



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

### ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

#### 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

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

##### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

##### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 202 Rail & light rail support
- 106 Workers

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is a good example of a Federation Bungalow style cottage, within a setting of trees, and displays aesthetic qualities of simple massing and a gable feature. (Criterion 1.1)

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is central to the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was built in 1915 on the Northam to Mullewa line, which was constructed as part of the State Government's investment in the development of the State's agriculture between 1900 and the 1930s, and to provide a government owned line between Perth and the port at Geraldton, parallel to the privately owned Midland line. (Criterion 2.1)

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is one of the structures that make up the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct. The other elements of the precinct are the water tower, goods shed, barracks, and 1965 station building, and the sites of the 1920 station building, stockyards, turntable, railway houses and displaced

\*

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

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

persons' camp. Together, they represent the ongoing history of the railway in Wongan Hills, and are a reminder of the important part the railway has continued to play in the development of the district and the town since 1911. (Criterion 2.2)

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was the residence of the Wongan Hills Station Master from 1915 to the 1980s. The station master dealt with the public, oversaw the handling of passenger and freight trains in the station yard and supervised the station staff. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

-----

### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is valued by the local community for its association with the railway presence in the town and district, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criterion 4.1)

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* contributes to the local community's sense of place as one of the earliest elements of the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct, which has existed since 1911. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

-----

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is a good representative example of a station master's house of the period and demonstrates a way of life no longer practiced when the station master was required to live in close proximity to the station. The place is indicative of the status of the station master for whom the dwelling was constructed. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is in fair condition. The gutters are rusted and full of debris, the paint on the exterior brickwork is flaking and exterior timber elements have weathered in many places. There is evidence of some degree of structural settlement. The weatherboards on the cabin are weathered and the paint is flaking.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* has functioned continuously as a dwelling, originally for the station master and his family, and more recently for residents from the broader community. The place has retained a moderate degree of integrity.

## **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The place shows evidence of alterations and additions at the rear. A cabin has been placed on the southwest front corner of the verandah, providing extra accommodation that was consistent with WAGR policy. The place displays a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 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

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is a brick and iron residence constructed in 1915, most likely by the Public Works Department. It is sited on the central railway reserve in Wongan Hills, adjacent to Fenton Street.<sup>1</sup>

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is part of the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct, which comprises the brick station building (1965), railway barracks (1914-1921), water tower with square tank (1914), goods shed (1914), and ramp and crane. The original station building site, railway houses site, stockyards site, railway turntable site, and displaced persons campsite are also recorded as part of the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1880s, Western Australia was not producing enough wheat for local consumption and had to import flour from the eastern states. A major issue was lack of transport to the markets, as it could take several weeks to haul a wagon load of bagged grain over poor roads to Guildford or the closest coastal port town, while rural transport, consisting generally of seasonal, long-distance one-way traffic, was not attractive to private enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

To make the State self-sufficient, the Government began to actively encourage agriculture and closer land settlement. Two privately constructed land grant railway lines, namely the Midland Railway and the Great Southern Railway, and the government financed South West Railway were built between 1885 and 1894 to assist in opening up the country for settlement. At the same time, the Government surveyed 'agricultural areas' in at least forty localities throughout the south and central regions of the State. Assistance for settlers was provided under the *Homestead Act 1893*, which granted 160 acres with seven years to make improvements, the *Agricultural Bank Act 1894*, which provided long term loans to pay for the improvements, and the establishment of the Bureau of Agriculture (later Department of Agriculture) to provide information and advice on farming in Western Australia. State Farms

---

<sup>1</sup> The West Australian Government Railways (WAGR) property file for the place could not be located at Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth, so no details of occupation or changes to the place could be documented.

<sup>2</sup> Wongan Hills Railway Precinct, Place No. 12594, HCWA website database; *Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory*, Railway Precinct P1.

<sup>3</sup> Statham, Pamela, 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', In Stannage, C. T. (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, 1981, p. 190; Sewell, Barbara, *Goomalling, A backward glance: A history of the district*, Goomalling Shire Council, 1998, pp. 72-80; Glynn, Sean, *Government Policy and Agricultural Development: A study of the role of government in the development of the Western Australian wheat belt, 1900-1930*, UWA Press, pp.53-54.

were established, the first, at Hamel, being the venue for superphosphate trials in 1899, which demonstrated the value of the fertiliser in improving wheat yields.<sup>4</sup> Transport for large quantities of superphosphate to the farms was added to the need for transport of produce to market.

