



## 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.

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is a competently designed brick, render and iron roofed school building in the Federation Arts and Crafts style, made more visually complex by the honest expression of each stage of development. One of its finest features is the imposing central hall with its painted, reed-moulded Oregon lining supported on a queen-post truss system. (Criterion 1.1)

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School*, in its open landscape and surrounding tall trees, is a local landmark in contrast with its suburban setting. (Criterion 1.3)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is significant in the pattern of the history of Western Australian schools demonstrating the rapid development of the City of Kalgoorlie with each of the stages of development being clearly distinguishable in the fabric of the place. (Criterion 2.1)

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* has a close association with prominent former students who included: Educators Dr T. L. Robertson, Mr Harry Dettman, E. Halliday and W. Halliday, writer Gavin Casey, Matron Edis of the Home of Peace, Tom Eyres a Vice President of the Stock Exchange, F. C. Edmondson, engineer and J. Hocking the Editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. (Criterion 2.3)

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is associated with Government Architects George Temple-Poole, John Grainger and Hillson Beasley, who were responsible for many of the era's public buildings. (Criterion 2.3)

#### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

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

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* has been highly valued by the local community for social, cultural, and particularly educational associations since 1902. (Criterion 4.1)

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is a conspicuous place and a focus of community life contributing to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

Although *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* has features which distinguish it from other schools, these are matters of detail. In other respects it is typical of central hall based school design of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century school design. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is a characteristic example of the design and pattern of growth in the schools of the Eastern Goldfields. The legibility of the pattern growth and the changes in the handling of finishes through time are of particular interest in this school. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

With the minor exception of the management of damp penetration, termite control and maintenance of pointing, *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is in good condition.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

Although *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* has undergone much minor change, the place continues to perform the basic functions envisaged when the design was conceived. The place retains a high degree of integrity.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* remains little altered externally and the hall is also little altered. Changes to the rooms began early in the history of the place and have continued through time to accommodate changing requirements. The place overall retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Dr Dorothy Erickson, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is a single storey red-brick primary school building with a hipped and gabled zincalume custom orb roof based on the central school hall and surrounding classroom model. It is situated on a lot bounded by Campbell, Keenan, Russell and Addis Streets and contains the built evidence of the Senior School, built for the Education Department in 1902, and some more recent structures which are not of heritage significance. The Teacher's Quarters, pavilion classroom, Infant's School and other buildings transported in from Yellowdine and Boulder Airport have been removed.

Elementary education became compulsory in Western Australia in 1871. The system adopted was a dual one of Government and Government-assisted private or church schools. The church schools were of concern to the Governor of the time, Aloysius Weld, who was the first Roman Catholic Governor in Western Australia. In 1890, following Responsible Government and before *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* was built, state aid to church schools was abolished and the Education Department was established to provide free secular education along the lines of the New South Wales model. At this time there was an influx of teachers from the depressed 'Eastern Colonies' to teach in the schools being built in Western Australia, many of which were being established in the rapidly expanding goldfields.

Gold had been discovered in Western Australia in small quantities since the middle of the nineteenth century, but with the Kimberley find of 1886, followed by the Pilbara in 1887, the Yilgarn in 1888 and the Eastern Goldfields (Coolgardie) in 1892 the rush to the goldfields commenced in earnest. The discovery of great goldfields made the last decade of the nineteenth century a time of great promise for Western Australia and there was an air of zest and expectation on the fields.

Gold was discovered in Hannans in June 1893. By August, the first deep shaft was sunk – The Great Boulder. The 'Golden Mile' of Kalgoorlie Boulder was the richest gold ore body the world had seen, outstripping the great finds in Coolgardie. It produced more gold than all the other mining areas in the colony combined. Conditions were primitive for early prospectors. Typhoid was rife in the harsh unsanitary conditions where potable water was extremely scarce; water had to be carted from suitable sources or distilled. Nevertheless, the poor conditions and lack of water did not deter the fortune seekers.

