in WAGR staff by almost 50%, to 5,567. More and more railway houses were being leased to private tenants as railway staff numbers were reduced.³² In the 1990s, it was WAGR's policy to dispose of its employee housing. Many residences on railway station reserves were demolished, or sold for removal. At Kalgoorlie, a number of the 1950s residences on the station reserve fronting Forrest Street have been leased out for business use. In 2000, the sale of Westrail's freight division to private enterprise was finalised and the disposal of remaining unrequired residences became a priority.

In 2003, the Barracks are occupied as a boarding house for non-railway employees and the Railway Houses are unoccupied.³³ Reserve 8316 is currently undergoing subdivision by the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) to enable sale of the buildings.

³¹ All information in this section from WAGR property file for DP 973, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

³² WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1988, p. 22; WAGR, property file for DP 302, 12 Kitchener Street Merredin, Properties section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

³³ Information provided by Mary Ryan, WAGR Properties Division, 11 September 2002.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group comprising brick and iron former railway Barracks constructed in 1902, and three timber and tile Improved Mill type dwellings constructed in 1948, all by the Western Australian Government Railways Commission (WAGR) as accommodation for employees. The Barracks and Railway Houses are sited on Reserve 8316 on the corner of Chapple and Wittenoom streets.

Kalgoorlie Railway Housing Group is situated on the corner of Chapple and Wittenoom streets, immediately north of the railway line and one street block west of the railway station. The place comprises the railway Barracks and three residences of similar style. 2 Chapple Street is located on the northwest corner of Chapple and Wittenoom Streets, with 4 Chapple Street immediately to the west. West of (behind) 2 & 4 Chapple Street is the Barracks, which front Wittenoom Street, and immediately west of the Barracks is 46 Wittenoom Street. The Chapple Street frontage of the site is delineated by a steel post and wire fence, with central pedestrian gate entries and vehicular entries on the south side to both 2 and 4 Chapple Street. Super six fencing delineates the dividing boundary between the two places, and the rear and side boundaries. The Wittenoom Street frontage has a timber framed chain link fence along the front of the Barracks and a super six fence with a central pedestrian gate entry to 46 Wittenoom Street and a vehicular entry on the south side. The side and rear boundaries are delineated with super six fences.

The Barracks

The Barracks displays some characteristics of Federation Bungalow style, although primarily the design is functional and purpose designed for railway employees within the availability of WAGR resources at the time. Typical of the Federation Bungalow style is the single storey, ground hugging brick construction, unpretentious design and simple massing. The broad simple roof planes and main roof extending over the verandahs, which are supported by simple timber posts, are similarly typical of the style.

The Barracks comprises two brick buildings linked by a covered walkway, and comprising single room accommodation units, a transportable accommodation building, and a number of outbuildings including three railway cabins. All the accommodation buildings are rectangular in form with the main building form a 'T'. The main building has three main rooms forming the top of the 'T' as a rectangle in an east west alignment, parallel with the road, with ten back-to-back accommodation rooms on a north south alignment with each room opening onto verandahs on the east and west. A smaller three roomed building west of the main building is connected by a curved roof covered walkway, and has a verandah facing along the courtyard side (east) with a skillion roofed steel framed carport on the west side. On the east side of the main building are the transportable units, aligned north south, and facing west, with a separate overarching steel framed roof. There is a timber framed asbestos bathroom forming a closure to the courtyard on the north side, with a brick laundry and storeroom attached to the accommodation building, at the north end. Across the rear of the property there is a c.1950 typical railways corrugated iron shed, a garden shed, a row of aviaries, and a single brick toilet structure with curved roof, in the northeast corner of the yard. The yard has a blue metal surface except for concrete paths and a grassed central courtyard.

