



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.24.2 Providing hospital services
- 8.8 Remembering the fallen

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 404 Community services and utilities
- 501 World wars and other wars

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Wickepin Nursing Post is a competently designed and built example of a small country hospital built by the Public Works in the Inter-War period. Built on a residential scale, the building exhibits the influences of the earlier Federation Bungalow and Federation Queen Anne style styles. (Criterion 1.1)

As a competently designed and constructed community building, the place contributes to the aesthetic qualities of the townscape of Wickepin. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The place demonstrates the early Twentieth Century practice of small communities raising funds to provide important community facilities and services to further the development of the town. (Criterion 2.1)

The place is associated with the settlement and development of the Shire and Town of Wickepin. (Criterion 2.2)

As a war memorial, the place is associated with the Australia wide movement to commemorate those who died in the First World War by the construction of practical memorials, community facilities such as hospitals, community halls and public parks. Also, as a war memorial, the place is associated with the First World War and its aftermath. (Criterion 2.2)

As a war memorial, the place is associated with those men from the region who died in the First World War. (Criterion 2.3)

* 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.

Wickepin Nursing Post is associated with the Public Works Department of Western Australia who designed and supervised the construction of the place and the builder, Mr E.G. Tompkins, of Corrigin. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Wickepin Nursing Post is highly valued for its association with the establishment of the town and is a reminder of the sense of community involvement this project engendered. The place also has social significance as the community's centre for medical care. (Criterion 4.1)

As a memorial to the men who died in the First World War, the *Wickepin Nursing Post* is particularly significant to the local community. (Criterion 4.1)

The place contributes to the community's sense of place because it has been a consistent feature in the town and an important community facility since its construction in 1926. Although the hospital was downgraded to a nursing post in the 1980s, the *Wickepin Nursing Post* has offered primary health care in the Shire for seventy four years. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Wickepin Nursing Post is a rare example of a largely intact Inter-War public country hospital as unlike other country hospitals it has not been substantially altered or extended to suit the modern hospital's increased space requirements. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The style of the *Wickepin Nursing Post* is characteristic of modest suburban and country buildings built by the Public Works Department of Western Australia in the first half of the Twentieth Century. (Criterion 6.1)

Wickepin Nursing Post is an example of the Inter-War period practice of local hospital committees undertaking the construction of a small hospital with the assistance of the State Government. (Criterion 6.2)

The place is an example of the practice of local communities building public facilities such as hospitals as memorials to commemorate those who died in the First World War. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally the *Wickepin Nursing Post* is in good condition. The exception to this statement is the interior of some minor service rooms on the verandah that are in fair to poor condition. However, remedial action to conserve this fabric would be fairly simple and easily achieved.

The current good condition of the place is largely due to the refurbishment works carried out in 1997 and to regular maintenance. While this work has helped preserve the place in good condition, it has led to the loss of some original fabric and the simplification of detail. For example, the brick chimneys have been removed and parts of the timber verandah floor have been replaced with concrete.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

While the place was downgraded from a hospital to a nursing post in 1975, its integrity has only been slightly diminished as it is still the town's medical centre and its rooms are still used for medical consultation and treatment. The new use of this building is highly compatible with the use for which it was originally intended.

Due to the changing standards of health care and medical technology, it is unlikely that the *Wickepin Nursing Post* will be re-established as a hospital, however, it would appear to have a viable future as a nursing post or community medical facility.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The authenticity of the *Wickepin Nursing Post* is moderate. Overall the planning and the exterior treatments have remained intact but the verandah has been modified and the Surgery/Dispensary and the brick chimneys have been removed. Apart from the remodelling of the bathrooms and WCs the modification of the interior has largely been limited to the installation of carpet, the replacement of a ceiling and the blocking up of fireplaces.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Prue Griffin, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Gena Binet, Architect, of Kelsall Binet Architects.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Wickepin Nursing Post is a brick and iron, single storey building constructed in 1925 by E. G. Tompkins of Corrigin for the Wickepin community. The Public Works Department of Western Australia designed the building and supervised its construction. Later additions were the responsibility of the Public Works Department subsequently the Building Management Authority and the Department of Contract and Management Services. *Wickepin Nursing Post* services the Shire of Wickepin with weekly visits from a doctor from Narrogin.