The Depression that had such an impact elsewhere, did not have the same effect in Western Australia. Capital flooded into the colony, most of it coming from England, with a smaller proportion from South Australia and the east-coast capitals. Investment from newly emerging industrial nations, such as Germany and Italy, who competed with England and France for areas of influence, also contributed to the growth of the gold fields. The area was also

aided by the development of communication systems and miners, engineers financiers and even goldsmiths commuted between America, South Africa and Western Australia.

Capital raised by the colony allowed the construction of the port of Fremantle and the Eastern Goldfields Water Supply pipeline, both major undertakings which assisted progress and made living conditions better for the young state. Construction of an extensive railway system through the mid 1890s to the Eastern Goldfields made the movement of mining equipment, machinery and consumer goods easier and reduced the cost of transport.

Accompanying the influx of capital from the eastern seaboard and other parts of the world, was the influx of people, mainly men, in search of their fortune. The population of the colony was multiplied by seven fold in twenty years, with most migrants going straight to the Eastern Goldfields from the ports of entry. The population grew from 48,000 to 180,000 in the 1890s and was 239,000 by 1904.<sup>1</sup> In the dry and dusty interior, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and other centres developed rapidly.

The greatest influx of migrants occurred in 1895-6; Kalgoorlie was gazetted a Municipality in 1896. The railway to Coolgardie was completed in 1895 and was extended to Kalgoorlie in 1897, bringing more people to the locality. The imbalance of male to female on the goldfields resulted in a deliberate immigration policy to attract women and families. This programme commenced in 1900.

Although gold mining peaked in 1903, the population continued to grow. The Eastern Goldfields Water Supply was opened the same year, making life more pleasant. Kalgoorlie and Boulder continued to expand and develop, becoming thriving towns with electric trams shuttling between them. The Boulder Block had the busiest retail trade anywhere in Australia at this time. With the arrival of families, primary and technical schools were required to provide for the education of both children and adults (further education). By the close of the nineteenth century in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, Primary Schools were being established and growing rapidly.

Cyril Jackson, who was appointed Chief Inspector of Schools in 1897, brought new ideas utilising the ideas of Froebel, who focused training on the development of the child rather than regimented rote learning. Jackson also noted the architectural inadequacies of the many school buildings: they were not oriented to local climatic conditions and there was little provision of trees for shade in the playgrounds. As a result, Jackson instituted Arbor Days to encourage the planting and appreciation of trees.

In his 1897 report on schools in Western Australia, Jackson commented on the standard design of classrooms, in which light entered the rooms from behind or in front, rather than the sides.<sup>2</sup> These and other matters, such as replacement of fluted mini-orn iron used to line the schools, influenced the designs of the schools built after this time. Light from the left hand side of the

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<sup>1</sup> General information is from Erickson, Dorothy. 'Aspects of Stylistic and Social Influence on the Practice of Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia 1829- 1965', Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> The general education information is drawn from Gregory, Jenny and Lisa Smith, 'A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia', prepared for the Building Management Authority by the Centre for WA History, 1995.

room became a guiding principle in the preparation of new school building designs. Jackson also introduced syllabus reform, including gardening, botany, woodwork, metalwork and cooking, all of which required additional facilities. Furthermore, the new Education Act of 1899 made education compulsory from 6 years to 14 years, and space had to be found to keep the children at school two years longer.

The number of schools in the State was doubling every five years, and the rate of growth on the Goldfields was even higher, with the added problems of shifting population which accompanied each new rush. To minimise costs and streamline the work of an overloaded department, the Public Works Department used the same school pattern for the construction of many schools, while introducing subtle variations. George Temple Poole favoured uneven fenestration, while Grainger and Beasley (who followed Poole as the primary Government architects) grouped the windows in even numbers. In many areas, rapid population growth led to additional classrooms being required within months of the opening of a new school. The clever use of a modular design, based around the central core of a hall provided a cohesive presence and proved sufficiently durable in concept to accept subtle changes.