The Barracks are brick construction laid in a stretcher bond. The corrugated iron roof is predominantly hipped with skillion verandahs at break pitch and

a gablet feature on the street frontage. The chimneys on the main building are rendered with deep-corbelled moulding and the west wing chimney is face brick with corbelled brick detailing. The verandahs are supported by square stop, chamfered timber posts with moulded collars and a diagonal patterned lattice valance. The verandah floors are concrete. The east side verandah is enclosed along the outside edge with a timber framed asbestos clad dado and diagonal lattice above. The windows are predominantly timber framed double hung sashes with concrete sills and three-course header arch. The doors are four-panelled timber.

The front three rooms comprise a corridor from the main entry door off the front verandah, with a bedroom on the right (east) and living room (left-west) with a doorway ahead leading to the east verandah where there is a patio enclosure at that end. Through the living room are a small hall and a bathroom, with the kitchen at the west end. The walls are plaster, ceilings are lathe and plaster and floors are the original 0.135 metre floorboards. The centre room (living) fireplace and mantelpiece remain intact. The kitchen has a c.1950s fitout with c.1970s louvred cupboards and splash back tiles. The bathroom is similarly a c.1970s fitout. Adjacent to the kitchen and west verandah of the accommodation rooms, is a small timber framed asbestos extension that forms a laundry. The ten rooms are identical except for the two north rooms on the east side where a wall has been removed to form a kitchen-dining room and a wood fired heater and rudimentary kitchen sink unit has been installed. Each accommodation room has a door and a window on the outside wall. The walls are plaster, ceilings lathe and plaster, and floors timber. The three rooms in the west wing are similarly constructed, but have the doors opening onto the verandah on the east, and the windows on the west wall. The south and centre rooms have sets of two hopper windows and the rear room has two double hung sashes. There is a brick 'copper' and chimney on the exterior of the southwest corner of the three-room wing. The laundry and store are rudimentary brick structures with rendered walls, concrete floors and are unceiled. The bathroom is a c.1970s timber framed asbestos clad building with interior asbestos lining, concrete floors and basic shower and vanity fitouts.

2 & 4 Chapple Street; 46 Wittenoom Street

The individual dwellings, constructed to a design known as Improved Mill type, display some characteristics of Inter-War California Bungalow style, although, like the Barracks, the design is primarily functional and purpose designed for railway employees within the availability of WAGR resources at the time. Typical of the Inter-War California Bungalow style, the buildings are unpretentious freestanding single storey houses within informal gardens, with timber structure and cladding and Marseilles tiled roofs. However, the dwellings do not display many of the details of the style, demonstrating a more economical and functional response to details, form and materials.

The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening into a corridor with two rooms on the left, one room on the right, and the kitchen straight ahead. The third bedroom opens off the kitchen on the left. Access to the back verandah is through the kitchen, with the bathroom on the left side of the verandah.

Each place is a single timber framed building with painted shiplap weatherboard cladding. The predominantly hipped roof is clad with terracotta clay tiles, and features a gable on the east frontage and a break pitch roof to cover the verandah, which wraps around three sides of the building. The windows on the front gabled wall, and on the south side, each

have timber framed fixed awnings with tiled cladding. The verandahs are supported by evenly spaced square timber posts and enclosed with dado height asbestos panels. All three residences have enclosures on the verandah. At 2 and 4 Chapple Street, a section of the north side verandah has been enclosed with timber-framed and asbestos clad walls and louvred windows. The enclosure at 4 Chapple Street also has aluminium-framed windows to the front. At 46 Wittenoom Street, a section of the east side verandah has been enclosed with timber-framed, shiplap weatherboard-clad walls and aluminium framed windows. The face brick chimneys are corbelled and have terracotta pots.

The front verandahs still have the original 0.100 metre (4inch) boards. The central front and back doors are flush panel doors with fixed frosted glazed panels in each. The original timber framed double hung sash windows remain in place throughout the main dwelling. Square profile gutters are in place but there are only some remains of downpipes to provide discharge from the roof, and no ground level drainage is evident.