The region surrounding Wickepin was opened up for selection in 1893. Early settlers came to the district to graze sheep and also found plentiful supplies of sandalwood and mallet bark. The town began to develop by 1906 and in 1909 a Roads Board was established, the same year as the rail line was constructed from Narrogin.¹

In 1912, it was recorded in the Local Board of Health minutes that a licence was issued for the erection of a private hospital. It has not been established where this hospital operated from or if there were others in the town at this time. However by the early 1920s, it became apparent that the existing facilities were inadequate, particularly during the influenza epidemic of 1919 when the Roads Board buildings were suggested as isolation wards for patients. The community formed a hospital committee to organise the building of a new hospital.²

¹ *Wickepin Community Profile An economic and social profile of the Shire of Wickepin*, prepared by Shire of Wickepin, 1993, p. 6.

² *The Wickepin Argus*, 13 August 1925, p. 2.

The State Government gave approval for the hospital in 1920 but stated that finances were unavailable. A subsidy of £1,100 was promised if the community would raise the equivalent. The cost was estimated on the basis of the construction being in brick as it was noted by the Minister for Health in 1925, Hon. S. W. Munsie, that the government favoured brick for hospital buildings.³ A reserve was created for hospital purposes in 1922 and the Public Works Department drew up plans⁴ but it took three more years before the building was completed.⁵

The community decided to build the hospital in memory of the men from the district who had died in World War 1. The local paper proudly supported the cause and when writing of the forthcoming fundraising events stated;

It is the best cause possible. The hospital is being built as a memorial to the lads who gave their lives in the Great War. No memorial is too good for the boys.⁶

Following the First World War most communities in Western Australia erected a war memorial to commemorate local people who lost their lives in the conflict. These memorials were either a traditional monument with symbolic meaning, such as an obelisk or cenotaph, or a practical structure, such as a hospital, community hall or public park. In her inventory of war memorials in this state, Oline Richards comments that

..... the high incidence of functional memorials erected in Western Australia in the inter-war years may have been a reflection of the fact that many areas of the State were still largely undeveloped and community amenities were generally lacking.⁷

As well as the memorial hospital, the people of the Wickepin District erected a more traditional monument, the Wickepin District Roll of Honour (circa 1920s – 30s). The roll of honour is a large carved board with brass name plaques listing the men of the district who died in the First World War as well those who fought. This memorial is located in the Shire Hall.⁸

It took two and a half years of fund-raising before the foundation stone of the hospital could be laid. The source of the moneys included the RSL (£230), dances and entertainment's (£300) and the curiously named, Commercial Travellers day that raised £140.⁹

A foundation stone was laid with a silver trowel and due ceremony by Hon. S. W. Munsie on 5 August 1925. During his speech, Mr Munsie spoke glowingly about the contractor employed to build the hospital, Mr. E. G. Tompkins of Corrigin. It was mentioned that Tompkins had 'done a lot of Government work and they had never found any fault with him. His work had always been satisfactory.'¹⁰ Perhaps this was why the project did not go through the usual tendering process used by the Public Works Department at this time.¹¹

Initially work progressed quickly with Tompkins promising a finishing date in September but his ill health and other delays meant the project was drawn

3 ibid.

4 PWD Plan 223606, Wickepin Hospital, held at CAMS.

5 Reserve 17932, Reserve Register, Department of land Administration.

6 *The Wickepin Argus*, 30 July 1925, p. 2.

7 Richards, Oline, *War Memorials in Western Australia*, 1996, p. 5.

8 ibid.

9 *The Wickepin Argus*, 13 August 1925, p. 2.

10 ibid.