By 1902, *Kalgoorlie Primary School* (1900) and *Boulder Primary School* (1898) were becoming overcrowded and were expanding into additional temporary accommodation. *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* was opened, initially in temporary premises, to provide alternative school accommodation. Despite the temporary nature of the first buildings, the children no longer had to trek to Kalgoorlie Central, St Mary's or the Church of England School, which were the alternatives.<sup>3</sup>

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* was designed by the Public Works Department, under the Chief Architect John Grainger and his assistant Hillson Beasley. The original pattern upon which the design was based had been developed by George Temple Poole. Grainger and Beasley adapted Poole's designs to suit a variety of situations. The high-pitched gabled roofs of Poole were decreased, the ceilings lowered from 14 feet to 12 feet and the windows had both uneven and even fenestration. However, Grainger and Beasley continued Poole's design of grouping classrooms around a central hall.<sup>4</sup>

Like many other schools of the time, *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* began as a nucleus to allow for progressive expansion. The first stage of the building was erected for the cost of £1331 and provided for 125 pupils (Rooms 8 & 9)<sup>5</sup> The school was opened on September 15, 1902 by Mr McMillan of the North Kalgoorlie School Board.<sup>6</sup> The school quarters were erected in the northern corner of the site for the cost of £474.<sup>7</sup>

The initial intake of 105 pupils rose to three times that number in four years as the suburb of North Kalgoorlie expanded. The enrolment increased by sixty pupils in the first week alone. To keep up with the increase in students, the school expanded at the rate of almost a room a year until 1910. In that year

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<sup>3</sup> Hunter, R. M. *From '02 to '62: The Story of North Kalgoorlie School*. self published. no pagination (np).

<sup>4</sup> The hall at North Kalgoorlie Primary School is a particular feature of the school.

<sup>5</sup> Hunter, op. cit..

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> The quarters were demolished in 1978.

there were 500 pupils; in 1917 there were 600. Student numbers hovered between these two figures until 1922, when the numbers halved. They did not rise again until after World War II, when pupil numbers returned to 600 in 1958.<sup>8</sup>

The first headmaster was Arthur H. Russell.

A solidly built man (some say 15 stone) with the black beard and moustache ... He was the first of twenty, each of whom left behind them some relic of their personality either in the shape of a piece of equipment, or some form of procedure, a scrap of tradition or a school rule.<sup>9</sup>

In line with Inspector Jackson's directives, Russell introduced the first Arbor Day to the school. Japanese Pepper' (*Schinus molle*) were planted because a hardy tree was required to withstand low rainfall and the ravages of goats and sandstorms. With the rapid development which occurred at times, the staff had to be ingenious. The pupils and staff built their own hessian-clad room in the hall, painting and decorating it in their holidays. The boys also made desks for the infant classes.<sup>10</sup>

Additions to the school which commenced in 1903 were completed in April 1904.<sup>11</sup> This work provided two more classrooms for 100 additional pupils.

Further classroom additions in 1905, which included a girls washroom, accommodated fifty more pupils<sup>12</sup>. Another fifty were accommodated in 1906 bringing the number of classrooms to six to house the 360 pupils. An additional boys washroom was also built in 1906.

In March 1909 Miss Halbert had ninety infants in her charge necessitating a further classroom. Room 5 was built in 1910, providing accommodation for fifty two more pupils<sup>13</sup>. Hunter states that rooms 6 & 7 were added in 1911 when the infants washroom was built.

In 1913, there was a similar situation and staff built an additional classroom within the hall using hessian and timber to divide the space. A library was housed in a converted washroom from c. 1913.<sup>14</sup>

In 1914, a pavilion classroom, with sliding or lifting canvas shutters on three sides was added to relieve overcrowding. This class room, one of the first in the state of this type, was either demolished later or moved to another site.

The Staff Room and Room 10 were removed during the 1920s (one went to Orange Grove). At times of overcrowding, the nearby Methodist Hall was used for school accommodation.<sup>15</sup>

Western Australia went into a low-level depression from about 1913, when most of the mining was done in deep shafts and the effects of Federation were depleting the nascent industries. The sale of gold was embargoed in 1914 for the duration of World War I, which caused the development of the goldfields

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<sup>8</sup> Hunter, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> ibid.