The interior fabric of each place is predominantly intact throughout. The main five rooms have the original 0.100 metre (4inch) timber floorboards. The ceilings are lined with battened plasterboard and the cornice has a horizontal simple decorative detail, although most of the ceilings in 4 Chapple Street have been replaced with suspended sheets. The walls have a vertical tongue and groove timber dado wall, painted, with battened plasterboard above. The skirtings, architraves and original flush panel doors and hardware are in place. There is a fireplace back-to-back in the living room and the kitchen. The living room fireplace is face brick, painted, with corbelled brick detail supporting a plain timber mantel that has also been painted. The kitchen also has a fireplace with the original wood stove and simple bracketed timber mantle, and the original basic three-cupboard sink fitout. The bathroom walls are plyboard and the fitout comprises a boxed bath and porcelain basin attached to the wall.

The laundry and toilet are separate detached buildings at the rear of the dwellings. The toilet is brick with a tiled gable roof. Adjacent to the toilet is the laundry. It is a timber framed and weatherboard-clad structure with a tiled skillion roof, concrete floor, and unlined walls on the interior. It is fitted out with a double concrete trough and brick copper stand with the copper missing. Each dwelling has a standard WAGR issue detached steel framed carport at the rear of the driveway.

There are no plantings of significance.

The railway cabins, transportable accommodations units, aviaries and carport on the Barracks site are of no heritage significance.

The carports at 2 Chapple, 4 Chapple and 46 Wittenoom Streets are of little heritage significance.

NOTE: The layout of Plan 4495 showing the additions to the Barracks is not evident in the insitu building. It seems from physical evidence on site, that the extra four rooms under the main building were constructed per the plan. However, the ablution block and covered way are actually on the site in mirror plan on the west side of the main building, not as shown on the east side of the main building. There is no evidence on the interior of the three ablution rooms, of their original function, neither are there any remains of the original fitouts. The windows on the west wall of the west wing attest to the original ablution function, consistent with a mirror image of the ablutions on the plan.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The brick Barracks are one of the few remaining examples of their type, which were constructed prior to 1904 and the introduction of the standard barracks of grouped weatherboard and iron cabins. Another early brick barracks is located at Albany and may be of similar construction to the Kalgoorlie Barracks. Albany Barracks are dated as 1870 in the HCWA database but are clearly later, as construction on the Great Southern line did not begin until 1884.

There was little standardisation in the early period of provision of railway houses, except that the quality of housing reflected the position of the employee. Station masters were accommodated in a separate residence near the station or in accommodation attached to the station building while other employees occupied cabins, camps, two-room cottages or similar, while senior officers were provided with more substantial residences, such as the District Superintendent's house at 2 Forrest Street Kalgoorlie. Standardisation for waged employees began in 1920 with the three-room Bungalow design. This was followed by the four-room and five-room Improved Mill type houses, the Henry Martin type (timber and asbestos, similar in design to the Improved Mill type but constructed by the Henry Martin Company) and the three-room imported pre-cut Simms-Cooke houses. Other railway houses were re-erected Group Settlement houses or purchased houses, generally former State Housing Commission homes. Most of the housing provided by WAGR for its employees was built post World War Two.

The Improved Mill type house is typical of the housing constructed in the post World War Two building boom. It is similar to many of the residences constructed by the State Housing Commission during this period. The Improved Mill type has some characteristics of Inter-War Californian Bungalow style, being originally designed in the 1930s.

Some other extant examples of Improved Mill type houses are Stickland Street, Wongan Hills (6 houses), 5 Wittenoom Street, Kalgoorlie; 67, 73, 77, 81 and 85 Todd Street and 81 Endersbee Street, Merredin; and 3 and 5 Ventnor Street, Wagin.

13.4 REFERENCES

WAGR, property files for DP 971, 972 & 973, Properties division, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

WAGR File, Kalgoorlie Trainmen's Barracks, SROWA, CONS 4771 WAS 1208, R5821, 1956-1975.

WAGR file, Kalgoorlie, departmental houses, SROWA, AN262/7 ACC 1398 Item 1642/1938.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