As production on the goldfields began to fall in the early 1900s, it was noted that a large number of men, who were attracted to the State by reports of gold, are now turning their attention to the land'.<sup>5</sup> A Royal Commission on Immigration and Land Settlement, which reported in 1905, looked at providing 'pioneer railways' to encourage land settlement. Its findings, that fifteen miles from the nearest railway was the limit for profitable wheat farming, provided the basis for the new railway policy that commenced in 1906.<sup>6</sup>

The Eastern Railway had been extended from Northam to Goomalling in 1902, to provide a rail service for settlers in that area. As each section of new line opened, settlers pushed further afield in the belief that the line would eventually be extended to reach them.<sup>7</sup> In 1908, a ministerial party travelled to the Wongan Hills district to investigate the possible construction of a railway line through the area to Mullewa. The route chosen was east of the hills, and once the site of the terminus was known, a settlement began to develop in the vicinity. This became the town of Wongan Hills.<sup>8</sup>

The contract for construction of the Goomalling-Wongan Hills section of the Northam-Mullewa line was let in July 1910. The contractors were Atkins & Finlayson, and the 34-mile (54.7 km) line was opened on 22 August 1911.<sup>9</sup> The terminus at Wongan Hills was provided with a portable shelter shed, telephone room, toilet facilities and loading platform.<sup>10</sup> The opening of the Goomalling-Wongan Hills section of railway line immediately reduced grain haulage times for the local farmers. A trip to the railhead at Goomalling with a wagonload of bagged grain had previously taken as long

---

4 Appleyard, R. T. 'Western Australia: Economic and demographic Growth, 1850-1914', In Stannage, C. T. (ed) *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, 1981, p. 229; Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 206-207; Statutes of Western Australia, *The Homesteads Act, 1893*, No. 18 of 1893 & *The Agricultural Bank Act, 1894*, No. 21 of 1894; *Bureau of Agriculture Journal*, 7 August 1894, p. 132; Burvill, G. H. *Agriculture in Western Australia: 150 years of development and achievement, 1829-1979*, UWA Press, Perth, 1979, p. 22.

5 Glynn, Sean, *Government Policy and Agricultural Development: A study of the role of government in the development of the Western Australian wheat belt, 1900-1930*, UWA Press, 1975, p. 39, quoting the superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau.

6 Glynn, Sean, op cit, p. 61.

7 Ackland, R. R. B., *Wongan-Ballidu Pioneering Days*, Wongan-Ballidu Shire Council, 1965, pp. 1-5; Glynn, Sean, op cit, p. 63.

8 Hancey, Fred, *West of Wongan Katta*, Wongan-Ballidu Museum, n.d., pp. 14-16.

9 *West Australian Government Gazette*, 18 August 1911, p. 3250.

10 Public Works Department (PWD), *Annual Report, 1911-1912*, p. 12.

as three days, a fact which reinforced the absolute necessity of the railway for the viability of grain production at this time.<sup>11</sup>

The following year, the Public Works Department (PWD) began construction on the section of line between Wongan Hills and Mullewa. Work began at the Wongan Hills end on 22 May 1912 and at the Mullewa end on 12 June 1912. Through communication was made on the line on 20 December 1913. The line was operated by the PWD from 7 January 1914 until it was handed to Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) on 1 March 1915. During this period, the line was ballasted and buildings and water supplies were provided at a number of stations. A 4.5 million gallon tank (dam) was excavated at Wongan Hills, and a tank and stand were located in the station yard.<sup>12</sup> The official opening of the Wongan Hills to Mullewa line took place on 5 April 1915.<sup>13</sup> The line from Northam to Mullewa was of particular importance to the Government because as well as providing transport through the area for farmers it provided government owned rail access between Perth and the port at Geraldton, the alternate rail access being the privately owned Midland Railway.