<sup>10</sup> ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Plans signed by MJC WBH. PWD Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.

<sup>12</sup> ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Hunter, op. cit.; Hillson Beasley, PWD Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.

<sup>14</sup> Hunter, op. cit..

<sup>15</sup> ibid.

to slow. The war had a profound effect on education, limiting the staff available, reducing salaries and removing funding for school expansion.

The school was a stepping stone for ambitious teachers. Three headmasters, Telford, Rabourne and Jeans went on to become District Inspectors. A first Assistant, J. W. Hatfield, also went on to become a District Inspector. However, *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is more celebrated for the achievements of its pupils than its teachers. Former students included the Director General of Education, Dr T. L. Robertson; Deputy Director, Mr Harry Dettman; E. Halliday, Director of Physical Education; W. Halliday, Principal of Graylands Teachers College; Gavin Casey noted author; Mr. F. C. Edmondson, foundation General Manager and Chief Engineer of the State Electricity Commission of Western Australia; Matron Edis of the Home of Peace; Tom Eyres, Vice President of the Stock Exchange and J. Hocking the Editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

Affection for the *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is particularly high in the local community, as Hunter states:

There has always been a close liaison between the school and the community in various community projects, the peak here being reached when Mr Potter was Headmaster. He was the means of establishing Adult Education discussion groups which met in the school with a lecture being given each month.<sup>16</sup>

The local North Kalgoorlie Dramatic Club and North Kalgoorlie Ladies' Choir used the school facilities. Involvement in the 'war effort' was also undertaken as communities are more active at such times and the sense of cohesion was evident.<sup>17</sup>

Storms and cyclones damaged the buildings at *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* removing roofs, blowing down the chimneys, destroying shelter sheds and flattening fences at frequent intervals. A major storm was occurred in 1928 causing further damage.<sup>18</sup>

Assisted immigration was revived after World War Two and the population of the State expanded rapidly. A burst of building activity occurred, assisted by Commonwealth funding. In 1945 a classroom was moved to *North Fremantle Primary School* from Yellowdine.<sup>19</sup>

Additions were under construction in 1946-1948 and completed 1948-49. A wartime building from Boulder aerodrome was converted for use, repairs and renovations were undertaken and new latrines and sewerage work were undertaken.<sup>20</sup> There were shortages of materials in the immediate postwar years and construction was often delayed. Further additions were undertaken in 1950-2 and completed in 1952-3.<sup>21</sup>

The second mineral boom in the 1960s and 1970s saw renewed activity in the goldfields. The Poseidon Nickel Boom increased pressures on schools. Changes in educational aims and methods and in technology saw the phasing

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<sup>16</sup>       ibid.

<sup>17</sup>       ibid.

<sup>18</sup>       ibid..

<sup>19</sup>       PWD Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.-This was demolished in the 1980s, under the direction of headmaster Barry Godley. Hunter, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup>       PWD Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.

<sup>21</sup>       PWD 32254 and 18910 Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.

out of many of the older buildings. The Infants school was demolished and a new open-plan Junior School was built to replace it. Shelter sheds and other structures were also removed. A series of working drawings were undertaken by local architect Bruce Williams for additions/alterations in 1970.<sup>22</sup>

A Dental Therapy Centre was added in 1976.<sup>23</sup> Williams also designed the upgrade and conversion of the administration area in 1978.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1980s the wooden ceilings of the hall were painted white.<sup>25</sup>

In 1995 the Administration section of the school was reorganised and a new library built.<sup>26</sup>

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is currently used as a primary school servicing the population of North Kalgoorlie. The historic 1902 building is the central core of a group of much later school buildings.

### 13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is a single storey red-brick primary school building with a hipped and gabled zincalume custom orb roof based on the central school hall and surrounding classroom model. It is situated on a lot bounded by Campbell, Keenan, Russell and Addis Streets and contains the built evidence of the Senior School built for the Education Department in 1902.