11 Government Gazette, 1925 and 1926 held no record of tenders for Wickepin Hospital.

out until February 1926.¹² The hospital was soon in use and it was recorded that the first child was born at the hospital in March 1926.¹³

Two active supporters and members of the hospital committee were the local doctor, Dr Crooks and his wife. The couple had arrived in Wickepin in 1921 and after five years work and fund-raising for the new hospital, the couple had decided to leave. Their contribution must have been significant because the date of the opening ceremony was arranged to suit their departure.¹⁴

The official opening took place on 19 April 1926. Mr. Munsie again performed the ceremony, this time with a specially prepared gold key. All the shops in the town were closed to encourage attendance at the event. Although the building was complete and all the construction costs were met, the fund-raising did not stop as the running costs of the hospital were not fully subsidised. Whilst congratulating the town on its contributions the writer for *The Wickepin Argus* encouraged further donations.

There are still some names missing from the list and as the upkeep of the hospital is great the committee will be very pleased to receive any further donations. The Wickepin Football and Trotting Clubs have given £5 each. Now, there are other sporting bodies in the district, who perhaps could follow the good example given by the above mentioned clubs.¹⁵

The direct appeal to the community gives an indication of the sense of involvement and responsibility that was encouraged in the project.

The Public Works Department drawing shows the extent of this project. The hospital building has six major rooms. The Labour Ward, the Maternity Ward and the Female Ward are located on one side of the central corridor and the Male Ward, Matron's Room and Dining Room on the other. A verandah surrounds the building on three sides and all the main rooms, except for the Labour Ward, have doors opening on to it to provide access to the bathrooms and W.C.s located on the verandahs at the rear of the building. A Lobby at the end of the central corridor provides access to the Maid's Room and the Kitchen, which has a Pantry and Store at one end. A room on the north-west corner of the front verandah accommodated the Surgery and Dispensary possibly so that out-patients would not disturb the running of the hospital. There are four 2,000 gallon rainwater tanks shown around the building. Also on this drawing is a simple rectangular outbuilding housing the Wash House and Wood Shed with the note "Wash House to be placed on site as directed".¹⁶ The hospital building is extant but the rainwater tanks and the Wood Shed and Wash House have been demolished.

The original Public Works Department plan has been amended several times when the Wickepin Hospital was modified to provide extra accommodation. One set of amendments shows a timber framed Nurse's Bedroom clad in asbestos sheeting on the north-eastern corner of the front verandah. This room is extant. Another set of amendments show a timber framed Bedroom clad with asbestos sheeting with a wood dado (possibly weatherboards) on the western verandah adjacent to the Surgery/Dispensary and a Cement

¹² *The Wickepin Argus*, 25 February 1926, p. 2.

¹³ *The Wickepin Argus*, 18 March 1926, p. 2.

¹⁴ *The Wickepin Argus*, 25 March 1926, p. 2.

¹⁵ *The Wickepin Argus*, 29 April 1926, P. 2.

¹⁶ P.W.D. Plan 23606, Wickepin Hospital, held at CAMS.

Ramp leading up to the front (north) verandah. The ramp is extant but there is no evidence of the Bedroom on the western verandah.¹⁷

The Wickepin Memorial Hospital was constructed in the period when William Hardwick was Chief Architect of the Public Works Department. During this time ...

A number of country hospitals were undertaken by local hospital committees. The Public Works Department provided the designs, specifications and supervision. Tenders were called by a local committee. Among the hospitals constructed on this basis were Katanning, Wickepin, Nannup, Kondinin and Dumbleyung.¹⁸

Of these other hospitals, Dumbleyung District Memorial Hospital (1925), Nannup Hospital (1925), and Kondinin Hospital (1925) are still extant but Katanning Hospital (1926) has since been demolished. Like Wickepin Memorial Hospital, these buildings were simple single storey structures generally with a hipped iron roof with gambrels and a verandah on three sides. There is some variation in wall material with both brick and weatherboard being utilised in different cases.¹⁹ The Dumbleyung District Memorial Hospital is the only one of these hospitals that, like the Wickepin Memorial Hospital, has been constructed as a war memorial.²⁰

The town of Wickepin remained relatively static in size and prosperity in the first half of the Twentieth Century. *Wickepin Nursing Post* changed little in structure during this time. Running costs and the doctors' salary were a constant debate between the Roads Board and the Health Department.²¹ Repairs and renovations were undertaken in 1954 and a new brick mortuary was built in 1956.²²