Wongan Hills is reported to have been opened as a booking station on 1 August 1913.<sup>14</sup> During the 1913-1914 financial year, 5,705 tons of wheat was hauled by rail from Wongan Hills, being the major part of the total 6,168 tons of goods railed from the station, and there were 3,319 journeys booked at the station during that period. This is the first year of operation for which figures were recorded for the town in the WAGR *Annual Report*.<sup>15</sup> Initially, a caretaker was appointed to manage goods and passenger traffic at Wongan Hills. This method of operation meant that the station was not continually manned, resulting in lack of security for goods waiting collection. Urgent requests were made to the Railways Department for the appointment of a station master, and H. Dinsdale was appointed.<sup>16</sup>

The station master was a member of the Railway Department's Traffic Branch and was the lowest ranking salaried officer in that branch. Above him were the traffic inspectors, the district traffic superintendent and the chief traffic manager. At the majority of stations in the State's rail system, the station master was the senior traffic officer present. The station master dealt with the public, oversaw the handling of passenger and

---

11 Ackland, R. R. B., op cit, p. 5.

12 PWD, *Annual Report*, 1913-1914, p. 13; EEL Plan 19668, c.1920, Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) file, Wongan Hills trainmen's barracks, SROWA, ACC 1781 Item 19597A.

13 *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1 April 1915, p. 1379.

14 Ackland, R. R. B., op cit, p. 5. No notice of this opening was located in the *West Australian Government Gazette*, but the station was first manned partway through the 1913-1914 year according to the WAGR *Annual Report* for that period.

15 Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) *Annual Report*, 1913-1914, p. 78.

16 *Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory*, Reference No. 3. No date for this appointment has been found.

freight trains in the station yard and supervised the station staff.<sup>17</sup> A house for the occupant of the position was provided in the station reserve.

Construction of *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was begun in July 1915 and completed in December that year.<sup>18</sup> No contract has been located for *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills*. The place is not listed in the WAGR Index to Contracts for 1901-1966, and no notice calling for tenders has been found, so it is assumed that it was built by the PWD, as were other station master's houses on the line at Dalwallinu, Buntine and Koolanooka.<sup>19</sup> The place was built to a 'non-standard' plan, according to a 1965 WAGR report.<sup>20</sup> It was designated Departmental Property (DP) 558.<sup>21</sup>

WAGR provided accommodation of varying types for its employees beginning with the construction of the first Government railway from Geraldton to Northampton. There were approximately 290 railway employee houses existing by 1912, and over 600 by 1920, when WAGR had a total staff of 7,032.<sup>22</sup> In 1920, the station building from Trafalgar, on the Golden Mile Loopline, was re-erected at Wongan Hills.<sup>23</sup> This provided office accommodation for the station master and the traffic inspector, who had previously used cabins for this function.<sup>24</sup> The traffic inspector oversaw the movement of trains on the line.

The 1920s was a period of considerable agricultural expansion throughout the State, as Soldier Settlement and Group Settlement schemes contributed to the number of people taking up land. Prices for produce were high in the early 1920s, and government sponsored agricultural research was pushing the boundaries of acceptable farming land, with more 'light' lands being deemed suitable for wheat cultivation.<sup>25</sup> These factors all contributed to greater traffic on the railway lines servicing country areas during this period, and an increase in the number of railway employees, including those stationed at Wongan Hills. Ten employee houses were added at Wongan Hills in 1921-1924, and two in 1930.<sup>26</sup> These were the three-room timber Bungalow, a standard design developed in 1919, which could be relocated or extended easily.<sup>27</sup>

---

17 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1905, Appendix O: Return of staff; *Annual Report*, 1924, Appendix L: Return of staff; Royal Commission of Inquiry into the System of State Railways, *Votes & Proceedings of State Parliament*, 1922-23, Vol. 1, paper 7, p. xi.

18 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1916, p. 68.

19 WAGR, *Alphabetical Index to Contracts, 1901-1966*, SROWA, AN 260 ACC 2581; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1910-1920; PWD *Annual Report*, 1914-15, p. 15 reports construction of brick station master's houses at these stations.

20 WAGR file, Wongan Hills station improvements, SROWA, WAS 1208 CONS 4792, Item R5294, historical report prepared for opening of new station buildings, 27 November 1965.

21 Information provided by WAGR Properties Section.

22 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1910-11, pp. 67 & 69; later Annual Reports and various other files.

23 WAGR file, R5294, op cit.

24 EEL Plan 19038, 13 May 1920, op cit.

25 Glynn, Sean, op cit.

26 WAGR, *Annual report*, 1921, p. 16, 1930, p. 17; Wongan Hills town plan, 1966, showing location of railway houses, WAGR file, Wongan Hills employee houses, SROWA, WAS

During the 1930s, the farming regions were severely affected by the Depression and the resulting fall in produce prices, and by dry seasons from 1935 to 1938, which were exacerbated by grasshopper, rabbit and emu invasions. Wheat and lamb production fell, hundreds of farmers abandoned their properties, and rail traffic was reduced accordingly. The introduction of bulk handling of wheat from 1931, where bins at railway sidings replaced the stacks of three-bushel bags, was an efficiency measure for the farmer and railway alike and reinforced the farmers' dependency on the rail service.<sup>28</sup> A bulk bin was installed in the Wongan Hills station yard.