*North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is located in a suburban setting to the north of central Kalgoorlie. It is surrounded by generously wide streets with wide verges planted with *Eucalyptus sp.* trees. The school grounds are fenced with galvanised steel tube framed link mesh fencing. The grounds are open grassed areas and bituminised play and parking areas. The 1902-14 school buildings are set amongst later buildings including a modern library resource centre to the east, transportables to the east and north, toilets to the north and modern classrooms to the north east. There are sparse plantings of Eucalyptus trees around the grounds. The old school quarters site lies to the north of the site and there is no above ground evidence of the is building.

The plan *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is organised around rectangular school hall which is a double square proportion plan. Classrooms are arranged around the hall and these elements were built up progressively. This arrangement of classrooms clustered around the large volume of the hall gives the school its visual expression. The design is restrained and almost utilitarian externally with hints of the Federation Arts and Crafts<sup>27</sup> styling and proportions. Later buildings around the site are simple utilitarian types.

The main *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* building is brick with cement enriched string courses. Windows are tall double hung sashes with awning

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<sup>22</sup> PWD Att. to 6/696/0 Book 1.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> PWD Att. to 6/696/6c.

<sup>25</sup> Pat Hooper, Headmaster, North Kalgoorlie Primary School, conversation with Dorothy Erickson and Philip Griffiths, Pers, site visit late 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Lorraine Cowie, Librarian, North Kalgoorlie Primary School, conversation with Dorothy Erickson and Philip Griffiths, site visit late 1996.

<sup>27</sup> Apperly, et. al., *op. cit.*, pp 140-143.

lights over. The roof is gambrelled and is covered with custom orb Colorbond sheeting. Each stage of construction can be distinguished in the changes of the brickwork, changes in window arrangements and in the progressive simplification of detailing. Internally similar distinctions can be made through changes in detailing; for example the early classroom have fireplaces located at the mid point of external walls and later classrooms have fireplaces located in the corners of classrooms. Recent changes to the east corner of the school are sympathetically executed in style similar to the existing building.

The interior of *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* is planned around the main hall. The hall is generously proportioned with a clerestory roof carried on large queen post timber trusses. The hall retains its original features, including its reed moulded Oregon timber soffit lining, though decorative treatments are recent. Unlike other goldfields schools *North Kalgoorlie Primary School* does not have a fireplace in the hall.

Classrooms are either entered from the hall directly or from the four corridors which lead off the hall. Few rooms have been untouched by modernisation and four have been joined together to form larger rooms and this alteration was already in place by 1910.

Changes have been made to the administration area in the eastern corner and this represents the most far reaching changes since the completion of the core group of spaces. The work done in this areas has changed all finishes, ceilings and floors. Elsewhere in the school the changes generally have left much of the existing fabric in place and removed minor elements, together with introducing modern services.

The place is generally in good order. The spaces are generally used for the same or similar function to those for which they were designed. The hall is perhaps the least altered space. The exterior of the place is little altered since 1914 except where the minor addition was made in connection with the administration offices and reception in the eastern corner.

### 13.3 REFERENCES

Considine & Griffiths with Erickson & Taylor, 'Historic Kalgoorlie Boulder Schools Preliminary Heritage Assessments', CAMS 1997

Considine & Griffiths, 'Goldfields Historic School Buildings Condition of Masonry', CAMS 1997.

Gregory, Jenny, and Smith, Lisa, 'A Thematic History of Public Education in Western Australia', prepared for the Building Management Authority 1995.

Hunter, R. M., 'From '02 to '62: The Story of North Kalgoorlie School', self published.

CAMS Records Premise Nos 3224 and 4204

EES; Public Works Department (PWD) 1902, 1904, p. 70, 1905, 1906, p. 44, 1907-8, 1910-11, 1946-7, 1947-8, 1950-1, 1951-2, 1952-3.

Education Department Reports (EDR) 1902, 1904, 1905, 1914, 1945, 1947.

### 13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

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