A Public Works Department Plan from 1957 shows a proposal to construct new nurses quarters to the east of the hospital. This plan indicates that these new quarters were to be an extension of an existing brick building that stood approximately on the site of the current garage. The existing quarters building was a lineal block that contained two bedrooms and a bathroom and had a verandah to the north and south elevations and a covered walkway that linked it to the verandah of the adjacent hospital building. The proposed extension was a 'L' shaped block that adjoined the eastern end of the existing building and contained four bedrooms and a bathroom. A verandah on the south side of the extension would provide access to the rooms. The plan also indicates that a future stage of development was envisioned that would provide a further two bedrooms, an ironing room, a storeroom, a pantry and a sitting room.²³ There is no evidence on site of either the brick, two bedroom nurses quarters or the proposed 1957 extension. These buildings are not shown on later drawings of the site and there is no other documentary evidence referring to their existence.

17 ibid. No information on the dates of these additions was found in the files held at PRO or CAMS

18 Le Page, J.S.H., *Building a State*, The Water Authority of Western Australia, 1986, p. 460.

19 Considine and Griffiths Architects, *Katanning Municipal Inventory*, 1996; Heritage and Conservation Professionals, *Shire of Nannup Municipal Inventory*, 1996; Laura Grey in association with Whelans, *Shire of Kondinin Municipal Inventory*, 1997. Note: there is no record in the HCWA library of a Municipal Inventory being completed for the Shire of Dumbleyung

20 Richards, Oline, *War Memorials in Western Australia*, 1996

21 Summary of Local Board of Health, PR 8679/Wik, Battye Library,

22 *Government Gazette*, 1954, p.593; 1956, p. 2345.

23 PWDWA plan, Drawing No. 1, Wickepin Hospital, Proposed New Nurses Quarters, 24/4/1957.

Minor repairs were undertaken in 1963, 1966 and 1973.²⁴ Demand for hospital services have ebbed and flowed over the years but have generally declined. In 1964, the hospital was reopened to in-patients after a period of five years of solely out-patients' service.²⁵ This change may well have been prompted by the arrival of scheme water and electricity to the town.²⁶ The in-patient service did not last as the gradual drift away from the country and the universality of car travel made a hospital unnecessary in a small town like Wickepin.

As is common in the Wheatbelt the number of farms have declined in the Shire of Wickepin but the area covered by them has increased indicating that the farming properties have got bigger over time. As mechanisation of farming has increased the number people needed to operate the farms have also declined. These two factors have contributed to the declining populations of many country towns and shires like Wickepin.²⁷ In 1975, the hospital's status was changed to a nursing post, indicating that there is no resident doctor at *Wickepin Nursing Post*.²⁸

In 1984, further repairs and renovations occurred 'to prolong the life of the present Nursing Post'.²⁹ It is assumed this statement means that the facilities available were not in keeping with current medical practices. A Public Works Department Drawing describing the extent of the renovations suggest that these works mainly involved the rationalisation of the structures on site, possibly to reduce maintenance costs. These changes consisted of demolishing redundant outbuildings and structures including, the Morgue, the Wood Store, the Store, a W.C. and a large rainwater tank on a stand. Changes to the main building, the Nursing Post, included changing floor coverings, removing chimneys and general maintenance. Also a sign bearing the word "Hospital" was removed from near the front entry.³⁰

This drawing also indicates that the room uses have changed considerably since 1926. Of the six main rooms, there are two bedrooms and a living room one side of the central corridor and Consulting Room, Treatment Room and Bedroom on the other. The Maid's Room and adjacent Bathroom have been converted into an internal shower and W.C., the Kitchen is now referred to as the Kitchen/Dining and the adjacent store has been converted into a kitchenette with a sink. The other bathroom on the verandah has become a store and a new free standing Laundry and Boiler Room has been constructed opposite the back door. Also the Lobby at the rear of the building has been enclosed and a garage with a covered walkway linking it to the main building has been constructed. There is no reference to the Bedroom on the western verandah. Apart from the modifications associated with converting the Maid's Room and adjacent Bathroom into an internal shower and W.C. there has been only limited alteration of the original fabric.³¹

The site plan drawn at this time shows some detail of the landscaping of the site. The border planting of trees around the driveway is the most distinctive

²⁴ *Government Gazette*, 1963, p. 1336; 1966, p. 933; 1973, p. 3606.