In 1940, five new railway houses were constructed at Wongan Hills as the economy recovered from the Depression and wheat, wool and lamb production increased in 1939 and 1940. Rural industries were again affected during the World War Two period by shipping problems and shortages of machinery, superphosphate, fuel and labour. Wheat production was discouraged in 1943, by limiting the yield that would attract the top guaranteed price.<sup>29</sup>

The twenty year period of 1949 to 1969 saw cleared land on farms doubled, sheep numbers trebled and wheat acreage and production increased 2.5 to 3 times, making the State second only to New South Wales in sheep and wheat production in Australia. Scientific research produced better yielding strains of wheat, improved clovers for pasture and chemicals for control of pests and weeds. Applications of superphosphate and trace elements quadrupled as high produce prices and good seasons continued. Larger and more powerful tractors and other machinery were developed, reducing labour requirements, while amalgamations of smaller farms into larger holdings took place.<sup>30</sup>

Demand for rail services was high during this period of expansion and WAGR struggled to upgrade its infrastructure and meet manpower demands and higher expectations of working conditions, including improved housing. In 1950-1952, nine new houses were provided at Wongan Hills. The first four houses constructed were built at the opposite end of the station yard to *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills*, while the rest were sited in the town on Ganzer and Stickland streets, one street block northeast of *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills*. These included the standard four and five-room Mill type houses, and a pre-fabricated three- room design, the Simms-Cooke, which was imported

---

1208, CONS 4792, R4622; WAGR, Alphabetical Index to Contracts, op cit, Contracts No. 239& 321; WAGR, *1972 Housing Review: Report of future housing requirements*, Perth, WAGR, [1972], Appendix 5.

27 WAGR *Annual Report*, 1919, p.5.

28 Burvill, G. H., op cit, pp. 48-49.

29 WAGR, *Annual report*, 1939; WAGR, Alphabetical Index to Contracts, op cit, Contract No.

30 Burvill, G. H. op cit, pp. 62-76.



from Britain and erected in large numbers throughout the State between 1949 and 1952.<sup>31</sup>

Wongan Hills railway station was manned twenty-four hours a day, with a station master, assistant station master and night station master employed.<sup>32</sup> In 1952, improvements were carried out including the erection of new stockyards.<sup>33</sup> The steam locomotives on the line were completely replaced with diesel locomotives by 1955, allowing greater tonnage to be hauled at faster speeds.<sup>34</sup> The railway water tank was not required once the steam locomotives were removed from service and the tank and stand was leased by the Shire.<sup>35</sup>

In 1964-65, Wongan Hills station yard was upgraded with new station building, loading ramp, and a larger crane. A new CBH grain storage installation outside the town provided for the storage of 400,000 bushels (approx 11,000 tonnes) replacing the existing structures, which held half that amount. The new grain storage and railway facilities were designed to meet the increasing development of the district, and to provide safer and more efficient handling of the grain and superphosphate traffic. The new station building was sited on the town side of the line making it more accessible from Fenton Street, the main street.<sup>36</sup> Passenger trains between Perth and Mullewa ran a six-day-a-week return service in the 1960s. The goods trains ran two return services, six days a week, and one return service on the seventh day. Grain haulage added at least one extra train a day during the harvest.<sup>37</sup>

In the 1970s, while a number of railway branch lines were closed in favour of road haulage and other lines were relegated to seasonal operation, the Northam-Mullewa line continued to operate at close to normal capacity. This was illustrated by the number of railway houses retained at Wongan Hills following WAGR's 1972 review of employee housing. Of the twenty-seven houses in the town, twenty-four were considered as still being required for permanent staff at this time.<sup>38</sup> Passenger services on the line were replaced with a road bus service in the 1970s, and deregulation of freight carriage in the 1980s meant that rail was in direct competition with road haulage.