²⁵ *The West Australian*, 3 October 1964, p. 12.

²⁶ *The West Australian*, 5 October 1964, p. 19.

²⁷ *Wickepin Community Profile*, p. 6.

²⁸ *Wickepin Hospital Nursing Post*, Annual Report, 1987/88, p. 5.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ PWD Plan A1, File No. 1740/51, Wickepin Nursing Post, Repairs and Renovations 1984, 23/502/4, held at CAMS.

³¹ *ibid.*

feature.³² These trees, a *Prunus sp.* are extant but any information on when they were planted has not been found.

In 1995 the *Wickepin Nursing Post* was entered into the Shire of Wickepin's Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places. The Statement of Significance for the place stated that ...

The place represents the community health services in the community of Wickepin. The place demonstrates a significant sense of place to the local people of the Wickepin district, as a place where many were born and relatives died.³³

The entry also recommended that the place be further researched for submission to the National Trust.

The photograph included in this Municipal Inventory listing shows that the brick room located on the north-west corner of the building had been demolished by 1995. This room, constructed as a part of the original scheme to accommodate the Surgery and Dispensary, was still standing in 1984 as it is indicated on the 1984 Public Works Department drawing where it is described as the Waiting Room. The exact date when this room was demolished or the reason why is unknown.³⁴

Wickepin Nursing Post continues to operate as a nursing post today serving the town and the district. There are no medical practitioners present in the town and the post functions as a primary care and first aid facility. A private medical practitioner visits from Narrogin one day each week. In addition to the routine functions the *Wickepin Nursing Post* holds health promotion courses for the community. For example, Quit Day, Women's Health Day and Blood sugar and blood pressure education programmes.³⁵

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Siting

Wickepin Nursing Post is sited towards the eastern outskirts of the town on Wogolin Road, the main street running through Wickepin. The lots surrounding the Nursing Post mostly contain modest detached houses on large blocks. The majority of other commercial and community buildings, such as the former Post Office, Railway Station and hotel, are located closer to the centre of town.

The site is a large rectangular block bounded on the north by Wogalin Road, on the south by McCracken Street and on the east by Potts Street. The area of the site is approximately 1.6 hectares and its long axis is orientated east-west.

Relationship of building(s) on site

The Nursing Post and its associated outbuildings are clustered closely together in the middle of the western half of the site. The eastern half of this site is empty and the documentary evidence suggests that it has never been developed in any way. The Nursing Post faces north addressing Wogalin Road and a semi-circular bitumen driveway leads to the front of the building. There is a bitumen carpark to the east of the driveway.

³² No detail of landscape design was found in the plans or files held at PRO or CAMS.

³³ Shire of Wickepin, Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places, November 1995.

³⁴ No detail of the demolition of the former Surgery/ dispensary Room was found in the plans or files held at PRO or CAMS.

³⁵ *Wickepin Hospital Nursing Post*, Annual Report, 1997/1998, p. 8.

The area contained by the semi-circular driveway has been planted with couch grass and a collection of ornamental trees and shrubs including *Callistemon* "Bottle Brush", *Prunus* *sps.*, *Agonis flexuosa* "Peppermint Tree", "Liquid Amber" and various *Eucalyptus* *sps.* An expanse of buffalo grass has been established around the Nursing Post and there are a few examples of mature "Liquid Amber" and *Callistemon* "Bottle Brush" planted in front of this building. The remainder of the site is lightly vegetated with a collection of indigenous plants.

To the west of the Nursing Post is a simple rectangular, timber-framed shed with a gable roof. This shed has a concrete floor and the walls are clad with shadow line compressed cement sheeting and the roof with corrugated compressed cement sheeting. A simple, timber framed, flat fibro cement sheet clad rectangular shed stands between the garage and the Nursing Post.

At the rear of the Nursing Post is another simple, timber framed, rectangular shed, the Laundry. This building stands opposite the back door of the Nursing Post, a concrete slab path runs between the two buildings. The Laundry has brick foundations and a concrete floor and it is clad with flat, fibro cement sheeting with cover battens. The flat, Klip-lock metal sheeting roof extends to the rear wall of the Nursing Post to cover the pathway. It also has framed T&G boarded doors and 1 pane timber casement windows. A large, corrugated iron water tank behind the Laundry collects water from the roofs of the Laundry and the Nursing Post.

External form and style, and details of each of the building(s)

The only major building on the site, the Nursing Post, is a modest example of a country hospital designed during the first half of the Twentieth Century in Western Australia. The style of this building is typical of hospitals of this size from this era. The style of these hospital buildings was residential in character and was derived from the earlier *Federation Bungalow* and the *Federation Queen Anne* styles. These styles continued in use up until the beginning of the Second World War but the detail and ornament was gradually simplified and reduced.

The Nursing Post has a roughly square plan that is symmetrically arranged around a central north-south axis. There are verandahs on the north, east and west sides of the building and on the south side there is a lean-to section that extends slightly beyond the line of the square of the south east and south west corners.

The hipped roof has a pitch of approximately 30 degrees and it has two vented gambrels one facing north and the other south. The verandah is continuous with the main roof but has a lower pitch of approximately 10 degrees. In the centre of the northern verandah there is a decorative half timbered gable with rough cast render. The lean-to at the rear of the building has the same roof as the verandahs. The W.C. and Store on the south-west corner of the building is attached to the building in the form of a wing with a gable roof with the same decorative treatment as that to the northern verandah roof. The entire roof is clad with painted, short length sheets of corrugated iron and it has rolled ridge caps. The gambrels have rolled barge caps, timber barge boards and fixed timber louvers.

Generally, painted plain galvanised iron ovolo profile gutters and rectangular plain galvanised iron downpipes have been used throughout, there are no fascia boards at the eaves. This building has no surviving chimneys or vents but a solar hot water system has been installed on the south side of the main roof.

The underside of the verandah roof is unlined but the eaves to the gables are lined with spaced timber battens. The northern and western sides of the verandah have tubular steel posts and balustrades and concrete floors with brick verandah walls. The eastern verandah has 100 x 100mm square section timber posts, timber rails and an 85mm T&G board floor with a brick verandah wall.

The north-east corner of the verandah has been enclosed with fibro cement sheet clad stud framed walls to form a small room. This room can be entered from both the northern and the eastern verandahs through 4 panel timber doors with brass rimlocks. There is a 6 pane double hung sash timber window in both the north and east elevations of this room. These windows are similar to those used elsewhere in the building but, having been designed to fit in a much lower wall, they have different proportions.

The walls of the Nursing Post are constructed from red coloured face brickwork laid in stretcher bond with cream coloured mortar and raked joints. However the walls of the lean-to section at the rear of the building have been rendered and painted white. A small section of the brickwork on the north-west corner of the building is plastered, this is probably the only remnant of a masonry room that originally stood in this location but which has been removed sometime since 1984.

Generally cast iron wall vents, 1 brick size, have been used at high and low level in the walls except for parts of the rear lean-to section that have terracotta vents. This variation in vent type may suggest that these walls have been modified some time since their original construction.

The front elevation of the Nursing Post is symmetrically arranged around a central axis. The front door is located in the centre of the elevation and there are 6 pane double hung sash windows positioned on either side of the door. The 2 pane and 2 panel door has a sidelight on one side and a fanlight above. Both the door and window openings have lintels of diagonally set bricks.

On the east elevation there are three doors opening onto the verandah; one 8 pane, 2 panel timber door with a fanlight and a 3 panel flywire door and; two sets of 4 pane, 1 panel French doors with fanlights and 2p flywires. On the west elevations there are two sets of French doors opening onto the verandah and a 1 pane double hung sash window.