By 1988, rationalisations and changes in technology and services had resulted in a decrease in WAGR staff by almost 50% throughout the State. Many country centres had the number of resident staff reduced to zero. At

---

31 WAGR, *Annual report*, 1939; Wongan Hills town plan, 1966, op cit; WAGR, *Alphabetical Index to Contracts*, op cit, Contracts No. 580 & 620; WAGR, *1972 Housing Review: Report of future housing requirements*, Perth, WAGR, [1972], Appendix 5.

32 WAGR file, Wongan Hills employee houses, R4622, op cit, 21 May 1946.

33 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1952, p. 23.

34 WAGR file, Wongan Hills station improvements, Item R5294, op cit.

35 *Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory*, Reference No. 1.

36 WAGR, Wongan Hills station improvements, Item R5294, op cit.

37 WAGR, Wongan Hills station improvements, Item R5294, op cit.

38 WAGR, *1972 Housing Review*, op cit.

Wongan Hills, only one permanent staff member, an Operations Officer, was required to be stationed in the town.<sup>39</sup> *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was occupied by the station master into the 1980s. The exact date of removal of the station master from Wongan Hills has not been ascertained, but occurred sometime between 1980 and 1988.<sup>40</sup>

In 2000, WAGR reported a record grain haulage, with a slight increase over the previous year's record. An order was placed for 76 new narrow gauge grain wagons and modifications were made to the existing 640 grain wagons.<sup>41</sup> On 17 December 2000, WAGR sold its freight business to the Australian Railroad Group (ARG), a consortium of Wesfarmers Limited and Genesee and Wyoming Inc. ARG entered a 49 year lease of the rail freight network, which it now maintains. The sale is intended to provide operating efficiencies, freight business growth and better competition with road haulage. Of the 1,125 WAGR staff involved in freight services, about 1,000 took up employment with ARG.<sup>42</sup>

Some changes have been made to *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* since construction. The laundry was most likely a separate free-standing structure in the back yard originally, and has been relocated to the back verandah. The steel clad garage was a standard improvement made to railway employee houses in the 1970s and 1980s, following the 1972

WAGR housing review. The provision of a cabin as extra bedroom accommodation was standard practice up to the early 1970s, as no more than three bedrooms were normally provided in a railway residence.<sup>43</sup>

In 1998, *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was entered in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory as an element in the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct, and given a level 1 management category, recommending it for inclusion on the State Register.<sup>44</sup>

In 2002, the railway activity in Wongan Hills comprises freight trains passing through the station yard and the collection of grain from the CBH installation and the delivery of superphosphate. *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* has been occupied by private tenants for the past ten to twelve years.<sup>45</sup>

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

---

39 WAGR, *Annual Report*, 1988, p. 22; WAGR property file for Departmental Property 302, Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

40 *Western Australian Country Telephone Directories*, 1980 and 1988.

41 WAGR, *Annual report*, 2000, p. 11.

42 WAGR, *Annual report*, 2001, pp. 9-10.

43 Physical evidence; various WAGR property files, Properties Section, WAGR headquarters, East Perth.

44 *Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Municipal Heritage Inventory*, Reference No. 1.

45 Information provided by WAGR Properties Section.

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is located on the northwest side of Fenton Street between the road and the parallel railway line. The place does not address the road or the railway line, but faces southeast, down the line towards the railway barracks and railway station. There are no other dwellings in the immediate vicinity, although there is a roadhouse at the rear, on the northwest side. The place is at the northwest end of the Wongan Hills Railway Precinct that includes Railway Water Tank & Stand Pipe, Railway Barracks, Railway Station & Railway Goods Shed, and Ramp & Crane.

The street view is of the side of the dwelling. The front of the place is obscured by plantings. The front boundary has a timber-framed chainlink fence with a central gate opening onto a concrete path that leads direct to the front door. The remaining boundaries are delineated by an open picket fence. A steel gate gives access to the vehicular entry on the Fenton Street side boundary, and opens onto a dirt driveway. The site is flat. Except for a small area of lawn at the rear of the place, the yard is unkept. There are several mature trees in the rear yard including a jacaranda, and a lillypilly.

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* displays some characteristics of Federation bungalow. Typical of the style, the building has simple in traditional brick construction, with a gable feature on the front elevation with the main roof extending over the front verandah.

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is a single storey brick construction. The roof is of corrugated iron, constructed in a double hip style with a box gutter along the centre, a feature front gable, and a skillion over the rear rooms. The return front verandah is under the main roof and supported by square timber posts. The face brick chimneys are corbelled.