The rendered brick, lean-to section at the rear has an assortment of different windows that appear to date from different eras. There is a 6 pane double hung sash like those on the other elevations, a 1 pane fixed glass window, a 1 pane casement window, an aluminium sliding window, 2 short glazed timber framed windows and two sets of fixed louvres in timber frames. The back door, a ledged and braced tongue and groove board door (150mm wide boards), is fitted into a small section of stud framing that encloses a small back verandah.

Internal layout and details

The Nursing Post has a symmetrically arranged, almost square plan with a corridor running the length of the central axis. The six main rooms in the building are arranged either side of this corridor and all except one have external doors that open onto the surrounding verandahs. These rooms are used for offices, waiting rooms and consulting rooms. The rooms are all roughly similar in size except for the central room on the western side that is slightly smaller in size to accommodate a built-in hall cupboard.

The six main rooms are surrounded by verandahs on the north, east and west sides and, at the rear of the building by the service area. The verandahs are open except for a small section on the north-east corner of the building that has been enclosed to form a Store. This room is accessible only from the verandah.

The service area accommodates the Kitchen/Dining Room, Pantry, Kitchenette, Bathroom, Toilets and Stores. At the end of the central corridor a small verandah has been enclosed to form a Lobby.

This Lobby opens into the Kitchen/Dining Room, which in turn provides access to the Pantry and Kitchenette. On the other side of the Lobby a corridor provides access to the internal W.C. and Bathroom. On the south-east and south-west corners of the building are a W.C. and Store that are entered from the verandahs.

The six main rooms and the central corridor have painted, plastered brick walls, 150mm high painted, moulded timber skirtings and 120mm wide jarrah tongue and groove board floors covered with carpet squares. The internal corners of most rooms have been radiused. The ceilings are reasonably high (3150mm) and they are all lined with fibro cement sheeting with matching battens and a scotia cornice except for one which has a plasterboard ceiling with a splayed cornice. Only the room adjacent to the kitchen has a fireplace but only the chimney breast is visible as the firebox has been bricked in and the mantle has been removed.

The front door that opens into the central corridor is a 2 pane, 2 panel door with a sidelight and fanlight. The doors that lead off this corridor to the six main rooms are all 4 panel timber doors with a fanlight above. The hall cupboard has a pair of 2 panel timber doors. Five of the main rooms have doors that open onto the verandah; four are 4 pane, 1 panel French doors with a 1 pane fanlight; and the other is a 8 pane, 2 panel door with a fanlight. Only the front two rooms have windows, one has a 6 pane double hung sash and the other has a 6 pane double hung sash and a 1 pane double hung sash. The doors have an assorted collection of hardware but some original rimlocks and brass knobs remain. Windows still have original sash lifts and catches.

The service rooms have plastered brick walls, concrete floors and fibro cement sheet ceilings with matching battens and scotia cornice. The ceilings are lower than in the main rooms and the kitchen ceiling is lined on the rake. Light fittings are generally fluorescent tubes fixed to the underside of ceilings.

The Kitchen, Lobby, Pantry and Kitchenette have sheet vinyl laid on the concrete floors and 90mm high timber bullnose skirtings. These rooms also have ledged and braced T&G board doors with rimlocks. The Kitchen has a fireplace with a large open hearth and a timber mantle and built-in kitchen cupboards with a stainless steel sink. The Kitchenette has a run of recently constructed cupboards with a small stainless steel sink.

The Bathrooms and WCs have mosaic tiles on concrete floors and 150 x 75mm tiled skirtings. The internal Bathroom and WC have flush panel doors whereas those on the verandah have ledged and framed T&G doors.

Subsequent alterations

Between the construction of the hospital building in 1926 and the refurbishment works of 1984, the building has undergone a series of modifications. Several parts of the verandah have been enclosed including the Box Room on the north-east corner of the verandah and the Lobby at the rear of the building. The timber verandah floors have been largely replaced

with concrete and timber verandah posts and balustrade with round section steel posts and pipe rail. The Maid's Room and adjacent Bathroom have been converted into an internal W.C. and shower and a kitchenette has been installed in the Store. A new plasterboard ceiling has been installed in one room and fireplace in the former Dining Room has been bricked up and the mantle removed.

In 1984, most of the out buildings located behind the main building were demolished including the Morgue, the Store (fmr. Laundry), Wood Shed and W.C. Modifications to the main building included the removal of the chimneys and roof vents and the installation of carpet tiles in main rooms.

During the 1990s the original Surgery/Dispensary room was demolished.

Appearance and condition of the building to date

Wickepin Nursing Post has recently been renovated and generally it is in good condition. The exception to this is the external Store and WC that are entered from the western verandah. These two rooms exhibit problems with rising damp, in particular, the plaster is fretting severely at low level on the south and part of the north wall and mosaic tiles are delaminating from the concrete floor.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

As part of this research, discussions were held with David Cronin, the Senior Asset Advisor for the Health Department of Western Australia. He commented that to his knowledge, the only similar domestic scale hospital building from the first half of the Twentieth Century is the Kukerin Nursing Post. However, he believes that unlike the purpose built *Wickepin Nursing Post*, the Kukerin Nursing Post building appears to have been initially built as a residence and it was later adapted for use as a hospital.

Wickepin Nursing Post is built to a similar plan to *Rosella House*, Geraldton. *Rosella House*, a timber framed building, was constructed in 1911 as a private hospital and is now part of the Geraldton Hospital Complex.

Memorial Hospitals Commemorating the First World War

In the Inter-War period there were many memorial hospitals built in country areas to commemorate those who fought in the First World War and to provide much needed facilities for these communities. These hospitals were largely funded by public subscription. *War Memorials in Western Australia, 1996* lists the following memorial hospitals, Boyup Brook Memorial Hospital (1923; demolished and replaced c. 1963), Kulukup War Memorial Hospital (1920), *Bruce Rock Memorial Hospital* (1920s), Dumbleyung District Memorial Hospital (1925), Kellerberrin Memorial Hospital (1920s, now demolished), Shire of Narambeen Memorial Hospital (1929) and the Northam Memorial Hospital (1923, demolished 1960s). It is possible that there were other memorial hospitals in country areas in this state but that they have been demolished or forgotten when hospital facilities are rationalised or refurbished.³⁶

While it has been difficult to obtain information on these buildings, some appear to have many similarities in construction and scale to the *Wickepin Nursing Post*. For example the Bruce Rock Memorial Hospital (1920s), now Memorial House, is a single storey structure with a corrugated iron hipped

³⁶ Richards, Oline, *War Memorials in Western Australia*, 1996

roof with a gambrel and verandahs on three sides. The building has a central entry door and the ward rooms have doors that open onto the verandah.

However, these memorial hospitals are particularly vulnerable to change because of the changing nature of medical care and the rationalisation of government facilities in country areas. This may have led to some of these buildings no longer being used as medical facilities. The extent to which these buildings are intact and have retained their integrity is difficult to ascertain using Municipal Inventories as the information in these documents has little detail on individual places.

Country hospitals built largely by public subscription

Like the *Wickepin Nursing Post*, Corrigin District Hospital (1924), Nannup Hospital (1925), Kondinin Hospital (1925) and Katanning Hospital (1926, now demolished) were all funded largely by public subscription and supervised by the Public Works Department of Western Australia. Preliminary investigations suggest that these buildings appear to all share a similar scale and design. Generally there were simple, single storey structures with a hipped iron roof with gambrels and a verandah on three sides. There is some variation in wall material with both brick and weatherboard being utilised in different cases.³⁷ The examples listed above were not war memorials but most memorial hospitals were also largely funded by public subscription.

13. 4 REFERENCES

No key references.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

³⁷ Considine and Griffiths Architects, *Katanning Municipal Inventory*, 1996; Heritage and Conservation Professionals, *Shire of Nannup Municipal Inventory*, 1996; Laura Grey in association with Whelans, *Shire of Kondinin Municipal Inventory*, 1997; **Note:** there is no record in the HCWA library of a Municipal Inventory being completed for the Shire of Dumbleyung