The original tuckpointed front walls have been painted. The side walls are rendered and marked in an ashlar design. The gable infill is detailed in the original decorative timber and roughcast, above a moulded cornice line. The original six-panelled front door is still in place with stained glass leadlight sidelights and fanlights in an art nouveau stylised design. The original double hung sashes and timber frames are still in place on the front and northeast side, although the windows on the northwest (railway line) side have been replaced with double casements. The main gabled wall features a set of two windows separated by a vertical section of wall. The other front window is a full height 'Bachelor' window. The front verandah has a concrete floor and a lattice enclosure. The rear verandah and extensions are timber framed and clad with asbestos with aluminium sliding glass windows. The original profile gutters are in place, although there is minimal evidence of downpipes to provide adequate discharge from the roof, or any ground level drainage.

The floor plan is simple with a central front door opening into a small hall with a room each side (bedrooms 1 & 2), and another room ahead (living room). A third room (bedroom 3) opens off the living room to

the left. A doorway at the back of the living room leads to an open vestibule area, with the kitchen on the right and the bathroom on the left. A skillion roofed verandah extension across the rear is partially enclosed with asbestos cladding, and houses a laundry and storeroom.

The original interior fabric is mostly in place. The walls and ceilings are plasterboard. The ceilings in the kitchen and rear verandah area are lined on the rake. The original 0.135 metre (5 inch) floorboards remain in place throughout. The skirtings, architraves and original four panel doors are in place. The four main rooms and the kitchen each have a fireplace. The fireplaces in the two front rooms (bedrooms 1 & 2) are back-to-back with the fireplaces in the adjoining rooms (living room & bedroom 3). Bedrooms 1 and 2 still have the original mantelpiece and cast iron fireplace set within a moulded arch. The mantelpiece and all other details have been removed from the living room and bedroom 3 fireplaces. There is a wood stove in the kitchen fireplace with a simple timber mantle. The kitchen fitout is c.1950s and very basic.

On the front south west corner of the dwelling, only metres from the still operational railway line, is a detached cabin, accessed from the front verandah. It is a standard WAGR cabin: timber framed on concrete stumps, weatherboard clad, with a gable roof clad with corrugated iron. The interior is fully lined with tongue and groove timber. In the rear yard of the dwelling, there is a steel clad garage and various timber framed and steel sheet clad outbuildings.

Externally, *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is in fair condition. The gutters are rusted and full of debris, rendering them relatively ineffective. The paint on the bricks is weathering, and exterior timber elements have weathered in many places. There is damage from moisture ingress on the bathroom wall. The weatherboards on the cabin are weathered and the paint is flaking. There is no obvious evidence of termite activity, although some of the floorboards, covered by carpet, evidence some degree of settlement or damage. Internally, the place is in fair condition due to continuous use.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

*Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* is a good example of the type of residence constructed for station master's between 1900 and 1920. These residences were generally of brick and iron, with five main rooms, fireplaces on internal walls, and verandahs front and rear.

Most station master's houses built during this period were constructed to a standard plan introduced in 1900, the design resulting in a residence of Victorian Georgian style, despite some being built in the late 1910s. *Station Master's House, Wongan Hills* was described as non-standard in a WAGR report of 1965. It is in Federation Bungalow style, with a return front verandah and a feature front gable. The second and third bedrooms are smaller and the living room larger than in the standard plan, but it conforms in overall size and provision of facilities.

None of the brick station master's houses constructed on the Northam- Mullewa line by the PWD in 1913-14 at Dalwallinu and Buntine (Shire of Dalwallinu) and Koolanooka (Shire of Morawa) are listed in the relevant Municipal Heritage inventories, and no information has been ascertained on their design or condition, or even their continuing existence.<sup>46</sup> Other extant station master's houses constructed during this period, including those at Boyup Brook, Dumbleyung, Northampton, Popanyinning, Wickepin and Darkan (all built in 1912-13) and Bowelling (1919), conform to the standard 1900 Victorian Georgian style plan.<sup>47</sup>

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

-----

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may establish the construction date for the detached cabin.

---

<sup>46</sup> Information provided by HCWA librarian, Pam Hartree from Shire of Dalwallinu and Shire of Morawa Municipal Heritage inventories.

<sup>47</sup> Gray, Laura & Sauman, Irene, *Darkan Railway Precinct Conservation plan* and *Bowelling Railway Station Conservation Plan*, May 2002.